

## BLM LE History Part 5.5.DOC

As the 21st century dawned, BLM prepared for a year-long celebration of the 25th anniversary of both FLITMA and the BLM Law Enforcement Program by issuing commemorative badges to all law enforcement officers to wear throughout 2001. At the end of the year, each officer kept the commemorative badge as a memento for their service.

That summer, BLM law enforcement officers were deployed to the drought-stricken Klamath Basin to keep forces at odds over the distribution of water from destroying federal waterworks. Before summer's end, a national tragedy forever changed our nation and the structure of BLM's Law Enforcement Program.

The tragic events of September 11 were felt by all. BLM law enforcement played a crucial role in the immediate aftermath by performing the duties of air marshals on commercial flights nationwide, and providing security for important and strategic Department of Interior infrastructure. Limited law enforcement authority was granted to the Bureau of Reclamation for infrastructure protection. BOR was authorized to hire six special agents that would operate under the administrative control and law enforcement authority of BLM. As rangers and agents rotated through annual inservice training, transitioning from the Ruger Mini-14 rifle to the Colt AR-15 rifle, a second Tucson ranger was shot in the line of duty in May 2003. Ironically, within one-quarter of a mile of where the first Tucson ranger was shot in 1989. In October, a Sonora, California ranger was involved in a shooting with a subject high on meth.

Since 2003, several BLM law enforcement officers have been involved in shooting incidents. Fortunately, all BLM law enforcement officers involving in shooting incidents to date survived the incident and remain on the job protecting public lands and resources, or are pursuing other opportunities in retirement.

Beginning with the first rangers in 1978, newly hired law enforcement officers learn the job through experience and mistake, often taking advice on how, when and where to perform their duties from line managers and non-law enforcement staff. Many new law enforcement officers only had the experience of a mixed basic police academy or basic criminal investigator training FLETC. Others came with additional law enforcement experience from other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. As the law enforcement program expanded, new-hire LEOs often spent some field time with seasoned LEOs to learn the ropes of the job. In more recent times, a semi-official FTO Program existed as some rangers attended field training officer classes offered by the respective state police academies. This semi-official FTO Program was moderately successful, but replete with inconsistencies. BLM recognized the need for a standardized field training program and eventually adopted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services field training format.

In 2006, BLM formally implemented the Field Training and Evaluation Program as a requirement for all new-hire rangers to complement the revised FLETC

Basic Natural Resource Protection Training Program. The FTEP pairs a new law enforcement officer fresh out of FLETC with a journeyman BLM law enforcement officer for up to 320 hours of field training and evaluation. To qualify as a field training officer, a law enforcement officer must have a minimum of 5 years field experience and submit to an application process and/or a land review. Officers selected as FTOs must complete a 40-hour FLETC FTO class where they develop and hone teaching, observation and evaluation skills. Through all phases of the FTEP the FTO provides training through action and scenario-based instruction while evaluating the trainee's performance and progress. The trainee's performance is recorded on a daily observation log. At the end of the training period, the FTO certifies that the trainee has met the minimum requirements necessary to operate as a fully-functional independent BLM law enforcement officer.

Today's BLM law enforcement officer is a proactive, skilled and highly trained professional prepared to deal with historical public land law enforcement issues such as timber theft, trespass, and all such acts and things touching or respecting the public lands of the United States, as well as that new dimension in public land management, people management. No doubt the future holds new and unanticipated challenges for BLM law enforcement as burgeoning populations place greater demands on the public lands and resources. If we trust history to be our guide, BLM law enforcement will continue as the forerunner

in land management law enforcement, ready to face the unforeseen challenges of the future.