

The World's Farthest North Policeman

One of the Finest Officers
Of the Canadian Mounted Police
Is Inspector A. H. Joy. Who
Has Been in Service 20 Years
And Now Has His Headquarters
Within 800 Miles of the Pole



Nature, not bad men, brought Inspector Joy closest to violent death. . . . Sketched here is the scene: a clear, cold Arctic day, a treacherous, snow-covered crevasse, stretching unseen ahead of Joy's on-coming dog sled. . . . Down into the icy canyon went his dogs. Joy jumped at the brink. . . . A weighted 80-foot line failed to find the bottom.

.. By ..

JAMES MONTAGNES

INSPECTOR A. H. JOY of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with headquarters at Bache Peninsula, Ellesmere Island, less than 800 miles from the North Pole, is the world's farthest north policeman.

His beat is a desolate Arctic waste extending north from the Hudson Straits to the pole and west to the 90th degree of longitude. In this region winter is four months of darkness and the only inhabitants are a few thousand scattered Eskimos and a few score white trappers, traders and missionaries.

Every call for police assistance which Joy receives may start him on a gruelling dog-sled chase over hundreds of miles of snow and ice. He has covered thousands of miles of this bleak territory, including perilous mountain slopes in winter and inland seas in summer. He has visited regions where no white man has ever been and others where he found skeletons which told too plainly of Arctic exploration trips which had come to tragic ends.

In his vast "beat" are the remains of the Franklin expedition of 1845 and of the more recent Sverdrup expedition. In his territory have sailed in recent years the various expeditions of Commander Donald MacMillan and those of Putnam, the publisher. Somewhere in his domain, Arctic explorers have always hoped to find a short route to China.

Inspector Joy has held the title of "the world's most northern policeman" since the summer of 1921, when, armed with a letter of instruction from Ottawa, he sailed for Pond Inlet on Baffin Island, then Canada's most northern police post.

HIS commission gave him the powers of magistrate, coroner, customs officer and postman. His job was to patrol all the region in the neighborhood. His special undertaking was to bring to justice the murderers of Robert S. Jones, a fur trader.

Young Joy's task was a solitary one. No ship would touch at his headquarters; no communication could be had with Ottawa or any other city. When the ship which brought him and the two constables under him to the post had left, they were divorced from the outside world.

Never before had the Canadian government maintained its famous mounted policemen so far to the north. This headquarters, at a point where the Hudson Bay Company had a trading post, was the first step in the establishment of a chain of northern police posts. The special reason for bringing these posts into being was the popularity of the country for traders and seal fishers. Then there was the murder of Jones, in which Eskimos were involved.

As soon as the post was in proper shape for the heavy winter, Inspector Joy, then a staff sergeant, set out. He traveled by dog team over the early snow and ice to Cape Crawford. Here Jones had been murdered. Here had lived the Eskimos who had committed the murder, therefore it was the first place to visit.

Joy learned that Jones had been murdered by a native named Nookkudlah, who had been aided by Oorooreungnak and Ahteetah. The crime was committed in a little Eskimo village near Cape Crawford, where Jones had stopped overnight on his way out of the Arctic.

In investigating the details of the murder Joy acted as a police officer. Then Jones' body had to be exhumed to prove his death had been by violence and in doing this Joy acted as his office of coroner required him to act.

He swore in three or four traders to act as a coroner's jury and its verdict was, after hearing eight Eskimo witnesses, that the three suspected natives should stand trial. Then, as justice of the peace, Joy issued warrants for the arrest of the three men and, as a policeman again, set out after them. The chase led across 500 miles of trackless ice and snow to an isolated little Eskimo village to which the guilty had fled. But, in the tradition of the mounted police, "he got his men."

FOR a year the three accused, the witnesses and their families, lived around Pond Inlet. The extra population worked a hardship on this northern settlement, for often there was not enough food for everyone. But the next summer the trial would take place, the report of the inquiry having been taken out by a supply ship.

So the next summer there arrived at this most northern

police and trading post a collection of legal lights, such as never before had been witnessed in the north. Headed by His Honor Judge L. A. Rivet of Montreal, and assisted by counsel for crown and defense, the party arrived on the bleak shores of the post.

The trial was carried on with all pomp and ceremony, as if it were transpiring in a dignified supreme court room in one of the big cities of Canada. Scarlet-coated police officers acted as escorts for the judge and as guardians for the prisoners.

His Honor was robed in the traditional black gown with white tabs, as were the attorneys. The jury was drawn from the traders, government officials and officers of the supply ship.

The verdict was that Nookkudlah was guilty of manslaughter. He was sentenced to serve 10 years at Stone Mountain penitentiary. Oorooreungnak was given two years at hard labor in the guardroom of the mounted police post at Pond Inlet. And Ahteetah was acquitted.



Provisions stored in this cache, just south of Bache Peninsula, must last Inspector Joy during the four winter months of night. . . . It was being restocked when this picture was taken, during the summer.

So ended one of the most notable murder cases in the Arctic, one wherein the police officer had acted in his own capacity, as well as that of coroner and justice of the peace in bringing his culprits to justice while in addition he had sent in documents as orderly as any clerk of the court would have done in a regular court.

INSPECTOR JOY was given his present rank in 1927, following the fine work he did in the Arctic, for he has been Canada's northernmost police constable ever since that year when he went up after the murderers of Jones. And now he is in the farthest north in charge of the entire Eastern Arctic Sub-District.

It is 20 years to the year since he first, as a young fellow just out of his teens, joined the force. That was in Calgary, when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was the North West Mounted Police, the romantic police force of the west—the only police force during the years when the west was being settled. And it was during his own time that policing of the west was finished, when shortly after the war the various provinces assembled their own police units, and the North West Mounted Police became a Dominion body, changing its name in 1920.

It may have been the romance of the force, or it may have been a restlessness in young Joy that induced him to join. At any rate, he signed up, meeting all the requirements, and topping the height standard of five feet eight inches by a good four and one-half inches. He was unmarried, for the mounted police do not take married men into their ranks. And he is still unmarried, for he lives nowadays practically all the time in the north, which is not a place to bring one's wife.

Joy had a look at the possibilities of his Arctic job in 1920, when, with Inspector J. W. Phillips, he made a trip to the Belcher Islands in the Hudson Bay to look into the homicides which reports said were being committed there.

Two Eskimos had been killed on these islands, Ko-Okyauk and Ketashuk. The causes in each case were the



Eskimo belles. . . . Their husbands are superstitious, but very moral. . . . Inspector Joy and a jury sanctioned their ethics.

which is seldom. The nearest trading post was 70 miles away, on the mainland. It was the post at Great Whale River. Water cut them off, and only when there was plenty of ice on the bay was the journey at all safe. So the state of the natives was pitiful. It accounted for the killing of the two natives.

Both had run away with women of other men. The natives are superstitious, but have fine ethics. For the running away with other women, when each already had a wife, was deemed highly immoral, and could only be caused by a state of mind which bordered on insanity. In addition, the miscreants threatened to kill the others of their little band if they interfered. So to insure the safety of their women folk, and children as well as themselves, the few men of the village took one of the outlaws to another small island, where they tied him up and left him.

He managed to get loose by cutting his bonds on the sharp stones. The men came the next day and tied him so tight that they strangled him. The other outlaw was killed more quickly.

The police held an inquiry there and then, the jury being the crew of the gasoline launch. And because of the condi-



Within the dotted lines here is the farthest north police beat in the world. . . . Bache Peninsula, headquarters for this vast ice-bound area, is indicated by the arrow. . . . The location of other points mentioned below is also shown.

same, supposed insanity. Joy and his superior officer delved into the matter, after making a hazardous journey by canoe down the Missinabi River to Moose Factory, then by sailboat and gasoline launch to the Belcher Islands.

THEY found a starved number of communities, in all 128 people, of whom 33 were men. Living conditions on the islands were so tragic that it was not hard to see the reason advanced by the natives as to the cause of the crime. There was so little game on the islands that for clothing they had scarcely enough, while there was practically no bedding for the cold winter months, the natives sleeping with their dogs for warmth. And so there was also little food.

As for fish, the kyaks were so flimsy that they could only be used when the bay was smooth.



Arctic Mountie Inspector Joy. . . . He has found the bones of unsuccessful polar expeditions on his "beat." . . . He has tracked criminals in places where no other white man has ever been.

tions of the natives, they decided that the killings were done in the best interests of society, while the villagers were warned not to do so in the future.

Sergeant Joy must have been highly recommended by his superior officer, for it was the following summer that he was sent to Pond Inlet as the world's most northerly policeman.

The Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police only sends men of sterling qualities to the Arctic. The loneliness is one of the biggest hardships to overcome. Thus one will not find in that region men of moody or gloomy outlook, for they would soon commit suicide up north, where no white man is seen and only a few natives. Where the wind rages constantly and the winters are four months of night.

Inspector Joy has stood the test, for as those who have come in contact with him in the northland have told me, there is no more respected officer in the Arctic. His men and the natives all look up to him. With the natives it is akin to hero worship, for they believe implicitly his every word. What he says he does. Nowhere in the entire Arctic will one find white man or native who does not respect Inspector A. H. Joy.

HIS patrol of March, April and May, 1927, the first year that any police outfit wintered up at Bache Peninsula, brought him high praise from Ottawa. And well it might. He covered 1320 miles in 54 days.

He left Bache Peninsula and struck inland through the heart of Ellesmere Island, across a frozen sea to Axel Heiberg Island, the Ringnes Islands and King Christian Island, all the most northerly islands on the North American map. During the whole trip not a human being was encountered, only large numbers of caribou, bears, musk-oxen, hares, wolves and ptarmigan. Sometimes travel was over ice as smooth as glass, and at other times the heavily-laden komatiks had to be dragged over sharp boulders and gravel devoid of any snow—windswept tracts of land.

Two Eskimos accompanied him, Nookapeungwak and Ahkecoo, the former being considered the best hunter in all the Arctic. He had accompanied Joy on other patrols and has been with him since. He is with him this year on another of those lengthy patrols for which Inspector Joy is now famous. Then they had three komatiks and 40 dogs, quite a cavalcade to journey the Arctic silence and quite a mob to feed.

ON a similar patrol Joy had his narrowest escape from death. He was traveling along on one of those days which happen so seldom in the north, when it is clear and cold. They were making their way downhill at a fast pace when suddenly a chimaera caused the whole landscape to change. It seemed as if they were going uphill, yet their pace showed them to be still going down. And then the dogs disappeared.

In a minute they came up over the surface again. They had broken through the deep snow into a crevasse. The other team coming behind was also running at a fast pace, for they make time when they can in the Arctic. There was no time to stop it.

Down . . . down went the whole outfit, dogs, harness and all. But the harness held, and the dogs came up again, minus one mate. His harness had broken loose. He had fallen down the crevasse.

The rest of the route ahead was broken by similar cracks and fissures in the ice, so that the party turned back. They dropped a weighted line down the crevasse where the dog had been lost, but though it went straight down its full 80 feet, no trace of the bottom could be felt, nor was the dog seen again.

(This is one of a series of articles on the acts of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the world's most picturesque organization for the enforcement of law and order. Another will appear in an early issue.)