



Staffing Shortages Among Challenges Facing the Marine Division

The undertaking of a thematic inspection of the Marine Division, a non-geographical formation of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) in July, unearthed several issues, which has served to weaken the division's effectiveness in carrying out its mandate to prevent and combat crime along the coastline and in the territorial waters of Jamaica. This is in addition to, impacting on its ability to discharge other functions. Among the critical issues uncovered were: the existence of a severe shortage in human resources and the average compliance in the management of records.

The PCOA Team inspected the headquarters of the Marine Division in Kingston and 12 of its 13 outposts - Newport East in Kingston; Bowden in St. Thomas; Port Antonio Errol Flynn Marina in Portland; Oracabessa-James Bond Beach in St. Mary; Ocho Rios Marina in St. Ann; Glistening Waters Marina in Falmouth, Trelawny; Montego Bay Port Authority Pier in St. James; Negril Police Station in Westmoreland; Bluefields Police Station in Westmorland; Hendricks Wharf, Black River in St. Elizabeth; Old Harbour Bay Police Station, St. Catherine and New



PCOA Member, Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Peter Brady (right) accompanied Senior Director, Inspections and Monitoring, Andrew Beaumont (centre) to inspect a vessel at the Marine Division headquarters in Newport

Causeway Fishing Complex, Portmore in St. Catherine. Due to logistical issues, the Pedro Cays was not included in the inspection. The Division was also not equipped with the necessary human capital to carry out its functions. This was reflected in the fact that while the division had a staff complement of 182, it had a total working strength of 153 at the time of inspection and included a management team of four. According to JCF Policy, the divisional management structure should be headed by a Superintendent, who is assisted by 7 Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSP) and two Inspectors. Instead, the division

had one DSP and two Inspectors assisting the Superintendent, thereby making it difficult for the management team to adequately carry out its tasks, especially those related to overseeing and coordinating the daily operations. General staffing at outposts was also found wanting. With the exception of the Kingston outpost, all outposts were inadequately staffed. Further evidence of this was when the PCOA Team observed only two officers on duty at an outpost when a cruise ship was docked. This therefore, precluded them from conducting any patrols. In addition, given the shortfall in staff, there was also evidence of personnel working above the 50 hour week requirement. As it pertained to records in the division being maintained and administered in accordance with JCF policies and procedures, none of the outposts were fully compliant in maintaining all records (Station Diary, Firearm Register, Duty Forecast and Launch Log Books) inspected. However, all outposts properly maintained the Duty Forecast Register.

Area 3 TOPS Awards Ceremony Set for November 25

It is all systems go for the Awards Ceremony for the Transforming Our Police Service (TOPS) Competition for Area 3 on November 25.

The ceremony, which is traditionally held during Police Week in November, will take place at the Golf View Hotel in Mandeville, Manchester, starting at 10:00 a.m.



Awards will be presented in the following categories: Top Station, Top Division, Top Customer Service Division and Top Prisoners in Custody Station among

others. The event will also be live streamed on the Jamaica Constabulary Force You Tube channel.

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NACOLE: Challenges Abound for Police Oversight Around the World

One of the takeaways from the 28th Annual National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) Conference held in Fort Worth, Texas, USA in September was, the commonality regarding challenges faced by practitioners of police oversight around the world.

The lack of adequate human resources; unfettered access to police records for investigations; the recurring issue of independence; miniscule budgets and how to work within a framework to create realistic expectations for community members and other stakeholders formed part of conversation regarding oversight of law enforcement.

Despite these issues, oversight practitioners seemed resolved to overcome them and voiced as such in a session entitled, “The Changing Landscape of Civilian Oversight in Texas”.

However, of deep resonance and relatability as it pertained to oversight agencies outside of the USA, was the session, “Civilian Police Oversight in Sierra Leone,” which was presented by Senior Investigations Officer at the Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB), Rashid Kabba.

On the outset he shared that Sierra Leone had made significant progress in building stability after more than a decade of civil war, which ended in 2002.

This progress was reflected in the govern-



It is all smiles between PCOA CEO, Mrs. Otarah Byfield-Nugent (right) and Senior Investigations Officer at the Independent Police Complaints Board in Sierra Leone, Mr. Rashid Kabba at the 28th Annual NACOLE Conference at the Worthington Renaissance Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas in USA.

ment’s efforts to prioritize rebuilding state institutions with particular attention to the justice and security sectors. The creation of the IPCB in 2013, which is a civilian oversight body for the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), was an illustration of this commitment. Mr. Kabba explained that the role and function of the IPCB was to receive and investigate complaints of a serious nature including a fatal road accident in which a police vehicle is involved and also, allegations of misconduct involving an officer of the rank of Superintendent or higher. The board, he further added, was comprised of a Chairperson and six other members.

In providing a breakdown of the nature of complaints received by the IPCB since its inception, Mr. Kabba disclosed that of the

417 received, 282 were investigated. Interestingly, the majority (241) of the complaints fell under the category of any matter or incident which it thinks the action or inaction of the police is likely to impact significantly on the confidence of the people in the police.

Pointing to the number of challenges hampering the ability of the IPCB to effectively deliver on its mandate, he mentioned that the challenges were brought about by limitations in the current legislative framework, which was under review. This was in addition to, a very low staffing level, with a staff complement of 16 including one trained and qualified investigator for the entire country and support staff; low budgetary allocation and limited mobility due to the fact the Board operated one vehicle. In the meantime, at a short meeting with PCOA CEO, Mrs. Otarah Byfield Nugent, at the conference, Mr. Kabba expressed an interest in partnering with the PCOA on programmes/activities that would be mutually beneficial to both entities. The PCOA CEO was most agreeable on future engagement with the IPCB.

“We can start with a memorandum of understanding on exchange programmes, benchmarking and even placement of specialized staff,” he said via email.

This year more than 400 persons were in attendance at the conference.

Deficiencies Cited in Marine Division’s Fleet of Vessels

In determining if the Marine Division was equipped with the basic resources to execute its mandate and duties, the PCOA Team zeroed in on the state of its fleet of motor and aquatic vehicles during a thematic inspection in July. Most apparent was the low number of serviceable launches (vessels) at the disposal of personnel. Exacerbating the problem was that the launches utilized were not the most appropriate to perform effective surveillance activities, the majority having no covering, thereby exposing personnel to risks associated with poor weather conditions. In fact, the team observed that after conducting marine patrols, several of the personnel were soaking wet however, could not change owing to the insufficient issuing of uniforms.

Four outposts were without a working



Officer exposed to the elements on Service Launch Felix at the Negril Outpost in July.

vessel. The remaining 8 outposts had working vessels, however, these vessels though being serviced by the division, were either in need of maintenance or repair. It was also observed that several of these vessels had damage to their hull (frame of the launch), which will impact on the longevity of the hull by making the vessel more susceptible to further deterioration.

In addition, the vessels inspected surpassed the recommended limit for maintenance, with some vessels registering more than 30 times the hours of use above the recommended period. The team was informed that the division had a challenge in procuring service parts for the launches in a timely manner.

Coupled with inadequate vessels, was limited service vehicles, with only 8 assigned to the division. Only 4 outposts had a service vehicle assigned. The shortage of vehicles limited the ability of personnel to transport fuel, equipment, tow vessels and conduct mobile patrols.

On the matter of safety equipment life vests were not up to par in terms of quality, when compared to the ones used in other jurisdictions, and only 2 of the outposts had a serviceable fire extinguisher.

Inspections for Area 3 TOPS Competition Commences in Earnest

The PCOA Team braved stormy weather and difficult road conditions to start inspections for the Transforming Our Police Service (TOPS) Competition for Area 3.

Area 3, which is comprised of three police divisions - Manchester, Clarendon and St. Elizabeth - combined for a total of 34 stations.

The team first headed to the St. Elizabeth Division, where they completed inspections of 11 stations - Balaclava, Junction, Santa Cruz, Siloah, Lacovia, Maggoty, Malvern, Nain, New Market,



Inspections and Monitoring Officer, Toni-Ann Baker (seated) going over findings with an Inspector at the Mandeville Station in the Manchester Division.

Pedro Plains and Black River - in a week.

Then it was on to the Manchester Division, where they inspected 11 stations - Alligator Pond, Cottage, Cross Keys, Spaldings, Newport, Christiana, Williamsfield, Asia, Kendal,



Senior Director, Inspections and Monitoring, Andrew Beaumont (right) in discussion with the Sergeant at the Cross Keys Station in the Manchester Division.

Porus and Mandeville -also in a week.

An inspection of the remaining Clarendon division, which has 12 stations, was scheduled for early October.

According to Senior Director, Inspections and Monitoring, Andrew Beaumont, police personnel in the two divisions were thrilled at the possibility of winning the Top Station Award.

“Some went as far to say what they would do with prize money attached to the Top Station Award,” he revealed.

“They really appreciated that an entity such

as ours, took the time to recognize their self-sacrifice and hard work by developing the programme of which, the competition is a component,” he added.

The Senior Director further stated that after some inspections police personnel expressed their disappointment in their performance when feedback was provided. “Some asked us to advocate for them so that some of the issues found, could be resolved by the time we returned for the re-inspection in 2023,” he continued.

The stations were assessed based on their compliance with specific JCF standard operating procedures relating to records management; station administration; station facility; utilities conservation and community/customer service.

The main awards, which will be announced on November 25, are: Top Station, Top Customer Service Division, Top Division, Top Prisoners in Custody Station and the Dr. Marshall Hall Award.

Quarterly Spotlight - Lacovia Station



Top Photo: Lacovia Station circa 2015
Bottom Photo: Lacovia Station circa 2017

When ground was broken for a new Lacovia Station in the St. Elizabeth Division, the PCOA was heartened to hear the news. The PCOA Team first visited this old station in 2009 and it was in a shambolic state, with rotting floors, no station signage or perimeter security fence. Over time when the old station building was demolished, police personnel settled on the top floor of a two-storey building on the compound, which was occupied by the Narcotics Division.

A two-storey police facility will be built at a cost of \$175 million courtesy of the Ministry of the National Security in partnership with the National Housing Trust. The facility will house the police station, living quarters and detention cell.

External Scrutiny is Important to Law Enforcement, says PCOA CEO

External scrutiny provided by police oversight bodies is important to law enforcement as it can assist in improving the quality of policing processes says PCOA CEO, Mrs. Otarah Byfield-Nugent.

“External scrutiny increases accountability and also assists in increasing the public’s understanding of law enforcement policies and procedures,” she explained.

She made these remarks during a presentation to some 30 Inspectors participating in a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Promotional Course at the National Police College at Twickenham Park in St. Catherine in September.

The PCOA CEO further opined that the existence of external scrutiny of law enforcement in any jurisdiction en-



PCOA CEO, Mrs. Otarah Byfield-Nugent (standing) preaching the gospel of police oversight to Inspectors attending a Deputy Superintendent of Police Course.

hanced community relations by fostering communication between the community and the police. Meanwhile, participant Inspector Camendo Thoms from the Greater Portmore Station told the *PCOA Monitor* that all attendees were now in the fourth week of an initial seven week course.

“We are receiving training in aspects of leadership and the different types of oversight which monitors us,” he disclosed.

Inspector Thoms said that so far the training was “very good” and that it broadened the scope of his knowledge.

“It has really enlightened me on a lot of areas. The course has allowed us to think more critically and analytically as managers and leaders,” he shared, adding that his competencies in the areas were definitely enhanced.

Poor Accommodation and Working Conditions Plague Marine Outposts

It is apparent that the Marine Division is hampered by numerous challenges in effecting both its mandate and functions, which are particularly critical in stemming the flow of illegal weaponry across our borders.

One such challenge relates to the accommodation provided and the conditions under which personnel work at its outposts. The conditions are both untenable and unsuitable as the areas (some in containers) serving as workplaces are too small, cramped and lack the very basic office amenities such as sanitary conveniences, a kitchen in addition to, proper equipment and furniture.

These were some of the findings from a thematic inspection of the Marine Division in July, which revealed that the work space in particular at the outposts were cramped and constricting. Five of them alone were housed in containers, shared with other agencies. Indeed most were inadequate to accommodate staff and conduct administrative and operational duties.

In one instance, the area assigned to conduct administrative duties was used for storage for government properties such as station records, marine vests and other equipment. As a result marine personnel had to conduct administrative duties on a



Area and tables utilized by police personnel to conduct administration duties at an outpost in July.

table outside. Likewise at another outpost, which was without a functioning air conditioning unit, staff was also forced to conduct administrative duties on a table placed outside, under a tree.

On the matter of barracks at the outposts, some were inadequate as in two cases, marine personnel during their rest period, had to sleep in their vehicles given the limited space. In addition, at two posts, barracks were used for storage.

Ablution facilities were also deemed deficient at five outposts. At one outpost, the bathroom which was inoperable, was used to store fuel, old records and items seized during police operations. As a consequence, marine personnel had to use the bathroom belonging to a hotel sharing

the same property, when permitted to so. Otherwise, they had to travel to a police station in the vicinity. Another had to share facilities with another government agency also occupying the same space. There was also an absence of kitchens at three of the outposts, which resulted in personnel having to purchase cooked meals daily.

Of concern was the storage of fuel, which in some instances was not stored in suitable containers. At two outposts, the fumes emanating from the containers, which were being stored in or near work areas, were overpowering, thereby creating a health hazard for personnel.

The PCOA Team found that many of the outposts were without basic equipment such as computers and printers to carry out administrative duties. Worsening the situation was the fact that several of the outposts lacked internet connection. Meanwhile, building structures housing two of the outposts were deteriorating. At one of the outposts, there was signs of water damage and corrosion from the sea. Whenever the sea level rose, water came through the cracks of the floor causing flooding.

Of note was that, approximately half of the outposts did not possess a first-aid kit for emergencies.

PCOA FACTOID




The Police Civilian Oversight Authority has made representation at the Annual National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) since 2008. The Authority has the distinction of the


having the first person outside of the United States to gain its Certified Practitioner designation.


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Compiled by the PCOA Communications Unit

PHOTO OP FOR THE QUARTER



PCOA CEO, Mrs. Otarah Byfield-Nugent (centre) was among several police oversight practitioners from Jamaica that made representation at the 28th Annual National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, USA. Here she is bookended by Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) Commissioner, Hugh Faulkner (right) and Director of Complaints, Central Region, Dave Lewin.