

Global Vision

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NEW YORK'S FINEST:

THE NYPD



approaches its 165th Birthday



In 1844 the NYPD and the Boston Police Departments were formed as the first 'modern' police constabularies in the United States. Today the NYPD is the largest police force in America comprising some 37,000 police officers with the widest imaginable remit from policing civil marches through counter-terrorist training and protecting the world's heads of state at the United Nations annual opening ceremonies.

REPORTING BY JEFFREY BRADFORD PHD

The Police Department is probably one of the best known in the world given the profusion of television series and films immortalising the NYPD and its police officers – Television show such as Kojak, Cagney & Lacey, NYPD Blue, Law and Order, life on Mars amongst others. Hollywood movies such as Fort Apache: The Bronx, Shaft, The French Connection starring Gene Hackman and alternatively, later chapter of the Godfather movies captured the criminal underworld of the City on celluloid.

New York State is around ten percent larger than the landmass of the United Kingdom with a population of around 18 million (one third the UK) of which some 8 million reside in the five boroughs of New York City. The state includes mountainous terrain of the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains, long island facing the Atlantic, the Great Lakes and an international border with Canada – offering just about every kind of terrain for law enforcement officials to grapple with. The NYPD today has an operating budget of

some \$3.7 billion and made some 350,000 arrests in 2005. One of the biggest non-policing tasks of the NYPD is to manage its fleet of some 7,500 vehicles. The fleet ranges from battery powered scooters through patrol cars, SUV's and helicopters.

Until recently, the New York Police Department possessed six helicopters: two Bell 412s, three JetRangers, and one LongRanger. A seventh was added on 22 October 2003. A \$9.8 million "state of



the art" Bell 412 (see above), it was funded by a special grant from the Department of Justice. No other police department in America has such a helicopter. It requires a three-person crew, can accommodate as many as seven passengers, and is out-fitted with a battery of radar sensors, GPS trackers and locators plus long-range video and photographic cameras. In the words of the magazine Newsday each camera is "so sophisticated it is capable of reading a license plate from 1,000 feet away, making it five times more powerful than the older surveillance equipment." Infra-red imaging allows each camera to "see," even at night. An on-board digital radio transmitter can "downlink" a live video stream complete with GPS-derived coordinates and GIS-created digital maps to receivers installed in police stations, police cars, and hand-held devices. And an on-board digital receiver can access police databases and other files containing names, license plate numbers, "high-crime" areas, "watch lists" and so forth.

In the aftermath of the 9-11 terrorist attacks which resulted in the destruction of the World Trade Center towers with resultant loss of life the NYPD looked afresh at its counter-terrorism strategy and developed a new program known as SHIELD. Other plots have been thwarted, such as the attempt to bomb the Atlantic Avenue subway station in 1997 and the 1993 Landmarks plot that targeted key sites, such as the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, the United Nations and 26 Federal Plaza.

NYPD SHIELD is an umbrella program for a series of current and future Police Department initiatives that pertain to private sector security and counter-terrorism. This is a public private partnership based on information sharing. NYPD SHIELD is a central destination for private sector security managers to obtain information and engage Police Department resources.

For further details concerning the work of the New York Police Department please visit their website at www.nyc.gov/nypd