

**REPORT TO NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA ON MATERIAL CULTURE  
IN RELATION TO 1928 CONISTON KILLINGS**

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**Introduction**

I have been contracted to provide the following services to the National Museum of Australia in relation to the Coniston killings of 1928:

1. Identify objects and images that illustrate the event or are related to it.
2. Conduct interviews with relevant parties, including retired or active members of the Northern Territory Police Force who have knowledge or interest in the area so to identify relevant objects and images that may be in private possession or held in public collections.
3. Provide a written report containing relevant information.

This report meets the requirements of the first and third services I have been contracted to provide. A list of those interviewed for the purposes of this consultancy is provided as Appendix A to this report. Of particular importance has been my renewal of relations with Mr

Eric Murray, the only child of Mounted Constable William George Murray, the sole policeman and principal protagonist in the Coniston affair.<sup>1</sup>

I provide in this report recommendations on how best to visually represent the events of the Coniston killings. I have approached this question by grouping ‘material culture’ into a number of categories, namely police equipment, camp life (Warlpiri and European), Warlpiri and European weaponry, Mounted Constable Murray’s military background, imagery, and correspondence and other text.<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted at the outset that there is a high degree of speculation involved in determining exactly what material culture the Museum should select. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of police equipment (uniforms, firearms, etc.), which reflects the nature of Central Australia and the Northern Territory Police Force at the time.<sup>3</sup> Wherever in this report I have speculated, I have made it plain that conjecture was involved in the decision-making.<sup>4</sup>

### **Summary of events**

The killing in 1928 of a white man, the attack upon another and the consequent killing of at least 31 Aboriginal people around the Coniston Station region in Central Australia by a police/settler party led by Mounted Constable William George Murray is accepted by conservative historians such as Keith Windschuttle as a “genuine massacre”.<sup>5</sup> The killings have also been described as ‘the final war between white men and aborigines in Central Australia’.<sup>6</sup> Official records show that after the murder of the dingo-trapper Frederick Brookes, 17 Aboriginal people were killed and that following a subsequent attack on the pastoralist William ‘Nugget’ Morton a further 14 Aboriginal people were killed. Other estimates regarding the Aboriginal death toll have been made by various people since the time of the killings, including the owner of Coniston Station, Randall Stafford (minimum of 62 deaths), the owner of Broadmeadows Station, Nugget Morton (close to 100), Aboriginal bushmen Nugget Hunter (600 to 700 deaths) and Walter Smith (over 200 deaths), lay missionary Annie Lock (70 deaths), and historians Mervyn Hartwig (70-105 deaths) and Dick Kimber (approximately 110 deaths).

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Murray and I have arranged to meet on his return from England in September 2005. He has stated a clear willingness to work with me to assist the NMA in relation to Coniston, and will source artefacts (including photographs) from what he describes as his parents’ personal collection.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the images used to illustrate aspects of police equipment are worthy as images in their own right, particularly those showing Mounted Constable Murray.

<sup>3</sup> Things have been further complicated with the relocation over the past 18 months of all police (Northern Territory Archive Service) records of Central Australia from Darwin to Alice Springs.

<sup>4</sup> Such conjecture is, however, informed by considerable research and deduction.

<sup>5</sup> Windschuttle 2000: 19. Another Aboriginal was killed in a separate incident by the pastoral Tilmouth, taking the known official death toll at the time to 32 Aboriginals.

<sup>6</sup> Downer 1963: 126.

The killings were the subject of police and Government Resident reports, a police court hearing in Alice Springs, a Supreme Court hearing in Darwin, a Commonwealth Board of Enquiry (the contemporary spelling), domestic and international press reports and much bureaucratic correspondence. Despite this prominence and wealth of documentation, much remains imprecise and ambiguous in our historical understanding of the events leading to, during and after the killings. Published accounts have been written by non-historians and are usually included in broader works. There are many contradictions between and even within these accounts. The one book devoted solely to Coniston, published 21 years ago, was written by a journalist as a narrative.<sup>7</sup> This work does not source much of the information it provides and accounts of key events are contradicted by other earlier evidence, including official records. Pre-eminent (and most reliable) in accounts of Coniston is the work of Mervyn Hartwig (1960). I have also found the police records held by the Northern Territory Archive Service (which Hartwig did not consult) and the diaries and other unpublished work of T.G.H. Strehlow (held by the Strehlow Research Centre) to be of especial value. A chronology of events is provided as Appendix B to this report.

### **Police equipment**

In 1926 the Minister for Home and Territories, Senator George Pearce ‘brought down a bill to divide the Northern Territory in two at the parallel of 20 Degrees South latitude, near Tennant Creek. The Northern Territory, therefore, ceased to exist. North Australia and Central Australia took its place, each with a Government Resident and elected advisory council’.<sup>8</sup> The *Northern Australia Act 1926* came into force in January 1927. The Act was repealed in June 1931 and ‘the Northern Territory was reconstituted as a single Territory of the Commonwealth’.<sup>9</sup> This meant that the Government Resident of Central Australia in 1928, John Charles Cawood (who took office on 1 March 1927 and continued until his replacement on 11 December 1929 by Victor George Carrington)<sup>10</sup>, was also the Commissioner of Police – among other appointments.

Until 1930 there was no regulation police uniform as such in use in the Northern Territory, with the only official regular issue being a hat badge. This applied equally to the Territory of North Australia as to Central Australia. There was, however, a degree of standardisation in the mode of dress adopted by the Mounted Constables of the time – images of the period show most if not all Northern Territory police wearing similar tunics and hats. Weaponry, also, was

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<sup>7</sup> Cribbin, J. *The Killing Times*, Fontana Books, Sydney, 1984.

<sup>8</sup> Powell 2000: 163 and Austin 1992: 161. The council comprised of two elected and two appointed members.

<sup>9</sup> History of Supreme Court. Available <http://www.nt.gov.au/ntsc/history.html>

<sup>10</sup> Government House NT - Biography: Previous Incumbents. Available <http://www.nt.gov.au/administrator/biographies/previous.shtml>

somewhat standard with the adoption by the Northern Territory police until 1911 of the firearms used by the police in South Australia.<sup>11</sup>

### Badges

The following photographs show the two Northern Territory police badges in use during the late 1920s (Figure 1) and from the 1930s (Figure 2). Prima facie, one would say that the badge in Figure 1 is the preferred option as during the period in question there was no 'Northern Territory' as such (featured on the scroll in Figure 2), as noted above. The badge in Figure 1 is a 1927 pattern police badge issued to all Commonwealth territories, including Central Australia. The badge in Figure 2 replaced the earlier badge from around 1935. Mounted Constable Murray, therefore, would have worn the hat badge in Figure 1. This badge is quite rare and its estimated value is some \$1,500.00. I am advised that it is unlikely any collector would part with such a rare badge, necessitating its replication for an exhibit.



*FIGURE 1*



*FIGURE 2*

### Saddle

The South Australian and Northern Territory Mounted Police are known to have used the 1912 pattern Light Horse Saddle. This pattern saddle was in use by the Northern Territory Mounted Police as late as the year 2000.<sup>12</sup> However, imagery from the time suggests that Mounted Police in northern South Australia and Central Australia used stock saddles, which were more comfortable during the often long patrols demanded of Mounted Police. The Theodor Bray collection held by the State Library of South Australia shows a Mounted

<sup>11</sup> The Northern Territory was a part of South Australia from 1863 to 1911, when the Commonwealth took over control of the Territory.

<sup>12</sup> The saddles in question were acquired from surplus military stock in the 1940s and 1950s.

Constable Cameron in 1927 in the Oodnadatta region ‘on *his* horse in front of cattle yards’ [emphasis mine], his saddle very clearly not a Light Horse but a standard stock saddle of the period. At that time the two common stock saddles in use were the ‘Schneider’ and the ‘Wieneke’. These are described by saddler and historian Ron Edwards of Queensland as the ‘archetypal stock saddles’ of Australia. In a recent interview Mr Edwards explained the attributes of such saddles.

*‘Australian stock saddles were made for rough country, long rides, often changing horses. They needed a saddle to be comfortable, to hold them in place and be easily and indefinitely repairable.’*<sup>13</sup>

On learning the distances that Mounted Constable Murray covered during the Coniston episode, Mr Edwards plainly noted ‘you wouldn’t want to do such a ride in a borrowed saddle’. He was firmly of the opinion that a man with the horse experience of Murray (childhood riding, the Victorian Mounted Rifles, the 4th Light Horse and mounted police work in the Territory) would have taken his own saddle with him on such a journey. He was also firmly of the opinion that this saddle would not have been anything other than a stock saddle.

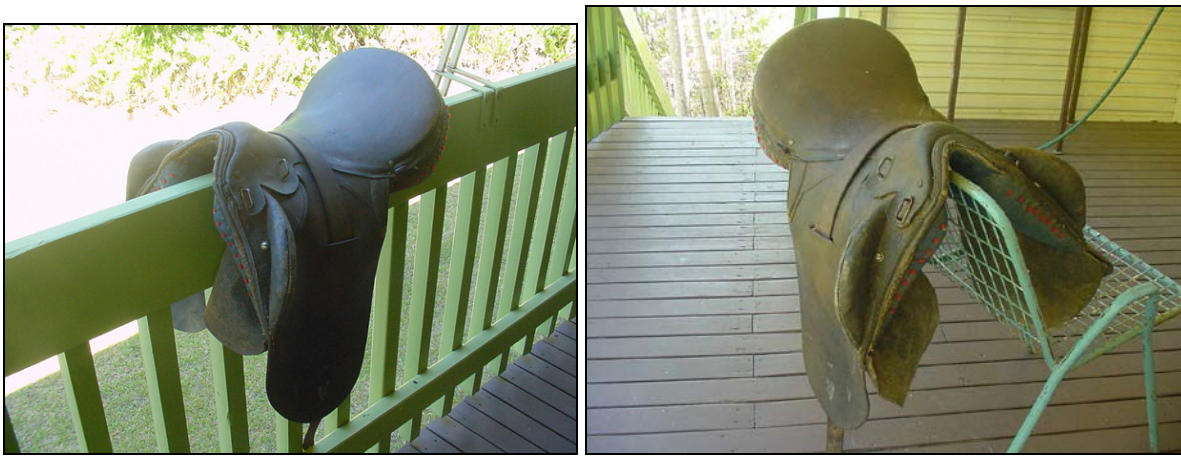
Although it is largely conjecture it is nevertheless safe to suggest that Murray would have ridden in a stock saddle (of the ‘Schneider’ or ‘Wieneke’ design) during the Coniston episode.



*FIGURE 3: Saddle photographed at NT Mounted Police 20 May 2005. This Light Horse pattern 1912 is stamped 1945. Note especially the wooden side panels (or tree) underneath and leather flaps (which broaden toward the base). Photograph by author.*

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Ron Edwards, 30 June 2005.



*FIGURE 4a: Stock saddle photographed 20 May 2005 at the Retired Police Association of the Northern Territory Police Museum. Note the lack of a 'tree', the straight leather flaps and the leg rest toward the front of the saddle. Photograph by author.*

*FIGURE 4b: Stock saddle photographed 20 May 2005 at the Retired Police Association of the Northern Territory Police Museum. This image better shows the leg rest against which the rider would push his knee. Photograph by author.*

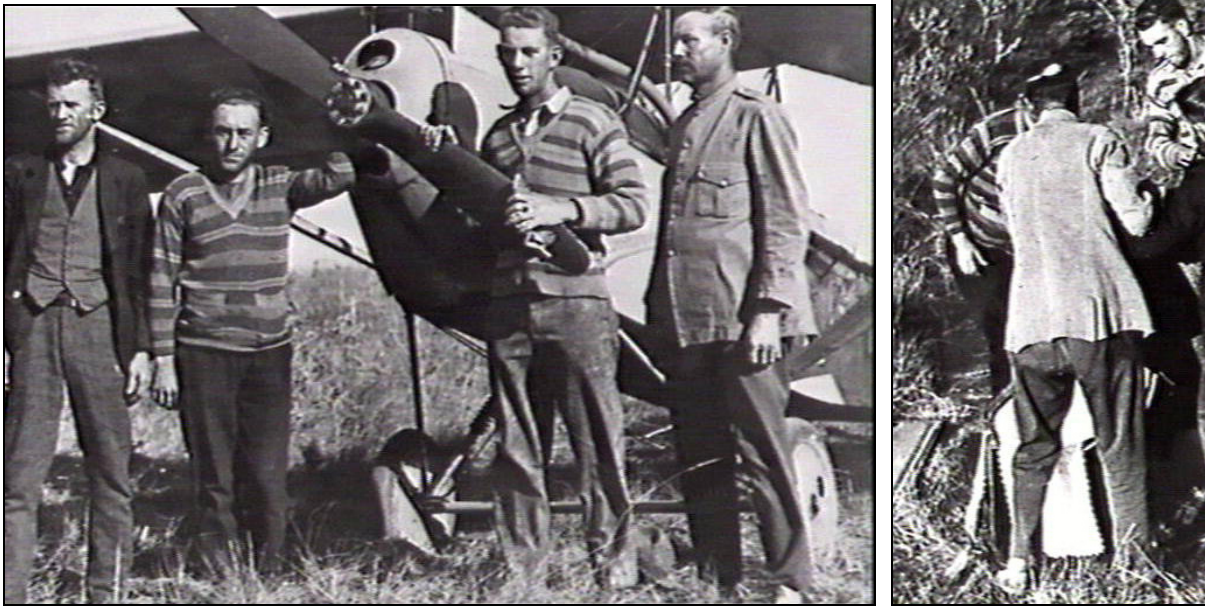


*FIGURE 5: This photograph by Theodor Bray is titled 'Mounted police constable, year 1927'. Note the lack of wooden side panels, the straight 'flaps' and the leg rest. Also note the straight style riding boots. State Library of South Australia South Australiana database, Number B 64383/174; Phys. desc Photograph; 8 cm x 5.5 cm; Author: Bray, Theodor, 1905-2000 (photographer); Title: Mounted police constable; Year 1927; Summary: 'Mounted Constable Cameron beside his horse in front of cattle yards'.*

### Tunic & holster

Until the adoption of a formal uniform in 1930 it was customary for Northern Territory and South Australian Mounted Police to wear military-style tunics, as shown in the following photographs. In Figure 6 we see Mounted Constable Murray in May 1929 wearing this Colonial style tunic, used by Australians and the British in the Boer War. These single-breasted jackets were of the military pattern khaki-drill undress or fatigue suit type and were made in light cotton material. The tunic has a 'stand' collar, two flapped patch pockets on the chest with none on the skirts and plain cuffs. The 'white metal' or dull chrome buttons showed a King's Crown with 'NT'.

I suggest that the holster worn by Mounted Constables would have been for use with the Webley Mark V revolvers used by police at this time (see firearms section).



*FIGURE 6a: From left: Frank Nottle, Les Miles, Stan Cawood and Mounted Constable Murray in front of the 'Kookaburra', May 1929. Northern Territory Archive Service, Stan Cawood Image Collection, NTRS 234, CP 50/7, captioned 'Members of expedition.'*  
*FIGURE 6b: The second image shows Murray's tunic from behind. Northern Territory Archive Service, Stan Cawood Image Collection, NTRS 234, CP 51/5, captioned 'Removing a body from its grave to a casket.'*<sup>14</sup>

### Trousers and boots

The dark trousers worn by Mounted Constable Murray in the Stan Cawood photographs were most likely his customary dress. It can therefore be assumed that he would have worn these during the Coniston episode.<sup>15</sup> It is unlikely, however, that he would have worn the light shoes shown in the Stan Cawood images, as these were no doubt his 'driving shoes' and not at all suited to horse riding. It is more likely that Murray wore either straight or 'concertina' riding boots. The concertina boots were particular common among the Mounted Police of the Northern Territory and South Australia, although usually of a somewhat earlier period. An image of Mounted Constable Albert McColl taken c.1931 shows the straight style of riding boots that Murray may well have worn in 1928. Curiously enough, this image was taken (according to Egan (1996)) at Coniston.

<sup>14</sup> Other images in this collection (not digitized) that illustrate the dress worn by Murray are CP 51/9 and CP 50/12, which is captioned 'Removing the remains of Anderson to casket' and shows Murray in full view, including his light footwear.

<sup>15</sup> If different, they may have been heavier and better suited to horseriding.

*FIGURE 7: Egan (1996) provides the following caption to this image: 'Constable Albert Stewart McColl, at Coniston, Central Australia, probably in 1931. McColl was based in Central Australia with the Northern Territory Mounted Police 1927-31, and spent a period in 1931 at Brookes' Soak, Coniston, the scene of the 1928 massacre, after which the police mounted an outpost there.'<sup>1</sup> Note especially the riding boots, holster and pith helmet worn by McColl. [Egan sources this image to the 'Stewart McColl Collection', although no further details of this collection are provided. Presumably this is the personal collection of a relative of Albert McColl.]*



### Headwear

It would appear from the photographic record that the manner in which Mounted Police wore their customary wide brim hats was very much subject to personal taste. It is not at all uncommon to find a great variety of styles worn by Mounted Police in the same photograph. The somewhat showy 'lemon squeeze' tall style – reminiscent of the famous Canadian 'Mounties' – was particularly common in the 1920s and 1930s. From the mid-1930s on, the usual slouch style (minus the fold of the left-hand side of the brim) was increasingly common. Images of Mounted Constable Murray in May 1929 (see Figure 9) show him wearing a white pith helmet. It is questionable, however, whether Murray would have worn a pith helmet during the Coniston episode, as he would have probably have prepared himself in the knowledge that he would be on horseback possibly for several days. In the end he was riding through the heat of the day for several weeks. It is reasonable to assume that Murray would have chosen a broad-brimmed hat over a pith helmet for such an expedition, although this again is subject to speculation. A history of the Mounted Police of South Australia states:

*'When on bush patrol, the uniform was sometimes replaced by more practical bush dress, and broad brimmed hats were worn.'*<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> History of South Australia Police. Available at <http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au/operations/history.htm>





*FIGURE 8: Titled 'Northern Territory police outside the police station, including four Aboriginal trackers. Date: 1936', this photograph shows that as late as 1936 the fashion of hat style adopted by NT police was very much a matter of personal choice. A.V. Stretton, Superintendent of Police Darwin, is in the centre of the group. National Archives of Australia, Picture Australia Collection, Title: 'Photograph of the Northern Territory - Northern Territory police outside the police station, including four Aboriginal trackers'. Date: 1936. Image number: M105, 88. Barcode: 4171725. Location: Canberra. Find other items in this series: M105. Series accession number: M105/1*



*FIGURE 9: This image from the Kookaburra (or 'Thornycroft') expedition in May 1929 shows Mounted Constable Murray wearing a white pith helmet. It is unclear whether it is stored in the same NTAS Stan Cawood Image Collection (i.e. NTRS 234).<sup>17</sup> The details given on the Territory Images website are as follows: FILE 27\27710. TITLE Aeroplane. DESCRIPT The 'Kookaburra' G-AUKA, showing its excellent condition at its last landing ground. Constable Murray and Les Miles checking the propeller. DATE : 05 : 1929. PHOTONO PH0284/0057. CREATOR COLLECTN CAWOOD. RIGHTS Northern Territory Library and Information Service.*

<sup>17</sup> This particular image was not located during a search of the NTRS 234 collection. This may be a Northern Territory Library Image Collection, possibly numbered 284.

*FIGURE 10: Former Northern Territory Police hat, photographed at the Retired Police Association of the Northern Territory Police Museum on 20 May 2005. It is suggested that Mounted Constable Murray would have worn a style of hat similar to this when not wearing his pith helmet (particularly horse riding). Photograph by author..*



Trackers' clothing

Aboriginal trackers of the period were less inclined than police to any standard mode of dress. Trackers' clothing, however, appears to have differed little from that of Aboriginal stockmen or the European 'frontiersmen' with whom they worked. They usually wore dark trousers, a leather belt, often boots (particularly if they were riding, as was Tracker Paddy during the Coniston affair) and a long-sleeved light-coloured shirt with or without a dark suit coat or vest.

This clothing would have been complemented often by a bandolier to suit whatever rifle ammunition the Tracker carried, which I separately suggest would have mostly likely been ammunition for a Winchester 1892 model 44-40 calibre or a Short Magazine Lee Enfield No.1 MkIII rifle in the case of Tracker Paddy.



*FIGURE 11: This 1927 photograph of a typical South Australian Aboriginal Police Tracker (seated right foreground) shows the customary style of dress for Trackers of the region during the period. State Library of South Australia South Australiana database, Number B 64383/38; Phys. desc Photograph; 8 cm x 5.5 cm; Author Bray, Theodor, 1905-2000; Title Aboriginal camp at Oodnadatta; Year 1927; Summary: 'Camp at Oodnadatta with four Aboriginal people, one of whom is 'Bob', a black tracker, at right. Two men from the tourist party are standing behind them.'*



*FIGURE 12: This photograph by Terry (1974) shows 'Harry Tilmouth and his loyal Aboriginal companion' who 'were attacked by Warramullas [sic] at the Lander River in 1928.'* <sup>18</sup> *Note the style of dress worn by Tilmouth's companion. It is likely that this photograph is stored in the Terry Collection at the National Library of Australia.*



*FIGURE 13: These Aboriginal stockmen ('Bob, Tommy, Hughie and Jack') joined the 'Thornycroft' or 'Kookaburra' expedition at Newcastle Waters in May 1929. They are dressed in typical fashion for such Aboriginal people of the time, a dress sense they shared with Aboriginal Trackers. From FILE NTAS Stan Cawood Image Collection, NTRS 234.*

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<sup>18</sup> Terry 1974: opposite 22.

## **Camp life – Warlpiri and European**

To make apparent the theme of ‘contested lands’ I suggest the inclusion of material culture that depicts both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ‘camp life’ as it was in 1928. The evidence presented to the Board of Enquiry gives the impression that Warlpiri and other Aboriginal people were simply doing their daily chores around camp prior to the police party’s arrival. A visual illustration of the contrast between this quietude and the melee that occurred on Murray’s arrival is a poignant symbol for the clash of culture that Coniston signifies.

Material culture to represent a Warlpiri camp would include digging sticks, coolimon, millstones, stone and steel tomahawks, wooden dishes and the like. It was common for Warlpiri women to prepare meals after treating plants such as pig weed (*Portulacca oleracea*) and bush raisins (*Solanum centrale*). A selection of such plant material could be placed in a coolimon.

A depiction of Fred Brookes’ non-Aboriginal camp would, I believe, make two significant contributions to any Coniston exhibit. Firstly, it would underscore the contestation of the land by acknowledging the European presence in the landscape, which was ephemeral in the case of Fred Brookes’ camp (reflecting the tenuous reality of the European presence in the region at the time). Secondly, it would provide testimony to the powerful accounts of those that visited Brookes’ camp after his death.

I recommend that both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal camps be depicted in a state of disarray, suggestive of the violence that took place there. Cribbin (1984) gives the following account of Alex Wilson’s impressions on arriving at the soak at which Brookes was murdered, in the evening of the day of his death:

*‘The moonlight reflected something in the sand. He [Wilson] reached down and picked up a spoon. A white man’s implement! Further on there were the remains of a campfire with a blackened billy nearby. It appeared to have been overturned and then partly crushed as though trodden on.’*<sup>19</sup>

Murray stated to the Board of Enquiry that the following possessions of Brookes were retrieved from the first group of Warlpiri attacked by the police party: ‘coat, shirt, singlets, quart pot, blanket, calico, knives, tobacco’.<sup>20</sup> Billy Briscoe told the Board that the police party, ‘got a bag containing a coat, shirt, singlet, quartpot, tomahawk, blanket, calico, butcherknife, straps, tobacco wallet and about 1 lb of tobacco broken up into little bits’.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Cribbin 1984: 29.

<sup>20</sup> Murray evidence to Board of Enquiry, 16 January 1929, NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment]: 522. Note: for the sake of simplicity and ease in referencing I have used the NAA number provided in square brackets on each page to reference individual documents, in this first instance the document number is [522].

<sup>21</sup> Briscoe evidence to Board of Enquiry, 13 January 1929, NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment]: 531.

## Warlpiri and European weaponry

This section deals almost exclusively with non-Aboriginal weaponry, as the NMA is already well placed to determine the precise nature of Warlpiri weaponry used in the 1928 period. Determining the firearms likely to have been used by the police party has involved a (not uncomfortable) degree of speculation. This is due to a dearth of official documentation relating to police service arms, the fact that Central Australian police records were not accessed as part of this particular consultancy (due to their relocation to Alice Springs), the division of the Northern Territory into two separate jurisdictions from 1927 to 1931 and the relative youth of the Northern Territory Mounted Police at the time.

Evidence presented to the Board of Enquiry is replete with references to Warlpiri and other Aboriginal people using boomerangs, spears, nulla nullas (often referred to as ‘yam sticks’) and shields during clashes with the police party. The itinerant worker Billy Briscoe told that Enquiry:

*‘I could see about 30 newly sharpened spears on the ground. They were collected by the whites. I also saw a lot of yamsticks and nulla nullas on the ground. They chucked boomerangs at us from a distance of about 80 yards. They ran towards us with spears.’*<sup>22</sup>

It is noteworthy that it is likely that the spears used by Aboriginal people in Central Australia at this time would have used metal rather than stone as a spear head.

There are several references in the Board evidence to spears being broken, either by the police party during or after a melee, including Murray’s claim that:

*‘Two natives rushed to get the one spear that was standing upright in a bush. I noticed their movement and I also grabbed for the spear. Myself and a native got hold of the spear together. I wrenched it from him. It broke and left the small end in his hand while I had the strong end. The natives were then so close around me I felt that I could not get my revolver in time so I drove the spear right through a native’s chest, then jumped back, drew my revolver and fired.’*<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Briscoe evidence to Board of Enquiry, 13 January 1929, NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment]: 531.

<sup>23</sup> Murray evidence to Board of Enquiry, 16 January 1929, NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment]: 519.

## Firearms generally

In the entirety of the National Archives of Australia file on the Coniston affair (including evidence to the Board of Enquiry) there is only one substantive reference to firearms. This is provided by Billy Briscoe, who told the Board of Enquiry:

*'I had a revolver loaded in seven chambers. I had 30 or 40 spare cartridges in my swag... Constable Murray had a revolver and rifle. Mr Stafford had a revolver and a .22 rifle. Mr Saxby had a rifle and a revolver. Paddy had a revolver – no rifle. I had a revolver. ['Tracker'] Major was with the packs. Dodga was also with the packs and was not armed... Alex Wilson (half-caste) was also with us. He had a rifle.'*<sup>24</sup>

In his (at times somewhat bewildering) evidence to the Board, Tracker Paddy states:

*'I and Alex Wilson had rifles... Bye and bye I fired my revolver. I had a revolver and not a rifle as I said before.'*<sup>25</sup>

Determining the firearms used by the police party has been especially difficult, given the general dearth of documentation on police firearms for Central Australia during this period, the relocation of administrative files to Alice Springs and uncertainty associated with the transfer of the Northern Territory from South Australian to Commonwealth jurisdiction in 1911. Rather than seek to make any definitive determination, I focus on what handguns and rifles were *available* to Central Australian Mounted Constables and Trackers at this time. Short of visiting the NTAS archive in Alice Springs in the hope of locating a file relevant to firearms and/or ammunition, this appears the only logical course of action at this stage.

Even more difficulty is associated with determining the firearms used by the non-police members of the party. I have, however, ventured to make several suggestions based on what weapons were generally available and popular in remote Australia at this time.

## Handguns

It is suggested that the non-police members of the patrol used Colt handguns, given their popularity at the time. I am informed that the famous Colt 'Peacemakers' were common in the Australian outback of this period.<sup>26</sup> Various non-police members of the party (particularly Morton) mention rapidly firing a number of shots during skirmishes, suggestive of double-action revolvers. There are a number of revolvers that were 'loaded in seven chambers' as Briscoe describes. Given the complete dearth of historical evidence in relation to the firearms

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<sup>24</sup> Briscoe evidence to Board of Enquiry, 13 January 1929, NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment]: 531.

<sup>25</sup> Paddy evidence to Board of Enquiry, 31 December 1928, NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment]: 567.

<sup>26</sup> Interviews, Tony Austin and Edgar Penzig.

of the non-police members of the party, I here focus my attention on the handguns available to Mounted Constable Murray.

In his description of the first melee, Briscoe gives an indication that Mounted Constable Murray's handgun was capable of rapid fire, suggestive of either a semi-automatic pistol or at the very least a double-action revolver.

*'I heard four or five quick shots. I then returned to where Constable Murray was. I saw three or four natives lying on the ground. They were dead... Constable Murray said to me, "It was absolutely useless to try and arrest these natives. I had to draw my revolver to save myself."'*<sup>27</sup>

South Australian Police were issued with .38 calibre Webley Mark V revolvers in April 1909 and it is likely that these were made available to Mounted Constables in the then Northern Territory of South Australia.<sup>28</sup> This weapon, then, would have been 'available' to Mounted Constable Murray and therefore fits my criteria for possible inclusion in any Coniston exhibit. This is supported by Slee (1988) who states:

*'Police arms that were carried in the Northern Territory were issued from Adelaide and so follow an identical history until 1911 when the Commonwealth Government accepted control. At that time, all South Australian Government property (including police arms and equipment) was taken over by the Commonwealth and generous compensation was paid to South Australia.'*<sup>29</sup>



*FIGURE 14: The Webley MkV double action .38 calibre revolver.*

The question, then, is whether Mounted Police in Central Australia in 1928 were still using the handguns issued to them when they were under the jurisdiction of the South Australian

<sup>27</sup> Briscoe evidence to Board of Enquiry, 13 January 1929, NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment]: 531. Murray stated that during this melee he fired two shots. Reference is made to revolvers throughout the Board evidence; nowhere is the word 'pistol' or 'automatic' used by either Murray or other witnesses.

<sup>28</sup> Slee 1988: 73.

<sup>29</sup> Slee 1988: 72.

police. Or, put another way, did the Commonwealth issue these Mounted Police with a handgun between 1911 and 1928? Slee (1988) goes on to state that:

*'The police in the Northern Territory continued to use the Adams and the Smith and Wesson revolver-carbine for many years after the South Australian police had replaced such heavy revolvers with semi-automatic pistols.'*<sup>30</sup>

The weapons to referred to here are the Adams revolver and the Smith & Wesson New Revolver Model No.3 revolver. The Adams in question was most likely a breech loading, trigger-cocking, solid frame revolver of .450 calibre designed in 1872. I suggest that the age of this weapon and the fact that the Smith & Wesson No.3 was considered 'far superior to the Adams revolver',<sup>31</sup> make it highly unlikely that it was used by Mounted Constable Murray during the Coniston affair.

The Smith & Wesson No.3, which became known in the South Australian police as the 'revolver-carbine' was acquired in the 1880s.

*'In the early 1880's, Superintendent (later Commissioner) Peterswald was responsible for initiating the re-arming of the Force with more modern weapons... Peterswald also recommended that the Mounted Police be issued with the large New Model No. 3 Smith and Wesson revolver in .44 Russian calibre. These pistols were supplied with a detachable shoulder stock and could be used as a pistol or carbine as the occasion demanded. The 250 new pistols, termed 'revolver carbines' were issued in May 1882.'*<sup>32</sup>

Slee (1988) quotes an Inspector Le Lievre who described the revolver-carbine as obsolete early in the twentieth century:

*'... The custom was ... for the mounted police to carry a cumbersome revolver in a pouch attached to the saddle – a most unwise regulation ... This obsolete weapon has been done away with and a thoroughly up-to-date weapon supplied in its place, carried as it should be, at the constable's waist ...'*<sup>33</sup>

Given the fact that Mounted Constable Murray makes repeated reference in his Board of Enquiry evidence to pulling out his revolver during fighting at close quarters, it is highly unlikely that he was wielding the 'cumbersome' Smith & Wesson revolver-carbine. It is also noteworthy that the revolver-carbine was single-action and incapable of the more rapid fire

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<sup>30</sup> Slee 1988: 72.

<sup>31</sup> Slee 1988: 62.

<sup>32</sup> History of South Australia Police. Available at <http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au/operations/history.htm>.

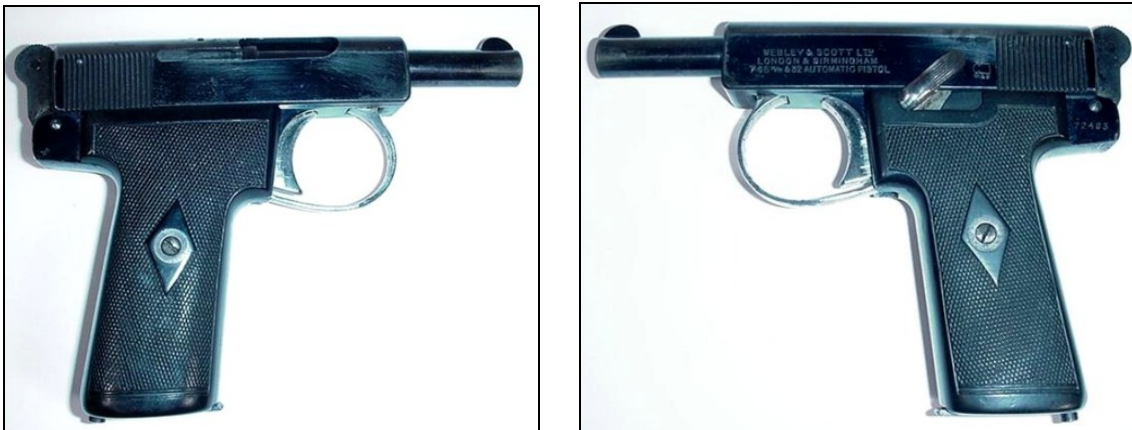
<sup>33</sup> Slee 1988: 70-71.



rate of a double-action weapon – thus compounding the unlikelihood of its use by Mounted Constable Murray in 1928.

Mounted Constable Murray's son, Eric, has told me that although he was young at the time and that his memory might not be serving him rightly, he has a recollection of his father telling him that the Coniston episode confirmed to him that automatic pistols were 'no good' as his jammed on him. This news surprised me, as the South Australian police did not acquire the (Model 1913) Webley and Scott semi-automatic pistol until 1913,<sup>34</sup> two years after the Commonwealth took control of the Northern Territory. On pressing him, I found that Eric Murray appeared unsure if his father's comments were in relation to Coniston or a subsequent event.

Although there is significant uncertainty surrounding the possibility of a semi-automatic pistol being used – and the fact that Murray and all other witnesses to the Board of Enquiry described his handgun as a 'revolver' (although it is arguable whether the term 'pistol' was in vogue in Central Australia at this time) – there remains a slight possibility that Mounted Constable Murray was in possession of a semi-automatic pistol. If this was the case it is likely that he would have used a Model 1913 Webley and Scott.



*FIGURE 15: Webley and Scott eight-round semi-automatic pistol, circa 1911.*

### Rifle

I suggest that there are three (3) possibilities in relation to the rifles used by Mounted Constable Murray and Tracker Paddy during the Coniston killings. These are the Martini-Henry Mark IV, the .303 Short Magazine Lee-Enfield Mark III and the Winchester 1892 44-40. Given the present degree of uncertainty with the rifles used and the fact that the non-police members of the party were likely to have used an older weapon such as the Martini-Henry, I suggest that all three rifle be considered for inclusion in any exhibit.

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<sup>34</sup> Slee 1988: 73.

It is clear that the Martini-Henry rifle was employed by the South Australian police for a significant period of time. Issued to the police in 1881, the .455/.577 calibre Martini-Henry were still official issue 60 years later.<sup>35</sup> However, this rifle was a .450 single action weapon, slow to load and cumbersome and ammunition for it was increasingly hard for the South Australian and NT police to obtain by the 1920s.



*FIGURE 16: A Martini-Henry MkIV, valued at approximately \$850.00*

There are good arguments that Mounted Constable Murray would have used a Lee-Enfield .303 MkIII rifle (Mark III was adopted in 1906 as the Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) No1 MkIII)<sup>36</sup>, given his experience with them during World War One and the fact that they held a magazine of 10 rounds and had a rapid fire rate.



*FIGURE 17: A .303 Short Magazine Lee-Enfield No.1 MkIII, valued at approximately \$500.00*

Given the humble status of Aboriginal people at the time it may have been the case that the Aboriginal Tracker Paddy, the unofficial 'Tracker' Major and the 'half-caste' Alex Wilson used Martini-Henry rifles or .22 rifles (as we know Stafford did) while Murray himself used a .303 Lee-Enfield.

Also popular with colonial police forces (and individual pastoralists) at this time was the Winchester rifle. The model most likely to have been available to members of the Consiton police party would have been the 1892 Winchester 44-40.

<sup>35</sup> Slee 1988: 60 and History of South Australia Police. Available at <http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au/operations/history.htm>

<sup>36</sup> Information from interview with police arms specialist Mr Edgar Penzig. Also see <http://www.militaryimages.net/photopost/showphoto.php/photo/7311/cat/500/page/1>



*FIGURE 18: An 1892 Winchester 44-40 rifle, often referred to (at least in the United States) as the 'Saddle Ring Carbine'.*

### **Mounted Constable Murray's military background**

Murray enlisted in the 4th Light Horse on 21 August 1914 at Broadmeadows, Victoria, just 16 days after the Empire had declared war against Germany. On enlistment Murray was 30 years of age and five feet eleven inches tall. He gave his trade as farmer, address as Northcote, father as next of kin, religion as Methodist and nearest town to birthplace as Yarck, a small country town northeast of Melbourne. Significantly, he cited eight years, eight months experience in the 7th Australian Light Horse militia, otherwise known as the Victorian Mounted Rifles. Murray was considerably older than most enlistees<sup>37</sup>, joined very early in the war and was already well-versed in the tactics of the Light Horse. He was given serial number 308 and on 20 October 1914 embarked at Melbourne on the troop carrier "Wiltshire" bound for Egypt.<sup>38</sup>



*FIGURE 19: Members of the 7th Australian Light Horse, the Victorian Mounted Rifles.*

<sup>37</sup> The then average enlistment age was from 19 to 21 years of age. Murray's police file gives his birth as 9 February 1884.

<sup>38</sup> Australian War Memorial, WWI Personnel Dossier W.G. Murray 308.

On 20 May 1915 Murray proceeded to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force with B Squadron of the 4th Light Horse, landing at Gallipoli on 24 May.<sup>39</sup> Three months later, on 14 August, he suffered a gunshot wound in the left arm and was evacuated to Malta. Following a bout of diarrhoea, he rejoined his regiment at Gallipoli on 25 October and remained there until late December when he disembarked at Alexandria.

Jones (1985) has dubbed the 4th Light Horse a ‘vanishing regiment’; Murray was a part of what Jones has described as ‘a military version of pea-and-thimble’.<sup>40</sup> His movements after Gallipoli help explain this definition. Along with six officers and 137 other ranks, Murray (then a Lance Corporal) proceeded to join the British Expeditionary Force in France on 21 March 1916.<sup>41</sup> In May he was taken on strength of the 1<sup>st</sup> ANZAC Mounted Regiment and on 7 July his B Squadron (along with D Squadron of the 4th and New Zealand’s Otago Mounted Rifles) was incorporated into the 2nd ANZAC Mounted Regiment. A month later, 13 August 1916, Murray suffered his second wounding, after three officers and 100 men of B Squadron had reinforced the 53rd Battalion in the trenches at Fleurbaix near Armentieres.<sup>42</sup> Murray’s wound (in the right arm) was described as slight and he remained on duty, to be promoted Corporal in the field on 20 September.



*FIGURE 20: A 4th Light Horsemen photographed on the Western Front.*

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<sup>39</sup> Smith 1993: 23.

<sup>40</sup> Jones 1985: 4.

<sup>41</sup> Jones 1985: 4.

<sup>42</sup> Jones 1985: 4. Murray’s wounding was reported by the OC of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion.

Toward the end of November 1916 Murray was hospitalised for “venereal disease gonorrhoea”, eventually being forfeited 36 days’ pay.<sup>43</sup> He rejoined his unit on 17 January 1917. Like others of the 4th, Murray no doubt spent a good deal of time on inglorious (although dangerous) duty in France as a member of anti-aircraft and salvage parties detached from his unit. It is possible he also served on traffic duty. On 7 June 1917 his squadron partook in the successful attack on Messines Ridge, which commenced when 19 volcanic blasts began to shatter the German line, merging to a single explosion which was felt in London.<sup>44</sup> Murray’s B Squadron went into this action mounted, riding (sometimes at a gallop) over ground that the British had a week earlier bombarded with an estimated three and a half to four million shells, producing a shell crater every nine square yards. In this action the 4th Light Horse lost seven men killed, 12 wounded and about 20 horses.<sup>45</sup>

During the Spring Offensive in April 1918 Murray, then a Sergeant, was detached to the British 49th Division, with whom he saw action at Bulgar Wood during the Battle of the Lys. It appears that in France Murray participated, at a minimum, in action at Fleurbaix, Messines Ridge and at Bligny during the Allied counter-offensive in July 1918.

On 8 October 1918 Sergeant Murray was granted 1914 Special Leave and embarked on furlough to Australia. During the voyage, in November, the Germans surrendered and the war was over. He disembarked at Melbourne on 2 December and was discharged from the AIF on 23 March 1919. He was afterwards issued with the customary 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.<sup>46</sup> Murray’s war had been a long one. While he had only risen to the rank of Sergeant<sup>47</sup>, he was in select company – an ANZAC and a soldier on active duty for most of the war. He had been wounded twice and participated in some of the war’s fiercest battles.

A history of Murray’s regiment, the 4th ALH, tellingly states the approach the Light Horse took to battle:

*‘Australia needed units which could move quickly and be fit to fight when contact was made with the enemy. Practically stated, armed men were mounted for mobility; they were equipped with the same rifle, bayonet and*

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<sup>43</sup> Australian War Memorial, WWI Personnel Dossier W.G. Murray 308. It was customary for soldiers to forfeit their pay for such self-inflicted ‘wounds’ as gonorrhoea.

<sup>44</sup> Coulthard-Clark 2002: 129. The British, Canadians and Australians had spent almost two years tunnelling under the German front line and laid 19 huge land mines containing more than a million pounds of explosives.

<sup>45</sup> Jones 1985: 5.

<sup>46</sup> In 1967 Murray received the medallion and lapel badge issued to ANZAC veterans. Australian War Memorial, WWI Personnel Dossier W.G. Murray 308.

<sup>47</sup> This was by no means unusual for Light Horsemen, who mostly saw less action than infantrymen and consequently were less decorated and/or promoted.

*machine gun (Vickers Maxim) as the Infantry, and they were to fight dismounted.'*<sup>48</sup>

During an interview in November 2002, the historian of the 4th ALH, Ian Jones, described Mounted Constable Murray's attack on the first Aboriginal camp (not dissimilar to others during the Coniston affair) as 'a classic Light Horse attack'.

*IAN JONES: Yeah. That extended line with him in the middle, it's a Light Horse advance, that's what it is... and dismounting, that's the way they fought. They'd come in on a line, depending on the situation.... An extended line. That's the way they'd approach coming into a situation where they're likely to encounter fire, small arms fire, or artillery fire... The officer would generally be in the centre, he'd be in the centre of the group he was leading...*

*JUSTIN O'BRIEN: And the dismount?*

*IAN JONES: Well again, this is the Light Horse fighting pattern. The Light Horse were virtually mounted infantry. They used their horse to ride into action, they would dismount, their horses would be held. The horses would be led out of the firing line. They would engage the enemy, the horses then on signal would be brought up for a further advance or a retreat. So that is the way the Light Horse fought, in sections of four, with one man of each four man section as the horse holder.*<sup>49</sup>

A chronology of Murray's military experience is provided as Appendix C.

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<sup>48</sup> Smith 1954: 5. Further information on the Light Horse may be obtained from volume VIII of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 by H.S. Gullett.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Ian Jones, Melbourne, 7 November 2002.

## Images

The following pages provide a selection of images that depict the key protagonists and places in the Coniston killings. This is by no means an exhaustive selection and other images may be sourced from the photographic collection of Michael Terry located at the National Library of Australia and the photographic collection of Stan Cawood located at the Northern Territory Archive Service. There are approximately 300 photographs from the 'Michael Terry exhibition Australian walkabout 1928-1933' stored at the NLA Pictorial section (Call Number: PIC/8722 LOC Drawer Q66 - Q69).

I have viewed the Stan Cawood collection and regard the following images as noteworthy: -

CP44/3: Barrow Ck telegraph station

CP52/4&9: J.C. Cawood presenting the cups to winners Race Day at Alice Springs (showing Cawood and dress of white people c.1928)

CP52/5: Mrs Standley, Mother, Dad, Mrs Carrington, Mr Carrington.<sup>50</sup>

CP55/9: The Cawood family.

CP54/2: Some [Aboriginal] prisoners doing 'time'.

CP54/7: 'Dad setting out', J.C. Cawood on camel.

CP54/9: Black prisoners – arrested for cattle spearing and marched 150 miles in chains.

CP51/12: 'Bonney Well on overland stock route about 250 miles North of Alice Springs.' Policeman in picture is presumably Mounted Constable Murray.

CP51/9: 'Sealing body in a casket.' Shows Mounted Constable Murray from front.

CP50/1: 'One of series of rocks known as the Devils Marbles.' Shows Mounted Constable Murray.

CP50/12: 'Removing the remains of Anderson to casket.' Shows Mounted Constable Murray, full view showing footwear.

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<sup>50</sup> Carrington was the secretary to the Coniston Board of Enquiry.

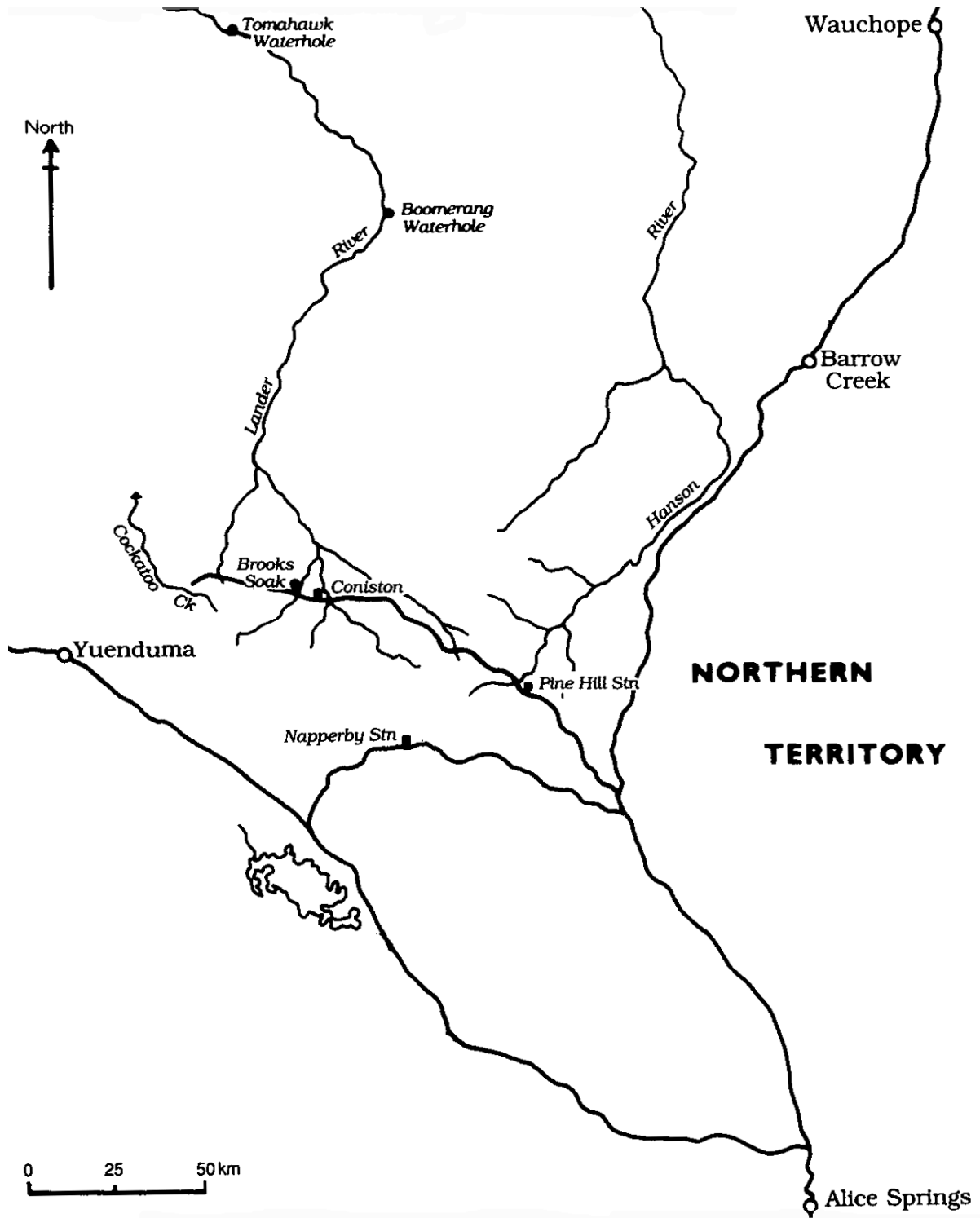


FIGURE 21: Map showing Coniston in relation to Alice Springs. Elder 2002: 178.



Sydney Herald

14. 8. '28.

### KILLED BY BLACKS.

### In Central Australia.

#### BODY IN RABBIT BURROW.

ADELAIDE, Monday.

A message received to-day from Alice Springs states that Fred Brookes, about 60 years of age, has been found murdered by the blacks, 80 miles west of Tea Tree Well.

Brookes, who had two camels loaded with rations, left Alice Springs on June 13, on a dingo-scalping expedition.

It is stated that he had two small black boys in his employ, and that he sent them to bring the camels to the camp. While they were absent the blacks attacked Brookes and killed him.

The blacks told Brookes's boys "to tell white fellow that old man died himself."

The boys became frightened and told a man named Chapman, who was 14 miles away, of what had occurred. Chapman sent a note to Connelton Station, and from there an employee rode all night and reported the matter to the police.

Chapman went to the scene of the murder, where he found signs of a struggle. Brookes's body was discovered partly buried—the head was wrapped in a bag, and had been pushed into a rabbit burrow.

Constable Murray is making inquiries, but further information is not expected for a few days.

Brookes was said to be a quiet, inoffensive man.

*WJH*

Have we had any advice from Govt Resident re this matter? If not, inquire by lettergram

*WJH*  
15/8/28.

Extract from telegram from Government Resident, Alice Springs - 11<sup>th</sup> August 1928

"... Report received this morning murder by blacks of Frederick Brookes"  
(see "Police for Central Australia" file)

FIGURE 22: The first public reporting of the murder of Frederick Brookes, in the Sydney Herald on 14 August 1928. It appears that this article brought the matter to the attention of J.A. Carrodus, who on the 15th wrote: 'Have we had any advice from Govt Resident re this matter? If not, inquire by lettergram.' Following this is written: 'Extract from telegram from Government Resident, Alice Springs - 11<sup>th</sup> August 1928 "...Report received this morning murder by blacks of Frederick Bro[okes]'. NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 1: 1.

E.T. No 2  
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.—POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

OFFICE DATE STAMP.

**RECEIVED TELEGRAM.**

The first line of this Telegram contains the following particulars in the order named:

STATION FROM: 2 ALICE SPRINGS  
WORDS: SA  
TIME AND DATE LODGED: 40 10 22am 3rd. 17

Remarks: To: SECTY HOME & TERRITORIES  
CANBERRA.

SEP 3 1928 PM 8:28

This message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Acts and Regulations.  
The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form.  
Sub. C 5531322—22/27

POLICE ARRIVED ALICE SPRINGS SATURDAY EVENING FIRST SEPTEMBER WITH TWO PRISONERS MURDER FREDERICK BROOKES STOP OTHERS CONCERNED IN OUTRAGE DIED FROM WOUNDS IN FIGHT WITH POLICE AND CIVILIANS WHILE RESISTING CAPTURE POSTING FULL REPORT

GOVRES. 3 11pmfb.

GOVRES.  
ALICE SPRINGS.  
3.9.28

Yours third what were number of fatalities.

*Comiter*

E.T. No 2  
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.—POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

OFFICE DATE STAMP.

**RECEIVED TELEGRAM.**

The first line of this Telegram contains the following particulars in the order named:

STATION FROM: 4 ALICE SPRINGS  
WORDS: 40  
TIME AND DATE LODGED: 12 30pm 4th.

Remarks: To: HOMETER  
CANBERRA.

SEP 4 1928 PM 4:23

This message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Acts and Regulations.  
The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form.  
Sub. C 5531322—22/27

REPLY YOURS THIRD SEPTEMBER 17 CASUALTIES STOP URGENT REQUEST FROM SETTLER STAFFORD HEAR 3 MEN LAST MURDER ASKING PROTECTION STOP SEND THE POLICE PATROL TODAY STOP JANITOR APPROVAL RE ALL MY RESPECTS OF MARCH LAST FOR EXTRA HOURED CONSTABLE

GOVRES. 3 41p.vb

*There is a vacancy for a Constable in Central Australia. Vic. Kollit, recently promoted to Sergeant. Inquiries have been made regarding applicants who were noted in the Sept. and a recommendation for the filling of the vacancy will be made to day.*

*RR 5/28*

FIGURE 23: Telegrams between Alice Springs and Canberra regarding first news of Aboriginal fatalities as a result of the police party after Brookes' death. NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 1: 5 – 7.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.  
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)

28/9588 [50]

TELETYPE ADDRESS: "OVRES," ALICE SPRINGS.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,  
ALICE SPRINGS. 25th October. 1928.

IN REPLY  
PLEASE QUOTE  
NO. 183/28

The Secretary.  
Home and Territories Dept.  
C A N B E R R A.

3 - NOV 1928 A.M.

With reference to your Memorandum of 28th September No. 28/8588, which reached me to day, I have to report that I have had interviews with various settlers on the incidents leading up to and following the murder of Frederick Brookes by blacks.

Since taking up duties in March 1927, there have been continuous complaints from white settlers as to the depredations of the blacks. The police have constantly been investigating complaints but owing to the inadequate Police force and the extent of country to be patrolled, complaints that should have been investigated promptly have had to stand over.

The result of this delay has been accepted by the natives as a sign of weakness on the part of the Administration of Law and Order, consequently the natives have adopted a cheeky attitude towards the whites and have openly boasted of their depredations, and have made threats to wipe out the white settlers in isolated portions of the Territory.

In ordinary cases of cattle killing by what may be termed "civilised natives", arrests have been effected without loss of life, because the civilised native submits to capture and recognises the authority of the Administration.

The position is quite different as regards the "Myall". He resents the intrusion of the white, whether he be Police or settler, resists any attempt at capture, and has very little idea of the deadly effect of firearms. His attitude when called upon to surrender is one of immediate hostility, and the Police have therefore to safeguard their own lives as well as those of other members of the party.

The uncivilised native has no respect for the sanctity of human life, as instanced by the number of well planned attacks on the white settlers so frequent of late. The recent unfortunate happenings are only a repetition of history as regards the colonisation and development of lands formerly held by colored races.

The Police in the Territory as well as the white settlers are anxious to avoid bloodshed so far as the native is concerned. In every instance that has come under my notice the attacks by the blacks have been unprovoked, their one idea being to kill and loot.

No one regrets the shooting of the blacks more than I do, but if the Government throws open, country in the isolated interior, it is incumbent upon the local authorities to afford the necessary protection against such unprovoked attacks as the white settlers in Central Australia have been subjected to.

In the opinion of old residents of this part, trouble has been brewing for some time, and the safety of the white man could only be assured by drastic action on the part of the authorities. In their opinion the only other alternative was to hand the country back to the blacks.

I am firmly of the opinion that the result of recent action by the police will have the right effect upon the natives, and while regretting the necessity for extreme measures, the fact remains that the natives brought the trouble on themselves.

My instructions to M.C. Murray were definite to avoid bloodshed as much as possible but under no circumstances to jeopardise the lives of the Police party.

I will endeavour to get statements from each of the members of the party accompanying M.C. Murray, but it will be some weeks before I can interview them. I have every reason to believe M.C. Murray's reports to be truthful in detail. I explained to him that when furnishing a report nothing was to be kept back. I recognise that when the Minister is in possession of full facts, he is placed in a false position when replying to criticisms.

J. B. Cawood  
GOVERNMENT RESIDENT

FIGURE 24: Cawood to Carrodus, 25 October 1928.  
NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment]: 50.



*FIGURE 25: The remains of Glen Maggie homestead at Ryan's Well on the Stuart Highway. Mounted Constable Murray communicated with his police superior J.C. Cawood from here in August 1928. Photo by author.*



*FIGURE 26: This image of Randall Stafford's Aboriginal partner, 'Alice', was taken at Coniston Station by F.E. Baume in 1932. The children pictured may not be hers, as in 1932 Stafford told TGH Strehlow that his two daughters were studying in Adelaide and living with his sister. Baume 1994: 56.*



*FIGURE 27: 'Randal Stafford and Desert Myalls'. Another picture taken by Baume in 1932.  
Baume 1994: 56.*



*FIGURE 28: 'Blacks' camp near Staffords House. Typical summer residence.'  
Terry 1931: opp 229.*

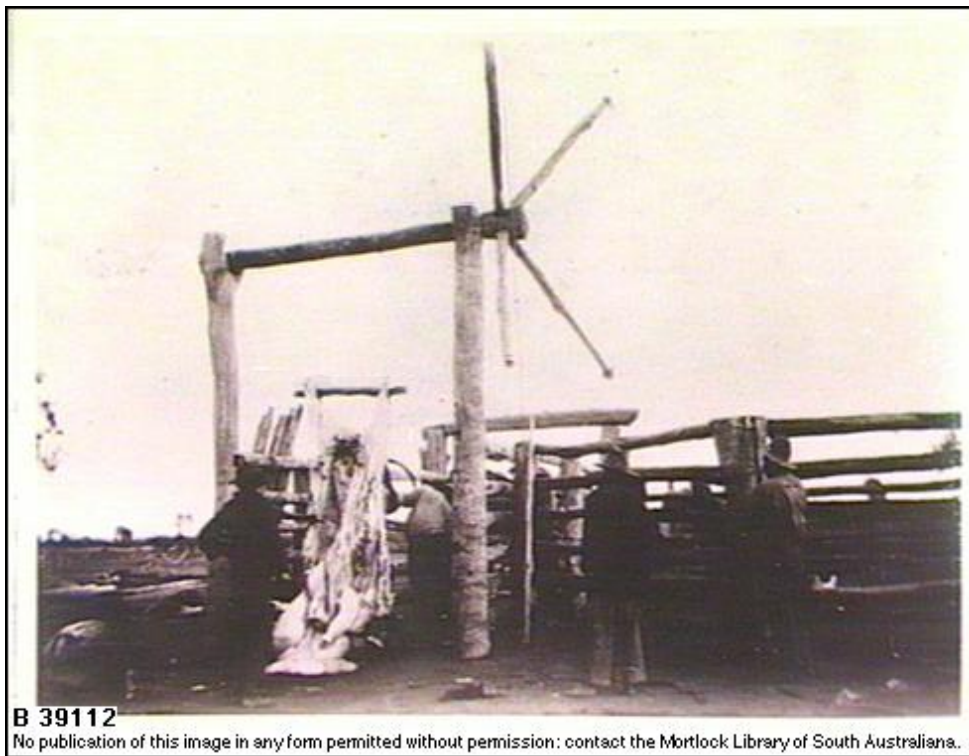


Randal Stafford. (Photograph: National Trust of Australia (NT))

*FIGURE 29: Randall Stafford (undated). This photograph, sourced to the National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory) is reproduced at Cribbin 1984: 12.*



*FIGURE 30: Photograph of Coniston Station in the 1930s. Bowman 1991: 11.*



*FIGURE ? : TITLE Coniston Station DESCRIPTION Coniston Station, North West of Alice Springs, Killing Pen for stock. DATE ca.1940. Mortlock Library of South Australia, B39112.*



*FIGURE ? : Terry 1931 opp p256: 'Brooks's Soak, where Fred Brooks was killed by blacks in August, 1928. Mount Naval Action in distance.'*



*FIGURE ? : Terry 1931 opp p232: 'The Mickery at Staffords with Joe Brown's camels being watered on coming in after his death.'*





*FIGURE ?*: Marble headstone, Frederick Brooks, purchased by Randall Stafford and delivered by Michael Terry, 1928. Text reads: *In Memory of Frederick Brooks, Murdered on 7th August 1928. Old man in the early days of Coniston. Those days when our troubles were great in the years you & I worked together. I found you a true & staunch mate. His old mate Randal Stafford.* "CE Morgan" [Adelaide?] at base. Location is South 22deg 05.782' East 132deg 18.533'. Photo by author.



When Warramullas attacked along Lander Creek in 1928, they murdered bushman Fred Brooks and pushed his body down a rabbit burrow, as they feared he would warn his fellow settlers. When peace was restored, Brooks was properly buried in frontier style; a headstone was provided by pioneer cattleman, Randal Stafford, and Terry agreed to transport it to Lander Creek.

National Library of Australia

nla.pic-vn3068972-v

*FIGURE ? : Burial place of Fred Brooks, Lander Creek, Northern Territory, 1928 [picture] / Michael Terry. nla.pic-vn3068972, photograph by Terry, Michael, 1899-1981.*

*1 photograph: gelatin silver ; 28.2 x 34.8 cm., on mount 51 x 40.6 cm.*

*IN Terry, Michael, 1899-1981. Photographs from the Michael Terry exhibition Australian walkabout [picture].*

*Title devised by cataloguer based on accompanying list.; Part of the collection: Photographs from the Michael Terry exhibition Australian walkabout.; "When Warramullas attacked along Lander Creek in 1928 they murdered bushman Fred Brooks and pushed his body down a rabbit burrow as they feared he would warn his fellow settlers. When peace was restored Brooks was properly buried in frontier style, a headstone was provided by pioneer cattleman Randal Stafford, and Terry agreed to transport it to Lander Creek." -- Caption on mount.; Inscriptions: "Australian walkabout, early glimpses of our unexplored interior. Photography by Michael Terry. A Kodak presentation" -- on lower part of mount.; Also available in an electronic version via the Internet at: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-vn3068972>.*

*Call Number: PIC/8722/3 LOC Drawer Q69/23\* Last Updated: 2004/06/04*

*This image is reproduced in Terry 1931 opp p257: 'Brooks's Grave. The rabbit warren where the blacks threw his body. 14 miles west of Staffords Station. Left to right: Saxby, Keyser, Matthews, Campbell.*



*FIGURE ?:* 'Constable Murray', photographed by Ernestine Hill. Sydney Sunday Sun and Guardian 5 February 1933. See Figure ?.



*FIGURE ?:* Terry 1931 opp p255: 'Saxby with 8 ft. brown snake killed near Brooks's Soak.'



### CENTRAL AUSTRALIA MURDER.

The two aborigines who were found not guilty on a charge of having murdered Mr. F. Brooks, near Alice Springs. A protest against the killing of 17 aborigines by the police during their effort to arrest the alleged murderers has been lodged with the Home and Territories Department by the Rev. Athol McGregor, of the Methodist Inland Mission.

FIGURE ? : Padygar and Arkirkra, Adelaide Register 10 November 1928.

run away. He was left behind with the women and children. The four shot were running away. We shot to kill—what was the use of a wounded blackfellow hundreds of miles away from civilization.

FIGURE ? : Quote from Mounted Constable Murray during his evidence to the Darwin trial of Padygar and Arkirkra, Northern Territory Times, 'Alleged murder', 9 November 1928.



*FIGURE ?:* 'Old Bullfrog', from Dean, B. and Carell, V. 1955. *Dust for the Dancers*, facing 54. This man was photographsed in 1955 (27 years after the Coniston events) near Yuendumu and given his name and age is likely to be the Japanangka that murdered Fred Brookes in 1928. Dean and Carell described him thus: 'Another of the important old men was Bullfrog. He was a lovable old fellow, quite distinguished looking, with a tiny goatee beard. Although neither of us could understand his language, and he knew no English, we still managed to have long conversations with him, in which he told us, in eloquent sign language with much smiling and nodding of the head, all about his travels through his own country.'"(Dean and Carell 1955: 119). If this was indeed the same Japanangka who killed Brookes he obviously chose not to tell Dean and Carell exactly 'all' about his travels, or he did and they chose not to recount the Coniston events in their largely well-mannered travel book.



'Old Bullfrog' with his woomera sits 'Dreaming' beside his spear and bean-tree shield.

*FIGURE ?:* 'Old Bullfrog'. (Dean & Carell 1955: 101).



*FIGURE ?*: State Library of South Australia South Australiana database. Number B 64383/154. Phys. desc Photograph; 11 cm x 6 cm. Author Bray, Theodor, 1905-2000; photographer. Title Miss Lock's Aboriginal Mission. Year 1927. Summary Miss Lock's Faith Mission at Harden's Soak, Woodford Creek, on Burt Plain, Northern Territory.



*FIGURE ?*: State Library of South Australia South Australiana database. Number B 64383/126. Phys. desc Photograph; 10.5 cm x 6.5 cm. Author Bray, Theodor, 1905-2000; photographer. Title House at Ryan's Well Station. Year 1927. Summary A house at Ryan's Well Station on the Burt Plain. A member of the tourist party is talking to a man standing in the doorway of the house.



*FIGURE ?*: Title: 1992 *Beasts and Beauties (Contact period)* Location: Framed Art Gallery, Darwin NT Date: 1992

*Catalyst For a Massacre - The Coniston Incident* Year: 1992 Format: Oil on Canvas Size: 120 x 150 cm. A typical 'human' incident where a white man was killed for sleeping with the tribesmen's wives at his leisure and pleasure. This fellow was a dam builder (camels would drag the dirt out of the hole), he was also a dingo poisoner. Inevitably what followed his death was a 'massacre' of hundreds of Aboriginal people in the area as a 'get back' or revenge. Description: Major solo exhibition featuring the contact period works. A dramatised mythological look at the 'contact' between the early white settlers and the Aboriginal culture. The works focus on conflicts and harmonies in this strange meeting of power, persuasion, force, resistance and exchange between cultures in Australia. The works explore the ancient Dionysian, polymorphic nature gods in Aboriginal Australian culture coming into contact with 'one god' white man, and the resulting violent clash. ([www.cockatoo-gallery.com.au](http://www.cockatoo-gallery.com.au))



*FIGURE ? : FILE 14\14230*

*TITLE Nugget Morton branding.*

*DESCRIPT Nugget Morton branding. Cameron Richards among the dogs.*

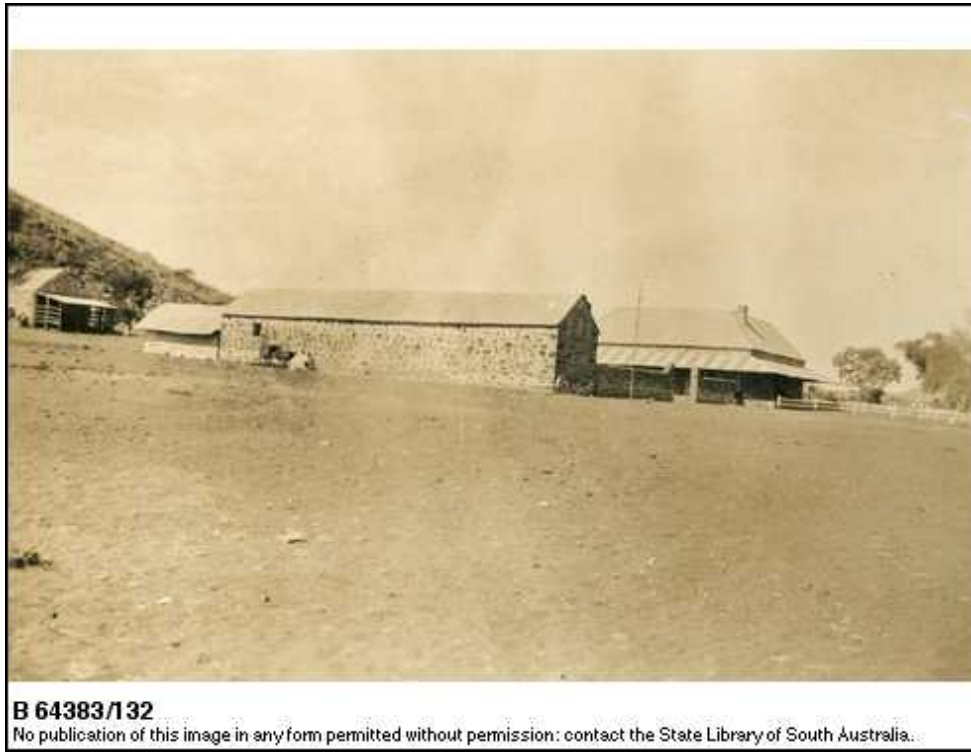
*DATE : : 193? PHOTONO PH0175/0041*

*CREATOR A & B Richards*

*COLLECTN RICHARDS*

*RIGHTS Northern Territory Library and Information Service LOCATION Possum Well*

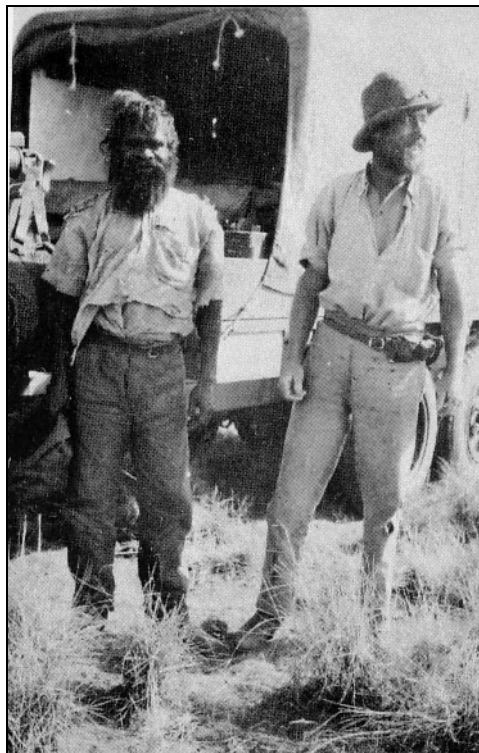




**B 64383/132**

No publication of this image in any form permitted without permission: contact the State Library of South Australia.

*FIGURE ? : State Library of South Australia South Australiana database  
Number B 64383/132, Phys. desc Photograph; 8 cm x 5.5 cm  
Author Bray, Theodor, 1905-2000; photographer, Title Barrow Creek Telegraph Station  
buildings, Year 1927. Summary The telegraph station buildings at Barrow Creek.*



*FIGURE ? : Terry 1974 opp p22: 'Harry Tilmouth and his loyal Aboriginal companion were  
attacked by Warramullas at the Lander River in 1928.'*

# MURRAY—SCOURGE OF THE MYALLS

**Man Whose Gun Keeps White Men Safe In Wilds**

By ERNESTINE HILL

"But you didn't shoot to kill, Mr. Murray?"

It was at Darwin that a Judge of the Supreme Court asked that question.

Straight and clear came the answer he was not expecting. "Every time."

In December, 1928, before a court of special inquiry in Central Australia, Mounted Constable George Murray was called to account for the death of 31 natives who were destroyed, following outrages upon settlers of the Lander River.

At that inquiry, with the sympathies of every bushman in the Territory, Constable Murray was exonerated of all shadow of reproach, and his action declared justified.

**T**o whisper the name of "Murri" to the 'blacks of the Lower Territory to-day is enough to turn the stock-boys pale with fright and send the myalls in a wild scatter for the bushland.

Leader of the last of the great punitive police raids that alone have made for the safety of the white man in a black man's country, Murray is stationed with his wife and family at a lonely little station



Constable Murray

In May, 1919, he joined the Northern Territory police force, and in the ensuing nine years was stationed at the Rankine, Lake Nash, where he was in charge of the daily dipping of some 50,000 cattle; Arltunga, and Barrow Creek. During those nine years, save for one journey of 1200 miles alone with a raving lunatic, his career was uneventful. A noted champion of the natives, he was even at times a little unpopular with station-owners of the north.

It was in August, 1928, then stationed at Barrow Creek, that he



Mrs. Murray on camel-back; she loves the outback life, despite her city origin. At top left is an actual photo. of Murray at work on the reconstruction of a murder committed by blacks. He is enacting the part of the victim, while prisoners and witnesses (right) show how the man was speared. In the centre is a view of Arltunga police station.

son and Bobby Hitchcock. Out in that tragic desert, he has set up crude monuments, the end of a petrol case on a bush stick, to mark the place to their memory, out where the sun-perished wings of the "Kookaburra" are spread in the form of a white cross against the emptiness of the burning plain.

It was in 1931 that he married in Melbourne and brought his young wife to share his life in the Territory. A youthful and popular city girl, who had never been further than the suburbs in her life before, Mrs. Murray and her little son

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FIGURE 2: The (Sydney) Sunday Sun and Guardian article by Ernestine Hill, published 5 February 1933.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS.  
~~Minute and Correspondence Department~~

Departmental No. 451.

13th December, 1928.

Executive Council No. 61.

MINUTE PAPER FOR THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

SUBJECT.

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD OF ENQUIRY, CENTRAL  
AUSTRALIA.

Recommended for the approval of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council that in pursuance of the Board of Enquiry Ordinance 1928 of the Territory of Central Australia he be pleased to appoint a Board of Enquiry in the within terms to enquire into matters connected with the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia.

Approved in Council.

(Sgd.) STONEHAVEN

Governor-General.

13 DEC. 1928

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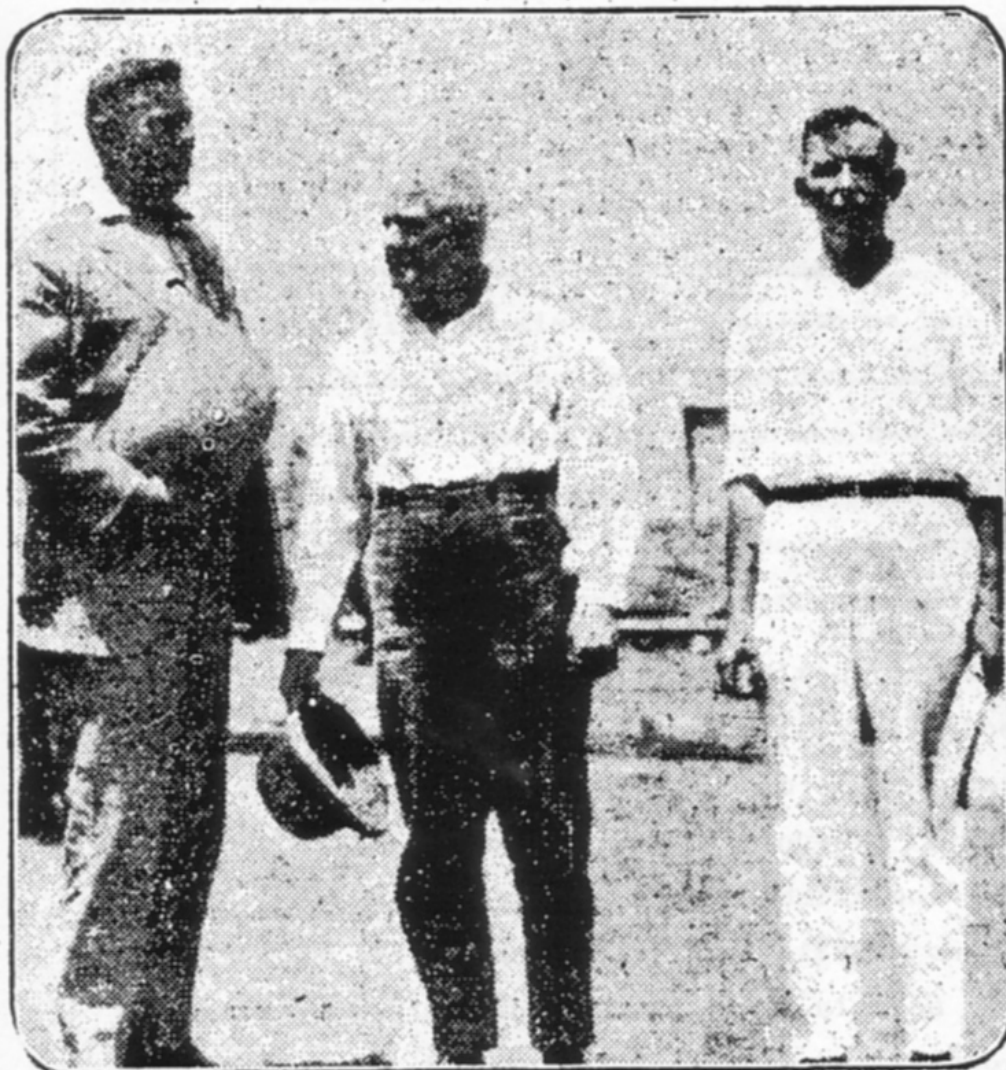
Minister of State for Home Affairs.

Filed in the Records of  
the Council.

(Sgd.) J. H. STARLING

Secretary to the Executive Council.

FIGURE ? : The Executive Council minute recommending that a Board of Enquiry be established.



**WHITE MAN'S JUSTICE:** The three members of the commission who are now enquiring into the shooting of blacks in Central Australia. From left: Inspector Giles, Mr. A. H. O'Kelly (chairman), and Mr. J. Q. Cawood. A photograph by The Register's special representative,

*FIGURE ?:* 'White Man's Justice'. Photograph of the Board of Enquiry, published in the Adelaide Register 15 January 1929.

# MUST OUR ABORIGINALS BE SLAUGHTERED?

## Recent Killings Criticised

### FORMER RESIDENT DISSECTS "SECRET" FINDINGS OF BOARD OF INQUIRY

#### A PROTEST NATIVE SHOOTING INQUIRY A.B.M. MOVES

Protesting against the findings of the Board of Enquiry which recently investigated the shooting of aborigines in Central Australia, the Australian Board of Missions has passed a resolution, copies of which have been forwarded to the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce), the Minister for Home Affairs (Mr. Abbott), and the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scullin).

The resolution is as follows:—  
(a) That the Board of Enquiry should have included in its personnel at least one representative of the bodies representative of public interest in the care of the aborigines.

(b) That a legal officer should have been appointed to assist the Board of Enquiry in the examination of witnesses and assessing of evidence.

(c) That a most important witness, Tracker Major, should have been produced and examined.

(d) That the evidence and examination of witnesses given at the sittings should be made available to the public.

(e) That the report brings itself under the implication of bias by its reference to alleged injudicious conduct on the part of some missionaries (unnamed) and wrongdoing on the part of the aborigines, whilst omitting making any comment upon provocation arising from the conduct of white men.

*Morning Herald, Sydney 9-4-1929.*

#### SHOOTING OF NATIVES. MISSION BOARD'S PROTEST.

At a meeting of the Australian Board of Missions, the Archbishop of Brisbane, Dr. Sharp presiding, the following resolution expressing the board's dissatisfaction with the findings of the board of inquiry into the shooting of natives by police in Central Australia was carried:—(a) That the board of inquiry should have included in its personnel at least one representative of the bodies representative of public interest in the care of the aborigines. (b) That a legal officer should have been appointed to assist the board of inquiry in the examination of witnesses and assessing of evidence. (c) That a most important witness, Tracker Major, should have been produced and examined. (d) That the evidence and examination of witnesses given at the sittings should be made available to the public. (e) That the report brings itself under the implication of bias by its reference to alleged injudicious conduct on the part of some missionaries (unnamed), and wrongdoing on the part of the aborigines, whilst omitting to make any comment upon provocation arising from the conduct of white men.

#### SHOTS THAT KILLED NATIVES

##### "Inquiry Not Adequate"

#### STRONG CRITICISM BY MISSION LEADER

Intense dissatisfaction with the finding of the Board of Inquiry appointed to investigate the killing of natives on Forrest River last year was expressed by the Rev. J. S. Needham, chairman of the Australian Board of Missions, at the conference of the National Missionary Council of Australia today.

"The personnel of the Commission," he said, "though satisfactory as far as it went, should have included representatives of the public interested in the welfare of aborigines. The Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) was asked to make this appointment, but he refused."

"A lawyer should have been appointed to examine witnesses and assess the evidence. Mr. Bruce was also asked to make this appointment, and again refused."

"The evidence of a most material witness was not called. The Commission excuses this by the announcement to the witness concerned, Black Tracker Major, was not available. His services had been dispensed with, and he had gone bush. This is most unsatisfactory, because this black tracker was the one who was supposed, on four different occasions, to have identified the natives who were pursued by the police, and shot as being the natives concerned in the murder of Brooks."

#### WHITE MAN'S EVIDENCE

"Another unsatisfactory aspect of the Commission's finding is the reference to the evidence of the white settler, John Saxby. The Commission reported:—'Saxby says he fired eight or nine shots with a rifle, and heard two other firearms discharged, and we are of the opinion that he was afraid to admit that he killed some of the blacks.' Yet the Commission goes on at once to add:—'The Board is prepared to believe the evidence of all witnesses.'"

"The finding is also unsatisfactory because of clear indication of bias against both missionaries and blacks. The most trivial acts of missionaries are the subject of criticism, and every possible blame is levelled at the blacks for all their actions, but no mention whatever is made of the conduct of whites toward the blacks."

"The half-caste problem is entirely ignored."

#### SHOOTING OF ABORIGINES. INQUIRY BOARD CRITICISED.

##### Discussion by Missionary Council.

Representatives of 14 missionary societies assembled yesterday for the annual meeting of the National Missionary Council. The vice-president of the council (the Rev. W. J. Eddy) presided. For a long time the meeting discussed the findings of the board of inquiry, consisting of Messrs. A. H. O'Kelly (chairman), J. C. Cawood, and P. A. Giles, which investigated the shooting of 17 aborigines in Central Australia. The council placed on record its dissatisfaction with the contents of the abridged report which had been made public. Appreciation was expressed of the publication of the report of the chief protector for aborigines in Queensland (Mr. J. W. Bleakley).

"We are utterly dissatisfied with the finding of the board of inquiry which investigated the killing of aborigines by police parties," said the chairman of the Australian Board of Missions (the Rev. J. S. Needham). Continuing, he said that he did not wish to quarrel with the personnel of the commission, but he considered that a representative of some philanthropic institution interested in the welfare of the aborigines should have been included. The findings as published were biased. The evils of "unattached missionaries" had been mentioned. He did not know of any unattached missionaries. Such people, considering the charges laid against them, should have been named.

The secretary of the Aborigines' Friends' Association (Mr. J. Sexton) said that he could not endorse the statements made by Mr. Needham. They were too strong. Some people had hastily condemned the police, and when their judgment was subsequently upset by the finding of the commission they did not like it. The shooting had taken place in the dark, and the police had shot in self-defence.

An appeal to the white people to safeguard the interests of the aborigines was made by Mr. Shadwick James, a native missionary to his own people in Northern Australia. He believed that the aborigines had not received fair treatment. The shooting of aborigines had been going on for many years, and in 80 years one person only had been executed for killing them.

The following motion, which was moved by Mr. J. Sexton, and seconded by the Rev. F. H. L. Paton, was agreed to unanimously:—

"That in the absence of the evidence forwarded to the commission we view with dissatisfaction the findings of the recent commission dealing with the shooting of natives in Central Australia; that we desire to point out that during the regime of Sergeant Stott, who was stationed for more than 20 years at Alice Springs, no natives were shot by the police in carrying out their duties; that in view of this fact the police be urged to employ more peaceful methods in bringing native offenders to justice."

Officers were elected as follows:—Chairman, Mr. W. M. Bantline (Church Missionary Society); vice-chairman, the Rev. W. J. Eddy (Mission to Lepers); secretary, the Rev. A. T. Thompson (British and Foreign Bible Society); treasurer and minute secretary, the Rev. J. Simpfordorfer (Lutheran Society).

#### Protest in Gippsland Synod.

SALISBURY, Thursday. — Speaking in regard to missionary work at the synod of the diocese of Gippsland to-day, the Rev. John Jones commented strongly on the manner in which the inquiry into the killing of aborigines was conducted. He said it did not stand to the credit of the Prime Minister.

FIGURE 2: A selection of press cuttings in the aftermath of the 1929 Board of Enquiry.



*FIGURE ?:* 'Painting courtesy of National Museum of Australia. This painting was done by M. Joseph between 1974 and 1977 when she was a student at Yirarra College in Central Australia.' Reproduced in 'Making Peace with The Past: remembering the Coniston Massacre 1928-2003'.

## Correspondence & other text

I suggest that in addition to any text prepared by NMA staff, facsimiles of original text be included in any Coniston exhibit. These are primarily the telegrams and letters between the Central Australian Government Resident, John Charles Cawood, and the Secretary of the Department of Home and Territories in Canberra, J.A. Carrodus. Images of key correspondence are included in the Images section above. Other text that I consider important includes the Aboriginal oral record, reports and evidence of Mounted Constable Murray and other members of the police party and subsequent accounts by participants and contemporary commentators. What follows is a selection of such text.

The South Australian *Register* summarised the situation in Central Australia that led to the Coniston killings by stating that “the blacks have taken charge and it will be an impossibility to develop the country until there is more police protection”.<sup>51</sup>

Sergeant Noblet of Alice Springs expressed a somewhat starker sentiment in correspondence to Cawood after the Coniston killings:

*‘My experience in nineteen years of out back life is that the settlers are very fair to the natives but stock and natives do not and will not thrive together and it can be seen at a glance by the restlessness and tucked-up look of the cattle when they are together. If this country is to be settled with a healthy white population, we must give the pioneers every protection both for themselves and their stock otherwise the country must be left to the natives who have not the slightest idea of development in any shape or form.’*<sup>52</sup>

Terry (1974) describes the open hostility between Aboriginal people and European Australians that was evident by the 1920s:

*‘By 1926 the hostility of the Warramullas was breaking out in open defiance and lawlessness... Later in 1926 a cattleman named Mathews went to Mount Peake looking for feed in a poor year. Mathews found feed there and had begun to graze cattle when a band of Warramulla warriors appeared. One of the Aborigines, a man who had some contact with white men, ordered him off, saying threateningly, "This no more longa white feller, longa black feller. White man can't sit down longa black feller. White man shift."’*<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Register*, ‘Black Menace’, 8 September 1928, in Wilson 1996: 89.

<sup>52</sup> Noblet to Cawood, 8 December 1928, NAA A431 1950/2768 Part 1: 217.

<sup>53</sup> Terry 1974: 4.

It is evident that Fred Brookes was murdered by Aboriginal people, for what reason remains a matter of conjecture. Most Aboriginal (oral) accounts point to Brookes being involved in a sexual relationship with one or two Warlpiri women and that this was either inappropriate or not honoured by him. European accounts invariably state Brookes was killed ‘so as to get possession of his flour and tobacco’<sup>54</sup> or because he encountered a warring party of ‘myalls’ making for Coniston Station, intent on removing the white man from Aboriginal land.

One Aboriginal oral history states, ‘the white man [Brookes] used to go into camp and drag off women in front of the men whom he threatened with his rifle’.<sup>55</sup> This account is found in Japangardi and Jampijinpa (1978), a three-page document that I recommend should be reproduced in full. This text is provided as Appendix D.

Another Aboriginal oral history indicates that Brookes had asked a local Aboriginal man, Japanangka (also known as ‘Bullfrog’), for his wife, Marungarli, for her to do his washing for him and that he would give Japanangka food and tobacco in exchange. Walpiri men Blind Alec Jupurrula and Jack Japaljarri told Read & Read (1991) that Japanangka expected Marungarli to return but as she did not, and Brookes had not supplied any food or tobacco, he attacked him at dawn. According to this account Brookes had said:

*“Let that woman go washing clothes for me, and [I’ll] let her go after washing clothes. I’ll give you tucker.” And so old man let her go, that old lady. That Freddie took him away, washing clothes, but he [Brookes] never comin’ back. He never comin’ back with the tucker. He keepem there.’<sup>56</sup>*

In another Aboriginal variation on this theme, Brookes was living with two Aboriginal women who were working for him by arrangement with their mutual husband, “a Warlpiri man from the area” whose third and youngest wife remained with him.<sup>57</sup> One morning this man awoke cold and alone; his youngest wife had not tended to the fire and her tracks went in the direction of the soak, giving him the unfortunate impression that she, too, had gone to camp with the white man. Despite words of caution from other Warlpiri, who told him his youngest wife had simply left to fetch water, he armed himself with a steel tomahawk and in a rage stormed off to the soak. When he arrived he called out to his wives to hold Brookes, which they did while he hacked at him with the tomahawk.

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<sup>54</sup> Deposition by Murray to Special Magistrate Allchurch, 7 September 1928, NAA A431 1950 Part 1: 32.

<sup>55</sup> Japangardi & Jampijinpa 1978: 1. The booklet is also vividly illustrated by Jampijinpa.

<sup>56</sup> Read & Read 1991: 36. In this account the name of the husband of the woman with Brookes was ‘Nugget’. Citing a 90 year-old Warlpiri man as his source, Kimber (October 2003) states Bullfrog’s correct Warlpiri name was ‘Kamalyarrpa Japanang-ka’.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Dick Kimber, 25 March 2002. Warlpiri at Yuendumu told this story to Kimber in 1970.



Warlpiri woman Rosie Nungarrayi describes how her grandfather survived the punitive raids following Brookes' murder:

*'At Yurrkuru, my grandfather killed a whitefella. He hit the whitefella because the whitefella stole his wife. That old lady was my grandmother, a Napurrula ['Marungarli']. She was frightened when that whitefella took her – that's why the old man hit him. After that the old man run up to the hills to hide. My grandfather was living in the hills, in a cave. That's what saved his life while police were out looking for him. He stayed in the hills. They didn't find him, because he was sitting in the cave.'*<sup>58</sup>

On 28 August, the co-owner of Broadmeadows Station, William John ('Nugget') Morton, had been attacked by a group of 15 Warlpiri. Aboriginal oral history suggests that Morton was attacked because of his abuse of Aboriginal women. Warlpiri Jimmy Jungarrayi told Read and Read (1991):

*'Well, that, all the people bin talkin', "What we killem that man, because that man come up and robbem with the woman all the time?"'*<sup>59</sup>

The lay Methodist missionary Athol McGregor attended the Darwin trial of Padygar and Arkirkra and was shocked at the actions of the police party. In the *Northern Territory Times* he called for an inquiry into the shootings, also stating his reasons:

*'My objection is not to constitutional justice but to the shooting of seventeen men and women by a police party. I don't think that any circumstances can justify the shooting of such a number. But was ever a battle fought in which 17 were hit and all died? So many settlers prefer a dead "walk-about" black to a live one that we must ask ourselves what really did happen? ... I do earnestly ask for an inquiry into the stewardship of the police party who represented us in this affair, and maybe also into the scheme of land settlement which makes such tragedies inevitable.'*<sup>60</sup>

Randall Stafford recalled the events at Coniston some four years later during a conversation with T.G.H. Strehlow, who recorded his comments in an unpublished manuscript:

*'I don't dislike the blacks myself: I have lived among the blacks all my life, first in South Australia and then here, and I realize they are human beings*

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<sup>58</sup> Vaarzon-Morel 1995: 36.

<sup>59</sup> Read & Read 1991: 42.

<sup>60</sup> *Northern Territory Times*, 'The Tragedy of the Centre', 9 November 1928.

*like myself. It's just that I don't understand them and their ways. I've been good to them on every station I've been on – I've fed them – I've treated them well – I've never interfered with them much on their walkabouts; and yet I feel sure that they don't like me much any more than they like those other whites who treat them as though they were dogs. But it doesn't matter to me. I know that these myalls here sometimes spear one of my bullocks; but as long as it doesn't happen too often, I say nothing about it. It was their country before I came into it, and I know they often have a pretty tough time in making a living for themselves. Alice always keeps me informed how things are going, and I know that she would tell me if anything really serious happened out on the run...*

*'Well, four years are gone since it all happened; and lots of blacks were shot for it. Mind you, I don't approve of all that the police party did afterwards. I only know of most of their doings by hearsay, of course, for I would not go out far with the police myself, though I did lead them to the place where Fred was killed. But I can tell you this: most of the things they did were hushed up afterwards at the official enquiry. I had enough of it when I saw Murray coming back to the party after shooting several blacks at the first encounter. But Murray, Nugget Morton, Police-tracker Paddy, and the rest went on with lots of rifles and loads of bullets; and I was told that they shot down myalls up and down the Lander River for many miles. At the enquiry they owned up, I believe, to shooting thirty-one blacks in all, and this figure included two gins as well. But some of the men who went out with Murray told me that the true figure was at least twice as high, and that's not even counting in the odd myalls who were shot from time to time by men like Jimmy Wickham, who's now got a station in the Lander River country west of Campbell's station. Now I don't hold with such methods either. I have always believed in fair play and in British justice; and those sorts of shootings were a disgrace to any civilized community. The myalls that did the murder should have received exemplary punishment for what they had done; but to shoot down whole camps of blacks without leaving any live witnesses behind is not my idea of justice.'*<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Strehlow *Land of Altjira*: 312-319.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Persons interviewed**

The following were interviewed as part of the consultancy.

- Mr Barry Frew, Retired Police Association of the Northern Territory.
- Dr Bill Wilson, Charles Darwin University (and retired NT policeman).
- Mr Paul O'Brien (I.S. Wright Militaria, Sydney).
- Mr Tony Austin (private small firearm specialist, NSW).
- Mr Edgar Penzig (private small firearm specialist and author, NSW).
- Mr Eric Murray (the only child of Mounted Constable William George Murray, this was a brief preparatory communication for further interview – see above).

The following were previously interviewed, their input assisting this current work.

- Mr Peter Gunner (former pastoralist and co-worker of William 'Nugget' Morton, Alice Springs).
- Mr Ian Jones (4th Australian Light Horse historian, Melbourne).
- Mr Dick Kimber (historian, Alice Springs).

## APPENDIX B

### Chronology of events – 1928 & 1929

2/3 Aug	Brookes left Coniston for soak with 'Skipper' and 'Dodger'
4 Aug	Carter and Young meet Brookes, warning him of Aboriginal unrest
7 Aug	Murray leaves Barrow Creek district for Alice
7 Aug	Brookes killed & body found/Coniston advised
8? Aug	Chapman viewed body and reburies
10 Aug	'Old Percy' rides overnight to Ti Tree with Chapman's note
11 Aug	Alice Springs Police advised & Murray departs Alice Springs, met
12 Aug	Murray arrived at Coniston
14 Aug	Sydney Herald reports, Murray making enquiries at Coniston
15 Aug	Stafford arrives Coniston, Woolingar and Padygar arrive, W shot
16 Aug	Party leaves Coniston (Murray, Alex Wilson, Randall Stafford, prospector John Saxby, itinerant worker Billy Briscoe, Dodger, trackers Paddy and Major and prisoners Padygar and Woolingar)
30 Aug	Party returns Coniston with prisoners Padygar & Arkirkra, Woolingar dies of wounds, total 17 killed during minimum of six encounters over 1,362km
28 Aug	Nugget Morton attacked at Broadmeadows by 15 Warlpiri
1 Sept	Murray returns to Alice Springs
2 Sept	Canberra advised of 17 Aboriginal deaths
7 Sept	Alice Police advised by letter of attack on Morton & Padygar & Arkirkra committed to trial at an Alice hearing
19 Sept	Murray & Wilson despatched to Broadmeadows, en route informed that Tilmouth had killed an Aboriginal man near his camp
24 Sept	Murray arrives Broadmeadows, party formed (Murray, Morton, Wilson and 'small Aboriginal boy')
18 Oct	Murray arrives Alice, total 14 killed during three encounters over 1,288km
7 Nov	Darwin trial of Padygar & Arkirkra
8 Nov	Padygar & Arkirkra acquitted
9 Nov	Darwin press covers trial and prints Athol McGregor's condemnation
17 Nov	Federal election, Stanley Melbourne Bruce returned to office
28 Nov	Government announces establishment of Board of 'Enquiry'
13 Dec	Board of Enquiry officially appointed by Governor-General
18 Jan	Board declared closed after 30 witnesses, 18 days hearings and 1 day findings
30 Jan	Board findings (not evidence) made public
Feb-May	Strong public criticism from primarily the Association for the Protection of the Native Races of Australia and Polynesia (APNR), wide press coverage negative to Australian Government.

## APPENDIX C

### Chronology of Murray's military record

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
21 Aug 1914	Enlisted, no. 308, 4 <sup>th</sup> L.H. at Broadmeadows, aged 30. Gave father as next of kin, Northcote address, trade as farmer. Nearest town to birthplace given as Yarck, NE of MEL (Maroondah Hwy). Stated 8 years, 8 months in 7 <sup>th</sup> Australian Light Horse militia (Victorian Mounted Rifles). <sup>62</sup>	<i>Attestation Paper for Persons Enlisted For Service Abroad, inc. Certificate of Attesting Officer.</i>
20 Oct 1914	Embarked at MEL on "Wiltshire" <sup>63</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Army Form B, 103</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Statement of Service</i></li> </ul>
20 May 1915	Proceeded to join Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, Alexandria, with B Squadron <sup>64</sup> of 4 <sup>th</sup> L.H.	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 1</i>
24 May 1915	Landed Gallipoli	<i>Smith, p.23, and based on above entry</i>
14 Aug 1915	Wounded in action – gun shot wound left shoulder/arm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>War Gratuity Schedule</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Telegrams 13 &amp; 17 Sept '15</i></li> </ul>
20 Aug 1915	Disembarked from Hospital Ship "Valdavia" at Malta hospital <sup>65</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Army Form B, 103, entry 3</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Telegram 13/9/15</i></li> </ul>
26 Sep 1915	Embarked for Egypt on Hired Transport "Karoa" <sup>66</sup> (recuperation from GSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>War Gratuity Schedule</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Telegram 7 Dec '15</i></li> </ul>
4 Oct 1915	Diarrhoea, admitted Royal Naval Hospital Mustapha, Malta	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 5</i>
6 Oct 1915	Discharged to Regiment	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 6</i>
25 Oct 1915	Rejoined Regiment at Gallipoli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>War Gratuity Schedule</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Army Form B, 103, entry 7</i></li> </ul>
27 Nov 1915	Promoted to Lance Corporal	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 8</i>
27 Dec 1915	Disembarked Alexandria "ex Caledonia"	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 9</i> <sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Army Form B, 103 "Casualty Form – Active Service" (discoloured version) gives date of enlistment as 20 August 1914. The Oath on the Certificate of Attesting Officer is effective "from 20<sup>th</sup> August 1914 until the end of the War".

<sup>63</sup> War Gratuity Schedule has date of embarkation 19 October.

<sup>64</sup> Neil Smith, p.201

<sup>65</sup> Also spelt "Valdivia".

<sup>66</sup> No mention of this on either version of Army Form B, 103

<sup>67</sup> Army Form B, 103 "Casualty Form – Active Service" (discoloured) gives date as 27/12, whereas Army Form B, 103 appears to give as 27/11, if "do" = ditto.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
21 Mar 1916	Proceeded to join British Expeditionary Force <sup>68</sup>	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 10</i>
27 Mar 1916	Disembarked Marseilles from "Castrian"	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 10</i>
13 May 1916	Taken on strength of 1 <sup>st</sup> ANZAC Mounted Regiment	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 11</i>
7 Jul 1916	Transferred to 2 <sup>nd</sup> ANZAC Mounted Regiment <sup>69</sup>	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 12</i>
7 Jul 1916	Taken on strength of 2 <sup>nd</sup> ANZAC Mounted Regiment from 1 <sup>st</sup> ANZAC Mounted Reg.	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 13</i>
13 Aug 1916 <sup>70</sup>	Wounded in action (slightly) right arm <sup>71</sup> , remained at duty (reported by OC 53 <sup>rd</sup> )	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 14</i>
20 Sep 1916	Promoted to Corporal (in the field)	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 15</i>
26 Sep 1916	Detached from 2 <sup>nd</sup> ANZAC L.H.R. for duty with Corps Reserve Echelon Armentieres	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 16</i>
27 Nov 1916	Rejoined from detachment C.R.E. Armentieres	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 17</i>
28 Nov 1916	Sick to hospital	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 18</i>
7 Dec 1916	Admitted 3 <sup>rd</sup> Divisional Rest Station, V.D.G.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Army Form B, 103, entry 19</i></li> <li>▶ <i>War Gratuity Schedule</i></li> </ul>
8 Dec 1916	Admitted 2 <sup>nd</sup> ACCS, V.D.G.	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 20</i>
9 Dec 1916	Transferred to 18 Ambulance Train	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 20</i>
10 Dec 1916	Transferred to 51 <sup>st</sup> General Hospital, Boulogne	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 21</i>
10 Dec 1916	Admitted 51 <sup>st</sup> General Hospital, V.D.G., Etaples	
11 Jan 1917	Joined Australian General Base Depot from hospital VD period & total forfeiture of pay 36 days.	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 23</i>
25 Jan 1917	Marched out to unit	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 25</i>
27 Jan 1917	Rejoined unit from hospital ex AGBD	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 26</i>
6 Feb 1917	Detached to School of Instruction	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 27</i>
4 Mar 1917	Rejoined from School of Instruction	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 28</i>
5 May 1917	Detached to anti-aircraft section 2 <sup>nd</sup> ANZAC	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 29</i>
25 May 1917	Rejoined unit from detachment to anti-aircraft section 2 <sup>nd</sup> ANZAC	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 30</i>
17 Jun 1917	Detached to Salvage Party 25 <sup>th</sup> Division	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 31</i>
20 Jun 1917	Rejoined unit from detachment to Salvage Party 25 <sup>th</sup> Division	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 32</i>
29 Jun 1917	Proceeded on leave	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 33</i>

<sup>68</sup> "B Squadron – six officers and 137 other ranks – sailed [to France] on 21 March." (Jones, Ian. "The Case of the Vanishing Regiment: The Fourth Light Horse in France and Belgium 1916-18." *Sabretache* XXVI Number 2, no. April/June 1985, p.4.)

<sup>69</sup> "...B and D Squadrons of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the single squadron of the Otagos became the 2<sup>nd</sup> ANZAC Mounted Regiment." (Jones, p.4.)

<sup>70</sup> "On 21 July, three officers and 100 men of B Squadron ... were sent to reinforce the 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in the trenches near Armentieres. More precisely, to a place called Fleurbaix." (Jones, p.4.) According to Army Form B, 103 the "OC 53<sup>rd</sup>" reported the 13 August wounding on 26 August.

<sup>71</sup> Subject of telegram, 15/9/16.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
13 Jul 1917	Returned from leave	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 34</i>
3 Sep 1917	Promoted to Lance Sergeant (as substitute for wounded Sgt)	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 35</i>
10 Sep 1917	Promoted to Sergeant (as substitute for wounded Sgt)	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 36</i>
29 Sep 1917	Detached to School of Instruction	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 37</i>
14 Oct 1917	Rejoined from School of Instruction	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 38</i>
20 Dec 1917	Detached for duty with 2 <sup>nd</sup> ANZAC Salvage Company	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 39</i>
4 Feb 1918	Rejoined from Salvage Company, under new designation 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps Light Horse Regiment or XXII Corps Mounted Regiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Army Form B, 103, entry 40</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Statement of Service</i></li> </ul>
4 Feb 1918	To England on leave	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 41</i>
20 Feb 1918	Rejoined from leave	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 42</i>
11 Mar 1918	To Paris on leave	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 43</i>
19 Mar 1918	Rejoined from leave	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 44</i>
28 Mar 1918	Detached to British 49 <sup>th</sup> Division	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 45</i>
12 Apr 1918	Rejoined from 49 <sup>th</sup> Division	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 46</i>
8 Oct 1918	Embarked at Taranto on furlough to Australia	<i>Army Form B, 103, entry 48<sup>72</sup></i>
2 Dec 1918	Disembarked "Port Sydney" at 3 <sup>rd</sup> Military District, Melbourne	War Gratuity Schedule
23 Mar 1919	Discharged AIF	War Gratuity Schedule

<sup>72</sup> Entry 47 has been deleted in all forms, but read: "18.9.18 Proc to Adm Hq London for return to Aust". It is safe to assume he was in France until at least 18 September.

## APPENDIX D

English translation of Japangardi & Jampijinpa (1978).

'Coniston Story. Told by Tim Japangardi. Transcribed and edited by George Jampijinpa. Illustrated by George Jampijinpa. Translated into English by Mary Laughren and G. Jampijinpa.

'Yurrkuru is our name for the place where the fighting between Aboriginals and Whites started. The White owner of Coniston Station was a man called Randall Stafford. At that time (1928) a man with camels was digging out soakages and making a dam at Yurrkuru on the west side of Coniston station. His name was Frederick Brookes. The camels were used to dig out the earth. Brookes' tent stood on the west side of the soakage. Where he was digging women used to come regularly for water. Thus it was that the white man got to talk to them as they came up to get water.

'This white fellow used to go with his rifle towards the camp situated to the south where our people were living. Those living there were Pukirdiwara, Walypalipakarnu, Yukunypungu and Nyalinyapa. The white man used to go into the camp and drag off women in front of the men who he threatened with his rifle.

'One day he took off north with Jangari Japangardi's mother, Napurrula, and slept with her. He kept her for a long time in his tent as his woman. At the camp at Yurrkuru they looked for her but when night came she still wasn't to be found. He kept her for two nights and didn't send her back home. He continued sleeping with her the next day and although they went north looking for her, the men didn't find her. The white man kept her for three days. After that he sent her back home.

'The old men met her and told Napurrula: "If you go back again, you can hold him for us and yell out." They then returned to the camp. The old men said: "He might take away our women from us, so we will have to kill that white man. (Do you know where those people were from? Those old men were from Lurnpakurlangu.) They then said that they would have to send her in the morning. And so they sent her there the following morning.

'The old men followed the creek back. Japanangka himself had a club and so did Japaljarri (Napurrula's uncle). They each carried two boomerangs. Japanangka (Napurrula's husband) went with an axe. They went along the eastern side of the creek. Then they hid close by where the white man was digging the dam unaware of what was going on.

'He went into his tent and Napurrula went after him. Meanwhile those old men were standing by listening. Napurrula yelled out. The old men ran straight up to the tent with their



boomerangs. Japaljarri was the first one to strike the white man he struck him a blow on the back of the jaw. The white man staggered and caught hold of the tent posts. Then another man, Japanangka, broke a club over the back of his neck. The white man was now staggering around and falling down all over the place. Japanangka took his axe struck the white man on the neck and killed him outright.

'They dragged the body west towards the creek and shoved it into a rabbit burrow near a black-berry bush, and a white-wood tree. Having thus disposed of the body they went back home.

'At that same time Alec Wilson Jupurrula came with some men to that creek which is north of Yuendumu on the other side of Wakurlpu (Rock Hill) where the two rock-holes lie. The killing of the white man had taken place just before they arrived there. They were carrying a white man (Jo Brown) who was very sick. They brought him to the other side of Wakurlpu. There they looked after him and tried to treat him. This white man thought to himself that he was very ill indeed and he said to Jupurrula: "I am probably dying." So he sent Jupurrula to Yimampi (Coniston Station) where there were other whites. Jupurrula set off with one camel. He headed towards that same place where the people had killed the white man. Jupurrula didn't find anyone in the tent but came across the body in the creek bed to the east. He headed straight for Yimampi further east. There he told the white people what he had seen. From Yimampi the whites set out by truck for Alice Springs to get more whites including policemen. They all came with lots of horses to attack the Aboriginal people. They returned to where the dead man lay in the rabbit hole and buried him in a proper grave.

'They then split up into two parties; one went south and the other west. There was a camp to the south where the ones responsible for killing the white man had been camping. The whites coming from the north were then ready to attack towards the south. They shot all the people they found. They attacked in the late evening. Many people ran away to hide during the fighting. The whites sent away two old men, one of whom was a blind man called Rdakamuru and another called Wantapurrapurru from Yarrungkanyi in the west. The whites told them: "Go away and take the women with you."

'Meanwhile the ones who had killed the white man were still alive and making their way through the rocky hills. They came to Yalkarajirri where they joined another camp. Japaljarri left the other two and went east to a place called Yurnturrpulu.

'Some people were camped near a soakage called Yarlalinji near Yajampiyi (Mt. Denison). A lot of old men walking around south of there were all shot. Many others travelled at night

and some were shot as they arrived exhausted at the watering place. These were drinking when they were shot.

'There were a lot of people camped at Ngarntampi, all of whom were shot by the whites. However, there was a Jangala man who arrived there from the west and who was very thirsty. As he approached he was on the lookout for signs of people who might be living near there. He only came across whites there. He said to himself: "All my family must have been killed by these whites. I might as well get shot too." He went back to his camp at Lampalya.

'The whites then came further west to Yipirri (Mission Creek) and shot people camped there. As the whites turned back from there to return east they came across another lot of people and shot them all.

'An old blind man Japanangka was wandering around calling out for any people who might be still around when he was bitten by a dingo. That was on the Juka-juka hills at Yartiri (near Mission Creek).

'The whites went back keeping to the south. One Jungarrayi was coming from the west and he caught sight of the whites and so he went into the water to hide. The whites came and shot him there. His name was Yakirrki. The whites dragged his body northwards and threw it away in a creek bed.

'Other whites returned to Alice Springs to get more bullets. They then came back in search of other Warlpiris. They shot people they found around their camp fires.

'Some Warlpiris had made a bush fire to the north and when the whites saw it they headed that way to attack whoever might be there. A lot of Warlpiris were camped by a waterhole. The whites came there and shot them all. There were really a lot of people living in that camp. They didn't even know about the trouble and the killing of the white man.

'After that the whites headed further north to Ngunurluru to shoot more people before returning to Yimampi (Coniston). They looked around for more Warlpiris but didn't find any.

'Then there was a Jampijinpa man coming towards them but he didn't know there were whites around. Only one whites [sic] caught sight of him and raced to attack him as he was on a horse. Jampijinpa ran ahead and the white chased after him. Jampijinpa climbed into a hollow tree trunk and hid there. At first just one white man was looking for him but later he shouted out to the others and they all came to look for Jampijinpa. They lit a fire to flush out the Warlpiri man but he stayed inside the hollow tree. He covered himself with spinifex so that he would not be seen. The whites kept the fire going till night fell. Then the man

climbed out of the hollow tree and ran away. He returned to the camp and related his story to the others.

'Then there were two Japaljarris who were unaware of what was happening. They came from the west. They just came to drink some water. They drank and then set off from the watering place. They struck camp and were putting up a wind-break when they saw many whites coming to attack them with rifles. The two Japaljarris only had shields to protect themselves so they started singing themselves for protection. The whites started shooting at them. The two Japaljarris stood one in front of the other. The whites shot and shot at them. The two men kept blocking the bullets. The whites eventually ran out of bullets. They spoke to the two men: "Well you two are the winners." They gave them shirts, trousers and tobacco.

'These two Japaljarris then went west to Yuendumu and stayed there for a long time. Later they went back north and that's where they died. Before they died they went to Lirrakilpirri (on the western side of Lake Surprise) where many of us were living. Later we people came back south to Lurnpakurlangu (Mount Doreen) where we worked. Many others later came here to Yuendumu.'

## APPENDIX E

### National Archives of Australia document summary

Date	Name	Form (some content)	Case	Document
Aug 1928 (undated copy)	Chapman	"Letter received by Randle Stafford from Bruce Chapman.": "I am at your place....Alex Wilson also came in yesterday", Joe Brown ill	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [9]
Aug 1928 (undated copy)	Stafford	"Statement from Randle Stafford taken down by Robert Purvis at Tea Tree Well." (notification to Alice police)	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [9]
7 Aug 1928	Walkington	Coroner's Certificate	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [215]
11 Aug 1928	Cawood	Telegram [to hometer?]: "... Report received this morning murder by blacks of Frederick Bro"	Brookes	No copy, see A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [1] & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [2]
14 Aug 1928	Sydney Herald <sup>73</sup>	"Killed by Blacks: In Central Australia: Body in Rabbit Burrow" Adelaide Monday (13 Aug): "A message received today from Alice Springs...", S&D told Chapman who was 14 miles away who sent a note to Coniston, from there ridden all night to report it, Chapman visited murder scene. (Carrodus 15 Aug: 'any info from govres? If not inquire lettergram') A second undated and unsigned note quotes Cawood telegram above.	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [1]
25 Aug 1928	Noblet	Letter to Cawood: Young & Carter on Abla, Brookes	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [8]
20 Aug 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Telegram to Cawood: "yours eleventh", send particulars re. murder Brookes	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [2] & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [Attachment] [228] (different & crossed out)
30 Aug 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: Sat 11 Aug 7AM rec'd phone msg Ti-Tree Stafford "had arrived there from Coniston Stn and reported the murder", sent Murray 10 Aug re complaints, intercepted @ Ryans 11 <sup>th</sup> "night" & instructed him, attached Chapman, Stafford statements. (Rec'd 7 Sept, Howse 17 Sept: cons appointed about to proceed to Alice)	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [10]
30 Aug 1928	Morton	Letter to Sgt of Police, dictated by Morton to B.S. Sandford, Ti-Tree Well: attack on him	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [Attachment] [225] & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [17]
2 Sept 1928	Murray	Report to Police Commissioner	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [Attachment] [221] & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [14] (original)

<sup>73</sup> The story was also published in the *Sun Pictorial* (MEL edition) issue of 13 Aug, c.f. letter from Chas. R. Brookes, to Sec hometer, 20 Aug, A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [3]

Date	Name	Form (some content)	Case	Document
3 Sept 1928	Cawood	Telegram to Sec, hometer: Police back 1 Sept, "others concerned in outrage died from wounds in fight with police and civilians"	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [5]
3 Sept 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Telegram to Cawood: "what number fatalities"	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [6]
4 Sept 1928	Cawood	Telegram to Sec, hometer: 12.30PM 17 cas, urgent req. from "settler near scene last murder"	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [7]
4 Sept 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: fwd Murray rep 2 Sept, msg via Terry x-Stafford 2 Abls back, Murray sent out "this afternoon" (rec'd 12 Sept)	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [15]
7 Sept 1928	Lala	Allchurch deposition	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [Attachment] [222] & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [30] (original)
7 Sept 1928	Murray	Allchurch deposition	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [Attachment] [224] & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [32] (original)
7 Sept 1928	Noblet	Warrant remanding a prisoner: Akirkra & Padygar	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [34]
8 Sept 1928	Cawood	Telegram to Secretary, hometer: "just rec'd particulars" attack 28 Aug, report posted today (Carrodus 10 Sept: "for the Minister's information)	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [16]
8 Sept 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: attaches Morton statement	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [18]
15 Sept 1928	Noblet	Statement forwarding Allchurch depositions, committal for sentence, warrant of commitment, etc. to Attorney General via Cawood: guilty plea of Padygar & Akirkra, committed for trial next crim session Supreme DWN. (Cawood 18/9: duly fwd & Campbell for Cawood 1 Sept: fwd to hometer & hometer [?] stamp 29 Sept A.M.	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [36]
18 Sept 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Dept memo: 17 killed, murder, Murray, Abls refused & attacked in all, 2 pris 1 witness, definite evidence before action for arrest (Clemens 21 Sept: Mins desires govres report on police actions, reports on inquest proceedings, statements from party)	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [23] & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [20] (annotated)
28 Sept 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Letter to Cawood from Clemens: req 'your observations, statements of party & proceedings of inquest'	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [28]
8 Oct 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Dept memo Howse: 'papers from govres relate charges against Abls not inquest'	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [39]
9 Oct 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Telegram to Cawood: 'pls advise if inquest proceedings forwarded if not advise when'	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [38]

Date	Name	Form (some content)	Case	Document
11 Oct 1928	Cawood	Telegram to Sec, hometer: 'Coroner issued cert, letter following'	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [40]
15 Oct 1928	Bleakley	Telegram to Sec, hometer: 'Lock said Kaitish (same tribe arrested) told her police & 6 civs surrounded camp & shot # natives, women & children, have told govres & council for defence of murderers'	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [43]
19 Oct 1928	Murray	Report to Police Commissioner	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [Attachment] [226] (O'Kelly notes) & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [46]
19 Oct 1928	Murray	Report to Police Commissioner, rec'd CAN 2 November	Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [47]
25 Oct 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: "trouble brewing", "cheeky Abl attitude to whites", "killings right effect" (rec'd 2 Nov AM)	General	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [50]
2 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Telegram to Cawood: 'pls fwd Coroner's cert & any action taken'	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [53]
8 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Sec, hometer memo: "It seems strange that these attacks should happen recently, when the Territory has been quiet for a number of years".	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [67]
9 Nov 1928 <sup>74</sup>	Dept Home & Territories	Letter to Cawood: 'full details pls as reports inadequate, Dept at loss to understand violence, unusual circumstances all reported by Murray, quotes missionaries'	Brookes, Morton & Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [65]
13 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Clemens to Minister Howse: 'inadequacy of reports, deaths inc 2 lubras <i>but no children</i> '	Brookes, Morton & Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [74]
16 Nov 1928	Pockley, F.A.	Letter to Mins hometer: 'not 17 but 34 killed'	Brookes, Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [207]
17 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Telegram to Cawood: 'further 9 Nov, pls fwd Protector of Ables report'	Brookes, Morton & Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [84]
19 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Dept memo: "Attacks by Aboriginals on white men, Central Australia. Killing of aboriginals by Police and others, Central Australia."	Brookes, Morton & Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [127] & A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [113]
22 Nov 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: 'No grounds for acquittal (Padygar & Akirkra), Skipper & Dodger too young/not witness, Chapman died, relied on Lala & Murray, judge refused evidence of lower court	Brookes	A341 1950/2768 Part 1 [158]

<sup>74</sup> On 8 November Padygar and Akirkra were acquitted in DWN trial, only records NT Times & NT Standard, 9 November.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Form (some content)</b>	<b>Case</b>	<b>Document</b>
22 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Telegram to Cawood: 'possibility Govt holding special investigation, what required?'	Brookes, Morton & Tilmouth	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [93]</i>
22 Nov 1928	Murray	Letter to Police Commissioner: 'Padygar & Akirkra "evidently disappeared" en route from DWN on 14 Nov' (rec'd CAN 1 Dec AM)	Brookes	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [154]</i>
23 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Dept briefing: "Central Australia. Shooting of Aborigines."	Brookes, Morton & Tilmouth	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [201] &amp; A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [136]</i>
27 Nov 1928	Terry	Letter to Cawood: attack on his party, no drought	Tomson Rockhole, drought	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [174]</i>
27 Nov 1928	Bruce	Telegram to QLD Premier: 'Govt to immediately appoint Board, O'Kelly as chairman?' (rec'd positive answer same day)	Board	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [143]</i>
27 Nov 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: estimate of cost of inquiry, if two, at over £50 plus travelling expenses	Board	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [176]</i>
28 Nov 1928	Bruce	Telegram to SA Premier: 'Govt to immediately appoint Board, Giles as member?' (rec'd positive answer 30 Nov)	Board	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [145]</i>
28 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Telegram to Cawood: 'Govt has decided to appoint tribunal, 3 member inc you, prepare'	Brookes, Morton & Tilmouth	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [137]</i>
29 Nov 1928	Cawood	Telegram to Sec, hometer: 'If tribunal inc missionary suggest Kramer'	Board	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [166]</i>
30 Nov 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Dept memo W.J. Clemens: there is no law in Central Australia to empower Board to take evidence on oath or provide privilege, Ordinance required or a Royal Commission'	Board	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [148]</i>
4 Dec 1928	Dept Home & Territories	Telegram to Cawood: tribunal already appointed, you, O'Kelly & Giles	Board	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [172]</i>
5 Dec 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: fwd Terry statement (27 Nov) 'Terry under contract to newspapers, don't publish til his articles appear'	Terry	<i>A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [175]</i>

Date	Name	Form (some content)	Case	Document
6 Dec 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: Lock & Bleakley incorrect, no children killed, no inquest as yet been held, should special Coroner trip be arranged, please telegraph me on this (rec'd 14 Dec) <sup>75</sup>	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [214]
6 Dec 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: 14 killed in Morton case, re. Dept at loss - Abl attitude has not changed since '27	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [213]
7 Dec 1928	Cawood	Letter to Sec, hometer: 'herewith fwd Coroner's certificate' (rec'd 19 Dec)	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [216]
8 Dec 1928	Noblet	Letter (as chief protector) to Cawood: "... will not thrive together"	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 1 [217]
12 Dec 1928	Dept Home Affairs	Dept memo (Carrodus): Inquiry into shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia: draft terms of reference for Board	Brookes, Morton, Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [250]
13 Dec 1928	Dept Home Affairs <sup>76</sup>	Dept memo (Clemens): change to draft terms for Board, only substantive change being '(d) whether on the part of the settlers....'	Brookes, Morton, Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [251]
13 Dec 1928	Commonwealth	Board of Enquiry Ordinance by Governor-General (signed Abbott & Stonehaven)	Brookes, Morton, Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [245]
13 Dec 1928	Dept Home Affairs	Minute Paper for the Executive Council: Appointment of Board (signed Abbott)	Brookes, Morton, Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [258]
14 Dec 1928	Commonwealth	Cth Gazette: Ordinance (dated 13 <sup>th</sup> ) re. to Boards of Enquiry	Brookes, Morton, Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [248]
31 Dec 1928	Paddy	Board evidence	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [567]
1 Jan 1929	Kramer	Board evidence: Abls, Murray, Annie Lock	General	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [554]
1 Jan 1929	Paddy	Board evidence (recalled)	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [556]
2 Jan 1929	Kramer	Board evidence (recalled): Abls, drought, police	General	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [550]
12 Jan 1929	Tilmouth	Board evidence	Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [533]
12 Jan 1929	Tilmouth	Carrington deposition: death of Wangaridge	Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [524] & A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [355]

<sup>75</sup> "...the Coroner intended accompanying me to the scene, but on your telegraphed instructions to await arrival of your memorandum dated 9<sup>th</sup> November which reached here on 4<sup>th</sup> December, no inquest has yet been held."

<sup>76</sup> Department renamed Home Affairs on 10 December 1928.



<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Form (some content)</b>	<b>Case</b>	<b>Document</b>
13 Jan 1929	Briscoe	Board evidence	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [532]
13 Jan 1929	Briscoe	Carrington deposition	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [351]
13 Jan 1929	Saxby	Board evidence	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [528]
13 Jan 1929	Saxby	Carrington deposition	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [348]
13 Jan 1929	Stafford	Board evidence	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [530]
13 Jan 1929	Stafford	Carrington deposition	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [349]
16 Jan 1929	Murray	Board evidence	Brookes & Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [523]
17 Jan 1929	Morton	Board evidence	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [506]
17 Jan 1929	Noblet	Board evidence	Brookes & Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [514]
18 Jan 1929	Board of Enquiry	Finding of Board of Enquiry	Brookes, Morton, Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [586]
18 Jan 1929	Murray	Board evidence (recalled)	Brookes & Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [Attachment] [503]
19 Jan 1929	Morton	Carrington deposition	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [340]
19 Jan 1929	Morton	Carrington deposition: attack on him, death of Walgardu	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [342]
19 Jan 1929	Murray	Carrington deposition	Brookes	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [346]
19 Jan 1929	Murray	Carrington deposition	Morton	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [338]
8 Apr 1929	Cawood	Letter to Sec, homeaff: 'M returned Alice 2 Sept, M not sent to investigate B's death, Murray "left two days earlier" than receipt of news, no S.C.s, M training given effect ASAP, M after Willaberta Jack' (rec'd 19 Apr)	Brookes, Morton, Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [444]
26 Apr 1929	Dept Home Affairs	Memo, Carrodus: 'cf Cawood 8 Apr, first advice Dept rec'd re shootings was telegram 3 Sept, no comment or questions of M etc made in forwarding reports, letter of 8 <sup>th</sup> Apr 1929 first intimation of settlers not S.C.s, cites O'Kelly "confidential report": had police been used killing would have been less, "Sgt Noblet's explanation cannot be regarded as satisfactory"	Brookes, Morton, Tilmouth	A431 1950/2768 Part 2 [445]

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