



Constable Linda Paterson in action at Melbourne Headquarters new weapon range.

NEW RANGE SETS THE STANDARD

By Keith Livingston

Constable Linda Paterson hugs the ground, her .38 service handgun held firmly in her right hand, supported by her left arm.

There is a quick movement in the dimly lit area of the concrete canyon in which she is lying. Her eyes strain to identify an outline approaching her in the gloom.

Her hands become moist and it's hard to maintain a steady 'ready' pressure on

the trigger.

The 'person' looming out of the shadows seems to be carrying something. The index finger of the Constable's right hand prepares to squeeze the trigger. She calls "Stop - Police!!"

The figure still moves towards her.

Suddenly Constable Paterson relaxes and lowers her weapon. In that brief moment she has decided there is no danger. The 'person' is a female carry-

ing a baby. She is relieved. No shot has been fired. No 'innocent' has been harmed.

Constable Paterson had been facing the targets in Lane 3 of the new four-lane Australian Federal Police weapons range located in the Southern Region headquarters building.

When she was ordered by rangemaster Sergeant Eric Riley to adopt the prone position, Constable Paterson had no idea what would confront her.

The exercise was designed to test her reactions in a confrontation which could be either a 'hostile' or a 'friendly'. Her task was to make a split-second decision whether to shoot or not to shoot.

Although Constable Paterson's ordeal is not a specified part of weapons proficiency testing undertaken by all members of the AFP, it serves to graphically illustrate what can be achieved with the recently-installed weapons range.

For training purposes, the new facilities are excellent. Sergeant Riley has total control over the range and its facilities. He can vary the amount of available light, change the distance at which a target will be set, and even decide whether the target presented to the firer will be a 'friendly' or a 'hostile'.

Remote control

His control panel is a compact computer console which sends commands

RILEY'S RANGE

It has been a period of frustration, hard work and rewards for Range Controller Sergeant Eric Riley.

After many years of maintaining firearms proficiency in Southern Region in less than ideal conditions, Eric was given the task of overseeing the installation of the most modern range in the Southern Hemisphere.

For his 'beyond the call of duty' efforts in ensuring everything during the preparation, transportation, installation and commissioning of the equipment, and for his past service to the AFP, Eric's name was put forward as a worthy recipient of the Australia Day Medallion.

At the presentation ceremony attended

by more than 100 commissioned officers, members and staff, Assistant Commissioner Walter Williams spoke of the high regard held for Eric, and his professionalism, and said how pleasing it was to see such an award to a hard-working conscientious member of the AFP.

Eric's wife, Elizabeth, was invited by Assistant Commissioner Williams to see Eric receive the medallion and heard her husband express his thanks to the Region's members and staff who had assisted him to achieve the successful installation of the range.

Incidentally, the range has been named officially 'Riley's Range' on a plaque.
— Keith Livingston, MLO Southern Region.