

XVI – SPECIAL SERVICES BUREAU

This chapter presents findings and recommendations relating to the Special Services Bureau. After an initial background section that describes the bureau and its current operations, issues that affect more than one bureau unit are presented. A discussion of improvement opportunities in the following individual divisions and units is then presented: narcotics; youth and family support; auto theft and financial crimes.

A – BACKGROUND

The Special Services Bureau is led by an assistant chief and is divided into three primary divisions and sections:

- Narcotics
- General Investigations
- Youth and Family Support

A brief discussion of the functions and operations of each division and section follows.

Narcotics

The Narcotics Division, which is managed by a deputy chief, is divided into three primary sections: narcotics; vice and neighborhood nuisance.

Narcotics. The Narcotics Section is responsible for the investigation of offenses that are violations of the Texas Health and Safety Code. This division actively seeks to prosecute drug traffickers at all levels and to have an aggressive asset seizure program. The deputy chief, who manages this division, is supported by a captain who serves as an executive officer and head of the narcotics audit control, an administrative sergeant, a senior corporal (drug education detective) and two office assistants who provide clerical and administrative support. There is also a lieutenant who is the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Intelligence Manager. The division is divided into a number of squads and units: street squads; enforcement squads; diversion/intelligence squad; asset/forfeiture squad; technical squad; laboratory squad; Love Field interdiction squad; and two (2) federal task force squads.

- **Street squads.** Many of the Narcotics Division's staff are assigned to one of six street squads. Each of these street squads is responsible for proactively addressing narcotics problems at the street level. Each squad is led by a sergeant who oversees four or five detective/officers. These squads work two overlapping schedules from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and from 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. on weekdays only. The four sergeants who supervise the street squads and one training sergeant all report to two lieutenants.
- **Enforcement squads.** The Street Squads are assisted by two Enforcement Squads, each supervised by a sergeant with five detectives in each squad. The sergeants report to a lieutenant who is over enforcement and the federal task forces. Their mission is to work on mid-level drug dealing in residential neighborhoods.

Diversionsary/intelligence squad. The diversionsary/intelligence squad, is led by a lieutenant who also supervises the Asset Forfeiture Squad and includes a sergeant and seven senior corporals. The senior corporals include two diversionsary detectives, two case file detectives, two intelligence analysts and one grand jury detective. The unit is staffed with seven sworn personnel (senior corporals) who work from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. weekdays only.

- **Asset/forfeiture squad.** The asset/forfeiture squad is responsible for seizing assets acquired by illegal drug dealing and performing investigations in money laundering operations. The unit is led by a lieutenant who supervises a sergeant, five senior corporals and an office assistant position that is currently vacant. Four of the senior corporals are asset forfeiture detectives and one is a vehicle inventory control detective. The six sworn personnel and one non-sworn (vacant) who are assigned to the unit work from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. weekdays only.
- **Technical squad.** The technical squad is managed by a sergeant and consists of four senior corporals and two non-sworn personnel who are responsible for project coordination and storekeeping for the seized assets. The four sworn and two non-sworn personnel assigned to this unit work overlapping schedules from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and from 4:00 p.m. to midnight weekdays.
- **Laboratory squad.** The clandestine laboratory squad is managed by a sergeant and is staffed with five detectives. This squad is responsible for the handling and testing of all confiscated suspected drugs and drug related products. The schedule of the staff assigned to this unit varies every month. During odd months the unit works weekdays from 4:00 p.m. to midnight and during even months the unit works weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- **Love Field interdiction squad.** The Love Field interdiction squad is responsible for the inspection of goods and materials that pass through the Love Field airport via air delivery. The unit is led by a sergeant and is staffed with six sworn personnel (detectives). Two of the detectives handle the canine operations and one is a money laundering specialist. The other three act as general detectives. The staff assigned to this unit vary their work schedules from either 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or from 4:00 p.m. to 12: a.m. on weekdays only.

Federal task forces. A number of staff are assigned to two regional federal task forces and work in concert with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to address regional narcotics related issues. Currently, the general DEA task force is managed by a sergeant and has five detectives and one police officer while the other DEA/DFW Airport task force is led by a sergeant and consists of eight detectives two of which are canine specialists.

Vice. The Vice Section is organizationally a subunit of the Narcotics Division so the captain who leads the section reports to the Narcotics Division's deputy chief. There is an office assistant who reports to the captain. The unit is divided into two enforcement units each of which is led by a lieutenant and one licensing squad headed by a sergeant.

- **Enforcement squads.** The two enforcement units each have two squads and are responsible for addressing prostitution, obscenity, gambling, public lewdness, and bigamy complaints/violations. Each of the four squads is led by a sergeant and is

staffed with a total of twenty two senior corporals. Staff assigned to the enforcement squads work weekdays from either 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

- **Licensing squad.** The licensing squad, which is led by a sergeant, conducts licensing checks for establishments serving alcohol, dance halls, billiard halls, and sexually oriented businesses and also oversees new licenses and renewal applications for these businesses. The unit is staffed with four senior corporals and one office assistant who work weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Neighborhood nuisance. The Neighborhood Nuisance Response Unit is led by a lieutenant who reports to the Narcotics Division deputy chief. This unit addresses all statutorily defined criminal nuisances such as prostitution, drugs, gangs, random gunfire, commercial obscenity and violent crime in multi-family properties through civil enforcement processes. The unit also addresses associated code/fire nuisances including nuisance abatement under the Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission (TABC) rules and regulations.

The Neighborhood Nuisance Response Unit is divided into two subunits each of which is led by a sergeant and each is comprised of six sworn personnel: three senior corporals and three police officers. There are also two code inspectors and one fire inspector in one unit and a code inspector and one fire inspector in the other. In addition, a sergeant manages two office assistants. The staff assigned to these units work weekdays from either 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

General Investigations Section

The General Investigations Section is divided into two units: financial investigations unit and auto theft unit each of which is led by a lieutenant. Both of these lieutenants report directly to the assistant chief over special services. There is also a sergeant assigned to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) lab.

Financial investigations. The financial investigations unit is divided into three independent squads: forgery squad, financial crimes squad and computer/swindle squad. All staff assigned to these three squads work weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

- **Forgery squad.** The forgery squad investigates offenses involving forgery, identity theft, credit/debit card abuse, criminal simulation, and false statements to obtain property or credit. The unit is led by a sergeant and is staffed with nine sworn personnel (eight senior corporals) one senior corporal on temporary assignment, and one non-sworn personnel (office assistant).
- **Financial crimes squad.** The financial crimes squad investigates offenses involving insurance fraud, theft of real estate, embezzlement, misapplication of fiduciary property, and hindering secured creditors. The squad is led by a sergeant and is staffed with five senior corporals.

- **Computer/swindle squad.** This squad investigates thefts by swindle, endless chain schemes, allegations of impersonation of a public servant and allegations of false identification as a peace officer. The squad is led by a sergeant and is staffed with five senior corporals.

Auto theft. This unit is divided into three squads; auto theft react squad 1, auto theft react squad 2 (support team) and the salvage squad. All staff assigned to these squads work Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

- **Auto Theft React Squad 1.** This squad is managed by a sergeant and contains ten detectives. The squad is responsible for investigating auto theft offenses, which contain leads or where a suspect has been arrested and stolen vehicle recoveries. The detectives also investigate theft of service offenses from rental car companies and thefts related to vehicle title fraud or deception.
- **Auto Theft React Squad 2 (support team).** This squad is led by a sergeant and consists of one detective, eight non-sworn personnel, three crime technicians and five office assistants. The squad is responsible for answering incoming calls, processing paperwork on no lead offenses, conducting computer checks and verifying owner information and providing support for line personnel.
- **Salvage Squad.** This squad is supervised by a sergeant and has nine detectives and one non-sworn personnel, a research specialist. The primary responsibility of this group is the recovery of stolen vehicle parts, inspection of salvage yards, identification of stolen vehicles, gathering intelligence and providing crime prevention relating to auto theft.

Youth And Family Support

The Youth and Family Support Division, which is led by a deputy chief, focuses on reducing, prosecuting, and responding to crimes against juveniles; crimes involving family violence; and crimes committed by juvenile offenders. The division is also responsible for maintaining a liaison with county and city court systems on issues relating to juvenile detention. The division is divided into three units: youth operations; gang unit which includes the school liaison and Law Enforcement Teaching Students (LETS) squads and the child exploitation and investigative squad.

Youth Operations. The youth operations unit, which is led by a lieutenant , is divided into two subgroups: general operations and missing persons (which also oversees a first offender program).

- **Missing persons/first offender program (FOP).** This unit is responsible for the investigations of runaway children reports, missing children reports, “want to locate” reports (all adult missing persons), critical missing reports (under age 10, over age 70 or one that requires continuous supervision), child abduction cases and harboring of runaway offense reports. The first offender program seeks to provide skills training to parents of first offenders, keep records, reports, statistics and program recidivist rates. The unit is led by a sergeant and is staffed with six senior corporals and seven FOP caseworkers. The staff who are assigned to this unit are scheduled to work the regular second watch shift.

- **General operations unit.** The operations unit is responsible for investigating offenses with juvenile complainants, investigating interference with child custody offenses, serving as first responder to child abductions (AMBER alerts). This unit operates on three watches with each watch managed by a sergeant. The first watch consists of three senior corporals, the second has eight senior corporals, a civilian police technician and an office assistant while the third watch has six senior corporals and an office assistant.

Gang Unit. The gang unit is responsible for investigating gang related offenses, providing intelligence reports, conducting surveillance on criminal street gangs, maintaining gang history files on active criminal street gangs, responding to requests from schools experiencing gang activity and monitoring radio calls in order to respond to gang related incidents. Included in the gang unit is the school liaison unit which assigns officers to various schools within the city limits of Dallas and the LETS unit which provides drug education to school aged youth. This unit is managed by a lieutenant with four sergeants each supervising the different squads. There is also one sergeant who conducts special projects and assignments.

- **Gang Unit Squads.** This unit is divided into two squads; investigations and enforcement. The investigations group consists of four sworn detectives and three non-sworn personnel: a case worker, a research specialist and a technician. The enforcement section has two subgroups with a senior corporal supervising each group containing five police officers. Three officers have been on special assignment to the School Liaison Unit since September, 2001. As a result of these staff shortages, the gang unit operates on a 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. schedule.
- **School Liaison/LETS Unit.** This unit consists of three squads dividing the city in geographic terms, east, west and north. The LETS unit operates under the east unit. There are a total of thirty school liaison officers (senior corporals), one LETS coordinator (senior corporal), three LETS instructors (senior corporals) and one civilian police technician. There are also 75 to 100 other instructors from throughout the department that are compensated with overtime pay or compensatory time to supplement this unit. The Dallas Independent School District (DISD) has created its own police department, which over time will mean a drastic reduction in the liaison group. The timeframe for full implementation of the DISD police force has not been confirmed.

Youth Investigations. This unit is divided into three squads: family violence, child exploitation and child abuse. It is led by a lieutenant who reports directly to the deputy chief.

- **Family violence squad.** This unit investigates all domestic violence offenses including violations of protective orders. There are actually two squads each led by a sergeant and consisting of a total of seventeen senior corporals, five domestic violence caseworkers and two office assistants.
- **Child exploitation squad.** This team handles all investigations involving the sexual abuse and exploitation of children that are reported through the normal reporting process. The sexual offender apprehension (SOAP) team handles investigations involving registered sex offenders who are not in compliance with the registration

laws. The internet crimes against children team handles all cases involving the sexual abuse of children via the internet. This squad is managed by a sergeant and consists of twelve sworn personnel (senior corporals) and non-sworn personnel: a research specialist and a caseworker.

- **Child abuse squad.** This unit investigates physical and sexual abuse crimes committed against children under the age of 17 by family members or caregivers. They also investigate deaths of children under the age of 10. The manager of this squad is a sergeant and consists of ten senior corporals and an office assistant.

B – ISSUES AFFECTING MORE THAN ONE UNIT

Coordination Among Department Units Conducting Vice And Narcotics Investigations Should Be Strengthened

Because effective communications systems have not been established, centralized and decentralized staff investigating vice and narcotics activities sometimes find themselves investigating the same problem without knowing that other entities are involved. While systems that support improved communication are needed to address this problem, the organizational recommendations presented in Chapter VII should also help to foster improved communication. A byproduct of requiring vice and narcotics staff to be assigned to support crime reduction efforts in individual patrol operations divisions (when they are not investigating citywide issues) will be improved coordination and communication. After the recommended organizational changes have been implemented instances of staff working at cross purposes should decline.

Just as coordination between centralized and decentralized units needs to be strengthened, communication among centralized units needs shoring up as well. At present, Vice, Narcotics and Neighborhood Nuisance units are not consistently aware of the investigations being conducted by other units. As a result, from time to time units find themselves unwittingly investigating different aspects of the same problem. The systems developed to strengthen coordination and communication among decentralized units, therefore, should also be used to support improved communication among centralized units as well.

Vice And Narcotics Detectives Should Be Scheduled To Work Seven Days A Week

At present, narcotics detectives are scheduled to work overlapping schedules from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and from 4:00 p.m. to midnight on weekdays. Likewise, officers assigned to vice enforcement squads work weekdays from either 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. The need for vice and narcotics enforcement does not stop at the weekend, however. Schedules for these officers should be modified therefore to provide enforcement services seven days a week.

C – NARCOTICS

ORGANIZATION

Spans Of Control For Division Lieutenants Should Be Increased

Spans of control for the four lieutenants assigned to the Narcotics Division are narrow. As the following table shows, the maximum span of control for these lieutenants is five sergeants. Each of the two street squad lieutenants has only three sergeants reporting to him.

Unit	Number Of Sergeants Reporting To Lieutenant
Asset Forfeiture/Diversionsary	5
Enforcement/Federal Task Force	4
Street Squads(1)	3
Street Squads (2)	3

To provide more reasonable spans of control all street squads should be combined under the leadership of a single lieutenant. Implementing this recommendation will enable the department to discontinue or redeploy one lieutenant position.

ASSET FORFEITURE

The Department Should Take Steps To Ensure That Its Use Of Seized Monies Complies With Federal Law And Reflects Department Priorities

Federal law allows the department to use assets seized as part of narcotics investigations to support department operations in limited ways. While the department has taken worthwhile steps to ensure it receives the share of assets it is due – staff are assigned to the office of the two primary federal agencies involved in drug investigations – less attention has been focused on determining how these resources can best be used to support department priorities. Just as the recommended budget process (described in Chapter XI) should be structured to determine how the department's overall resources can best be used to achieve its overall goals and objectives, in the same way – and to the extent possible as part of the same process – a systematic, inclusive approach should be established to ensure that seized assets are used (subject to legal restrictions) in ways that support department efforts to achieve its overall objectives. The department should also take steps to ensure the proposed uses of monies comply with legal mandates and should audit the use of seized assets to ensure compliance with these requirements.

When Large Cash Seizures Are Made The Monies Should Be Taken Immediately To A Financial Institution

When large cash seizures are made on the street, the department's current practice is for the monies to be taken to the property unit where the cash is counted by hand. The federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), by contrast, takes such funds directly to a bank where they the money is counted electronically and deposited immediately. The department should follow this procedure as well. Doing so will ensure that the funds will be counted accurately, limits the number of people processing the funds thereby reducing the risk of malfeasance, ensures the safety of funds and maximizes the interest earned on the funds.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

The Technical Squad Should Maintain All Specialized Equipment Assigned To The Narcotics Division

Although the Narcotics Division has a squad of two detectives that is responsible for maintaining the technical equipment used for surveillance, some units maintain their own equipment which defeats the purpose of establishing a special unit for this purpose. The division should therefore require that all technical equipment be maintained by this unit (or that the unit contract out for maintenance that is beyond the skills of the unit staff to maintain.)

In addition, as detailed in Chapter X, the two positions assigned to this unit should be converted to civilians. Please note, however, that while civilians should maintain division equipment sworn staff should make decisions about the type of technical equipment that should be acquired.

D – YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT

ORGANIZATION

The Organization Of The Division Should Be Restructured As The Dallas Independent School District's Own Police Force Matures

As currently configured the organization of the Youth and Family Support Division is sound. While spans of control for the lieutenants assigned to the division are not broad the overall division of responsibilities is generally sound. However, when the Dallas Independent School District's police force matures the unit commander for the gang/school liaison/LETS unit will have only two sergeants reporting to her. To ensure reasonable spans of control after this change has been made the unit should be merged with the Youth Operations Unit and one of the lieutenant positions should be discontinued.

It should be noted that a case could be made to consolidate the department's first offender program and the LETS program even if there were not other organizational reasons to do so. Both of these programs focus on helping youth avoid problems with the law. Indeed, given the success of the first offender program – the recidivism rate for

youth who complete the program is 7.5 percent versus 26.0 percent for those who do not – it may make sense to incorporate aspects of the first offender program into the LETS program.

GANG

The Gang Unit Should Focus Its Efforts On Gathering Intelligence On Gang Activity And Unit Staff Should Be Reassigned To The Intelligence/Crime Analysis Unit And To Patrol Divisions

When the gang unit was originally established, its goal was to collect intelligence on gangs and to share that intelligence with other investigative units. Some years ago, the gang unit – which was under threat of being abolished – began to focus on making arrests and clearing cases in an effort to quantify the value of its operations. Intelligence gathering now has a relatively low priority and only members of the gang unit have access to the information that is collected.

It is impractical for a unit of only sixteen sworn and three civilian staff to effectively address gang related activity in a city the size of Dallas. Consistent with the organizational recommendations presented in Chapter VII, individual patrol divisions should be responsible for addressing crime problems relating to gangs in their divisions. As necessary, they should deploy the range of resources available at the division to address whatever gang problems exist. To support these efforts, twelve of the sixteen staff currently assigned to the gang unit should be redeployed to the patrol divisions (two per division). Patrol managers should rely on these officers to be their experts on gang related activity. The remaining four gang unit members should be assigned to the recommended Intelligence/Crime Analysis Unit that will report to the senior assistant chief. Consistent with the mission of this unit, the intelligence on gangs generated by these staff should be shared with division managers and used by them to develop effective strategies for addressing gang related issues in their patrol divisions.

The sergeant who currently undertakes special projects for the gang unit should be assigned to the Intelligence/Crime Analysis Unit. In addition, one of the two remaining sergeant positions should be retained to coordinate centralized gang enforcement and investigative activities. The remaining sergeant should be redeployed. (Less supervision will be needed when this recommendation is implemented because day-to-day supervision over the gang unit staff assigned to the patrol divisions will be provided by patrol division supervisors.)

E – AUTO THEFT

The Auto Theft Unit Should Develop A Cohesive Strategy For Addressing City-Wide Auto Theft Issues

The problems that currently plague the Auto Theft Unit are a microcosm of the problems afflicting the department as a whole. The unit lacks a clear direction and as a consequence staff do not have a shared understanding of what the unit is trying to accomplish. Moreover, because the unit has no clear sense of what it is working to achieve, an organizational structure that is sound from the perspective of organizational principles has become a barrier to improving operations. Indeed, because the responsibility of the salvage investigators who work at the auto pound and the

investigators who conduct investigations and process prisoner paperwork are so well defined, a “silo” mentality has been created and the work of these two units almost never intersects. For example, the officers assigned to the salvage unit do not evaluate the condition of recovered vehicles to identify patterns that might be helpful to the officers conducting follow-up investigations. In addition, the lax supervision that characterizes the unit and the lack of strategic and operational planning virtually ensures that the independent operations of these units will persist.

To address these issues, unit leaders should be charged with developing an overall strategy and plan to address citywide auto theft issues. (As discussed in Chapter VII responsibility for addressing localized auto theft issues should be assigned to the patrol operations divisions.) As part of this effort, unit managers should re-evaluate the roles and responsibilities of existing units and should determine the organizational structure that will best enable the unit to achieve its goals. In addition to defining roles this process should also be used to ensure that all employees assigned to the unit have a clear understanding of the overall workings of the unit and how their work supports the unit’s efforts to achieve its overall objectives.

F – FINANCIAL CRIMES

Staffing Of The Financial Crimes Unit Should Be Increased

At present, caseloads in the financial crimes unit are relatively high. The forgery caseload, for example, is approximately five cases per day while three to four cases per day is generally considered appropriate. In addition, only two investigators are assigned to address identity thefts – an extremely fast growing crime across the nation. Moreover, because two of three clerks were eliminated from the unit, the amount of clerical work performed by unit investigators has increased substantially.

While making a precise determination of the resources needed in the financial crimes unit is difficult given available information, providing some additional capacity is warranted. To this end, three additional investigative staff should be assigned to the unit – one of which should focus on identity theft investigations. In addition, one additional clerical employee should be assigned to the unit.