

## **Detective Sergeant Derek Charles Wood**

**1928-2007**

Derek Wood was born March 11<sup>th</sup> 1928, in Reigate, oldest son of the local Co-op manager. He attended Reigate Grammar School until he was 15/16, then trained with the Weights and Measures Deptment of Reigate Borough Council. It was here that he was introduced to the idea of being a policeman, (I seem to recall possibly an inspector with a name like Boucher taking him under his wing). Dad enlisted with the army – 4<sup>th</sup> Hussars when old enough and eventually commanded a tank in Palestine and Egypt before returning home to join the Surrey Constabulary. He was allocated the collar number 525. He died in October 2007.

### **Old and Bold November 2007**

John Wright: I have just received a phone call from Gwen to say her dad, Derek Wood, passed away today at Princess Alice Hospice, Esher. He is survived by his daughters Gwen and Pip. Derek was DS and uniform sergeant at Leatherhead when I knew him and he served on the crime squad. On retirement he was CID office Manager on Addlestone Division but lived in Leatherhead for many years. The funeral took place on Monday 5th November 2007 at Randall's Park Crematorium at 12.30pm.

## 100 gather to say farewell to popular officer

MORE than 100 people said goodbye to a very popular policeman and friend when they attended the funeral service of Derek Charles Wood on 5 November, *writes David Amos.*

Derek died on 23 October, aged 79. His police career had started in 1948, following military service in Italy, Palestine and Egypt. He



enjoyed a varied career and his first police posting was to Godalming. Shortly after he married Joyce, a local girl from Shackleford who worked at the police station as a civilian clerk.

Derek carried out duties at Egham and Pyford before moving to CID at Woking in 1954 and then to the Fingerprints Department at Headquarters.

In 1956 he was on the move again – this time to Caterham as a DC. There was only one DC and one sergeant at Caterham in those days. During this time he saw 14 learners go through his capable hands. Probably the most major case he dealt with was the shooting (attempted murder) of Reg Callaghan, the Waringham village sergeant.

Derek was promoted to sergeant in 1963 and was posted to Leatherhead. A year later he became detective sergeant on the Regional Crime Squad at Epsom. This was the first and only crime squad office in the country at the time and Derek was the only Surrey officer working alongside five Metropolitan Police officers. They investigated some of the very serious crimes (murders and armed robberies) being committed at the time by the infamous South East and East London gangs.

He returned to Leatherhead in 1967 and retired in 1970 on ill health grounds due to injuries received while working in the Crime Squad. He then became the CID office manager at Addlestone Division, a role he stayed in until 1988, making 40 years service in all.

Derek is survived by his two daughters, Gwen and Pip, Joyce having died in 1999.



Derek was posted to Godalming where in 1949 he was a part of this group photograph.

THE SUNDAY TIMES FEBRUARY 23 1964

## POLICE UNITE TO BEAT HOUSE BREAKERS



The crime squad confer: (left to right) Det.-Supt. Denton, Deputy Commander Millen, Det.-Chief Supt. R. Lewis, Lt.-Col. Bacon, Det.-Sergeant Hales, Det.-Sergeant Wood, and Det.-Inspector Thompson.

## CID set up 'Home Guard'

By Michael Hamlyn

A regional crime squad, with power to cross borders and operate in any police division in London, Kent or Surrey, has been set up by the Metropolitan and county forces to check the ever-rising tide of house and shop breakings, and also to counter the psychological effect on the public of such invasions of their homes.

The squad, under the command of Det.-Superintendent A. Denton, was formed three weeks ago as part of the declared intention of Lieut.-Colonel Ranulph ("Rasher") Bacon, the new head of C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, to make the house-breaker's life much more difficult. "Housebreaking is one of the worst crimes in the book," said Colonel Bacon. "Never mind about train robberies and that sort of thing. It's housebreaking that affects the public more than anything else. A woman who has had her privacy invaded and her belongings turned upside down by a thief, suffers an enormous psychological shock.

"The courts bend over backwards to be lenient to house-breakers, but this should be changed. All such offences should be treated as serious crimes."

Colonel Bacon explained that the squad would act as a central information pool for details of break-ins throughout the area. The members, unencumbered by the weight of petty cases loaded on to divisional C.I.D. officers, would be

free to concentrate on their own speciality.

"The modern criminal is not tied by boundaries, so the police must not be. If, for example, there is a series of break-ins at, say, Reigate, one of the detectives from this squad can go round his contacts and ask who is responsible for them, and with luck he may find out."

Already the squad, operating from twin headquarters in Epsom and St. Mary Cray, has had a series of successes. They have been instrumental in arresting six house-breakers, "a number" of expert shop-breakers, and—incidentally—a woman who was on the police wanted list.

At each of the headquarters a detective-inspector is in charge of four detective-sergeants and one detective-constable, all with about 15 years' experience in fighting crime. All are between 35 and 45—"young enough to be extremely fit, and old enough to have a wealth of experience and contacts," according to the head of C.I.D. south of the river, Det. Chief Supt. R. Lewis, who is Supt. Denton's immediate superior.

Each member of the squad comes from a different division and brings a particular knowledge of local informants and criminals. The Epsom squad includes a sergeant from the Surrey constabulary, and the St. Mary Cray squad one from Kent. One main problem is the

fact that juveniles are responsible for many of the break-ins notified nowadays and they tend not to work to any set pattern or to have any record which may be checked.

"There was a series of house-breakings recently by a gang of five school-kids, none of them over 15," said a member of the squad. "They took nothing but money and were responsible, between them, for about 20 break-ins.

"We caught them and they were all discharged, except for one who was remanded for a psychiatric report. He skipped out and with another member of the gang went to Sunderland. When he was brought back he was just put on probation by the magistrate. Now he's been caught breaking-in again."

Crimes of housebreaking have doubled in the past few years according to Home Office statistics. Recently the increase in numbers of known offences has been dramatic.

The average number of house-breaking offences known to the police in the years 1955-9 was 29,745. In 1960 it was 41,898, in 1961 47,728, but by 1962 it had grown to 56,836. During that year only 9,091 people were brought to court for these offences.

# SURREY CONSTABULARY

HEADQUARTERS, MOUNT BROWNE, SANDY LANE, GUILDFORD

Telephone. 0483-71212

Telex 85273

All communications to be addressed to The Chief Constable.

Your ref:

My ref: ACC(Ops.)/172-2-11



Chief Constable  
Mr. P. J. Matthews

3rd January, 1972.

Dear Mr. Woods,

Armed Robbery - Elliott, Courley, Grantham  
and Piggott

I refer to the above case which resulted in some salutary sentences at the Kent Assizes on the 8th November, 1971.

I have read the papers in this case and in addition to the excellent police work which was carried out by the C.I.D. officers I appreciate that a large amount of paper work was necessary and I am impressed by the way it was dealt with and understand that you were largely responsible for taking this load from the shoulders of the operational detectives. You will have noted that the officers concerned have been commended by the Chief Constable and your name would have been included in the list but for the fact that it is not the policy of the Chief Constable to publish commendations to civilian staff. However, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for the very great assistance you gave to the operational staff on this occasion. This is one of those cases which proves the point that the appointment of a C.I.D. office administrator is well worthwhile because it enables the operational detectives to set about their enquiries and leave the office work to the administrator.

I hope you are settling down to the new work and that your health is improving with the more regular hours.

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Chief Constable

Mr. D. Woods,  
C.I.D. Administration Office,  
Police Station,  
Addlestone,  
Surrey.

KPB



15th DECEMBER, 1956

COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR DETECTIVE CONSTABLES, CLASS "B,"  
HELD AT METROPOLITAN POLICE DETECTIVE TRAINING SCHOOL,  
HENDON, LONDON, N.W. 9.

Photo: T. K. EMMETT & SON,  
42 ADELPHY WALK, E.C. 10.  
Phone: 5752 (4 lines) 8075.

Det. Con. Challenger <i>Met. 'Z'</i>	Det. Con. Stanley <i>Newport</i>	Det. Con. Powell <i>Manchester</i>	Det. Con. Bisset <i>Derby</i>	Pol. Con. Barlow <i>Surrey</i>	Det. Con. Hughes <i>Met. 'Y'</i>	Pol. Con. Fuller <i>Herts.</i>	Det. Con. Woodward <i>Portsmouth</i>	Det. Con. Eames <i>Met. 'R'</i>	
Det. Con. Hardy <i>Cheshire</i>	Det. Con. Cooper <i>Met. C.R.O.</i>	Pol. Con. Mott <i>Berks.</i>	Det. Con. Asbury <i>Manchester</i>	Det. Con. Davies <i>Met. 'S'</i>	Det. Con. Brown <i>Met. S.B.</i>	Det. Con. Bennett <i>Met. C.R.O.</i>	Det. Con. Waud <i>Surrey</i>	Det. Con. Nordmann <i>Durham</i>	
Wilkinson <i>Wiltshire</i>	Det. Con. Norman <i>West Sussex</i>	Pol. Con. Southern <i>Cornwall</i>	Det. Con. Taylor <i>City of London</i>	Pol. Con. Williams <i>Bristol</i>	Det. Con. Waddington <i>Lincoln City</i>	Det. Con. Harwood <i>County of London</i>	Det. Con. Tursell <i>Lincoln City</i>	Det. Con. Ball <i> Ipswich</i>	Det. Con. To <i>Met. 'G'</i>
Det. Insp. Kallavanjayan <i>Thailand</i>	Det. Insp. Hedden, M.B.E. <i>Instructor</i>	Det. Insp. Mitchell <i>Instructor</i>	Det. Supt. Ellis, M.B.E. <i>Dep. Commandant</i>	A/Ch. Supt. Smale <i>Commandant</i>	Det. Insp. Fenwick <i>Instructor</i>	Det. Insp. Joyce <i>Instructor</i>	Det. Sgt. Tester <i>Asst. Instructor</i>	Sgt. Chalvalitid <i>Thailand</i>	



Det. Sgt. Derek Wood (Founder/Member of the Regional Crime Squad) is presented to H.M. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, on the occasion of the opening of the Police Seaside Home, Hove, 9th November, 1966. Sir Joseph Simpson K.B.E. Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police is in the background.

Elstead  
2200

Hankley Farm,  
Elstead,  
Surrey.

16. 12. 70

Dear Sgt Needs

I was very sorry to hear that you were leaving the service on medical grounds

I am afraid that your illness during the last few years can be attributed very largely to the difficult time when you were attached to the Essex Home Guard.

You went there a fit man and the strain and excessively long hours changed you in a little over two years to a very sick man, and you have never fully recovered.

if you are paying the  
penalty, your senior  
officials, including myself  
must bear the blame.  
we demanded too much  
in these early crime  
squad days  
I do hope you make  
a full recovery  
Yours sincerely  
Knutson