

What has this got to do with checking Passes?

This article was submitted by P.S. Probationary Constable M.D. Costello, Southern Division. It is his personal account of a recent induction course for Probationary Protective Services Personnel, held in Canberra.

No course of any type or length can hope to cover all that there is to know about a topic or subject, but this course attempted to introduce, at least, just about everything that may be encountered as a Protective Services Constable. The word 'introduce' is the key word and, in this respect, a remarkable amount of ground was satisfactorily covered in the two weeks.

The basic areas of law, police duties, official writing, use and abuse of firearms, etc. were touched upon and when one considers the possible depth of study within each of these subjects, one wonders how such an Induction Course was even suggested let alone carried out. Nevertheless the student left the College enlightened as to what he might be able to achieve, a little disillusioned as to what he was going back to, but much the wiser for his contact with fellow A.F.P. members from other parts of Australia.

At times during the course there seemed to be an unlimited quantity of 'verbatims' and 'explains' to learn, coupled with a never-ending supply of dummy MO's, CPF2's and notebook entries. It was then that we lost track of our ultimate goal and appeared redeyed next morning for Parade. This was a necessary evil for it was the final result that counted and when reflected on over the two weeks, did not create any real hardship.

But was it all worth it, and why the comment 'so what?' afterwards? How does all this make us better 'pass-checkers'? Comments like these from a few students left the others non plussed. True, there were a wide range of educational backgrounds to contend with and extremities as far as ages go, but neither of these factors should have aided nor obstructed any student in his endeavours. It seems that those students who posed these wondrous questions, were either immature, or were simply disillusioned about the job at hand. Whether their aspirations of grandeur as a member of the A.F.P. had been dashed or fulfilled, we will never know (although I suspect the former may have been the reason for the comments in some cases). Induction Courses are intended to make the Protective Services Constable more fully aware, not so much of his duties, but of his responsibilities, and in that respect some students misconstrued the aims of the course.

To those at the A.F.P. Training College, the senior staff and Instructors (and not forgetting the Duty Constable!) our thanks as students for a difficult job well done.

This question flashed through the minds of most students at some stage during a recent Induction Course held at the Australian Federal Police College, Canberra. The answer was, of course, 'everything' — although, at times, the immediate aims of the course were clouded by the pressure of assignments and study.

Nevertheless, with burning eyes and aching limbs most of us thoroughly enjoyed the course and accepted the slog of long hours of work and the pleasant social environment gracefully.

Right from the time of our arrival in Canberra on a Sunday we were brainwashed and/or earbashed into believing that these two weeks were not going to be a holiday. How right that was! The promise of all work and no play was carried out to the fullest extent. Previous fears of another Alcatraz or Colditz were about to be realised. How could they organise such purgatory?

The daily routine commenced at 8.25 a.m. and officially concluded at 9 p.m. Included in this were our lunch and dinner breaks. Of the nine hours of lecture time, just over one half of this period was spent in solid note-taking. Revolver use and practice and a daily Physical Training session provided a welcome break to the monotonous listen - discuss - note procedure that had engulfed us. For some, formal lectures were a new delight, while for others many years had gone by since that pleasure had come our way. By 9 p.m., every one of us felt that enough had passed between our ears for one day, and looked forward to a pleasant social drink in the lounge. But those of us that did partake of these pleasures knew that we would return to our rooms, not to rest, but to carry on regardless ... revise, repeat, re-learn or even restore some lost confidence.

But, was this high-pressure learning a real and justified criticism of the course? To some it was, but those few only had to have a serious look at what the course was meant to achieve in the limited time available, to realise that their criticism was unjustified.

There were other more specific growls and grizzles, some constructive, others destructive. For instance, the value of the daily physical training program over the two-week period was considered by some as a waste of time. Used merely as a break from routine, P. T. served its purpose.

