



S. DAU

David Crawford

PROFILE

IN each issue Platypus will profile the kinds of people who keep the AFP machine ticking over. They might be driving a desk or a patrol car, they might be writing a summons or a submission, they might be trainers or trainees. They are all important to the AFP.

This time we look at the ARO. An ARO is an Assistant Research Officer. The ARO Scheme is one of the ways in which people are recruited to the Australian Public Service. Like most of the ways of getting into the Service, the scheme is highly selective. Candidates must be recently graduated from a university or college of advanced education and can be of any age. They are attached to a Department or Authority for twelve months, during which time they have to work at tasks for which they are suited. Generally, they will have stints of three months at a time in different parts of an organization. They receive guidance and training where it is necessary, and are usually attached to an officer whose job it

is to provide such help and to report on the results.

Competition for the few ARO vacancies is such that graduates accepted are invariably highly qualified and good communicators.

David Crawford is an ARO attached to the AFP. At 28 he has an Honours degree from Sydney University and is a candidate for a Doctorate. Tudor church administration is the theme of his post-graduate work.

David has been a research assistant and tutor in the history department of Sydney Uni, and has tutored at St Pauls College and in adult education.

What kind of choice did David have as to where he would work in the public service?

'Not much, really,' said David, 'The public service is very flexible in choosing its graduate starters. It makes use of the skills available, unlike private industry which demands skills apparently immediately relevant to their transitory needs.

'So the graduate entrant has to be flexible, too. I'm enjoying the work in the AFP; the range and scope of the work is very interesting. The community has a view of the police which is fairly glamorous — chasing speedsters, catching crooks, that kind of thing. Most of the work is not like that at all. Most of it is unexciting and routine. I find that most police have a very clear idea of their role in society.'

How does the AFP use an historian?

David is helping with the AFP Museum project. His research experience is very useful for the documentation and writing-up of the history. He is writing the history of the forerunners of the AFP — all Commonwealth police forces right back to . . .

'Billy Hughes and the Warwick egg?' I suggested.

'Further than that', he laughed, 'The Northern Territory Mounted Police was started in 1911, which was about the time people began to realise that the Commonwealth was more than a kind of Common Market. Lots of interesting things in the development of Australia as a federal unity happened at about that time.'

But David has to do more than the research for the Museum. He is engaged on clerical tasks familiar to most professional pen-pushers. Suitable furniture has to be investigated and ordered, the physical aspects of the Museum looked after, the budgetary constraints taken note of.

Does David look forward to a career in the public service?

'If I get a job,' says David. At the end of this year David will be able to apply for permanent vacancies. He will have to compete with other public servants who might have lots more experience and whose only handicap is less formal education. A Clerical Administrative Class Six is the usual objective for AROs, but some are not so lucky. Very talented people have slipped into higher jobs.

'I see myself as doing policy work or as a researcher,' said David, 'I'm particularly interested in Australia's foreign affairs administration in the thirties and forties.'

David enjoys the prospect of living in Canberra. 'My wife, Sandra, comes from the country, and I've lived in Sydney so long we both reckoned that Canberra was a breath of fresh air. Sandra's got a job nursing, and we both love it here.'

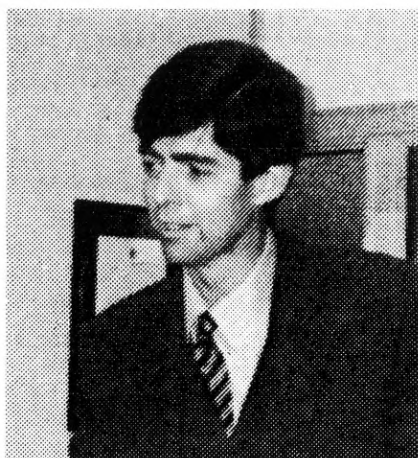
Note: As we go to press we hear that AROs are now known as GAAs — Graduate Administrative Assistants. An anonymous poet has contributed this:

*I shot an ARO into the air,
It fell to earth, GAA knows not where.*

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS



Assistant Commissioner Peter Lamb, APM



Detective Superintendent Adrian Whiddett, APM

Two AFP members received the Australia Police Medal (APM) to celebrate the Queen's Birthday. They are Assistant Commissioner Peter Lamb and Detective Superintendent Adrian Whiddett, who received the medals for distinguished police service. Peter Lamb, now in charge of Investigations Department, received particular mention for his work in liaison and criminal investigations and governmental and overseas liaison. Adrian Whiddett was mentioned for work in criminal investigation and intelligence, and the development and implementation of AFP policy in criminal intelligence gathering, management, and its application to large scale criminal investigations. Adrian Whiddett is the AFP's Senior Liaison Officer in London.