

Police that the training you have received has been utilized in bringing you this honourable recognition.

"Your courage and bravery in the face of what might well have been tragedy are ex-

amples of heroism which cannot be refuted, and in presenting you these medals I wish to add my congratulations and best wishes for a successful future in your chosen profession, the upholding of the law under all conditions."

### R. v. Miktaeyout

#### *Manslaughter—Eskimo Wives Traded—Complete Court of Law Sits in Far North—Criminal Code of Canada Applies to Every Person in Every Part of Canada*

In July, 1942, while locked in the ice at Pasley Bay during her west-east voyage through the North-west Passage, the now famous *St. Roch*, only floating detachment of the R.C.M.P., learned that an Eskimo woman of the Netsilinguit tribe had murdered her husband the previous month at Victory Harbour near Thom Bay on the south-east coast of Boothia Peninsula.

In due course a patrol set out from the R.C.M.P. detachment at Pond Inlet on the north shore of Baffin Island, and on May 6, 1943, the investigator reported by wireless that the suspect had confessed. There had been no eye-witnesses, but the body was available and circumstantial evidence had been obtained.

Behind the tragedy lay the old story of the eternal triangle, a bane not uncommon even in the Far North. Miktaeyout, the suspect, had for five years been the wife of Equalla who was a good provider and one of the best hunters of the tribe. However, early in 1940 an influential native named Ohokto decided that Equalla would be a suitable husband for his daughter, Kachootenosk, and persuaded him to take her as his wife. In the deal Miktaeyout was given to Kookieyout, a shiftless, unattractive individual and no good as a hunter or trapper.

Miktaeyout protested the arrangement to no avail. Once, upon following her erstwhile spouse to another camp, she was lashed to a sled and returned to Kookieyout, and several times was subjected to threats and abuse. For two years she put up with her unwanted husband, sinking lower and lower from the enviable status she had enjoyed as the notable hunter's wife. Finally, on July 24, 1942, she shot Kookieyout while he slept.

Early in the morning of that fateful day two native men of the village had gone to

Kookieyout's tent and asked him to go hunting with them. He had declined, saying he was too tired, but while there they examined his rifle and found it to be unloaded. In the evening a shot was heard, and two other men who were cooking seal meat in the open saw Miktaeyout come out of her tent. She was crying, and told them Kookieyout was dead. They looked inside the tent and saw him lying on his side with a bullet hole in his head; the rifle was on the ground beside him.

The bleak and timeless North unleashed obstacles that delayed the inquiry, but eventually the law was in motion. On June 6, 1943, the body of the deceased was taken north to Fort Ross at the southern tip of Somerset Island and buried.

This was done preparatory to an inquest which tentatively was to take place in the autumn when R.M.S. *Nascopie*, the Hudson Bay Co. supply ship, would call at Fort Ross during her annual cruise to the Eastern Arctic. But ice conditions prevented the vessel from docking there, and the inquest and trial had to be postponed.

It was the second year that the ship had failed to reach the two small clapboard houses which comprise the fort, and in the following spring the personnel of the H.B.C.'s trading post had to be brought to the outside by plane because of lack of provisions. Meanwhile the R.C.M.P. investigator who had assembled the witnesses and prisoner for the expected court proceedings released them with an injunction to be on hand the next year at ship time. Then on Oct. 18, 1943, he left the fort on a lone, circuitous patrol back to his detachment. He arrived at Repulse Bay on the north-west corner of Hudson Bay on December 14, and on New Year's day struck out almost due north up Melville Peninsula