Wayne Merry

….. developed his rugby league skills at Westmead and then Parramatta Marist Brothers. He played junior rugby league with Wentworthville in the mid 1960's but by 1967 he was graded with the Wentworthville senior team which dominated the Sydney Second Division at the time.

Wayne played in the 1968 Wentworthville Reserve Grade team which was coached by former Wests First grade player, George Lucas. The Reserve Grade team were premiers in 1968.

Sunday, August 25, 1.30 p.m.   BANKSTOWN OVAL
RESERVE GRADE SECOND SEMI-FINAL

ARNCLIFFE SCOTS	WENTWORTHVILLE
(Black, Red & Gold, Gold Collars & Cuffs)	(All Black)
Coach: MERV LEES	Coach: GEORGE LUCAS
Fullbacks:	
1—Peter BERG	Col BULLIVANT— 1
Threequarters:	
5—Grant BLATCHFORD	Ray DEVINE—18
18—Dave BYRDSON	Wayne MERRY—16
17—Bill COLLESS	Kerry DAVIS—28
19—Denis O'NEILL	Ken FOORD— 2
21—Peter ERICKSON (one to be omitted)	
Five-eighths:	
22—Chicka REYNOLDS	Adrian WELLER—19
Halves:	
34—Neville GREER	Steve MERRIMAN— 7
Forwards:	
23—Warren O'BRIEN	Geoff WORTHINGTON—29
27—Barry DEAN	Tom GROGHAN—36
36—Steve PYNSENT	Joe PORTELLI—22
24—Alan WEBB	Geoff BEESLY—35
41—Peter ALLEN	Don GREENBANK—26
26—Doug HANCOCK (C)	Noel KANE (C)—25
Reserves:	*Reserves:*
Terry Byron, Heinrich Rampe, Geoff Grinham.	M. McDonald (24), A. McMartin (33). A. Lyons (27), P. Hughes (37), J. White (31).

Wentworthville Reserve Grade Premiers1968

In 1969, Wayne played in the Wentworthville First Grade team. The First Grade team were premiers that year, defeating Sydney University in the Grand Final.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1969   3.00 p.m.   RINGROSE PARK
FIRST GRADE: GRAND FINAL

WENTWORTHVILLE	SYDNEY UNIVERSITY
(All Black)	(Royal Blue, University Crest)
Coach: LEWIS JONES	Coach: FRANK JOHNSON
Fullbacks:	
1—Col BULLIVANT	John KEAN— 1
Threequarters:	
2—Ken FOORD	John PINKERTON— 2
16—Wayne MERRY	Greg FARRELL— 3
35—Wayne BALDOCK	Dick LEW— 4
5—Brian DEVINE	Jim FIELD— 5
Five-eighths:	
6—Lewis JONES (C)	Ray WATTERSON— 6
Halves:	
7—Bob YULE	Graham McLENNAN— 7
Forwards:	
8—Rod BLUNDELL	Mick KING— 8
9—Dave ABLE	Geoff McMAHON— 9
23—John ROE	Peter WILSON—10
11—Noel CORNWALL	Dave HILL—11
12—Jim HAINS	Brian STONE—12
13—Des ROOTS	Dave CHADWICK (c)—13
	Reserves:
	J. Carmody (14), M. Cahill (15), R. Spackman (16), S. Norrish (17), Roger Allebone (18), G. Purcell (19), M. Cripps (20), G. Doherty (21), B. Jenkinson (22).

Wentworthville First Grade Premiers 1969

Wentworthville Second Division First Grade Premiers 1969
Back: K Foord, N Cornwell, D Roots, D Able, L Jones (Captain-Coach), J Roe, C Bullivant,
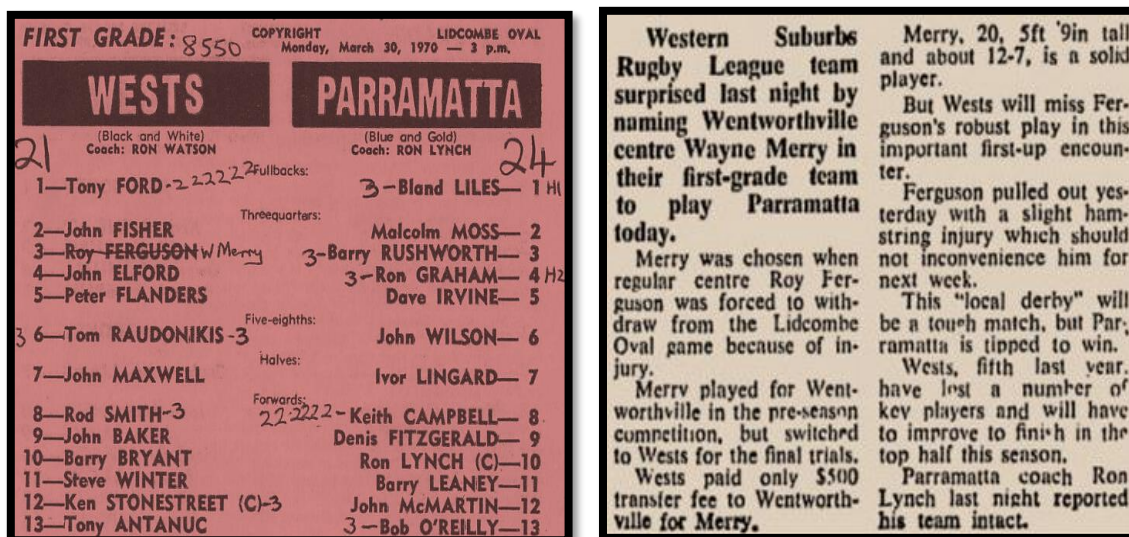**Front:** Wayne Merry, W Baldock, R Yule, J Hain, B Devine, R Blundell

In 1970, the NSW Rugby League experimented by including the two top teams from the previous year's Second Division competition in the first division pre-season cup competition. The experiment only lasted the one season with Wentworthville winning one of its four matches. The team finished in 12th position ahead of Penrith and University. The team defeated Parramatta but lost a close match against University.

More importantly, Wentworthville played against Wests in that competition and while being soundly defeated it also provided the opportunity for Wests to have a close look at Wayne Merry.

Wayne Merry playing for Wentworthville – Pre Season Cup Competition

Wests graded Wayne Merry from the Wentworthville Club and he was selected for the First Grade team to play Parramatta in round one of the 1970 season, replacing Roy Ferguson. It was an opportunity for Wayne but Roy returned the following week and maintained his First Grade position for most of the season. Wayne remained in Reserve Grade for the remainder of the season tallying up twenty games in Reserves that year.

Wayne Merry's debut with Wests

Wayne had his next opportunity to play First Grade in round six of the 1971 season when he came into the team to replace Dick Timbs who had influenza.

During his three seasons with Wests, Wayne Merry played seventeen First Grade, forty seven Reserve Grade, one Third Grade and one Endeavour Cup game. He scored twelve tries and kicked three goals for a tally of forty two points in all grades and cup matches.

Surname	Forename	Year	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	Endeavour Cup	Tries	Goals	Field Goals	Total
Merry	Wayne	1970	1							
Merry	Wayne	1970		20			1	3		9
Merry	Wayne	1971	5				2			6
Merry	Wayne	1971		19						
Merry	Wayne	1971				1	1			3
Merry	Wayne	1972	11				3			9
Merry	Wayne	1972		8			5			15
Merry	Wayne	1972			1					
Total			17	47	1	1	12	3		41

Wayne Merry's Playing Record at Wests

Wayne joined up with the Penrith Club in 1973 and finished his career in the Sydney premiership that year. However Wayne was a serving member of the NSW Police and so he continued his rugby league interest with the NSW Police rugby league team.

NSW Police Rugby League Team 1974
Standing: Unknown, Bill Comans, Alan Stephens, Shane Harcombe, Bob May, Mick Kelso, Ron Tancred, White,
Mick Lang, Unknown, Garry Butt, Bill Tout (President)
Kneeling: Paul/Peter Bright, Chris O'Toole, Derek McNeil, Kevin Timbs (C), Ken Money, Peter Plunkett
Sitting: Wayne Merry, Phil Jacobson, Rob 'Evil' McDonald, Wayne Loughlin

The above photo was taken just prior to the kick-off against the Queensland Police side in Brisbane. NSW Police were victorious over their northern counterparts in 1974. Wayne was a regular partricipant in the NSW Police rugby league team and played until at least 1980.

NSW Police Rugby League Team 1980 – Tour of Queensland
Back: Dave Oliveri, Brian Fulmer, Shane Harcombe, Rob 'Evil' McDonald, Barry Craze, Unknown, Unknown,
Unknown, Unknown, Gary Bourke
Front: Wayne 'Bugsy' Merry, Pat Hamill, Unknown, 'Jules' Marlow, Glen Crompton, Unknown, Unknown, Rod Bryant
Absent: Bob Capel

Wayne Merry was selected for the 1980 NSW Police rugby league tour of Queensland. An interesting story has been recorded from that tour. It was said that the tour was bitter/sweet for a number of players. Bitter, because the NSW/Queensland game never went ahead. Sweet, because the team were a great bunch of blokes and they had a fantastic time as mates.

A member of that team recalled;

"We got off the plane in Brisbane and were met by a Queensland cop, who told us they could not get a team together. He then drove us to the pub where we had been previously booked and we drank and played pool all afternoon.

Rod Bryant had recently won a share in a lottery and seemed to have plenty of money to throw around. He and Bugs Merry wanted to run a book on a pool competition. Bobby and I (Bob Capel), teamed together and were pretty hopeless.

However, the rest of the team all got together and put their money on us and we then won the tournament. We put Rod's money on the bar and continued to have a great afternoon. The following day we were all driven to the Kirra Beach Hotel where we spent another three days on the drink."

The NSW Police rugby league team did play some football in 1980. A 23 man contingent toured New Zealand in September of that year. They played two matches against combined New Zealand Police teams, the second of which at Auckland was for an annual shield. The New Zealanders proved a little too strong for the tourists, winning the decisive match 29-22.

NSW Police Rugby League Team 1980 – Tour of New Zealand
Wayne (red jumper) third from left New Zealand tour 1980

The Police Force was not all football and good times for Wayne. He was a highly respected officer with the NSW Tactical Response Group (TRG). The TRG was created in 1982. There were four units in Sydney drawn from the ranks of general duties police. Their primary role was to respond to riots, demonstrations, disasters, saturation patrols and to support the SWOS team at barricaded hostage

and siege situations. The TRG and SWOS teams were amalgamated in the 1990's to form a full time Tactical Operations Unit.

Wayne Merry at work with the TRG

In many ways these police units were rudimentary in the way they were equipped and trained compared to their modern day counterparts. The photo of Wayne Merry above shows him wearing a general duties uniform, a basic military style helmet and perhaps some body armour.

During Wayne's time with the TRG, the unit was involved in one of the highest profile siege events. The Spit Bridge siege in Sydney's north was the culmination of a failed bank robbery and after taking hostages from the bank the perpetrator was cornered on the Spit Bridge. He was subsequently killed but not before severely wounding one of the detectives at the scene.

Wayne, who was a prolific song writer and musician, wrote a song about the event. In fact Wayne drew on his experiences in the NSW Police Force as inspiration for many of his songs.

Based in the inner city, he was exposed to the darker side of life on the streets and could see the human cost of addiction, homelessness and exploitation.

IT'S BUGGSIE, THE COWBOY COMMANDO'

Merry of the Tactical Response Group

When Buggsie, the cowboy commando cop, is saddened by the sleaze and sorrow he sees on skid row he doesn't pull a gun.

Buggsie — Senior Constable Wayne Merry of the Tactical Response Group — reaches for his pen and guitar.

Buggsie, 34, muscled and moustachioed, has been writing country songs for more than 20 years but it's only in the last 12 months they have attracted attention from major country artists.

First it was singers like Chad Morgan, Reg Poole and Singing Kettles who took tapes of his songs to learn.

Chad plans to record Buggsie's *I Was Born A Bastard*. And in Tamworth at the recent Australasian Country Music Festival, Buggsie's spirits were lifted by the interest of Redgum singer John Schumann.

The North Annandale Hotel in Sydney was one of the venues where Wayne performed. It was from here that Wayne connected with legendary Australian songwriter and singer John Schumann. He performed with the band Redgum which had the iconic hit song, "I was only 19" which told the story of a young Australian soldier in Vietnam. Schumann was interested in the raw and real life stories in Wayne Merry's songs.

Songs of acid, and Redgum's Schumann is interested . . .

Neutral ground

I arranged a meeting, without Buggsie's knowledge, after he sang me a few of his songs at the North Annandale Hotel the previous weekend.

Dual Australasian Country Music award winner Schumann was highly impressed with some of Buggsie's tunes, especially *Hold On To My Hand*, *The World Is Dying*, and two heroin songs *White Lady* and *Triangle*.

The two songwriters met on neutral territory — the Dean St nurses' home where 24 members of the Tactical Response Group were housed.

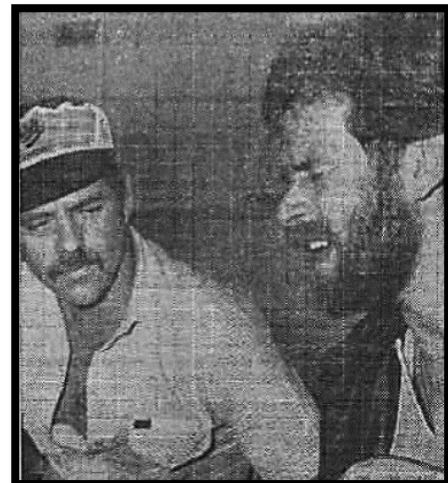It was the night before the TRG became heroes in the George St bank robbery hostage gunfight drama.

And Buggsie picked and grinned with Schumann on the recreation room stage as the commando cops unwound after pacifying visiting bikie gangs.

Book of desire

Schumann, whose Vietnam Veterans' eulogy *I Was Only 19* was a major catalyst for the Agent Orange Royal Commission, was about to record at the Music Farm, Mullumbimby.

The singers from opposite worlds — Schumann, a trained school teacher from Adelaide, and Buggsie, a Coffs Harbor orphan who left school in Form 4 — sucked on cans of Tooheys as they passed the guitar around.

Buggsie, a cop for 12 years, was an electrician before he joined the force.

Meeting - Redgum's John Schumann tries out a Buggsie song

While Wayne was very much used to performing his many songs both in the studio and live on stage. It was also at the North Annadale Hotel that he stumbled into another form of artistry when he became an accidental extra in an iconic musical film clip.

The hotel at that time hosted its fair share of Country music artists, a genre that Wayne Merry was quite familiar with. The story goes that he was walking past the hotel when he saw a light inside which just happened to be a film crew setting up to film the interior scenes for the iconic clip of Cold Chisel's song, "Flame trees."

Wayne, of course was in his customary cowboy hat and no doubt looked the part, so was immediately roped in to give authenticity to the nostalgic theme of the song. He was cast as one of a number of old friends reminiscing over old times and forelorn love as the camera pans to a young couple standing by the pianola, with the unanswered question as to whether he will leave the town as so many others have done, or stay with his love.

Wayne Merry, the accidental extra in "Flame Trees"

COP THIS VIDEO!

HELL-raising retired Cold Chisel rockers — stars of the Star Hotel riot — have recruited an unusual video star.

The band, who immortalised the rockers-coppers blitzkreig in song, hired a real life anti-terrorist police officer.

But the policeman, Senior Constable Wayne "Buggsie" Merry of the Tactical Response Group, doesn't play a cop.

Buggsie, 34, plays a cowboy in a honky tonk scene in the video for the song Flame Trees from Cold Chisel's sixth album, Twentieth Century.

Filmed at North Annandale cowboy bar, the video captures childhood memories of the writer, Don Walker.

"I was just walking past when I saw a light in the window," ever-vigilant Buggsie explained.

Mean dudes

"I was wearing my cowboy hat and they said: 'Step inside, you're just what we need.'"

Buggsie soon found himself seated at a table with three other mean dudes — a male stripper, his sidekick and publican John Powell.

And in the background, former RCA and Wonderworld promotions girl Marianne Dibbs is the buckle bunny serenaded by the piano-playing hero.

Headline-grabbing is nothing new for Buggsie, a real life country singer and songwriter.

The laid back lawman (who recently named his baby daughter Calamity Jane) is looking for someone to record his Spit Bridge hostage song written after his crack TRG squad became heroes in the February kidnap drama.

— DAVID DAWSON

Wayne Merry died at Belfield, NSW in November 2022 after a battle with cancer. He was exposed to the darker side of life through his role in the Police Force but from the various interviews that he had given he appeared to be able to filter those darker moments through the realms of his music.

He was a loving family man and a good mate. The tributes at the time of his death attest to his laconic character and perhaps a bit of larrikin thrown in as well. Wayne attended every Pratten Park Magpies reunion and on his passing it was noted that he was not only a talented musician, but a mate to many.

In the notice of his death, his former Police colleagues noted that he was a loving dad, brother and mate. **"He is on his way to where there is no technology, stupid people, mobile phones, people that can't tackle but above all, no more pain."**

Perhaps the day that he walked into the North Annandale hotel and became a cast member in the "Flame Trees" film clip was more than an accident. The words from the song that align with Wayne's appearance would not be out of place in Wayne's life.

"But oh who needs that sentimental bullshit, anyway
Takes more than just a memory to make me cry
And I'm happy just to sit here (at) a table with old friends
And see which one of us can tell the biggest lies"

MERRY, Wayne George
"Bugs"
Service No. 15372
Passed away on
04.11.2022
after a courageous
battle with cancer
Late of Belfield

Loving dad,
brother and mate.
He is on his way to where
there is no technology,
stupid people, mobile
phones, people who cant
tackle but above all,
no more pain.

Aged 73 years

Bugs' Family and Friends
are warmly invited to
attend his Funeral Service
to be held in the South
Chapel of Rookwood
Gardens Crematorium,
Memorial Av, Rookwood
on Monday, November 14
2022, commencing at
12:30pm.

In lieu of flowers, please
donate what you can to
Guide Dogs Australia.