

# Tasmania Police Overseas

## Part 1: War and Peace-keeping

by Darcy Erwin

Following the Bali bombing on 12 October this year, Australian police have taken on tasks relating to investigation, disaster victim identification and ante mortem procedures. As part of this response, Tasmania Police have provided two trained officers, one of whom departed for Indonesia within a week of the tragedy.

From their formation in 1899 to the present, Tasmania Police have had members serving in a variety of roles outside their homeland.

This is the first of a two-part article which will document the service of almost 100 police who have fought in international conflicts, as well as those who have taken part in civilian peace-keeper missions overseas.

In the following issue, the second article will look at the operational experience of Tasmanian policemen and policewomen in a host of overseas locations, as they carry out investigations, perform extraditions, or play a part in law enforcement, peace preservation and the protection of life and property.

### Boer War

With the outbreak of war in South Africa on 11 October 1899, a number of Tasmanian policemen volunteered to go overseas and many who had



William Shegog

returned from that war, joined the ranks of the constabulary. Notably, some had remained for a time in Africa to serve with local forces.

Three serving policemen resigned to volunteer for war service. These were Elvin Charles Mitchell QSA who resigned on 17 February 1899 to join the Second

Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen, Constable William Lowry Shegog QSA, of Young Town, who resigned on 31 March 1900 to join the same contingent and

was later Troop Sergeant Major, Provisional Transvaal Constabulary, and Constable Charles George Gregory, of Hobart, who resigned on 30 April 1900 to join the Third New South Wales Imperial Bushmen, and later the Midland Mounted Rifles.

William Lowry Shegog, born in Longford, Ireland on 29 November 1854, had served with the Fifth Dragoon Guards, 1867-1876 and the Launceston Volunteer Rifle Regiment 1883-1890 before becoming a policeman. He left for South Africa with the Second Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen, and later joined the Provisional Transvaal Constabulary before returning to Tasmania in September 1901. He retired in 1914 after 19 year's police service.

It is of interest to note that according to the Launceston Daily Telegraph of 18 January 1904, Trooper John Plane of Perth was well known for possessing useful and expert knowledge in veterinary surgery and medicines. His veterinary remedies were considered of such value that the Government instructed the manufacturer, Mr P L Andrews of Beaconsfield, to forward a large supply to South Africa during the war for the treatment of mounts used by the Tasmanian Bushmen contingents.

In all, 33 Tasmanian policemen had fought in the South African campaign.

### World War I

When Australia next found itself providing troops for an overseas campaign, the Police Department was again reluctant to grant leave, as it was already difficult enough to find recruits to fill the ranks of the police service. However, as men preferred to resign rather than miss what many saw as the opportunity of a lifetime, the Department relented.

Twenty-six Tasmanian policemen were granted leave of absence between August 1914 and October 1918 to join the Australian Expeditionary (or Imperial) Force during the course of the First World War. The first was Albert Joseph Robinson, who was granted leave from his position as a constable in Burnie on 17 August 1914.

John Ernest Cecil Lord, who had been appointed

Commissioner of Police from 1 July 1906, saw overseas service from 10 February 1916 to 6 August 1919. After the outbreak of war in 1914, and then a

Major, he volunteered for overseas service on 10 February 1916. Lord commanded the Fortieth Battalion of the Third Division, A.I.F. from its formation in March, and embarked on the troopship Berrima on 1 July 1916.

Lord saw service in France and Belgium, and between July 1918 and February 1919 held commands of the Fifth, Ninth, Tenth and Fifteenth Australian Infantry Brigades. On 20 April 1919 he re-embarked for Australia.

Colonel Lord D.S.O. (1917), C.M.G. (1919), V.D. (1919), Croix de Guerre (France 1919) continued to hold the position of police chief until his retirement on 24 November 1940, Tasmania's longest serving Commissioner.

Outstanding amongst the 26 men who served their state and their country was one highly decorated, courageous and



Colonel John Lord long-serving officer.

Joseph Cooper, born at St. Marys on 19 August 1877, had already fought with the First Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen and the Third New South Wales Imperial Bushmen in the South African war. He was awarded both the Queens and Kings South Africa Medals and later served with the Provisional Transvaal Constabulary.

Joining the police force in 1903 he was granted

Joseph Cooper



Victor Lisson

leave to serve in World War I for which service he was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal, Military Medal, Serbian Cross, and was mentioned in dispatches. He returned to police duty, retiring in August 1942 after a police career spanning some 34 years.

Sadly, two Tasmania Police members would not return and were buried far from their homeland.

Trooper Victor Tasman Lisson, from Geeveston, joined on 7 July 1913. He was stationed at Sandhill when given leave of absence to join the Australian Imperial Force from 15 August 1915. Private Lisson, 2248, 26th Battalion, Australian Infantry, was killed in action in France on 28 July 1916 and buried at 26 Villers Bretonneux, France.

His wife received a letter marked France, March 20, and it read in part :

"It is with regret that I am to let you know that your son is dead. He was my best mate, and was wounded on the night of July 28, 1916, and died before we could get him to our lines, having been wounded with five machine-gun bullets, the fatal one being in his side. We charged for a certain position that night, but did not reach our objective, and had to retire with our wounded; it was then that we discovered Vic was dead. He was in the same platoon as me, and almost side by side...., I felt Vic's death as if it had been my own brother."

Six months from the time of writing, the author of the letter, himself from Swansea, was also dead. He died of wounds in Belgium on 5 October 1917, aged 29.

Constable Ebenezer Joseph Hayward, from Bridgewater, joined on 11 July 1916. He was granted leave of absence to join the Australian Imperial Force from 13 October 1916. Mrs Hayward, of Branxholm, also received a letter in reference to the death of her son. The writer expressed his own sympathy and that of the Company, who, he said, had learned to appreciate the deceased's sterling character. Death came when he was sleeping quietly beside one of his men.



Ebenezzer Hayward

Corporal Hayward 637A, 3rd Battalion Australian Machine Gun Corps, was killed in France on 19 September 1918. His resting place may be found at Memorial Panel 176, 700 Cerisy-Gailly French National Cemetery.

## World War II

Following the outbreak of World War II, a number of police officers were granted extended leave, but this practice was curtailed in 1942 by Commissioner Oakes. His primary concern was understandably to maintain the numerical strength of the Force, and in his opinion, members might be doing just as good a job by staying in the Force.

By November 1942, a motion had been submitted to the Police Association executive by Northern constables that any member resigning to enlist for active service be reinstated upon return. It was contended that if men were refused extended leave, and then resigned to enlist for war service, they should be entitled to rejoin, but not with seniority. As the rank and file expressed the issue, if it was good enough for one to be granted leave, then everyone should get it.

Ultimately, it was considered that Regulation 426 covered the position and it was moved to have it amended to apply to the present war. This regulation stipulated that any police officer who had resigned during the Great War to serve with the AIF, and was re-appointed, may be promoted to the rank and position held by him at the date of his resignation. The regulation further stipulated that the rate of pay would be that in force for such rank. The proviso was that re-appointment be subject to the Commissioner's certification that the officer was efficient, competent and physically capable of carrying out his duties.

In all, fourteen Tasmanian police officers were granted extended leave to fight for their country in World War II. Seven of the fourteen would go on to serve over 30 years each as Tasmanian policemen. The first to enlist was Ouse constable, Jack Fleming, who was granted leave to join the Commonwealth Military Forces from 18 December 1939. He resumed duty on 22 November 1940, but resigned due to ill-health by 1946.

Some who may still be remembered include Robert Raymond McArthur, who retired in 1971 as superintendent, New Norfolk; Ronald Arthur Wagner, who retired as inspector, Scottsdale in 1970; Reginald George Whitton Bennett, who retired as inspector, Hobart 1980, and Mervyn Thomas Fleming, who retired as inspector, Hobart Transport Section in 1978.

Detective Sergeant Thomas James Marshall of Hobart, who had joined the force on 17 September 1920, was granted extended leave of absence to join the Second A.I.F from 12 July 1942. He resumed duty on 24 May 1944, and was appointed Deputy Commissioner just over 15 years later. He retired in this position on 30 June 1962.

In September 1944, a policeman composed a moving poem depicting the thoughts of a soldier on the eve of the Allied invasion of Europe. "Ode To a Soldier" was penned by Detective Frank Gough who himself suffered an untimely death in Royal Hobart Hospital in 1947 at the age of 32.

As World War II drew to a close, the Police Department was in crisis, both in terms of sworn and unsworn personnel. As the Federal Government had drawn heavily on State servants for their wartime needs, there was a real fear that the Commonwealth might take over State police forces and meld them into a single body under Federal control.

Furthermore, by late 1945, those men who had been on extended leave were coming back to a Force which had been severely handicapped due to the absence of what were termed 'A' Class men. It had been impossible to maintain numerical strength due to the acute shortage of manpower, and the Department looked forward to cutting out overtime which had been excessive during the war years. Rural areas had especially suffered, and to compound the problem, experienced officers were being 'mopped up' by post-wartime industry, and were leaving the Force in droves.

From this point onwards, Tasmania Police struggled to raise numbers and retain experience in a rapidly growing State. As history shows, the importation of British police officers, the introduction of Junior Constables, and the creation of the Cadet Scheme, all bore witness to the struggle. In a sense, it is one which has never really eased for Tasmania Police.

## Cyprus

Twenty-five years passed before Tasmanian police officers again had an opportunity to serve overseas.

After a bloody and conflict-ridden lead-up, the island of Cyprus became an independent state in



Thomas Crack

1959. The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities lived side by side in a very fragile relationship, and under a largely unworkable Constitution. In 1963, frustrations boiled over into open hostility, and several hundred from both communities were killed in the violent clashes.

When order was largely restored, dissatisfaction with British supervision led to a call for the United Nations to provide a peace-keeping force. On 27 March 1964, the United Nations flag was raised in Nicosia and international peace-keeping forces began to arrive from a number of countries. By the close of 1964, over 6000 soldiers from six nations, and 174 civilian police from Australia, Austria, Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden were on the island. This was the first time police without enforcement powers had acted as peace-keepers.

From May 1964 until September 1976, police from Tasmania played a role with the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus. The peace-keeping role extended well beyond 1976, but thereafter, only Australian Federal Police members performed these duties.

Among those seconded for duty was our one-time Minister for Police, Ronald Cornish, who served with Tasmania Police for over 12 years between 1964 and 1976.

The first two officers to go were Thomas James Crack and Bever Learoy Howell, both of whom were seconded to the Commonwealth Police Force for duty in Cyprus from 18 May 1964. Tom resigned on 5 July 1996 after rejoining in 1971 (he had resigned once before), and Bev resigned on 1 July 1998.

Writing to Commissioner Delderfield late in 1964, Tom spoke of the dust in summer and the mud in winter as he described their twelve hour shifts. He listed their main duties as maintaining road checking stations for internal security and compliance with road laws, as well as other civil matters.

A total of 33 officers performed duty on Cyprus, the last being Constable Terrence Douglas Bessell, currently with Northern Traffic Services. Terry was seconded from 26 April 1975 and resumed duty on 4 September 1976. Due to the small numbers of Australian police required for future contingents, the Commonwealth Police assumed full responsibility from May 1976.

Apart from Terry, those members who were seconded to Cyprus and are still serving in the job are Robert Geoffrey Fielding, Arnan Geoffrey Burgess, Michael Lawson Otley, Ivan Noel Dean, Thomas Edward Lahl, Anthony Ronald Buckingham, Patrick George McMahon and Joseph Norman Miller.

All are proud of their UN service, which provided rewarding opportunities and benefits. Some, such as Leon Kemp, returned with wives from Cyprus, while others, such as Dave Woolley, resigned to return to Cyprus to live. All are entitled to wear the Ribbon of the United Nations Medal, Cyprus.

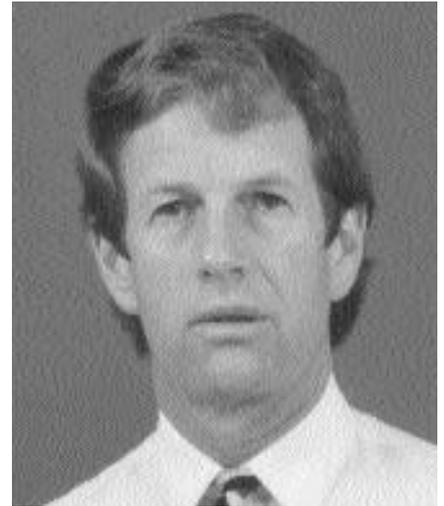
In some respects, the service these men performed under the flag of the United Nations had some quite unintended benefits. Colin Catto, originally a member of Cadet Course 6, recently emphasised that the initial dislike of 'that ridiculous blue beret' on the part of some cadets soon disappeared when they learned that it was also the headwear of UN peace-keeping forces. The peace-keepers too wore their uniform with pride.

### Papua New Guinea

Police Gazette Notice 47, dated 13 March 1972 attracted the interest of a handful of adventurous men. Applications had been invited for experienced officers to join a 30 member Australian police group being formed to serve with the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary. The secondment was to be for two years and applicants were to be of the rank of sergeant with at least six year's service, but would also be considered from members below the rank of sergeant with at least six year's outstanding service.

Evidently the Department was not exactly stamped with prospective applicants as a follow-up notice appeared in the Gazette just over a month later, encouraging suitable applicants to apply.

By August of that year, two successful applicants were about to take part in a month long orientation course at Bomana Police College near Port Moresby. They were also wondering what they had got themselves in for. Their secondment commenced on 1 September 1972, and in the words of Russ Ames, their task was "to assist in developing the skills of the native (or 'local') police to eventually take over their Constabulary. The seconded members would form a training team and be posted to various duties throughout the Territory."



Bever Howell

Sergeant Russell Stanford Ames and Senior Constable Raymond Arthur Lawson (who was promoted to sergeant on 14 September 1972), eventually worked together on a General Duties Course for Non-Commissioned Officers. They were, in fact, the only members of Tasmania Police who took part in the original secondment scheme which ended in 1976. Both were to return later to this place that had 'grown upon them'.



Russell Ames and Raymond Lawson

Next to see service in Papua New Guinea was David Henry Grimsey, who first heard of the opportunity for secondment while a senior sergeant, and director of in-service training at the Police Academy in December 1987.

Interviews were conducted by ex South Australian Commissioner, Laurie Draper, and Price-Waterhouse Urwick representative Bob Neil, and Dave was selected for the position, in which he would join a team of specialists on a developmental programme sponsored by the Australian Government. The aim of this programme, which began in February 1988, was to provide professional advisers in a

number of areas including administration, operations, personnel management, forensic science, computing and training. Specifically, Dave would assist to revamp and refine the country's police training methods. Sponsored by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB), they were to advise their Papua New Guinean counterparts on the formulation and implementation of new training methods.

Dave first travelled to Point Cook, Victoria for four weeks instruction in Pidgin and aspects of Papua New Guinean culture, before leaving (with wife Jackie) on 21 April 1988 for Port Moresby. They returned in May 1991.

By and large, the secondment was without incident, apart from an unexpected encounter on a dirt road in the jungle, following a visit to stations at Wau and Balolo. Together with Tony Mott (ex Deputy Commissioner, Western Australia Police) and local inspector Paul Manamo (the only officer armed), Dave brought their 4WD to a halt as armed and balaclava-hooded Rascals held them up. Fortunately, some deft reversing and the aid of a band of locals prevented what may have been an unwanted outcome.

Dave, for many years Drum Major and Secretary of the Police Pipe Band, retired on 29 March 2000.

Following Dave Grimsey's secondment, Russ Ames (also a former Pipe Band member) returned to PNG, also on the Developmental Programme, from 31 May 1991. It was while undertaking this secondment that he elected to resign at the rank of inspector on 31 July 1992. In early 1997, both Russ and his wife Nell learned that they had been awarded the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary 100th Anniversary Medal for their services to the Constabulary.

The Development Project was part of an official aid programme to assist the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary improve their capability to provide an effective Government Agency for the maintenance of law and order.

When Ray Lawson returned to Papua New Guinea for the second time in March 1992, Phase II of the Programme was being implemented by ACIL Australia Pty Ltd, a company which specialises in managing international development projects. Ray was stationed at the 6 Mile Police Station as a CID adviser. In the words of Russ Ames, "... he was later attacked, badly wounded and repatriated back to Australia where he was medically discharged from Tasmania Police. Such are the risks of working in Papua New Guinea."

Ray returned from Papua New Guinea in March 1994 and retired at the rank of inspector on the grounds of ill-health on 2 June 1995.

Last to serve in Papua New Guinea under the ACIL Programme was John Robin Arnold. Currently an inspector in Western Support Administration, he was seconded from Tasmania Police from 1 February 1996 to 31 December 1998.

Essentially, the aims of the Programme hadn't changed greatly, and advisers worked towards strengthening the operational and administrative capacities of local personnel.

Like those before him, John made a significant contribution to building the capabilities of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary. All worked in a difficult and demanding environment and their efforts reflect upon Tasmania Police as a body.



Jackie and David Grimsey

## East Timor

In September 1999, Australian police forces were requested by the Australian Federal Police to seek expressions of interest from members willing to undertake a peace-keeping role with an Australian Civilian Police Contingent to the United Nations mission in East Timor. Criteria included a minimum of eight year's service in an operational community policing function, commonly accepted police knowledge and skills, ability to live in a harsh environment, 4WD vehicle driving skills and a high level of physical fitness and health.

After the initial selection process, four members were chosen (first contingent), together with a further four in reserve (second contingent). The period of transfer was initially 90 days and this was extended to the normal UN period of 180 days from the second contingent.

This was the first time that State or Territory police had served with a United Nations mission since the United Nations Force in Cyprus, although several police from Victoria and Queensland served as part of a US-led multinational force in Haiti in 1995.

In all, 17 Tasmanian policemen took part in five contingents. Each was sworn in as a Special Member, and took the oath of the Australian Federal Police. Special Members were initially sworn in under section 28(1) of the Australian Federal Police Act 1979, but from 1 July 2000, amending legislation - AFP Amendment Act 9 of 2000, Table A Section 2(4) - changed this to section 40E. In effect, police from other jurisdictions were transferred to the control of Australian Federal Police for the duration of their assignment.

After induction training in Canberra and Darwin, officers went on to carry out civilian policing tasks and to protect life and property as East Timor underwent the process of rebuilding after gaining independence from Indonesia. Essentially, they maintained law and order at a community level, carried out investigations, provided security for local installations, and assisted with the development and training of East Timorese police. In doing so, they came to terms with a new lifestyle - mosquitoes, climatic conditions, local culture and food, and limited communications.

The first Tasmanian group went to East Timor in February 2000, in the lead-up to the 30 August ballot as part of a group of 272 civilian police from 27 countries, under the leadership of Superintendent Alan Mills. The Tasmanians in this group were Constable Bradley John Rogers and Sergeants Michael Desmond Hawkins, Adrian Paul Bodnar and Philip George Curtis. Adrian has since resigned from the Force.

In May 2000, Sergeants Robert John Eric Dunn and Gregory Douglas Lowe joined Constables Andrew James Lockley and Russell Marsden Broomhall in the second group, while Inspector John Malcolm Blue and Sergeants Scott James Bailey and Ian Brian Edmonds made up the third. Group four comprised Sergeant Robert Ian Batge and Constables Damon Charles Smith and Anthony Craige Muir. The fifth and last group included

Sergeant Scott Raymond McDonald and Constables Iain Roy Shepherd and Gavin Christopher Hallett.

Only one commissioned officer went to East Timor. Inspector John Blue took on a coordinating role within the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

### (UNTAET).

All who served in East Timor received the United Nations Medal for Service. This was previously only issued to military personnel who had spent a minimum of 90 days as part of a United Nations mission. The Police Overseas Service Medal also recognises those with at least 30 days service as part of an overseas peace mission.

Over the last century Tasmanian police have played their part, both as individuals and as team members, in international conflicts across the globe. Fortunately, there have been few casualties, and the variety of experience gained by the officers involved has ultimately strengthened Tasmania Police as an organisation.

Police, in common with others from all walks of life, have fought in wars and they have volunteered to take part in peace-keeping missions in environments far more unstable than our own. It is a sobering thought to remember that civilian police officers have lost their lives in each of the areas documented above. In this context, the recognition that we owe to those involved is substantial.

As usual, I have played the part of 'serial pest' to gather some of the information and images for this article. Thank you to all who assisted me - your patience is much appreciated. Also, in fairness I should note that there are individuals who have been overlooked, for it was not possible to identify those who resigned to perform war service without painstakingly checking resignation records against Defence records - another task for later.

*Next Issue: From the Old Bailey to Bali - Police Work Overseas.*

John Blue, Brian Edmonds  
and Scott Bailey

