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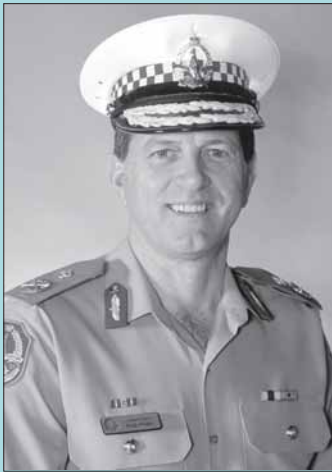
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# D R U M

The official publication of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Exercise Northern Track  
Show circuit  
Mick rides high  
Operation Richtoffen  
Sexual assault workshop  
RCMP exchange  
Footy challenge

**NOVEMBER 2003**



## Commissioner's message

*We live in exciting times and right now it is a great time to be part of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services and – in particular – the Police Force.*

*The O'Sullivan Assessment is complete*

*and we are now getting on with the business of Building our Police Force to make it one of the best in the world.*

*That may sound like a grand statement to some, but I am confident we have the skills, the talent and the determination to shape this Agency for the future.*

*We've hit the ground running with the establishment of a range of committees to ensure the change process is driven and that everyone has the opportunity to become as involved as they want to be in the building process.*

*It is now time to shake off the past. We've been given the resources and the backing of Government to make things happen – to get more police back on the streets and give Territorians the service and support they deserve.*

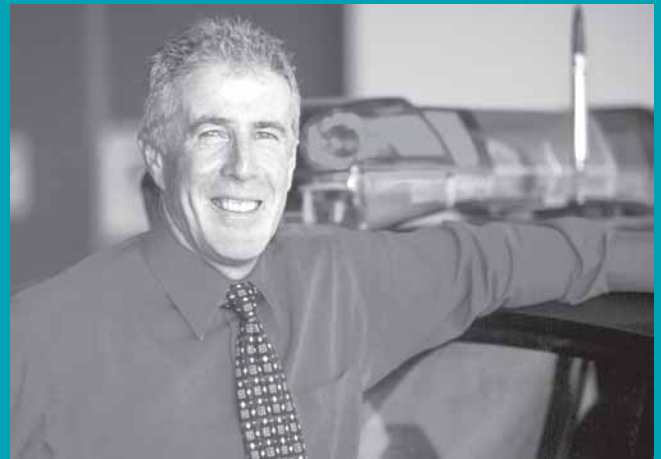
*Change won't happen overnight but it will happen and until then we need to be focused in what we do and support each other. That means getting on with business. It means doing the job well. It means wanting to be part of a Police Force that is moving forward.*

*Right now we are fortunate to have a very professional group of leaders within the organisation and from this group have emerged two senior officers who were successful in their applications for Assistant Commissioner positions. Congratulations to Assistant Commissioner Grahame Kelly who will command the Crime & Support portfolio and Assistant Commissioner Mark Payne who will command the Operations portfolio in the absence of Assistant Commissioner, John Daulby, who is currently in East Timor.*

*I am determined, as is my executive team, that the current change process will deliver this Agency a future that is both exciting and challenging. Let's get moving.*

**Paul White**

Commissioner of Police and  
CEO Fire and Emergency Services



## From the Editor

Welcome to the November edition of *The Drum*.

Since the last edition you may notice some changes in style and content. This is a conscious effort to give our official internal publication a bit more bite – discussing important policing, fire and emergency services issues while staying faithful to popular human interest articles and who's who section.

As you know, *The Drum* is produced by the Media and Corporation Communications Unit - a section of the Agency I would like to tell you a little more about.

I am fortunate to have an extremely professional and talented staff, each of whom has extensive experience in public relations, communications and media liaison. Indeed, media liaison is but a part of the work we do.

I am keen to ensure all staff of the Agency – in particular those of you in the frontline – know that my Unit is here to support and advise. It is also vital that all police, firefighters and emergency service personnel are aware that a strong and positive public image of the organisation is vital and, as such, media and communications considerations need to be kept in mind at all times.

By the time you read this edition, you will be aware we have a new Media Policy. This is a more simplified policy that encourages proactive relationships with the media. Please take time to read it and let us know if you have any questions.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *The Drum*. Let us know what you think – good or bad, as long as it's constructive.

**John McCourt**

Director, Media and Corporate Communications



# Alice and Tennant Creek Shows

This year's Alice Springs and Tennant Creek Shows proved a great success with both displays receiving awards.

Police and Emergency Services won the best government display at the Alice Show and at the Tennant Show we nabbed both the best government and best overall awards.

NTES volunteers assisted with the setting up and manning of the Alice and Tennant displays, the President of the Tennant Creek Show Society hinted that we did so well because of the local content and the volunteers participation at the NTES displays.

Both displays proved popular to the public with lots of balloons and promotional material handed out.

At the Alice Show eleven new people signed up as Neighbourhood Watch members and about 20-30 Safety House packs were handed out to interested parties.

All in all a great success and a credit to all who organised and participated in the displays.



*captions*

*The Drum* is the official magazine of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.  
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Stories and photos by Kerry Sharp, Theresa Kulboer, James Pratt, David Silva, Karl Herzog and Sandra Mitchell.

Correction: Worlds Greatest Shave photos featured in the June 2003 edition courtesy of Allan Mitchell.

Front cover: Const Tamara Randall and S/C Stephen Hazell at the Australia vs Bangladesh cricket match at Mararra Oval.

Back cover: FF Craig Slack

Design and artwork by Kris Lee.

Next deadline: December 2003

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# MICK RIDES HIGH

Northern Territory Police officer Senior Constable Mick Shaw, who is currently based in Alice Springs, recently returned from a 10 week overseas study tour. Mick was awarded a prestigious Churchill Fellowship last year which enabled him to travel to Canada, America and the UK to study police bicycle patrol techniques.

Each year the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust provides financial assistance to Australians from all walks of life to travel overseas to further their search for excellence in their field of work or study.

Mick said the aim of the trip was to conduct a comprehensive study of police mountain bike patrol units with the view to finding best practices and bringing those lessons back to improve Australian patrols.

"I was most impressed with the professionalism and extremely high

standard of the units in Canada, the US and the UK. The US has been using mountain bikes as a policing option for a long time and has developed sophisticated methods for riding on patrol. They are the world leaders in this field."

Mick said the highlight of his trip was attending the International Police Mountain Bike Association's annual conference in Charleston, West Virginia, which was attended by more than 30 officers from all over the US, Canada, the UK and even Israel.

Mick also took part in the IPMBA's Police Cyclist Course and also became a police cyclist instructor.

"The course included challenging subjects like suspect apprehension, hazard avoidance and falling techniques. I am now very much looking forward to passing on the knowledge and skills I have gained to my colleagues in the NT Police."



Senior Constable Mick Shaw exchanges ideas with PC Ed Stevens from London's Metropolitan Police

Mick said the Fellowship had provided him with "the trip of a lifetime" which would never have been possible without the assistance of the Churchill Trust.

"If you have an idea which will be of benefit to Australia I would strongly recommend that you contact the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. They could well offer you an experience which will benefit both yourself and your country for years to come."

## Darwin workshop focuses on sexual assault

Victorian psychologist, family therapist and La Trobe University lecturer Anne Welfare first got involved with sexual assault victims while working in the Victorian mental health system.

"A lot of sexual assault victims ended up in the psychiatric bins in those days because their symptoms were not addressed," she said. "The system is much better now."

Ms Welfare has since dealt with thousands of sexual assault cases – sometimes at a rate of 30-40 a week - in a career spanning 20 years. She now works exclusively in the area of childhood sexual assault and trauma.

An NT Police-hosted workshop at

the Training College in June gave 80 Darwin and Katherine participants the opportunity to learn from her vast experience.

Participants included police officers, mental health and other health staff, school-based nurses and counsellors, sexual assault referral centre staff, private-practice psychologists and Family and Children's Services representatives.

Ms Welfare presented a framework for understanding the impact of sexual assault on victims and the symptoms they suffer. She spoke about how police officers should handle the interview process and how health professionals and others involved can address symptoms in an appropriate way. She also spoke about the types of

offender thinking and how officers need to understand this when interviewing them.

"I found this workshop particularly exciting because the participants represented such a broad cross-section of groups with different roles to play in relation to victims," Ms Welfare said.

"But it was also a challenge for that very reason. We had people with distinctly different roles to play, and workshop had to be conducted in a way that met everyone's needs.

"The most valuable outcome, I thought, was the final brainstorming session where the participants came up with

*(continued on page 7)*



# OPERATION RICHTOFFEN

By James Pratt

One of the NT Police's largest management operations of an Outlaw Motor Cycle Gang's (OMCG) annual run, Operation Richtoffen, was successfully conducted recently.

More than 100 members of the NT Police force were involved in the planning and execution of the operation, which saw 108 Coffin Cheater members from the Victorian and Western Australian chapters, ride from Broome to Darwin.

Upon learning the Coffin Cheaters would commence their run in Broome on 28 June, the NT Police liaised heavily with the WA Police's OMCG Response Team, which has had extensive dealings with the Coffin Cheaters.

A select group of NT Police travelled to Broome as part of an advance team several days before the Coffin Cheaters commenced their run. All were sworn in as Special Constables in WA.

The NT Police members then worked alongside members of the WA Police who managed the Coffin Cheaters' run, which involved gang members riding 100 motorcycles and travelling in a twin trailer Road Train and three other support vehicles to the NT border.

Upon reaching the NT border the NT Police then took control of the run to Darwin.

Ten members of the WA Police's OMCG Response Team were sworn

in as Special Constables in the Territory as they travelled with NT Police towards Darwin for the conclusion of the run in Darwin on 4 July, 2003.

Field Commander of Operation Richtoffen, Acting Superintendent Wayne Harris said the expertise and knowledge of the WA Police in handling gangs such as the Coffin Cheaters was crucial to the operation's success.

"The WA Police's OMCG Response Team provided invaluable advice in how to manage these types of groups based on their own extensive experience," A/Supt. Harris said.

"They also provided significant intelligence information ensuring we were fully informed and ready to take over the management of the group once they crossed into the Northern Territory."

A/Supt Harris and Senior Sergeant Mark Setter had regular meetings with senior members of the Coffin Cheaters, prior to their arrival in the Territory, to discuss and explain the manner in which NT Police would be managing the run to Darwin.

Such issues included the speed limit the gang could travel at while in "pack formation" and the safety considerations of other road users in light of a large group of motorcyclists travelling in unison.

The Coffin Cheater hierarchy were also informed of the NT Police's expectations of gang members'

behaviour while in the NT and how any incidents may be dealt with.

"The working relationship was generally good although strained on occasions," A/Supt Harris said.

"NT Police members always had to be aware that they were dealing with an outlaw motorcycle group which if given the opportunity would, without a moment's thought, step outside the boundaries of what is generally regarded as acceptable behaviour."

A/Supt Harris said from when the Coffin Cheaters crossed into the Territory on 2 July, to their run's end in Darwin, there were only minor incidents of confrontation between Police and members of the OMCG.

As well as ensuring members of the Coffin Cheaters obeyed road rules during their journey, liquor license regulations were also enforced as well as monitoring of the gang's behaviour during their overnight stays at the Victoria River Wayside Inn and the Lazy Lizard Caravan Park at Pine Creek.

And each morning following an overnight stopover all Coffin Cheater members partook in roadside breath analysis tests. No gang members returned positive results during any of the RBT stations on the run.

"Our attitude was to manage the group without necessarily interfering with them having a good time so long as their activities were lawful," A/Supt Harris said

"They were very clearly advised that action would be taken against any illegal activity.

"This is best practice however it will only work so long as the Police have sufficient numbers to back up what they say."



(cont'd page 15)

# EXERCISE NORTHERN TRACK

By James Pratt

It's the Wet season and a train headed towards Darwin carrying 200 passengers and cargo has derailed west of Lake Woods, near Elliott.

All communications with the single locomotive and 17 carriage vehicle was lost shortly after 3 am, 100 people were reported as injured to varying degrees and some were trapped in the carriages of the train.

Due to the heavy rains of the Wet season, all roads are impassable and all nearby airstrips are unusable due to their gravel composition.

This was the scenario put to members of the NTPFES at the Peter McAulay Centre's Emergency Operations Centre last month, as part of Exercise Northern Track.

With the Alice to Darwin railway due for completion in the coming months, the aim of Exercise Northern Track was to examine the draft PFES Rail Emergency Plan as well as provide the opportunity to discuss responses and co-ordination between related agencies and identify any weaknesses in the plan.

More than 50 people took part in the exercise with representatives from the railway industry, the Australian Defence Force, St John Ambulance, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and the Environment, Royal Darwin Hospital and the PFES taking part in the four hour exercise.

Exercise Northern Track co-ordinator, Mark Cunnington, said the simulation proved invaluable to all those involved.

"Exercise Northern Track was extremely important, it put all the major players in the same room and allowed for free discussion on perceptions, ideas and fact," Mr Cunnington said.

"It is essential to have all stakeholders present when dealing with emergency management planning issues, so as to get the big picture," he said.

"This exercise answered questions for some and produced more for others.

"The thing is that everyone is working towards the same goal: A

workable Emergency Response Plan for the NT Railway."

As parties involved in the exercise worked through the scenario, the details of the situation were continually updated such as fatalities, rescue equipment available and problems that could be encountered if such an incident occurred.

"I think the PFES would respond as well as it does to any other major incident. There were some gaps (in the draft plan) identified, but nothing in our business is ever plain sailing and problems will always crop up," he said.

"Having close partnerships with each of the stakeholders concerned will go a long way to solving any problems that occur at such an incident."

Construction of the much-anticipated Alice Springs to Darwin railway was completed this month.

## SENIOR PROMOTIONS

After a recent promotion board, Kate Vanderlaan became only the second female Commander in the Northern Territory Police.

Kate, along with Mark Payne of CIP, was appointed to the rank of Commander.

Shortly after those promotions, the selections were made for the two Assistant Commissioner roles, made vacant by the 12-month leave for John Daulby and resignation of Doug Smith.

Grahame Kelly was selected for appointment to the role of Assistant Commissioner, Crime, while Mark Payne was selected to fill Assistant Commissioner Daulby's role of Assistant Commissioner, Operations.

Congratulations to all.



L to R: Station Commander Dave Pettit, Senior Auxiliary Bill Hawker and Patrick Horner



# Police tree donated for Larrakia cultural project

A large native Milkwood tree that once grew on land within the Berrimah Police Complex has become the resource for an important cultural project conducted through the Larrakia Nation's Itinerant Program.

The specimen caught the eye of Kenny Reid and Robert Mills who'd been searching Darwin bushland for months for a suitably-sized native tree to be used for a canoe and artifacts carving project involving various Indigenous artists from across the Territory.

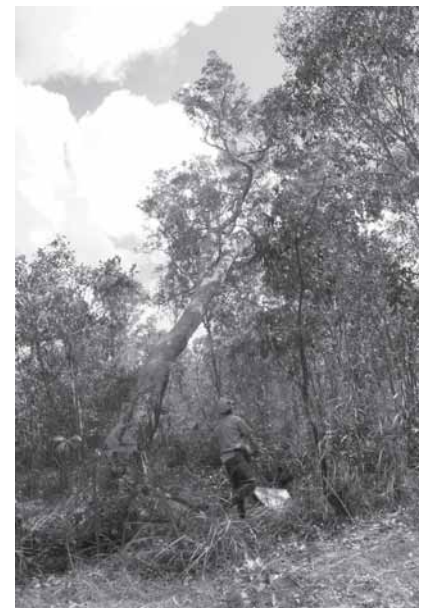
The Larrakia Nation's Tania McLeod approached Assistant Commissioner Mark McAdie in early June to ask whether the police would consider donating the tree, which was of a species significant for Darwin's Larrakia people.

Assistant Commissioner McAdie

thought it was a great opportunity to help foster local police and Indigenous relations and also support this valuable cultural initiative. Commissioner Paul White agreed and the tree was handed over.

Over the past six weeks, the Milkwood timber has been meticulously carved and crafted into traditional artifacts including a 1.5 metre mini dugout canoe, didgeridus, large and small native storks, a turtle and a whole range of smaller pieces.

"We'd been searching for six months for a suitable Milkwood for this project," Tania said. "We were absolutely thrilled when the police agreed to donate it to us. It has been put to a very special purpose, and the canoe and other pieces carved from its timber are really fantastic."



## Darwin workshop (continued from page 4)

suggestions for improving the existing systems, and accepted that they were a powerful combined force in tackling domestic violence.

Superintendent of Crime, Bert Hofer said the workshop's aim was to give participants an understanding of family therapy approaches to working with childhood sexual assault, and an understanding of offender behaviour as is appropriate to their work. He said it was an excellent opportunity for workers from the various disciplines to interact and build on their relationships to present a more holistic approach in tackling this very important social problem.

The workshop evolved from ongoing training between detectives, school-based constables and operational police, and Family and Children's Services employees. The training included the latest advances in child interviewing and techniques for interviewing young people with communication disabilities.

# Opposition trounced in annual footy challenge

Members of the Fires and Police Football team are fast gaining a lofty reputation for their sporting prowess on the field.

In consecutive weeks in June, the boys trounced a Navy team from HMAS Coonawarra by 60 points, then followed up with a 63 point drubbing of a team from the Army's 8/12 Medium Artillery Regiment at Robertson Barracks.

The games are deadly serious – but the camaraderie and good will fostered between the competing services is equally as important as the final outcomes on the footy field.

A vocal crowd of around 500 young and old supporters congregated under lights at Robertson Barracks on 27 June for what has become an annual event – a night of fun, festivities, friendly rivalry and hard slog as the Army boys and the Fires and Police face each other in an Aussie Rules Football challenge.

The Army scored an early first goal while the Fires and Police languished with a single point. But fortunes soon changed. The all conquering Fires and Police had slammed through 13 goals 12 points to the Army's 4 goals 3 points by the time the final siren sounded.

"It was one of the best team efforts I can remember," Fires and Police team coordinator Peter McLeod says. "Everyone put in a huge effort on the night. We were



particularly thrilled with the result because the Army team had been training together for weeks for this match, whereas our boys only come together for the match on the night."

Peter also had plenty of praise for the fearless Army boys, saying the scoreboard failed to reflect the true grit and determination and sportsmanship that every player on the field put into their game.

"They played their hearts out and were brave and gallant in defeat," he said. "All in all, it was a very physical, skillful game but very clean at the same time," Peter said. "We had NTFL umpires officiate at the game, and the Brigadier Commander was on hand to perpetual trophy and other awards."

And while they might not have taken home the trophy this time around, the people at Robertson Barracks banded together to put on an outstanding night for their guests.

"On behalf of our team and supporters, I want to sincerely thank the Army people for their tremendous hospitality and good sportsmanship," Peter said. "The Army boys are very keen for a re-match next year and we are more than happy to continue the tradition of what has become a fantastic annual event."





# INSPECTOR EARLA-KIM McCOLL, RCMP

In a string of Aboriginal conversation, the words “Due South” were instantly recognisable to all in the room – that’s how an ACPO was able to clarify for Galiwinku/Elcho Island council members the organisation being represented by Inspector Earla-Kim McColl of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

NT Police hosted Inspector McColl on a month’s exchange from mid-July and prepared an extensive itinerary to provide an opportunity for her to experience the vast geography and culture of the Territory.

She had the opportunity to visit a range of police stations and communities and in many cases, the main question related to the absence of a red serge jacket, identified world-wide as the uniform of the RCMP.

At Galiwinku, when ACPO Daisy Gumbala was introducing Inspector McColl in Aboriginal language, the two words “Due South,” referring to the TV programme brought immediate nods of recognition.

Inspector McColl has been with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for 25 years, spending most of her time in British Columbia. She is now in the headquarters as the OIC of the Operational Policy Section of the National Contract Policing Branch, after working in the areas including general duties, plain clothes, audit, recruiting, victim services and internal investigations. Most recently before her move to the OIC position, she worked as a Watch Commander.

Inspector McColl said that RCMP members tended to move to postings within the one province, rather than being transferred across the whole of Canada.

“That’s the usual practice, unless of course you belong to a specialist branch such as police dog services, forensic identification (crime scene evidence) experts or you transfer into headquarters and then move to another province.

Today the RCMP’s scope of operations includes organised crime, terrorism, illicit drugs, economic crimes and border protection. It also protects VIPs and, through its National Police Services, offers resources to other Canadian law enforcement agencies. These resources include databases – fingerprint, criminal record, forensic image, missing children, firearms – and other specialised services such as those offered by forensic laboratories, the Canadian Bomb Data Centre and the Automated Criminal Intelligence Information System.

Inspector McColl said there were similarities between the Northern Territory and Canada in several ways.



“There are a lot of similarities in relation to indigenous or First Nations people issues,” said Inspector McColl.

“We have people who live in isolated areas, but we don’t have the complexity of clans and their histories evident as in the NT.”

The RCMP’s 15 000 members have jurisdiction over eight provinces, three territories, more than 200 municipalities, 65 Aboriginal communities, three international airports and numerous smaller airports. It also has a volunteer base of more than 75 000.

Inspector McColl has enjoyed the opportunity to experience policing in the Territory first hand.

“NT Police are very hospitable. They’re professional, knowledgeable and dedicated men and women,” said Inspector McColl.

“The NT and RCMP both face the challenge of effectively policing vast areas and remote communities. We too are actively recruiting and are staffed with a fairly junior workforce.”

Inspector McColl said the benefits of exchanges such as this included the chance to share the experiences and ideas of other police professionals and to allow the exchange of ideas to assist in facing new challenges.

One of the Territory’s police officers, Superintendent Anne-Marie Murphy, will have a chance to view the operations of the RCMP first hand when she travels to Canada for a month’s exchange during September.

Superintendent Murphy will be hosted by Inspector McColl on the reciprocal visit.

# ROGER NEWMAN

To get to retirement day following almost 25 years in a job and loving every minute of it, is rare – but that's exactly the way Det Sgt Roger Newman sees his choice of a career in policing.

Det Sgt Newman finished his last shift with NT Police on Friday, 1 August just two months shy of 25 years' service and while reflecting on his career, said he would make the same choice again.

"I'm more than happy with what I've done," he said on his last day.

That may not be so surprising if you take into account that being a police officer is something Roger always wanted to do ... although he took time to enjoy himself first.

He came to Darwin in 1963 with his family and attended Darwin High School before moving on to an interesting array of jobs.

"I was an insurance clerk, a finance manager, I delivered bread and then after the Cyclone I was working on roofs for a while," Roger said.

He also travelled around Australia and did what he wanted to do with his sport.

"I knew that police did a lot of shift work and long hours, so I wanted to finish my sport first," he said.

Then, at the age of 30 and with a 12-month-old son, Roger decided it was time to embark upon his career with police.

In his first year, he worked in General Duties from January to August and then answered an advertisement for crime car people and was accepted. After that, he went to traffic for about six months before joining TRG, then known as Taskforce, almost by default.

"The OIC saw me on a Wednesday and asked me about joining Taskforce. I said I'd think about it and he was back on the Friday to say I was starting on Monday," said Roger.

That led to eight years in TRG, followed by a move to CIB, where he spent the last 15 years of his career.

In a career spanning such a great period and in such high-pressure areas of the force, Roger has seen and been part of a range of investigations that still evoke a range of memories and emotions.

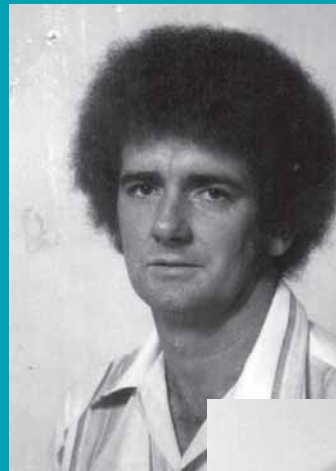
"I remember we went to a station out the back of Katherine and we were working with a tracker to find a man who was missing. I showed the tracker the map and asked him where he reckoned the fellow was. We drove for about four hours around the river, which was in flood and we found where he'd been sleeping in the sand and tracked him from there. It was really amazing."

While Roger spent his career posted to positions in Darwin, he spent a great deal of time travelling to all points of the Territory to investigate sexual assaults, murders, assaults and riots.

In that time, he has seen a myriad of changes to the police force and policing work.

"We're very reactive rather than proactive because of the lack of numbers, but the camaraderie is still there and the people are just as good and our equipment has definitely improved," Roger said.

In retirement, he will spend six



*Left: Roger Newman some time ago and below the 2003 model*



months taking it easy before making a decision on what to do after that.

"Maybe a golfing holiday in New Zealand next year, but we'll wait and see."

In the meantime, he'll spend some time relaxing with his wife, Alison, who probably deserves a medal for her support of Roger during his career.

Roger said that Alison had basically looked after their two children single-handedly for long stretches of time – "Sometimes she didn't see me for days at a time while I was in TRG and I had continuous call outs during my time in SCU," he said.

The couple are now concentrating on life as grandparents – their daughter Debbie, in Queensland gave birth to twins in June and their son Ashley's wife is due to have a baby in November.



# JACK CLIFFORD'S FAREWELL



To describe Jack Clifford's 28-year career with the NT Police as "interesting" is, without doubt, a gross understatement.

When he answered an ad in an Adelaide newspaper for a "Career with a Difference" all those years ago, he had no idea how different it would be.

He joined up in April 1975 and his first posting was to Katherine.

"In those days we were housed in the tin sheds at the old Tindall RAAF base and there was no such thing as airconditioning or any other conveniences, but even though it was a culture shock for my family we loved it," Jack said.

After two years in Katherine he was posted to Alice Springs in the traffic section and then was sent for a short stint to Ti Tree in 1981. While in Ti Tree he was in the process of apprehending a drunk driver when his career almost came to a grinding halt.

Jack arrested the drunk driver and while he was in the process of arresting one of the drunken passengers he and his partner Mal Warren were attacked by the eight occupants of the car. One of the men then grabbed a lump of wood and hit Jack over the head and back. Jack managed to reach for his

gun during the attack and shot two of his assailants. One died at the scene and the other was injured. Jack eventually had his head wound stitched and was later told he'd be suspended.

But that was just the start of the nightmare. He was ordered to stand trial for murder by the coroner and it would be almost two years and many court appearances later before he was acquitted by a judge and jury and reinstated as a police officer.

Such an experience would be enough to make most people rethink their careers, but Jack continued on in the job he still loved.

He then eventually went to Alice Springs and during that time worked on many high-profile cases including the famous balloon crash in which 13 people died.

"In that week we had 13 people killed in the balloon crash, one suicide, a motor vehicle fatality and a murder. Those involved spent every day for a week at the mortuary for 12 hours a day."

He then spent nine years in forensics in Alice Springs.

"At the end of that time I felt I really needed a break so I went away but was having nightmares about post mortems. That was when I knew it was time to get out."

So when the position of officer in charge at the Kulgera Police Station came up, Jack jumped at the chance for what he thought would be a more peaceful life.

But in the first week he was there there was a major fire at the motel in which a baby was burnt to death. Since that time there have also been numerous motor vehicle accidents and a particularly horrific accident last year when a station hand who was welding a tank on a vehicle died after he was terribly burnt when the tank exploded.

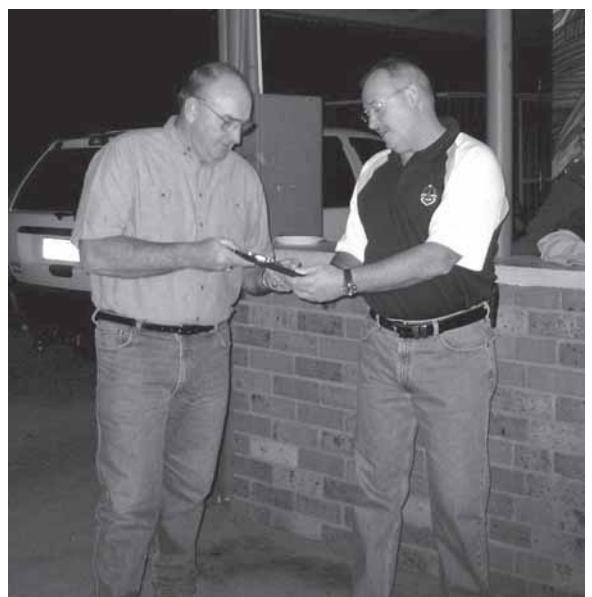
Jack said there had been many highs and lows over the years, but he still considers the highlight of his career was when he was chosen to drive the Queen of England when she visited Alice Springs three and a half years ago.

"I virtually took her and Prince Phillip on a tour of the town before taking them back to the airport.

And did he get to chat to the Royal couple?

"Yeah, we had a yarn about this and that," Jack confirms.

But now that he is ready to retire Jack intends to take his wife Helen to a house they bought in the beautiful coastal village of Port Neill on the Eyre Peninsula – and spend his retirement fishing.



# Gadget Geek retires

Alice Springs saw the end of an era when Senior Constable Bill Towers retired last month.

Bill was head of the Alice Springs Forensics Unit and had been in forensics for most of his policing career. In that time he has seen an enormous amount of changes.

He joined NT Police in May 1978, after a neighbour showed him a recruitment ad "because he obviously wanted to get rid of me" according to Bill.

So he moved from his Taree, NSW, home and began what was to be a fascinating career spanning 25 years.

Three years after joining, Bill went to forensics in Darwin where he investigated a multitude of crimes from murders to unlawful entries and everything in between. In 1985 he had a 18-month break and returned to general duties before the fascination of forensics drew him back – this time to Alice Springs where he was the sole forensics investigator.

"I used to get called out to everything in those days, even if someone was scratched. I was on call 24 hours a day, 330 days of the year, and the years working on my own took their toll."

In 1991 Bill was joined by Jack Clifford, but the workload was still horrendous.

"All we used to do was 'bag and tag' in those days – we just didn't have time to do anything else. We used to average about 40 hours overtime a fortnight. This was mainly due to the large area we had to cover in Southern Region."

The forensic evidence was then sent to Darwin for processing. During that time Bill was in charge of investigating a murder which occurred in Alice Springs in 1989.

"The victim had been shot in the back of the head at a unit in George Crescent. It was our job to strip everything in the unit and send it up to Darwin so they could reconstruct the scene. That was a huge job."

Over the years many things have changed, including intensive training in forensics examinations resulting in much of the work now being done in Alice Springs.

"We're much more professional and more accountable these days, which makes you feel more at ease when a case comes to court. The emphasis today has changed from quantity to quality. We now attend less jobs, but there are more members attending which means less overtime."



Before Bill joined NT Police he had his own photography business and in the early days of home computers became what he himself describes as a bit of a "gadget geek".

As a result Bill has helped today's forensics unit become far better equipped and has made a name for himself as a technology whiz. He designed the first computerized forensic data base on his home computer. That data base is now used to assist enormously in investigations.

"I was also the first police officer in the Territory to have a mobile phone, which reinforced everyone's attitude that I was a "gadget geek."

Bill doesn't regret one moment of his long and interesting career. He only regrets he didn't join earlier.

"The job overall has given me great benefits and has allowed me to do things I'd never do outside policing. I've stood within 6 feet of the Pope, stood within one foot of the Queen and photographed her, and met with various dignitaries I'd never have met elsewhere. The department has paid for me to go to places tourists pay thousands of dollars to see."

One of Bill's greatest regrets is that he won't be around to see the full implementation of the use of digital imaging.

"We started a pilot scheme in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs which will now see police using digital cameras instead of the old polaroids. This will put us up among the leaders in the utilization of digital imaging."

Bill will retire to the east coast where he intends to continue to enjoy his passion for gadgetry and technology, although now it will be a hobby. His other hobby is golf and he was on the committee of the Alice Springs Golf Club for two years.

When asked what his handicap is, in true Bill Towers form he replies "my 14 golf clubs."

At least in retirement he'll have plenty of time to work on that.



# WELL DUNN GEORGE!

By James Pratt

The heroic efforts three years ago of George Dunn in attempting to apprehend an intruder at his neighbour's home has received recognition by Commissioner of Police, Paul White.

Mr White commended the daring attempt by the then 17-year-old who sustained serious injuries as a result of the altercation with the offender, when he met Mr Dunn recently.

A very humble Mr Dunn received an official Commissioner's Letter of Recognition for his actions during the early hours of 9 March 2000.

As a result of trying to apprehend the intruder in his neighbour's yard in Parap, Mr Dunn suffered stab wounds to his right leg and right forearm from a knife the offender was wielding.

Mr Dunn also sustained cuts and abrasions to his body after he and the offender fell through a plate glass window while they were wrestling with each other.

He spent 12 hours at Royal Darwin Hospital having his injuries tendered too.

"I'm pretty honoured to receive this award," Mr Dunn said.

"I didn't think what I was doing at the time was anything special, I just went to see what was happening next door," he said.

"I heard a noise and went to investigate.

"If a similar incident happened again I wouldn't think twice about going and seeing what was happening."

Commissioner White said the actions of Mr Dunn in pursuing his attacker, which eventually led to his arrest, was commendable and illustrated his strong character.

"This is a great piece of recognition for a fine young man and a member of the Northern Territory community," he said.

"We do recognise courageous conduct by members of the community and award them appropriately with the Commissioner's Letter of Recognition

"It was a particularly courageous act and that didn't deter him, as it would a number of people.

"George continued to pursue the offender and it was because of George's actions the offender was eventually brought to justice, so it was a courageous effort by this young man.

"We wouldn't normally expect people to go to the extent that George did because of the courage it took and the fact that he fell through a glass window.

"But it says a lot about his character and his personality as a young Territorian and everyone should be extremely proud of his actions."

Commissioner White also thanked Mr Dunn (pictured left) for his efforts that led to the eventual identification, arrest and prosecution of the offender.

Noting Mr Dunn's pro-active endeavours to stop crime in his neighbourhood, Mr White also spoke to George about career paths within the NT Police, although he indicated he was leaning towards a career with the Air Force.



# Col Hardman honoured for a diverse police career

Commander Col Hardman's extensive policing skills, built up over 33 years in widely-scattered Territory stations and specialist units, has made him an attractive drawcard for Pacific Rim crime fighters in recent years.

It's also the reason why Commander Hardman was recently awarded the Australian Police Medal in recognition of his distinguished service.

Commander Hardman is currently in Vanuatu, having taken leave from the Territory force, to work on a project examining indigenous policing services in that Pacific island nation. And in a previous offshore posting from 1997-1999, he was seconded to serve as a police advisor to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.

Former Victorian, Colin James Hardman, then a fresh-faced 21-year-old, signed up as a recruit for the Northern Territory Police Force on 7 September 1970.

He spent his first year in Darwin before being posted to Alice Springs, the stepping stone for 10 years of service at bush stations, including some of the most remote in the Territory. This service took him almost from border to border – from Yuendumu in the Western Desert country and eastward to Avon Downs near the NT/Queensland border.

Back in Top End in 1981, Col Hardman joined the Darwin Criminal Investigation Branch before being promoted a year later to handle serious drug offences, as a Detective Sergeant in the former Combined Drug Enforcement Unit.

He was again promoted in 1987, this time to the rank of Senior Sergeant in the forerunner to the current Territory Response Group (TRG), the Task Force, Special Operations. His work in this area enhanced his crime investigation expertise and tactical management skills. He is also credited with helping to mould the former Task

Force into the highly trained unit that exists today.

He was promoted to Superintendent of the TRG in 1990, was transferred to head the Darwin-based Northern Crime Division a year later and, after his two-year Papua New Guinea secondment from 1997, returned to a new senior management job as Commander Territory Crime.

This peak position put him in charge of all Territory crime and drug investigation, as well as all

intelligence and tactical response operations.

Commander Hardman, who transferred from Crime for the Darwin Region Operations Command last year, was a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy in 1991. In his ongoing commitment to improve his skills, he has also successfully completed the Australian Federal Police Management of Serious Crime Course and the Northern Territory Management of Serious Crime Course and the Northern Territory Development Course.

## Richtoffen (cont'd from page 5)

A/Supt Harris dismissed public comment from some circles that the number of NT Police present during the Coffin Cheaters' run was over the top.

"These types of criminal organisations will push the boundaries and Police must be in a position to respond swiftly and decisively to any serious breaches of the law if they occur," he said.

Upon their arrival in Darwin on 4 July, the Coffin Cheaters were led by Police through areas of the CBD on the gang's request in order to "finish their run".

NT Police agreed to lead the tour to ensure public safety as the 104 contingent of motorcycles made their way in and out of the city and to their final destination at Robbie Robins Reserve.

Operation Richtoffen's mission was "To maintain law, order and public safety during the conduct of the Coffin Cheaters' national run" and according to A/Supt Harris this would not have been achieved without the commitment and skill shown by all members of the NT Police who were involved.

"The organisation as a whole got behind this operation with co-operation being received from all regions in providing personnel and from the executive in

ensuring adequate funding and equipment was made available.

"The members allocated to work on the run ensured the operation's success through their dedication to the task at hand and the professional manner in which they went about their duties in what were often difficult working conditions."

While not underpinning the value of one group of members during the operation, A/Supt Harris acknowledged the work of TRG members during the run.

"The TRG provided myself as the Field Commander with a real time tactical response capability in the event any serious incident occurred involving weapons or violence," he said.

"Their surveillance skills ensured the gang could be kept under observation in a discreet manner at overnight stops and their professional approach to the job at hand set an example to all members involved in the operation."

By Monday 7 July, the majority of the 100 strong motorcycle gang had left Darwin via commercial aircraft, while some small groups rode out of Darwin headed towards Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.



## Letters of thanks

NTPFES has received a range of letters of appreciation in recent weeks, including one from the United States Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) to the Commissioner.

The letter expresses appreciation of the agency's assistance in providing quality force protection support to visiting US ships.

The Resident Agent in Charge, Robert Mulligan, stated in his letter that he heard numerous laudatory comments from agents about the "outstanding" support provided by NT Police.

He said the Navy had high confidence in the willingness and demonstrated ability of NT Police to provide quality force protection support, including staff from MFEU, BCI, CIB, SCU, DEU, TRG and GDs officers.

"The professionalism and esprit de corps displayed by your officers and their willingness to assist NCIS in investigative and force protection matters makes our job so much easier ... on behalf of myself and my staff, please pass along our sincere appreciation for many jobs well done!"

### Letter from Jennifer Smith to Commissioner

*The amount of support received throughout Gary's illness, hospitalisation and since Gary lost his battle with cancer on 7 April 2003, has been incredible and is acknowledged with sincere thanks. Special thanks are extended to you – Commissioner White, Deputy Commissioner Bruce Wernham, Acting Assistance Commissioner Gary Manison, Commander Bob Fields and many others for visiting Gary in hospital; to you and your wife Cynthia for the card of condolence and flowers; and the caring members and staff of Police, Fire and Emergency Services.*

*Numerous messages of support, your notice of condolence in the Northern Territory News, preparing and printing Gary's funeral service programs, your attendance and the Police escort at Gary's funeral, Major Peter Wright's Chaplaincy services, the Police floral tribute, the Police Guard of Honour at Gary's funeral, offers for help and much, much more, have been great sources of comfort and strength during my time of loss and grief.*

*The working bee organised by the Retired Police Association Northern Territory Inc at our often-described 'magnificent' property at Berry Springs was inspirational. This taskforce of kindness and respect was organised and executed with the precision of a specialist Police tactical response group. The working bee had a marked affect on both Gary and myself as we saw on video, police from all ranks – including new recruits, retired police, Police Association members, fire and emergency services personnel, spouses and staff working alongside each other for a sick mate – we cannot thank you enough. (Gary and I know about all the cursing and sweating that took place that eventful weekend, including the tree that was inadvertently burnt. As Gary would say, "I'm not a Detective for nothing, you know")*

*Gary and I are indebted to your understanding, patience and allowing me the flexibility to continue my annual report work and crime research at home when Gary was unwell over the past year and at his bedside during his hospitalisation. And thank you for your ongoing understanding and support during challenging and personally difficult times since Gary's passing.*

*Warmest regards  
Jennifer*

### Commissioner's letter of appreciation

The efforts of a long-time Territory police officer have been recognised through a letter of appreciation from the Commissioner.

Sergeant Greg Hansen, of the Police College, was recognised by the Commissioner for his outstanding and ongoing commitment to the College and in particular the Operational Safety and Tactics Training section.

Sgt Hansen, OIC of the OSTT Unit and a firearms instructor for the recruits, also manages the armoury. For some years he has provided the armourer services such as repairs and maintenance to Police weapons from across the Territory frequently in his own time. He also took on yet another role recently as OIC of the College for a time.

In his letter, the Commissioner acknowledged the work ethic displayed by Sgt Hansen.

"The dual role placed a significant, additional workload on you that you accepted without complaint. The work ethic you display, your contribution to the training of our people and the example you set for others is deserving of recognition."



Northern Territory Government