

9 awarded Australia Day medallions

Nine members of the AFP and OAFP have been awarded the Australia Day Medallion.

The medallions are awarded by the Australia Day Council to people who made significant contributions to organisations in 1984.

The medallions were awarded to Mr I.W. King (Regional Executive Officer, Eastern Region), Detective Senior Constable H.J. Rook (Tasmania Region), Mr R.K. Riley (Regional Executive Officer, Northern Region), Detective Sergeant L.W. Miller (Central Region), Senior Constable R. McFarlane (ACT Region), Mr. B. Kelly (AFP Welfare Advisor), Superintendent R.J. Prigg (Logistic Services Division), Station Sergeant P. Duffy (Eastern Region) and Senior Sergeant P. Dellas (Southern Region).

The recommendations included such comments as: Senior Constable McFarlane — That he was attached to a task force specialising in the theft of motor vehicles and that since April 1977 has charged some 563 persons with a total of 1,829 offences, the majority motor vehicle theft related. From 1969 to this date he has recovered in excess of 1,600 stolen motor vehicles.

Detective Senior Constable Rook — as Officer-in-Charge of Launceston Station, he is responsible for the AFP's representation in the north of Tasmania. He has shown ability of the highest order in training junior staff while continuing to manage his station.

Mr I.W. King — His dedication to duties and responsibilities in all aspects of management, direction and co-ordination of Administrative support, has contributed most significantly to the development and operations of the AFP in Eastern Region.

Detective Sergeant L.W. Miller — Central Region said he was in charge of Port Augusta Station for four years, and added: "Under his leadership, the office achieved a high standard of professionalism. Port Augusta is regarded as a hardship post because of its social and climatic arrangements. Through his sense of humour and balanced personality, Sergeant Miller made a significant contribution to the reputation of the AFP which was recognised by civic and aboriginal leaders at his recent farewell in Port Augusta".



• Detective Senior Constable H. Rook receives his medallion from Tasmania Regional Commander Inspector W.L. May.

Rescue squad builds a training reputation

By Philip Castle, of the Canberra Times

Using prisoners as 'volunteers' in a major search seemed like a good idea at the time but it was a dismal failure and would not be tried again, Western Samoan Police Constable Lui Auvae said recently while training with the AFP's Search and Rescue squad in Canberra.

Constable Auvae is one of four Samoan, four Fijian and 11 AFP officers who completed the basic search and rescue course which concluded with a two-day bush search in the rugged mountains west of the ACT on March 1.

Constable Auvae said a number of searches in Samoa involved looking for lost aircraft. In 1981 a Nomad aircraft went missing with 10 people on board.

About 25 police officers were sent out on the search with 20 prisoner volunteers, including murderers, rapists and child molesters. Apparently the lure of getting "outside" for a time was enough incentive to attract the volunteers. But it did not work out.

After about six days the party ran out of food and water. The group was caught in rough country near a cliff face with the prisoners refusing to go any further. It was so hot and dry that during the day many of the party buried themselves in the soil to try to stay cool. A number of the prisoners had become "insubordinate" and were causing problems for their police party escorts.

Constable Auvae, who played international rugby for Western Samoa and was the fittest member of the party, was delegated to try to get help. After seven hours of hard walking he did.

The group was resupplied and three days later found the aircraft. It had crashed into the side of a mountain killing all 10. The search party had to wait three days before being joined by the official medical and aircraft examiners.

When they finally got back to base camp, they found that one body had been left behind. So the party had to return and retrieve it. The missing body had been thrown by the impact some distance from the aircraft.

The Samoan officers said they had learnt a great deal from that



• Members rescue a 'victim' during the training exercise. (Pictures Courtesy Canberra Times).



• Left: Corporal Kevueli Bulamainavalu, of Fiji, and Constable Lui Auvae, of Western Samoa.

particular search. Everyone agreed, including the prisoners, that such searches were not suitable for the use of volunteer criminal labour.

The February course was the first on which police officers from overseas have been trained by the AFP, and according to course leader Senior Sergeant Ray Kristiansen, considerable interest has been shown by other neighbouring countries.

Fitness was a major course requirement to the extent that even half of the AFP applicants for the course failed to pass the stiff medical.

"We don't believe in rescuing the rescuers," Senior Constable Peter Bright said. "So once you are in the squad you have to be able to keep going and ensure that no more victims are created. So the standard of course fitness is pretty high. But these fellows have pulled up well and I think have got a great deal out of it."

According to the visiting course members, the Samoan force numbers about 400 officers for a population of about 750,000 and the Fijian force numbers about 1,500 for about 800,000.



• Regional Executive Officer, Ian King (left), is congratulated after having been presented with his medallion by the Eastern Region Commander, Assistant Commissioner Ray McCabe (second left). Third from left is Chief Superintendent 'Doc' Gillespie, with Ross Bannister, John Wheatley, Allan Singh and Norm Carter.

Because Fiji is made up of about 300 islands, most of their rescues involve fishermen lost at sea. There are some bush searches but because the villages are fairly evenly distributed throughout there are not many occasions when people get lost.

The police, however, do often have to search for escaped criminals.

Much of their other work involves fires, floods and cyclones, Corporal Kevueli Bulamainavalu (nicknamed 'Buller') said. He said the Fijian force had a good record of finding most of the missing fishermen but so far did not have a separate rescue squad. However, consideration was being given to forming one.

The Samoans also have many sea searches. Samoa consists of two major rugged islands and this often presents the police with difficult inland search and rescues, frequently for tourists in difficulties.

One of the aspects that had impressed the overseas visitors was the high standard of equipment held by the AFP compared with their own.

AFP Senior Sergeant Ray Kristiansen said he understood that as part of an aid project, the Australian Government was donating to the Samoan force more than \$300,000 in rescue equipment which was compatible with the Australian Police forces equipment and made the recent training even more relevant.

The course members had been trained in the basics of running a search with emphasis on co-ordination and control. They were also trained in map reading and First Aid. This was all put into practice on February 28, March 1 and 2 when the men were divided into groups of four and told to search for two "lost fishermen" in the rugged country in the Brindabellas, near Mount Coree, about 30 kilometres west of Canberra.

All returned without incident and it seems that the AFP rescue squad may be asked to continue some training for overseas officers in the basic course and the more advanced courses.