

John McArdle

Rushworth Chronicle

19 June, 1936

GUN TRAGEDY.

Local man killed.

Knee shattered when gun falls.

The accidental discharge of a shotgun cost the life of a young Rushworth man on Sunday last. The victim was John McArdle, aged 23, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. McArdle, of Rushworth.

With his wife (who was a Miss Gustavson before her marriage) and two children Mr. McArdle went in a motor truck to Gustavson's farm at Lauderdale on 10 a.m. on Sunday last. They were accompanied by Dominic Francis McArdle, a brother, Simon John Fraser, another local youth. One of the objects of the visit was to hunt a fox that had been destroying poultry on the Gustavson farm. At the farm the men picked up Mr. Charles Patrick Gustavson and they proceeded to a nearby paddock where all except Mr. McArdle left the truck and, armed with guns, spread out to hunt the fox.

Mr. McArdle started the truck to go the opposite side of the paddock. A few minutes later Fraser, who was nearest to him, noticed McArdle waving his hat. He went to the truck and discovered that McArdle had been shot in the right knee, in which there was a terrible wound, which was breeding bleeding freely

McArdle told Fraser that the gun had fallen off the truck and discharged. He said he had loaded the gun to have a shot at a hare, but the hare had moved off and he stood the gun alongside him in the driving cabin. He was turning the truck around when the gun slipped and went off. He also said the gun, which was of the hammer type, was not cocked.

There was a distinct mark on the side of the truck where it is assumed the hammer of the gun struck and forced the trigger forward. Fraser drew the attention of the other members of the party to Mr. McArdle's plight and they drove to the Gustavsons' where Dr MacInness of Rushworth was telephoned for. After treating him, the doctor conveyed him to the hospital. Every effort was made to save the life of the unfortunate young man and his brother Mr. Charles McArdle gave a pint and a half blood to him in transfusions, but it was of no avail and he passed away at 3.30 a.m. on Monday morning from loss of blood and severe shock.

The tragic occurrence created great regret throughout the district. The young man was well known being a native Rushworth, and was very popular. The deepest sympathy of everyone is extended to the young wife and family and to the McArdle family.

The funeral was held to the Rushworth Cemetery on Tuesday and was very largely attended, the big gathering at the graveside being representative of all classes of the community.

The burial service was conducted by the Rev. Father Tehan.

The late Mr. McArdle had been the victim of a series of unfortunate happenings. A little time ago he badly injured his foot with an axe in the bush and in recent months fire

destroyed his home in Moora road only a few hours after he and his family had moved into it, with the result that they lost practically all their possessions.

An inquest is to be held at Mooroopna.

MCARDLE. -- In loving tribute to our friend Jack, who was accidentally killed on 14th June, at Stanhope. A true friend and a wonderful sportsman. Inserted by S. Prentice, Stanhope Road.

Rushworth Chronicle

3 July, 1936

CORONIAL INQUIRY

Death of John T. McArdle

At Mooroopna on Thursday last, the deputy coroner conducted an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of John Terence McArdle, aged 23 years, of Rushworth, who died at Mooroopna Hospital on 13th June last.

The Deputy Coroner returned a finding that the deceased died from the effects of a gunshot wound accidentally inflicted.

Simon Joseph Fraser, labourer, of Rushworth, stated: At 10 a.m. on 14th June, I went with deceased, his brother Dominic Francis McArdle, his wife and children, in Mr. Henry Abikhair's Chevrolet truck to Gustavson's farm at Lauderdale, about 2½ miles east of Stanhope. Deceased drove the truck, Deceased had a double-barrelled shotgun, produced, and I had a single barrel shotgun in the truck with us. Deceased, his brother, Charles Gustavson and I left Gustavson's farm at about 12.45 p.m. in the truck and went to a paddock about 2 miles north of Lauderdale. Three of us left the truck there and went into the paddock. Deceased remained in the truck and drove around to the opposite side of the paddock. We were after a fox which we believe we had seen. Deceased had the gun produced and cartridges in the truck with him. We spread out and walked across the paddock and when about a quarter of a mile from where the truck was, I saw deceased waving his hat. I called out to Charles Gustavson, "'Bake' is waving". I was closer to him than the others when I got to the truck deceased was on the seat with both legs on the seat. Deceased said, "My leg is broken. Come quick," I said, "How did it happen?" Deceased said the gun fell off the car and went off and shot me in the knee." I picked up the gun (produced) from where it was lying on the roadway beyond the truck. Deceased asked me to unload it. I opened the gun and extracted a discharged cartridge case from the right barrel and loaded cartridge from the left barrel. Both hammers were down. Deceased then said, "I loaded the gun to have a shot at a hare but the hare ran away. I put the gun by my side in the truck and was turning the truck around when the gun slipped out the open side of the cabin and went off." He also said the gun was not cocked. McArdle and Gustavson then came up and we could see the deceased was badly wounded. He had a hole in his left knee and he was bleeding freely and in great pain. We all went to Gustavson's farm. I phoned for Dr MacInnes and he arrived at 2.30 p.m. and, after treating deceased, the doctor removed him in his car. Deceased was shot from his left hand side. At Gustavson's farm I examined the truck and noticed a deep scratch on the left hand running board, directly

under the open cabin door. The scratch could have been made by the hammer of the gun produced.

Charles Patrick Gustavson, labourer, of Stanhope, stated at about 12.30 p.m. on Sunday, 14th June, I left my home to go out shooting with Dominic McArdle, Simon Fraser and the deceased. We drove about 2 miles down the road in a motor truck, and I got out of the truck with McArdle and Fraser to walk through the paddock. Deceased drove the truck around to the opposite side of the paddock. We were about halfway across the paddock when I saw the deceased waving his hat. The three of us hurried across to him. Fraser was the first there. When I arrived I saw the deceased sitting with his legs across the seat of the truck. Fraser said to me, "He has broken his leg." I said, "How did he do it?" Deceased said, "I saw a hare and I loaded the gun but before I could get a shot the hare had got away. I got back into the truck and placed the gun alongside me. I started the truck and the gun slipped and shot me through the knee." Fraser picked up the gun at the back of the truck and unloaded it. The empty discharged shell produced was taken out of the gun and handed to me by Fraser. We then drove the deceased back to my home. In my opinion the injuries received by the deceased was caused through the gun being accidentally discharged. At my home I examined the truck and I saw a distinct mark on the edge of the wooden running board on the left side of the truck under the open entrance to the cabin. The mark, in my opinion, was made by the hammer of the gun when it fell from the truck and caused the gun to fire the cartridge. The gun belongs to Charles McArdle. I knew that the lock of his gun was defective and I told him about 12 months ago the gun would go off easily if it had a knock. When we got over to the truck in the first place I noticed that it had been half turned around in the lane. The engine was stopped. The ignition was turned off, but the engine was in gear.

Dominic Francis McArdle, labourer, of Rushworth, gave the following evidence: At about 10 a.m. on Sunday 14th June, I met was Simon Fraser, the deceased, who is my brother, his wife and children in Henry Abikhair's truck to Gustavson's farm at Lauderdale about 2½ miles from Stanhope. Deceased, Simon Fraser, Charles Gustavson and I left Gustavson's house about 12.45 p.m. in the truck and went out about 2 miles along the Shepparton road for a shot. Three of us left the truck there to walk through the paddock and the deceased drove the truck around to the opposite side of the paddock. He had double barrellled shot gun with him in the truck. When we were about halfway across the paddock I heard a shot go off but I took no notice of it thinking that it was the deceased having a shot. We were spread out walking across the paddock and after we had walked a little further I heard Fraser calling out to Gustavson. I looked across and saw my brother (deceased) waving. I hurried across and when I got there the deceased was sitting with his legs along the seat of the truck. His left leg was broken. I heard him telling Gustavson and Fraser that he had been shot through the knee. We took the deceased back to Gustavson's farm and he was later taken by Dr. MacInnes to the Mooroopna Hospital.