



Recent losses felt by police and the community

The century is only a few years old but tragedy has already struck the Queensland Police Service (QPS) several times, with the deaths of five officers in the line of duty since 2000.

On July 21, 2000, Senior Constable Norm Watt from the Rockhampton Dog Squad was fatally wounded after attending a serious domestic dispute on a hobby farm at Alton Downs, near Rockhampton.

Just after 9pm on July 20, police were called to the residence after a man had fired shots at a friend during an argument. Police had begun to establish a cordon when the man left the house and hid in surrounding bushes.

Senior Constable Watt and another officer had been checking the boundary fences on the property when he was shot in the groin. The bullet severed an artery and Senior Constable Watt died from his injuries the next day.

On April 5 the following year, Senior Constable Dave Shean from the Upper Mount Gravatt Traffic Branch died after his motorcycle collided with a truck while he was responding to an urgent job.

Then in 2003, the QPS mourned the loss of Senior Sergeant Perry Irwin, Officer in Charge of the Caboolture Police Station.

On August 22, police received reports of a man firing shots in the Caboolture area. Senior Sergeant Irwin accompanied two officers to the location and searched bushland for the alleged gunman.

A short time later, Senior Sergeant Irwin was ambushed and shot twice by a 21-year-old man. Officers were unable to reach Senior Sergeant Irwin as the gunman kept firing shots until he turned the gun on himself.

In 2005, the QPS was dealt a double blow with the deaths of Constable Sally Urquhart and Senior Constable Chris Barwise.

On May 7, Constable Urquhart from Bamaga Station was flying to Townsville to undertake the Constable Development Program

when the plane crashed at Lockhart River.

Constable Urquhart was among 15 people on the plane who lost their lives.

Two months later on July 19, Senior Constable Barwise was riding a police motorcycle from Brisbane to Cairns with another officer when his motorcycle struck a tree 50km south of Sarina.

He received fatal head injuries as a result of the collision.

Each officer has been sadly missed by the police family and the greater community.

Their names feature among the 719 police officers recognised on the National Police Memorial.



Senior Sergeant Perry Irwin and his plaque on the National Police Memorial (from left), Constable Sally Urquhart, Senior Constable Norm Watt and Senior Constable Chris Barwise.

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