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CADET PROGRAMS: AN INNOVATIVE CHANGE?

JAMES W. OSTERBURG, HILLARD J. TRUBITT AND RICHARD A. MYREN

At the time of preparation of this article all three authors were faculty members of the Department of Police Administration, Indiana University. Professor Richard A. Myren has recently left the University to become the first Dean of the new School Criminal of Justice, State University of New York, Albany. Professor Hillard J. Trubitt is currently engaged in writing a textbook for a broadly conceived introductory Police Science course entitled "Foundations of Law and Order". Professor James W. Osterburg recently served as Co-Chairman of the working group session on crime laboratories and physical evidence of the National Symposium on Science and Criminal Justice sponsored by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice.

The research reported in this paper was accomplished through the financial support and encouragement of the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice.—EDITOR.

A selective study of police cadet programs in the United States was initiated by the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance of the United States Department of Justice, and was to be prepared within the context of the present role of police in society and the current organizational structure of police agencies. The goal of the study was acquisition of information about existent or contemplated cadet programs. Of special interest was a consideration of their value as a recruitment device. A cadet program was defined as any work, entry, or apprenticeship program designed to prepare individuals below minimum entry age for appointment or service as regular police officers.

METHODOLOGY

Three different methods were employed to acquire information relevant to the subject: pertinent literature was surveyed; field trips were made to 10 selected cities in order to examine some existing programs in detail; a questionnaire was prepared and distributed, and the returns were analyzed and reported later in this paper.¹

Survey of Literature. The literature concerning police cadet programs is meager; furthermore, the few comprehensive articles on the subject quickly become outdated. The following bibliography indicates some of the sources of ideas which served to guide the investigation at the field inspection sites, and in the preparation of the questionnaire:

OCHELTREE, KEITH. POLICE CADET PROGRAMS.

Chicago: Public Personnel Association, (undated). Personnel Brief No. 21, 9 pp.

¹ Readers interested in the format and contents of the questionnaire should write to the authors at the Department of Police Administration, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

SEARS, R. S. The Police Cadet, *THE ANNALS*, 291 (1954), pp. 107-112.

FAY, L. Revitalizing a Police Cadet Program, *PUBLIC PERSONNEL REVIEW*, 24:1 (1963), pp. 60-63.

FLAUGHER, P. "The Police Cadet," *JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL LAW, CRIMINOLOGY AND POLICE SCIENCE*, 47 (1956-1957), pp. 500-507.

Home Office. REPORT OF WORKING PARTY ON POLICE CADETS. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965.

QUINTERO, JOHN U. Effect of Prior Police Cadet Experience on Patrolmen Graduating from the Detroit Police Academy During the Years 1954 Through 1960 as Gauged Through a Comparison of Selected Achievement Records. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Graduate Division, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1962.

BAGLEY, G. L. A Police Cadet Program for the City of Whittier, *POLICE*, 10: 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1965), pp. 65-69; *POLICE*, 10: 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1965), pp. 68-73.

FIELD SURVEY FINDINGS

Field trips provided an opportunity for an extended discussion with administrative personnel concerning many of the problems experienced by each department as it instituted and nurtured its program. A consolidated narrative report follows—under appropriate headings—on the more important aspects of cadet programs not covered by the questionnaire. Since the literature was of minimal help, reliance had to be placed on the combined knowledge of the investigators who made these field trips.

Nature and Purpose of Cadet Programs. Police

cadet programs vary in different communities. To some, they are a means of interesting high school graduates who can meet police department standards in police careers, and of keeping that interest alive through an affiliation with the department until they can be accepted as officers at age twenty-one. In others, the program is merely a way of placing competent persons in clerical positions so that patrolmen may be freed for general police service. Nowhere does a program seem to have been used as a means of meeting all recruitment needs of the department.

The term cadet is not universally employed. In some departments its equivalent is trainee, aide, or student. Regardless of terminology such a program has as its purpose the exposure of young men who are below the normal recruitment age for patrolmen to police department operations. Hopefully, these persons will become so imbued with police work that they will choose it as a lifetime occupation. Thus, a cadet program is regarded as a new step in the development of a true career police service.

In addition to the formal, highly visible cadet programs, several agencies operate quasi-cadet programs under different names. For example, some state police organizations employ young men to perform police-related tasks, often clerical, in operations-control centers, truck weight control, etc. Young men so employed are placed in uniform but lack police authority. They are encouraged to seek a regular appointment to the police agency when they reach majority. One city hires young men as temporary employees who are paid on a daily basis. They are termed "police guards" and are assigned to assist regular patrolmen in the performance of their duties. The department is permitted to employ as many "police guards" as there are regular-patrolman vacancies existing in the department. This operation is not considered by the department to be a cadet program.

The Selection Process

Recruitment. Recruitment for the police cadet program may be (and very often is) the responsibility of the police department itself. In some cities a separate civil service commission which handles all appointments for the city may have this responsibility, or the function may be performed by a fire and police commission which handles all recruitment for the fire and police departments. Even when recruitment is accomplished through a civil service commission, a background investiga-

tion of and a personal discussion with the prospective cadet are usually conducted by the police.

Extensive use is made of high school contacts regardless of where recruiting responsibility lies. Included in this method are meetings with high school guidance counselors, participation in high school career days (including a talk by a working cadet who is an alumnus of the particular high school), and the posting of information on bulletin boards in the schools. In addition, some departments utilize the various mass news media by inserting paid advertisements and "public service" items. The news is also spread on a personal basis by the men of the department. Although some departments purport to recruit nationally, little is actually done to disseminate the information beyond the immediate area of the department.

Usually, the minimum age is seventeen; the maximum varies from nineteen to twenty-one. Many of the departments visited have at some time accepted as cadets persons who were older than the stated maximum age; however, these individuals were considered to be good prospects for patrolmen, and for this reason were placed on the payroll as cadets until they reached the eligible age for acceptance in a recruit class. Some confusion exists among departments as to what is acceptable as the maximum age. Almost all departments wanted the program to be flexible in this respect. Thus, in some cases, a prime patrolman candidate would be taken on as a cadet even though his age might be as high as twenty-two. On the other hand, some feeling was expressed that the minimum age of seventeen is perhaps too young because of immaturity and adolescent behavior common among youths of that age.

Requirements. The reasons given for limiting residency are that the small number of positions (for some departments) makes it possible to fill them even though the base is limited, and the added time of travel plus the work load (and educational requirement, if any) would place too great a burden on the cadet. Living in a bachelor apartment or cadets living together as a small, unsupervised group is discouraged.

A high school diploma is required by most departments; however, a few will accept a certificate of equivalency. The diploma is demanded by some departments even when they are willing to accept a certificate of equivalency for patrolman applicants.

Invariably, some form of testing mental ability is employed. Personality tests are utilized to a lesser degree. The score or standard required is at

least that for appointment as a patrolman and often is higher. Some departments give the same test to cadets as that given to patrolmen. This may eliminate the need for further mental testing and qualify the cadet for appointment to the rank of patrolman when age and other requirements are met. In addition to an occasional "in-house" aptitude test, the following tests were employed by some departments:

- California Mental Maturity
- California Personality Inventory
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
- Army Alpha (Minimal score—85)
- Army General Classification Test (AGCT: Minimal score—105)
- Army Classification Test (ACT: Minimal score—18)
- Otis Self-Administering Test for Mental Ability (Minimal score—105)

The physical requirements for cadets depart from patrolman standards in two significant ways. First, recognition is given to the fact that many cadets are not yet physically mature; accordingly, there is some relaxation of height and weight requirements. This is based on the idea that the cadet will have grown sufficiently to meet the height or weight standards when he meets the age requirement. For the same reason, an upper limit, which is lower than that for patrolman, is placed on maximum height. Thus, the height limit for a cadet might be six feet three inches when the upper height limit for patrolman is six feet six inches. Second, more stringent standards are sometimes established for the eyesight requirement on the grounds that a cadet might suffer some deterioration in his vision but still meet the patrolman standard when he comes to majority.

Cadet Service Period

Orientation. The purposes of and time devoted to an orientation period vary considerably. In general, a short, four-hour orientation is directed toward giving the new employee information about fringe benefits, sick leave policy, and so on. Often, this lecture is given by a member of the city personnel division staff. In contrast to this is the highly structured, one-month program. Among the topics covered in a more extensive program are: general history and background of the department, its organization and mission; the role of the major divisions of the department; general rules and regulations; first aid; wearing of the uniform, and so on. Worthy of special mention is the almost universal attempt to establish a minimum typing skill for

cadets. This is accomplished by having each cadet attend a daily class of typing instruction throughout the orientation period.

When cadets are hired as a group, the possibility of a meaningful orientation period is great; however, if they are hired singly, at the convenience of the cadet or as vacancies occur, the task is too great to be undertaken.

Job Assignments. There are two somewhat disparate views governing on-the-job use of cadets: replacement and career encouragement. In those departments that regard the use of cadets primarily as a means of releasing a trained police officer for routine police service, the cadets are employed essentially as replacements with relatively little rotation in job assignment practiced. Departments which consider attracting young men to police work as a career or as a source of potential supervisory officers tend to expose the cadet to a variety of departmental operations. However, there are obvious problems which prevent full implementation of this policy: adequate comprehension of the task involved for some positions requires longer periods, especially if the cadet is to become a contributing member of the team (for example, in detective field offices); "make-work" is not economically feasible, as opposed to actual work which needs to be done; cadets whose age at employment is close to twenty-one have less time available, thereby reducing the possibility of a variety of cadet assignments.

When the rotation principle is employed, many departments try to expose the cadet to the "real thing" as he approaches his majority, i.e., to uniformed service problems. Thus, his last assignments may include: parking meter enforcement, general traffic regulation, booking desk operation, detail in the prisoner processing division, or even (as proposed by one large department) partnership foot patrol near the center of activity during ordinary daylight business hours. The initial assignments given to cadets are mostly inside work such as: messenger, receptionist, general clerk, and teletype, switchboard, or IBM machine operator.

In large departments with specialized units there was some mention that the cadet is welcome if he is able to quickly learn the routine of the unit. However, if he is transferred soon after he has been taught the operation, the unit supervisor may feel the return in cadet accomplishment was not worth the effort involved. This evaluation of cadet worth leads to discouragement of any further assignment of cadets to that unit. A remedial procedure that

overcomes this objection is the training of his replacement by the cadet since no special effort or loss of manpower is experienced by the regular personnel of the unit.

It is worthy of mention that at no time during the site visits was any comment overheard that some cadet task or assignment was regarded as punitive in purpose.

Evaluation. Some form of evaluation of the cadet is employed almost universally. When the program is sufficiently large, a cadet coordinator may be appointed to supervise its operation. He reviews the evaluation forms returned by the commands to which cadets are assigned. Any negative rating generally must be explained under the "remarks" section on the form and is the subject of a joint meeting of the cadet, the evaluator, and the cadet coordinator. In addition, on a time available basis, the coordinator visits the cadets during their duty hours to observe their performance and to discuss with the unit supervisor the value of the program to the unit involved. Considerable attention is paid to the appearance of the cadet, even to the point of being stressed in the literature describing the program.

Status and Uniforms. The employment status of a cadet varies greatly; but he is without exception a civilian employee and does not have police authority accorded to a sworn officer. The cadet may be a temporary police department employee who is not subject to Civil Service Commission regulations or he may be a temporary civil service employee. He may be a regular city employee who receives all direct and fringe benefits of city employment or serve as a special civilian employee of the police department.

Uniforms are prescribed for cadets; some departments issue them while others require the expense be borne by the cadet. The cadet uniform usually differs from that of the regular patrolman (a distinctive shoulder patch or shirt is often employed); but, in departments that furnish the uniform to the regular force and to cadets, there is a tendency to use the same stock for both.

Educational Requirements. The demand placed upon a cadet as to attendance in a regular course of instruction in college varies from no requirement to enrollment in a prescribed number of hours

(usually about 12 or more credit hours per year) in a recognized institution of higher learning. Academic credit is acquired during the cadet's off-duty hours, but departments vary as to whether they will arrange work hours so that class attendance is possible. Generally, the cadet pays his own tuition, but some departments reimburse the cadet upon successful completion of the course or courses taken during a semester. One city has established a civic foundation which underwrites the academic expense.

Courses in police administration are often preferred, and most departments control in some fashion the choice of courses. Social and exact sciences are usually taken as electives or when police administration courses are not available. Fine arts and physical education are generally discouraged.

Work Requirements. In general, cadets are required to work from 32 to 40 hours per week and are compensated at a rate which is usually about one half to three quarters of a regular patrolman's salary. Often, the cadet salary is above that paid to entrance-grade clerical workers. The time of work varies from covering eighteen hours to an around-the-clock routine. The particular duty assignment controls the time of work.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The personal experience of the site visits suggested that if many replies to a questionnaire were to be forthcoming it was necessary to keep to a minimum the effort required to locate the information in departmental archives.

The questionnaire was sent to ninety-eight of the larger cities selected in part to insure geographic distribution by the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance. Responses were received from ninety-two departments, including all major cities.

Data: Comments and Interpretation

Question 1. Thirty-two departments report they have a cadet program. Table 1 shows the number of departments having a program of a certain duration.

Note that about 70 per cent of the programs are five years or less in age. This is an important factor

TABLE 1

Age of Program in Years....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Number of Departments	9	4	6	2	1	2	3	1	0	1	1	1	0	1

to consider since police department experience with cadets is limited in time and numbers.

Note further that about 60 per cent of the reported programs are less than three years old and about 30 per cent are one year or less in duration. Many of the nine programs reported as less than one year old had been in progress for only a month or so.

Five departments dropped a cadet program after trial periods of from 1 to 7 years. The reasons for termination were varied:

All cadets from one department were drafted into military service. Another department had its cadet ranks depleted by the draft during World War II, and the program was never reinstated. Two departments felt the return in service was not worth the effort required to recruit and specially train cadets in the manner required to suit their community situation. Having only one cadet caused one department to terminate its program; however, resumption is now being contemplated.

The definition of "special handling" ranges from difficulty in acquiring the desired caliber of applicant to the myriad problems of dealing with essentially teen-age boys. It is fair to state that some of the programs which were dropped represent cases of disenchantment. The field visits disclosed that while some departments were not considering abandonment of their programs, they were experiencing unforeseen personnel problems.

Twenty cities are contemplating the establishment of a cadet program. One of these cities reported that it "Had a Program" and was included in that category; thus, the total of responses to Question 1 will exceed the number of replies received.

Thirty-six departments do not have a cadet program. Examination of the distribution of these departments reveals no geographic bias.

Question 2. The number of cadets hired from the beginning of the program to the present time is 2,265.

The number of cadets that became regular patrolmen is 734.

The total number of regular patrolmen (including those who were cadets) appointed to the department since the start of the cadet program is 12,230.

The number of cadets eligible to become superior officers in the department is 184; and, of this figure, 18 were promoted to a supervisory rank.

The number of cadets that left the department after appointment as regular patrolmen is 96.

The number of cadets who have become patrolmen (734) is very small and represents an average of about 6 per cent of the supply of all patrolmen hired in each department over the same period of time. Figure 1 depicts these data graphically by comparing cadet programs as a source of patrolmen with patrolmen obtained through all sources. It may be argued that since many programs are recent in origin, the comparison is not valid. For this reason Figure 1 also contains similar data applicable to cadet programs which are four or more years in duration. These have been in existence sufficiently long to suggest whether age of program is an important factor. Examination of the graph indicates no significant difference attributable to age.

Our present experience is seriously limited with respect to cadets as police officers. Even if all cadets (2,265) ultimately become patrolmen, the number will still not be great compared with the figure 9,965 (12,230-2,265) which represents the supply of officers obtained from traditional sources in the same period.

The number of cadets eligible to become supervisory officers is small: 184. The number who achieved supervisory rank is 18, a figure that scarcely lends support for considering current cadet programs as a significant source of supervisory or command officers.

Of the potential of 734, the 184 officers with cadet background who are eligible for promotion represent the comparative youthfulness of cadet programs. The 10 percent promotion rate (18 of 184) is poor. It is also disappointing since in Question 4 below "a source of potential leaders" is given by departments as one of the two major reasons for having a cadet program. It is possible that this promotion rate reflects either or both the stultifying effects of the seniority system or the poor caliber of cadet-originated eligibles. If the second reason is true, and the determination of this would require a study of individual files, it reflects on the selection process of cadets.

The number of cadets who left the department after appointment as regular patrolmen (96) represents, in general, a higher percentage (about 13 percent) than usual for overall attrition and is not small even for young officers. Any turnover above minimal rate represents serious failure. After all, the officer appointed from the cadet program, who then leaves the service, represents the loss of an

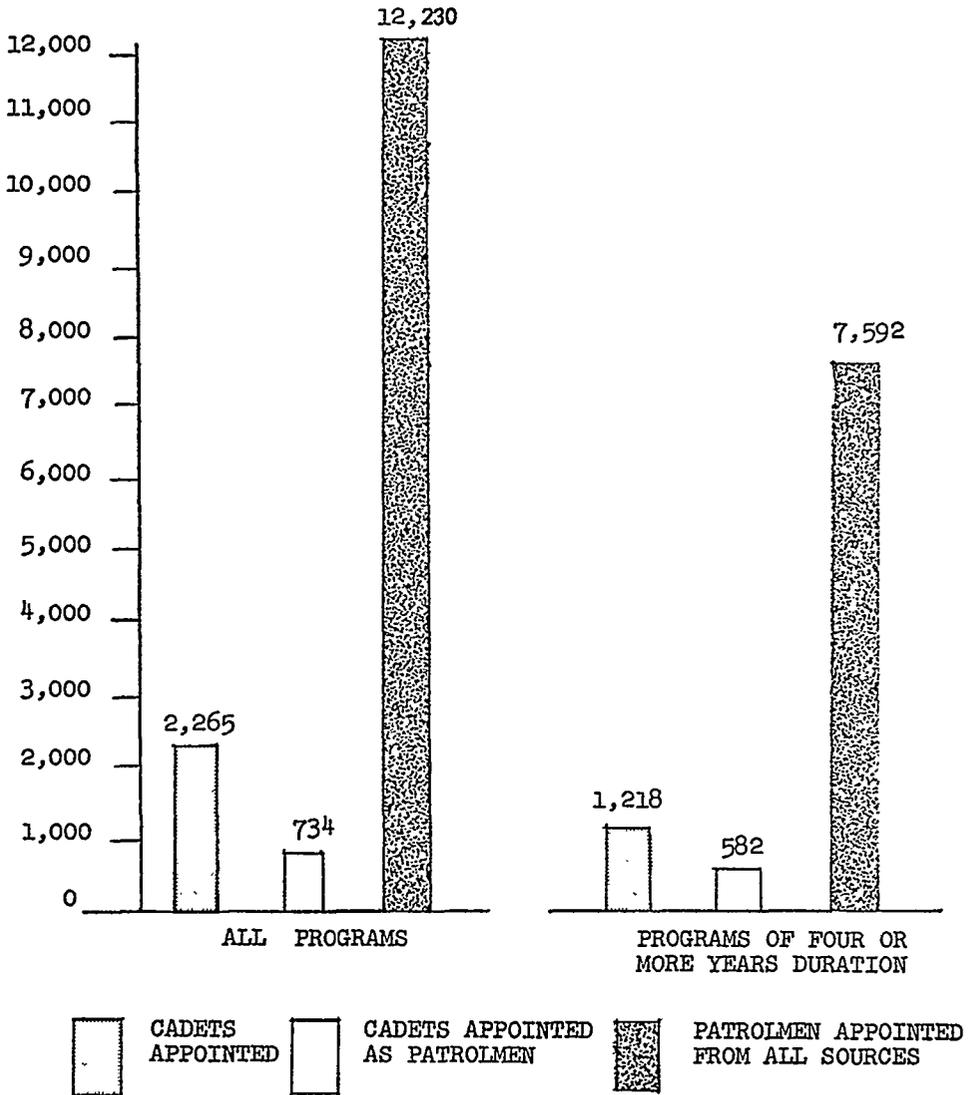


FIGURE 1

Cadet Programs as a Source of Patrolmen Compared with Patrolmen Obtained through All Sources.

individual who has had considerably greater exposure to the department and police service than the non-cadet officer recruit. This is a direct loss of manpower of greater potential than is the attrition of an ordinary recruit. It may also reflect wide divergence between cadet training and actual patrol training, thereby inferring that cadet programs do not accurately expose and orient a person toward police service. "Culture shock" that leads to resignation or separation of a patrolman recruited through the cadet program reflects misuse of cadets if the objective of the program was to orient and prepare men for police work.

Question 3. The number of responses given for

separation or resignation from the department immediately precedes the statement below.

- 19—Enter military service.
- 16—Requested to resign because of misconduct.
- 15—To return to college full time.
- 15—A more attractive career opportunity in business opened up.
- 13—Requested to resign because of unsuitability for police work.
- 9—Personal reasons (for example, father died, mother moves family to another city to be near relatives).
- 6—A physical or medical deficiency developed.

- 6—A police career opportunity elsewhere opened up.
- 4—Dissatisfaction with working conditions.
- 3—To become a fireman.
 - Other (explain)
- 3—Academic deficiencies.
- 2—Dismissed.
- 1—Marriage.

Although beyond the scope of this study, the substance of Question 3 should be investigated further for a basic understanding of the problem.

Currently, drafting of cadets for the manpower needs of the war in Viet Nam presents a problem to departments. Some cities have worked out an arrangement with local selective service officials so that cadets are not drafted. This involves an understanding and agreement by the local board to consider cadets as "apprentices" within the meaning of the Selective Service Act provisions deferring apprentices in skilled occupations until completion of apprenticeship. In view of the good physical and mental condition of the average cadet, deferment action is a real problem for the local board. On the other hand, nationally, the number of cadets probably does not exceed 1,000 and general deferment would not pose a serious threat to the national military effort. Departments which have not made any effort in this respect might meet with similar success if they tried to work out an arrangement with their local boards.

The figures quoted for separation by reason of misconduct do not reflect the number of cadets involved; but, rather, they represent the number of departments that reported this as a reason for separation. It is quite significant that almost one half of the departments with programs have this kind of trouble even though experience is rather short. It may be that misconduct is actually a mask for the lack of ability or desire by an agency to tolerate adolescent problems. Further study of this question may be important if cadet programs are to be encouraged.

The "return to college full time" response is given by seven departments that require attendance at college while the individual maintains cadet status; for departments that "urge" college attendance, four responses were received; four responses were also received from departments that "neither urge nor require attendance at college." Thus, there is no significant relation between *this* reason for leaving the cadet program and the demands made, or not made, concerning college attendance. The college return phenomenon may

represent a recognition by good students that their opportunities in life are furthered by additional education.

Question 4. The number of responses as to why a department has, or is contemplating, a cadet program follows:

- 44—A recruitment device.
- 23—A source of potential leaders.
- 7—A source of less expensive manpower.
- 6—A public relations device.
 - Other (explain)
- 6—Early career start.
- 3—A training device.
- 3—Backdoor device for obtaining college students.
- 2—Release a trained officer.
- 1—Apprenticeship.

The two major reasons are obviously a recruitment device and a source of potential leaders. The data compiled from responses to the second question in this questionnaire are too limited, in time and numbers, to permit definitive comment on the prospects of success for the hopes and aspirations of a department in the establishment of a cadet program. However, a reasonable comment is that unless existing programs expand, they will not live up to expectations as a recruitment device. Even greater faith or change in point of view is needed if the program is to be thought of as a serious source of superior officers. These gloomy comments must be weighed against the present limited experience with cadet programs. The picture could change for the better if police agencies decide to make a special effort to couple the program with an educational requirement.

Question 5. Relative to a college education, the number of responses to each statement in this question is given below. Replies from 3 departments that had, or are contemplating, a cadet program are included.

- 16—Cadets are required to attend college.
- 9—Cadets are urged but not required to attend college.
- 11—Cadets are neither urged nor required to attend college.
- 1—Required to attend a vocational school.

The data suggest that there is some feeling among departments that college education ought to be a part of a cadet program. However, the unsatisfactory history of making college attendance impossible through indifferent scheduling, part-time work, and so on, has created in some cadets a feeling of departmental disinterest.