

when the glamour hostel, Gowrie, was opened in 1965 and helped establish its kitchen.

In 1965 he was appointed manager of the Commonwealth Hostels Food and Preparation Store at Kingston on the former site of the Eastlake Hostel. When Macquarie Hostel was opened in 1973, Bill was again asked to establish and run its kitchen and continued to be area catering manager of Government cafeterias at the Admin Building, Russell Offices, Campbell Park and others.

In 1980 he became manager of the AFP's college at Barton which he says has been the most enjoyable of his entire working career. He said that the AFP's college was in fact formerly Lawley House and built about 1948. Barton House was next door until pulled down recently. About the college, he said, "I love'em. I have enjoyed my time very much here and I feel quite sad about leaving and also that it is now being sold off to private enterprise. That is a bad decision and I think all the staff are a bit worried about what will happen to us.

"I have been treated very well by all the Commanders here and I have had a lot of satisfaction from organising the formal and graduation dinners, the Commissioner's farewell dinner and the many impromptu services that we provide."

Because of his continued excellent service and dedication, Bill was this year given the Commissioner's Commendation and the Australia Day Medallion by former Commissioner Grey.

As Bill looks back over his years, first as a volunteer cook in the UN camps of Italy and then his time serving meals on such special occasions as Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies Christmas party in 1956 and the Queen's visit in 1954, he does not seem ready for retirement.

He is President of the Serbian Ex-servicemen's Association and regularly attends the Anzac services. He played first grade soccer in Canberra until 1965 with the Napad club. He says, with a smile, that he used to play soccer against the present Commander of the college, Chief Superintendent Peter Dawson, and he still maintains a keen interest in soccer. He has two children, a 39-year-old son by his first marriage, a 25-year-old daughter by his second, and he has two grand-children. He now lives in Chapman where he is a keen gardener so when asked what he'll do when he retires possibly in the next few months, he pauses. "Maybe I'll do a little travel, maybe some gardening but what I really want to do is cook . . . I love cooking and I love food," he said.

Some people make their hobby their life's work. Good luck and thanks from us all, Bill.



INVENTIVE OFFICER

by Paul Lewer

AN AFP officer who has invented a much improved descending device for special operations teams is looking for help to develop the idea.

"I have taken out a patent, but I don't want to make any money out of it," Constable Tracy Wilson said.

"All I want is the best that is available for our people from a safety point of view."

Commissioner Peter McAulay has presented Constable Wilson, 26, with a cheque for \$500 for a Field Initiative Award from the Adelaide-based National Police Research Unit for his invention which he has dubbed the "Jet Descender". It is the NPRU's largest award so far.

The device allows an officer to quickly release himself with safety after rappelling down the side of a building to a window ledge, for example.

Using the device the lowering rope can be operated in either hand which would allow an officer to draw a weapon if he needed to defend himself while on a manoeuvre during a siege or any other life-threatening situation.

"There is nothing on the market like it," Constable Wilson said.

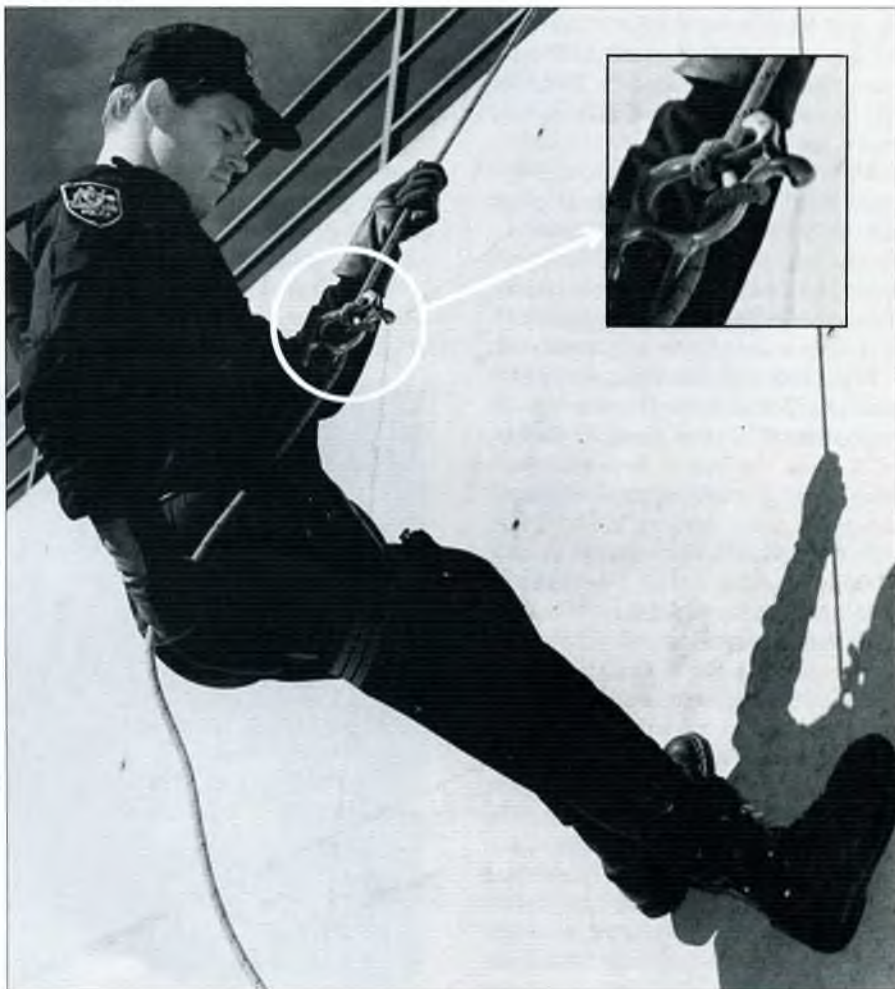
"The use of the device is easily learned; it allows quick release from the rope; it consists of only one piece of equipment and it is quiet.

"All the conventional devices force the operator to spend too much time in getting off the rope. The equipment is designed more for cavers and climbers where the need for quick release is not so important.

"Conventional equipment has the karibiner (locking device) separate from the descender but mine has the karibiner built in.

continued ►

Constable Tracy Wilson demonstrating his rappelling device. (Picture by Sen. Const. Wayne McConaghy)



"SOT officers in Canberra who have tried it have been enthusiastic and say the quick release function is a big advantage. The equipment currently in use is generally felt to be clumsy, noisy and cumbersome — overall, it's just too big."

The device was examined and seen in action by the AFP's SOT Co-Ordinator, Sergeant Ron Learmonth, who reported in the following terms: "From an SOT point of view, the device has merit because it would replace noisy devices currently in use and would provide quick attachment and release. The safety of the device, while not suitable for Search and Rescue, is acceptable to the SOT. The SOT uses single rope techniques as a tactical tool requiring stealth and speed and the device seems to have features suitable for this purpose."

Constable Wilson, who is based at City Station in Canberra, became aware of the shortcomings of the conventional equipment while in the Army for nine years.

"I qualified as a vehicle mechanic in the Army which provided a wide range of engineering skills and I have always been interested in the design and manufacture of tools and machinery.

"I'm a part-time member of SOT and the Diving Squad in the ACT. I thought of the idea for the 'Jet Descender' in May 1987 before I was due to go on a special operations course.

"I took the prototype I made on the course with me and it proved to be most successful," he said.

Aside from looking for help to develop his invention, what does Constable Wilson plan to do with his \$500?

"I've always wanted to learn to fly," he said, "and I think I'll spend the money on my first lessons!"



Commissioner McAulay presents Constable Wilson with an award and a cheque for \$500 from the NPRU.

MONEY FOR GOOD IDEAS

"As far as the National Police Research Unit is concerned, inaction by other AFP officers could be costing them money," the AFP's NPRU Liaison Officer, Chief Superintendent Phil Baer, told "Platypus".

"The NPRU will pay money through the Field Initiative Award Scheme for initiatives developed by police or civilian employees that will improve police efficiency," Mr Baer said.

"To quote from the NPRU Policy Manual, 'the scope of the scheme is wide ranging and embraces policy and

operational matters the crucial criteria being the novelty and relevance of the idea to police practice on a national basis'.

"Submissions for an award are considered by the NPRU and each force NPRU liaison officer at the first liaison officers' meeting each year. The amount which may be awarded for any single initiative ranges between \$10 and \$1000. This year's submissions and accompanying documentation were of a most impressive standard," he said.

Officers who want to get into the money should, as a first step, contact Chief Superintendent Baer on (062) 757623

AFP AND THE NPRU

An officer from the crime scene section of the Scientific Branch in Canberra is the first member of the AFP to be seconded to work on a research project with the National Police Research Unit in Adelaide.

First Constable Craig Petterd, 26, has been in the AFP for more than five years and grew up in the national capital. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and computing.

"I joined the AFP to get into the forensic area," he said. "I have been working in the crime scene section of the Scientific Branch for three years after starting in general duties."

The NPRU, which is staffed by academics and officers from the various Australian police forces, undertakes research on all aspects of police work.

"I will be working on an urgent duty driving study which will keep me in

Adelaide until mid-August," Craig said. "The study is being run under the Resident Research Programme and myself and an officer from the South Australian police, Senior Constable Dean Miller, are working on it so far with more officers to come onto the project during the year.

"We will be looking at police driver training methods around the country in relation to pursuit driving and accident levels to find out whether anything can be done to improve safety. My work in the crime scene section in Canberra could prove to be useful to me with the study."

Craig said other projects being undertaken at present under the NPRU's extensive programme included studies into drug driving, crime trend forecasting and the tape recording of interviews.



First Constable Craig Petterd.

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