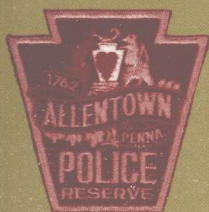


CITIZENS DEFENDING AMERICA

FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE AGE OF TERRORISM



MARTIN ALAN GREENBERG

FOREWORD BY JOHN B. WILT, COLONEL (RETIRED), U.S. AIR FORCE RESERVE

Citizens Defending America

From Colonial Times to the Age of Terrorism

MARTIN ALAN GREENBERG

With a Foreword by John B. Wilt, Colonel (Retired), U.S. Air Force Reserve

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*This book is dedicated to
the memory of my friend Gary Morgan.*

FOREWORD

In *Citizens Defending America*, Martin Greenberg presents a history of the important role citizens have played in defending America as volunteers in state militias, as well as in federal- and municipal-level security forces. He describes and analyzes America's long history of volunteer participation in enforcement of the criminal law, and in some cases military defense, through a wide variety of institutions with greatly varying objectives, organizational structures, tactics, and results. Detailing how most volunteer police have operated within the legal boundaries of their communities, Greenberg offers a very useful definition of *volunteer police*, along with a fourfold typology of such forces (proactive, reactive, general, and special purpose) that serves to guide the reader through an interesting maze of "legally sanctioned" volunteer police examples.

Citizens Defending America is an excellent contribution to the literature on community policing and justice studies. The author has compiled several hundred years of criminal justice history, organizing volunteer police events into several eras: the "lay justice" era, the "vigilant" era, the "spy" era, the "transformation" era, and the "assimilation" era. While these eras are useful for thinking about the history of volunteer policing, it must be emphasized that they have only approximately defined termini, with some degree of overlap. Of equal significance are Greenberg's numerous examples of how volunteer policing has played a crucial role in preserving U.S. democratic ideals during periods of insecurity, natural disaster, declared war, or the day-to-day fight against crime. Greenberg chronicles the key building blocks of modern-day "community policing": the Citizens Home Defense League, junior police, Explorer programs, citizen patrol groups, riverkeeper organizations, Volunteers-in-Parks, and many other groups. Greenberg also revisits the contributions of many well-known justice system pioneers (e.g.,

Chief August Vollmer of Berkeley, California) but acknowledges lesser-known but nonetheless important volunteer justice system figures such as Lewis Rodman Wanamaker, who helped oversee the work of the New York Reserve Police.

This work sends a forceful message that strengthening volunteer police efforts at all levels limits opportunities for neighborhood vigilantism, as well as secrecy in law-enforcement circles. Government decision makers, community activists, and civic leaders will be well served by *Citizens Defending America*, which offers cost-effective solutions to a society working to harness the efforts of public-safety-minded citizens in their continuing support for existing volunteer police organizations (e.g., airport watch programs, reserve and auxiliary police) or in their creation of new volunteer police efforts directed at a resolution of the challenging and complex issues surrounding what is now referred to as homeland security. Clearly, Greenberg's work is a significant contribution to justice studies and law enforcement literature, extolling the virtues of "grassroots" volunteer efforts, without which the American justice system—police, courts, and corrections—might fall apart.

JOHN B. WILT, Colonel (Retired),
U.S. Air Force Reserve

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I joined the auxiliary police force of New York City in 1965. At the time, I had no way of knowing that I was embarking on a journey that would involve twelve years of service in that organization, as well as the eventual publication of two books and numerous articles and the completion of a doctoral dissertation concerning the history and deployment of America's volunteer police. Along the way, I have had the opportunity to learn from hundreds of volunteer and regular police, as well as many others, about the field of public safety. I have also had contacts with numerous members of the academic community who have dedicated their lives to researching and teaching about the criminal justice system. My own teaching career, which drew upon my earlier contacts with professionals and volunteers, began in Hawaii in 1977.

Public safety, I am convinced, is and must always be a joint enterprise between the people and the police. While this conclusion and the others in this book are my responsibility, they have certainly been informed by my contacts with dedicated volunteers and professionals. I will always be indebted to my John Jay College of Criminal Justice professors and mentors, including Warren Benton, John Kleinig, James Levine, and Larry Sullivan. A very large debt of gratitude is also pleasantly owed to Christina Czechowicz, the former associate director of the Ph.D. Program in Criminal Justice at John Jay College.

I am also grateful to an anonymous reviewer for the University of Pittsburgh Press who indicated that the present book "makes an important contribution to the literature on police" since its publication may help to overcome "an inherent academic bias toward studying only the paid professionals. This bias persists despite the fact that volunteers are an important component of America's national, state, and municipal level defense."

I am extremely thankful for the pioneering achievements and sage advice of Eliot H. Lumbard, a major shaper of criminal justice policy during the 1960s. The present work also owes deep intellectual gratitude to the following scholars: Sally Hadden, David Rothman, Raphael Semmes, Barry Stentiford, John A. Tilley, Samuel Walker, and Howard Zinn. I am especially grateful to Dennis Rousey, who pointed out various historical omissions prior to publication, and to Richard B. Weinblatt, who has substantially contributed to the literature in the field of reserve policing. In recent months, I have significantly benefited from the support of my closest colleagues at Point Park University, especially Robert Alexander, Kim Bell, Judy Bolsinger, Gwen Elliott, John Gobble, Greg Rogers, and Grant Snider. I have also been heartened by the wisdom, courage, and example of Bill Cosby, who has taken a personal interest in helping combat crime in our nation's cities.

In addition, I wish to thank Col. John B. Wilt, author of the book's foreword, who recently retired from the U.S. Air Force Reserve after thirty years of active and reserve duty in the Security Police (now the Security Forces) and the Office of Special Investigations. Colonel Wilt heads the administration of justice program at Danville Community College, in Virginia, having held a similar position for over twenty years at Maui Community College. Colonel Wilt received the Hung Wo and Elizabeth Ching Foundation Faculty Service to the Community Award for his wide-ranging volunteer efforts in Hawaii, having done reserve officer work with the Maui Police Department and having volunteered for Maui Crime Stoppers. He was also a Volunteer Guardian Ad Litem and the cofounder of the Neighborhood Justice Center (now Mediation Services of Maui), where he served as a volunteer mediator for nearly twenty years.

The events of September 11, 2001, necessitated the addition of a new final chapter to the present publication. I wish to extend to the publisher of the *Journal of Security Administration* my appreciation for permission to use materials from its June 2003 issue; chapter 8 of *Citizens Defending America* relies heavily on my previously published work in this journal (see M. A. Greenberg 2003).

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the editors at the University of Pittsburgh Press for their expert advice and assistance throughout all phases of the book's preparation. I shall

always owe a great debt of gratitude to them and to Carol Sickman-Garner for her extraordinary care in copyediting this book.

Finally, without the love and sacrifice of my wife and son, this book would never have been written. My wife, Ellen Wertlieb, has consistently encouraged my enthusiasm for this project and assisted in all aspects of the book's creation. My son, Edward, is a far better writer and he is bound to become a well-known author.

INTRODUCTION

We learned about an enemy who . . . makes no distinction between military and civilian targets.

The 9/11 Commission Report

On September 11, 2001, thousands of Americans perished as four commercial aircraft plunged into the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City; the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.; and the ground at Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Millions watched as the horrible events of the day unfolded, but many Americans were subsequently heartened when Mayor Rudolph Giuliani declared that the city of New York and the United States of America were much stronger than any group of barbaric terrorists—"that our democracy, . . . our rule of law, . . . [and] our strength and willingness to defend ourselves will ultimately prevail" (qtd. in Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 26). Americans also took heart when they learned that a group of passengers aboard Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania, had apparently decided to fight the terrorists when they realized the plane had been hijacked. The final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States concludes that the terrorists intended to crash "into symbols of the American Republic, the Capitol or the White House," but were "defeated by the alerted, unarmed passengers of United 93" (9/11 Commission 2004, 14).

It is important to note that these passengers were not law enforcement or military personnel but ordinary citizens who made a valiant attempt to save the lives of their fellow Americans. While professional law enforcement groups today remain on alert in anticipation of future attacks by Islamic extremists linked to the al-Qaida terrorist network, little attention is paid to the role the average citizen can play in homeland security. This is surpris-

ing, since historically the general public has always held a very prominent role in the detection of crime. Police agencies have traditionally been reactive organizations responsible for detecting only a small proportion of crimes; their investigative and related services generally commence only after the more proactive citizenry has called them to report an incident (see Mitchell 1984, 459, 466). Indeed, under the community policing concept, the police are the public, and the public are the police! Police officers are merely those paid to give full-time attention to the duties of every citizen.

Furthermore, there currently exists a network of officially recognized volunteer groups that specialize in community safety and the overall protection of the homeland. Their contributions have been largely unheralded throughout American history, although numerous famous Americans have been active members of such groups, including Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Babe Ruth, Jimmy Carter, Humphrey Bogart, Col. Frank Borman, Harrison Ford, James Woods, Chuck Norris, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Shaquille O'Neal, and Bobby Sherman. Franklin basically invented the idea of voluntary associations, establishing the first volunteer fire department in the city of Philadelphia. Seven other signers of the Declaration of Independence, including Samuel Adams and John Hancock, were volunteer firefighters. Lincoln served as the captain of his militia unit during the Black Hawk War. Ruth was a New York Reserve Police lieutenant during the 1920s. As a youth, President Carter was a devoted member of his local American Automobile Association (AAA) school safety patrol in Plains, Georgia. Bogart volunteered his services and yacht as part of the U.S. Coast Guard Temporary Reserve in 1944. Air Force colonel Frank Borman, the pioneering astronaut who acted as the command-module pilot on *Apollo VIII*, the mission that paved the way for Neil Armstrong's historic lunar landing, was a Civil Air Patrol cadet in his youth. Harrison Ford, who starred as the movie hero Indiana Jones, acts as a real-life hero in his work with several county sheriff rescue units in Wyoming, regularly volunteering his flying skills and Bell helicopter for rescue missions. James Woods, who has appeared in over seventy-five feature films, is a reserve Los Angeles police officer. Chuck Norris, a well-known actor, athlete, and producer, is also a reserve police officer for the city of Terrell, Texas (about twenty-five miles east of Dallas). Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is the president of the Riverkeeper Alliance and has been very active as the chief prosecuting attorney for the Hudson Riverkeeper organi-

zation, an environmental neighborhood watch program. Since the 1980s, he has been credited with leading the fight to protect New York City's water supply by helping to prosecute Hudson River and New York City watershed polluters. Shaquille O'Neal, the great basketball center, undertook about one thousand hours of training in order to become a Los Angeles Port Police reserve officer. In 1984, Bobby Sherman, a popular 1960s teen recording artist, established a volunteer paramedic squad that has worked at hundreds of events throughout southern California. In the following decade, he was recruited to teach first aid to reserve police officers (Pool 1993).

Volunteer policing, in fact, is and has been ubiquitous in the United States—a fact of which few people are aware. This book is the only one to date that considers the full history of volunteer police in America—a history that parallels that of the regular police but has been virtually hidden until now. Through exploring the activities and organization of various types of volunteer police units, this book provides a roadmap for those contemplating the contemporary citizen's role in homeland security and community safety.

Before beginning the full story of volunteer policing in the United States, it might be useful to contrast its history with that of regular policing. The history of regular policing in America can be roughly divided into four periods, each based on the dominance of a particular strategy of policing. In 1805, New Orleans inaugurated a distinctive paramilitary model of policing that was duplicated in "Deep South cities with large slave concentrations" (Rousey 1996, 4). During the first few decades of the nineteenth century, such military-style policing was in vogue in New Orleans, Richmond, Mobile, Savannah, and Charleston (see Rousey 1996, 11–39). This southern military model represents the first era of modern policing, used in the South because "policemen who looked like soldiers probably helped ameliorate the deep anxieties many whites harbored about the dangers of slave crime and revolt" (Rousey 1996, 39). The second period saw the end of the Deep South's military model and the beginning of the adoption of a civil style of urban policing during the 1840s, which continued throughout the Progressive period and ended after the first third of the twentieth century. The third period lasted from the 1930s through the late 1970s, while the years since comprise the fourth era. The second, third, and fourth periods have been referred to, respectively, as (1) the political era, (2) the reform era,

and (3) the community problem-solving or community policing era (Kelling and Moore 1988). The political era is so named because of the close ties that existed between police and politics. The reform era, a reaction to the political era, has now given way to a period emphasizing community policing strategies (Hartmann 1988).¹

The history of volunteer policing, however, may be divided into a slightly more diverse set of periods, with some degree of overlap. These epochs include (1) the lay justice era, marked by Native American military societies, the militia (including slave patrols), and the constable and watch systems of the colonial settlements, used until the establishment of unified day and night watches in the 1840s; (2) the vigilant era, featuring the detective societies and posses (including slave patrols) of the nineteenth century, as well as the rise of a score of antvice societies during the last quarter of the nineteenth century; (3) the spy era of the Progressive Era and World War I, with operatives including individuals from the Anti-Saloon League and the American Protective League, as well as charity workers; (4) the transformation era, which lasted from 1920 to 1941, during which special-purpose units evolved into general-purpose police reserves; and finally (5) the assimilation era, when civil defense workers and other kinds of volunteer police became an integrated part of the community policing strategy of many police departments.

These time frames shape the discussion that follows, which uses the generic term *volunteer police* to refer to the overall history of both involuntary and voluntary citizen police. While this study indicates that the existence of volunteer police (especially since the Civil War) has generally contributed to the growth of democratic institutions in the United States, it is important to keep in mind that during most of American history the police have been used to maintain a political order that has promoted slavery, segregation, and discrimination. This work, however, is interested not only in the history of volunteer policing but also in its present and future potential—in current community practices and in recommendations for the future deployment of citizens as keepers of the public safety.

The overwhelming majority of volunteer police groups were legally sanctioned to perform one or more police functions (e.g., law enforcement, peacekeeping, crime prevention, the delivery of services) in an overt man-

ner. Such organizations—anti-horse-thief societies, southern slave patrols, “friendly visitors” (early charity workers), National Guard and state guard units, police reserves, the junior police—tended to be permanent in nature unless mobilized in response to a wartime emergency. Many of the anti-horse-thief or law-and-order societies of the nineteenth century, for example, had the support of local law enforcement authorities, their existence eventually authorized by statutes. Reserve/auxiliary units began to appear in the pre-Depression era of the twentieth century in some of America’s largest cities, but some of these “volunteers” rarely performed law enforcement functions, their appointments sometimes made merely as a political favor and/or to provide a constituent with an added credential for employment purposes.

Nevertheless, in the late 1940s, one prominent police expert, Bruce Smith, proclaimed that the establishment of volunteer law enforcement units was one of the most practical ideas that he had heard of in his thirty-eight years of work as a police consultant and researcher (B. Smith 1949). Since then, his sentiments have been echoed by many other police scholars and practitioners. In 1960, Lt. Everett King of the Alameda County, California, sheriff’s department wrote that the hundreds of “auxiliary law enforcement components throughout the country . . . are proving, in practice, that the concept is both valid and practical” (E. M. King 1960, 15). Don Blankenship of the Maricopa County, Arizona, sheriff’s department was referring to the Sun City volunteer deputies when he stated, “It’s an idea that’s gaining rapid and widespread acceptance, an idea that’s here to stay” (qtd. in Mehren 1981). Maj. Donald Woodruff of the Duluth, Georgia, police department states that the volunteer police reserves are made up of “serious, dedicated individuals, who want to make this city a better place to live” (personal communication, September 29, 2000). Police chief James G. Jackson of Columbus, Ohio, declares that the police reserve is “a valuable part of the Division’s effort to combat crime and to make Columbus a better place to live” (Columbus Police Reserve 2000). In Arizona, Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, with a population of about three million, has assembled a volunteer posse of over twenty-five hundred men and women to supplement his regular full-time deputies. The volunteer force outnumbers the regulars five to one. Arpaio believes that “you can’t get more into volunteerism than

this . . . to help protect the neighborhoods and protect the people. . . . I have faith in my posse, and that's the way it's going to be as long as I'm the sheriff" (Arpaio and Sherman 1996, 96).

This study centers on organizations such as those described above—organizations (private or public) that have directly assumed or been empowered to undertake law enforcement functions (e.g., criminal investigations, arrest, and prosecution) and/or the related tasks of peacekeeping. Such organizations are generally associated with governmental authorities and tend to operate under some real or pretended "color of authority" (e.g., to wear police uniforms and insignias or display badges). Of course, membership in authorized or official volunteer police organizations is not the only way for private citizens to contribute to community safety and homeland security. Individuals or groups may supplement the role of the government in crime control and public safety by, for example, engaging in efforts to improve neighborhood security, hiring private security guards, or patrolling themselves. They can contribute time or funds to nonprofit organizations that provide drug-rehabilitation services or special care for juvenile offenders. There are literally thousands of such worthwhile local groups throughout the nation—Mothers against Drunk Driving, neighborhood watches, Court Watch, and so on—though they are not the focus here.

In general, volunteer policing in America has moved from the general-purpose policing of the early night watches, to the special-purpose volunteers of the vigilant and spying eras, and then back again to the general-purpose activities of reserve and auxiliary units. The events of September 11, however, may trigger a return to the former spy era unless careful attention is paid to the civil liberties and rights of the American public by all sectors of society. Fortunately, current indications are that modern units of volunteer police are being trained to respect individual civil rights and liberties. In addition, some federal units (e.g., the Civil Air Patrol) have been assigned highly important and visible roles in the war on terror, particularly homeland defense.

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