

## CONDOLENCES RECEIVED

A condolences book to be forwarded to Colin Winchester's widow and family from Southern Region headquarters contains many hundreds of signatures.

Some signatories made additional comments which are reprinted here with their permission.

"A respected friend and colleague." Assistant Commissioner Brian Bates (Commander Southern Region).

"With lasting memories of a good friend." Superintendent John Wheatly.

"A man with a great deal of respect for everyone. Gone but not forgotten." Tina Deville.

"He advised me as if I were family." Sue Backhouse.

"Although commanding great respect, this man treated all as equal. His help, advice and his presence were enough to make us care so deeply." Sandra Hurnall.

The Australian Federal Police and the Winchester family have received more than 8,000 messages of condolence, only a few of which can be recorded here.

### Telephone Condolence Messages

#### Wednesday 11 January

Mr J.K. Avery — Commissioner, New South Wales Police; Mr Tom Sherman — Attorney General's Department; Mr Vic Anderson — Former Assistant Commissioner, AFP; Major General R.A. Grey — Former Commissioner, AFP; Mr W. Horman — Commissioner, Tasmania Police; Mr Pat Brazil — Secretary Attorney General's Department; Mr R.W. Job, QC — Chairman NSW State Drug Commission; Mr K. Glare — Commissioner, Victoria Police; Mr P. Hurley — Deputy Commissioner, South Australia Police; Mr M. Palmer — Commissioner, Northern Territory Police; Mr W. Goedegeburre — A/g Commissioner, Northern Territory Police; Mr Mick Young — former Special Minister of State; Mr D. Lenihan — National Crime Authority.

#### Thursday 12 January

Mr John Langmore, MP — Member for Fraser; Sir William Keys — former National President, RSL.

#### Friday 13 January

Mr Morris West (from London) — Author; Mr R.H. Anning — Commissioner, Royal Hong Kong Police.

#### Wednesday 18 January

Mr J. Sturgis (from Washington) former Legal Attache to the U.S. Embassy.

### The many condolences included those from:

Commissioner R (Peter) McAulay; Winsome McCaughey — Lord Mayor of Melbourne; Kelvin Glare — Chief Commissioner VICPOL; Dr Wilfried de Pauw — Belgian Ambassador; Tony Mott — Acting Commissioner WA Police; Mark Weinberg — Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions; Ergun Pelit — Turkish Ambassador; J.R. Godfredson — Chief Fire Officer, Melbourne; Ian Taylor MLA — WA Police Minister; F.D. Tothill — South African Ambassador; Alex Fong Lim — Lord Mayor of Darwin; Sir Ninian Stephen — Australian Governor-General; L.W. Lane Jr — American Ambassador; W.L. Goedegeburre — Acting Commissioner NT Police; R.J. Redmond — Acting Commissioner Qld Police; P.H. Clark — Acting Chairperson NCA; Clyde Holding — Federal Minister for Territories; Paul Tohian — Commissioner PNG Police; Mr Hunt — Commissioner SA Police; Patrick O'Flaherty — Secretary POA Canberra Branch; Brian Hickey — ACT General Manager Commonwealth Bank; Revd Robin Long — Rector Bungendore Anglican Parish; B.M. McGee — President Police Association of SA; M.K. Ward — Managing Director Telecom; W. Wilson — Secretary NT Police Commissioned Officers' Association; John Kelso — Australian Consul-General, Los Angeles; C. Morfuni — Registrar Family Court of Australia; Sue Cummins — President Police Partners Association; W. McF Campbell — Deputy Administrator Norfolk Island; D.J. Rodgers — Member, Legislative Assembly of Norfolk Island; Ray Bedford — President, Australian Police Historical Society; Felice Pratico — President, Carabinieri Association of Victoria.



Assistant Commissioner Winchester receives his Australian Police Medal from the Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, on March 27, 1987.

# LIFE IN EASTERN REGION

by Stephen Simpson

**Eastern Region, which covers the nation's most populous area, highlights the federal investigational role of the AFP. Stephen Simpson, the Region's Media Liaison Officer, prepared this series of reports.**

**E**astern Region is the AFP's largest Region, outside the ACT, in manpower and other resources employed. It contains 584 officers including 90 officers whose positions are controlled from the ACT.

Eastern Region encompasses Australia's most populous state, NSW, and its largest city, Sydney. The Region also includes the major industrial cities of Newcastle and Wollongong.

Sydney has Australia's major international airport and the city's wharves handle a huge amount of container traffic, although not quite the volume of Port Melbourne.

As the country's largest city, more overseas mail is received in Sydney than elsewhere. The AFP's client departments and authorities, such as the Department of Social Security, the Australian Taxation Office, the Health Insurance Commission, Telecom and the Commonwealth Bank, serve more customers in NSW than in any other state.

Eastern Region conducted many major investigations in the past year.

## Drug Operations

The Drug Operations Division has 94 officers, and its successes in the past year included:

- the interception of 43kgs of heroin, the largest ever in Australia, in an investigation co-ordinated with Hong Kong police, resulting in the arrests of eight people in Sydney and 21 people in Hong Kong;
- the arrest of Donald Tait, his son and two Thais, and the seizure of 10kgs of heroin;
- the seizure of 3.1 tonnes of hashish from two vessels in Broken Bay, Sydney, in a co-ordinated operation with Customs, resulting in the arrest of 11 people;
- the seizure of 5kgs. of heroin and the arrest of a Singaporean man in the Sydney suburb of Rozelle;

- the seizure of 4.2kgs. of heroin and the arrest of three Asians in Kensington, Sydney;
- and the seizure of 1.7 tonnes of hashish in a container in Sydney and the arrest of one man.

There were 515 other drug seizures in 1988, resulting in 241 drug-related charges being laid.

## Fraud & General Crime

The Fraud & General Crime Division, with 119 officers, also had many significant investigations in the past year, including:

- the arrest of four men concerning an alleged conspiracy to avoid \$25 million in sales tax on motor vehicles;
- a \$330,000 social security fraud allegedly involving six members of one family;
- an Austudy fraud of \$200,000 and the arrest of one man;
- a Social Security fraud of \$600,000 identified in February this year when 12 people were arrested.

The success of the Fraud & General Crime Division, particularly in taxation and welfare fraud, was reported in the July issue of *Platypus* (No.22).

## Other Branches

Other branches in the Region, such as the Regional Intelligence Unit, the General Duties Branch, the Organised Crime Unit, the Document Examination Bureau, and the Police Technical Unit, in most cases cannot enjoy the same high profile as the drug and fraud divisions, but have each played a major role in the overall effectiveness of policing federal laws.

The Region's Newcastle office has a staff of six officers. It is run as a branch of the Fraud and General Crime Division. Its contribution to Eastern Region's effectiveness was recognised by the Commissioner when he awarded its staff his Certificate of Commendation in February last year.

## Accommodation

Eastern Region's accommodation problems are about one year away from solution. In about March 1990 the Region will move into purpose-built premises in the Sydney Central Business District close to client government departments and the law courts.

Until then, the Region's divisions are split. Fraud and General Crime is in the city. The balance, except for Airport police, is housed in Redfern. Airport police, the Bomb Response Unit and sections of the Regional Intelligence Unit have a new building. (See separate report)

## Region Life

The size and nature of Sydney results in a great number and variety of investigations.

Sydney with Perth can boast probably the mildest climate of Australia's capital cities. There are more than 20 surfing beaches on Sydney's coastline, though with the pollution problem it pays to keep your head above water! Sailing on Sydney Harbour and in Pittwater is incomparable.

Sydney's night life caters for all tastes and the city is the headquarters of "the greatest game of all", Rugby League (a matter no doubt disputed south of the border).

On the down side, Sydney is becoming crammed. There is little land available for new housing in the metropolitan area and this has forced housing prices to astronomical levels. The average price for a house is now around \$230,000. New home and first home buyers are forced to live in Sydney's outlying suburbs from which commuting is time consuming and expensive.

Sydney's roads are choked. Peak hour is three hours, morning and evening, with 24 hour clearways under consideration.

The housing cost and resultant rental costs in Sydney have a huge impact on officers moving to Eastern Region, regardless of rank.

# OPERATION TOGGLE

*Prepared by Stephen Simpson*

**O**PERATION Toggle was one of the largest and most complicated heroin trafficking investigations ever undertaken by the AFP.

THE HEROIN, of which more than 100 kgs was seized over three years, was mainly brought in through Sydney.

The magnitude of the investigation tested the resources of Eastern Region particularly in the intelligence and surveillance areas and the final results of Operation Toggle are a testimony to the capabilities of its officers.

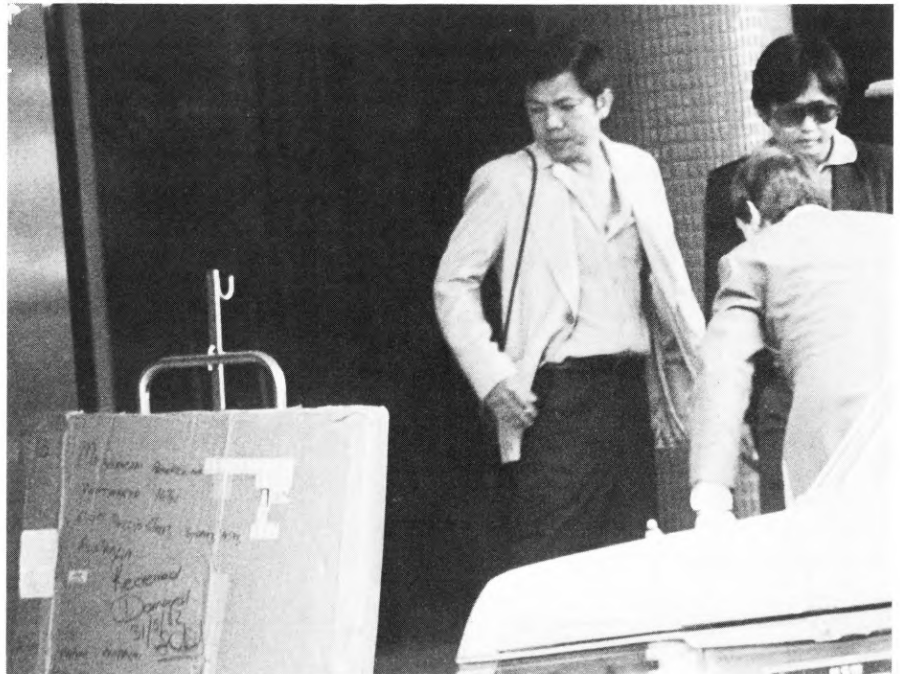
The ultimate success of Operation Toggle would have been impossible without the network of support given overseas by the AFP's liaison officers. It was their liaison with the host country law enforcement officers and checking of information which made the difference between facts and uncertainty. It highlighted the effective co-ordination of the Overseas Liaison Officer Service working with national investigations to achieve a successful resolution.

## The First Shipment

The operation began on 17 January 1982. The Royal Thai Customs Service informed the AFP's Liaison Officer in Bangkok that a Thai national, a Mr Y., was a suspected drug courier and was travelling to Sydney from Bangkok.

Mr Y. was put under surveillance on his arrival and it was apparent he was associated with another Thai passenger, Mr Poosit Traimas. The baggage of both men was searched. In Traimas' baggage 7.3 kgs of high grade number four heroin was found poorly concealed in the bottom of a cardboard television carton. It could not have withstood even a casual Customs inspection. At trial Mr Y. was found not guilty and returned to Thailand. Traimas was convicted and sentenced to six years gaol with 18 months non parole.

Subsequent inquiries found that other members of the Thai drug syndicate, including one of its principals, were on the same aircraft. A Customs officer examining the passenger manifest spotted a possible second pair of couriers on the same



*(From left) Saepang and Prasertchang at a Sydney hotel with the package containing the pictures used in the heroin trafficking.*

flight. Like the first pair the second two were airline and airport employees in Thailand, and they were located in Sydney staying in a flat belonging to an employee of the same airline. It was believed that they were to take the proceeds of the heroin sale back to Thailand.

When the second two left Australia, a fifth Thai national was noted leaving on the same flight. It was discovered that he had also arrived in Australia on the same flight as the others. An examination of the travelling undertaken by the five Thais over the previous twelve months suggested they were involved in a number of courier runs between Bangkok and Europe, Hong Kong and Australia.

All information available was worked on by Sergeant Vince Dainer of Eastern Region's Regional Intelligence Unit. As a result of his previous years as an investigator with Customs, he was convinced that the Traimas' importation was by a well organised major international narcotic syndicate. He convinced Superintendent Ray

Phillips, Commander of Eastern Region's Drug Operations Unit, who allocated intelligence analyst Ray Ingram to work full-time on the investigation.

The next major break came in May that year when Customs officers at the Redfern Mail Exchange found 4.5 kgs of a similar type of high grade heroin concealed inside the wooden picture frames of portraits of the King and Queen of Thailand. The frames were addressed to a Mr Prasertchang, c/o a Sydney international hotel.

AFP inquiries showed that a Mr Prasertchang had been a guest at the hotel for a short time but had returned to Thailand. As there were no other immediate leads the Drug Operations Unit decided to keep the picture frames under surveillance in the belief that the syndicate would not abandon the 4.5 kgs of high grade heroin.

Mounting a surveillance operation in a busy hotel is not an easy task. The waiting tested the patience, skills and imagination of those AFP officers involved to the limit.