

# The day-to-day work continued

**W**ithout question, 1995 has been a year of change, however, the day-to-day work of the AFP continued. The following is a selected summary of the activities the AFP found itself involved in during the year.

## January

- Two men were sentenced in Brisbane to 14 years imprisonment after they attempted to enter Australia with 5.5kg of heroin while posing as members of a Singaporean tour group.
- An AFP, NSW Drug Enforcement Agency and Australian Customs Service joint operation netted approximately 55kg of heroin. Five men were charged in connection with the importation of the heroin allegedly hidden in the back of 29 glass paintings.
- Commissioner Palmer welcomed a proposal which would allow police to obtain forensic samples from people suspected of committing serious crimes.
- Arrests began for a tax evasion investigation within the clothing manufacturing industry in Melbourne. In a five-and-a-half year period cheques to the value \$21 million had been processed through a system to avoid tax.

## February

- Counterfeit \$100 notes were found in Adelaide.
- Southern Region seized 10 marble lamps imported from Thailand. The lamps contained 7kg of heroin. Seven people were arrested.



*In March a new era of terrorism was experienced in Tokyo's subways when 12 people died and 5,500 were injured from exposure to nerve gas planted on peak hour trains. AFP officers immediately commenced investigating an Australian connection.*

- An external review conducted by Carmel Niland and Associates commenced. It looked at the AFP's culture, EEO budget and staffing requirements, training programs, and target strategies.

## March

- With the retirement of Assistant Commissioner Peter Dawson, Commissioner Palmer assumed the role of Chief Police Officer for ACT Region with Deputy Commissioner Jim Allen responsible for the day-to-day management of the region.
- A Singaporean flight steward was charged with importing approximately 8kg of heroin potentially valued at \$10 million and allegedly found in his hand luggage.
- The first public statement from the AFP regarding the activities of the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Western

Australia was made. Initial investigations discovered no connections between the sect's activities on a remote sheep station and the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway on March 20.

## April

- AFP officers in NSW located approximately \$1 million in counterfeit notes and printing equipment used to produce it.
- Members of the Mozambique UN Peacekeeping contingent and the multi-national force for Haiti were honoured with a welcome home parade at the Weston Police Services Complex.
- The Justice Minister issued a statement indicating his disappointment with the High Court's decision to quash the conviction of John Anthony Ridgeway. Mr Ridgeway had been convicted for being in possession of

a prohibited import after allegedly buying heroin from a police informant in Malaysia. The import had been the subject of a controlled delivery.

The High Court decided that the technique of controlled deliveries was illegal following which all operations involving the use of controlled deliveries were reviewed.

- A 36-year-old accountant was committed for trial concerning an alleged fraud on the Taxation office of \$1.265 million.
- Four Brisbane businessmen were charged with allegedly defrauding the Commonwealth of more than \$240,000 in relation to an Austrade grant to manufacture a mortar spreader.

### May

- Further investigations in cooperation with other state and federal agencies provided a link between the Tokyo subway gas attack and the Aum Shinrikyo sect activities at Banjarn Station, Western Australia. (See article elsewhere in this edition.)
- The trial of David Eastman for the murder of Assistant Commissioner Colin Winchester began.
- A man who bought postal orders and altered them to greater amounts defrauding Australia Post of about \$40,000 was jailed for four

years. His scheme forced a change in the system where postal orders are now cleared first before being paid.

### June

- An Army travel clerk appeared in Melbourne Magistrates Court for defrauding the Commonwealth of \$378,000.
- A north Queensland artifacts importer was jailed for six years with a non-parole period of 18 months after pleading guilty to importing 4.2 gams of cocaine from Peru through the mail.

### July

- New team-based operational model introduced.
- Degrees and police certificates were presented to newly sworn members from the police undergraduate scheme.
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander career development and recruiting strategy launched at Parliament House Canberra.
- Commander Mick Keelty, 41, was appointed the AFP's youngest ever Assistant Commissioner.
- Three men were sentenced in the Darwin Supreme Court to life imprisonment without parole following the detection of Australia's largest heroin seizure of 123kg in Darwin. They appeared

before Mr Justice Angel who described the men as "executives in the importation" which he said was the worst-case category.

### August

- With the two-year refurbishment of City Station (ACT Region) complete, it was officially opened by the ACT Minister for Police Gary Humphries.
- A member of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions was extradited from New Zealand . The man was charged with official corruption and disclosure of information by a Commonwealth officer contrary to sections 33(a) and 70(1) of the *Crimes Act 1914*.
- AFP Western Region seized counterfeit \$50 bank notes.
- Women's safety program unveiled in ACT Region.
- CJC inquiry into operation Wallah (AFP operation Gallon). Commissioner Palmer took the unprecedented step of appearing before a Queensland State Inquiry into alleged leaks into matters relating to Operation Wallah.

### September

- A former ATO employee was charged with defrauding the Commonwealth as a result of a joint investigation by the AFP and ATO.
- Assistant Commissioner Bill Antill retired.
- A joint Customs, AFP, NCA operation in Western Australia results in arrest of three suspects for importation of heroin. Approximately 45 grams of heroin was seized with estimated at a value of about \$160,000.
- Fake \$100 notes surfaced in Cooma, Jindabyne and Canberra along with counterfeit \$50 notes in the Canberra suburb of Belconnen.
- AFP seize numerous counterfeit \$50 notes in Brisbane.
- Police remembrance services were conducted throughout Australasia and the south west Pacific.
- Following complex investigations



In July, five women and 15 men marked their graduation with a parade at the Weston police complex.

Canberra Times Photo



The 30-member Haiti peacekeeping contingent included three women from the AFP.

convicted of falsely completing medical forms for his de facto wife to claim benefits while she was working as his secretary-receptionist.

- An Adelaide man was charged in Brisbane with importing 22 grams of ecstasy through the mail from the Netherlands.
- A con man believed to be using at least 20 different names was arrested in Adelaide in mid November. Earlier in the year he illegally obtained documentation and assumed the identity of a Vietnam War veteran. Under this identity he married a Queensland woman. Caught out by the woman he fled Brisbane while on bail, but was identified in Victoria in early November attempting to marry another woman.
- A Sydney District Court judge sentenced a 61-year-old Armidale man to 3 years and 3 months jail for defrauding the Department of Social Security of more than \$30,000. The man had 26 known aliases and had used several of them to fraudulently claim various unemployment benefits while living in Victoria, South Australia and NSW. He was eventually tracked down to Armidale.
- The funeral for retired AFP Commissioner Peter McAulay was held at All Saints Anglican Church in Canberra.

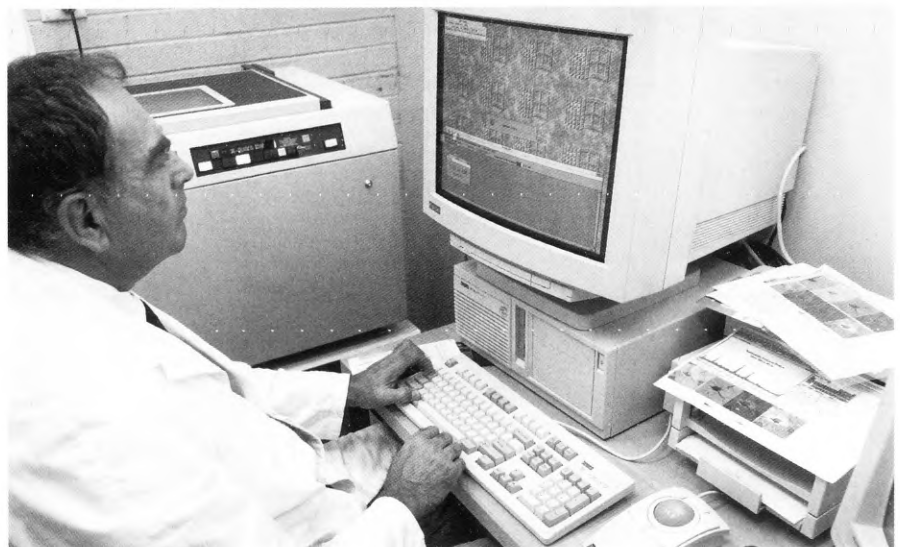
by the ACT Region, a 28-year-old man was sentenced to five years imprisonment after being found guilty of stealing more than \$471,000. The former bank officer stole the money while working for the State Bank of NSW at the Belconnen Mall. The man is expected to be eligible for parole in January 1997.

**October**

- Federal justice Minister Duncan Kerr issued a statement in support of the AFP after several AFP officers had been found corrupt by the Royal Commission in the NSW Police Service. He noted that the AFP officers involved were either ex-members or had resigned.
- Federal police in Sydney charged a 23-year-old man in connection with the alleged hacking of computer systems operated by Australian Internet service providers.
- Federal attorney general and justice minister attended the official opening of the AFP Gold Coast office.
- AFP representatives attended the United Nations remembrance day service at the Australian War Memorial.
- A joint state and federal operation saw the arrest of four men attempting to import compressed cannabis into Australia by air from Papua New Guinea

**November**

- David Eastman found guilty of the 1989 murder of Assistant Commissioner Colin Winchester and sentenced to life imprisonment.
- Two new AFP general managers and 11 directors were appointed.
- Ms Sandy Peisley became the first woman to be appointed to the AFP rank of Commander/Director.
- Armed robbery of an ANZ bank in the northern Canberra suburb of Dickson.
- Official opening of new AFP HQ - Central Region (Adelaide).
- A Gold Coast doctor was jailed after being convicted of 71 social security fraud charges. He was



In February, Forensic Services became one of only eight forensic laboratories in the world to acquire a Kevex "Omicrom" x-ray microfluorescence spectrometer.