

*Son of Man who  
hunted Bushrangers  
now Top  
New England Tracker*

**Tracker Jim Boney . . . a famous name**



The son of a man who once hunted bushrangers in the Thunderbolt country of New England plays an important role in the police organisation in Armidale.

He is James John Boney (59) who seems to have inherited the flair for tracking, intelligence and lightning deductive power of his late father.

There are some who say that Tracker Jim Boney's father could well have inspired author Arthur Upfield's fictional Aborigine detective, Napoleon Bonaparte ("Boney"), the hero of an outback thriller series.

The elder Jim Boney was famous for his skill and intuition in tracking bushrangers and cattle thieves in the bad old days of New England's settlement.

But "young" Jim Boney did not pick up the threads of his father's career until comparatively late in life.

Born at Walcha, when his father was Police tracker in that town, he lived with his family on the old Summervale Aborigine Reserve outside Walcha when the reserve occupied both sides of the river.

He started out in life as a drover for the Tancred family at Grafton. After a long spell in the saddle he took on bush work in the Kempsey district and then went to Coff's Harbour to try his luck on the banana plantations.

Finally he settled in Armidale with his wife and four children. He joined the police as tracker seven years ago.

In May this year he was chosen to attend the Police Centenary Celebrations in Sydney and whilst in the "big smoke" took part in a T.V. film depicting the search for a lost child.

This film was very real as Jim had the year before taken a very active true-life role in the search for a little boy lost in the Guyra district.

Recalling this search Jim is still of the opinion that if he had been left quietly on his own to make a "track" he would have found the child earlier.

But he is enthusiastic in his acknowledgment of the terrific response made by local communities who joined in the search.

Tracker Boney was also responsible for finding a man lost in dense scrub at Tenterfield in 1959.

Although the need for a police tracker does not occur frequently it is reassuring to local residents that Jim's services are instantly available in an emergency.

Answering the call to arms in 1940 Jim entered the Army and was sent to Darwin where he spent several months.

Jim says it took the Army more than four months to discover he was minus his trigger finger (lost from the knuckle in a bush accident) after which he was quickly discharged.

The Boney family is now widely dispersed, Jim's brothers Alf and Andy living the closest at Ingelbar and Urunga.