

Francis WILLIAMS

Francis WILLIAMS ISM

AKA Frank

Late of ?

Grandfather to Sgt Mick Williams APM

New South Wales Police Force

Regd. # ????

Rank: Aboriginal Tracker for 17 years

1945 – appointed Sergeant of Police

Sergeant – Retirement

Stations: Dubbo (1915), Byrock (1916 – 1919), Bourke (March 1938 – May 1950)

Service: From 1 March 1915 to May 1950 = 45 years Service

Awards: Imperial Service Medal – for Faithful Service – awarded in 1943

Born: ? ? 1871 on the Warrego River, NSW

(Toorale Station)

Died on: 18 January 1955

Age: 84

Cause: ?

Event location: ?

Event date: ?

Funeral date: ? ? ?

Funeral location: ?

Buried at: Bourke Cemetery, Gorrell Ave

Memorial located at: ?





MEDAL FOR BLACKTRACKER. NSW Police Sergeant **Tracker** Frank **Williams**, receives an Imperial Service Medal from the Governor of NSW, Sir John Northcott, during an investiture at Government House, Sydney.





NSW Police Monthly – October 2013

[alert_yellow]**FRANK** is NOT mentioned on the Police Wall of Remembrance[/alert_yellow] ***NEED MORE INFO**

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FURTHER INFORMATION IS NEEDED ABOUT THIS PERSON, THEIR LIFE, THEIR CAREER AND THEIR DEATH.

PLEASE SEND PHOTOS AND INFORMATION TO Cal

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May they forever Rest In Peace

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Bourkes_rich_policing_history
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Frank Williams

A contemporary of Alex Riley, **Frank Williams** was a tracker who also received numerous accolades throughout his career. Williams was born in the country between Gundabooka and Toorale in the 1870s to Edward Williams and an Aboriginal woman named Fanny Hippi. He is associated with the Ngemba speaking peoples south of Bourke. After working as a labourer, he was appointed as the tracker at Dubbo on 1 March 1915, the first year of Riley's temporary absence of the force.^[1] He transferred to Byrock the following year before resigning on 16 May 1919. He re-joined just over 12 months later and was stationed at Byrock until March 1938 when he took up the tracker's job at Bourke. Another 12 years on the job followed before Williams retired in May 1950, two months before Alex Riley left the force.

Frank Williams told his daughter Grace that after his mother died when he about six years old, he "stopped with his grandmother", who is known only as Maude. He said that they:

...used to lie on skins. They used to have like a humpie, built right down, real traditional. He said this 'walkabout' that they reckon they used to do, he said they usen't to. The only time they moved around was when they changed their camps, and that was for cleanness. They would shift around and get fresh ground.^[2]

Maude, who had "up alongside her nose... a bone needle from a fish", taught Frank about tracking.^[3] She knew how to "sew the

possum skins and make little possum skin bags to carry water in". *Grace Williams* said that:

Dad used to go about with her and she used to show him a lot. She showed him how to track, so he ended up being a good tracker.^[4]

A case which Williams received some press coverage at the time was the murder of Robert Whye (aka Bobbie Burns), a ten year old Aboriginal boy, on the banks of the Barwon River near Brewarrina Aboriginal Mission. The culprit was an older Aboriginal man from Brewarrina named Charlie McDonald and Williams was faced with the prospect of tracking his countryman. But his decision was made somewhat easier by the fact that he had strong familial ties to the victim.

In June 1906, Frank Williams married Caroline Parker (aka Caroline Whye) at Brewarrina.^[5] Caroline was the daughter of Sam Parker of Coopers Creek, South Australia, and Caroline Hilt of Brewarrina, a fluent speaker of the Wailwan dialect of Ngiyampaa. She passed her linguistic knowledge on to her daughter and both were significant informants about Ngiyampaa language and culture for R.H. Mathews.^[6] Caroline Hilt's first marriage was to Alfred Whye, non-Indigenous, and her children to Cooper sometimes carried this surname.^[7]

The young victim, Robert Whye, was born at Warren in 1919 to George Whye and Jane Francis McIntrye. His maternal grandmother was Caroline Hilt, making Caroline Parker his aunt, and in cultural terms, his mother. Although Charlie McDonald was from Brewarrina, it is not clear how he is related to the other families from the district. In a broad sense, Frank Williams was not stepping outside the bounds of tradition in seeing that McDonald was captured and punished for the murder. Other prominent members of the Brewarrina Aboriginal community were prepared to give evidence against McDonald, including Christy Warraweena (a Ngiyampaa speaker)

and John Wilson (a cousin of Frank Williams). Other witnesses were children who were probably playing with Whye when he disappeared. In an interesting twist from the Governor episode, one of the witnesses was Annie Coombes, the daughter of Jack Coombes of Wollar and Lottie Governor (Jimmy and Joe's sister). Her parents were part of the Wollar community which was removed to Brewarrina Aboriginal Station. They married at Brewarrina in October 1900 while the chase was still on and Annie was born about 10 years later. The following year she married Tom Wellington who was also a witness against McDonald.^[8]

The pursuit itself was a difficult one. Rain soon after the murder obliterated most of the tracks, which at one stage led within less than a kilometre of Brewarrina Aboriginal Station. Although not mentioned in the press, Williams was assisted for some of the search by Alex Riley. But it was Williams alone who led the other police to a lonely shearer's hut on Caringle Station where McDonald was arrested. Convicted of the murder at Dubbo, he was incarcerated in Goulburn Gaol where he passed away in 1928.^[9]

Family was an important part of Frank Williams' life and he and Caroline had 12 children and many grandkids. Cecily Hampton recently recalled spending the weekends with her grandfather:

I used to go out with grandfather a lot, especially on weekends. On Sundays we'd got out and kill a kangaroo and always bring back the tail. We never brought anything else back, just the tail. Granny would make a big pot of kangaroo tail soup. Oh it was beautiful. I used to always follow grandfather around! He used to sit down out the back and we'd talk about all sorts of things. He would show me how to draw figures in the dirt, things like lizards and frogs, you name it, and he could draw it.^[10]

Williams was probably taught to track in a similar manner by his grandmother Maude. He was keen to pass the knowledge on: his son Sydney Williams also worked as a tracker. Frank Williams retired in 1950, having been promoted to the rank of Sergeant and given the King's Medal in 1943.

References

1.	↑	Police Salary Register 1915 SRNSW 3/2995 Reel 1974. The family also believe that Williams was casually employed as a tracker at Mount Drysdale near Cobar before moving to Dubbo. The salary register does not record
2.	↑	Cowlishaw 2006: 10.
3.	↑	This information is significant given that there are no known examples of Aboriginal women working for NSW Police. It clearly demonstrates that Aboriginal women, not surprisingly, had the skills to track people in the bush.
4.	↑	Cowlishaw 2006: 11.
5.	↑	MC of Francis Williams and Caroline Parker 1906/006754.
6.	↑	R.H. Mathews Papers NLA MS 8006. Series 3. Folder 7. Notebook 7b Untitled:114.
7.	↑	See DC of Caroline Parker 1917/003971.
8.	↑	Tindale Brewarrina Genealogy, 1938; MC of Thomas Wellington and Annie Coombes 1927/009958; DC of Robert Whye 1926/001079.
9.	↑	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 1 January 1926: 5; <i>New South Wales Police Gazette</i> 6 January 1926: 9; <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 8 January 1926: 11; Tracker Riley file, Macquarie Regional Library, Dubbo.
10.	↑	DEC 2005: 2.

https://pathfindersnsw.org.au/placemarks/frank-williams/divider_dotted

Bernard Alfred ORROCK

Bernard Alfred ORROCK

(late of Alpha Rd, Willoughby)

New South Wales Police Force

Regd. # **????**

Rank: Constable

Stations: **?**, Sydney Water Police – Death

Service: **From** 22 January 1951 **to** 26
February 1955 = 4+ years Service

Awards: Queen's Police Medal for
Gallantry

Bronze Medal from the Royal Shipwreck and
Humane Society for his actions in the
floods

Born: **?** **?** 1930 in Hornsby

Died on: 26 February 1955

Cause: Electrocuted

Event location: Maitland

Age: 24

Funeral date: ?

**Funeral location: ? "possibly"
Macquarie Park Cemetery, Plassey Rd,
Macquarie Pk**

**Buried at: ?"possibly" Roman Catholic
Portion, Row U11, Plot 0041**

Memorial at:



[alert_green]BERNARD IS mentioned on the Police Wall of Remembrance[/alert_green]

On **26 February, 1955** Constable Orrock of the Sydney Water Police was performing flood rescue duties in the Maitland area during the horrendous **1955 floods**. While travelling with Army and Air Force personnel in an Army Duck toward the **Louth Park** area, the wireless aerial on the **Duck** struck live high tension

power lines. As a result, **Constable Orrock** and **two Army Signallers, Sergeant William McGrath** and **Signaller Eric Chard**, were killed. The cause of death was **asphyxiation caused by electrocution**.

He was posthumously awarded the **Queen's Police Medal for Gallantry** and a **Bronze Medal** from the **Royal Shipwreck and Humane Society** for his actions in the floods that ultimately led to his death.

The constable was born in **1930** and joined the New South Wales Police Force on **22 January, 1951**. At the time of his death he was attached to the **Sydney Water Police**.

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Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 – 1995), **Tuesday 22 November 1955**,
page 5

AWARDS FOR GALLANTRY IN N.S.W. FLOODS

SYDNEY, Monday.

The Queen has conferred awards for services during the floods of last February and March.

The awards were announced by the Governor, Sir John Northcott, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, yesterday.

.....The **Superintendent of Newcastle Police, Peter F. McLouglin** or **McLachlan**, and Mr **Ian Stuart Black**, of **Denman**, receive the **British Empire Medal**.

The **Queen's Police Medal for gallantry** was awarded **posthumously** to **Constable Bernard Alfred Orrock**, of the **Sydney Water Police** who was killed during rescue operations.

The **Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct** was awarded to **four policemen** and **four civilians**.

They are **Senior Const. William Elsner STEVENS** of **Gilgandra**. **Const. 1st Class Marius Joseph William John BOURKE**, **Const. 1st Class Rudolph Luvaine MUNNS**, **Const. Svend Aage IVARSSON**, of the **Sydney Water Police**, and **Messrs. Claude Reynolds** of **Bundarra**, **Gordon Ernest Davis**, of **Moree**, **Robert Edward Montgomery**, of **Moree**, and **Keith Arthur Bennett**, of **Moree**.

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<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article91212609.txt>

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They Sydney Morning Herald 22 November 1955 p3

Inspector Peter McLachlan, of **Newcastle**, who was awarded the **British Empire Medal**, personally took part in more than 100 rescues in the Singleton district.

He was without sleep for four days and nights directing dozens of other rescue operations, including the organisation of an aerial flood lift into Singleton, and emergency accommodation for hundreds of homeless people.

Constable Bernard Alfred Orrock, 24, of **Alpha Rd, Willoughby**, who was awarded the **Queen's Police Medal for Gallantry** (posthumous award) was attached to the **Water Police** when he was electrocuted on an **Army duck** at **Maitland** on **February 26**.

The duck on which **Orrock** was travelling hit a **66,000 volt high**

tension wire near the **Maitland railway bridge** while trying to reach 100 people who were stranded there.

Before he was killed he assisted in the rescue and evacuation of about 70 people.

Constable Marius Joseph William John Bourke, Rudolph Luvaine Munns and Svend Aage Ivarsson, awarded the **Queen's Commendation for brave conduct**, are all of the **Sydney Water Police**.

Washed Over Dam In Boats

There were in two police flood boats, which were washed over a dam, near Singleton, while trying to get **Inspector McLachlan** into Singleton at night.

Constables Bourke and Ivarsson later in Singleton, took part in scored of rescues under **Inspector McLachlan**.

Constable Munns worked with **Constable Orrock** at Maitland and took part in more than 100 rescues.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1301&dat=19551122&id=Xf1jAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=B-UDAAAIAIBAJ&pg=6173%2C5029386&hl=en>

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Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 – 1954), **Saturday 14 August 1954**, page 6

Ship's Wash Sweeps Workman To Death

Wash from a ship's propeller swept a man to death beneath a wharf at Walsh Bay yesterday.

A wharf foreman, who plunged fully clothed into the water to rescue him, received cuts and bruises when he was buffeted against the wharf.

Drowned was John Allan Mitchell, 57, of Nicholson Street, Balmain.

Mitchell, a welder, was working on the stern of the motor vessel Braeside, moored at No. 7 wharf.

He was standing on scaffolding on a raft floating between the ship's stern and the wharf, when wash from another ship, Muliama, rocked the raft, overturned the scaffolding, and sent him tumbling into the water.

A wharf foreman, James Curry, of Cascade Street, Paddington, dived into the water and supported Mitchell until Maritime Services Board employees Stewart Dutton, of Herne Bay, and Leslie Lindwall, of Seaview Street, Dulwich Hill, reached them in a launch.

Mitchell was given artificial respiration before the arrival of the **police launch Typhon**, with **Constables B. Orrock** and **W. Atkins** aboard.

Central District Ambulance took Mitchell to Sydney Hospital, but he was dead on arrival.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article18430246.txt>

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Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 – 1954), **Monday 24 May 1954**,
page 4

Water Police yesterday rescued a man clinging to a pylon in three feet of water under a wharf at Walsh Bay.

The man, William McCormack, 60, of Victoria, told police he did not know how he got into the water, but must have been there for hours.

He was blue with cold, and on the point of collapse when rescued by **Constable B. Orrock**, assisted by **Sergeant D. Lechleitner** and **Constable J. Nicholson**.

McCormack was admitted to Sydney Hospital suffering from immersion.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article18435779.txt>

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“Possibly” lived in:

1954 – North Sydney

1977 – Barton, NSW

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