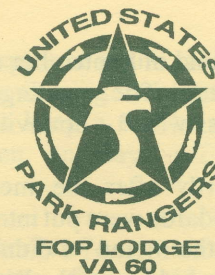


The Protection Ranger

WWW.RANGERFOP.COM

The Newsletter of the National Park Rangers Lodge, Fraternal Order of Police Vol. XVIII • No. 3 • 2008



President's Message

John T. Waterman

Well, there went another year. I apologize that my comments for this newsletter will be shorter than usual as I sit here trying to entertain my four year old son. But I promise that my comments in our next newsletter will be more detailed, including goals for the New Year.

Today the phone has been ringing non-stop as I learned that DOI had released the new Gun Regulation amendment to 36 CFR 2.4. By the time you read this, hopefully guidance from WASO will have come out. As you know, your Lodge Board worked on this amendment throughout the year joining forces with NPCA, the Brady Campaign, ANPR and several other organizations to prevent the regulation from being changed. Responses from Lodge members were split about 50/50 for and against the change. The Board felt that the original regulation, which had last been reworked in 1983, was fair, met its intended goal, and provided us with a great tool for law enforcement. The new regulation went through numerous changes, which at one point included taking out the regulation completely.

Your Lodge provided constant feedback to members of Congress and DOI throughout the process. Although I personally am not happy with the new regulation that has come out, I feel that it is a good compromise compared to what could have come

out of Washington. There has, though, been another benefit in going through this process. By working with the NPCA, the Lodge Board has learned the ropes when it comes to lobbying and working the press. This will be instrumental should we decide to proceed with the 6 (c) issue or any other large issue for that matter.

The whole program is a disgrace. The NPS continues to violate 5 CFR 339. 204: Agencies must waive a medical standard ... when there is sufficient evidence that an employee ... can perform the essential duties of the position without endangering the health and safety of the individual or others.

Brother Calvin Farmer has been hard at work on the retirement issues. The amount of research and follow-up has been tremendous. It is important that if you have any questions or would like to help out on this important issue that you contact him. Responses to our request to the membership have been somewhat dismal on such an important issue. I know several of you are concerned with confidentiality and we have tried to assure you as much as possible. It is so important that we hear from you on this issue.

There have been a few successes with 6(c) and we continue putting a plan together. It is going to take more of your involvement if we are to continue moving forward. The enhanced retirement issue affects all of us and it is important that we try to make it as

secure as possible. I believe the only way this can happen is through a legislative fix.

Besides the interesting changes with the recent national election, WASO has also undergone some changes too. I am pleased that key management positions were not left vacant for a long duration. The Lodge continues to have an open dialogue with WASO management and looks forward to working with them in the New Year. There have been several advances out of this office that have been long overdue. The Lodge remains vigilant in watching their actions, assisting in promoting initiatives that benefit us, and opposing those ideas that we feel would have a negative impact on us while providing suggested alternatives. The Lodge Board is planning a meeting with WASO management at their invitation in January and we will pass on the results in the February newsletter.

In all of my recent messages to you, I have expressed concern with how the current medical standards are being applied. The number of requests for help from our members has been on the rise this year. I had been in contact with the Chief of Risk Management Richard Powell and expressed my concerns.

The medical standards program recently underwent a program review by a steering committee which was to include providing an evaluation of how the program issued waivers. It was then to go out for review to the Regional Chiefs. The Lodge was told it would have an opportunity to directly participate in the final drafting once the comment period had closed. I was advised that a meeting was to

be held in September and I would be invited. The meetings came and – guess what? – no invite.

Shortly after the meeting, updated standards were put into place. Did you get the memo? I didn't. The changes were hidden on the Risk Management section on InsideNPS. Something as big as this should have been sent out to all of us. The changes don't reflect reality and in fact were made even more stringent. There were no recommendations on how rangers are to be treated while in the waiver process. Rangers are now being required to wait to participate in one of only four medical review boards held each year. In some areas, if you are found not medically qualified and must go through a medical review board, you are immediately stripped of your commission and gun. There are rangers who have been waiting for more than a year for this process to be completed.

The whole program is a disgrace. The NPS continues to violate 5 CFR 339.204 which says agencies must waive a medical standard or physical requirement established under this part when there is sufficient evidence that an applicant or employee, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential duties of the position without endangering the health and safety of the individual or others.

Another regulation, 5 CFR 339.202 (a), states that health standards must be: "established by written directive and uniformly applied." The type of treatment and service given to rangers going through the medical exam and review process has been degrading and discriminatory. Rangers who have taken on the long fight are winning, but at what cost to their lives and career? It is a tough battle including filing EEO, workplace discrimination, disability, and the actual medical review.

Do not go at this alone. Let us know if we can assist you. The Lodge will continue to push for a full review of

the program and a halt to the disparaging way it treats rangers. We need to have a medical program, but it must be realistic, fair, and treat rangers with respect.

I still find it hard to believe that 2008 is behind us. Our Lodge has remained strong with a solid membership base and stable finances. Juggling work, a family, and Lodge business has been a challenge. I am honored to have this opportunity and should any of you have concerns, suggestions, or just want more details on what your Lodge Board is doing, don't hesitate to contact me: jtwaterman@yahoo.com or call us at 800-407-8295. Be safe; spend time with your family; and Merry Christmas!

Lack of Sleep Affects Shift Workers

Mary Battaglia, President
Professional Sleep Solutions
www.prosleepsolutions.com

***Editor's Note:** A few years ago, an officer in California worked over 20 hours on a critical incident then drove home. He died in an auto accident on the way. Lack of sleep was ruled as a contributing factor. We all work very long shifts on SARs or other major incidents. When the incident is over, it's not "over." It may be best for you to get some sleep in an office or somewhere quiet before driving home and possibly endangering others. One of the tests that came out of this tragedy was to just leave the officer alone in an office for about 20 minutes with nothing to do. If he or she nods off, then find them a motel for the night.*

Law Enforcement is a 24/7 job that requires its employees to work various shifts throughout the day. Many times law enforcement shifts go into overtime because of an incident, a case or court appearance. Between overtime, family time and shift changes sleep becomes the lowest

priority in a law enforcement officer's day. Most people don't realize the physical price that is paid for shift work.

The sleepier you are, the less accurate your perception of degree of impairment. You can fall asleep briefly ("microsleeps") without knowing it!

Our bodies follow a 24-hour cycle of wakefulness and sleepiness that is regulated by an internal circadian clock. Our Circadian Rhythm is connected to light and darkness. It regulates body temperature, hormones, heart rate and other body functions. Before the light bulb was invented people woke up at sunrise and slept soon after it became dark. Not so today. Now people need to fit their sleep patterns to the needs of their profession.

Behaving in this manner causes the body's natural clock to get out of sync. It is difficult to reset the internal circadian clock which is why shift workers have trouble adjusting to night shifts.

The average daily amount of sleep a person gets should be between 7 and 8 hours. Most shift workers average 5 hours of sleep a day. Columbia University researchers have found that people who receive 5 hours of sleep have a higher rate of becoming obese compared to people who get 8 hours of sleep. Lack of sleep also contributes to hypertension and diabetes.

Daytime demands, such as family and other obligations interfere with sleep. Lack of sleep can affect your mood and increase hormonal stress levels which will have a negative impact on performance.

The National Sleep Foundation states that a decline in performance starts after 15-16 hours of continued

wakefulness. Shift workers need to be aware if you stay up all night that the period of lowest alertness is between 6AM and 11AM. Studies show that sleepy people underestimate their level of sleepiness and overestimate their alertness. The sleepier you are, the less accurate your perception of degree of impairment. You can fall asleep briefly ("microsleeps") without knowing it!

It is critical to recognize the importance of sleep since it affects your safety. LE personnel are expected to be alert during a shift. Sleepiness can lead to errors and poor judgment in the field. It can affect vision, slow reaction time, decrease awareness and increase the risk of crashing. Recognize that if you feel irritable with staff, colleagues and family; recheck your work, lose focus and feel like you don't care that these are all warning signs of sleepiness.

Shift workers and their families need to realize the importance of sleep. Make family and friends aware that 7 to 8 hours of sleep is a priority for you. Create healthy bedtime rituals. Focus on relaxing and going to sleep when you get home from your shift. Listen to relaxing music, take a warm bath, meditate or write down anything that may bother you.

Keep a sleep journal to prove to yourself that more sleep is better. Write on a piece of paper for at least 2 or 3 weeks the amount of sleep you get each night, the time you go to bed and wake up and your mood. Always consult with a physician if you are not feeling rested after sleep.

If child care is preventing proper sleep, try some alternate solutions. Talk to co-workers to see how they handle child care. See if work has any program to help with day care. See if family, neighbors or day care can watch a child for an hour or two a day so you can get the proper rest.

A bedroom should be designed for sleep. Try these Bedroom Tips for healthy sleep:

- A dark bedroom will help you fall asleep quicker and stay asleep longer. Buy window treatments to darken the room or use sleep masks.
- Keep the bedroom as soundproof as you can. Use carpet, soundproof curtains, earplugs or white noise machines to reduce sound distractions that keep you up.
- Remove any televisions, computers or phone from the bedroom. These all distract you from sleep.
- Keep a cool bedroom 65 to 72 degrees. Temperatures below 55 degrees and above 75 degrees typically wake people up.

Eating properly and exercising can help adjustments to night shift work. Make sure you eat the largest meal after you wake up. Eat a light meal in the middle of your shift and avoid a big meal before sleep. Many shift workers live off caffeine. Try and avoid caffeine 5 hours before you are going to sleep. Avoid consuming alcohol. It may make you sleepy at first but it will end up waking you up and contribute to poor sleep.

The National Sleep Foundation has some tips for going on and off night shift:

- Before your first night shift, sleep between one to four hours to help reduce sleepiness at work.
- When coming off night shifts into days off, have a short sleep on reaching home, and go to bed earlier that night. A good sleep at night is the quickest way of getting the body clock back to normal.
- Reduce extra work that could decrease your sleep when on the night shift.
- Arrange social life so you still get proper sleep.

It takes at least one week for circadian rhythms and sleep patterns to adjust. Sleep researchers have devised compensation tactics, such as the use of bright lights to help night-shift workers remain alert on the job and sleep better after the shift. Have as much exposure to bright light as possible when you need to be alert.

Avoid light exposure in the morning after a shift by wearing sunglasses. It is important to keep a regular sleep schedule, even on days off and weekends.

Many shift workers have to drive themselves home after a long shift. Recognize the signs of drowsiness while driving. This includes trouble focusing on the road, difficulty keeping your eyes open, nodding, yawning, drifting out of your lane, missing exits or closing your eyes at stoplights. People think that opening the car windows or listening to the radio will keep them awake. However, studies show that these methods do not work. In fact, these actions should be signs to you that you are tired and should not be driving.

Stop driving if you notice signs of sleepiness. Remember it takes only a 4 second lapse in attention to have a drowsy driving crash! Pull over and take a short nap in a shopping center parking lot or somewhere.

Avoid driving if you are drowsy after your shift. Carpool, call a taxi or take public transportation after a shift. If driving is your only alternative then take a nap before driving home. Twenty minute naps can temporarily improve sleepiness. Remember, sleep can quickly overcome you when you don't want it to.

Studies show that napping at the workplace is especially effective for workers who need to maintain a high degree of alertness, attention to detail, or make quick decisions. In situations where the worker is working double shifts or longer, naps at the workplace are even more important.

Employers can participate and help shift workers focus on good sleep habits:

- Start an employee sleep awareness campaign.
- Facilitate training on the importance of sleep.
- Install bright lights in the work areas.

- Provide light therapy boxes to employees during work.
- Schedule shifts to allow sufficient breaks and days off.
- Develop a napping section for breaks.
- Encourage the use of carpools and rested drivers.

Law Enforcement will always need shift workers. Employers and employees need to recognize the importance of sleep for shift workers. Always remember to make sleep a priority no matter what your shift is.

Business Manager's

Message

Paige Meier

The 2009 membership cards will be sent out in early January. If you received a renewal notice and have not yet paid your dues you will not receive a membership card. Please try to get them in soon.

We were informed by the Virginia Lodge about a month ago that many of our members (more than 100 of you) do not have a current address on file with them, and the VA State Lodge newsletters they sent out were returned to them by the post office. If you have not received any mailings from the Virginia Lodge, or the Grand Lodge for that matter, it is probably because they do not have your current address.

The Grand Lodge and the Virginia Lodge (which is our state lodge) have requested that ALL members provide them with their current address. So, please log onto the Grand Lodge site at: www.fop.net and update your address there. They will send the current information on to the Virginia Lodge.

Here's how to do this:

- If you don't already have a member's login and password, go to the New User Registration page. Enter your last name, the

membership number from your membership card; **Virginia** for the State Lodge; and **060** for the Lodge number.

- Then enter a username and password for the site.
- New and already registered users can then enter the **Members Only** part of the Grand Lodge website. To change member information choose **My Tools**, then **Update My Information**. Remember to enter and save it only once.

Once you entered your current information, it will be reviewed and approved by the Lodge Secretary or the Business Manager. The Grand Lodge then makes the change and sends the information to the Virginia Lodge.

Please note that it is up to individual members must make these changes. The Grand Lodge web site was designed specifically to allow you to keep your information current. When you have had a change of address, please notify us as well. We do not automatically change your address unless you specifically request that we do so.

We have heard from a few members that they only received some important information second hand rather than directly. If you want to be sure you receive important notices, please go to the Lodge web site and register as a user. That way Duane, our webmaster, will include your email address in any limited mailing we send out. The web site address is: www.rangerfop.com.

The Lodge **strongly** encourages all members register on our web site and become involved with the Lodge. The site posts timely and important information and hosts a discussion board for issues important to rangers.

Also, many of you do not have an email address on file. If you want to receive any special notices we sent out to ALL members, please contact us to be sure we have an email address for you as well.

Huge thanks to those members who made donations of time or money this year!

Thanks also to the retired members who continue to support the Lodge.

The Ranger Lodge Needs to know the names of all rangers who get officer liability insurance from Hylant Insurance.

Because of some recent confusion with Hylant on whether the Lodge qualifies for their Group Rate, we need the name of everyone who has insurance through them.

Hylant recently raised their rates. Group rate members will be charged \$197 yearly. Non-group policies will be charged \$215. For years, the Ranger Lodge assumed we were getting the group rate. Previously, there was no rate difference for Virginia Lodge members whether our Lodge qualified for a Group Rate or not. With this price increase, it now makes a difference. The Lodge must show that 50 of our members insure through Hylant to qualify. Hylant says they are currently unable to determine that with the records they have.

So, if you insure through Hylant, send an email to foplodge@sonic.net and put in the Subject line: Insured by Hylant or call us at: 800-407-8295, leaving a message that you're insured with Hylant and your name and address. On the email, put in your name and address in the message section. No need to send any receipts or anything else. Please try to get this to us by January 5th!

We'll send this list to Hylant. If you've already paid for the year, you'll be credited the difference in rates. If you haven't, your next bill should reflect the group rate.

Demise of the Generalist Ranger?

By John T. Waterman

At ANPR's invitation, John recently wrote this for their magazine, Ranger.

Many NPS employees - especially those of a certain age - bemoan the loss of the "generalist" ranger. That fabled ranger of yore who could identify every critter in the park, knew all the trails but who could also get Boy Scouts off of cliffs and drunks off the roads. Some have gone so far as to say today's law enforcement ranger no longer wants to do generalist type duties, but rather just be a gun toting police officer. Although I question whether the true generalist ever really existed in any great numbers, it's important to note that two major changes have occurred in the Ranger series to make the generalist even rarer. One change is the introduction of competencies and professionalization of the law enforcement ranger. The other is a more than 40% reduction in permanent law enforcement rangers and a 50% reduction in seasonal law enforcement rangers.

In 1994, the Park Service embarked on a mission to professionalize its ranger ranks in both Interpretation and Law Enforcement. It was referred to as Ranger Futures. Arguably, the largest change came within law enforcement. Included in this specialized series was an enhanced retirement annuity, otherwise known as the 6-(c) package. To meet the "rigorous duty" standards imposed by 6(c) regulations, law enforcement rangers were required to pass one of the toughest medical standards in the Federal Government, a physical fitness battery exam, and greatly expanded LE training requirements. Currently, initial LE training requirements are a minimum of a nine month Academy divided between FLETC in Glynco, Georgia and a park where the ranger-trainee is supervised

by a Field Training Officer. That means being away from your family and home park for almost all of that time. LE rangers are then required to have an additional forty hours of law enforcement refresher training each year.

For the first six years of the Ranger Futures model, many rangers did continue as generalists, with their duties including LE, EMS, SAR and fire. But in 2000, there was a drastic change. Since the inception of Ranger Futures in 1994, some rangers had been waiting for a determination of whether their prior 1994 service counted towards their retirement.

Due to the incredible backlog, DOI formed a team call FLERT, the Firefighter and Law Enforcement Officer Retirement Team. FLERT, which evaluates and handles 6(c) enhanced law enforcement and firefighter retirement claims, has set out on a mission to stop NPS park rangers from receiving their duly-earned 6(c) special law enforcement retirement benefits. Ironically, some rangers are being denied 6(c) enhanced law enforcement coverage although they do the same work of others who have already been approved. The sudden change in decisions in 2000 was due to a new interpretation of the definition of law enforcement.

For retirement purposes, a "law enforcement officer" is defined as:

... an employee occupying a rigorous position, whose primary duties are the investigation, apprehension, or detention of individuals suspected or convicted of offenses against the criminal laws of the United States, or the protection of officials of the United States against threats to personal safety, as provided in 5 U.S.C. § 8401(17).

This new interpretation has been backed by DOI and the Merit Promotion Review Board and has led to hundreds of law enforcement

rangers being denied retirement benefits, requiring many to work well past the mandatory separation age of 57. This is while still being required to meet the physical fitness and medical standards. Because most of these rangers have waited more than ten years for a decision, they have been effectively denied the opportunity to change careers to obtain the benefits they expected.

The other major change has been in the actual duties law enforcement rangers are now performing. Emphasis in training and actual job functions are now focused on meeting the 6(c), enhanced annuity, law enforcement definition. As has been stated in FLERT determinations, firefighter duties, EMS, security details, interpretation, resource management, and general police work such as road patrol do not meet their fundamental idea of law enforcement. FLERT's emphasis has been that in order to fully meet the definition, law enforcement rangers need to be performing investigations. It is important to remember, LE rangers have not forgotten their roots of why they became a Park Ranger rather, they have been pushed into a corner by the Department of Interior to meet a specific job classification or risk losing their retirement.

We have all heard the same story, park divisions are underfunded, understaffed, and have been doing more with less for years. So the final straw in the demise of the generalist ranger is the dramatic decrease in the numbers of law enforcement rangers at many parks. A recent meeting I attended at a park on the East Coast found that in 1994 they had forty-two permanent Law Enforcement Commissions and are now down to seventeen, even though the park has had a steady increase in visitation. A smaller urban park had sixteen permanent Law Enforcement commissions and in less than five years is down to seven. Law enforcement divisions are now forced to compete for the same pot of money that all the other divisions are sharing.

Finally, for several years in a row, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) has stated that "Law Enforcement work in the National Park Service is the most dangerous in Federal Service. NPS officers are 12 times more likely to be killed or injured as a result of an assault than FBI agents." The Department of Justice Bureau of Statistics has stated that the National Park Service suffers by far the worst record of having its officers killed or injured by assaults in the line of duty of any Federal Law Enforcement Agency. A study (Analysis Of Assaults Upon National Park Rangers: 1997-2003) carried out by Northern Arizona University on this alarming rate of assaults on rangers found:

Based on the reports it appears that NPS Rangers have a wider range of duties than most other Federal Law Enforcement agents. The range of duties performed by the NPS Rangers appears to be even more diverse than what would normally be found in local law enforcement agencies. Again, based on the information provided in the reports it appears that some NPS Rangers had difficulty transitioning from non-law enforcement roles to law enforcement roles. Specifically the difficulty seemed to be greatest when there was a need to transition from an educational/informational role to an enforcement role.

In short, it is too dangerous - to both the public and rangers - for us to be the 'ranger for all seasons' that many, both NPS and public, expect. Nor is there space to address the increasing professionalization requirements of SAR, EMS and, especially, fire. It is almost impossible to maintain competencies in all these skills, to say nothing of being able to identify a Wilson's Warbler in flight.

As such, LE rangers have had to change our emphasis, concentrating on better training, tactics, equipment and staffing for adequate officer back-up. In order to meet GPRA goals, emphasis has been placed on meeting visitor satisfaction

requirements and concentrating on visitor centered issues. This is also combined with meeting the ever increasing demands of Homeland Security rotation requirements. It is important to note that crime statistics in the National Parks have remained relatively stable for the past ten years, thanks in part to the dedication of the law enforcement ranger.

The professionalization of the ranger ranks was long overdue. It's impact on the law enforcement ranger has been tremendous. There is still a ways to go. In the next four years, approximately 43% percent of the current law enforcement ranger ranks are eligible for retirement. Even though many LE rangers are not staying with NPS to the age of 57, they are deciding to get out due to current fears that their retirement may be in jeopardy and the continued push for doing more with less. The National Park Service needs to start filling some of the ever increasing empty positions now before the flood gates open.

Using GIS in Law Enforcement

George Durkee

There's been growing interest from rangers in a few parks wanting to use GIS (Geographic Information Systems) more extensively in SAR and LE operations. Last summer, Yosemite hired a ranger specifically to run GIS operations for SAR and other LE needs. Both Fire and Resources use these applications extensively. Although a few parks have implemented effective use of GIS for ranger operations, many, apparently, don't.

On a SAR, for instance, the most basic use of GIS is sending search teams out with GPS units to mark their exact route. When they return to the ICP, the GPS units are downloaded and their track projected onto a map. This can be used by Plans to review for the following day's search. When an exact route is mapped, search managers can

see potential holes in a Team's coverage of an area. A visual also gives them a much better idea of POD for an area.

Another major advantage is that this information is easily stored and retrievable for use or review long after the search is over. If there are legal questions or the search needs to be resumed when better conditions return (e.g. after snow melt or low water), then exact routes of searchers can be quickly accessed.

Other applications on a SAR can include drawing search segments with ArcGIS and calculating the total search area quickly; drawing successive rings of possible travel distances of a subject from point last seen; identifying high angle terrain that might call for technical teams; giving search managers a better feel for the terrain, including vegetation and satellite photos, through GIS mapping. GIS can also be used to predict what areas marijuana growers might use for planting as well as keeping exact track of places that have been used so they can be monitored over the years - long after the rangers involved in the original operations leave.

Paul Doherty of YOSAR and I have recently started a Google Group to educate and encourage such use among rangers and other interested emergency service people. As with any skill we acquire, there's a learning curve involved. At its most basic, though, it's really not that hard. A recent two day class in Yosemite allowed rangers there to become familiar with using a GPS unit to record their track and then use ArcGIS to show their travel route on a map.

Because maps and the need to accurately present spatial information are such a basic part of what rangers do, each park should have at least a few rangers familiar enough with the techniques to at least recognize when and where they can be applied to a park's law enforcement needs.

Solutions can then be applied either in-house by a ranger, or ask the Park's GIS Coordinator to do it. With a little work, many rangers can train to learn to do fairly sophisticated techniques to carry out mapping on SAR, incidents or other applications.

The web site provides some basic training *how to's* and other materials, as well as providing a discussion section where rangers and other emergency service people can ask questions and contribute to the common knowledge. Emphasis in the Group is on using ArcGIS software for mapping, though discussion is not at all limited to Arc.

The NPS has extensive licensing to use ArcGIS as well as good support from our GIS Coordinators & free training for those using it. If you have an NPS mail address and are doing GIS work, you qualify for free online training from ESRI. Go to:

<http://home.nps.gov/applications/gis/esri/vc.cfm> to review courses and apply for a registration number.

Some of you may have received Magellan Triton GPS units Magellan recently donated to the Park Service. Although there's some legitimate controversy over their use among the GIS Coordinators, Paul and I believe they're still useful for SAR and other applications. We provide some basic cheat sheets for use of these GPS units. However, if you or your park is planning to buy GPS units, we strongly urge you to check with your park or region's GIS coordinator. Garmin is the standard in the NPS and all training materials are geared towards their units.

If you're interested in learning more, have expertise you can contribute or want to use GIS for SAR or other law enforcement applications, I hope you join our group. Go to: <http://groups.google.com/group/sar-and-gis>. Ask to be accepted for membership, and we'll approve it as quickly as possible.

IACP Recap: Are these physical problems putting you at risk?

Charles Remsberg, PoliceOne

(C) 2008: PoliceOne.com, the leading information resource for law enforcement nationwide. To register for the free PoliceOne.com news reports, visit: www.policeone.com. Reprinted with permission.

PoliceOne Editor's Note: The following is one in a series of articles written by PoliceOne columnists in the wake of the recently completed IACP conference in San Diego. Check out the IACP Special Coverage page for complete and continuing coverage of the event. If you attended the IACP and want to share your thoughts or photos, please let us know by sending an email.

They're a danger to themselves and other officers, and you probably see them on your department: Two extremes, one the bulked up, Incredible Hulk who seems itching to take on any aggressive suspect, the other the out-of-shape blob who's a prime candidate for a cardiac the next time he tangles with a resister.

In separate presentations at the recent IACP annual conference in San Diego, chiefs and other attendees got an earful about both types - the steroid abusers and the fitness neglecters - among their personnel, the problems they can cause, and what may need to be done about them that will potentially affect all officers.

The facts are sobering. Here are highlights:

Steroid Abuse by Cops

"On any given department, at least five percent of officers, if not more, have taken anabolic steroids," estimated Kim Humphrey, commander of the Professional Standards Bureau of the Phoenix (Ariz.) P.D. "This abuse has surfaced in Florida, California,

Massachusetts, New York, Texas - it's a coast-to-coast problem."

Humphrey has gained first-hand expertise about it from an ongoing series of investigations into steroid abuse by police, firemen, and other municipal workers in the Phoenix area. At one clinic suspected of illegally dispensing the drugs, firefighters "drove fire trucks up to the place" to get supplies and off-duty cop customers parked personal vehicles out front with their uniforms visible inside, he said.

"Steroids are abused a lot" in the public service sector, he claimed, "and they have a lot of potential for creating serious problems." Phoenix experienced one "significant incident where an officer using steroids behaved so irrationally that a supervisor had to take his gun away."

En route to being tested, an officer who'd been taking steroids for 12 years tried to proselytize IA investigators to start using them and advised them where to go to get supplies, Humphrey recalled.

"I know for a fact that plaintiffs' attorneys are starting to look at steroid use" where officers are accused of being overly aggressive or using excessive force, he said. "This could result in huge liability judgments against departments." Apart from wanting to bulk up to support a body-building hobby, officers often cite job-related image and self-esteem motives for getting into steroids, Humphrey said. "They think the drugs will help them do the job better."

Some feel they are "picked on all the time" because they're too small. Others feel they stand a better chance of getting on or staying on SWAT teams with steroid use. Still others believe they're "not big enough to take on criminals, who are getting tougher and tougher" and sometimes have massive muscle development from working out in prison. Humphrey quoted one officer user: "I

want bad guys to run away when they see me on the street.”

Legitimately, anabolic-androgenic steroids may be prescribed for hypogonadism (an abnormally low testosterone level) and a few other medical conditions. But in those rare instances, the medication is most often administered via a patch or gel, not in oral or injection form, and it is not effective for muscle growth, Humphrey explained.

Although steroids are illegal (a felony) without a valid prescription, the hundreds of formulations associated with abuse are easily obtained. One of Humphrey's co-presenters, Dr. Gary Green, a sports medicine specialist who helps train law enforcement agencies in testing protocols, said he Googled “buy anabolic steroids” and in just .22 second got 413,000 websites where purchases could be made. Abusers also readily secure the drugs through unscrupulous physicians at clinics and “longevity” centers, from veterinary and pet supply stores, at gyms, and over the border in Mexico.

Ironically, Humphrey said, “being bigger does not necessarily equal being fit or even stronger.” And the effort to get there through steroid use carries significant personal risk, ranging from chronic muscle tightness to death. Among potential adverse side effects ticked off by Dr. Green were high blood pressure and other cardiovascular complications, major liver problems, nasty tissue tears and other musculoskeletal disasters, breast enlargement in men, psychoses, depression, and hyperaggression (“roid rage”).

“Most departments haven't figured out how to deal with the steroid problem,” Humphrey asserted. But for more than two years now, Phoenix P.D. has addressed it head-on through policies and education aimed at awareness and prevention and by adding steroid screening to pre-employment and random in-service drug testing to ensure enforcement.

Gaining cooperation for the testing in particular required conferring with the local police union, but Humphrey considers the process well worthwhile and he urged other agencies to follow suit, even though reliable and comprehensive testing can prove expensive and complicated and, along with other drug testing, may meet strong union resistance in some jurisdictions.

“We've found some officers who've tested positive for steroids without having a prescription. Others have quit while under investigation,” he says, noting that so far all suspected of abuse have been males.

“We're still learning and adjusting our protocols to close loopholes. Realistically, we probably can't completely stop this problem. But we can say we tried to blaze a trail in combating it, and that should lessen liability.”

In addition to testing, Humphrey stressed the importance of observing officers for “red flags” that might suggest abuse, including:

- a visible increase in body mass over a short period of time.
- noticeable acne and/or oily skin.
- unreasonable emotional responses to situations.
- mood changes, particularly an increase in aggressiveness.
- multiple use-of-force incidents or complaints of improper outbursts and attitude.

“What has been a problem in the sports field for many years, we are now struggling with in law enforcement,” said Dr. Green, who has worked with the DEA on steroid investigations. “It is not limited to one geographical area. We see it all over.”

[More information about the nature of steroids and the anti-abuse campaign by Phoenix P.D. can be found in an article by Humphrey, Green, and four other authors, *Anabolic Steroid Use and Abuse by Police Officers: Policy & Prevention*, which appeared in the

June 2008 issue of *The Police Chief* magazine. The Phoenix police and fire departments have also produced a 34-minute CD for public safety personnel: *Anabolic Steroids: Body Building or Body Destruction?*. Humphrey can be emailed at: kim.humphrey@phoenix.gov]

L.E.'s Fitness Scandal

What's necessary for you to extend your life by 10 to 20 more years? In a presentation on “Protecting Our Officers,” which focused largely on officer fitness and law enforcement-related injuries, David Cashwell, a public policy and policing consultant from North Carolina, cited this magic triad:

1. Don't smoke.
2. Accumulate 30-60 minutes or more of moderately intensive physical activity on most (preferably all) days of the week.
3. Eat a healthy diet.

Nothing radical there. Yet within three years after exiting an academy, Cashwell said, a significant percentage of officers have begun to drift away from physical fitness and healthy living.

Studies have shown that inmates are more physically conditioned than cops as a group, especially in cardiovascular fitness, claimed Cashwell, the former director of training and standards in North Carolina. “Research clearly demonstrates that police work is largely sedentary. Officers are like lifeguards-sedentary most of the time, until someone needs rescuing. This tempts us to downplay or even dismiss the need for physical fitness or readiness.”

When officers do act, a lack of fitness sometimes contributes to injuries that have breathtaking consequences. An officer injured his back lifting an exercise mat, which ultimately produced insurance claims totaling \$310,000; the officer was 5 foot 8 and weighed more than 300 lbs. Another, tipping the scale at 360,

slipped and fell on the job, at a cost of \$172,600. Injuries to another who was hurt scuffling with a suspect who outmatched him cost \$94,500; that officer was 5' 11" and weighed 315.

Monetary outlays, of course, can be incidental compared to the physical and emotional pain incurred by officers who aren't fit enough to overcome the challenges they encounter, not to mention the risks of permanent disability or death. "That's why the issue of fitness and wellness is so important," Cashwell said.

He itemized 12 physical activities most often performed by police officers, according to research studies. If you can't do these without over-taxing your capacity, you need to whip yourself into shape: running, vaulting, lifting, jumping, climbing, carrying, crawling, pushing, fighting, balancing, pulling, dragging.

Cashwell offered a couple of rudimentary measures for assessing where you stand physically. They might at least shock you into investigating further.

1. If your waist is more than 40 inches (for men) or 35 inches (for women), you're likely at increased risk health-wise.
2. If you have any three of the following you have evidence of metabolic syndrome, a cluster of conditions that occur together, increasing your risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

Even one symptom warrants consultation with a physician:

- central (abdominal) obesity
- high blood pressure
- high triglycerides
- low HDL cholesterol
- insulin resistance

Cashwell concluded with a valuable reminder: "Your physical fitness level may be the factor that one day saves your life."

It wasn't mentioned during his presentation, but the costly risk problems Cashwell surfaced inevitably raise the question: how much longer

can agencies and unions resist mandatory fitness standards that will affect officers throughout their career?

[A comprehensive study on police wellness that Cashwell was involved in and that documents, among other things, the correlation between officer fitness and job performance can be accessed at: www.ncimwellness.com. Click on "Pilot Study". Cashwell can be reached at: dcashwell8@nc.rr.com]

Good Roll Call Reminder

From Sgt. Adrienne Quigley of the Arlington (Va.) Police Dept., one of Cashwell's co-presenters: "Research has shown that since 1980, approximately 1,200 officers have been killed in the line of duty. More than 30 percent could have been saved by body armor. It is estimated that the risk of dying from gunfire is 14 times higher for an officer not wearing a ballistic vest than one who is. Soft body armor has also helped protect officers from other potentially fatal situations, including blunt force trauma, fire incidents, and explosions."

A third presenter, Gregory Tooker, president of a Massachusetts risk-management firm, pointed out that nearly 30 percent of officer injuries occur in vehicle accidents-the largest single category of injury risk. Soft body armor often provides protection there, too.

So vest up!

Charles Remsberg co-founded the original Street Survival Seminar and the Street Survival Newslines, authored three of the best-selling law enforcement training textbooks, and helped produce numerous award-winning training videos. His nearly three decades of work earned him the prestigious O.W. Wilson Award for outstanding contributions to law enforcement and the American Police Hall of Fame Honor Award for distinguished achievement in public service.

Pre-order Charles Remsberg's latest book, *Blood Lessons*, which takes you inside more than 20 unforgettable confrontations where officers' lives are on the line.

Time to Renew?

If you have recently received a notice of renewal (*check your mailing label on the newsletter for your expiration date!*), please send your dues in soon. You may renew using the envelope provided or go to our web site and use PayPal:

www.rangerfop.com/join.htm

We now offer the option of signing up for yearly automatic renewals with your credit card.

If you've moved, please send us an email at fop lodge@sonic.net and tell us your new address.

Member support is always available by email or phone: 800-407-8295.

Call *only* between 10AM and 7PM Eastern Time.

Lodge Website

The Lodge website is updated with notices and links to other sites that we think are interesting and/or helpful to resource based law enforcement officers. Visit it often between issues of the Protection Ranger to keep current on things that affect you and your job. Our address is www.rangerfop.com

Application for Membership

You may also join, renew and pay your dues online with PayPal:
www.rangerfop.com/join.htm

I, the undersigned, a full-time regularly employed law enforcement officer, do hereby make application for active membership in the U.S. Park Rangers Lodge, FOP. If my membership should be revoked or discontinued for any cause other than retirement while in good standing, I do hereby agree to return to the Lodge my membership card and other material bearing the FOP emblem.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

DOB: _____ E-Mail: _____

Permanent Rangers: \$60/year

Seasonals and Retired Active Members: \$40/year

Associate (non-Commissioned) Membership (Newsletter only): \$40/year

Renewals: You do not need to send in this form to renew. Enclose a copy of your Commission (new members only).

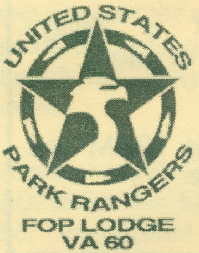
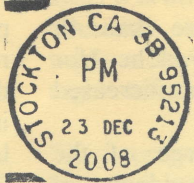
Make Check Payable to: National Park Rangers Lodge.

Agency and Work Unit: _____

Mail to: FOP Lodge, POB 1481, Twain Harte, CA 95383

Phone: 1-800-407-8295 10am-7pm Eastern Time or email

fopldodge@sonic.net



National Park Rangers Lodge
POB 1481
Twain Harte, CA 95383



9227786640 H067

