

Water Police celebrate 150 years of policing in Queensland



Above—Queensland Water Police were better equipped than most to deal with Brisbane’s devastating 1974 flood. Sergeant 2/c Dougie Scott takes a phone call, seated in a boat inside the flooded Brisbane Water Police office at Petrie Bight.

Below—The *Lyle M Hoey* makes its debut in Queensland waters in April 2009, launching a new era of water policing. It is one of three purpose-built catamarans designed to act as an independent forward command post. The Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (foreground) can be rapidly deployed from the cradle between the twin hulls of the main vessel.



Celebrating a rich history

In May 2009, the Queensland Water Police celebrated its 150th anniversary, with police officers, members of the public and dignitaries gathering to acknowledge the important role and rich history of the unit.

Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson, Queensland Premier Anna Bligh and Police Minister Neil Roberts unveiled a commemorative plaque at the Brisbane Water Police Complex at Lytton.

A century and a half ago, the main tasks of the Queensland Water Police were to guard convicts, investigate maritime law-breakers and manage the hustle and bustle of the Brisbane River.

Today there are 12 Water Police units based along the Queensland coast from Thursday Island to the Gold Coast. Officers use the latest technology and equipment to assist in patrols and search-and-rescues.

In 2009, three 22-foot catamarans were integrated into the fleet to improve the

present and future operational capabilities of the state’s Water Police resources.

Each vessel contains its own forward command centre, combined with the latest in communication technology, to greatly enhance maritime-related policing capabilities.

The new vessels will also provide enhanced counter terrorism ability due to their extended patrolling capacity and increased periods of offshore deployment.

Following a Queensland Police Service tradition, the boats are named in honour of police officers who have lost their lives in service to the community. The *Lyle M Hoey* is based at Yeppoon, the *W Conroy* at Cairns, and the *Brett T Handran* at Brisbane.

Although the Queensland Water Police has grown in size and capability over the past 150 years, what has not changed is the integrity, determination and courage of water police officers.

1859	1859	1862	1864	1895
1859	William Thornton becomes the first Water Police Magistrate for Brisbane.	First Water Police vessel the <i>Julia Percy</i> is purchased.	The Queensland Water Police employs serving police officers.	Water Police comes under the jurisdiction of the Queensland Police Force.

Lost in the carriage of duty

Standing proudly alongside the officers and dignitaries gathered to celebrate the Queensland Water Police anniversary in May was a woman called Jean Stierer. Ms Stierer was there to represent her father, Constable George Young, who died in 1938 trying to solve the disappearance of Brisbane woman Marjorie Norval.

Ms Norval, a typist for the State Public Service, had been missing since November 11, and police were treating her disappearance as suspicious.

The RAAF Amphibian crew offered to assist detectives by conducting an air search of the coastal areas. They requested an officer to accompany them, as it was an official police search.

Constable Young, who was stationed at the Brisbane Water Police, was nominated because of his expertise and boarded the ill-fated plane *Sea Gull* on November 28.

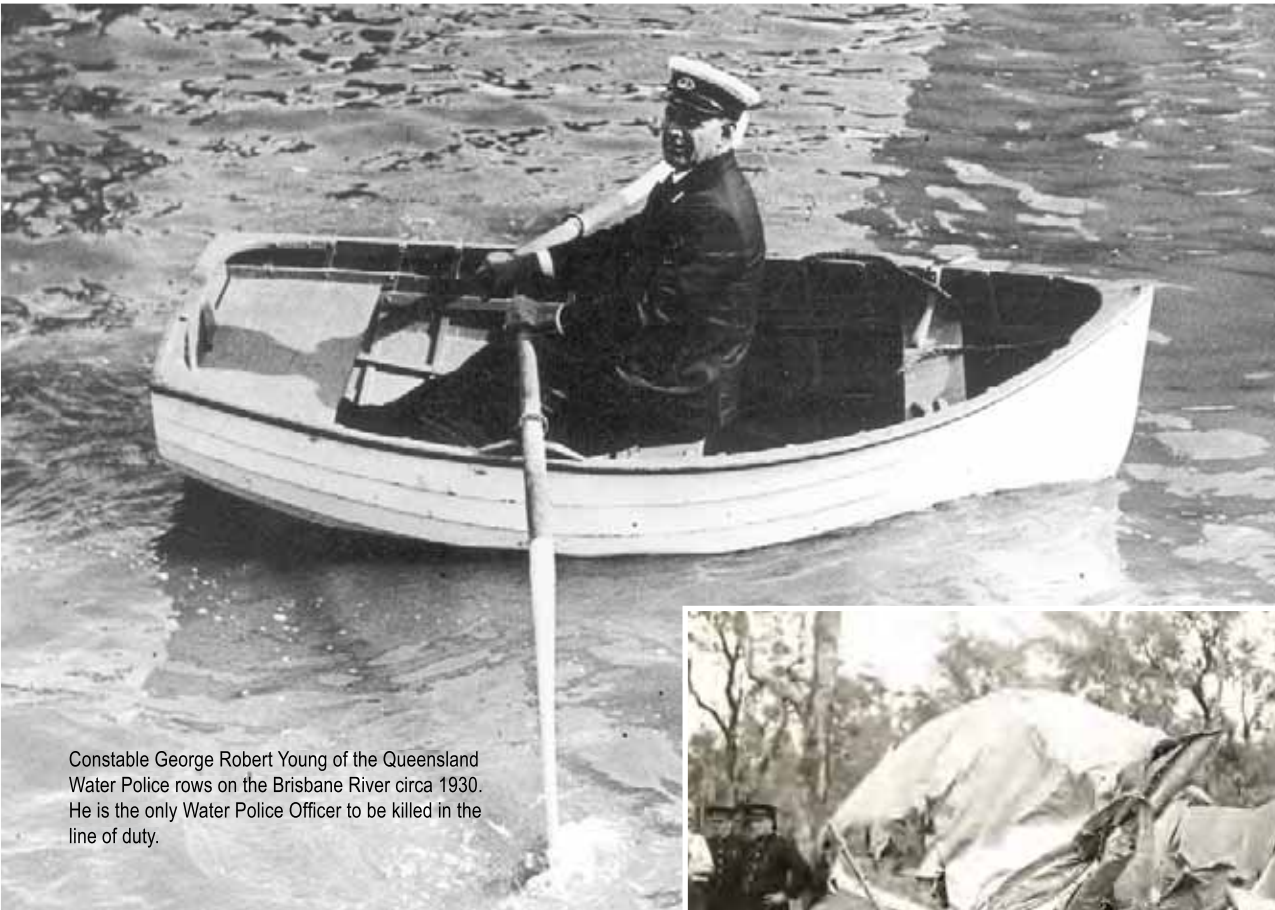
As the crew searched the Albert River at Beenleigh for signs of the missing woman,

the plane hit power lines and crashed to the ground, killing Constable Young and the three RAAF officers on board.

Constable Young had received a certificate for Launch Master for the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay, and had qualifications as a Marine Motor Engineer. He had also passed his sergeant's exam and was waiting for a promotion. He is the only Water Police officer to have died on duty.



Underwater Crime Scene Investigators are highly trained in recovery, hull searches, wharf clearances, recovery operations. They also conduct investigations into diving accidents.



Constable George Robert Young of the Queensland Water Police rows on the Brisbane River circa 1930. He is the only Water Police Officer to be killed in the line of duty.



The RAAF Amphibian plane *Sea Gull* lies wrecked after crashing at Beenleigh on November 28, 1938. Constable George Young and three RAAF crew members were killed during their search for a missing woman.

1907

The *Patrol* is the first motorised vessel used by the Water Police in Brisbane.

1960

The Diving Squad is established by Ivan Adams.

Necessity the mother of invention



ined officers whose duties include evidence of deceased bodies, and salvage and recovery ing deaths.

What do you get when you combine two 30-cubic-foot (68.65 cubic metres) medical-air cylinders, a piece of sheeting rubber, brass bushes and a CIG reducer valve?

The simple answer is the birth of the Queensland Water Police Diving Squad.

Sergeant Ivan Adams invented his crude version of an aqualung after deciding he wanted to stay longer under the water when he was deep-sea fishing.

The Water Police soon seized upon his amazing skill when they realised his prowess in the water and talent for invention. He was called out on many jobs to retrieve stolen goods from the Brisbane River and assist in recovering the bodies of people who had drowned.

In 1960 Sergeant Adams transferred to the Queensland Water Police, after the Inspector noted that the sought-after officer spent more time with their unit than at the Windsor Police Station.

Soon after, Sergeant Adams was formally requested to establish the Diving Squad. He armed himself with text books on diving physiology, physics and psychology, as well as enough equipment to kit out two officers.

In 1964, Sergeant Adams was presented with the George Medal for bravery after rescuing 12 sailors from the Danish dredge *Kaptajn Nielsen*, which capsized in Moreton Bay. This event confirmed the value of having a permanent dive squad.

Now known as the Police Diving Unit, the squad has evolved since Sergeant Adams began it nearly 50 years ago. The unit now comprises 10 elite and highly trained officers—four full-time and six part-time.

Known as Underwater Crime Scene Investigators, their duties include evidence recovery, hull searches, wharf clearances, recovery of deceased bodies, and salvage and recovery operations. They also conduct investigations into diving deaths.

Police Diver Constable Peter Kelly said the technology used by the Police Diving Unit had changed a great deal since 1960.

“We now use underwater cameras to record and photograph crime scenes, and use advanced underwater techniques to preserve located evidence for finger print and DNA analysis,” Constable Kelly said.

“We also have the capability to map underwater search areas to locate large items such as dumped cars and sunken boats.”

By Michelle Fleming, Media and Public Affairs Branch



The captain of the Danish dredge *Kaptajn Nielsen* is delivered to safety after it capsized in Moreton Bay in 1964. Police diver Sergeant Ivan Adams was later awarded the George Medal for bravery for rescuing 12 sailors from the stricken vessel.



A member of the Police Diving Unit uses water communications equipment to speak with divers in the water performing a hull search for Customs at Fisherman's Island wharf (Port of Brisbane).

1974	1977	1998	2009	2009
The Water Police station goes under water in the 1974 flood, but the officers remain at their posts.	The <i>DG Gordon</i> , <i>GJ Olive</i> and <i>LM Hoey</i> are the first vessels named in honour of fallen officers.	The Water Police move to a purpose-built facility at Whyte Island, Lytton.	Water Police patrol and forward command capabilities are boosted with the commissioning of three purpose-built 22-foot catamarans.	2009