



RANGER ACTIVITIES INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Volume 7, Number 4

November/December, 1991

REPORT ON REGIONAL CHIEF RANGERS' MEETING

During the next to last week of October, the ten regional chief rangers and law enforcement specialists met in Boise, Idaho, with representatives from this office to review the year's activities, discuss current issues, and formulate a plan for the year to come. This year's meeting focused primarily on two areas which required particular attention - law enforcement and all-risk management. Although regional and WASO Ranger Activities offices are involved in a number of other activities, including park uses and resource management, time constraints precluded discussions in those areas until the coming year. The following report summarizes the week's proceedings. Some of the narratives contain updated information which was obtained subsequent to the meeting; those notes are bracketed.

Law Enforcement/Emergency Services Position Management

The meeting began with a lengthy discussion of current position management practices and their application to rangers specializing in law enforcement and emergency services. A number of recent trends were seen as rapidly converging over coming months - all of which will require the Service to closely examine the structure and grading of the GS-025 and related series. These included:

- the slow but steady increase in the number of GS-1811 criminal investigators within the NPS;
- the shift toward utilization of GS-083 instead of GS-025 for rangers with primary duties in law enforcement in some regions;
- the impact of OPM decisions on applications for credit for past service for enhanced annuity retirement;
- the subsequent review of law enforcement positions by the NPS to possibly establish benchmark position descriptions for various types of related work;
- the 75th anniversary symposium's recommendations for a thorough review and revision of the GS-025 series and its uses;
- the Service's work force management plan, which suggests the use of a variety of series to accomplish tasks traditionally done by GS-025's; and
- OPM's Congressionally-mandated study of law enforcement and protective service positions for possible inclusion in a new pay system.

The latter initiative led to considerable discussion. A provision of the Federal Employment Pay Compensation Act (FEPCA) of 1990 requires that OPM study special pay and benefits for Federal law enforcement and emergency services employees, including NPS rangers with those duties, and propose legislation to Congress by January 1, 1993. A 44-member commission representing all Federal agencies has been established to review proposed options. Dick Martin is representing the Service; Morris Simms (DOI Personnel) and John Gannon (DOI Enforcement and Security) are representing the Department.

The commission is focusing primarily on four issues - pay, classification, hazardous duties (as they affect grade), and pay differentials. Although it was emphasized that there is no way of knowing what OPM will recommend when the study is concluded, it's possible that they may endorse the creation of a new pay and classification system which would be as different from General Schedule as the Federal Wage System is at present.

There was very strong support among all present for becoming actively involved in the work group charged with implementing the 75th anniversary symposium recommendations on reviewing and restructuring the GS-025 series, as that seemed to all to be a central and potentially coalescing effort which could develop a plan which would deal with all aspects of GS-025 classification and pay problems. The participants were virtually unanimous in their feeling that we need to have a single, integrated approach to these intertwined problems, and that we need to begin by defining what a ranger is and should be in the future before attempting to arrive at possible solutions.

Accordingly, a meeting will be held in late winter or early spring to begin working on these issues. Each regional chief was asked to nominate three candidates from his or her region. Candidates can be from any branch of ranger work or any other professional discipline. Nominations are to be submitted to WASO Ranger Activities by December 1st.

Law Enforcement Identification

Maj. Jack Schamp, law enforcement specialist in Ranger Activities in WASO, said that his office is in the process of developing a new shield and identification card for GS-1811 special agents. The badges were ordered in September. Both badge and credentials should be available some time next year. The shield will be part of an identification case, and won't be worn on the uniform. Work is also underway to redesign the current law enforcement commission.

NPS-9 Needs Assessments

There was some discussion among participants on the utility of the information collected through the NPS-9 needs assessment process. It was agreed that one of the objectives of these assessments - determination of Servicewide law enforcement shortfalls - is laudable, but that it would be better to prepare and distribute a single, comprehensive questionnaire to all areas, then compile the results. A draft questionnaire will be circulated to the regions for comment by December 31st.

Semi-Automatic Weapons

Jack Schamp provided a report on the status of the procurement of semi-automatic weapons, which he said is on track and currently at the end of the first of three phases.

Phase I began with the initial study conducted last year. The results of that study were subsequently evaluated by a task group, and a formal request for proposal, which is required for large purchases by federal acquisition regulations (FAR), is now being formulated. Although many of those who participated in the initial tests thought that they were making a final decision on which weapon would be selected, such an action would violate FAR rules and would immediately be subject to protest. The agency may define what it is seeking in a weapon through specifications, but must then employ the formal procurement process to seek proposals from interested bidders.

During Phase II, the pistol samples submitted by the bidders will be tested and evaluated at the FLETC firearms range. Current plans are to have ten rangers from Southeast Region fire 30,000 rounds in six days on the NRA firearms and combat courses. The technical evaluation committee will then review the results and select a weapon.

Phase III will involve the actual procurement of the weapons and their distribution to law enforcement rangers. The \$2.5 million that the Service requested for that procurement has been appropriated.

Background Investigations

Jack Schamp advised that employees in all law enforcement positions, whether permanent or seasonal, will soon be required to have to full field background investigations, each of which costs about \$2,700. The SF-85P has replaced the SF-86 as the form to be used for BI's for public trust positions, but the revised SF-86 will continue to be used for positions involving national security interests. The new form was introduced because of lawsuits which contended that the SF-86 was too intrusive. The law enforcement specialists brought up the problem they're having with serious delays in getting background investigations completed, and WASO Ranger Activities agreed to seek permission from the Department to allow them to contact the Office of Federal Investigations in Boyers directly to determine results of BI's. [The Department was later approached on this matter, but declined to take action because OPM does not want to increase the number of people authorized to call Boyers].

Law Enforcement Training

Bill Supernaugh, the outgoing superintendent of the NPS Employee Development Center (EDC) at FLETC, spoke on several law enforcement training issues:

- Regional LE training funds were delivered very late last year - some regions did not receive them until August. FY 91 funding letters have already gone out, though, and all regional LE training accounts should be fully funded by January 1st.
- The conversion to semi-automatic weapons will require a major training effort. FLETC was asked and has agreed to give the NPS more slots in the firearms instructor and semi-automatic pistol programs during the coming year. The NPS will have about 30 slots in the former and 45 in the latter - up from five each during most years. The training will be funded from money Congress is providing for FY 92.
- FLETC EDC has submitted paperwork for conversion of NPS detail instructors from GS-025 to GS-1811 with enhanced annuity retirement coverage.
- FLETC EDC has conducted a survey of parks with field training officer (FTO) programs with the objective of publishing a suggested field training curriculum and a recommendation that parks institute FTO programs for seasonal rangers and newly hired rangers just returning from FLETC. About a dozen parks responded with well-developed curricula.
- There are now 23 schools with seasonal law enforcement training programs. The NPS will place two rangers at two historically black colleges - the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and University of Maryland - Eastern Shore - in order to assist them with their seasonal programs and provide more qualified minority applicants for seasonal LE positions.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)

Ken Mabery from El Malpais and Nancy Campanella from NCRO gave a presentation on CISD programs. They began with a overview of CISD and standard procedures for conducting debriefings, then highlighted a number of important considerations in formulating a plan:

- CISD protocols should be included in all emergency action planning.
- Protocols should be written to include all involved personnel, including those working behind the scene.
- SOP's should include provision for follow-up services from mental health professionals and peers after an incident is over.
- SOP's should address specific types of incidents which will be debriefed.

They noted that six regions currently have CISD programs and that the remainder are considering them. Volunteer teams are also available in most areas; although they often aren't tailored to precisely meet NPS needs, they are still effective and worth utilizing.

CISD modules are being developed in order to provide specific assistance for different types of incidents. Three in the works at the moment are modules for line-of-duty deaths, post-shooting assistance, and disaster relief. CISD teams are beginning to specialize in types of incidents, such as wildland fire debriefings. Future efforts will also focus on improving training, increasing CISD familiarization courses, and expanding the roles of peers in CISD.

[On November 8, 1991, the Director signed and disseminated Special Directive 91-8, "Critical Incident Stress Policy and Guidelines." This directive mandates the provision of assistance to employees "who have been involved in an incident or series of incidents that have the potential for resulting in CIS." The directive was sent to all WASO and regional offices and superintendents.]

Seasonal Hiring

Harry Baldauf, supervisor of WASO's Seasonal Employment Unit, spoke about seasonal hiring concerns, particularly regarding commissioned rangers. He said that he and his staff are committed to improving hiring procedures and are looking at a number of possible revisions to the system. Although there immediate goal is to get registers to the parks no later than March 1st and October 1st, he said that their goal is to develop a year-round register which can be requested by parks whenever needed. They are also looking at ways in which the numbers of applicants for summer positions can be increased, including the possibility of opening summer registers so that people can apply to more areas or rescreening applicants after the first round of hiring to determine who may still be available for employment elsewhere.

Baldauf also recommended that parks consider hiring people as permanent, year-round or subject-to-furlough employees since mission needs are changing in many areas due to the lengthening of seasons. He also recommended employing other hiring authorities where possible, particularly through agreements with state employment offices. Southwest Region tried this in New Mexico in 1991 and reported very positive results. The following are some of the key points of the arrangement they have:

- Applicants submit SF-171's instead of NPS 10-139's.
- The state department of labor publishes recruiting bulletins, accepts applications, and refers certificates to the parks.
- Although the state follows veterans' preference requirements, they do not score other than determining basic qualifications. Applicants are referred alphabetically and in accordance with veterans' preference.
- Applicants may apply to only one park.
- Screen-outs for law enforcement positions are similar to those used in the Service's centralized system.

Baldauf emphasized his desire to work with parks and regions to resolve existing problems. At the end of the session, Bill Tanner from SWRO volunteered to develop an issue paper on field concerns with seasonal hiring and transmit it to WASO Ranger Activities.

Drug Interdiction and Operation Alliance

Joel Wright, the special agent representing the NPS at Operation Alliance, the interagency drug interdiction group operating out of El Paso, Texas, gave a presentation on the history and organization of Operation Alliance and its current projects. Over 50 Federal, state and local agencies are now members of this task force, as is JTF-6, a military umbrella group representing all the services. Operation Alliance is charged with coordinating interdiction efforts in high intensity drug-trafficking areas (HITA), including a 150-mile deep zone along the country's southern border from the Texas/Louisiana line to the California coast at the 34th parallel.

Joel said that a third of the requests currently coming in to Operation Alliance are from the NPS and Forest Service, largely because the two agencies have so many areas along the border. Special HITA money is therefore available to parks within the zone.

The Border Patrol is currently creating a similar interagency program for the northern states along the Canadian border known as Operation North Star. Parks along our northern boundary will be participating in Operation North Star in the near future.

Bob Marriott noted that counter-narcotic program funds - almost \$8 million for FY 92 - had been received by the Washington Office and were being distributed to parks and regions according to regional priorities and requests. About \$2.5 million of that amount will be allocated to the procurement of semi-automatic weapons and associated law enforcement equipment. This equipment will be centrally purchased, stored, and issued.

During the follow-up discussion, several participants noted that we need a Servicewide radio frequency for use in counter-narcotic and other joint operations. Phil Ward of Western Region agreed to prepare a justification for acquiring such a frequency. Participants also agreed that we should have a representative on whatever NPS working group is working on the narrow-banding issue (see the July/August Exchange). Bob Marriott will work on this project.

ARPA Update

Bill Tanner, regional chief ranger in SWRO, Jim Radney, regional LES in SWRO, and Judith Reed, the staff archeologist with the ARPA task force in SWR, provided an update on the task force's development and recent activities. The impetus for the development of the task force came in 1986 when the regional director asked that efforts be made to find a way to check archeological looting in the Southwest. Efforts were initiated to set up an interagency task force at that time, but did not gain momentum until a GAO study was conducted and published which criticized Federal land management agencies for their inability to curb archeological thefts and site depredations. An interagency task force was then established under the lead of BLM. Reed then talked about a number of cases now under investigation, and emphasized that even the limited efforts the task force has been able to undertake have turned up a tremendous amount of information on ARPA violations and violators. Because of the few enforcement efforts underway, thieves are able to operate boldly and with little fear of capture or prosecution.

Following the presentation, there was an extended discussion about the utilization of ARPA funds. Some present felt that the money should be used for training and education, but others felt as or more strongly that funds should all be funneled into undercover investigations and prosecutions. Several law enforcement specialists also brought up the problem of conducting multi-regional investigations and the lack of procedures for such investigations within the NPS. WASO Ranger Activities agreed to develop a national policy and procedures for NPS-9.

Bob Marriott, the drug and ARPA program coordinator in WASO Ranger Activities, reported that the Service received an increase of \$400,000 in ARPA funding for FY 92, thereby bringing the full total to \$900,000. The increase will be used to fund investigators in the regions and long-term investigations. The NPS is considering implementation of a task force approach to ARPA enforcement. Targeted individuals will be major dealers and looters on public lands.

All-Risk Incident Management

The meeting participants spent the better part of a day and a half discussing all-risk management and touring the facilities at the Boise Interagency Fire Center (BIFC).

Doug Erskine, the NPS fire director at Boise, provided background information on the creation of BIFC and the operation of MAC groups. BIFC was created in 1965 after several active fire years in which it became evident that the lack of interagency coordination was a serious hindrance in fire suppression efforts. Although BLM is the host agency because the center was built on its land, all participating agencies are equal partners. BLM and the Forest Service were the first two members; the NPS came in during the early 70's and was followed by BIA and Fish and Wildlife.

BIFC conducts its business through the multi-agency coordinating group, or MAC group. Each agency is a member and has an equal voice. The MAC group's primary responsibility is to set priorities nationwide on incidents when resources become critical. Agency directors have delegated the authority to move agency employees as needed to the agency representatives at BIFC. The Boise MAC group also coordinates agency fire programs, puts out the national mobilization guide, and maintains the national preparedness plan.

Skip Scott, the chief of logistics at BIFC's National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), explained how BIFC provides support to agencies through a three-tiered system. Local resources are employed until fully committed. After that, regional geographic coordination centers are called upon to provide logistical support. When a region's resources began to dry up, NICC coordinates supply efforts by moving people and material among the 11 geographic centers. The "driving force" in all instances is the field area.

Scott stressed that the system is set up to support agencies; if not, managers "need to demand that the system work for you". Liaisons should be established with regional centers before situations arise in which support will be sought from them. Contingency plans should be developed for different scenarios.

NICC's function is to support agencies on emergencies and special events, but not during long-duration, planned events. Although NICC is geared to fire operations, it can also provide support for other types of incidents. BIFC was recently mandated to shift to all-risk management, but the transition to support of incidents other than fires will take some time. Different types of resources, i.e. investigators, Type I law enforcement teams, etc., will have to be identified and brought into the system. It will also be necessary to determine how these non-fire operations will be funded. BIFC must provide a report to the director of BLM by next spring which will outline plans for the transition to all-risk management.

The National Park Service's implementation of all-risk management was outlined by Rick Gale of the Branch of Fire and Aviation Management. The Service adopted the incident command system (ICS) for managing fires and other emergencies in 1985 and first employed it for the Queen of England's visit to Yosemite the following year. Type I fire management teams from BIFC were also used occasionally for major events, but problems which arose subsequent to use of one of the teams on the Exxon Valdez oil spill led to the realization that the NPS had to have its own Type I all-risk management team. Such a team has since been established and was first utilized at the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor at the Arizona Memorial in December.

The Service's Type I team is comprised of an incident commander and four section chiefs; the remaining functions are resource ordered through NICC according to need. All five core members are committed to the team for three years and can not be used on other teams.

The five main uses for the team have been delineated by policy: national, non-fire emergencies; national special events; requests or obligations to other agencies; whenever regional directors ask; and international requests. The team is called out by regional chief rangers through their regional directors.

Over the coming year, three projects will be undertaken to further the implementation of all-risk management in the NPS: development of an NPS supplement will be developed for the interagency fire business management handbook; formulation and dissemination of requests to the field for technical specialists who will be available for callout for team operations; and participation in an I-420 all-risk exercise. After that, all-risk managers will look at establishing interagency all-risk teams and developing an all-risk qualification and certification system.

The subsequent discussion focused on the need to find funding establish a funding source for non-SAR/LE/fire emergencies and special events. Dick Martin agreed to work on this project with assistance from the regions.

The session on all-risk management concluded with a presentation from Lieutenant Commander Jim Watson of the Coast Guard's 13th District in the Pacific Northwest. Although the Coast Guard worked with other agencies under ICS on the Tenyo Maru oil spill at Olympic, understanding and interest in ICS has not yet spread to all areas of the Coast Guard. Nonetheless, a number of people are advocating its use for a variety of incidents, including hazardous chemical releases, marine fires, oil spills and natural disasters. He also explained the Coast Guard's current approach to oil spills, using the Tenyo Maru incident as an example.

Incident Reporting

Bill Halainen of Ranger Activities in WASO said that the incident reporting system continues to be a success, noting that both the number and quality of incident reports improved this year. Incident reports are circulated widely through the morning report, which now reaches about 40 offices in the Department of Interior (including the Directorate and Secretariat), almost all parks, and a host of other offices in the NPS and other Federal agencies. Reports need to meet established criteria and contain all necessary information, including dates, names, etc. Many currently come in incomplete. Interim reports on cases in progress are appreciated; in those instances where information is confidential, submitters should so indicate so that pending cases aren't compromised. Complete, detailed follow-up reports are very useful on significant incidents.

Health and Fitness

Jim Lee, the health and fitness program coordinator in WASO Ranger Activities, talked about recent revisions to the draft of NPS-57 which were made subsequent to several meetings with field employees and WASO and DOI staff. The revisions were made because of concerns with the program expressed by field rangers. The health and fitness programs employed by a number of other agencies were reviewed; following those meetings, a decision was made to employ the "On Target" fitness program, a "whole-body" fitness program. Ranger Activities staff held extensive discussions with representatives from WASO Equal Opportunity and Personnel to insure that this program contains no bias toward any employee group.

The program will be mandatory for personnel in identified hazardous or arduous duty positions. Several key changes have been made in its contents:

- task-related testing standards have been deleted in favor of the "On Target" program, which focuses on whole-body fitness testing standards;
- pass/fail standards have been replaced by incentives for achievement;
- the program now concentrates on a total fitness program - aerobics, muscular strength, body composition and flexibility - instead of just aerobics, strength and ability;
- adverse action provisions for failure have been removed and replaced with incentives for fitness achievement; and
- the program is no longer task-oriented.

The focus now is on training, coaching and otherwise helping employees become physically fit, not on tests. This compromise was supported by all parties, and the guideline is now nearly ready for final distribution. It should go out early in the new year.

WASO Ranger Activities has also proposed that three additional courses be held this year for park health and fitness coordinators.

United States Park Police

Bob Langston, the new chief of the Park Police, made a special trip to Boise to meet and talk with the regional chiefs and law enforcement specialists. Langston said that he believes he has a better understanding of the NPS than his predecessors because of his experience working with rangers in the field and because of his details as a regional law enforcement specialist and the law enforcement specialist in WASO Ranger Activities. He emphasized that he'd be working on improving communications and cooperation between Park Police and rangers. During his tenure as chief, he said he'd be focusing on a number of matters relating to improved relations and/or field support, including:

- increased training for regional law enforcement specialists, including attendance at meetings of the International Association of Chiefs of Police so they can develop ties with regional chiefs of police;
- assuring that regional law enforcement specialists work closely with area seasonal law enforcement schools;
- placement of Park Police officers in Albright courses and lieutenants who are interested in regional jobs in the FBI Academy and the law enforcement for managers course at FLETC;
- getting regional chief rangers to attend Park Police command training.

Langston also emphasized that the Park Police are available for field assistance and that they should be called upon whenever circumstances warrant.

Uniforms

An update on the Service's uniform program was provided by Bill Halainen from WASO Ranger Activities. The principal focus of the presentation was on revisions to uniform allowances and the uniform allowance system. Although the uniform contractor's price increases are controlled by the contract and are under the rate of inflation, the addition of many new components to the program and the overall impact of 15 years of price raises has been considerable. The Class A initial allowance has not changed during that period, but the cost of a typical uniform has increased by more than 130%; the Class B initial has increased by 25%, but the cost of a typical Class B uniform is up 190%.

WASO Ranger Activities proposed a review of both uniform allowances and the structure of the allowance system to the regional directors in September and received their support. A work group will meet in December to analyze the problem and make recommendations. These will be presented to the regional directors in January, and a course of action will then be determined.

Two topics pertaining to uniformed appearance arose at the end of the discussion - a separate badge for law enforcement rangers and the institution of rank insignia. Major Schamp will examine and report on the former; Phil Ward of Western Region will prepare a position paper on the latter.

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The Ranger Activities Information Exchange is produced by the Washington Division of Ranger Activities. Jim Brady, Chief Ranger. Address letters, comments and inquiries to: Ranger Activities (650), Stop 3310, National Park Service, Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127; FTS 268-4874 or (202) 208-4874. Attn: Bill Halainen, Editor.