

# Thirty-year milestone for Investigator

By Keith Livingston

**D**ETEKTIVE Sergeant Pat Kennedy commenced his career in Federal policing with the Commonwealth Police in 1961; spending a large slice of that time in Melbourne, he has witnessed all the major changes that have led to today's AFP.

When he turned 21, he qualified for the minimum age limit to join Commonwealth Police which was actively recruiting for members at that time. He was formally recruited through the Melbourne office located at 159 Flinders Lane in the city. No sooner had he put his name on the dotted line than Pat found himself in the field.

At first his duties were more those of a security guard than a police officer. After two years in uniform, Pat applied successfully for duty in the Plain Clothes Branch. The Branch was very much the embryo of the investigative role the AFP now undertakes in the Regions.

In 1963 prospective detectives underwent their basic training as investigators at the Australian Police College at Manly. After the course, Pat returned to Melbourne to a 'small' CIB team: the total Commonwealth Police investigative team strength at that time was about 18 detectives. It would have been impossible to imagine then that the team would grow to the proportions of today's investigative body in Southern Region - some 300-plus members.

## Joint Task Force member

Pat spent six of the following 28 years working with the Joint Task Force (JTF) made up of AFP and Victoria Police.

In 1981 Pat joined a select team of investigators working on the Meat Substitution Inquiry. The investigation uncovered one of the greatest threats to Australia's name as a viable, reputable overseas trader. The ramifications of the investigation were far reaching and a warrant for the arrest of one of the

principals is still outstanding. Pat saw this Operation, codenamed 'Orion', through to its conclusion. He hardly had time to take a breath before he was 'conscripted' into another JTF Operation codenamed 'Rock'. Team members successfully investigated a large drug importation racket involving 330 kg of cannabis resin. They encountered considerable difficulties as they worked within the technicalities associated with Federal and State laws, as their investigations were spread between Melbourne and Sydney. The task was made considerably more complex as one of the principals in the gang was a senior Victoria Police member.

Pat's contribution to both operations was recognised by the AFP Commissioner in the presentation to him and other JTF members of certificates of commendation for their professionalism and conduct of the investigation.

## Move to professionalism

Pat has found the change in the organisation both refreshing and challenging.

"There's not as much fun in the job now as there used to be. That's due to a number of factors. One being the professionalism of the job now and the different kind of work we used to do in those days," he said.

He said attitudes have changed dramatically over the years.

"A \$200-300 fraudulent tax cheque was regarded extremely seriously when I first entered the job. Today, these sorts of jobs hardly raise an eyebrow.

"These days we're looking at much more serious frauds - worth millions of dollars.

"Another thing is the number of times we had to go to court and give evidence.

"Years ago we had to enter the witness box and give evidence irrespective of the accused person's plea."

Pat said, "These days, because



Detective Sergeant Pat Kennedy

we only have to front court in defended cases, a new member could go for years without ever having to see the inside of a court."

He said the major benefit from change has been in conditions and pay, accompanied by better accommodation.

## Moving with the times

Pat believes another major improvement has been the equipment now available to the investigator.

Pat sees himself today as an investigator about 80 per cent of the time - and a copper for the other 20 per cent. He doesn't however, believe this is due to the recent changes within the AFP.

"I would say, even in the old Commonwealth Police days, it was practically much the same. You still had to go out and investigate."

## About the future

Pat said he enjoys seeing New Members come in - and teaching them the tricks of the trade.

"After they join my team I am often reluctant to let them go. But I realise they are going through a continual development process and must be given the opportunity to gain as much experience as possible."

He is very impressed with the standard of new members.

"They are extremely promising and generally of a high quality," he stated.

After three decades as a member of the Australian Federal Police and Commonwealth Police, Detective Sergeant Pat Kennedy still likes his job and perhaps, more importantly, the people with whom he works.