

## Constable James Patrick Clifford

PC Jim Clifford was best known, not for his police duties, but for the considerable amount of time he spent working with and for the St. Johns Ambulance Brigade, both on a local level and nationally.

He joined the Metropolitan Police from a previous employment as an horticultural researcher. He was posted to Waltham Abbey straight from training school in early 1954 as PC 424J, and very quickly made his mark with police First Aid activities, a previously held hobby in his home town of North Ockenden, Essex.

By 1962 he was a member of the highly successful J Division first aid team and his days on the street undertaking serious police duty progressively dwindled with each competition success. He was treated like many select sportsmen of the times, he received police pay but was not expected to act as a street duty officer. In return the police received a massive amount of kudos and an expert training officer for tasks that they had to undertake. Policemen and women were expected to undertake First Aid.

In one year the team consisting of Arthur Gatcum [Captain], and PC's Knott, Neal, Akers and Clifford won the Metropolitan Police trophy, the Police National Trophy and the Grand Prior award, in the following year he trained the women's team that won the Police National Trophy in 1963-4. In January of 1968 he was admitted to the Royal Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and in February 1975 he was promoted to the rank of Officer (Brother) by Queens Warrant. This was the third highest honour that can be bestowed in peacetime by the Order. The award was presented to him by Lord Caccia, Lord Prior of the order, at Clerkenwell Church, London in July 1975.



The award was based on a long period of activity for the Order of St. John. Aside from competitions, over a 25 year period of work for the Order, he had trained other teams, trained police officers during their normal refresher courses at various police stations including Woodford for local officers. Acting with a number of former RAF people living in the locality he helped to set up the St. John Air Wing, for flying spare body parts donated for transplant and set up a St. Johns Brigade unit based at St. Margarets Hospital, Epping.

With all his work and pleasure time deeply entwined with the St. John organisation, PC 424J found little time to fit in normal police duties. But although he was missing as often as he was present, he was something of a 'Golden Boy' and when he did manage to be involved on police duty he attracted a few divisional commendations

for his work, and for the inevitable assistance to the injured accident victims he came across.

He was present at the 1966 incident when PC Stuart Will earned himself an award for lifesaving on Ramey Marsh, but as a rule he was almost written off as far as regular police work was concerned. Towards the end of his service life he was starting to suffer from his own bad health; he was away ill for almost a year in 1975, with what was eventually diagnosed as a form of immunology.

He remained in the service only long enough to receive his 22 year long service medal from Assistant Commissioner Crisp at Barkingside police station, before he retired in 1976 [see below right].

He remained following the same track though, after retirement he taught officers in the City of London Police their First Aid.

Eight years later, in 1984, he died.

