Summer Cop: A Qualitative Study of Summer Police Officers

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ABSTRACT

There are approximately 18,000 police agencies employing 750,000 police officers in the United States in order to police a population over 300 million citizens. In addition, sketchy estimates state there are 400,000 police reserves assisting full-time sworn officers in their duties. One major subgroup of these police reserves are summer police officers ("summer cops") who serve full-time during the tourist season in mostly beach communities. There has been little to no research into this subpopulation of police officers and little is known about their background and reasons for becoming summer reserve officers. In order to fill this gap in the literature, this study used participant observation and in-depth interviews to assess 15 summer officers in a Maine police department. The study presents major findings about their backgrounds, motives, and goals for becoming summer police officers, as well as their experiences in becoming summer cops and perceptions of training.

INTRODUCTION

> "I just graduated with a Criminal Justice degree…my only [other] job has been landscaping. So, I wanted to become a summer officer to see if I would like a career as a police officer."
>
> —*Summer Reserve Officer, 2010*

As of 2008, there were 17,985 local and state policing entities responsible for providing law enforcement services in the United States that employed 765,000 sworn officers responsible for policing a population of over 300 million citizens (Reaves, 2011). Policing a population this large is a daunting task, and many police agencies struggle to address increasing requests for police services. This presents issues for police agencies that face budgetary

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restrictions and have limited personnel resources across the United States (Aragon, 1993; Arwood, Hilal, Karsky, & Norman, 2005; Gill & Mawby, 1990; Greenberg, 1984 Hedlund & Burke, 2006). Confronted with the strain of public demands, police agencies sometimes rely on non-regular (i.e., part-time and volunteer) police officers to bolster the number of law enforcement personnel deployed on the street (King, 1960; Pray, 1997; Sundeen & Siegel, 1986; Unsinger, 1972; Weinblatt, 1996a).

These non-regular police officers are usually referred to as *reserve officers* (Aragon, 1993; Pray 1997; Weinblatt, 1996a; Weinblatt, 1996b). Depending on a particular state's legislation, however, the term can carry many different meanings. In the majority of jurisdictions, reserve officers are members of the community who assist a local law enforcement agency by volunteering their time, while in some places the reserves are officers who work part-time for the agency once or twice a month (Arwood et al., 2005; Berg & Doerner, 1988; Hedlund & Burke, 2006; Hilal, 2003; Sundeen & Siegel, 1986). Other regions use the term reserve police officers to refer to paid police officers who are hired in tourist areas on a seasonal basis to deal with a vast population influx (Bushey, 1976; Weinblatt, 1996b). This latter type of reserve officers, those hired seasonally, are the primary focus of this study.

Seasonal reserve officers are typically hired in communities that experience a significant population increase during tourist seasons. For example, in Barnstable, Massachusetts, the population increases from 43,000 in the winter to 110,000 people from the end of May until the beginning of September (Weinblatt, 1996b). In order to adjust to increased calls for service, the police department adds 21 seasonal reserve officers to supplement the 91 full-time police officers employed in the town. Similarly, Panama City Beach, Florida can face an influx of 11,500 people to 125,000 on popular holiday weekends requiring an additional 40 officers to be deployed (Gidjunis, 2007).

Compared to full-time officers, these officers are used for a limited amount of time, and they may receive training through an exceptionally abbreviated law enforcement academy. Some states have required as little as 100 hours of pre-service training before giving these officers full powers of arrest, a firearm, and a badge (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011; Weinblatt, 1996b).[1] If the data are accurate, the majority of summer reserve officers are college students, in their early 20s with no prior law enforcement experience, yet they are given a tremendous amount of power and responsibility given their age, training, and experience (Bushey, 1976, Gidjunis, 2007; Terrasi, 2010; Weinblatt, 2000). While there is ample information on full-time police officers, there has been little research on reserve officers and seasonal police officers in particular.

Despite the prevalence of non-regular police officers in agencies throughout the United States, not much is known about this subgroup in policing (Berg & Doerner, 1988; Gill & Mawby, 1990; Greenberg, 1984; Hilal, 2003; Siegal &

Sundeen, 1986; Woodworth, 1973). The bulk of research addressing the topic is found primarily in technical journals, and most articles tend to be descriptive in nature (Aragon, 1993; Ferguson, 2008; Hedlund & Burke, 2006; Hilal, 2010; Weinblatt, 1993, 2001). Specifically, no research to date has provided an in-depth examination of reserve officer programs other than descriptions of seasonal reserve programs in technical journals (Aragon, 1993; Ferguson, 2008; Hedlund & Burke, 2006; Hilal, 2010; Weinblatt, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2001), newspaper articles (Gidjunis, 2007; Graziadei, 2010; Greenland, 2010; Terrasi, 2010), or on police department websites (e.g., Ocean City Maryland Police Department, 2015; Wildwood Police Department, 2015), and a small section in one graduate student thesis (Bushey, 1976). Thus, the current research focuses on expanding the knowledge regarding summer reserve police officers.

Due to the lack of empirical research on the subject, qualitative methods were chosen to provide an in-depth examination of summer police officers. The current study employed participant observation and in-depth interviews with summer police officers employed by a municipal police department in a beach community in Maine. The author of the current research was a summer reserve police officer from May 2008 to August 2010, which allowed him to complete firsthand observations of his fellow summer reserve police officers and their transitional progress into the job (Berg, 2006; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004). Furthermore, the in-depth interviews were used to understand *who* the summer reserve police officers were, their motivations for entering the job, and perceptions of their preparation for the job (Berg, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004; Warren & Karner, 2005).

SUMMER RESERVE POLICE OFFICERS IN AMERICA

According to extant literature, seasonal police officers have typically been used in tourist communities where the population increases during busy months. Whether the municipality is near a popular ski mountain or a beach, seasonal officers are used to supplement the existing police force during common vacation seasons (Bushey, 1976; National Reserve Law Officers Association, 2010). In these communities, police departments face the unusual problem of increased calls for service during busy months of the year and popular holidays.

Existing police forces in these communities face difficulties in handling increased calls for service that can accompany an extreme population influx, and therefore, supplemental personnel are hired to work full-time (i.e., 40 hours per week) during the tourist season. For example, in Ocean City, Maryland, the population increases from 7,049 people in the winter to over 250,000 during the summer, resulting in the hiring of 110 summer officers. (Gidjunis, 2007). To fill these positions, police departments recruit individuals who are available when vacationers flock to popular tourist destinations.

Targeted personnel to fill these positions often include school teachers and college students who have breaks from school during common vacation seasons (Bushey, 1976). Extant reports have indicated that summer officers may possess or are in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and come to police departments in beach communities to gain valuable law enforcement experience (Gidjunis, 2007; Terrasi, 2010).[2]

Bushey (1976) examined two police departments that use seasonal officers, Huntington Beach, California, and Virginia Beach, Virginia. These departments also cited a major population influx during the summer months as a reason to hire supplemental officers who were assigned to oversee the beaches, bar districts, and other areas where tourists congregate. Summer officers patrol these areas on foot, bicycles, ATVs, and, more recently, on Segways (Wildwood Police Department, 2015).

The National Reserve Law Officers Association (2010) indicated that seasonal police officers are most commonly found in beach communities, particularly on the East coast of the United States. While qualifications for these law enforcement officers vary by state, common characteristics have been found throughout jurisdictions. In general, agencies require summer officers to be high school graduates, at least 18 years of age (Rowan College at Gloucester County, 2015), United States citizens, possess a valid driver's license, and have 20/20 vision (Avalon Police Department, 2010; Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011; Ocean City Police Department, 2015).

Training requirements for seasonal officers have been found to vary by state and municipality. Most police departments that employ summer officers are forced to certify these officers through abbreviated training programs. For example, in the 1990s, Massachusetts mandated that their summer reserve officers undertake the "200-hour reserve/intermittent training program at the Plymouth Police Academy" to establish state certification (Weinblatt, 1996b), and undergo a minimum of 310 training hours supplemented by 20 hours of firearms instruction (Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, 2015). In contrast, full-time officers in the state of Massachusetts must undergo an 800-hour, 20-week, pre-service law enforcement academy (Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, 2015). Maine serves as another example of an abbreviated training schedule used to certify summer police officers. In Maine, summer officers received 100 hours of training through the Maine Criminal Justice Pre-Service Academy until 2011. After 2011, the mandated training increased to 200 hours of instruction (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2015), after a reserve officer shot and fatally wounded an individual during an altercation that occurred during a traffic stop (Hench, 2011). On the other hand, their full-time counterparts must partake in 720 hours of training in an academy, spanning an 18 week period (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011).

Abbreviated training programs cover the same materials as full-time law enforcement training curriculums, although comparatively little time is spent on each training topic. In general, full-time and summer reserve academy curricula cover topics including firearms training, Constitutional law, traffic law, laws of arrest, criminal law, and drug identification tactics (Gidjunis, 2007; Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011). By comparison, full-time police curricula have more time allotted for each section. In Maine, full-time officers spend a total of 47 hours on firearms training, while summer police officers undergo just 8 hours of weapons training (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011). Similarly, in Massachusetts, reserve officers receive 20 hours of firearms instruction, while full-time police officers must complete 40 hours of firearms training (Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, 2015).

Despite the discrepancy in training hours, summer officers have often been used in the same capacity as full-time police officers. Upon completion of an abbreviated academy, many summer reserve officers are sent out to patrol busy bar districts and beaches on foot, bicycles, or ATVs. In some departments these officers can be as young as 18 years old, possess no prior police experience, and have received significantly less training than full-time police officers (Rowan College at Gloucester County, New Jersey, 2014). They are then issued a gun and a badge and have the same arrest powers as a full-time police officer.

Seasonal officers are also not limited regarding the type of calls they may be dispatched to. Seasonal officers could be sent to handle a noise complaint or, in some jurisdictions, reserves may respond to a murder scene (Gidjunis, 2007). Because of their proximity to bar districts, beaches, and areas where alcohol consumption is prevalent, fights are a common encounter for summer reserve officers. As bars close, these officers patrol streets infiltrated with rowdy, intoxicated persons who congregate in front of nearby restaurants still serving food. Sometimes during their first shift on the job, summer officers are dispatched to the scene of physical altercations accompanied only by other rookie summer officers. Some reserve officers may even face situations requiring them to draw their gun on perpetrators of crimes (Harkness, 2005). This is a large responsibility for many summer officers considering they are juniors and seniors in college, many in their early 20s, and have no prior law enforcement experience. This is significant considering prior research that indicates full-time officers often feel unprepared to perform job tasks upon graduation from pre-service academies (Alpert & Dunham, 1997; Bradford & Pynes, 1999; Marion, 1998; Ness, 1991; Olivia & Compton, 2011; Werth, 2011).

Because very little is known about this population, it is imperative that research thoroughly investigate this subset of policing to understand who these young men and women working as seasonal officers in law enforcement are, their motivations for entering the job, and what they expect to gain from the experience. These individuals are given an immense responsibility

considering their minimal training and general lack of experience. To date, policing researchers have not thoroughly examined this aspect of law enforcement personnel. Therefore, the intent of this study was to fill the gap in the literature by conducting an exploratory qualitative study of seasonal officers. The research used participant observation and in-depth interviews with summer reserve officers and their full-time counterparts to extensively examine a small sample of these officers. The current study also investigated the perceptions summer reserves held of the hiring process, their training, and their preparedness for the job.

METHODOLOGY

The current research was part of a larger exploratory ethnographic study that examined seasonal reserve police officers employed by a police department in a small Maine beach community. In this department, reserve officers are hired each summer to accommodate the increased demands placed on the police department as a result of a substantial influx of summer residents and tourists. During the summer months, the population of the beach community can increase from a year-round population of 15,000 residents to approximately 50,000-60,000 inhabitants. With a regular full-time staff of just 25 police officers, the summer officers were essential to ensure that the police department can fulfill its commitment to the community. On average, 15 seasonal officers were hired each summer. In the summer of 2010, 17 summer reserves were employed. The author of this research served as a summer police officer in this police department from May of 2008 to August of 2011. His prior experience and contacts within the department were used to gain access to the police department's training modules and standard operating procedures regarding summer reserve police officers. Approval from the administration of the police department to interview and observe seasonal officers was obtained by the researcher in addition to approval from the author's respective university Institutional Review Board.

Because of the lack of previous research investigating this particular population, qualitative research methods were deemed the most appropriate approach for the research. In order to gain a detailed understanding of who reserve officers are, the research used both in-depth interviews (Babbie, 2007; Berg, 2006; Gaubatz, 1995; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Warren & Karner, 2005) and overt participant observation (Babbie, 2007; Berg, 2006; Marquardt, 1986; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004; Van Maanen, 1973; Warren & Karner, 2005). By employing both of these techniques, the perspectives of the reserve officers as well as firsthand, personal experiences of a day in the life as a reserve officer were obtained.

The research was conducted from May 24, 2010 until August 31, 2010. This timeframe was selected because it encompassed the entire socialization process of a reserve police officer, from commencement of training to the

final few weeks of patrol duty. Reserve police officers were recruited from a list of new and returning reserve officers. An initial e-mail was sent to all officers explaining the research project and soliciting their participation in the interviews. This was followed by a presentation outlining the project on their first day of training. All summer officers received release forms stating that their participation was completely voluntary and that all information would remain confidential.

Extensive efforts were taken to build rapport with the new summer reserve officers to reduce the possibility of affecting their behaviors (Berg, 2006; Marquart, 1986; Warren & Karner, 2005). The lead researcher attended some of the initial mandatory training sessions with the participants, including the use of force training. The researcher also participated in an annual law enforcement charity run, workout sessions at a local gym, and pick-up basketball games with the reserve officers. Further, a barbeque was held at the researcher's home in order to build trust with the summer officers to ensure that they were comfortable in the presence of the researcher.

After building rapport with the new officers, the researcher observed the summer officers in their working environment. The participant observation in the current study occured during regular patrol shifts and training sessions for summer reserve officers. While working his scheduled shifts, the principal investigator observed reserve officers; he also conducted observations when he was off-duty. Observations were made during both night and day shifts to examine the daily tasks performed by the reserve officers, beginning on June 18, 2010 and ending on August 20, 2010.

Thorough field notes were taken to capture the experiences of summer officers. The researcher then converted field notes into detailed accounts in a timely fashion (Babbie, 2007, Berg, 2006, Warren & Karner, 2005). Subsequent to the collection of observations, the notes were transcribed as soon as the researcher returned to the police department. This allowed for an accurate account of the research conducted on the summer officers. Also, the researcher obtained print-outs from police dispatch detailing the time of day officers handled calls, as well as the officers who were present during the calls. Observations were recorded throughout the summer to document the transitional progress of summer officers as they assimilated into the job.

The participant observation aspect of the research was accompanied by in-depth interviews (Babbie, 2007; Berg, 2006; Gaubatz, 1995; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Warren & Karner, 2005). This method permitted the study to capture first-hand accounts of the summer officers' experiences. The in-depth interviews, as Gaubatz (1995) notes, allow participants to "explain it for themselves" (p. 205), and were conducted with 15 reserve police officers. Of these 15 officers, 6 were returning officers with at least one year of experience, while the remaining 9 were new officers.[3] Interviews with new reserve officers were conducted in two parts. The first

interview investigated their experiences during their first week on the job, and the second explored any changes that occurred in their perceptions of the job as the summer progressed. Returning summer reserves participated in one interview.[4]

Interviews with summer officers were conducted in private and informal settings at their homes, at the home of the researcher, or over lunches and dinners at various restaurants. All interviews with participants were recorded with a digital recording device to ensure the accuracy of the information (Warren & Karner, 2005). The information gathered during this study remained confidential in a locked safe located in the principal investigator's secure locker. There were no identifying names in the recordings, and the participant's names were not revealed to anyone (Berg, 2006; Warren & Karner, 2005). The researcher converted the recordings to his computer and stored them in a password secured folder. Upon completion of the study, the recordings of the interviews were destroyed to ensure that their contents were not released. Once the recordings were transferred to a computer file, the researcher transcribed the dialogues and stored them in the password secured file.

Shorthand field notes were also transferred into detailed depictions of observations made during work in the field. Once these transcripts and observations were completed, the researcher divided them into categories based on the general outlines of topics addressed in the interviewing protocol (Berg, 2006; Warren & Karner, 2005). For the purposes of this study, the qualitative data were divided into the following categories: (a) motivations for becoming a summer officer; (b) perceptions of the hiring process; and (c) perceptions of their expedited training.

FINDINGS

In the following sections, findings from the participant observation and interview data are used to illustrate the individuals who become a summer reserve officer, their perceptions of the interview process, training, and preparedness for the duties of performing as a summer police officer.

Motivations for Becoming a Summer Officer

Who becomes a summer officer?

Officers who participated in the interviews during the summer of 2010 were all males ranging in age from 21 to 25 years old, were currently enrolled in college, or were recent college graduates with little to no prior experience in law enforcement. The oldest summer officer was 25 years old and had been a member of the program for four years. The youngest officer, at 21 years of age, was entering his final year of college and was a rookie in the police department. In total, 1 officer was a year away from obtaining a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, 11 officers held bachelor's degrees in crimi-

nal justice, sociology, or psychology, and 3 officers were pursuing master's degrees in criminal justice. Participants learned about the summer reserve officer program in various ways. Five officers reported learning about the job through the Great Bay Community College Police Test. This test evaluates an individual's general knowledge pertaining to math, language, and reading comprehension. Once the exam is completed, test scores are sent to 42 police departments in Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire. Departments receiving scores from the test then contact and recruit potential candidates for full-time and summer officer positions. One officer said:

> I learned about the program here through the Great Bay Community College Policing Test. I took the tests, then the department got my scores and recruited me be sending an application through the mail and some general requirements to go along with it. I had to send in the application, a 500 word essay about who my hero was, and set up an appointment for an oral board meeting.

Two other officers learned about the summer reserve officer program through the criminal justice department at their respective colleges. One officer stated:

> Every year the Criminal Justice Department at my college sends out an e-mail about police positions throughout the New England area. I thought it was interesting that I could essentially become a cop without making the commit to start a career in it. So I contacted them and started the application process.

The remaining 8 officers heard about the summer officer positions from family members, friends, or individuals who were previously employed as summer officers in the targeted department. As one officer explained:

I learned about the summer reserve program from a high school friend that got a job in a neighboring town. I saw on Facebook that he was working as a summer cop and messaged him about how to become one. He told me about all of the reserve officer programs in the coastal communities. I found our department online and applied.

Testing the waters of law enforcement

Participants provided a range of anecdotes to illustrate their reasons to seek employment as a summer reserve police officer. The majority of summer reserve officers enter the job to gain experience in law enforcement and find out if they are suited for a career in the profession. When asked why he became a summer reserve officer one first year officer replied:

> I just graduated with a Criminal Justice degree. I had two internships with police departments before I came here; one with a juvenile unit and another with a crime scene investigation unit. But most of that work entailed filing paperwork.

> Other than that, my only job has been landscaping. So I wanted to become a summer officer to see if I would like a career as a police officer. I have always thought that I wanted to do it, but you never know until you try it out.

Another respondent stated:

> I'm going into my last year of college. My degree is Criminal Justice, but I wanted to make sure that I don't put a ton of effort into finding a full-time job when I graduate if this isn't the right career for me. I figured that this job would give me a taste of what the job is like even though we're on bikes and foot patrol. But other than that I just wanted to get away from my old summer job. I was a mover before this, and this is a little bit better for my resume.

Career purgatory

While most summer officers were testing the waters to see if a career in law enforcement would be fitting, some had entirely different motives for entering the job. It seemed that these officers were unsure about what career to pursue after college and were in career purgatory. These participants became summer officers to buy some time before deciding on a profession. As one returning summer officer said:

> I was a psychology major in college with a minor in Criminal Justice. I had no idea what I wanted to do after I graduated. My CJ advisor sent me an email telling me about the opportunity to be a summer cop. I thought why not; I never really wanted to be a cop but it would be something fun to do while I figure out what I want to do with my life.

Another officer concurred, saying that he was unsure where to go with his career so he applied for the job to earn money in the summer and travel during the winter.

> It was something that fit for where I was in my life. I was graduating and becoming a summer officer didn't require a three year contract like a full-time position would. It allowed me a lifestyle that enabled travel during part of the year and guaranteed work each summer to fund it. So it just fit into the kind of lifestyle that I wanted to lead for a while after graduation. I travel in the winter and have been to 28 countries. I've had jobs in some of the countries teaching scuba diving and working in an elephant rehabilitation center. But in most of the countries it is cheap enough that I don't have to work during the winter.

Networking, résumé building, and stepping stones

In addition to considering law enforcement as a full-time profession or being in limbo about what career path to enter, participants credited their interest in the job to network or build their résumés and saw the experience as a stepping stone into a law enforcement career. Explaining the networking opportunities allotted to summer reserve officers, one officer said:

> I'd like to get the experience and get my feet wet in police work. It's a stepping stone to fulltime work. I expect to meet a lot of people and build my résumé. The job is a great networking opportunity because cops (in the targeted department) are well connected. Chiefs in big cities were summer cops here. Some ended up being state troopers in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maine. Then some have gone onto federal jobs in the Marshals, Border Patrol, and even the FBI. Working here is a good opportunity to get contacts in big places so it will be easier to get a full-time job.

Referring to the ability to build his law enforcement résumé, a returning summer officer said he views the job as a résumé builder:

> I think if you can show that you have put X amount of years into law enforcement it shows your commitment to the lifestyle in the event you want to pursue a career. Being a certified police officer for a few years will give me an edge in the job market on people that are fresh out of college and have been a camp counselor every summer. It just shows them that I'm competent enough to have worked here for a few years and have got good reviews from the administration.

Another participant said that although summer officers have not received the same level of training as full-timers, the experience is something that can be used to build a future law enforcement career on.

> I wanted to develop interaction and communication skills. In police work you are always talking to people and talking on the radio. The department forces you to write parking tickets. So you get really good at dealing with angry people quick. They (the police department) also require us to go out and talk to businesses. We had to go out and be the community connection for the department. I figured after working two years here I would have a good idea of how to deal with people. Communication with the public, that's what police work is all about and I think building those skills here will help out a lot in the future.

In sum, the participants discussed three primary motives for becoming a summer police officer. Some sought to use the experience to obtain some hands-on law enforcement experience before committing to a career as a

full-time police officer. Others were unsure about their future plans, and used the job as a way to earn money while deciding on a career path. Finally, some respondents viewed the opportunity as a way to network, and build a foundation for a full-time career in law enforcement.

Perceptions of the Hiring Process

All new officers must submit an application for employment for the position, participate in a panel interview with full-time members of the police department, and submit to a background check. For most of the summer officers, the process was their first experience with a formal police interview.[5] All participants were asked to describe the interview process they underwent prior to being hired within the police department.

Application process

The first step of the application process for a summer reserve officer is to fill out the police department's mandatory application which is very straightforward. New applicants for the job must also complete a 500 word essay about their life hero or an experience that changed their life. The essay gives the police department an idea of the applicant's writing style and ability to communicate in report writing. All participants said that this portion was by far the least nerve-wracking portion of the interview process.

Panel interview

Subsequent to completing the application and essay, select candidates for summer reserve officer positions are scheduled for a panel interview or oral board. In the panel interview, five officers and/or sergeants question each applicant. Also present in the interview is the Patrol Lieutenant, a town selectman,[6] an administrative assistant from the police department, and a member of the community.[7] The purpose of the panel interview is to test the character of summer police officer applicants. All summer reserve officers said that the panel interview was the most intimidating portion of the interview process, attributing their anxiety about the interview to lack of preparedness, uncertainty about what they would be asked, and the fear of being eliminated from candidacy for the position. One summer officer recalled:

> In the panel interview, they (the panel) played the good cop/bad cop role. Some were supportive of your answers, and some would play devil's advocate. It really made me second guess everything I said. I thought I failed after I left.

Another participant said:

> The (panel) interview was what really took me aback. I was expecting a similar interview to the ones I had been through before for non-law enforcement jobs. You know, one-on-one, relaxed, "tell me a little bit about yourself" type interviews. So this was much more intimidating with the panel. You have to sit across from five sergeants and officers that know how

> to mess with you. They definitely pose some theoretical situations. Regardless of the responses you give them, they attack what you say. So it makes it stressful.

An underlying trend that emerged from participants' responses was that summer officers thought the hypothetical situations posed by panel members in the interview were what made the interview arduous. One hypothetical situation put forward in the oral board interviews involved a full-time officer who came to work intoxicated. Panel members asked potential employees what actions they would take if they could smell alcohol on the breath of a full-time officer or sergeant while at work. Participants noted that this was the toughest question to answer because they wanted to show their loyalty to other officers while assuring the panel that they would maintain the integrity of the police department. As one first year summer officer commented:

> Afterwards (the panel interview) I felt like I failed because they (the panel) attack all of your answers. They asked "what would you do if a full-time officer came up to you on your first day and had clearly been drinking?" I said I would report them to my sergeant because it's dangerous to drink on the job. Then the panel started attacking me, saying that I'm a rat and can't be trusted if I am going to tell on superior officers. I thought they hated me.

A second scenario posed to interviewees of the oral board pertained to police officer gratuities. Panel members described a situation in which a member of the public offered a service to an officer free of charge. Some of the free items included coffee from Dunkin Donuts, beverages from convenience stores, and free food at restaurants. One summer reserve office recalled being asked about receiving free food in a restaurant:

> The Sergeant asked me what I'd do if he and I were getting lunch and the owner of the restaurant told us our meals were free. The sergeant said he would take the free meal, so I said I would too because I wouldn't want to disrespect him. Then a few questions afterwards they asked what I'd do if I pulled the restaurant owner over for blatantly running a red light. I said I would give him a ticket. But the owner contested that he gives cops free meals to get out of tickets like this. Then the panel members started yelling at me for taking bribes. I was so confused, and I thought there was no way in hell I would get the job after that.

Finally, some participants reported that the panel interview was the most informative portion of the application process. A few participants admitted that they had very limited knowledge of what a summer reserve officer would be required to do. According to respondents, they were unsure

of the level of police powers they would be given and what their duties would consist of. A respondent noted

> In the interview, I was told I would be a reserve police officer with all of the powers of a normal police officer. I didn't realize that I would even have a baton or pepper spray, let alone a gun. I thought that we were just going to be meter maids; I didn't think I would even be able to arrest anyone. I remember thinking it was crazy that they would let us do all of that with so little training.

Another summer reserve officer responded similarly

> They (the panel) asked me what I would do if I was writing parking tickets along one of the beaches, and I saw a fight break out down on the sand. I told them I would call them to report it. I had no idea I would have full arrest powers. I honestly thought we would be like a junior cop or something. When they told me that in the interview I was really shocked. We don't even get half the training that full-time officers get, so I was a little confused when I learned that.

The respondents in these two cases exhibited the general lack of knowledge that some summer reserve officers have about the program before applying. Only four respondents had prior knowledge of the job, having had friends or older siblings who had been reserve officers previously. The others were astonished at the amount of power allotted to them after minimal training. As one officer said "I was surprised, we didn't even have to pass a physical fitness test to get in. It just seemed too easy."[8]

Background check

To conclude the hiring process, summer reserve officers must submit to a thorough background check. Unlike hiring practices for full-time officers, summer reserve officers in Maine are not required to complete psychological evaluations or polygraph tests.[9] Instead, police departments rely on thorough background checks before hiring. In the current department, officers are asked to complete a self-reported criminal history form, consisting of questions about prior criminal activity including drug use, alcohol use, drunk driving, and involvement in assaults, among other criminal activities. Rather than perform laborious and expensive polygraph examinations, the police department warns officers that if they lie on this one criminal background check, it could follow them through the rest of their career. They inform the applicants that for full-time employment, polygraph tests are mandatory and that wherever they go, their responses in this initial criminal history form will follow them. Respondents said that the threat of ruining their careers for lying was daunting. One respondent noted:

> They ask you about every possible thing you could have done wrong. I mean speeding tickets, shoplifting, underage drinking, and what drugs you have tried. I was terrified. I thought if I told them some of the stuff I did when I was a kid that I'd be fired. On the other hand though, I've wanted to be a full-time cop my entire life so I didn't want to ruin those chances by lying. In the end, telling the truth worked out, but I was a nervous wreck for two weeks.

This example shows how one respondent was frightened into telling the truth in the background check. Although the method may not be foolproof, threatening an applicant's entire future in law enforcement can be a very efficient way for the targeted police department to force applicants into telling the truth. All participants noted that admitting their personal criminal history to a police department was an awkward but necessary part of the application process.

Following the completion of the personal criminal history paperwork, summer officers are asked to provide information to the police department's detectives pertaining to their previous addresses, employers, and four non-family references who know them well. Detectives use this information to delve into applicants' real history and to examine any character flaws that may not have come forward in prior parts of the interview. The detectives make phone calls to the most recent employers and the four references provided by the applicants. They also contact neighbors, college roommates, and sometimes professors to gauge the character of each applicant. Respondents commented on how it feels to have a police detective meticulously investigating your past. One officer was astonished that they called his childhood neighbor. He said:

> They even called *Mrs. Smith*[10]! She was my neighbor growing up. Man, she hated me because I broke her window at least three times with a baseball. She yelled at me for everything; loud music, driving too fast, having too many people over when my parents were out of town. I guess she must have held back the anger towards me because I'm here now. But when I found out they called her, I was nervous. I really didn't like them prying into my past so much.

Another respondent mentioned the awkwardness the investigation created for his college friends. He recalled coming back to his dorm room after his roommate had been contacted by one of the detectives.

> I got back from lunch and my roommate told me he just got off the phone with the cops. He said some detective called him, and he thought it was about the party he was at the night before. The police came and broke it up. He thought he was getting in trouble for underage drinking. But instead, the detective asked

> him about all of my drinking habits, if I was an angry person, and if he could trust me. I should have warned him that I put his name down and he might get a call from the police department. But I didn't even think they would call him.

Fear of ruining the chances of employment because of the background check was an underlying theme among the respondents. Since this was the first background investigation for the majority of participants, having their past revealed to employers was a distressing experience to endure. All respondents recalled being taken aback initially by the thoroughness of the background investigation.

In summary, respondents viewed the hiring process as a nerve-wracking experience. For the majority of the participants (11 out of 17), this was their first experience with a law enforcement hiring process. Although the reserve officer employment application is not as meticulous as full-time applications are, participants indicated their concerns about obtaining employment due to insufficiencies in the interview process or their past behaviors.

Perceptions of Training

Summer reserve officers in the focus police department were required to attend an abbreviated version of the full-time police academy training consisting of 100 hours of in-class instruction and an additional 80 hours of instruction from full-time officers within the police department. Summer officers were asked to describe their feelings of preparedness to perform police duties subsequent to their training.[11]

It should be noted that at the time of the current study, summer reserve police officers, cumulatively, received less than one-seventh of the state mandated training required to become a full-time police officer. Still, after completing the 100 hour Law Enforcement Pre-Service (LEPS) Academy, summer reserve officers are given a badge and firearm and possess full arrest powers. The observed department did, however, supplement the LEPS 100 hours training module with 80 hours of in-house instruction which is scenario-based and intends to expose summer officers to a variety of situations they may encounter. Yet, while full-time police officers received an additional six months of field training by a Field Training Officer, the summer reserve officers did not receive this at the time of the data collection; rather they had to learn on the job.

Perceptions of LEPS 100 hour course and in-house training.

Respondents' perceptions of the LEPS 100 hour course were generally negative. Returning summer officers seemed to be more skeptical and pessimistic about the amount of training they received. They attributed this cynicism to a lack of situational based training and misperceptions of what they would actually encounter while on the job. The majority of the veteran reserve officers said that the training they received was inadequate and left

them unqualified to deal with the situations they encountered. Furthermore, the returning seasonal officers viewed the training process as a way for the department to use them for patrol while escaping liability for the mistakes made by reserve officers.

When asked what he thought about the 100 hour course, one participant with four years of experience said mockingly:

> The 100 hours course is a joke. It's just enough to take the liability off of the police department and onto the reserves. Myself and everyone else go down the hill[12] on our first day and think "what the hell just happened?" You're thrown all this information in a very short period of time, and we are expected to know just enough to make us dangerous. Like we know enough to be dangerous, but they document the training so it's on us if we screw up.

This anecdote indicates the frustration of one respondent with the type of training provided to summer officers. Other respondents echoed his remarks believing the course made them proficient in the law and the limits of their authority, but it failed to prepare them for the situations they would encounter. Another veteran officer responded to the same question by saying:

> The training itself doesn't help. Random people talk to us and we have no idea what we are supposed to tell them. We come out of a school setting where we need to know enough to pass a test, but here you need to know these laws and how to implement them because it's *your job*! I took the in class and in-house training seriously but the real training came through working on the job not in the classroom.

One respondent shared a similar view in regards to the LEPS 100 hour course:

> Oh my goodness. I consider myself to be a good learner but I thought it (the 100 hour course) was a really poor class. I wasn't impressed by it at all. I feel like I was much better equipped when I was trained by the department. I think that some of the instructors were good but most didn't teach, they were just spewing stories and information. It's just a class that allows them to remove the liability from the police department to the individual officer.

Although most returning officers had pessimistic views of the LEPS training, their comments indicated in-house training was more beneficial. They believed that the scenarios provided them with some real experience with the crimes they would encounter. One veteran summer reserve explained why the in-house training was more useful for him:

> The 100 hour course was a waste compared to the in-house stuff. There is no experience like firsthand experience, so the classes taught us nothing. If I hadn't gone through the practical scenarios, I would not have been as prepared. The in-house training was much better; we did a lot of situation stuff that helped me. Like FSTs [Field Sobriety Tests], without that I would have been lost and had no idea what to do with a drunk driver. If we didn't have that training, I would have been unprepared. I wouldn't know how to deal with people lying to me. I'd be totally blindsided.

Many veteran summer officers, like this one, indicated that scenario based training is more effective. They believed that summer officers are given a large amount of responsibility with minimal experience. These participants opined that summer reserve officers would benefit from more situation based training. In-house training not only prepared them more for the job, but it allowed them to apply laws learned in the 100 hour course in simulated settings.

First year reserve officers' responses closely mirrored the views of veteran respondents toward the LEPS and in-house training. In their initial interview, rookie respondents displayed negative views of the LEPS training and favored the in-house instruction. In several interviews, participants verbalized their concern with the instruction method used in the 100 hour course. One respondent reflected on his training experience saying, "The 100 hour course was just dry, boring, and seemed like it was more to ensure liability would be lifted off of the police department." Another first year officer agreed that the course was boring and failed to prepare him for the duties of the job:

> [The 100 hour course] was basically just a law class. It wasn't taken very seriously by the students. Basically the instructors were just saying they needed to cover the material for liability issues. I thought it was rushed. They didn't have much time to cover everything. I would have liked to have more hands-on practical work. The situations they told us about were extremes, not how to deal with day to day things.

They believed that the practical applications of the laws they learned in mock scenarios prepared them more adequately. In addition, the groups were smaller, and the instructors were full-time officers in the department, offering more one-on-one time with each trainee. When comparing the in-house training to the 100 hours course, one respondent said:

> The in-house training is by far better than the 100 hour course. It was more interactive and it was a smaller environment. There were only nine of us out there so we had a full-time guy helping each of us individually. That was really helpful to me.

Perhaps even more alarming than the low amount of scenario based training is the firearms instruction portion of the LEPS 100 hour certification. The LEPS curriculum allots just eight hours of instruction to firearms. The only requirement for reserve officers to gain firearm certification is that they hit a target with 40 out of 50 rounds in two consecutive sessions. Firearms qualifications take place on one Saturday during the 100 hour course. On this day, as many as 100 officers are streamlined through the qualification requirements. Up to 20 officers line up with an instructor behind them and are coached through firing 50 rounds at a target from various distances. For some aspiring reserve officers, this is the first time they have fired a weapon. The majority of cadets who have experience with a firearm before have never been trained in combat fire, nor have they fired a handgun before.

Both first year and veteran participants were asked to describe their experiences at the firing range. Three respondents revealed that they had not handled or fired a gun of any type before firearms qualifications. Six participants said that they had limited experience with shooting rifles, but had never used a handgun. The remaining six respondents indicated that they had some experience with firing handguns, but had never been through a firearms qualification process. One reserve officer with no experience firing a weapon commented on the training he received.

> It was my first time shooting a gun, I didn't know much about guns. I actually didn't know anything about guns. When they first gave it to us I learned about the parts and pieces. My first time shooting I was uncomfortable and didn't even know how to hold the gun. Needless to say I failed the first qualification. But they worked with me a little bit; then I was able to pass eventually.

Another first time shooter recalled:

> [I] went in green. It was intense. They had us shoot at different distances, and we had to hit the target 40 out of 50 times. I could remember my hands were shaking, and I couldn't stop them from moving. I was that nervous.

Officers who indicated they had fired a weapon before were also intimidated by the qualification process. Respondents said the process itself was what was intimidating. Each qualifier was assigned one firearm instructor. Instructors stood directly behind the qualifier and picked apart their shooting techniques. Suggestions for more efficient shooting were offered, however, respondents recalled the experience as unnerving and stressful. The candidate explained:

> I've been using guns since I was a kid, not a handgun though. But it's a nerve-wracking experience because you have someone standing over your shoulder telling you everything you are doing is wrong. You get through it, but I think we need more than just one day at the range.

In a similar vein, a participant detailed his apprehension about the firearm qualification process for reserve officers:

> It was the first time I'd ever shot a handgun. I did well enough, but I think that the procedures could be improved. I thought our instructor who introduced the guns to us was nice. But we don't get to shoot nearly enough to become proficient. All of the officers that I talked to said that we need to shoot much more than we do and I agree…At your initial qualification you have 200 people just trying to get 40 out of 50 within the target. You're kind of rushed through, and I still don't feel comfortable drawing my weapon or shooting.

Participants' overall views of the training were negative. While most respondents viewed the in-house training they received as beneficial, they were dissatisfied with the 100 hour course and firearms instruction. Time constraints on police departments that rely on summer reserve officers necessitate the quick and abbreviated training curriculum due to time and resource constraints. Most respondents agreed that more hands-on, scenario based instruction would be advantageous to the inexperienced reserve officers.

From personal experience, the researcher's views of training procedures coincide with the respondents' depictions. Learning laws and in-class training is crucial to becoming a law enforcement officer. However, understanding through hands-on training gives the police cadet realistic settings that he or she will inevitably encounter. The participants' insights on the training process illustrate their concern with the amount and type of training they receive from the LEPS certification course. The lack of scenario-based training seems to be the most significant shortcoming of the state mandated training. Participant observation, however, revealed that full-time officers were readily available and willing to provide backup for reserve officers. Moreover, several of the full-time officers in the department had also served as reserve officers both in the reporting agency and other departments. Accordingly, the full-time officers served as mentors to the reserves and seemed understand the necessity to assist reserve officers by providing backup, giving advice, and taking the lead on more serious calls. Finally, the reserve officers patrolled on foot or bicycle in congested beach and tourist areas which restricted their mobility. Subsequently, the common calls that reserve officers responded to were petty theft complaints and parents who had lost sight of their children briefly. To be sure, the majority of the calls handled by reserve officers in this study were not very serious, and when more serious calls arose, full-time officers provided sufficient backup or took over the call.

Through participant observation of the firearms qualifications process, the researcher recognized an overwhelming anxiousness among the summer officers. For individuals who have never held a gun, let alone fired one, the experience is daunting. If an individual fails to qualify the first time, ev-

eryone at the firing range is aware of his/her insufficiency. Despite the fact that the majority of officers eventually pass, the nervousness of the officers was apparent. Nearly every qualifier was visibly uneasy with the process. However, most made it through and obtained certification.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The research findings from this exploratory study support much of the literature which describes the background of the individuals who apply to become summer reserve police officers. Summer reserve officers participating in this study were current college students or recent college graduates. The youngest participant was 21 years old and the oldest was 25 years of age. Eleven participants had earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, sociology, or psychology. One participant was entering his final year of college pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. The remaining three participants were currently working toward obtaining a master's degree in criminal justice. Participants learned about the summer reserve officer program through advertisements at their respective colleges, police recruit testing centers, or word of mouth from acquaintances familiar with departments employing summer officers.

The qualitative data indicate that participants entered the job for three basic reasons. First, respondents suggested they became summer reserves to test the waters of law enforcement, prior to making a career out of it. Second, some respondents indicated that their future occupational life was in a state of uncertainty, and being reserve officers gave them the time and money needed to delay a decision. Third, respondents looked to build their résumés and networking opportunities by becoming summer reserve officers, using the job as a gateway towards a full-time law enforcement position. Prior research suggests that this is the primary reason for an individual to become a reserve officer in general. Because the majority of reserve officers expect to enter a career in law enforcement, they exploit the opportunity to build a foundation for becoming a full-time law enforcement officer (Aragon, 1993; Arwood et al., 2005; Weinblatt, 1991a). Similarly, participants in this study sought to use their relationships with full-time officers to obtain employment with other agencies. Respondents recognized that their service as a reserve officer provided them the opportunity to network through their contacts with full-time officers. Furthermore, participants believed that their experience as reserve officers would make them more marketable when searching for full-time employment.

The extant literature regarding summer police officers does not allude to any of the issues found in this study regarding their perceptions of the hiring process. For 11 of the participants, this was their first experience with a police hiring process. Every participant indicated that the employment application was the least intimidating requirement of the hiring process. The

panel interview and background check, however, produced the most anxiety among respondents. Since this was the first police hiring process endured by most participants, they were unfamiliar with its seriousness. In the panel interview, respondents recalled feeling attacked and unprepared for the types of questions posed by full-time officers. The most problematic questions asked involved hypothetical situations that tested respondents' ethics and ability to remain calm in stressful situations. Some respondents believed they failed the oral interview and that their chances of obtaining employment were ruined. Furthermore, three participants admitted they were considerably unfamiliar with the functions of summer reserve officers. They said they did not know they would be afforded full arrest powers, that they would be carrying a gun, and were surprised at the level of responsibility they would be given after minimal training.

In regard to the background check, reserve officers said that they were surprised at the extent their past was investigated. They commented on their acquaintances who were contacted by detectives of the department. Respondents recalled being surprised that their past behaviors and relationships could be detrimental to their chances of being hired.

The third portion of the interview with summer officers, also unexamined by prior literature, pertained to their perceptions of the training they received. Similar to other reserve officer programs, summer officers in the examined department receive less training than full-time police officers (Aragon, 1993). Participants were generally dissatisfied with the training they received. Respondents indicated that the training was mundane, and their ability to retain information on the in class topics was limited. They recalled feeling unprepared during their first week on the job. They were more positive toward the hands-on in-house training they received. The qualitative data show that they preferred the hands-on approach because it provided them the opportunity to work through potential interactions they would encounter on the street and beach.

Summer officers were asked to specifically comment on the firearms training they received, and most indicated that they were very uncomfortable with the training. Many said that although the instructors supervising them were qualified and helpful, they believed they needed to fire their weapon more to become efficient. Sending officers to patrol with a small amount of instruction on the use of firearms is problematic. Participants all acknowledged the potential problems that could arise from their lack of training. The focus department, however, has yet to have a summer officer sued civilly for their actions or injured while on patrol. Other departments in the state have had problems with reserve officer liability. For example, one reserve in another department was involved in an officer involved shooting that resulted in the death of an individual (Hench, 2011), but this incident was ruled a justified shooting. Undoubtedly, the lack of liability issues in the responding agency are because the department ensures that full-time offi-

cers are available to back up reserve officers when needed. Specifically, reserve officers typically handled less serious calls (e.g., petty theft), and when they were dispatched to more serious situations, full-time officers provided backup and advice or completely took over the call. Moreover, the full-time officers served as mentors to the reserves; they provided feedback and advice on how to handle calls and made sure that they were quick to respond when reserve officers had questions or needed assistance.

Parallel to the findings in the current study, research regarding police officer perceptions of their ability to perform daily job requirements indicates that officers are dissatisfied with the ability of pre-service training to prepare them for the occupation (Alpert & Dunham, 1997; Marion, 1998; Ness, 1991; Olivia & Compton, 2010). These findings are problematic, for law enforcement officers' perceptions and behaviors are driven by the initial training received prior to engaging in patrol activities (Bradford & Pynes, 1999; Marion, 1998).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Several practical recommendations for improving the experience of summer officers arose from the research. First, the hours required for the 100 hour part-time officer academy should be increased to mirror seasonal officer training in other states. For example, in New Jersey, summer officers are required to complete 460 hours of required training (Cape May County, 2015), while training for reserve officers in Massachusetts is a minimum of 310 hours with 20 hours of firearms training (Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, 2015). Summer officers indicated their preference for scenario-based in-house training versus classroom instruction. Participants believed they benefited more from simulated traffic stops, building searches, and field sobriety tests. Thus, training focus should shift from classroom instruction to scenario-based training to better prepare summer officers for their job. Second, summer reserve officers identified their dissatisfaction with the firearms training. For those entrusted with the responsibility to use such a tool in a high-risk situation, one would hope for better training in this area, to include more firearms and shoot/don't shoot training. Finally, respondents often indicated the need for a field training officer mentor, a service that could be provided by veteran summer officers. New summer officers should be teamed with veteran summer officers during their first several weeks on the street to streamline the learning process and familiarize rookies with their patrol tasks.

It should be noted that the Maine Criminal Justice Academy has (on its own) increased the training provided to seasonal officers after the conclusion of this study. Specifically, the 100 hour LEPS course has been increased to 200 hours of instruction. Seasonal officers are now mandated to attend 40 hours of online training, accompanied by 80 hours of in-class scenario

based instruction. Additionally, Maine now requires that seasonal officers meet physical fitness requirements, including a one-minute pushup test, one-minute sit up test, and a 1.5 mile run. Finally, police departments are now required to complete 80 hours of on-the-job observation, to evaluate the performance of seasonal officers during their initial transition into the job (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2015).

Similar recommendations have been made to improve the training of full-time law enforcement officers. Many studies suggest a shift from traditional law enforcement training to Problem Based Learning (PBL) practices. For example, Werth (2011) studied the use of PBL in law enforcement training to enhance officer preparedness through "building problem-solving, decision-making, multi-tasking and collaboration skills" (p. 326). The goal of PBL is the use of situational learning to expose trainees to realistic calls for service and problems. Through PBL, cadets are better prepared to adequately respond to calls while working in the field (Werth, 2011). Perhaps PBL methods would be beneficial to improve the preparedness of summer police officers as well.

While providing the first data-based study of the unique role of seasonal police officers in the field of policing, this study is not without its limitations including the relatively small size of the examined police department. This limitation is attributable to the accessibility of the research department, for during the time frame of the research, the department employed just 17 summer reserve officers and 25 full-time police officers. Further, only 15 out of 17 summer reserve officers participated in interviews. The small sample size restricts the generalizability of the findings to larger police departments with more seasonal officers. However, due to the dearth of knowledge pertaining to summer reserve officers, the findings in the current study are significant to policing research.

Second, the lead researcher's prior status as a summer reserve officer could have limited his ability to be objective during the research. Because the researcher was employed by the targeted department for two years prior to the study, some experiences portrayed by respondents could have been taken for granted. To address this issue, the researcher took extensive efforts to remain unbiased. He continually probed respondents to elaborate on their responses when they discussed topics he was familiar with. Furthermore, the researcher requested that participants treat him as an outsider possessing little to no knowledge about summer officers during the interviews. Despite the researcher's previous experience as a summer reserve, he was constantly cognizant of the importance objectivity played in the study.

Summer reserve officers make up a substantial population in police departments that serve coastal tourist communities in the United States during the summer season. Prior policing research has failed to examine this unique form of sworn law enforcement personnel. This study provides insight into

the training and occupation of summer reserve officers, in an attempt to address this gap in the literature. Due to the small sample size, the current study does not generalize about all reserve officers or programs; rather, it aims to provoke further investigation of seasonal police officers in other jurisdictions. Future research should focus on how summer officer perceive their role and ability to function and their capacity for learning their patrol tasks in such a short time frame. There is also the need to explore the relationship between new and veteran summer officers, as well as all summer officers with full-time police officers of the department. This research should include interviews with full-time officers, as well as focus groups that include full-time and seasonal officers. This would allow for a more complete picture of the relationship between seasonal officers and full-time personnel. Moreover, research should examine additional types of seasonal officers used in other jurisdictions that do not carry firearms (Howard County Police Department, 2015). Specifically, some jurisdictions use unarmed police cadets to increase their forces during peak seasons; future studies could compare the experiences of non-sworn, seasonal police cadets with those of sworn summer officers. The addition of further studies pertaining to summer and seasonal reserve officers will help build an understanding of this unique subgroup of police officers in America, the summer cops.

ENDNOTES

1 Since the current study was conducted, the Maine Criminal Justice Academy training has been extended to 200 hours of instruction that must be completed before certification as a law enforcement officer. Specifically, seasonal officers are required to complete a 40 hour online training curriculum. Additionally, the officers receive 80 hours of instruction using scenario based instruction in the classroom. Seasonal officers are now required to complete a physical fitness assessment that incorporates a one-minute pushup test, one-minute sit up test, and requires cadets to run 1.5 miles. Finally, the curriculum has been updated to include an additional 80 hours of on-the-job observation by their sponsoring police department (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2015).

2 Some police departments also use police cadets to supplement extant police personnel during busy tourist seasons (Howard County Police Department, 2015). The focus of this study, however, is on officers that are specifically employed by law enforcement agencies during the summer months.

3 There were 17 summer reserve officers employed during the time of the study. However, 1 summer officer refused to participate in interviews, while the second officer abstaining from partaking in the interviews was the lead researcher in this study.

4 Interviews with returning summer officers combined aspects of the new reserves' first and second interviews.

5 For eleven of the 15 summer reserve officer participants this was their first police hiring process experience.

6 Town selectmen are elected officials similar to a city council member.

7 The community member must be a person who is not affiliated with the police department or any town employer (i.e., the Parks and Recreation Department or the Town Manager's Office).

8 In 2011, the State of Maine made it mandatory that reserve officers pass the same physical fitness requirements as full-time officers. However at the time of the research there were no physical fitness tests required to be eligible for the job.

9 In other states (e.g., New Jersey), seasonal officers, called Class II Special Officers, must complete a psychological evaluation and polygraph test (Rowan College at Gloucester County, 2015).

10 All names used in the participants' responses will be substituted with false names to protect the confidentiality of the respondent.

11 Again, it should be noted that the Maine Criminal Justice Academy has extended the 100 LEPS training to 200 hours of instruction. This training has been extended to include a 40 hour online training curriculum, 80 hours of in-class scenario based training, and 80 hours of supervision by their sponsoring agency, prior to certification as a Maine law enforcement officer (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2015).

12 All areas patrolled by summer officers are within walking or bicycle distance from the police department. The police department is located on a hill to the east of all patrol areas. When making reference to the "hill" the respondents are referring to leaving the police department to begin their patrol shift.

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