



THE DEATH OF A CHIEF

ACC James Smith KPM

By Graham Borril

James Smith had just gone to bed after being at work all day supervising the civil defence effort in a North East Coast Town, a veiled name given to Hull during the war to avoid giving clues to the Germans on how successful, or not their raids had been. As Assistant Chief Constable of Hull City Police he was responsible for the whole area of police operations, as well as organising the civil rescue operations and getting the city back on its feet following air raids. It was now the early hours of Sunday 29th June 1941. There had been particularly heavy raids the previous month. The 7th-9th May saw two raids over the city during which more than 300 high explosive bombs and parachute mines were dropped. 40 bombs failed to explode but remained a problem for some time after the raid. Thousands of incendiaries fell over a wide area. 2,600 wardens, 130 rescue parties and 600 Casualty Service staff helped with the rescue of over 700 individuals. The Fire Service dealt with over 800 fires. The city centre; Jameson Street, King Edward Street and Prospect Street was an inferno with almost all of the large department stores, hotels, restaurants and numerous smaller shops being totally destroyed. The Guildhall & City Hall both suffered damage. Industrial areas in all parts of the city received damage, wholesale and retail markets were destroyed along with warehouses and offices. The Riverside Quay was gutted along its whole length and blazing timber stacks sent sparks high into the air only to serve as incendiaries to fall on and ignite even more buildings. Ranks Flour Mill was rendered inoperative, 3,000 homes were destroyed or seriously damaged, 9,000 had doors and/or windows torn out of their frames and another 50,000 suffered minor blast or shrapnel damage. The telephone department had to deal with 14,000 faults - hindered by their administrative offices being destroyed. A main cable of some 2,000 pairs of wires was destroyed. A direct hit on the Corporation bus depot destroyed numerous vehicles leaving nothing more than a shell of twisted metal. The supply of coal-gas failed with 200 mains having been hit and the electricity department had to deal with over 6,000 faults. The electricity supply was maintained apart from the immediate areas of bomb impact. At his home in Summergangs Road, the ACC was woken by a call to say that raiders were once again approaching the City. It was common for the German bombers to use the topography and reflection from the river Humber to guide them to the docks. Meanwhile Constable Bernard Craven was on the way to collect his boss. The ACC's home was not far from the city centre so he needed to get ready quickly. It was 01.30am and the air raid siren had already sounded so he had no time to hang around. Pc Craven soon arrived and Mr Smith climbed in the back with his gas mask and black tin helmet with two distinctive white bands denoting a senior officer. Craven and the ACC must have exchanged a resigned greeting knowing that a difficult night was ahead for them both. The Constable had driven to the house along Holderness Road, the arterial eastern road from the city. After his pick-up he returned via the leafy Garden Village of James Reckitt Avenue which meant he didn't have to turn the car around; time was of the essence. The black

Wolseley sped through the streets as there would have been few people about and the lights were blacked out. Little else would have been on the road at that time and Craven would have made good speed. As he approached the railway bridge at Dansom Lane near to Barnsley Street the car shook with the impact of bombs all around. In quick succession eight high explosive bombs had exploded in the area throwing glass, splinters and masonry in all directions. Barnsley Street was hit damaging sewers and a gas main, a dozen shops and up to seventy houses were damaged along with the Punch Bowl Public House. The police car lurched suddenly as one of the bombs had exploded close to the rear of the car showering the interior with glass and shrapnel. The ACC was hit by a splinter and was bleeding profusely around the neck. Craven was also injured about the head but continued his journey in the hope that prompt attention may save the life of his passenger. The Infirmary was not too far away and it was the 23 year old driver's quick thinking that gave them the best chance of survival. It was 1.45am and only fifteen minutes after the air raid siren had sounded, and twenty minutes later the 'all clear' was given. Seriously wounded and stemming the flow of blood James Smith must have fleetingly thought how unfortunate these circumstances were. *Originally from Loughborough James Smith joined Hull City Police in 1907. Previously he had been in the Royal Scots Fusiliers and as a reservist was recalled to the Army just before the outbreak of The Great War in 1914. He immediately went to France with the British Expeditionary Force. In September, he left the trenches to tend to an injured soldier who was lying in No Man's Land and was taken prisoner by the Germans. On demobilisation in 1918, he returned to the detective branch of the Hull City Police, being promoted to sergeant in 1923, detective Inspector in 1925 and detective Superintendent in 1932. He became Chief Superintendent in 1935 and ACC in 1940. He could have been enjoying retirement in June 1939 but, with another war looming and Civil defence preparations being pressed ahead, his sense of responsibility to the public made him decide to stay on, gaining the King's Police Medal in 1940 for outstanding service. With his passenger seriously wounded and himself suffering a head injury Craven drove quickly to the infirmary. When they arrived ACC Smith was barely conscious due to the loss of blood. He died soon after arrival. Craven was treated for his wounds and shock and was later praised for his plucky efforts. Five citizens were injured in the raid but the only death that night was Assist Chief Constable James Smith K.P.M. The news was broken to the ACC's wife and her daughter who were both still at home at 5.30am. The Chief had information that the bombs fell not in the main raid, but from that of a lone bomber returning from a raid further west. Lone aircraft from other raids would often return over the city to head back and as mentioned, the River Humber provided an easy navigation aid. It is entirely possible the straggler offloaded his bombs over the city to at least make some contribution. The City had lost a faithful public servant. The Hull daily Mail reported him as 'A most genial man, he knew how to maintain a high standard of efficiency, inspire discipline without lessening of self respect and yet observe the normal codes of hospitality in social life without bringing in his official status. In short, on duty he was a first class police official. Off duty he shed all sense of authority, and became a man among men'. Mr*



Smith was survived by his widow, three sons, all in the Forces and a daughter. Tributes were paid at St James' Church, Sutton which was attended by civic dignitaries, corporation officials and police chiefs from The East Riding, Durham, North Yorkshire, Leeds, and Bradford. The Police Inspectorate was also represented as were Mr Smith's many friends and colleagues. ACC Smith is commemorated on the bronze plaque at Police HQ, Priory Road which was previously at Queens Gardens Police Station. The plaque was dedicated in February 1951 to those from The City Police who gave their lives in both World Wars. He is buried in Hedon Road Cemetery.

The Author

Graham Borrill is a Humberside Police Sergeant stationed at Preston Road Police Station in Hull. He has researched this story after interviewing James Smith's son, Frank who is now 86.

Cheshire's Hero

The 'Gallant' Gentleman'

LT. COLONEL. PULTENEY

MALCOLM. C.B.E. D.S.O. M.V.O. A.M. K.P.M.
CHIEF CONSTABLE CHESHIRE CONSTABULARY
1910~1934.

This synopsis cannot pay tribute enough to the life a most 'Gallant Gentleman'. Pulteney Malcolm was born on the 16th August 1861, in Sholapur, East India, son of the late General Sir George MALCOLM G.C.B., Bombay Army. He was educated at Summerfields, near Oxford; Burney's at Gosport; Wellington College and Sandhurst. He entered the British Army on the 11th August 1880, and joined the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers. He was promoted Lieutenant at Kandahar, Afghanistan on the 1st July 1881. In 1886 he was transferred to the Indian Army, and was posted to the 2nd Battalion 4th Goorkhas (Ghurkha) then being raised. He received in the ALBERT MEDAL for Gallantry in 1887, the citation reading, "The Queen has been graciously pleased to confer the "Albert Medal of the Second Class" upon Lieutenant Pulteney Malcolm, 4th Goorkha Regiment, in recognition of the conspicuous gallantry displayed by him on the 10th June 1887, in attempting to save the life of a comrade who had fallen over a precipice near Dalhousie, East India". The actual statement made by the Commanding Officer of Lieutenant Malcolm shows, "On the 10th June 1887, the late Lieutenant Trevor of the Yorkshire Regiment, was returning to Dalhousie (in the Himalayas) from Kajiar. He was riding along a narrow road and at the most precipitous part of it, his horse, which was a fresh one, and which had been sidling along got it's hind legs over the side, and fell carrying it's rider along with it down the precipice. The Officer who was with Lt. Trevor at the time of the accident went back for assistance, and on the road met Lt. Malcolm and the latter hearing of the occurrence, at once ran to the spot and at the immediate risk of his life, commenced the descent. Lt. Malcolm managed after tremendous exertions, by dropping from

ledge to ledge (causing him much exhaustion and considerable laceration of the feet) to get down to Lt. Trevor, who was lying 300 to 400 feet below, and had the sad satisfaction of supporting him until he died and rendering him such assistance as was possible under the circumstance. Some other officers tried to go down to Lt. Malcolm's aid, but as appears from the evidence taken at the inquest they could not do so, it being described as a perpendicular precipice of an apparently inaccessible nature. There seems no doubt that Lt. Malcolm ran a great risk in climbing down; as had he made a single false step he must have been dashed to pieces". He served in the Chin Lushai Expeditionary Force, from 1889-1890 for which he received Medal with clasp. He was promoted Captain on the 11th August 1891 and served with the Chitral Relief Force, 1895 being present at the storming Malakand Pass (Medal and clasp) ; in the North West Frontier operations, 1897-1898, as Provost-Marshal to the Relief Force, and subsequently as D.A.A.G., 1st Brigade, for which he was Mentioned in Despatches and awarded a further clasp (London Gazette 11 February 1898). He was promoted Major on the 11 August 1900; served as Chief Officer, Malakand Field Force, 1900~1901. He served in Waziristan, 1901~1902 as Officiating A.A.G., Derajat District, and Chief of Staff. He was twice mentioned in Despatches; and received a further clasp to the Medal. During this campaign his horse was shot from under him and he himself received wounds around the left eye. He was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order on 2nd September 1902; "In recognition of services during Mahsud-Waziri operations" He was invested by King Edward VII on the 18th February 1903. Major Malcolm retired from the Indian Army on the 11 August 1904, after a total of 24 years service. He was Head Constable of Kingston-on-Hull from 1904 to 1910. He became Chief Constable of Cheshire on the 30 September 1910. His personal record shows on appointment to Cheshire that his Religion was Protestant, Height 6' 0", Age 48 years, Hair Fair, Complexion Fair. His pay on appointment was £500 plus £100 travelling expenses per annum. This rose annually by approximately £100 per annum until 1919 and on his retirement on the 30 April 1934, aged 72 years, and a total service with Cheshire Constabulary of 30 years 120 days, he was in receipt of £1300 per annum. His pension on retirement amounted to £866.13s.4d per annum. On the 24 April 1913 His Majesty King George V, at the expiration of his visit to Crewe Hall, Cheshire bestowed the M.V.O. on Major Malcolm and at the same time the King expressing his approval of the Police arrangements. On the 25 February 1915 he became temporary Lt. Colonel, as A.A. and Q.M.G. on the Divisional Staff of the New Armies, 22nd London Division. He served with the Division in France until late 1916, and again he was mentioned in Despatches. He was given the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel on