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# Gainesville Police Department

Inter-Office Communication

Chief Donald L. Shinnamon, Sr.

**To:** Chief Donald L. Shinnamon, Sr.      **Date:** 11/19/98

**From:** Lt. Scott J. Meffen   
Tactical Operations Division Commander

**Subject:** Mounted Unit FY '97-'98 Report

## Reporting Period

This reporting period is from October 1, 1997 through September 30, 1998.

## Enforcement Program

During FY '97-'98 the Mounted Unit began full-time operations. A schedule which provides coverage from 2000 hrs until 0400 hrs, Tuesday through Saturday was implemented. Due to the specialized nature of the Unit, training is conducted biweekly on Tuesdays. The Mounted Unit typically operates during these times, however the unit is flexible in scheduling based upon the current objectives that need to be completed on a monthly basis. The primary mission performed was high visibility, proactive patrol in the downtown corridor and surrounding neighborhoods during peak business hours.

## Personnel

Upon its inception, the Mounted Unit was initially staffed by a corporal and an officer and their mounts. On May 4, 1998, an additional officer and mount was added to the unit full-time.

The unit is now staffed as follows:

Riders: Cpl. Bruce Giles	Horse: Justice
Ofc. Vickie Griffis	Raider
Ofc. Barbara Thomas	Coffee

## Training

Initially, Cpl. Giles, Ofc. Griffis and their two horses attended a two week 80 hour state certification course from Geiser Equine in Jacksonville, Fla. Mrs. Geiser is the National Mounted Lead Instructor and was the founder of the Jacksonville Sheriffs Office Mounted Unit until her retirement from the agency 2 years ago. Her experience and knowledge in the field proved to be of great asset in the initial training provided to the Unit.

In May 1998, all three riders and horses attended and successfully completed the 48-hour National Mounted Certification Course held in Daytona, Florida. This training included crowd control methods, equitation, preparation of the horse and gear, troop movements and formations, public support and information, shooting from and around the horse, and training and working the horse around obstacles.

The Unit continues to work the horses and improve their skills by training twice a month for 16 hours. The training and progress is documented and then kept on file with the Unit Supervisor.

## Activity

The Mounted Unit completed its formal training on May 8, 1998 and began patrolling Downtown and area neighborhoods (Duck Pond, NW 5 Avenue, Pleasant Street, and Porters). The Unit's activity for the reporting period is listed below. It should be noted that the Mounted Unit was only full-time operational for five months of this fiscal year.

Parking Citations	230
Moving Citations	26
Pedestrian Citations	10
Bicycle Citations	30
Warrant Arrest	14
Misdemeanor/Felony Arrest	89
Panhandler Arrest	5
Domestic Battery Arrest	3
Resisting an Officer Arrest	1
Reports Written	94
Calls for Service	30

## Notable Events

### **May 1998**

The unit opened a Downtown Substation located at 109 West University Avenue and began full-time operations.

The unit, in conjunction with ASO and UPD, patrolled the exterior of the Oaks Mall to provide security for Project Graduation, which was a big success.

The unit purchased and began utilizing the third horse Coffee.

All three horses and riders received national certification from National Mounted and began patrolling downtown and area neighborhoods.

### **June 1998**

The unit provided security for the Red Cross at the Alachua County Fairgrounds and at Eastside High School during the fires in Waldo.

The unit arrested one subject at the county fairgrounds after observing a female violently strike her boyfriend repeatedly. The woman was quickly arrested and taken to jail.

### **July 1998**

The unit assisted downtown patrol units with crowd control at the Florida Theater. The unit made several arrests during this event and quickly cleared the sidewalks utilizing the horses for crowd control.

The unit purchased and received a second horse trailer to transport the third horse.

### **August 1998**

The unit completed a detail at the downtown Sun Center, which provided security for vendors selling items in front of their stores. The unit was notified by the event coordinator that the event had some problems with panhandlers and thefts and requested assistance. The unit assisted by being present for the entire month, which was every Wednesday from 1600 hrs until 1900 hrs. The unit was effective in deterring crime and assisting the public keeping downtown safe.

The unit received a Chevy Suburban, which was received from city surplus from the Gainesville Fire Department with the assistance of the City Fleet Director, and utilized to pull the second horse trailer.

### **September 1998**

The unit spent about 1 week working at the newly identified permanent stable location in the vicinity of Boulware Springs. The unit cleared trees, bushes and mowed about 30 acres in preparation to move the horses in the future. The unit spent time getting letters of agreement and preparing purchase orders for the equipment needed to build a fence for the horses.

The unit worked all University of Florida home football games patrolling the area outside the stadium deterring crime and assisting in crowd control, primarily along the West University Avenue corridor.

The unit also worked some of the high school football games at Citizens Field, providing increased police presence and assistance in the parking lots.

### Summary

The Mounted Unit began operating on May 12, 1998 in the downtown business district and area residential neighborhoods. The unit has three basic functions, which consist of crowd control, crime deterrence and apprehension, and improved community relations.

The Mounted Unit has been very effective in crowd control situations. The unit on several occasions was utilized to clear large crowds of people from the sidewalk after the crowd began to filter into University Avenue due to overcrowding. The horses were used to move the crowd out of the road and make room on the sidewalk for others trying to leave the downtown area establishments.

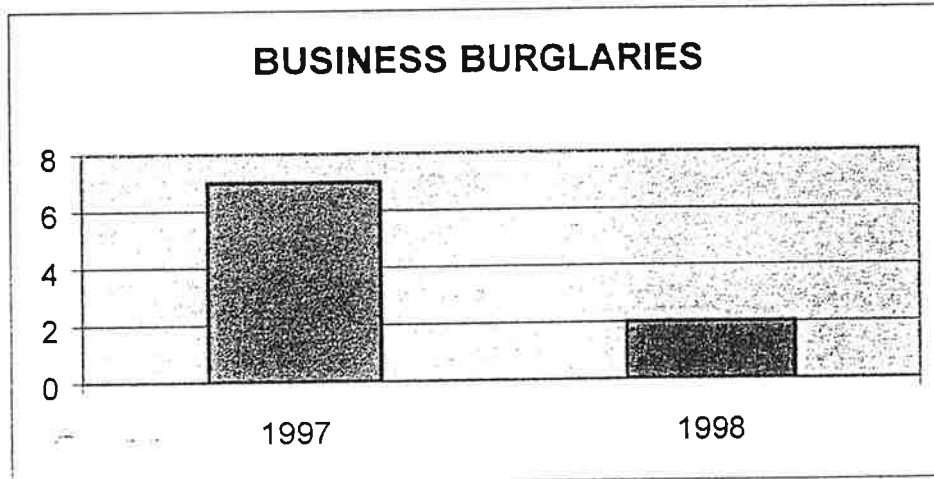
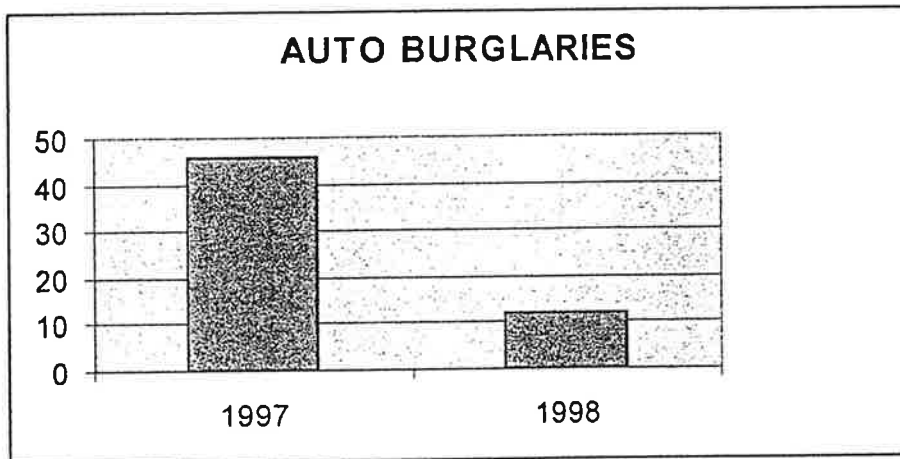
**The Mounted Unit has also been effective in deterring and apprehending crime in the downtown area. The unit compared 1997 statistics to 1998 statistics. Those statistics revealed that during the Mounted Unit hours of operation, burglary of vehicles dropped from 46 in 1997 to only 12 in 1998, and business burglaries went from 7 to 2. In addition, residential burglaries went from 4 to 0 and disturbances went from 15 to 9. The Unit significantly deterred crime during its operational hours in the downtown area. The statistics were for the months of June thru September, 1998. Graphs and charts depicting these statistics were prepared by the GPD Crime Analysis Unit, and are included at the end of this report.**

The Unit has also received a lot of public support and has completed numerous requests from citizen groups to present demonstrations utilizing the Mounted Unit, primarily during normal working hours. These details did not compromise the objectives for downtown and the unit was able to maintain a safe atmosphere for the citizen's downtown.

### FY '98-'99 Objectives

- Transition and move the horses to the new permanent stable location near Boulware Springs, in conjunction with the Florida Parks Services.
- Attempt to obtain a fourth horse (donations, no expense).
- Implement an expanded coverage area.
- Complete an in-service training program to other GPD officers who express an interest in the Mounted Unit.
- Increase arrests by at least 50%.

**Reported Crime for the Downtown Area  
June - September**



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