

As the AFP grows, more of its members will become interested in its history. Historian David Crawford (see *Profile* page 32) has been working on material from various sources, including the AFP Museum, to compile historical notes worth preserving. As more material becomes available we hope that other workers (and correspondents) will add to our understanding of the events and characters which shaped the AFP. Here we look at Lieutenant Colonel H.E. Jones, who headed three of the AFP's predecessors at the same time.

'FATHER' OF THE AFP

by David Crawford

THE historical origins of the AFP can be traced back to the second decade of this century at a time when the Commonwealth's role in policing was ill-defined and its future uncertain. It was in large measure due to Harold Edward Jones (1878–1965) that the central administration established a place in Australian investigative and police work.

Harold Jones himself sprang from Melbourne. A man of humble origins, he began his career in the Victoria public service before transferring to the Federal Taxation Department in 1911. Involved as a militiaman pre-war, Jones was promoted during World War I, first as head of the Intelligence Section of the General Staff, working within the Attorney-General's Department. Agencies changed rapidly at this time, and soon he was with the Counter Espionage Bureau and then the Special Intelligence Bureau from 1917.

The Warwick egg

These bodies were created as a result of the Great War as the central government undertook to coordinate and direct intelligence work throughout the country. The implications were clear to the Government, and it was determined that a civilian agency should undertake investigative work. The first effort in this direction, the Commonwealth Police (1917–1919), had been established following the notorious Warwick egg incident (see *Platypus* No. 10, 1985). It was disbanded in 1919; Lieutenant Colonel Jones was installed as its last Director in order to oversee the operation.

The Investigation Branch was created in the same year and Jones was its first Director. This body fulfilled two distinguishable tasks. One of these was the conduct of inquiries on behalf of government departments. In 1929 Jones wrote that he regarded this as the Branch's function. Although in 1925 there had been only 292 inquiries of this sort, by 1936–37 this number grew to 13,823 and led to the collection and recovery of money amounting to almost £5,700.

Platypus 17, June 1987



In this 1936 photo of the Police Association of the Federal Capital Territory, Lt Col. Jones is fourth from the left in the front row. First on the left in the back row is W J Tandy, the same as pictured in the polling booth photo. Second on the left in front is Sergeant-in-Charge Cook, who had been seconded from the NSW force.

Internal security

Despite Jones's posturings, however, the surveillance work was the backbone of the Branch's power because it was regarded as being critical to Australia's internal security. It was therefore an area of work which remained sheltered from public scrutiny because of its secretive nature. It was clearly because of Jones's energy that the Branch was established and grew.

Agitation

In 1925 Jones took control of another body. In that year a Seamen's Union's dispute in Sydney was a centrepoint of industrial and legal agitation. In the process, the Commonwealth Peace Officers were established by statute, primarily to help deport the ring leaders of the strike.

After the end of the Seamen's Union dispute in 1925, the Peace Officers were

HISTORY

caught without a role. Often referred to as the Commonwealth Police, reminiscent of the 1917–19 body, there was speculation that it would be disbanded. The *Labour Daily* reported on 17 December 1925 that personnel would be halved in number. The editor added that there now seemed no place for the organisation while ever State police existed. The *News* of the same day predicted that the Peace Officers would disappear. This was a distinct possibility.

From 30 December 1925 to 1 February 1926 personnel numbers dwindled from 41 to 15. Under cover of H.E. Jones's patronage and Attorney-General Latham's support, however, the Peace Officer corps survived. Officers were asked to help the Branch investigate the background of people seeking old-age pensions and offences under the electoral law. During the early 1930s, agents acting as guards of Commonwealth departments were sworn in as Special Peace Officers in bodies such as the Department of Trade and Customs. These people surrendered their state police warrants and were made Special Peace Officers.

Munitions

It was not until 1930 that this guard duty aspect established a unique place for the Peace Officers. In that year the munitions workers at Maribyrnong went on strike. At that time the Department of Munitions had a number of civil watchmen who were responsible for the security of the munitions and explosives establishments. As they were members of the Munitions Employees' Union they stopped work with their colleagues. The Prime Minister, Mr Scullin, was immediately concerned and notified Mr A.E. Green, the Minister for Defence.

H.E. Jones was then consulted on the appropriate measures to take. He advised that a new uniformed watching service be established under the *Peace Officers Act, 1925*. The Act was vague, providing delegated legislative rights to the Attorney-General. Jones's proposition provided a convenient solution. After consultation with Defence authorities and the Munitions Administration, steps were taken to recruit the force. The new body, known as the Defence Establishment Guard, took up duty at munitions establishments on 26 April 1935. As a result, it was added that Peace Officers could be appointed members of the Defence Establishments Guard as at 22 April 1936.

War

At the outbreak of World War II, the total strength of the Defence Establishment Guard was 63 men in Victoria and

13 in New South Wales. At that time the Defence Establishment Guard lost its title and its officers simply became part of the Peace Officer organisation. Those in the Defence body were titled Special Peace Officers. It was a re-classification which meant that the 'Specials' were lower in status and entitlement to ordinary Peace Officers. The result was that by 1940, and partly due to the outbreak of war, H.E. Jones recommended that Special Peace Officers be made Peace Officers after three months' service, and so entitle them to child endowments, a uniform, and to be under more direct control of the Peace Officers.

Changes

In the process, the whole notion and role of the Peace Officers had changed substantially. Mindful of changes afoot, the Department of Defence organised a conference in Melbourne, held on 26 October 1940. It was decided that the Munitions Department would not continue to pay for the service of Peace Officers, and that the cost of the Peace Officers Guard should be borne by the Attorney-General's Department. This was done.

The change clearly indicated that the Peace Officer Guard, as it was now called, was used primarily for guarding various establishments, and it was due largely to Jones, not only that this organisation survived, but also, that it played a role in society.

Meanwhile, a second body titled the Commonwealth Police had been created in 1927. This was the first ACT policing body. Although the area known at that time as the Federal Capital Territory had been separated from NSW as early as 1911, there had been little reason to alter the policing arrangements. With work beginning on Canberra it was decided that a separate police organisation was necessary. As he was moving from Melbourne to Canberra with the other parts of the Attorney-General's Office, Jones was nominated as the first Chief Officer.

Three agencies

It was indicative of the nature of Commonwealth law enforcement during those early years that one man was able to act as leader of three agencies. By 1927, there were less than one hundred officers in the three bodies. But it was due to Jones that each survived and found its own place within Australian society.

Political threats

Towards the late 1930s, however, Jones's position had changed in part because of the growth of the organisations under his control. First the Investigation Branch's existence was being threatened

by the Commonwealth Security Service, which was the child of military intelligence. By 1941, because of the war, it undertook responsibility for internal security.

Second, the Peace Officer Guard had grown in great numbers in order to meet the needs of wartime security. But this measure, as inevitable as it was necessary, attracted enormous political criticism by about 1942 because of the growth in the wage bill.

Finally, because of the increasing needs of Canberra, in 1943 there was an inquiry into the needs of ACT policing. It was suggested that the police needed closer attention than Jones could provide.

Retirement

It seems that facing these difficulties Jones decided to step aside, and he retired on 1 January 1944. It was not the most satisfactory completion to a long career. But his legacy remained intact. The Commonwealth Security Service was incorporated within the Branch at the time that the latter changed its name to the Commonwealth Investigation Service. This body, with the Peace Officer Guard, later combined to form the third Commonwealth Police (Compol). Similarly, the police force working in the ACT has continued to grow in strength and resources. With Compol, the ACT police made up part of the AFP, established on 19 October 1979.

The alterations in functions, and the changing role of Commonwealth law enforcement has been dramatic, and different in character from the approach adopted by earlier forces. Some of the functions the Branch fulfilled under Harold Jones's aegis have now been assumed by Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). Nevertheless he acted as the *de facto* father of the agencies which later became the AFP.

WHY PLATYPUS!



THE Platypus has been adopted by the Australian Federal Police as a symbol representing the diverse requirements placed upon members in the execution of their duty. This unique and tenacious little Australian mammal is a survivor against increasing pressure from today's environment. It leaves no stone unturned in its daily pursuits and has equipped itself with a range of features to adapt to changes over many years. It is capable of passing unnoticed, if required, yet demonstrates an unfailing dedication to explore all possibilities in an effort to maintain its special place in Australia's wildlife, at times against large and more powerful opponents — a quality admired and respected by members of the Australian Federal Police.