



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11

I, Simon Cooper, Coroner, having investigated the death of Byron Balfour Woolley

Find, pursuant to Section 28(1) of the Coroners Act 1995, that

- a) The identity of the deceased is Byron Balfour Woolley;
- b) I am unable to determine how Mr Woolley died;
- c) I am unable to determine the cause of Mr Woolley's death; and
- d) Mr Woolley died on or shortly after 11 October 1982 probably near Knocklofty Reserve, Hobart, Tasmania.

The evidence in relation to this matter satisfies me that Mr Byron Balfour Woolley, known as 'Bert', was born in Hobart on 12 April 1911.

There is no evidence that he ever married or had any children.

Mr Woolley saw active service as a member of the 2/12 Battalion AIF during World War II. As part of that Battalion's A Company, he took part in Oboe Two, the allied amphibious assault at Balikpapan, Borneo in July 1945.

After returning to Tasmania, Mr Woolley, described as a loner, and apparently suffering from depression, worked for the Hydro Electric Commission, as well as running a newsagency in Queenstown and spending time as a tin prospector in the state's north east.

It is apparent Mr Woolley enjoyed bushwalking, especially in the Knocklofty Reserve area, not far from where he lived.

He disappeared from the home he shared with his cousin, Ms Lorna Beck, at 34 Arthur Street, West Hobart in the afternoon of 11 October 1982.

Ms Beck, who is now deceased, reported his death to Tasmania Police in the evening of the same day. Contemporary records indicated his backpack, some bread and cheese, walking boots, an army coat, army trousers and a green Stetson hat were all noted to be missing from

his home. He did not take his bank book, which suggests to me he was not planning to go very far away or for very long.

Searches for Mr Woolley in the local area, and further afield, proved fruitless. No trace of him since 11 October 1982 has ever been found.

I am satisfied he is dead. Beyond that, I am unable to make any further findings. It is, I think, reasonable to conclude he went walking, probably nearby. How and why he died are not questions that can, on the evidence, be answered.

Comments and Recommendations

The circumstances of Mr Woolley's death are not such as to require me to make any comments or recommendations pursuant to Section 28 of the *Coroners Act 1995*.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Mr Woolley.

Dated 5 July 2021 at Hobart in the State of Tasmania.

Simon Cooper
Coroner