

Law Enforcement Management Institute

A Cost-Effective Study of Police Mounted Patrol Units

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the
Law Enforcement Management Institute

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May, 1992



#232

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INTRODUCTION

New technology is being incorporated into the field of law enforcement at an amazing rate. It is not uncommon for the patrol officer to have a lap-top computer in his patrol car, a cellular telephone at his side, radar equipment on the dash and a multi-band police radio at his finger tips.

Despite all this new technology, some police departments have reverted back to an old method of policing that has proven very efficient in some areas. Hundreds of law enforcement agencies in the United States have implemented horse mounted patrol units and suggest they are cost-effective because they reduce crime, control crowds, and promote good public relations at a low cost.

Perhaps Robert Carney best describes this newest addition to law enforcement in his article in Police magazine published in May, 1978.

The latest advance in police technology stands seventy inches tall, weighs upwards of 1,100 pounds, has the intelligence of a four year old child, the speed of a motor scooter and the strength of a dozen men. It seats one, eats cheaply, answers to names like Buck, Shake-a Leg and Dolly and emits no poisonous vapors (Carney 1978).

HISTORY

Horses have actually been used in police service since ancient times. Caesar Augustus, the first Roman Emperor, created the Pratorian Guard, a mounted unit given the responsibility of protecting the Emperor and his property (Prassel 1972).

Because horses were used as the common means of transportation during the beginning of this nation's history, they were used in law enforcement along with foot patrol until the motor vehicle was invented. With the advent of automobiles and motorcycles, horses were phased out of police work and considered of no use in the field of policing. A prime example of this phasing out of the horse can be seen in the history of San Antonio, Texas. In 1910, San Antonio acquired a Franklin automobile and four motorcycles. Though horses were still used in police work at the time, by 1920 the use of the horse was considered obsolete and San Antonio policing was done exclusively with motorized units (Prassel 1972).

Though automobiles became the accepted mode of transportation for police patrols in the growing cities, they left much to be desired in rural areas. Sheriffs, who rarely owned an automobile, usually had to work at another job just to meet the demands of providing for a family. This often made them hard to locate when they were needed. When a criminal escaped custody, posses were

formed but they were generally unorganized and ineffective (Mayo 1971).

As the nation grew and Americans settled in the frontier areas of the continent, towns sprang up in remote or sparsely settled areas where there was little, if any, formal law enforcement. Village law enforcement first appeared across the Mississippi in Texas. The 1,920 colonists found little help from the Mexican government when they complained of the need for law enforcement. In an effort to establish some crime control in their town, they established their own type of law enforcement. These mounted officers were called Rangers and they patrolled the sparsely settled areas of Texas (Prassel 1972).

Texas Rangers faced three major problems after the Civil War. First they faced the problem of enforcing the law on a developing frontier. As if this was not enough, they also had to deal with indian problems and turmoil on an international border (Prassel 1972).

What were these mounted officers like? A.J. Sowell describes the Rangers in his book Rangers and Pioneers published in 1964.

I will give you a description of the Texas Rangers, as they were at that time. In the first place he wants a good horse, strong saddle, double girted, a good carbine, pistol, and plenty of ammunition...(Sowell 1964).

As the years passed and the country became more

settled, counties became more organized and isolated communities became fewer, and, in time, the mounted rangers turned in their horses for automobiles which could tirelessly cover the vast areas of Texas.

But Texas was not the only state that depended on mounted officers for protection. On May 12, 1903, the anthracite coal strike occurred in Pennsylvania. This became such a large and violent strike that the sheriff and constables could not control it. The Coal and Iron Police (state officers) came in to settle the strike. This state police force was so corrupt that it sold its services to the highest bidder. What issued was a bloody battle. Finally, the national guard had to be called in to restore order in the community. As a result of this situation, an arbitration board met during the winter of 1902- 1903 and reviewed and investigated the strike problems. The board wrote a report condemning the state of Pennsylvania for not administering fair and impartial justice to all the citizens throughout the state.

This report was so derogatory toward the state government, that in 1905, Pennsylvania established the Pennsylvania State Police, a mounted unit dedicated to providing fair and equal justice to all the citizens under its jurisdiction. This agency was extremely productive. In 1907, the Superintendent of the state police reported the mounted force had traveled 332,094 miles in 51 counties and visited 886 different towns. They had made 4,388

arrests for fifty four different types of crimes. And if this was not impressive enough, the following year (1908), the report of the patrol's activity since it began stated the unit had covered 424,415 miles in fifty four counties and visited 1,683 towns. There were 5,028 arrests made for seventy one types of crimes. All this in three years (Mayo 1971).

However, Texas and Pennsylvania were certainly not the only states to use mounted police units. New Mexico Mounted Police came into existence in 1905, seven years before New Mexico became a state. The mounted police continued to function as an entity until 1921. During World War I, the mounted police in New Mexico was abolished (Prassel 1972).

As motorized transportation became more accessible, the mounted patrol units began to disappear. By the end of World War II they were all but non-existent. Progress had taken its toll on mounted police units.

Over the following years, police agencies became more and more mechanized and developed more and more public relations problems. Police drove more advanced automobiles and motorcycles, but they also lost touch with the citizens they were to serve and protect. The image of the police began to change. To the citizens, the officers appeared remote and unapproachable. Police began to be viewed with suspicion because they no longer interacted with citizens except in a negative way (Carney 1978).

The United States Park Police was one of the first law enforcement agencies to reinstate a mounted unit. In 1934, the National Park Police began its equestrian unit with one horse. The unit was initially started to patrol streets and wooded areas of the Nation's capital. The unit was so effective that it was expanded and mounted units began to be seen in parks with open areas such as picnic areas and ball fields. There, mounted units were more effective than a combination of foot patrol and motorized vehicles. The United States Park Police has been expanded to other Federal park lands in Washington D.C., New York and San Francisco. By 1980, the Park police had over fifty mounts (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 1980).

Some citizens of Miami, Florida recognized a need for a mounted unit in their City as early as 1937, and donated \$2,800 toward such a unit. The City administration had other goals and used the donation to purchase motorcycles instead. Because of the administration's attitude, a mounted police unit was not started in that City until 1945. Within the first two years, the unit had grown to twelve officers and seventeen horses.

Four times the City tried to disband the mounted police, but the citizens were so outraged and fought so diligently to keep the mounted police on the streets, that three of those four attempts resulted in expansion of the unit. By 1983, the Miami Mounted Patrol had increased to sixteen officers and fourteen horses with a proposal

before the city council to increase the division to twenty officers and twenty four horses (Ellis 1983).

Paul Bruum discussed the creation of Miami's Metro Police Anti-Crime Mounted Patrol in his column in the Community Newspaper on May 13, 1983. He stated that the City began to see a need for a third mounted unit in 1982, and a little over a year later, the Metro Horse Patrol was formed to become the 103rd equestrian unit in the United States.

All across the country, new mounted police units are being formed in law enforcement agencies. New Orleans uses a mounted unit to patrol the narrow streets and parks of that City and to control crowds during Mardis Gras. The merchants of New Orleans have strongly supported the equestrian units for more than fifty years (Carney 1978). Houston, Texas started a horse patrol in their downtown area in 1984. By 1988, the patrol had grown from a two horse unit to fourteen officers, one lieutenant, two sergeants and seventeen police mounts (Houston Police Department 1988). Greenville, South Carolina started its mounted patrol in a part-time capacity in 1985. It became a full-time unit in 1986, and by November, 1988 it had grown to three officers and five horses (Greenville Police Department 1988). In 1988, Fort Worth, Texas predicted a fifty percent increase in their mounted patrol over the next five years (Fort Worth Police Department 1985). In 1970, there were forty police jurisdictions that had horse

mounted units. By 1974 there were more than fifty and by 1978 there were seventy one mounted units with others in the planning stages(Carney 1978). Today there are over three hundred mounted law enforcement units across this nation (Sparrow 1990).

RIDERS AND HORSES

Horse mounted units are increasing but, like any specialized division, they are only as good as the officers and, in this case, the horses in them. Though different police departments have their own personnel selection process for these units, they seem to require many of the same qualities from their officers.

The National Park Patrol requires that an officer have at least three years patrol experience and prefers that the officer has some prior experience with horses. However, this is not a prerequisite, as the person can be taught how to ride. This agency also takes into consideration the past work performance, health and attitude of the officer (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin May 1980)

The Fort Worth Police Department requires officers selected for their mounted patrol unit be extremely adaptable, personable and community oriented because of the high visibility of the officers and the high degree of citizen contact. These officers must complete their training and pass a riding test and a horsemanship training

program. They must also have a good work and attendance record and their weight must be proportionate to their height (Fort Worth Police Department 1985).

Greenville Police Department requires much the same attributes. They require their officers to be off probation and have some street experience. They prefer the officer to have some prior experience with horses, have a good performance record, be in good health and have a personable attitude (Greenille Police Department 1988).

Just as important as the selection of the officers, is the selection of the horses in these units because the officers and horses will work as a team and, for all intents and purposes, will be partners.

Different agencies prefer different types of horses. New York Police Department prefers the Morgan breed while San Diego prefers Quarter horses. The Houston Police Department likes Quarter horses and Thoroughbreds while Detroit uses crossbreed animals (Rader May 1986).

The Fort Worth Police Department is typical in the standards the horse must meet to be considered acceptable for use in a mounted unit. The horse must be six to twelve years old and be a gelding, as mares and stallions tend to be temperamental at times. The animal must stand 15.2 to 16.2 hands high. (A hand equals four inches and the animal is measured from the hoof to the top of the withers.) A dark solid colored coat is preferred and the weight of the animal has to be proportionate to its height. Fort

Worth has no breed preference, as the department feels the breed of the horse is secondary to the animal's ability. Of extreme importance is the horse's calm disposition, because the animal will be required to function in diversified situations. The horse must be in excellent health and will be examined by a veterinarian before it is accepted for use (Fort Worth Police Department 1985). The physical condition of the horse is of extreme importance, as the average police mount works between ten and fifteen years before its retirement (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 1980).

COSTS

When considering the implementation of any new division in a law enforcement agency, one of the first considerations is the cost of the unit. Horse mounted police units can be extremely expensive to implement if all essential elements of the unit are purchased by the department and the officers' salaries are included in the budgeting. However, many departments do not include the officers' salaries as part of the initial expenditure cost of starting a unit because those officers would be receiving a salary regardless to which division they were assigned (Houston 1988).

One of the first considerations is the cost of the horses. Some agencies purchase their horses, the cost

varying from four hundred dollars to over a thousand (Carney 1978). The cost of purchasing an animal can vary greatly, depending on the availability of horses in the area, season of the year and type of animal purchased.

To offset the initial outlay of funds, many departments accept donated horses. These police departments are very selective of the horses they accept. In Greenville, South Carolina, when a horse is offered for donation, the unit supervisor and an officer in the mounted unit first inspect the horse to see if it appears suitable. A veterinarian then does a physical examination of the horse's health and looks for defects. Greenville Police Department assumes all liability for the animal during this trial period. The police department enters into an agreement of terms with the donor about the conditions of the trial period (see appendix). If the horse is not determined to be suitable, it is returned to the owner. If the animal is accepted, a transfer of ownership is completed (Greenville 1988).

The cost of upkeep on the horses must next be considered. Horses have to be sheltered from the weather to prevent illness. This brings up the question of stabling the animal. With the rising costs of building materials, a stable can be an expensive item in a budget. The city of Houston, Texas spent seventy thousand dollars to build their stables in 1987, when they first implemented the Houston Mounted Patrol (Houston Police Department 1988).

However, many agencies have found less expensive ways of sheltering their animals. Not only were the first horses donated to the city of Miami, but the materials for building a horse stable were also donated. Off duty officers donated their time to building the facility and the total cost to the city of Miami was fifteen dollars for nails (Ellis 1983). St. Louis Police Department renovated an old airplane hanger out of which their mounted unit operates (Police May 1978). Other units lease or rent stalls at local stables. The cost of renting will vary in different areas of the country but has proven effective in some areas.

Paula Phillips, the owner of The Tack Room, a boarding and training facility for horses in Wichita Falls, Texas, said she rented her stalls for \$165 a month per horse and this included full care (telephone interview, 3 January 1992). Phillips said the full care included feeding, cleaning of stalls, stall maintenance, daily exercise and grooming. She said complete care of the animal was provided except for veterinarian and farrier services. This could prove to be the least expensive way to stable horses if a city was starting only a small unit. When considering the large expenditure necessary to build a new stable, the cost of maintenance on the building, and the salary that would have to be paid for a stablehand or officer to feed and care for the animals, the cost of renting could appear very attractive. At \$165 per month, one horse could be stabled and cared for for less than

\$2,000 a year.

The cost of upkeep on the animals would be the next consideration effecting cost. An active working horse needs to be fed ten to thirteen pounds of grain (about five to six coffee cans) and about twenty pounds of hay each day to stay in good physical condition. The cost of feed will vary from year to year and state to state, depending on the crop production that year and the demand for the product.

Horses must have their hooves tended on a regular basis and this is especially true of working horses that are constantly walking on pavement. The hooves must be trimmed and proper shoes fitted to each hoof to ensure no injury to the animal. According to Paula Phillips, owner and operator of a boarding and training facility in Wichita Falls, Texas, (telephone interview January 3, 1992) a horse should have it's hooves trimmed and shod every six weeks. The average cost for this service is about forty dollars per shoeing. Another consideration is veterinarian services. Horses must be vaccinated yearly and wormed on a regular basis to prevent illnesses. However, despite all due care, animals do become ill or injured and then veterinarian services are required. There are also hidden costs involved in keeping horses. Grooming supplies, fly sprays, chemicals for cleaning and disinfecting stalls and medical supplies have to be purchased.

If all this sounds expensive, it is. But, perhaps

not as expensive at it first appears. Houston, Texas, Police Department figured the cost per horse for their fiscal year 1987/1988. To do this they added the cost of cleaning supplies (\$214.04), chemicals (\$2,104.40), feed and hay (\$14,292.00), surgical supplies (\$229.90), animal supplies (41,180.70), veterinarian services (\$18,500.00) and farrier service (\$7,993.80). This came to a total of \$44,515.44 and was divided by the nineteen horses in their unit. Excluding all cost for maintenance of the facility, this determined the cost of each horse at about \$ 2,342.91 a year or, about \$ 6.41 a day (Houston Police Department 1988).

Mounted units are often assigned to work in various areas of the city on a given day rather than the same work area each day. Transport for the horses and officers to these assigned work areas, which may be many miles from the stable facility, becomes a cost factor. In these cases a horse trailer and truck become a necessity. The cost of these items will depend on the brand of vehicle and trailer purchased, the options required on them by the department and whether the items are purchased used or new. An indication of the cost of this equipment is evident in the 1988 budget of the Greenville, South Carolina Police Department. That year they purchased a new six horse van for ten thousand dollars and a new pickup truck for fifteen thousand dollars (Greenville Police Department 1988).

Another major factor to take note of is the liability cost factor. In this age when lawsuits abound and government agencies of all kinds find themselves prime targets, the liability factor of any division comes under close scrutiny. As with any specialized division, proper training in a mounted patrol unit is essential to ensure maximum effectiveness and minimum liability. Without proper training, the horse and rider will not function as a team and the rider may lose control of the animal, turning what could be a productive asset into a costly liability (Carnie Mar/Ap 1987). Training sessions usually last from ten to sixteen weeks depending upon the needs of the department. In-service training is done periodically to refresh the horses' memories.

According to the Fort Worth Police Department (1988), there are four different methods of obtaining training for a new horse mounted unit. The first method is to send all horses and officers to an outside agency for basic equitation instruction then bring in an expert from another department to teach unit function such as team police related tactics. Houston, Texas Police Department charges \$3,500 to \$5,000 to train one officer. This takes into consideration the cost of the instructors, providing of the training area and obstacles, and cost of lodging for the officer. It should be noted that this is for only one officer. The more officers that go to the training, the less the charge would be, as the cost of the instructor

would be pro-rated (Houston Police Department 1988). This can easily be the most costly method as it requires the shipping expense of the mounts and transportation cost of the officers. The second method would be to bring in a professional trainer and train in all phases locally, incurring the cost of the professional's fee and his expenses. When Houston, Texas first started its mounted unit, an instructor was brought in from Philadelphia. He condensed an eighteen week program into five weeks and taught the fourteen officers in the unit. He was paid \$10,000 and his expenses (Houston Police Department 1988). The third method is to send selected officers to another department to learn training techniques which they bring back to their own department and teach their unit. The last method is to initially select the calmest and best trained horses along with officers and supervisors who are knowledgeable in basic equitation. This eliminates the necessity of basic training.

One of the nationally recognized training agencies is the National Mounted Training Group out of Sparkhill, New York. This agency is especially good for small programs that have no formal training program of their own. The instructors teach officers to work individually and in teams. Most training is directly related to street work and situations that the mounted unit are likely to encounter. Even the lectures are done while the officers sit their mounts. This conditions the officers for the

endurance necessary to sit an animal for a long period of time while training the horse to stand quietly for a long period of time. The officers are taught various police techniques such as searching a suspect without dismounting, though the search is confined to the waist of the suspect upwards. They are also taught how to handcuff a prisoner without dismounting, handcuffing him high with his hands behind his head for control until a transport unit can arrive. The officers are instructed to think of their horses not only as a great public relations tool but also as a powerful weapon to be used against a violent offender (Fairburn 1989).

To give an idea of some of the training that the horse and rider receive, one has only to refer to the Mounted Police Colloquim held in Lexington's Kentucky Horse Park each year. At this competition, horses are required to weave in and out of narrowly spaced traffic cones, pass through a curtain of plastic strips, back up between a pair of saw horses, walk through piles of trash and past burning flares. An officer must ticket a parked car without dismounting. The horse must pivot in a box, pass an operating cement mixer, and stand quietly by a patrol car that has its overhead emergency lights flashing and siren blaring. Then to finish the competition, the horse is required to stand quietly while officers behind the animal discharge their weapons (Lee Mar 1989).

The Houston Police Department subjects their mounts

to thrown smoke bombs, firecrackers going off under their feet and brass bands playing (Houston Police Department 1988).

With the reduced budgets that police agencies have had to operate under for the last several years, some agencies have found alternate ways to fund their fledgling units. The Riverside Police Department in California, a department of 245 sworn officers in a City with a population of 175,000 persons, felt the need for a mounted patrol when a new freeway was constructed through their City causing an increase in population and park use. The City utilized foot patrols at first, but these proved ineffective. After examining the alternatives, the City decided a mounted patrol unit would best meet their needs in the local parks. However, administrators did not feel the City could afford the cost of such a unit. A few officer-horse owners volunteered to work the parks on their own time, but because of the time involved in grooming the animal, transporting it to the police department where the officer could get a portable radio and then transporting the animal to the park, the officers were often putting in seven hours of uncompensated duty. The public administrators realized this situation could no longer continue and were aware of the public's demand for more mounted units. The city found a source of funding through Parks and Recreation and established a mounted unit (Asper 1982).

The Metro Unit in Florida was another mounted unit to find funding through Parks and Recreation. Finding it more economical to help with funding than to hire off-duty officers to work the parks, Parks and Recreation paid for maintaining the donated horses and the police department paid for officers, uniforms and portable radios (Betancourt May 9, 1982).

The Houston Police Department received its initial funding through the Central Houston Civic Improvement Association. In July, 1985, the city of Houston encumbered the expenses of the unit (Houston Police Department 1988).

Even during difficult economic times, many agencies with mounted patrols have opted to keep them functional. In 1983, the City of Los Angeles experienced a ten per cent reduction in department strength due to economic pressures. To continue the same quality of service with reduced manpower, it was necessary to evaluate each area of the department and determine how patrol could be re-deployed more efficiently. Many changes were made in the department, including the rejection of the team policing concept under which they had functioned. The number of personnel in some divisions were shifted in an effort to keep uniformed officers on the street. Two units were increased, the canine unit which saved manpower in searches and the mounted unit which saved manpower in crowd control situations (Cronkhite Ap 1983).

In 1987, the National Parks Service suffered budget

cuts which caused them to take a hard look at their operating expenses. It was determined that horses were more valuable than ever because they were cheaper to maintain than motorized vehicles and caused no pollution or soil erosion (Carnie Mar/Ap 1987).

OPPOSING VIEWS

Some police departments have decided against the use of horse mounted units because they feel a mounted patrol has distinct disadvantages. The first disadvantage is the cost of building a stable and the cost of upkeep on the horses. These departments also feel that horses have an extremely limited use in cities and are not as useful in catching criminals as vehicles because the animals tire easily and require physical attention (Peyton 1971). If the horses are used in a residential area, the sound of their hoof beats on pavement forwarn and frighten away any criminal committing a crime (Gourley and Briston 1971).

Agencies with mounted patrol units do not seem to agree with these attitudes and use their horses in various areas. In Fort Worth, the mounted unit is used in the stockyard area because of the narrow alleys and passage ways. They are also used in parks, parades and special details in the commercial areas. The Fort Worth, Texas Mounted Patrol can be seen in the streets, parking lots, vacant lots, jogging trails and other areas inaccessible

to other officers (Fort Worth Police Department 1988). In Washington D.C., mounted units are used from the parking lots of malls to the woods and trails of Great Falls Park (Carnie 1987).

The differences between these two points-of-views lead one to believe that the usefulness of a mounted unit will depend much on the types of areas in which a patrol is to function and other needs of the department.

Another disadvantage is the limited use of the animal in inclement weather. The Greenville Police Department addresses this problem in their Standard Operating Procedure of 1988. They ride their animals in light rain and snow, using special raincoats designed to cover the saddles and protect it from the elements. In the event of an electrical storm, however, the officer must seek shelter for himself and his horse until the storm passes. They do not ride their horses after the temperature rises over ninety-five degrees or when the temperature drops below fourteen degrees.

According to the standard practices of the Wichita Falls, Texas Police Department, motorcycles are not ridden on roadways if the pavement is wet, as this can cause the motorcycle to lose traction. Instead, the officers are placed in patrol cars for their tour of duty. Though officers ride the motorcycles throughout the summer in extreme heat, they are allowed to sit the bikes in the shade and run radar. In the winter, motorcycle officers

are usually taken off of their motorcycles when the temperature drops to around thirty-two degrees, but this varies as the wind-chill factor is considered and at times they are assigned to patrol cars when the temperature is higher (Wichita Falls Police Department 1991).

Another argument against the use of horses is that they cannot be used around-the-clock, seven days a week as a vehicle can, nor are they often used during the late night hours. Certainly, horses tire and require rest, and therefore, can not be worked on constant twenty-four hour shifts. However, they can be worked during late night hours, as proven in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. When this event occurs each year, the New Orleans Mounted Patrol horses are used seventeen hours a day for twelve straight days (Bruum June 1983).

When contemplating the use of a mounted patrol, a department should consider the type of terrain to be covered and the daily length of time desired for that coverage. If the area can be adequately patrolled by a motorized unit, and a round-the-clock patrol is needed, it may be well-advised to use a motorized unit. If, on the other hand, there are areas that would be inaccessible to a motorized unit, motor noise would be intrusive, high visibility is required, a great deal of citizen contact is anticipated and the patrol is not required twenty-four hours a day, an agency should certainly look at the prospect of using mounted patrol.

Advantages of a Mounted Patrol Unit

Despite the apprehension of some departments to invest in a mounted unit, it should be pointed out that mounted patrols offer some major advantages over officers in cars or on motorcycles. One of the major advantages of a mounted officer is his visibility. A mounted officer, because of his height from the ground, is more readily seen by the citizen. This is a distinct advantage in areas congested with traffic or large crowds. Because they can so easily be seen, citizens are more apt to locate them and report crimes or require services. Not only is an officer more easily seen, because of his lofty vantage point, he can see more. In a crowd situation, he is not on eye level with the people but can look down into the crowd and see trouble some distance away. This also holds true when he is working in congested traffic areas. He can often see traffic problems developing a block or two away and take action before the situation gets out of hand (Chapman 1971).

William G. Garfield, Associate Professor at the College of Law Enforcement at Eastern Kentucky University, conducted a study on mounted patrols and found them effective due partially to their high visibility. He contended that in terms of visibility alone, the horse is equal to ten to fifteen foot patrol officers, can travel distances at three time the speed of an officer on foot, is more maneuverable than a patrol car and can wind its way through congested traffic very easily

(Houston Police Department 1988).

In large rural areas, where field searches have to be conducted on occasion, the horse can be an asset. Horses can not only cover ground more quickly than a man on foot, but can also carry equipment if it is needed. Though four-wheel drive vehicles can get into some remote areas, where there are thick woods or brush, a horse is much more effective. Even if a motorcycle can get into these areas, it can carry little rescue equipment (Carnie 1987).

Mounted patrols are also proving to be effective in high traffic areas such as downtown districts. Houston uses a combination of mounted officers, foot patrol and police cars. Horse units are used in its high traffic area because foot patrol officers are hard to see and the officer in the car is isolated from the citizen. Houston deployed its mounted unit in 1985, and by 1987, the crime rate dropped 19.87 per cent in the Central Business District (Houston Police Department 1988).

When Washington D. C. began to experience high crime rates in the capital area, they moved a seventy-man mounted unit in to work a fifteen block area. The crime rate dropped by eighty per cent (Carney 1978).

As early as 1970, Cleveland, Ohio began working mounted officers in their downtown area where the crime rate was high. Twenty-five officers were deployed in this area and, according to their departmental records, there was a thirty per cent reduction of crime. Most of these were theft related cases (Carney 1978).

Atlanta, Georgia started an eight horse patrol unit in their downtown area in 1974. The crime rate had been very high around the convention centers in this City and the local businessmen had become very concerned. The mounted unit was so effective that by 1978, the unit was doubled (Carney 1978).

In some cities, mounted patrols have proven to be effective against robberies, burglaries and thefts. New York's mounted patrol has been in existence for many years. At one time, they were experiencing a high rate of robberies on 125th Street. They deployed two shifts of mounted units on that street and reduced the amount of robberies so drastically that every commander in the 28th Precinct wanted them (Carney 1978). This unit has proven so successful because of its visibility, New York is now putting the horses in high drug offense areas (Rader 1986). San Diego uses the mounted unit in its shopping mall parking lots. Shoplifters who try to flee from the store security have been caught by the units (Rader 1986). Albuguerque, New Mexico mounted patrols are also used in shopping center parking lots. They were assigned there to catch automobile burglars. The burglars had been striking in these lots so often that it was predicted the City could expect another forty to fifty burglaries in two shopping centers. The City brought the mounted unit in and there had been only six burglaries in the two lots by the end of the year. The success of this unit was due greatly to the officers' high vantage point which enabled them to see over and between cars and also due to their ability to cover ground quickly once a burglar was

detected (Carney 1978).

A horse can maneuver a violent offender up against a car or wall. Being challenged by an approaching animal the size of a horse may have enough of a psychological impact on the offender that he may not fight. The threat of using the animal might very well prevent the necessity of actually using force.

Officers become very attached to their horses. They come to think of the animal as their partner because horse and rider depend on each other so much (Carney 1987). As partners, they take care of each other and, the horse can be very effective at taking care of his rider. As an instructor with the National Mounted Training Group pointed out, "An eight foot tall, 1,400 pound police officer can be very intimidating." (Fairburn 1989).

Officer Jim Reed of Greenville Police Department gave an example of how a horse can be used against a violent offender when he talked about confronting a man who had been causing a disturbance in the downtown area. Reed said the man had been standing on a street corner cursing at people as they went by. When Reed rode up and asked the man what was the matter, the man insulted Reed's horse then became combative. Reed had his mount push the man up against the wall and hold him until Reed could dismount. According to Reed, after being pushed to the wall, the man apologized to his horse (Barteime Mar 1986).

Mounted units across the nation have proven themselves effective as deterrents and in reducing crime. Houston's mounted unit is a prime example of the type of statistics being presented

- by different agencies. According to Houston's 1988 report, its seventeen mounted officers reduced the crime rate in the downtown district by fourteen percent in the first year and sixteen per cent the following year. Statistics from January, 1985 to May, 1986 reflect the work produced by this unit.

Total calls for service	1,935
Total criminal arrests	614
Total moving violations	1,377
Total parking violations	14,292
Total citizen contacts	12,768

In Houston's proposal to the City Council to continue the mounted unit, the police department stated it felt the mounted unit was one of the most successful programs instituted by the department in terms of increased police visibility, crime reduction and community relations (Houston Police Department 1988).

PARK PATROL

Perhaps one assignment with which mounted units are most closely associated, is park patrol. Because of the wide open areas in parks and out-of-the-way brushy areas that are difficult for any other type of patrol to reach, mounted units are well suited to this type of work. The horse also has certain other advantages that motor vehicles do not have. First, they are quiet and citizens out to spend a nice quiet day in the park, jogging or walking their dogs, are not upset by the mounted

- officer riding by. This quietness also benefits the officer because he can hear suspicious noises that carry across the open areas of the park. Also, the horse does not pollute the air, if anything, it fertilizes the soil (Carney 1978).

In many parks, special activities are held and horse mounted units are used to control the crowds. Officer Eades of Metro-Dade County Mounted Patrol worked a concert in a local park and found a crowd trying to climb the fence to get into the concert. The mounted unit was called in to disperse the crowd. According to Eades, the crowd was easily dispersed with no problems and little resentment on the part of the people toward the officers. Eades felt that when officers with night sticks enter a crowd, they present a negative image while officers on horses do not. Eades said in the crowd situation just described, everyone wanted to pet the horse (Betancourt May 1982).

The Greenville Police Department uses their mounted unit extensively in the parks. The first three months of 1987, their unit was in training, but in the following nine months, the horse mounted unit had worked nineteen special events in the parks and downtown. In the first six months of the following year, the number of special events rose to twenty-five. The Greenville Police Department does not claim to make many cases, but when the horse mounted unit was on patrol, the crime rate dropped extremely low and potential muggers and drunks were no longer a problem in the parks (Greenville Police Department 1988).

The Albuquerque Police Department appears to feel horses are of great service in park patrol. As Lieutenant John Nelson of Albuquerque Police Department said, " You ride one of those horses into a park and a lot of so called undesirables just get up and leave. They know they can't escape that horse!" (Carney 1978).

Any city that is looking for an alternative or improvement to their existing park patrol would do well to explore the possibility of using a mounted unit.

Crowd Control

Another area in which the horse mounted units excel is in crowd control. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were many demonstrations in the nation's capital. Most of these mass gatherings were peaceful but some erupted in violence. The mounted units found themselves faced with the new problem of handling these violent crowds and, therefore, developed new techniques for crowd control (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 1980). A horse mounted unit of six to eight officers can control a crowd of thousands by moving them, holding them or splitting two opposing factions (Fairburn 1989).

People like horses but are a little intimidated by them. They are uncertain how a horse will react and, because of this uncertainty, a crowd will move back from a horse as a group where an officer on foot trying to move a crowd can only deal with one individual at a time (Carnie 1987).

The mounted officer also has a definite psychological advantage which comes from the appearance and demeanor of an excited horse. When the animal is excited, it will flex its neck, flare its nostrils, lift its tail and prance. To the untrained onlooker, the horse seems to be on the edge of being out of control. In fact, the officer has perfect control of the animal, but because the crowd does not know how the horse is going to react, it moves. Because of the uncertainty on the part of the crowd and the sheer appearance of strength and power on the part of the horse, a mounted officer replaces ten to twenty officers on foot (Rader May 1986).

The City of Houston uses horses for crowd control. This thriving City participates annually in many special events, ranging from parades, to rodeos, to park concerts. The mounted unit is used not only for a parade unit, but also to control the over one million people who attend these events. This unit has moved crowds the Houston police believe could not have otherwise been moved. For example, at one fireworks display, the crowd had surged so far forward that it was crowded up next to the multi-thousand dollar display. The people were pressed so close, the fire chief refused to ignite the fireworks because it was too dangerous and he feared someone would get hurt. The mounted unit smoothly moved the crowd back and the display was started. Houston police estimated it would have taken between 100 and 150 officers on foot to accomplish the same task (Houston Police Department 1988).

Another example of crowd control occurred in New York City.

Hearn's Department Store on Fourteenth Street advertised a large sale and a crowd of about ten thousand people arrived and crowded the street on the morning of the sale. When the mounted units arrived, fifty officers on foot were struggling to just contain the crowd. In a matter of minutes, the mounted officers "bent" the crowd into orderly lines without a horse stepping on a single foot (Chapman 1970).

Some crowds, anticipating the arrival of a mounted unit, have tossed marbles or ball bearings into the street in an attempt to make the horses slip and fall. They soon find out this tactic does not work. Marbles are crushed beneath the iron shoes of the horses and, because a horse's hoof is concave, the ball bearing roll harmlessly to the inside of the shoe without harming the animal (Rader 1986).

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Not only can a mounted unit prove its worth in city parks and crowd control situations, many departments believe the horse is one of their greatest public relations tools. People like to talk about horses, pet horses and have their picture taken with horses. Chief James Kralik of the National Mounted Patrol Training Group expressed his views on the use of the horse in public relations.

The horse is coming back into his own, because he's the

in-between stage [between foot and vehicle patrols] and the public loves him. He's touchable, he's talkable, he's lovable__and he's a tremendous deterrent.

Because people like the horses, and like to pet and ask questions about them, their positive feelings for the animal carry over to the officer. The officer comes to know every child and retired person in the area he patrols. They will approach the officer and want to talk about the horse and during the conversation, they will begin telling the officer about problems in the neighborhood. Sometimes they will tell the mounted officer things they would not tell the "unapproachable" officer in the patrol car (Carney 1978).

Bob Holly, supervisor of the mounted patrol at Valley Forge National Historical Park, points out the difference in a citizen's attitude toward a mounted officer and an officer in a car. "If you wave at visitors when you go by in a patrol car, half of them wonder why you're waving at them. The rapport is much better when rangers are on horses." (Carnie 1978).

An example of how strongly citizens feel about their mounted units, can be seen in the response the citizens of Houston exhibited when the Houston Mounted Patrol celebrated its first anniversary in the downtown district. Citizens purchased bales of hay and placed them in the downtown area as a "cake" for the horses. The "cake" was "iced" with apples and carrots and the bales were wrapped with Happy Birthday ribbon. Downtown merchants also bought hitch posts which they had installed at various locations so the officers would have a place to secure their mounts when they made a call or took a break (Rader 1986).

Public acceptance of a mounted unit can be very strong and at times can become a "two-edged sword" if the unit is to be disbanded. Once accepted by the public, the citizens tend to take these units to their heart and tenaciously hold on to them.

In Carol Ellis' article "Program Termination: A Word to the Wise", (Public Administration Review, Jul/Aug 1983), she discusses the difficulty city administrators had in Miami when on four different occasions they tried to disband the mounted unit. Even though the city administrators pointed out to the citizens that the services supplied by the unit would not be stopped and emphasized they felt city funds could be better used to fund more effective patrols, giving the citizens better protections, all four attempts met with public outrage. Citizens collected three thousand signatures in a petition to keep the mounted patrol. They gained favorable support from the news media and aired television commentaries. Delegations presented themselves before the City Commissioner's and showed comparative cost studies between mounted patrol units and other types of patrol such as motorcycles. One hundred fifty nine school children wrote letters protesting disbanding the unit. The outcome of all this was, on three of the four attempts to disband the unit, the unit was actually increased. Finally the Commissioners reached the consensus that the positive image reflected by the mounted unit far out weighed any possible savings that could be obtained by disbanding the unit.

Perhaps a San Diego mounted officer best summed up how

people feel about horses when he said, " Even people we arrest are petting our horses and asking about them." (Rader 1986).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of a horse mounted unit can be very costly, especially if the unit is not considered as a long-term proposition. The cost of horses, riding equipment, stables, horse trailer and transport vehicle, feed, farrier and stable supplies can cause a budget to soar. However, if alternative funding is available (such as through Parks and Recreation), donated horses are used (such as in Houston, Texas), and local riding clubs contribute to offset the cost of tack and stable equipment (such as proposed by the Wichita County Horse Association if the Wichita Falls, Texas Police Department implements a mounted unit) and an existing building is converted to stable use or local stalls are rented, the cost can be cut drastically. Also, once the initial implementation cost is met, considering the specialized versatility of the unit, the maintenance cost is relatively low.

Because of this low maintenance cost, the mounted unit would be cost effective over a period of time. In a city that has large park areas, especially if those parks are difficult to patrol by motorized means, a horse patrol would be an asset as they are highly visible, quiet and quick. In parks, the animals are quiet and do not disturb the citizens. Criminals trying to flee on foot are quickly overtaken. Isolated areas

are more easily accessible and the animals are environmentally safe. These mounted patrols would be especially beneficial if large crowds attend special events in these parks.

Even in winter months when park use is low, a mounted unit can easily be moved to specially targeted problem areas, such as mall parking lots where car burglaries and traffic congestion are usually a problem during the holiday season. They can easily be moved to high crime rate areas, such as high drug use or high theft areas, to compliment traditional units.

For cities with highly publicized events that draw large crowds, a mounted unit would be most useful because of their versatility, mobility and proven effectiveness at moving crowds. Police equestrian units have proven to be so efficient in these situations, that fewer officers from other patrol divisions are needed to control the crowds, freeing those officers to return to their regular duties.

Whether working in the local parks, working in high traffic areas, large crowds or high crime rate areas, a mounted unit can enhance the positive image of a police department and generate more positive citizen contact. The units are easily seen and appear approachable to the average citizen. Questions about the horse present a type of "ice-breaker" between citizen and officer, giving them common ground for communication.

Certainly a city looking for a way to up-grade their park patrol, strengthen their crowd control abilities and cultivate a strong positive public image should seriously consider using police horses. And, whether riding a quiet park patrol or

working a large crowd, the public responds to the animals and officers in a positive way.

The effectiveness of a horse patrol can be glimpsed in a survey done in Miami, Florida. Before implementing a mounted unit in Miami, that City sent out a questionnaire to established units across the country. The results of the questionnaire showed sixty-five per cent of the departments wanted to expand the units while only eleven per cent planned to cut back. Some departments such as Chicago, Cleveland, Boston and St. Louis disbanded their units for a time only to reactivate them for public relations and deterrent purposes (Carney 1978).

With tight budgets and higher public demand for services, any police unit today must prove its worth. If anyone thinks mounted units are just quaint displays for show, they should take a look at New York City. The New York Mounted Police began in 1871, and they are still working the streets of the City today. Lieutenant Richard Risoli, head of the New York Mounted Police, best describes the city administration's attitude toward their mounted unit.

This is a very unsentimental department in a very unsentimental town. Anybody who thinks they keep us around for sentimental reasons like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is wrong. We gotta put out (Carney 1978).

APPENDIX 1

Horse Trial Period Agreement

I, _____, of _____,

hereby agree to convey to the City of Greenville Police Department a _____ named _____ registration number _____, subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. It is agreed that the city shall have the use of said horse for a period of thirty (30) days and that the city will transport said horse at its expense from its present locations to the stables of the city for the purpose of the trial. If, after the trial, the city determines that the horse is not suited to its needs, the city may return the horse to me.

2. It is also agreed that the city's veterinarian may subject the horse to a complete physical examination during the trial period. If the veterinarian does not certify the horse to be in a fit condition, the city may return the horse to me.

3. It is agreed that during the trial period, the city shall accept responsibility for any injuries incurred by the horse.

4. If the city decides to keep the said horse after the trial period, documentation necessary to convey ownership to the city shall be executed.

Date: _____

(Witness)

_____ (Seal)

(Witness)

APPENDIX 2

Contract for Donation of Horse

I, _____, of _____,
 _____, being the sole owner of a _____
 named " _____," registered number
 _____, do hereby donate, give, and relinquish absolutely
 all right, title and interest in (him-her) to the City of
 Greenville.

This the _____ day of _____, 19__

 (Witness) _____ (Seal)

 (Witness)

The undersigned hereby acknowledges acceptance of this
 donation for the City of Greenville the _____ day
 of _____ 19__.

 (Witness) _____ (Seal)

 (Witness)

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