

RAY McCABE:

A POLICE LIFE

by Stephen Simpson

THE recent retirement of Assistant Commissioner Ray McCabe has ended a 35 year police career that has been both distinguished and interesting.

Mr McCabe's career began in the Kenya Police. Then his service in the Commonwealth Police saw, among other things, postings to Saigon, Phnom Penh, Osaka and Paris. In the AFP he worked on the establishment of the BCI and was its first commander; he has commanded the Internal Investigation Division; he was Chief of Staff to Commissioner Grey; and he was Assistant Commissioner Northern Command when he retired on August 12, this year. He has also been awarded the British Empire Medal and the Queen's Police Medal during his service.

Mr McCabe was born in England on September 26, 1932. "I was probably conceived in Kenya but born in England while my parents were on holiday there", he said. His British parents had moved to Kenya shortly after World War I. He was educated at the Prince of Wales School in

Kenya. He had always wanted to be a police officer, not because of any family pressures or tradition, although he recalls that his great grandfather was Director

General of Police in India in the last century.

He joined the Kenya Police in January 1953 and spent most of his 10 years there in the Criminal Investigation Department. He was an Assistant Superintendent and second in command of the Nairobi C.I.D. when the impending independence of Kenya influenced his retirement in November 1963, at the relatively young age of 31.

He then tried to transfer to the Hong Kong police which was, along with Kenya, part of the Colonial Police Service, but he was unsuccessful. He believed his senior rank on retirement from the Kenya Police was against him.

In COMPOL

Mr McCabe joined the Commonwealth Police in February, 1964, starting a new

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Ass. Comm. Ray McCabe farewelled by Commissioner McAulay.



Det. 1st. Const. Clinton Guthridge

DETECTIVE AWARD

"I really don't think the people of Australia realise just how bad the drug problem is in this country — particularly with heroin and cocaine," Detective First Constable Clinton "Gus" Guthridge said.

And the officer who won the annual Excellence in Detective Training Award has equally blunt views about the drug war.

"We are not winning the war at the moment. We need more resources around Australia, that is the essential problem. Most of the people we are

facing are organised; they are organised crime figures with a lot of resources."

Gus, 25, who comes from Heywood in south west Victoria, graduated in September 1983 with above average results and was posted to Melbourne.

After serving initially with the general duties section he was transferred to the joint AFP/Victoria Police Task Force where he worked on some major cases. He was subsequently transferred to the Southern Region drug unit and then to the Fraud and General Crime Branch.

He returned to the Southern Region drug unit in April, 1987.

Gus completed Detective Course 1/88 on April 22, 1988 and was selected as the dux of the course. On May 30 this year he received his designation as a detective in the AFP.



police career from the bottom. His first positions were in the central records office in Canberra and then in criminal investigations in Melbourne. In December 1965 he obtained the first of several overseas postings during his career when he was asked to go to Saigon to control security at the Australian Embassy. He was a sergeant first class. Towards the end of his three year stint the Communist Tet offensive hit that city and made life, at the very least, hectic.

In his Saigon posting Mr McCabe was dealing not only with the Vietnamese police and foreign intelligence agencies, but because of his functions he also became involved in the fringe of diplomatic circles. It gave him exposure to diplomatic protocol which he called on throughout his career.

Returning to Australia in December 1968, Mr McCabe had a short stint as a training officer at the Manly Police College and then more overseas service followed when he was chosen in December 1969 to head the COMPOL contingent at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan. After a year in Osaka he returned to Melbourne as an Inspector in the uniform branch. Then, with his Saigon experience, he was posted to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in February 1971 to control security at the Australian Embassy. Mr McCabe moved from Phnom Penh to become an Inspector in plain clothes in Melbourne, then to Chief Inspector in charge of the Currency Squad from May, 1972. He recalls working on a big counterfeit currency case involving about US\$10 million in forged notes. The investigation took him and a Chief Inspector from the Victoria Police to Switzerland where they were able to assist Swiss police in the arrest of several members of the counterfeit gang, with further arrests in Australia. In April, 1974 Mr McCabe was sent to St. Cloud, France, at the rank of Chief Inspector, to be Australia's first representative on the Interpol General Secretariat.

Work overseas

Of his foreign postings Mr McCabe said, "I was given the amount of overseas work because I apparently proved myself in Saigon. When you've done a job once you know how to adapt, what to be aware of, what's required in protocol, what to say and how to say it". Mr McCabe also admits that being single at the time may have influenced his selection. He met his wife, Thea, when he first went to Canberra in 1965, and they met again in Osaka when they were both there for Expo '70. It wasn't until Mr McCabe returned to Canberra in late 1977 that they met again. They were married in 1979.

Mr McCabe returned from his Interpol posting in 1976 and was then promoted to Superintendent as commander of COMPOL in Western Australia until January 1978. He was then promoted to Senior Superintendent in charge of policy for diplomatic and consular protection before the AFP was formed in 1979.

He headed the Australian Crime Intelligence Centre from November 1978 to October 1979. When the AFP was formed in 1979 he moved to head the Interpol National Central Bureau in Canberra from where he chaired the working party which resulted in the set up of the Central Crime Intelligence Unit — the forerunner of the current Bureau of Criminal Intelligence and the Regional Crime Intelligence Section. He transferred to be officer in charge of the BCI in July, 1980 and he moved to the then Executive Services Division in May, 1981. Mr McCabe then transferred to become head of the Internal Investigation Department in December, 1981 and went on to be Chief of Staff to Commissioner Grey.

Sydney move

Mr McCabe became Assistant Commissioner Northern Command in October 1983, which he regards as one of the most challenging in his career.

"Eastern Region is at the forefront of federal crime, be it drugs, fraud or anything else. I'd say that the AC's job there, along with AC Investigations, would be considered the most sensitive," he said. "The job is getting harder in that there is more complex crime being detected than before, and there is also the issue of statutory accountability.

"For example, the Telecommunications Interceptions Act, the listening devices part of the Customs Act, and the increasing number of rules and regulations are making officers of all ranks more accountable. Industrial consultation on personnel management, EEO, FOI, the Complaints Act etc; all those statutory provisions make daily life more difficult than 10 years ago", he said.

"In my opinion, what were routine matters in the old days are to some extent now being blown out of proportion, and thereby adding to the existing burdens of all ranks in the force".

"I've no regrets about my career," he said. "Apart from drug investigations as we know them now, I think I can say 'I've done intelligence, fraud investigations, general duties. I even tried my hand at traffic when I first joined the Kenya Police but that was a disaster so I gave that away.

"I'm more than happy with what I've achieved in this job. I would never have

expected to be an Assistant Commissioner when I came here from Kenya".

AFP Development

Mr McCabe is equally positive about the way the AFP has developed since its inception. "The existing organisational structure and the relationships between the various parts of the structure are well entrenched which is why we are reaching a high degree of efficiency. Everyone knows what everyone else does, what their responsibilities are, what their accountability is, how they all work together. I don't think any major changes are necessary apart from a little more fine tuning," he said.

Regarding the AFP's roles, he said, "I don't see the execution of family law process as part of our role; it is more of a social welfare function. I don't see it as being part of a police function to go out and take children away from parents who have unlawful custody of those children. The police involvement in family law should be purely as a protection against breaches of the peace.

"As far as the airports are concerned, we must remain there for our intelligence role. Possibly, I'd like to see an expansion of our intelligence effort to cater for our obvious interest in the wharves. Otherwise I'm more than happy with the way things have developed.

"In the early days of the AFP I had the job of getting the former Narcotics Bureau together with the old COMPOL Crime Intelligence Centre to form the BCI. It's now going the way I recommended to a very great extent. It required a lot of delicate footwork".

The Future

Mr McCabe's plans for the future? "We will move back to Canberra and re-establish ourselves in our Canberra home, and sit back in the first few months and enjoy retirement," he said. "We would like to see a lot of Australia. Both my wife and myself have seen a lot of the world but not much of Australia. I may buy a Kombi van or something like it, do it up myself and then we'll take off when we feel like it. We also have a house on the New South Wales North Coast at Port Macquarie and we may drift between there and Canberra.

"I have no intention of working five days a week. That's why I am retiring. However, if later on someone wishes to use the expertise and knowledge I've gained over the years then, on a part time basis, I could be amenable to suggestions!"

