

EXPERIENCE COUNTS FOR SMOOTH SAILING

by Keith Livingston

"I'M a career public servant", Laurie Allday said, reflecting on 41 years with the Commonwealth.

As Regional Executive Officer Laurie is the most senior public servant in Southern Region. He joined the AFP in May 1986 and is responsible to the Assistant Commissioner, Southern Region.

Being Regional Executive Officer in one of the AFP's largest regions is quite an achievement for a man who started work at age 14 in 1947 as messenger with the Overseas Telecommunications Commission. After six months with OTC Laurie moved to the (then) Postmaster General's Department, but continued to work as a messenger, being told that every telegraph messenger had a Director General's baton in his telegram bag. "And I've still got my Director General's baton," he said with a chuckle.

The climb to his present senior ranking in the Public Service results from a desire for self-improvement, achieved through study in his own time. He



Mr Laurie Allday

acquired his Leaving Certificate, Diploma of Public Administration through the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and as a crowning achievement,

Bachelor of Commerce at Melbourne University.

Laurie sees his role as extremely important. He makes perfectly clear his belief that the public servants working alongside the police members in the AFP perform many roles which are vital for the organisation to operate efficiently. Those duties include the payment of salaries and allowances, the ordering and purchase of equipment and stores, the maintaining of equipment in working order and financial and staff level monitoring and advice to the Regional Commanders.

When he's not behind his desk in Southern Command Headquarters, Laurie maintains his interest in several sports, including fishing, cricket and football. "Apart from fishing, mine is a spectator role in most sports these days, although over the years I have been an active participant in many areas of sport," he said.



SUPPORT SERVICES

The work involved when the AFP moved into its new Canberra headquarters will long be remembered by Peter McEwan (Assistant Director Management and Support Services Division).

"This area did a fine job in co-ordinating the move from several locations around the city," he said.

"Most people know the amount of work involved in moving house — moving the 'home' of the AFP was slightly more complicated! We had to try to upgrade the furniture and equipping the Investigations Department — which was previously in Unit Five at Barton — to a satisfactory standard was a priority."

"Our work with the new building in the early stages included preparing the specifications for the telephone system which is a third generation PABX system. Our aim is to install third generation PABX's in all the headquarters buildings in the regions. Ultimately we are looking at networking telephones — specifically between Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne which are the AFP's largest telephone traffic areas," he said. "With the impending move in Eastern Region to a new headquarters building

we are working on the specifications to upgrade their telephone system and their furniture and fittings. Similar advances have been achieved in Melbourne with Southern Region's move to a new headquarters."

Peter and his eight staff are responsible nationally for controlling much of the AFP's "nuts and bolts"; including building repair and maintenance, telephones, furniture and fittings, office services and purchasing. Overall, the budgeting responsibilities run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Peter said his area prepared a furniture and fittings programme for each year and they tried to give consideration to ergonomic requirements — when they knew what they were.

"People should always tell us when they apply for keyboard equipment so that we will be aware of their need for ergonomic furniture," he said.

Peter's face is a familiar one in headquarters and other AFP buildings in Canberra as he ensures that repair work and maintenance is carried out. "The biggest problem is the short notice people give us to get jobs done," he said. "We have to get contractors in from



Mr Peter McEwan

outside which can make it a bit hard to respond quickly. My main request to 'customers' is to give us more notice where possible of work that needs doing. We are returning to quarterly inspections following a restoration of staff numbers. That should allow us to get to problems before they get too big."

Peter's links with the AFP include the sporting variety. He has played with the AFP men's basketball team since 1977

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when he joined the public service side of the ACT Police and coaches the AFP men's A1 team in the ACT competition.

"I played first grade Australian Rules until 1981 with the Eastlake Football Club in Canberra," he said. "The club used to be known as the 'cops and Robbies' because members of the Robbie

family made up a large part of the team and police most of the rest.

"An ACT Police Commissioner, Mr Len Powley, was an Eastlake supporter and Australian Rules players who joined the ACT police were 'encouraged' to play for the club. AFP officers who followed his advice include Deputy Commissioner

(Administration) John Johnson, Assistant Commissioner (Eastern Region) Ian Broomby and Chief Inspector (Administration) Peter Curtis. All in all, Eastlake has benefited, over the years, from the expertise of some of the AFP's top brass!"



WORKING TOGETHER

Mr Roger O'Donnell(OIC Information Data Services Unit) has a recipe for police/public servant co-operation.

"People involved in law enforcement tend to be good judges of character and your credibility as a person becomes paramount," he said. "The way you present yourself will hold you in tremendous stead.

"And in my area we are dealing with multi-million dollar concerns that could have some one's life on the end of them when computer use is applied at the 'sharp end' of crime fighting. Public servants must remember that they remain in a support or consultancy role".

Roger came to the AFP in 1985 as a management consultant after 20 years in the Royal Australian Navy.

"My military background helped a lot in applying the co-operative spirit necessary for my type of work which currently involves helping the AFP install some of the most modern computer systems in the world," he said. (This work was featured in 'Platypus' 21, April 1988).

"There is an esprit de corps in the AFP that any military man will recognise and police and military officers have a similar managerial upbringing and way of thinking.

"If you can't recognise that and move with it, what you are trying to do won't work. Military and police strategic planning methods are similar and there can

be a degree of respect for similar experience.

Roger said his team at the Weston computer centre in Canberra demonstrated the benefits of police/public servant co-operation. The team consists of Detective Sergeant Tom Hanlon, Station Sergeant John Holroyd, Senior Constable Bob Richardson, Mike Humphrey, a personal computer expert, and Tania Julian.

"The team is certainly a good mix," Roger said. "Tom Hanlon's work in fraud and general crime has given me a feel for investigations work and court work; Bob Richardson has brought expertise from the crime collation/modus operandi area and John Holroyd has great breadth of experience — much of it involving investigations in the Northern Territory. Access to all that experience has told me that the AFP's latest computer advances will work."

The AFP has one of the largest levels of computer use of any police force in the world and the current initiatives will result in the most comprehensive police systems development ever undertaken in Australia.

Projects involving the AFP Xerox Intelligence System (AXIS) and the Australian Modified Version of HOLMES — a British designed system for handling major inquiries — are progressing well.



Mr Roger O'Donnell

"AXIS is operational with 25 work stations in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra and we are measuring its cost effectiveness," Roger said.

"HOLMES will be up and running in Sydney early in 1989 in Fraud and General Crime and shortly afterwards in Drug Operations in Melbourne.

"HOLMES will become a law enforcement standard in Australia. State police forces, insurance companies and private investigation agencies are all looking at our work with great interest."

Roger is impressed with the way the AFP has taken to computers.

"When I joined the Bureau of Criminal Intelligence (BCI) in 1985 I was not aware of any police with expertise in computer systems but that has changed dramatically," he said. "I am coming across officers now with experience not only in personal computers but who are also able to master major intelligence systems. Officers who a short time ago had every little computer knowledge are now training others — and doing it well.

"If that is thought to be an incredible learning curve, bear in mind that the future holds more because police use of computers will expand into areas we cannot conceive of at this time.

"I'm delighted in the response of the AFP to computer technology," he said.

