

Tale of a Hat / Hat of a Tale

By S/Sgt. T.E.G. Shaw (retired)

I had become acquainted with the late Insp. G.H. Clark, M.C., in 1954, shortly after he had retired from the Force to become a police magistrate at Edmonton, Alberta, and I had returned to police work following an 18-month stint with the Quarterly at Headquarters. Insp. Clark had submitted numerous items to the magazine for publication so we had something in common.

One morning, following a court case with him, I mentioned a harrowing airplane ride I had experienced the day before in an RCMP Air Division aircraft, while picking up a prisoner at Cold Lake. He listened with an amused expression on his face and asked that should I ever return to Ottawa and had an opportunity to draw his service file — particularly the volume covering his service with the British Columbia Provincial Police (BCPP) — to look for a report he had submitted back in the 1940s which I might find amusing. He didn't have time to go into details.

The following year, I was transferred from Edmonton and never saw Insp. Clark again. But his prediction of sorts came true. In November 1958, I returned to the Quarterly once more, and I forgot all about my conversation with him.

In the fall of 1962, I heard that he passed away, and eventually his file turned up at our office to prepare an Obituary — which incidentally appeared in the January 1963 issue. While perusing the volume on his BCPP service, a light flashed on! There,

under date of March 8, 1943, was a report: Loss of Uniform — Sgt. G.H. Clark. The Quarterly editor, at the time, Sgt. A. MacEwan (Reg. No. 13497), myself and the three ladies who looked after circulation, read the account and were subsequently overcome with laughter. I made a copy of it and filed it away, to be forgotten once more.

As luck would have it however, the file was not about to stay buried forever. In May 1995, while cleaning out an old briefcase, I came across it once more. Without further adieu, here is Insp. Clark's harrowing account. I hope you enjoy it as well.



On May 3, 1943, as the party holding an inquest at Fort Ware was to embark on the plane, Mr. Copeland, manager of the Hudson's Bay Post called to us suggesting that as lunch was ready, we should eat before leaving. The sumptuous meal of roast beef, potatoes, carrots, peas and rhubarb pie was greatly enjoyed.

We then all climbed aboard the plane and made ourselves as comfortable as the somewhat cramped accommodation would permit. Seated in the front of the aircraft, with our backs to the cockpit were Bob Howe, Indian Agent, and myself. Jammed up against my knees was Bill Harris, Coroner and Magistrate, and facing him, with knees intertwined, was Capt. Dawson, the Medical Officer. Next to Mr. Harris was Cst. Russell and facing him was Stephen Poole, his prisoner, with his two