

Regional

The 1984 Regional Commanders' Conference was held recently. Attending were: From left, standing, Inspector John Martin (acting OIC, NT); Mr Steve Gavin, (Chief Executive Officer, OAFP); Inspector Ray Thomson (Regional Commander SA); Brian Kelly (Welfare Officer); Assistant Commissioner John Reilly (Personnel); Chief Superintendent Arthur Brown (ACT Region); Assistant Commissioner Ray McCabe (Regional Commander, NSW); Chief Superintendent Peter Dawson (Chief of Staff); Chief Superintendent Alan Morley (Regional Commander, Vic.); Chief Superintendent Bill Antill (Regional Commander, Qld.); Superintendent Frank Pimm (Regional Commander, WA); Inspector Wally May (Regional Commander, Tas.). Front row: Deputy Commissioner (Investigation) John Johnson; Commissioner R.A. Grey; Deputy Commissioner (Administration) Roy Farmer; Assistant Commissioner Val McCounaghy (Commander ACT Region).



Accident squad reunion brings out the changes

The 'good old days' of road accidents had a sentimental airing recently when the AFP's Accident Squad held its 20th anniversary dinner.

About 115 former and present members of the squad attended. They came from many parts of NSW, Victoria and even Perth for the occasion.

Discussion went back to 5 May 1964 when the first ACT police accident squad was formed, under the late Sergeant Jock Turner. He had seven officers working with him — and six of them were at the dinner.

They were Col Winchester (Chief Superintendent), Bob Brown (Senior Sergeant, driver training), Don Halmarick (acting Inspector, Sydney), Ken Ayers (Inspector, Greg Lomax and Bob Riddle (both retired). The seventh member, Len Potter, now acting Superintendent in charge of City CID, couldn't attend because of work.

Deputy Commissioner John Johnson also attended, along with former members ex-Superintendent Joe Medwin, who was officer-in-charge of the squad for a number of years, and Mick Gannon, who was one of its longest-serving sergeants.

Anecdotes were many and lasted until the early hours.

Chief Superintendent Winchester said conditions were vastly different in those days. It was not unusual for one man to attend a major accident and to have to handle all the traffic control, report work and cleaning up.

Chief Inspector Peter Curtis, present officer-in-charge of Traffic, said that since it was formed, the

squad had attended more than 70,000 accidents of which more than 600 were fatals.

The squad had begun with two EH model Holdens, with one officer in each. In 1966, the first VW Kombis joined the squad and this type of vehicle was used from then until 1982. They were then replaced with the present Ford Transit vans.

These, in turn, are to be replaced soon by Toyota vans.

Squad members recalled with some sympathy their counterparts who found themselves on their own at the scene of an accident. But most were envious of the officers who drove around in the excellent comfort of an EH Holden.

Visiting Italian law men see the sights

Two Italian examining magistrates and two Italian police officers visited Australia recently.

The magistrates, in Perth to interview a man wanted in Rome in connection with a series of gang crimes, had more time than their police colleagues, and were taken to the WA Centres of Northam, York and Toodyay to see the country sights.

The police, who arrived later to escort the prisoner back to Rome, also had bad weather to contend with and settled for seeing some kangaroos at the Wanneroo lion park.

However, they made up for it by buying 30 souvenir boomerangs to take back to friends and relatives.

Ray said the Italians believed it was the first extradition from Australia to Italy.

He was impressed by the magistrates' powers, which he described as "extensive" under Italian law.

"Suspects are required to answer their questions, and you stay until they decide you are free to go," he said.

The magistrates check evidence in all major indictable offences and put together the prosecution cases.

"The magistrates could not think how we in Australia could get people before the courts," said Ray.

'Specialist' scheme in action

Thailand's Police Department has long since solved the problems which sometimes arise in bringing in 'lateral entry' specialists to work with those who train at the Thai Police Academy and come up through the ranks, according to Thai

Police Captain Ittipong Pattanapong.

Captain Ittipong was recently in Canberra working with the Australian National Central Bureau (Interpol).

He said that although the majority of recruits entered the force

through the normal training channels, Thailand had found that the use of people who were specialists in the many fields associated with police work had created a much more effective crime fighting organisation.

Captain Ittipong is himself a good example. Since he entered the Thai police straight from university nearly ten years ago, he has worked in the important area of international crime.

"My ability in English was a big asset," he said. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree, with English as a major.

"Interpol is a vital area of the force," he said. "The contact is considerable, particularly in relation to drug-related crime."

Captain Ittipong said that in 1981 he had been able to attend a National Central Bureau training seminar in Paris. He was visiting Australia on a three-month advanced English course under the Colombo Plan.

"It was good to be able to work out of the AFP's Interpol Bureau," he said. "Meeting people personally is so important."

He also took the opportunity to get to know AFP drug unit specialists. On his return to Thailand he will become Assistant Interpol Drug Liaison Officer.



The AFP's officer-in-charge of the Australian National Central Bureau (Interpol), Inspector John Vincent (right) and Acting Senior Sergeant Edward Hadzic, demonstrate the bureau's facsimile machine for Captain Ittipong.

Finance boost

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It is time saving and enables finance staff to provide a much more efficient accounting service to the Force.

The system will come on line for regional use on 1 July 1985 and training for regional staff will begin early next year.