



DES Newsletter – October 2010

Greetings Everyone,

In this world of ours, there is good news and then there is **GREAT** news. The performance of the Picatinny Arsenal Fire Department (PAFD) during their Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) just happens to be one of those **GREAT** news stories. One of the things that make this a **GREAT** story is the fact of how far the Department has come over the past 4 years. For those of us who have witnessed the transformation of the Department, there has been a feeling that a lot of great things have been happening in recent times. However, it's not until somebody else (namely our higher headquarters) comes in and grades you that you can actually say that, "We're among the best in our field." Well, the Northeast Region came in to see what you had to offer, made their evaluation and slapped you on the back (the good kind; not like the one on the back of the head) with an overall score of 90.5 out of a possible 97 on the ORI. We realize that this great accomplishment was a total team effort and for that I would like to add my personal thanks and congratulations to all of the fire officers and firefighters of PAFD. You all make us proud.



Some of you may wonder, "Why does the DES keep on bringing up things that happen at other installations?" The intent is to not only raise your situational awareness and pass on lessons learned, but to also combat the effects of complacency. Several years ago, a fellow MP responded to an alarm at Fort Bliss. He thought it was 'just another false alarm' and pulled right up to the front door of the NCO Club. The two suspects, who had just robbed the place, came out and shot the MP with a sawed-off shotgun. The MP survived, but had to be medically retired. Seeing that MP, and his senseless injuries, made a lasting impression on me about the importance of avoiding complacency and using proper officer safety tactics.

Fast forward to 2010 and we're back at Fort Bliss. This time, two DA police officers are at the Shopette when they heard gunfire coming from the back of the store. The officers go to the back and find two gunshot victims (one of them later succumbs to their wounds) laying on the



floor and see a man with a revolver run out the back door. The police ended up shooting the suspect as he sat inside his vehicle. The Commanding General stated during a press conference that it appears this was not a robbery, but the act of a disgruntled ex-boyfriend (a retired Army sergeant) who shot two innocent bystanders.

Some issues did come out of this incident that you can use a 'food for thought' as you go about your duties protecting our installation. The shooting was not the act of a terrorist act or a convicted criminal, but the action of, "One of our own" (a retired non-commissioned officer).

The suspect had a retired military ID card along with the necessary vehicle registration, worked on-post, and went through security at an access control point. Yet, he was able to sneak a weapon on-post and use it in a criminal act. No security system is ever fool-proof, but if you're involved in access control operations or searching people and vehicles while on patrol think about this and what you can do to prevent this from happening (That comment reminded me of another time at when I served at Fort Bliss. We had a shooting and the patrols stopped a person who matched the suspect description, but were going to release him after they searched his car and didn't find anything. I asked to search it again and ended up finding the weapon stuffed in-between the front seat of the suspect's car...you should have seen the look on the patrol supervisor's and the suspect's faces when I held the gun up). Another issue was raised concerning notification of personnel on-post when there's an emergency situation. Here at Picatinny, the installation is working to obtain some type of public address system to make mass notifications. In the meantime, if you're responding to an incident where you want people to either stay away or evacuate, you're going to have to find proper and expedient ways to notify the public on the courses of action you want them to take.

There's an old saying that, "When it rains...it pours." That was true again at another Army post where I was once stationed...Fort Carson, Colorado. Their 911 Center received a report of a man acting erratically at his quarters. DA Police responded, encountered a Soldier armed with a knife, and ended up with an officer involved shooting. Once again, we have another press conference and another reason to be trained and ready.



The President of the United States has proclaimed October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. That's very applicable to us in DES because we're often the first ones to respond to cases of domestic violence. The Department of Justice defines Domestic Violence as, "A pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner." The abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic (e.g. controlling the finances) and/or psychological. Awareness is key and while prevention and intervention of domestic violence requires a collaborative approach in the community, it's important to remember that we play a crucial role in that effort.



The Installation All-Hazards Exercise last month turned out to be a successful event for the Garrison. I know that they kept everyone in Police, Fire, and Security busy during the week. As with anything else, there were ups and there were downs. Again, what's important is to take the lessons learned and incorporate them into the way we conduct our operations so that we're fully prepared to handle any type of emergency situation.

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