



# Officer honours a colleague and a mate

By Jacinda Brown, Media and Public Affairs Branch

For Inspector John Brand, November 2, 1975 is a date that will always remain etched in his memory.

It was the day the community of Mount Molloy was rocked by the senseless death of Senior Constable Lyle Hoey, the officer in charge of the local police station.

At the time, Inspector Brand was a constable working as the scenes of crime officer in Cairns. He was tasked with investigating the forensic evidence surrounding Senior Constable Hoey's death.

Not only has Inspector Brand remembered the day from an investigative perspective, but it has stood out because it was the day he lost a colleague and a friend.

About 1.45am, Senior Constable Hoey had set up a road block at Julatten, an area between Mossman and Mount Molloy, and was using an illuminated torch to intercept vehicles after two men had stolen a keg of beer from the Mossman Hotel.

When the two wanted men approached the police vehicle used as a barricade, their vehicle struck Senior Constable Hoey at high speed.

As a result of the collision, Senior Constable Hoey sustained serious injuries and died on the way to hospital. He was 36 years old.

Inspector Brand, who is now based in Brisbane with the Forensic Services Branch, honoured Senior Constable Hoey's memory at the

National Police Memorial in Canberra, carrying a wreath in the march and placing it at the memorial.

He was chosen to take part in the event as the only police officer who worked on the case and who is still a member of the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

"It was a great honour and a great privilege to represent Lyle.

"He was an active, well-liked country officer, and a great mate with whom we all had worked on a number of serious, and at times, dangerous jobs in the early days of major drug crops and other serious matters," Inspector Brand said.

"It's one of every police officer's worst nightmares, the death of

another officer with whom you have worked and formed a mateship. It's like the next worst thing to a death in your own family as we are, in a very real sense, a family.

"You're just out doing your job and you never come home. His death was senseless, over a miserable keg of beer," Inspector Brand said.

"I'll never forget Lyle. He was a fellow officer I worked with for three years. The National Police Memorial dedication was moving – a once-in-a-lifetime event I had the privilege and honour to attend.

"It was great to not only honour Lyle but also to represent the Queensland Police Service, whose contingent represented the service and the state very professionally."



ABOVE: The funeral procession for Senior Constable Lyle Hoey. RIGHT: Inspector John Brand with his tribute to the fallen officer.



Photo by Senior Constable Deon Williams, QPS Photographic Section