



Acting Chief Commissioner Wendy Steendam during her address at the Carisbrook Cemetery yesterday.

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Barnett's star to join fallen members on memorial wall

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“Senior Constable Barnett’s death clearly had an impact on the local community and no doubt significantly affected his family and colleagues at that time,” she said during her speech.

“It’s no surprise to anyone that policing can be a challenging career choice. Members see confronting and complex situations every day and they are often put in harms way.

“Fortunately, we are better trained today than back in 1858, but we still do have members who are injured in the line of duty.”

Act Chief Commissioner Steendam said while much has changed for Victoria Police over the 161 years since Barnett’s death, the organisation’s commitment to remembering and honouring fallen members has not dwindled.

She also said having the Victoria Police Star mounted on the wall at the Maryborough Police station provides a “tangible and important” way for current members to connect and reflect upon Victoria Police’s history.

“Senior Constable Barnett took a solemn oath to protect all Victorians and paid the highest price in fulfilling that duty. Over 160 years

have passed since his death, and it’s a true testament to our respect for his service that we are here at his grave site,” she said.

“I am honoured to formally recognise Senior Constable Barnett’s service and sacrifice by rededicating his grave and awarding him the Victoria Police Star.”

Avoca Police Leading Senior Constable Chris Trimble and his wife Tanya have spent the past 12 months researching Barnett’s murder, and it was Led Sen Con Trimble’s idea to have the accolade presented posthumously.

Ordinarily presented to a relative when awarded posthumously, Led Sen Con Trimble said no relatives were found.

“I’ve been looking forward to having the Star hung in the Maryborough Police Station, it’s been a long process but it’s completed, it’s certainly satisfying,” he said.

“There are other members on the wall inside, we call it our memorial wall, and it’s good to have Edward included in that. Police working here today can now stop and have a read to know what happened 161 years ago.

“Nobody looks after us in the most crucial times as well as we do and

161 years and six months later, that should not change.”

Barnett’s Victoria Police Star now hangs alongside Senior Constable Maurice Moore’s, an officer who was shot dead by an offender in Maryborough in 1986.

Led Sen Con Trimble, who was present on the night Moore was shot, said having Barnett remembered with a Victoria Police Star is close to home.

“It’s kind of a replication of what I’ve lived through, but it’s 161 years ago,” he said.

“Despite 12 months of my research, we’re (Victoria Police) still the only family of Edward Barnett that we could find.”

On the night he was shot, Barnett was attempting to arrest William Brook, who had just murdered restaurateur Charles Lopez during an attempted robbery. Fleeing the scene, Brook opened fire on Barnett, with a bullet fatally striking him in the heart.

Brook was later arrested and died of injuries sustained during the robbery. A crowd of 1500 miners assembled later that day and ‘undesirable elements’ became the target of their vengeance following the deaths of Barnett and Lopez.