

COL AND A MATE



Assistant Commissioner Ian Broomby.

ASSISTANT Commissioner Ian Broomby recounted a story about a mate of Col Winchester by the name of Jacko (Mr Jack Roberts), who was a poultry farmer from outside Newcastle.

"I knew Col had been concerned about Jacko, that Jacko had been unwell and that Col had been anxious to go up to Newcastle to see him," he said. "When I met Jacko after Col's funeral I asked whether Col had been up to see him. Jacko said 'yes'. It had been rugby league grand final day and he was in a hospital in Newcastle.

"Col had turned up complete with esky, T.V., Canberra Raiders scarf, beanie and jumper and so forth, and decorated Jacko who was sitting up in bed.

"He set up the T.V. and according to Jacko they proceeded to turn the hospital upside down barracking on the match; and Jacko didn't even drink!"

Ian said this was typical of the sensitivity of Col. He had been a keen Canberra Raiders supporter. He would never miss a game in Canberra and yet when they were playing their grand final, Col had gone to visit his mate in Newcastle who was sick in hospital.

Ian Broomby also recalled a time when he and Col Winchester were in the Canberra CIB together, around 1978.

"I was holding the search warrants for some illegal gambling premises in Canberra and the CIB was raiding them," he said.

"There was a place in Manuka thought to be a gaming house and Col and a squad of officers and I were going to raid it. Col and I were to break open the back door.

"I had brought a sledgehammer to hit the door but Col insisted it would be better to kick it in as he had practised the 'DTS' kick — the detective training kick — where you give an almighty boot to the lock and spring the door.

"Col beforehand practised a couple of devious kicks; then when the signal

came he ran flat out at the door and thump!

"Col hit the door and just stopped. His face looked a bit like the coyote in the Road Runner cartoon. The door never gave an inch.

"We learnt later that the door had four steel bars across it. From then on Col always blamed me for his crook back, ankle, knee and anything else that came to mind."

SOUTHERN TRIBUTE

The late Assistant Commissioner Colin Winchester was truly a remarkable man.

In a physical sense those things which immediately impressed a person meeting Col Winchester for the first time were his height and stature; tall and fit.

He had piercing blue eyes, deep set in a craggy face, which had obviously been exposed over many years to the severity of Australia's wind and sun, and a jutting jaw line.

The stern, imposing exterior of this career police officer which must have been quite intimidating to those on the wrong side of the law, did however, conceal a deep passion for his work, his family (especially his grandchildren) his friends and the Australian Outback.

Of his grandchildren he spoke often and in the most endearing and loving terms.

When working or living away from his home town of Canberra the next time he would be able to see them was always too far away.

He was a man with a unique presence, evidenced by the people who had only met him a few times, who travelled hundreds of kilometres to his funeral.

Col Winchester was surrounded by an aura of confidence.

He was a tough but fair man who left a lasting impression on those who had known him for years, or for a relatively short time.

Almost unwittingly he was able to impress others with an instant recall of names, places and events which had taken place at various stages during his long service with the Australian Federal Police.

One of his most remarkable assets was his ability to talk to people from all walks of life and immediately make them feel at ease.

He was just as much at home talking to heads of state as he was to a newly recruited constable.

His appointment as Assistant Commissioner ACT Region was a crowning achievement to his rise through the ranks from constable.

He had a strong sense of mateship and over a social drink Col would speak in glowing terms of his friends with whom he would rough it in the Outback while on leave.

Apart from the obvious love for his family there was a second, passionate love in his life: Australia itself.

Colin was a great Aussie with a fierce determination to bring as many criminals to justice as possible in a bid to make a great country an even better place in which to live and raise a family.

He was a man with the common touch, without being common, who was very much liked and admired by his colleagues.

Colin Winchester A.P.M. was perhaps, most importantly, a great Australian.

Rest in peace Col.
We all miss you.

Keith Livingston on behalf of Southern Region

Platypus 25, March 1989