

# AFP OFFICERS IN SURF RESCUE

by Stephen Simpson

**Organised crime fighter and lifesaver, Steve Bullock, was recently involved in the dramatic and tragic rescue of an eight month pregnant woman and her family at the northern Sydney beach of Dee Why.**

Detective A/Sgt. Steve Bullock is a member of Eastern Region's Organised Crime Unit. He also gives much of his time as a lifesaver at Dee Why.

On Saturday December 17 last year, Steve rescued an unconscious woman who had been washed off rocks and he then guided rescuers to her family who were trapped on a cliff face by rising seas.

The drama began just before 2 p.m. when Steve, an instructor with the Dee Why Surf Club, was training some junior surf club members at the beach.

"The woman's husband came running across the beach. He was fully clothed but saturated, and collapsed after telling how his wife had been washed into the sea", Steve said.

Steve and his female patrol partner launched the "rubber duckie" rescue boat and spotted the woman about 50 metres from the rocks floating face down.

"I lifted her into the boat," he said, "but she had no pulse".

His partner then began trying to resuscitate the woman in the boat as they brought her back to shore. Some trained nurses at the beach were able to assist until ambulance officers arrived. She was eventually taken by helicopter to hospital in a critical condition.

More drama followed.

"During our resuscitation attempts on the beach a member of the public told me three more people were stuck on the headland cliff face," Steve said.

"The two of us climbed along the cliff from the beach and found the parents of the woman plus her two-year-old son. They were pinned down



*The NSW Police rescue helicopter goes into action to complete Detective A/Sgt. Steve Bullock's rescue. (Photo: Sun-Herald.)*

by the rising surf on a small ledge about a metre wide and a couple of metres above the sea".

The group waited on the ledge for the NSW Police Rescue Squad to arrive, but an overhanging ledge prevented the Rescue Squad from pulling the people up the cliff face.

The Police helicopter was called in but the steep slope of the cliff made it difficult for the pilot to lower the harness to the group. Finally, after some expert flying, each was winched

to the safety of the cliff top. The last to be winched up was Steve who arrived to something of a hero's welcome.

*This story regrettably has a tragic ending. The critically ill woman taken to hospital failed to regain consciousness. Four hours after admission she gave birth by caesarian section to a premature baby girl. The baby survived but the mother died on the morning of Monday, December 17, of brain damage.*

# OPERATION NOAH PROVES ITS WORTH

**T**HE national calls were up, the quality of information was excellent and much related to dealers and hard drugs, was how Superintendent Brian Brinkler summed up Operation Noah run on February 7.

Operation Noah, the phone-in day when the public is asked to give the police information about illegal drugs, has been successfully run annually for the past five years. None was held in 1988 and this year it was decided to hold it on February 7 when marijuana plantations were close to harvest.

This year it was the AFP's responsibility to co-ordinate the national campaign and to conduct the ACT's response. It ran in all States and Territories from 9am to 9pm local time.

All police forces were enthusiastic about the response by the day's end and some were keeping their lines open even after 9pm because calls were still coming. The total calls were up by 18.3% from 7,003 (November '87) to 8,288. If the information checks out, the calls will have identified a potential 8,501 offences.

"We are very happy with the response and all the police know that public support and information is vital in bringing criminals to justice," Superintendent Brinkler said.

"I want to thank all the media for their tremendous support in the lead up and promotion during the campaign. It was an excellent example of police/media relations working well to a community end.

"Of course every day should be the time to give information to the police. In all crimes police need information from the public about criminal activity."

The AFP maintains the Drug Intelligence Reporting Centre hotline (shown in every telephone directory) on a 24-hour basis where the public can telephone Canberra 733677 with illegal drug information.

On February 7 the conference room at City Station was staffed by an average of ten detectives working with the drug squad. They received 170



*AFP officers in Canberra hard at work handling calls from the public during Operation "Noah". (Photo: Terry Browne.)*

calls, down on the previous number of 221, which if the information proves valid, will identify a possible 209 offences in the ACT. Some of the calls related to areas outside the ACT and this information was passed on.



*The young volunteers and AFP officers who featured in the Operation "Noah" poster. (Photo: Philip Castle.)*

By the next day, one person had been arrested and charged with drug offences, five search warrants had been issued, three were executed and two people had been issued with summons.

Superintendent Brinkler said that within three months the real result of Operation Noah would be much clearer and details would be made public.

"However on the initial results it seems we have had some good quality information given to us, as have the other police forces," he said.

"It's the best the police forces have received in relation to Operation Noah, ever . . ."

"While the calls were down in the ACT, NSW and Tasmania they were up elsewhere.

"In the ACT more than 50% of the calls related to the harder drugs of heroin, amphetamines and to a lesser extent cocaine. More than 70% of the calls were about people allegedly supplying, selling and trafficking in illegal drugs."