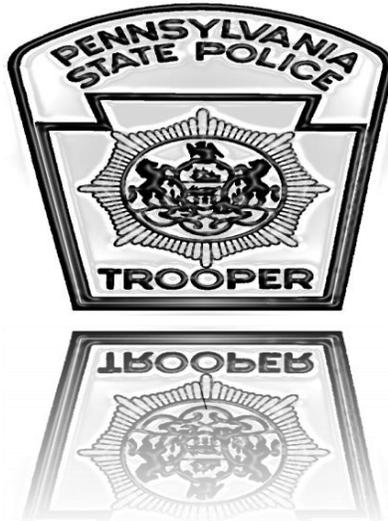


PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE TESTIMONY OUTLINE

SENATE VETERAN'S AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

JUNE 15, 2017



PRESENTED BY

MAJOR GEORGE L. BIVENS

MAJOR JAMES E. DEGNAN

CAPTAIN CHRIS L. PARIS

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

### Description of Incident:

- Ambush Shooting of Corporal Bryon Dixon and Trooper Alex Douglass at the Blooming Grove Station on 9/12/14
- Corporal Dixon passed away at the scene
- Trooper Douglass severely wounded and removed for treatment
- Troopers and PCO's secured the facility and needed to be extricated
- Shooter not in custody
- Wide perimeters established around station

### Priorities and Challenges of Investigation and Search:

- Initial life safety issues of personnel and security of scene
- Manage large number of personnel and resources responding
- Initiate criminal investigation to determine what happened and identify actor(s)
- Safety of responding officers – protective equipment not adequate for threat
- Needed to keep Frein focused on law enforcement – not civilians
- Management of search – 350 square miles of difficult terrain in 2 counties with concern about a possible additional ambush
- Critical to keep community fully informed – regular news briefings and discussions with government and school officials
- Search lasted 48 days

### Major Search Areas:

- Station and immediate area
- Area around Frein's Jeep
- Frein residence
- Cell phone ping/campsite/reported sightings

### Impacts:

- Blooming Grove Station closed – police services provided from PSP Honesdale
- Several schools closed
- Schools that remained open did not allow outdoor recess, cancelled after-school activities and changed bus routes to avoid search areas
- Businesses affected: tourism dramatically decreased; little or no activity for businesses within search or adjacent areas
- Hunting affected – state game lands closed in Pike and Monroe Counties
- Residents in fear, entire neighborhoods were inconvenienced: Dealt with secure zones/road closures, police vehicles and armored vehicles in their neighborhoods, heavily armed police officers walking through their yards, helicopters searching overhead
- Affected staffing of all PSP facilities statewide: concern about possible additional attack, as well as need to send significant number of personnel to assist with the search

### Resources:

- Nearly every operational component of the Pennsylvania State Police
- State Police from NY, NJ, CT, VA and MD
- State agencies: DCNR, Game Commission, Fish and Boat Commission, PEMA, OAG and DOC
- Federal agencies: FBI, BATF, US Marshals, US Customs and Border Patrol
- Numerous municipal police departments and sheriffs' offices
- Fire Department and EMS resources within Pike and Monroe Counties
- Pike and Monroe County Sheriffs, EMA, DOC and other resources
- Township resources within Pike and Monroe Counties
- Use of highly specialized and sophisticated equipment from state and federal agencies

### Costs:

- PSP Overtime
- PSP Operational Costs
- Outside federal, state and local law enforcement agencies' expenses
- Pike/Monroe County and Municipal expenses

Issues:

- Deputizing out-of-state agencies with law enforcement powers
- Radio Communications – coverage and interoperability
- Lack of funding source for agencies assisting PSP
- Challenge of coordinating large numbers of personnel from multiple agencies over a large geographic area
- Breakdown in communications at times with resources spread over a wide area with different reporting locations
- Rising costs of sustaining the operation

Positives:

- Frein was captured
- No loss of civilian lives
- No additional loss of law enforcement
- Thorough investigation resulting in successful prosecution
- Agencies worked well together and for an extended period of time
- Continued support of community throughout incident – businesses, residents, Red Cross, Barrett Twp Fire Dept
- Return of sense of normalcy to community

Lessons Learned:

- Good media relationships are vital
- Reinforced use of Incident Management Teams
- Communications issues have to be addressed before next serious incident
- Station security practices reviewed
- Not all attacks can be prevented
- Ongoing examination of equipment purchases to enhance officer safety
- Keep operational command centralized for all agencies