

Roger Sharp – The Policeman and the Peacekeeper

Chief Superintendent (Retired) Peter McDonald

I have been a colleague and friend of Roger Sharp for many years. We were in the same recruit training squad in Victoria Police and we served together as Australian police peacekeepers with the United Nations in Cyprus.

Firstly, I would like to thank all of our police Squad mates, and all of the overseas police peacekeepers who have contacted me, Chris or the Sharp family over recent days to express their condolences at his passing. It shows the esteem in which he was held.

I would also like to thank the Australian Federal Police for their assistance today. They have provided the flags which you see behind me. The Australian flag, the Victoria Police flag and the United Nations flag. Roger would have been impressed and it is a fitting tribute to his service.

As I've said, Roger and I were in the same recruit training squad. We graduated as Constables at the same time, and our paths have crossed on many occasions. Roger had a long and distinguished career in Victoria Police and retired as a Chief Inspector.

I would like to recount two stories about Roger. His brush with fame, and his brush with royalty.

When he was a Constable at Russell Street in Melbourne in 1965, he took a report of crime from a young lady who had a suitcase stolen from a motor car outside a discotheque one evening. She lost some clothes and a number of other personal items. Her name was Jean Shrimpton and a day or so later she made history when she attended the Melbourne Cup, or one of the days of the Melbourne Cup carnival, in a mini dress, flat shoes and few other accoutrements.

Roger had a theory that one of the reasons she did so was not to necessarily shock anyone, but because her clothes had been stolen and she had little else to wear.

The second story happened in Cyprus, where Roger was working as a liaison officer at UN Headquarters, the Blue Beret Camp in the capital, Nicosia. He was invited to a function with the British contingent, the Royal Hussars. One of the officers made a number of comments about Australia and Australians that Roger didn't like. There was a pool there and as Roger walked past, he bumped the officer, either accidentally or on purpose, and the officer fell into the pool.

All hell then broke loose as they rushed to fish the officer out. Roger then found out who the officer was. It was Prince Michael of Kent.

Roger suffered no repercussions over the incident, but he became a hero to the other ranks and never had to buy a beer in the Sergeants' Mess again!

There are other stories I could tell. But as they say, what happens on mission, stays on mission. So I won't.

Roger has been a great friend and a great colleague. He came to my send off in Melbourne when I retired from Victoria Police, so I certainly wasn't going to miss his send off today. It is a little different and a lot sadder, so I can only say "Goodbye old friend. You will be missed."