

"Officers in this job do need a great deal of diplomacy because it is not just a bodyguard function; it is a planning and liaison function."

Roger said many people did not believe him when he said jet lag could be a problem with the job.

"I, for example, have been in the Protection Division for nearly 11 years and in that time have made 22 overseas trips. I have been with Mr Hawke since he became Prime Minister in 1983 and members of the squad go overseas before any tour by the Prime Minister. We do the trip in reverse to prepare security in liaison with the local police forces and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and end up where the Prime Minister is going to start. Three members of the squad then do the whole trip with him. Staff in the division find they may only ever be in one place for two or three days.

"For example, I was in the USSR in 1987, China in 1986 and division staff and myself also made a world tour last year.

"For tours within Australia members of the seven-person Prime Minister's Protection Squad act as liaison between the Prime Minister's Office and the state police, as well as providing his immediate personal protection, which means you have to be vigilant at all times. As a result, the stress factor is high."

### Russia

Roger said that his advance trip to the USSR in 1987 had given him a glimpse of the country's human side.

"As part of the Prime Minister's security arrangements I had to liaise with the KGB. As we came down the ramp of the Aeroflot jet in Leningrad two fur-hatted, great-coated KGB agents were waiting at the foot of the stairs.

"One looked up and asked in broken English whether I was from Australia.

"When I said 'yes' he said: 'Welcome to Leningrad. My name is George. I am the local colonel from the KGB. Let's go and have a vodka'.

"I quickly realised it would do no good to say I would prefer a Foster's. I got the distinct impression that to have done so would have put an end to the co-operation!"

Roger became distinctly coy when asked whether his time with Mr Hawke had any influence on his voting habits at election time.

"I feel a lot of loyalty toward Mr Hawke," he said, "but I would be the original swinging voter."

Roger, who joined COMPOL in Melbourne in 1973, has a police background. British-born, he joined the Hampshire police as a cadet in 1960 and remained in that force until late 1972 when he emigrated to Australia.

He served with the Liberal Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, for a short time in 1978 while with the Prime Minister's Protection Squad and then spent four and a half years handling security for Sir Zelman Cowen when he was Governor-General.

# THE PROTECTORS

*by Jeff Woodgate*

**THE AFP Protection Division has two tasks — to protect VIPs and to protect witnesses. The Protection Division keeps a low profile — for good reasons.**

Detective Superintendent John Cooper has been with the VIP Protection Branch since the AFP was formed. John had served with the Leicester Police (UK) and the ACT Police. He moved from instructing at the ACT Police College into the demanding role of protector in 1979 and progressed from the Governor-General's protection squad to heading the VIP Protection Branch.

"The method of working has remained basically the same since 1979," John said, "but the volume of work has increased dramatically."

The growing threat of global terrorism has caused Australia to reassess the security risks posed by groups connected with the Libyans, Palestinians, Sikhs, Koreans and others.

"We must never let terrorists look on Australia as a soft-underbelly

target. We have to treat VIPs as if they were in their own countries because that is where the perceived threat usually originates."

The Branch tries to maintain secrecy, but often the movements of VIPs are publicised during most of their stay in Australia. The two chief aspects of any VIP visit are protection and protocol. Often the VIP has a high profile which complicates security and necessitates close liaison with a number of agencies.

Within Australia, special attention is always given to protecting the Prime Minister, the Governor-General and Israeli and Turkish diplomats.

Were there conflicts with overseas security officers within a VIP's entourage?

"There are sometimes conflicts when we don't use the same methods as they do in their country. Some VIP's for instance, are used to being guarded by troops carrying highly powered rifles or automatic weapons", John said.

"We make it clear to them that this is Australia and we are the unit

responsible for the security of their VIP."

Det. Supt. Cooper explained the difference between mainstream police and the VIP protection squad: "The VIP protection squad members have to be non-indoctrinated, non-typical police officers," he said. "They need to be very much the hit-and-run type."

Their job is to spot potential offenders before incidents and to take action to avoid them. When an incident does occur their main task is to get their VIP out of harm's way.

"The training of conventional police officers enforces their desire to grab the offender straight away. The protection squad member has to get rid of this 'hands on collar syndrome' and leave the offender, wherever possible, to State or other AFP members who are usually in attendance.

"The VIP protection squad member leads an entirely different life to the mainstream police. They are constantly on the move and need to develop a travel frame of mind.

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