

# RECRUITING AND TRAINING

**Recruiting and training are fundamental to the AFP. Paul Lewer prepared this series of articles covering the extent of work in the area and some of the latest developments.**

**C**HIEF Superintendent Peter Dawson (Commander Training Division) describes his area as the crossroads of the AFP.

'We are a young organisation and training is playing a vital role in our formative years,' he said

The Training Division has a concern about the members of the AFP identifying with a corporate culture; with a sense of common purpose about the organisation and their jobs.

'We also want to give them a vision of the future and their part in it.

'Those aspects of our job are critical in this young organisation with a heavy responsibility for law enforcement in this country.'

Chief Superintendent Dawson was speaking at the AFP College at Barton in Canberra where he is undertaking his third term as Commander.

'This College allows us to instill the 'right stuff' in members of the AFP.

'We bring them from all around Australia to learn from each other, learn they belong to a national organisation, learn about its culture and to make friendships which can last through their careers,' he said.

## **The Training**

Recruits are housed at Barton while they undertake their initial 13 weeks training at Weston.

They are then deployed to the various areas within the AFP and do a local procedures course.

There are eight stages in AFP training. Each recruit does the first four in his first year of service. Stage four takes the recruit to an introduction to criminal investigation which is the first part of detective training.

Stages five to eight are promotional stages and take AFP members through qualifying courses for senior constable, sergeant, senior sergeant, station sergeant and finally, the commissioned officers' qualifying course.

Initial training is undertaken at



*AFP College - Barton*

Weston and the later courses are tasks for the instructors at Barton.

'The College can accommodate 168 people at any one time,' Mr Dawson said.

'We are operating at capacity and can't put on any more courses. Indeed, we are moving towards regionalising some of the courses to ease the pressure on Barton.

'The Stage Five qualifying course for senior constable and sergeant is one of those we are looking at holding in the regions.

'We are also looking at making some of the courses non-residential.'

## **The Building**

Mr Dawson went on to say that Barton was taken over originally as a training centre by the former Commonwealth Police in 1977 and the building had some shortcomings.

'We are under pressure for new premises,' he said.

'We have no flexibility to handle fresh government initiatives. For example, if legislation were introduced

for the video recording of interviews with suspects we would have to cut back on our training elsewhere in order to introduce this training commitment.

'We cope with other difficulties such as shared accommodation for all ranks, a lack of space for training innovations such as command simulators and space to develop a syndicate approach to training.

'Command simulators are used to great effect overseas to give police training in how to keep on top of the many aspects of handling a large scale situation such as a counter-terrorist exercise or an airport disaster.

The age of the building is another difficulty with which we have to contend.

'We need to spend more than \$1.3 million to replace the plumbing and hot water and we would have to close one third of the College at a time to do it.

It's inevitable that we will have to





*Chief Superintendent Dawson*

look at getting a purpose-built training facility,' he said.

### The Instructors

All the 74 instructors at Barton are serving AFP members.

The instructors are here for two or three years and they can reasonably expect to pick up a promotion during that period,' Mr Dawson said.

'They are committed and dedicated and get a lot of satisfaction out of teach-

ing other people.

'I want to encourage people to remain as instructors for longer so that they get the time and resources to do more course development, but all in all, teaching at Barton is becoming a very attractive phase in a person's career.

'An increasing number of AFP members want to become instructors at Barton.'

### The Workload

About 1,000 AFP members pass through Barton every year.

'About four years ago the AFP did away with exams for promotion and introduced courses,' Mr Dawson said.

'We have a heavy commitment to courses because we find them more cost effective.

'The purpose of the courses is to provide our people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to their work system .

'The system at Barton is designed to be positive and supportive.

'It is our job to make sure the AFP members succeed.'

### New Developments

Mr Dawson said that a concept introduced in 1987 was proving quite

effective.

We have a professional development unit which conducts mini-courses.

Those courses run for one day up to five days and they are for both NCO's and commissioned officers.

'The courses are highly relevant, low cost and don't take up much time. They cover areas such as industrial relations, negotiating skills, officer survival, communicable diseases and media awareness,' Mr Dawson said.

'We are also going to place more emphasis on College staff development programmes. I would like in time to see as many of our instructors as possible undertake tertiary studies in adult education.'

He went on to say that overall, the AFP's training system was moving in the right direction to become highly relevant quality training.

He stressed that the mission of the Training Division was to be an adjunctive service to line command for training and developing the staff of the AFP.

The primary responsibility for training and developing staff rests with line command,' Mr Dawson said.

## STAGE EIGHT

'Platypus' caught up with two officers doing a Stage Eight Commissioned Officers' Qualifying Course at Barton.

The College is not like a school; it's more like a big family,' they said.

Station Sergeant Bob Lehmann, 37, is a 14 year veteran stationed at the Canberra CIB and Senior Sergeant Max Gabriel, 42, is a 19-year veteran who is part of the Fraud and General Crime Squad in Brisbane.

The course is the gate-way to senior management positions in the AFP.

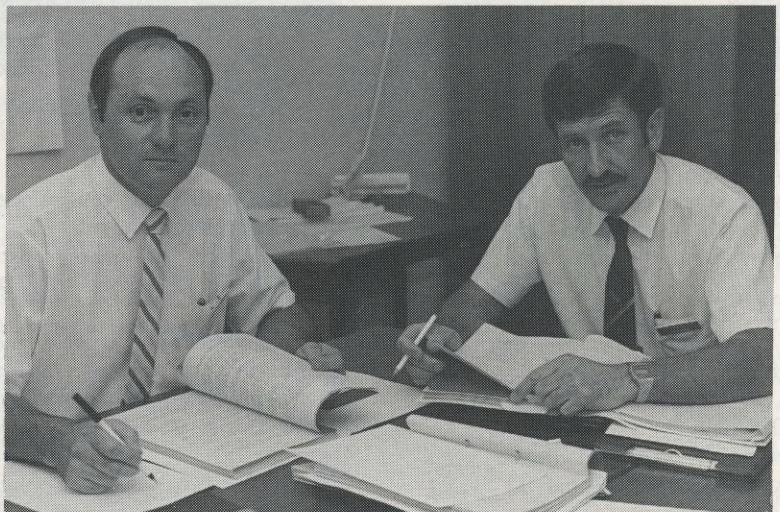
Both men praised the adult learning concept used in the 10 week course.

'Under the new system we are treated like human beings and allowed to develop at our own speed,' Senior Sergeant Gabriel said.

'The instructors push us fairly heavily but we develop ourselves in the course.

'I did a course at Barton two years ago and at that time we were treated as imbeciles and the attitude was very negative,' he said.

Station Sergeant Lehmann said the course emphasis was on making people want to learn rather than



*Station Sergeant Bob Lehmann (left) and Senior Sergeant Max Gabriel hard at work at Barton. (Picture by S/Const. P. McFawn)*

trying to force feed them.

'It's a good course that works very well,' he said.

'It's well planned and it caters for the AFP across the board. The management and command segments are particularly impressive.'

Station Sergeant Lehmann said courses such as the Stage Eight had the beneficial side-effect of making officers more aware of the AFP as a whole.

Participating officers could get up to date with current policies. They had also been able to look at the general administrative area of the AFP and in Senior Sergeant Gabriel's case, policing in the ACT.

They both praised the instructors at Barton, saying their enthusiasm was catching.

'The staff members are excellent and they spend a lot of hours with us,' they said.