

The Aboriginal History Project

Newspaper Archive

Herald 17th October 1933

Melbourne Herald 17th Oct 1933

FIGHT FOR LIFE AT DARWIN

Tracker And Murderer

DARWIN, Tuesday.—One of the most thrilling hand-to-hand encounters in the history of the Northern Territory police force took place at dawn today, when a police party attempted to capture the notorious native murderer, Namarluck.

Hero of the fight was the black tracker, Smiler.

Namarluck was captured in a camp at Delissaville Island, across the border from Darwin, early this afternoon.

Creeping on Namarluck just as dawn broke and taking him by surprise, Smiler fought a life and death struggle with him for more than a quarter of an hour, before the desperate escapee was eventually thrown over a cliff, leaving Smiler too exhausted to move, and another police tracker unconscious on the ground, fellow by a blow from a 10lb. lump of onestone.

Spears, waddies, bullets and revolvers played their part in the grim encounter.

The fate of Namarluck is unknown, but it is believed that he is lying near the spot of the encounter badly wounded from a bullet fired by Smiler.

Police are still combing the island for him.

Smiler's story was that the police raiding party on a launch sighted the camp just at daybreak and he and another boy crepe round to the rear of the six aborigines with Namarluck, while Constable Don and others in the party completed the encircling movement.