



On the occasion of her retirement in 1976, Joan Thurbon with Perc Thurbon (left) receives a memento of her service from Max Robinson, now Police Commissioner for Tasmania.

Perc Thurbon

MANY members of the former ACT Police would have been sad to learn of the death of former ACT Police Sergeant Perc Thurbon who died on 28 February in Canberra. His funeral service, attended by many AFP members, was on 4 March.

Perc Thurbon was a police officer of the old school who bore perhaps the epitaph most fitting to a sergeant that 'he was a very good street policeman'. He had joined the ACT Police on 23 March 1948 and retired on 12 January 1972. He

is survived by his second wife (former ACT Senior Constable Joan Coleman) and four sons from his first marriage.

He was the real local boy, having been born in Queanbeyan on 12 October 1917 when his father worked in building the national capital and when there was no hospital in the ACT. He lived at Acton, went to school at Ainslie Public School and later at Telopea Park High School. He left School at 14 and worked on the Mount Stromlo water pipe coming from the Cotter Dam. He became well-known as an Australian Rules footballer and cricketer in the district. When he was old enough he became a bus-conductor and then bus driver before being called up for

service in World War II to serve with the Commonwealth Military Forces' 3rd Battalion from June 1941. He was wounded in New Guinea in May 1944 and spent the rest of the war in hospital.

On his return to Canberra he rejoined the bus service as a driver but because of his war wounds was unable to take up active sport again. He became a Ministerial car driver with such notables as Dr H.V. Evatt, Prime Minister Ben Chifley and Mr Arthur Calwell. He joined the ACT Police in 1948.

During that time he served mostly in general duties and became well known in the district. He broke in many of the young aspiring constables, some now senior members of the AFP. He was officer in charge of the city watch house and at times was the relieving licencing inspector. He retired on the grounds of ill health and apart from four years on the Gold Coast from 1975 to 1980, where he found it too hot, he and his wife lived in Canberra. During his police career he had also been very active in the police association, holding the position of president for about five years.

He most recently lived in Turner and because of his failing health was unable to participate in any active recreation except gardening. He died of a sudden heart attack. ●



February Platypus carried a picture of the ACT Police in 1963. At that time Perc Thurbon and Joan Coleman (circled) were both members of the Force. We asked readers if the only member pictured without a hat was disciplined. Joan tells us she was not.