

still required to check the lists of possible matches provided by AFIS and prepare and present evidence in court. We now have more time to focus on the development and enhancement of crime scene prints using latest technology in which the AFP is a pacesetter," he said.

"The future holds many exciting developments. The next stage should

be the production of a machine to electronically scan a complete set of prints from a person and feed them straight into AFIS. This type of development, along with things like DNA genetic 'fingerprinting', should continue to make criminal identification a challenging field to be in. We are still only in the early stages of the possibilities of technological advancement."

'COPS' LINK KEEPS PATROLS IN TOUCH

AN advanced, computerised Incident Reporting System is now in use in the Operations Room at ACT City Station.

The new COPS Incident Reporting System, developed by the Systems Analysis Branch at Weston, was installed in March. It replaces the DOCI system which the Operations Room has been using since 1983.

The COPS system allows a radio operator, or a member in any AFP station, to enter incident details directly upon an Incident Report screen at a computer terminal. A glance at the relevant screen instantly reveals details of current and past incidents, details of any complainant, incident status, and the location and details of all patrols throughout the ACT.

The work of the radio operators in the dispatching to and monitoring of patrols at an incident has been greatly assisted by the introduction of the new system. It eliminates the double-handling of the old message and status cards, which had to be manually filled in and updated by the radio operators.

Many years of message and status cards are stored.

Usually, seven constables and a sergeant work in the Operations Room during a shift. The pace can be hectic at times — virtually non-stop from Thursday afternoons to Monday mornings, with particularly heavy workloads on Monday mornings as people return to work to discover weekend burglaries and vandalisms. The number of incidents also varies with the weather, with an increase in vehicle incidents when it rains, and the season, with more shopstealing in school holidays and more break-ins during summer.

The radio operators are highly-trained, continuously monitoring local and national AFP channels, special operations, rescue, emergency and marine channels, NSW Police, ACT local government and ACT Emergency Service bands. They are constantly refining the COPS system. The Systems Analysis Branch is currently reviewing 26 changes to the system suggested by the radio operators themselves.



Sergeant Ian McDougall.

TRACKS ON THE GHAN

Two AFP trekkers based in Adelaide are to follow in the tracks of the famous Ghan train — on foot.

Ian McDougall, Fraud and General Crime, and Bill Fazakerley, Administrative Support Staff, will set out with two other walkers on 1 July to attempt a continuous walk along the entire length of the original narrow gauge railway from Alice Springs to Port Augusta, a distance of about 1300 kms.

Apart from water, the camping expedition will be self-sufficient.

Ian McDougall believes the Great Ghan Walk 1989 team will be the first group of individuals to complete the walk. The "Ghan" is the name given to the train which ran between the Alice and Port Augusta for many years carrying passengers and vital supplies to centres and station properties on the way. It got its name from the Afghan camel trains which once covered the route.

Ian and fellow team-member Chris Whiteside, a secretary, have had considerable experience in bushwalking. They took part in an expedition from SA's Flinders Ranges to Cape Jervis, on the South Coast. (See story, Platypus 11 October 1984.) The 1373 km took them 71 days. They hope to do the Ghan trek in 63 days.

The fourth member of the party is Ian's sister, Jeanie, a horticulturalist, who specialises in native flora and fauna. She has already participated in a number of short and extended walks in South Australia.

COL WINCHESTER

LONG time friend of Assistant Commissioner Col Winchester, Assistant Commissioner Ian Broomby writes:

"I am not aware of the exact years or period over which Colin Winchester was at Wolaroi College (Orange, NSW). I believe Colin was 11 or 12 when he started at Wolaroi which would make that year 1945. I understand from his wife Gwen that he attended there for about 2 years.

"The only matter not mentioned in the many Platypus articles contributed is that Colin in fact was sent to Wolaroi College. In a recent letter to Mr Alan Anderson I told him that Colin's wife had said that his mother wanted one of her boys to become a Methodist Minister, and for that reason Colin travelled from Captains Flat to Orange by train staying overnight with an aunty in Sydney. Interestingly, Mr Alan Anderson in his reply to me stated: 'One does not usually associate the Police Force with the Ministry (!!) but I guess both professions are involved in helping people. I'm sure his mother would have been very proud of her son'. I can assure you, though she passed away a number of years ago, she certainly was."