

Reporter experiences police firearms training

By SCOTT KLINE

It was with sweating palms that I wrapped my hands around and fired a police service revolver Friday, July 13.

I have fired rifles and shotguns before but never a revolver. The eight-ounce Smith and Wesson .38-calibre service revolver used by Ontario's police officers is a powerful weapon ... it is, however, a pea-shooter compared to the weapons being used by the criminal element.

Firing the weapon on a range at simple targets was stressful(?) enough, I frankly cannot imagine what being in a shooting situation as an officer must be like — no one can.

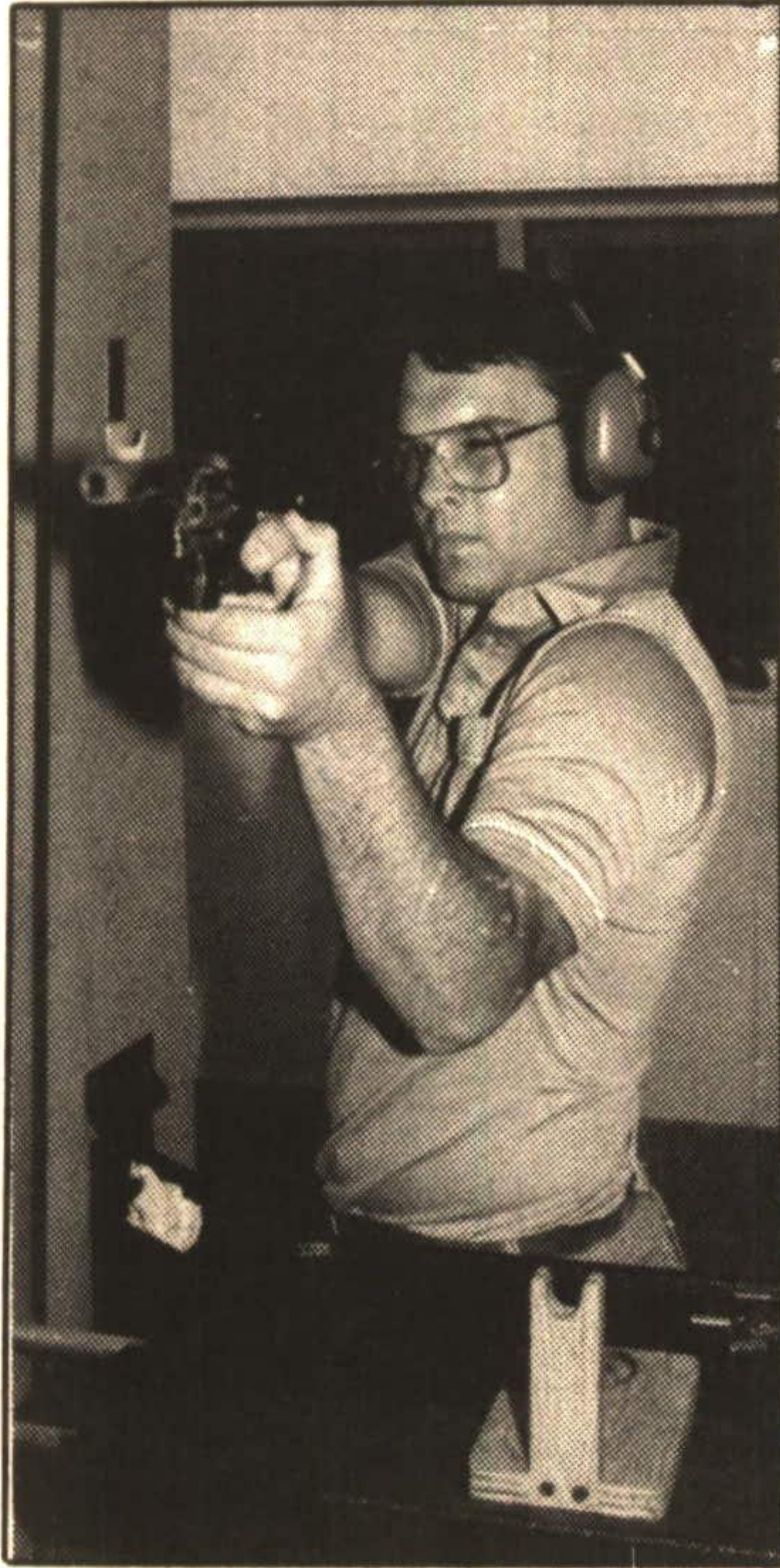
Going through a session on the Fire Arms Training System (FATS) gave me some appreciation of what it must be like to be shot at.

I found myself wanting to hide or run from the scenarios presented on the FATS.

The worst feeling of all was during one of the scenarios when a suspect turned and fired a sawed-off shotgun.

When he turned, the weapon looked like a cannon and despite the fact a TV screen was doing the shooting, for an instant at least, I wanted to make sure I wasn't bleeding.

OPP Sgt. Dave Benn said officers sometimes leave the FATS room sweating and worn out.



Weekend reporter Scott Kline takes aim during a live firing session at the OPP's Five District firing range.

I can understand why.

Most officers involved shootings take place in one to two seconds, at a range of 5 to 12 feet with the officer taking one or two shots — 85 per cent take place at night.

Something to keep in mind the next time the newspaper headlines scream about someone being shot by police.

It's like a big "Nintendo game"

New police training system, FATS recreates gun-involved scenarios

By SCOTT KLINE

It may not be real life, but for a group of media representatives a 20-minute session on a firearms training simulator was a taste of life in a police uniform.

Similar to a flight simulator used by pilots, the Fire Arms Training System (FATS) puts police officers in situations they may someday find themselves — situations where they may be forced to draw their service revolver and fire.

"The reality of having to draw and fire is something you can never duplicate," OPP Sergeant Dave Benn said. "This is moving closer and closer to reality."

Sgt. Benn, a 20-year veteran of

the force and the training officer for Six District OPP — which includes Guelph, Erin and Rockwood — was one of the hosts of a media day at one of the force's newest facilities Five District Headquarters in Aurora last Friday (July 13).

Members of the media were given a classroom briefing on the use of the Smith and Wesson .38-calibre double action revolver used by Ontario's police forces, followed by a chance to fire the weapons and a session in the FATS.

"Most shooting incidents involve the officer firing one to two shots, at five to 12 feet in three to four seconds," Sgt. Benn said. "After that it's game over."

Using the FATS, officers can be put in situations where they have to decide whether or not they should draw and fire.

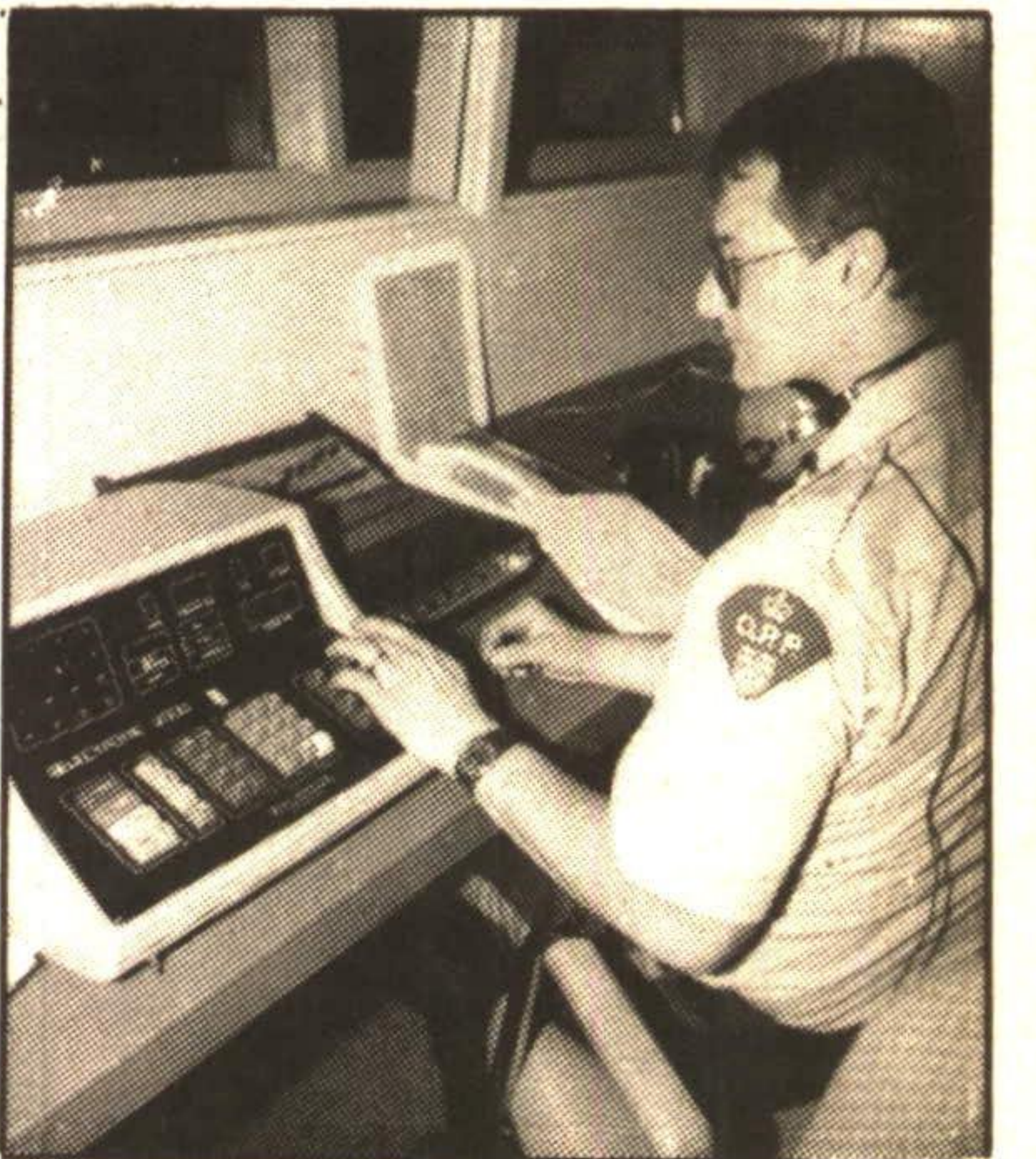
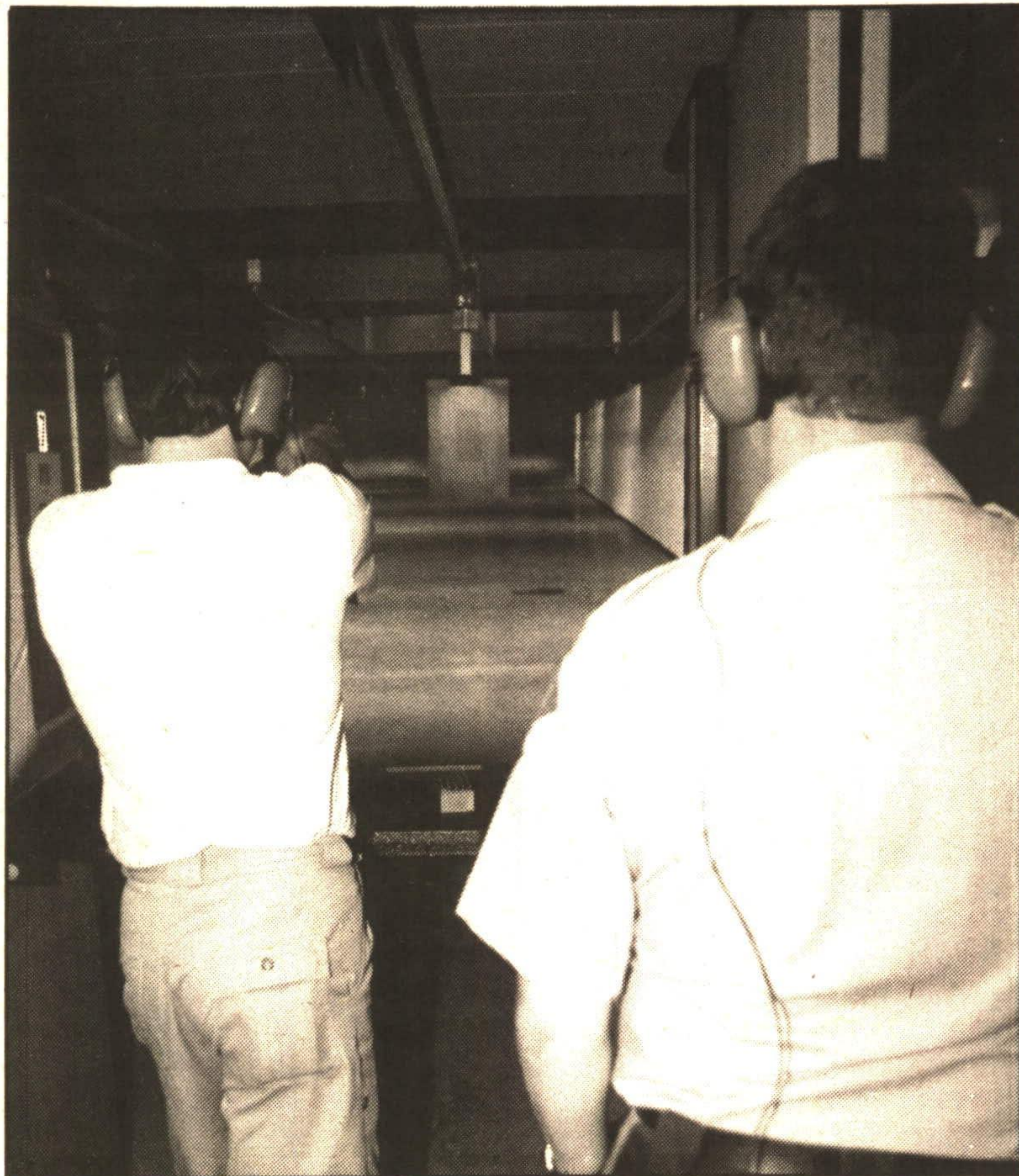
Sgt. Benn said the \$100,000 portable unit — currently at the Aurora facility — is one of the first of its kind in Ontario.

Resembling a giant television, the FATS — which one officer called "a big Nintendo game" — can put an officer in a combination of more than 300 different scenarios.

"If they bring their firearms out and shouldn't have, we tell them," Sgt. Benn added. "Not many officers have the experience where they have to draw their weapons, this gives them something to fall back on."

He added that officers are trained not to "shoot-to-kill or shoot-to-wound but shoot to eliminate the threat."

Sgt. Benn added that officers are also trained "to do everything they can not to get into a situation where they have to shoot."



Television cameraman Chris Matlock of CKCO fires some rounds as OPP training officer Daryl Knox looks on (left). Meanwhile, above, Cst. Daryl Knox controls target shooting on a computer keyboard. Located at the OPP's Five District Headquarters in Aurora, the range cost approximately \$2-million to build and is one of the best in Canada.

ZUCCHINI SNACK

3 eggs, slightly beaten
2/3 c. cooking oil
1 2/3 c. honey
1 tbsp. vanilla
2 c. zucchini, finely grated, raw
3 c. all purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tbsp. cinnamon
1 c. chopped walnuts or pecans

In a medium sized bowl, combine first five ingredients. In a large bowl mix dry ingredients. Add honey mixture to dry mixture, stirring just enough to moisten. Turn into 2 well-greased 9x5 loaf pans. Bake at 325°F for 1 hour, or until baked through and through. Cool for 10 minutes before removing.

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8 Runners
12 "calling"
13 Mr. Tolstoy
14 Clue
15 Garner role
17 "boy"
18 Marshes
19 PA city
21 Forever
23 Light wood
26 Assaults
29 "got sixpence"
30 Paid notices
31 Suffer
32
29 "got sixpence"
30 Paid notices
31 Suffer
32 Fashion's Oleg
35 Ms. Duke
37 Sarcastic
39 St. Francis
41 Audience request
45 Nasty

DOWN

5 Near
6 "capita"
7 Mice
8 Daisy type
9 Feline
10 Inside
11 Bandleader
16 Greek cheese
20 Small island
22 Stereo
23 Pen
24 Ms. Gardner
25 Not as much sodium (2 wds.)
27 Outfit
28 Foxy
30 Log support
33 Peter and Paul
34 Tax agency
35 Liquid measure
36 Agreement
38 Bird homes
39 Ammunition for short
40 Ooze
42 Cookie
43 Actor Foxx
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