

plicable, the law enforcement officer's task in obtaining compliance is most difficult if not impossible.

3. Lastly, but by no means the least, the wildlife conservation officers (indeed, all department employees) must be team players. Nothing can destroy the credibility and effectiveness of a wildlife agency more than disobedience, discord and disloyalty. Be an active participant in gathering the information and facts upon which decisions and policy are based. Vigorously press your opinion within the framework of an orderly organizational structure designed to consider your views. When the decision is rendered, support it for the reasons specified even though you may personally disagree. Always remember an ounce of loyalty is worth a pound of cleverness. Elbert Hubbard described it best when he admonished: "If you must growl, condemn, and eternally find fault, resign your position and when you are on the outside damn to your heart's content, but as long as you are a part of an organization do not condemn it for if you do, the first high wind that comes along will blow you away and you may never know why."

To conclude, all of us interested in sound wildlife management work must stick together. As someone once said: to be successful, one must be tall enough to have his head in the clouds, short enough to have both feet on the ground, heavy enough to stand firm, yet light enough to move and progress. These are good guides for all of us as we work for—and with—the public.

Thank you again for the opportunity of meeting with you.

## **BREAKTHROUGH IN TRAINING FOR WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS**

by

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### **ABSTRACT**

The wildlife officer, whether he be called a conservation officer, game protector, game and fish enforcement officer or simply game warden, must be a real professional. He needs most of the knowledge that a professional policeman needs. He also needs a working knowledge of many subjects peculiar to the out-of-doors. The breakthrough in training that has already occurred for police should be immediately extended to wildlife law enforcement officers. This, coupled with maintenance of high standards and increases in pay, should do much to professionalize this important occupation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

A game and fish enforcement officer is asleep at home after returning from a hard day's work. It is midnight. The phone rings. A resident of the Muddy Creek community has heard shots and conversation in a wooded area near his home and has seen flashing lights. Remains of two deer slaughtered illegally a week before make the officer believe poachers are at work again tonight.

The officer dresses quickly, holsters a .38 revolver, grabs his shotgun and light and runs to his car. He knows the area, investigated the incident the previous week, and hopes he can travel the twenty-three miles to Muddy Creek fast enough to catch them this time.

Driving rapidly, alone, over the winding country road to his destination he designs his plan of action and thanks Almighty God for the training that has prepared him for this difficult and demanding challenge.

He has the general power of arrest (game and fish officers in only two states in the Southeastern Region have such authority).<sup>1</sup> He can assume the subjects are armed and that there are at least two of them—maybe more. He knows darkness will be a factor working against him. He knows the violation is a serious one and that his own life may well be in danger. (A fellow officer in a nearby county had been shot at and seriously wounded less than a year before.)

He needs to know whether he will be arresting for a felony or only for a misdemeanor that was not committed in his presence. He needs to know if he can arrest all subjects at the scene, or only one who happens to be carrying a weapon.

He needs to know how to take cover, if he uses his light, to hold it far out to his side to avoid presenting himself as a target. If he is fired on, he needs to know how to fire back—quickly and accurately. He needs to know how to identify himself at the scene.

I never paid much attention to the safety on a weapon until one time I was armed with a loaded shotgun at an extortion stake-out. I was in total darkness, and had pushed the safety button back and forth several times with my thumb and index finger. Finally I was faced with the dilemma—was the safety on or off? Later I learned how to figure this out—in the dark.

In his glove compartment he has one pair of handcuffs. This pair *could* restrain two subjects. Suppose there are three or more? He has learned how to use a necktie or a belt to insert between the cuffs and secure one or more others.

Suppose he or one of the others is wounded and bleeding profusely. He needs to know first aid. Tourniquets are no longer advocated. Direct pressure on the wound may be the best way to stop the blood. How should he splint a broken leg and restrain two subjects while a third, wounded and unable to walk, is loaded into his car to be taken to a hospital or to jail? Then, should he stop at the jail first or at the hospital?

Suppose he apprehends the subjects and they refuse to get in the car. What come-along or other holds can he use?

What if he doesn't have arrest powers—or the subjects have left by the time he arrives at the scene finding only the remains of two slaughtered deer? How does he protect the crime scene? Should he investigate that night, or return in the morning? How should he identify the evidence? How should he wrap and preserve it? Should he collect and preserve blood to compare with any blood that may later be found in the car or on the clothing of suspects who may be located later?

All these things must be known and known so well that he can act instinctively. He has no way to study books on the spot. He will have to know how to use all this information, as well as such data as how to make plaster casts of footprints. He must be able to interrogate, to recite the Miranda Warning, and to bring the evidence and his testimony into court, to make a case.

But most of all the game and fish enforcement officer must know human relations. He must know how to deal with people. Many officers will know all the legitimate hunters and fishermen in their areas by their first names. An officer can deal with them because he knows them and knows what kind of people they are. But will he know the deer poachers? How will they react when they see him coming?

All these are matters that require training.

Of course this is not the only type of situation that game and fish enforcement officers encounter, and not the only dangerous one, but it points out several reasons why these officers must be thoroughly trained to act—and to react—intelligently, quickly and often instinctively to protect their own lives and to succeed in their work:

1. They are dealing with armed law violators;
2. They are usually acting alone under the worst of conditions;
3. The violators may be on their own property with the false assumption that anyone enforcing the law on their property is an unwelcome and illegal intruder.

What does an enforcement officer need to prepare himself for his job? How can he best be trained?

Several states put new enforcement officers through the regular police training program.<sup>2</sup>

Some who follow this practice do so because there is no available special course for their men. Others contend that this creates a spirit of cooperation between game and fish enforcement officers and other law enforcement officers that may benefit both.<sup>3</sup>

There are, no doubt, advantages to this practice. There are also disadvantages. Courses for police in the United States vary from 114 to 480 hours. (Kentucky has a 10-week, 400 hour course.) Such courses deal only slightly (if at all) with game and fish

laws. Most of them spend many hours teaching such subjects as: accident investigation, bad checks, counterfeiting, traffic violations, family crisis intervention, riot control and sex crimes. (While a game and fish enforcement officer might run up on an occasional sex offense during the course of his work, this should not be one of his major projects.)

On the other hand, game and fish enforcement officers need a great deal of special knowledge:

1. The specific laws pertaining to licensing;
2. Laws pertaining to game and non-game animals and fish;
3. Hunting and fishing seasons, limits and special conditions.

The game and fish enforcement officer shares with other officers the need to know such subjects as:

1. Police ethics and human relations;
2. Press relations;
3. Jurisdiction of other state, federal and local agencies;
4. Proper use and maintenance of equipment;
5. Record keeping;
6. Communications techniques and limitations;
7. Narcotic and dangerous drugs;
8. Crime prevention;
9. Prisoners' rights;
10. The U. S. and State Constitutions;
11. A general knowledge of the criminal law;
12. Laws of arrest, search and seizure;
13. Judicial organization and court jurisdiction;
14. Rules of evidence;
15. Preparation of cases for court;
16. Testifying in court;
17. Unarmed defense;
18. Firearms;
19. Crime scene search and field notetaking;
20. Interviews, interrogations, and confessions;
21. Handling the mentally ill;
22. Processing of juveniles;
23. Fingerprinting;
24. Photography;
25. First aid.

<sup>1</sup>Florida and West Virginia.

<sup>2</sup>Louisiana, Idaho, and South Carolina are examples.

<sup>3</sup>Letter, 8/19/74 from Larry Plott, Executive Secretary, Idaho Peace Officer Standards and Training Advisory Council.

He needs a special knowledge in such additional matters as:

1. Wildlife identification;
2. Waterfowl identification;
3. Identification and handling of poisonous snakes and other poisonous creatures;
4. Biology of small game;
5. Biology of deer and other large game;
6. Biology of game fish and non-game fish.

In addition, a number of excellent subjects would be particularly helpful to the conservation officer:

1. Forest fires, their causes and effects;
2. Tree identification and protection;
3. History of ecology and conservation;
4. Identification and biology of non-game birds;
5. Boating safety;
6. Map reading.

Public speaking is probably one of the most important subjects for most fish and wildlife enforcement officers. By appearing before service clubs, school and church groups and others he can create a tremendous public relations program and can induce citizens throughout his entire area to cooperate with him in the enforcement of the law.

Supervisors and other administrative personnel need training in management, supervision, decision-making, and often such specific subjects as budgeting and personnel matters.

In the past few years there has been a real break-through in training for police. Innovations that have been developed over the years in the field of education have been adapted to the police training field. Audio-visual aids, role playing practical problems and team training techniques have been developed to supplant the usual lecture.

Some states have developed excellent courses specifically for wildlife officers.<sup>4</sup>

Since different states have different laws and different terrain and other problems,<sup>5</sup> no one course can be developed to suit them all. Nor can the length of the course be uniform.

A basic course at least six weeks in length seems desirable.

In-service courses help to provide a refresher in firearms and other skills as well as to provide information on new legislation, new regulations and new developments in the arts of enforcement and investigation. The courts, every day, are handing down decisions they may affect enforcement officers.

I used to teach Search and Seizure when I was in the F.B.I. If I taught the law now from my notes of nine years ago, I would be teaching all the wrong law. The law seems to move slowly, but it is actually developing very rapidly—and, for the better, I believe.

One of the greatest benefits of in-service training for all law enforcement officers is the opportunity to compare notes, to discuss cases and situations that have confronted them. One person may have successfully dealt with a problem that is currently confronting another. For this reason I advocate long breaks in in-service training courses—to permit officers to discuss their experiences and their problems with each other.

There has already been a breakthrough in training for police officers. Project STAR, a multi-million dollar research project developed in California, Michigan, New Jersey, and Texas, has done much to determine the role of the policeman and other representatives of the criminal justice system, to ascertain performance objectives and to develop training packages to accomplish the training necessary in order to develop officers to the degree of professionalism necessary to perform their roles.

<sup>4</sup>Florida, West Virginia, Mississippi, Arkansas and Maryland are good examples.

<sup>5</sup>Seacoast state officers need training in oceanlife biology, etc.

New techniques have been developed. Role playing now forms a major part of the law enforcement officer's training package. He is given a chance to critique the work of other trainees in simulated situations. Stop-action and open-ended motion picture films take the officer into difficult situations similar to those he may encounter on the street, in a bar or in the home of a violator. Then the class is given a chance to discuss and to play out similar situations.

The trainee is given a chance to appear in moot court, to testify and to present evidence such as a gun, a bloody shirt or a broken bottle. He is cross examined as to how he first found the evidence, how he examined it, how he photographed and identified it, how he may have processed it for latent fingerprints, how he wrapped it, maintained the chain of custody, and how he can prove that its condition has not changed since he first took control of it.

He practices public speaking, writes out reports and affidavits for search and arrest warrants. He practices arrest and disarming techniques, carries stretchers and performs artificial respiration on a specially designed dummy. There will be a breakthrough in training for wildlife enforcement officers. There must be more uniformity, looking to the day when an enforcement officer, whether he be called a conservation officer, conservation agent, wildlife agent, conservation commission agent, game protector, wildlife ranger, wildlife resources agency officer, game and fish enforcement officer, game and fish warden, or simply game warden, may transfer from a department in one state to a department in another with appropriate certification that would require additional training only in specific laws and conditions of the new state in order to qualify him for employment there.

Each state must learn from the others new techniques and innovations in training and in enforcement, so that a pool of knowledge is developed to help all. I foresee the production of new motion picture films and other audio-visual material specifically designed for wildlife enforcement officers. I foresee training of instructors who might become outstanding authorities in their field and who might travel from state to state to disseminate their knowledge to enforcement officers. I foresee new handbooks and other printed material that will serve as a training library for conservation officers. In Kentucky we have a list of questions often asked by defense attorneys to trip up policemen in court. A similar list of questions could be developed for fish and wildlife enforcement officers with such possible cross examination questions as: "Did you write down the number of the hunting license of this defendant?" "Why didn't you search the area for other alleged violators?" or "What was the specific condition of the weather (or the exact time of day) when you contacted my client?"

Perhaps this technique has already been developed in some training programs. If so, it should be automatically disseminated to others. There should be a free exchange of all training devices and methods for conservation officers. Training for new personnel might well be mandated by statute.

We also have a list of 900 words often misspelled by police. Recruits are required to commit these words to memory. Perhaps a glossary of such words and terms as "muskellunge," "opossum," "parakeet," "trot line," "burglary," and "subpoena" would be helpful for ready reference in writing reports.

This field of law enforcement—wildlife law enforcement—deserves the most professional officers possible. Many of them are real professionals now. I believe the breakthrough in training, together with upgrading of the fish and game laws, maintenance of high standards, and increases in pay will do much to accomplish this.