



CommuniQUÉ

J A N U A R Y 1 9 9 9



INNOVATIVE
FIELD
Technology

HEADQUARTERS *News*

Operation 'Seek and Keep' Leads to Major Anti-smuggling Success

**NEARLY 12,000 ALIENS BROUGHT TO THE U.S.
OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS**

At a Headquarters press event on November 20 that was hosted by Commissioner Meissner and attended by Attorney General Janet Reno and U.S. Attorney for Dallas, TX, Paul E. Coggins, INS announced the breakup of what is believed to be the largest, most complex and sophisticated alien smuggling operation ever identified by the Service.

employers in the United States who actively sought out the cheap labor. Over the past three years, she said, the ring had smuggled as many as 300 Indian nationals (as well as immigrants from Pakistan, Syria, and Afghanistan) into the country each month, with each alien paying more than \$20,000. With nearly 12,000 individuals brought illegally into the U.S. over the course of

the past 36 months, she said, the total gross take for the organization would be nearly \$220 million.

with alien smuggling from India, through the Bahamas and Haiti, and on to the United States by boat or aircraft. In addition, the smugglers were charged with maintaining a stash house to hold the aliens they transported until their smuggling fees were paid.

Another traditional route involved smuggling the aliens from India to Moscow to Cuba, and then via boat to the Bahamas. From there, boats or planes transported them to Miami. Several aliens were also routed from Cuba through Ecuador, where they were either flown to Miami or driven through Mexico to the Southwest border.

“This kind of investigative work is the kind we are increasingly doing at INS on the national level,” the Commissioner said before taking questions from reporters. What made the operation a particular success, she concluded, was that the larger smuggling operation that was eventually uncovered stemmed from leads developed from a specific incident in the Dallas, TX, district. This ability to follow up on smaller cases, use information obtained, and connect them to one another is essential to disrupting complex worldwide organized rings such as the one identified in this case.

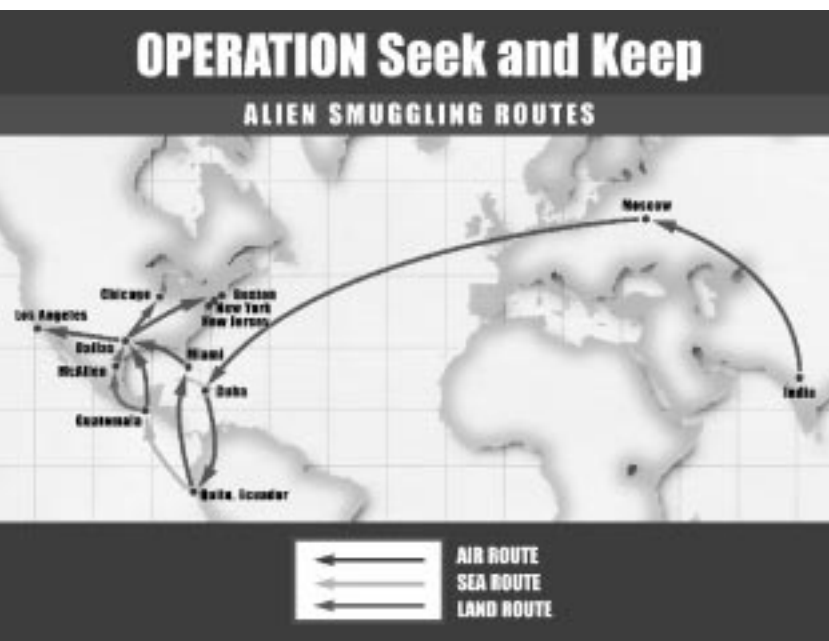
She also expressed the Service's appreciation for the cooperation received from countries including the Bahamas, Panama, and Ecuador during the investigation. Such international cooperation, she said, is essential—and will remain so in the future—to identifying and disrupting worldwide immigrant smuggling operations of this type.

the past 36 months, she said, the total gross take for the organization would be nearly \$220 million.

“Cracking a multi-million-dollar alien smuggling ring whose operations spanned four continents is an impressive achievement that underscores INS' commitment to aggressive anti-smug-

gling efforts to defend the integrity of this nation's immigration laws,” Commissioner Meissner said at the event.

Concurring, the Attorney General said forcefully, “Let all those who flout the nation's laws be warned: We plan to take swift and decisive action against you.” Accordingly, the U.S. Attorney presented unsealed indictments related to the case, charging three individuals



Graphic for INS by Don Starr, EDS

Termed Operation 'Seek and Keep,' the year-long investigation was coordinated by INS, with the assistance of the Department of Justice and prosecution by the U.S. Attorney's Office. Working together, the operation's agents identified a complete "alien smuggling cartel" and the organizational hierarchy that ran it at the global level.

As detailed by the Commissioner, the ring provided undocumented workers to



Commissioner Meissner, accompanied by U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and U.S. District Attorney Paul Coggins, briefs the media on the success of Operation 'Seek and Keep.'

TO OUR READERS:

Welcome to the first issue of the redesigned *INS CommuniQUÉ*. We hope this new format—which represents the first design change in nearly three years—will make the newsletter more readable and easier to use for all Service staffers.

In this premier issue you'll find a special insert on the 1998 INS Commissioner's Conference in Denver, CO, along with our regular features, including 'Headquarters News,' 'News from the Field,' 'Awards News,' and 'People on the Move.' Please remember that the *CommuniQUÉ* is *your* publication. So if you have a significant event or accomplishment that you would like Service employees to know about, please feel free to submit articles or photographs either in hard copy or electronically to the Headquarters Office of Public Affairs at the address below.

We hope you enjoy the new *CommuniQUÉ*, and will work with us to make it the best, most informative publication it can be.

Mitch Katz
Editor

The *INS CommuniQUÉ* is published by the Headquarters Office of Public Affairs to inform employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service about official and unofficial activities. Readers are invited to submit articles, photographs, and letters to the editor. Write to INS Public Affairs, Washington, DC 20536; or phone (202) 514-2648. This newsletter and other useful information also are available on the Internet through the INS web site at <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov>.

Doris Meissner
Commissioner

Maria T. Cardona
Director, Office of Public Affairs

Mitch Katz
Editor

Linda Paine
Art Direction

Jonathan Carroll
Graphic Design

Cover: Andres Batista of the Service's El Paso, TX, sector stands with the "laser locator" he designed for use by INS in locating and apprehending illegal border crossers. (see story on page 10)(photo courtesy El Paso, TX, sector)

HEADQUARTERS NEWS

Operation 'Seek and Keep' 2

INS NEWS OF NOTE

Temporary suspension of removal 4

Public comment on NACARA 4

Kirpnick murder indictments 5

Golden Venture sentencing 5

IIRIRA section 110 extension 5

INS NEWS FROM THE FIELD

New Manchester, NH, suboffice 6

Del Rio sector groundbreaking 6

Laredo North groundbreaking 6

INS Pistol Team triumphant 7

Kirpnick vessel dedicated 8

Computers to local schools 8

Bangkok anti-smuggling success 9

L.A. district anti-fraud operations 10

SPECIAL TO THE INS COMMUNIQUÉ

New Technology in the Field 10

SPECIAL INSERT

1998 Commissioner's Conference 11

INS RECRUITING UPDATE

FY98: Oh, What a Year! 32

RECORDS MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The new National Records Center 33

INS SPECIAL EVENTS

Disability Employment Awareness Month 34

INS AWARDS NOTES

SENTRI, Biometrics Program 35

El Paso Sector Intelligence Unit 35

INS/OSHA shared Hammer Award 36

North Dakota flood response Hammer 37

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Maria T. Cardona 38

Thomas J. Schiltgen 38

Edward A. Stubbs 38

Luis E. Barker 39

Richard K. Rogers 39

IN MEMORIAM

Jesus De La Ossa 40

Thomas Williams 40

Walter Scott Panchison 40

INS NEWS *of Note*

Hurricane Prompts Temporary Suspension of Removal for Certain Central Americans

The tremendous damage to Central America in mid-November caused by Hurricane Mitch led INS to temporarily suspend the removal of nationals from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras. Initially effective from November 5-23 and then extended through January 7, the suspension period was implemented "in order to not place any undue burden on the four Central American governments as they struggle to recover from the widespread devastation caused by the hurricane," according to a statement released at INS Headquarters when the directive was announced.

In addition, on November 30 INS announced that "as part of its continuing humanitarian response

to the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch," selected nonviolent aliens from Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador would be paroled from detention through January 7, following review on a case-by-case basis.

According to a news release issued at Headquarters, the new policy could affect as many as 3,000 aliens being held in INS custody who met the following criteria: 1) aliens waiting for their immigration court hearings who are not subject to mandatory detention under immigration law could be paroled from detention; 2) non-criminal aliens who have a final order of removal could be released under an Order of Suspension; and 3) nonaggravated felon criminal aliens with a final order of removal who have been detained more than 90 days, who could also be released under an Order of Suspension.

All release determinations were to be decided individually by the responsible INS district director.

Public Comment Sought on Proposed NACARA Rule

INS announced on November 24 that via a public comment period scheduled to last through January 25, 1999, it was seeking feedback on a rule published in the *Federal Register* regarding the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA).

The rule gave the public 60 days to provide input on newly proposed procedures that nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, and former Soviet bloc countries should follow in applying for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation under Section 203 of NACARA. Following the public comment period, INS will evaluate the responses received, make any nec-



Working for Workers

In a special ceremony held at INS Headquarters on November 23, Commissioner Meissner and the Department of Labor's (DOL) Assistant Secretary for the Employment Standards Administration Bernard E. Anderson jointly signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that is expected to benefit legal workers nationwide. The MOU will promote employment opportunities and improved wage rates and working conditions for authorized U.S. workers. Specifically, it will assist INS and DOL in enhancing worksite enforcement of employer sanctions and labor standards to reduce the level of employment of unauthorized workers. In addition, it will help INS and DOL work more closely together by clarifying the enforcement roles and responsibilities of each agency.

essary changes to the proposed rule, and publish either an interim or final rule in the *Federal Register* regarding the procedures.

As part of the late November announcement, INS strongly suggested that Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and former Soviet bloc nationals who believe they will be eligible for benefits under the pending NACARA provisions wait until after the public comment period has closed (and either the interim or final rule has been published) before attempting to claim a benefit. The only exception to this suggestion concerned nationals currently in deportation or removal proceedings, and those facing an administrative final order of deportation or removal.

Mexican Nationals Indicted in Killing of Alexander Kirpnick

Two Mexican nationals, one of whom has been extradited to the United States, have been indicted in the June 3 shooting death of Border Patrol Agent Alexander Kirpnick in Nogales, AZ. The men, Bernardo Velardes Lopez and Manuel Gamez, had previously been charged with possession and distribution of marijuana, conspiracy to possess and distribute marijuana, and using a firearm in a drug crime. The new indictments, which include killing a Federal law enforcement officer during

the commission of a drug crime, supersede Gamez's original June 6 indictment.

Under the terms of the U.S. extradition agreement reached with Mexico, Lopez could receive a maximum sentence of life without parole for his involvement in Kirpnick's death. Gamez, however, who was captured while still in the United States, could face the death penalty in connection with the killing of Agent Kirpnick.

Golden Venture Mastermind Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison

According to a recent article in *The New York Times*, Lee Peng Fei, the mastermind of the *Golden Venture* alien smuggling operation, was sentenced to the maximum 20-year prison term by a New York judge on December 1. While Lee expressed sympathy for the 10 passengers who died after the ill-fated ship ran aground off of Long Island in 1993, the judge imposed the stiffest sentence possible, calling Lee and the other smugglers "a group of greedy and immoral men who hoped to profit from the misery of others."

He continued by deriding Lee for packing the 150-foot vessel with passengers, and cited the ship's lack of adequate water, food, and sanitary conditions. In addition, he said that the smugglers urged the illegal aliens to jump overboard and swim toward shore

after the boat ran aground, contributing to several drowning deaths.

Apprehended in Thailand in 1995, Lee pled guilty to manslaughter and other charges in March of last year. He was the twenty-second defendant to be convicted in connection with the *Golden Venture* case, and received the harshest sentence of those handed out.

Extension Granted for Section 110 Implementation

As part of the omnibus spending bill passed by Congress and signed by the President in early October, INS has been given additional time to develop and implement an exit-entry management system for ports-of-entry (land and sea) on both the northern and southern borders of the United States. The development of such a system was mandated by section 110a of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996. The extension gives INS until March 30, 2001 to develop and implement an exit-entry management process, a primary goal of which will be to reduce the number of visa overstays that occur each year.

**UNDER THE TERMS
OF THE U.S.
EXTRADITION...
LOPEZ COULD
RECEIVE A MAXI-
MUM SENTENCE
OF LIFE WITHOUT
PAROLE FOR HIS
INVOLVEMENT IN
KIRPNICK'S DEATH.**

INS NEWS FROM *the Field*

Commissioner Attends Dedication of Manchester, NH, Suboffice

Commissioner Meissner visited Manchester, NH, on October 23 and was joined by New Hampshire Senator Judd Gregg and Congressman John E. Sununu at a special ceremony conducted to dedicate the Service's newest permanent facility.

The temporary location of the Manchester office had been in operation since October 1997 for enforcement activities and since January

1998 for service activities. The new facility is located at 803 Canal Street, Manchester, NH.

"I appreciate all of the hard work that has gone into establishing this permanent facility," the Commissioner said in her remarks during the ceremony, "and am proud of the significant efforts that have already begun at this location. It is with great pleasure that I dedicate this office today."

The event was well-attended by dignitaries from various Federal, state, and local New Hampshire agencies, with representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Postal Service (USPS), U.S. Probation Office, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and many others joining in the festivities.

The opening was considered a success by all involved, with employees and the senior management team having the opportunity to meet with the Commissioner to discuss issues of mutual concern following the formal dedication.

The Boston, MA, district's office of public affairs contributed to the development of this story.

Del Rio Breaks Ground for New Sector Headquarters

By Paty Mancha,
Office of Public Affairs,
Del Rio, TX, Sector

Not even a steady rain could dampen the spirits of Del Rio Border Patrol personnel as they broke ground for a new sector headquarters facility on November 13. Deputy Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsh presided over the ceremonies, which were directed by Chief Patrol Agent Paul Berg. Due to the heavy rains, the groundbreaking ceremony was moved to the Del Rio Civic

Continued on page 7



Deputy Commissioner Wyrsh joins Chief Patrol Agent Paul Berg and local and state dignitaries at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Del Rio sector headquarters. (photo courtesy Del Rio, TX, sector)

Commissioner Travels to Texas for Laredo Station Groundbreaking



Commissioner Meissner, accompanied by Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Central Region Director Mark Reed, and former Laredo Sector Chief Luis Barker, tosses the first shovel of dirt during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Laredo North station.

Hosted by Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Commissioner Meissner visited Laredo, TX, on November 11 to officially break ground for the sector's newest Border Patrol station.

The \$9 million facility will be completed next year and will help support the sector's growth as Operation Rio Grande continues to make inroads against illegal immigration in South Texas, the Commissioner said. The operation, which was implemented in July of 1997, is designed to be a multi-year strategy—along the lines of Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego, CA—to enable INS to gain and maintain control of targeted border areas through a combination of increased staffing levels, improved equipment and technology resources, and new facilities.

Continued on page 37

INS Pistol Team Triumphs at World Indoor Police Championships

INS' National Pistol Team had an impressive showing at the World Indoor Police Pistol Championships in October, capturing three individual and team world championships, as well as seven "High Master" rankings in individual firearms categories.

The team, which includes 10 Service law enforcement officers and is coordinated by the National Firearms Unit (NFU), sent five members to the competition in Leitmar, Germany, from October 22-25. Those representing the Service at this prestigious competition included: Team Captain Carl Michaud, Assistant Area Port Director, Madawaska, ME; Clay Tippit, El Centro, CA, Border Patrol sector; John Ketzler, Del Rio, TX, Border Patrol sector; John Poole Jr., Laredo, TX, Border Patrol sector; and Patrol Agent-in-Charge Steve Vines, Lubbock station, Del Rio, TX, Border Patrol sector.

In the individual world championship events, Tippit won the 1500 Semi-Automatic Pistol event and Michaud captured the Service Pistol event. In addition, Tippit and an officer from

the Long Beach, CA, Police Department teamed up to win the two-man team world championship for the unit, with the two INS teams taking second and third place in the event.

In the individual firearms categories, Tippit was named a 1st High Master and Poole a 2nd High Master in the revolver 1500 category; Poole was named a 1st High Master and Michaud a 3rd High Master in the stock auto pistol category; and Michaud was named a 1st High Master, Tippit a 2nd High Master, and Poole a 3rd High Master in the two-inch revolver category.

According to Michaud, the INS team is highly respected throughout the world police marksmanship community, and is considered one of the top five teams in the world with respect to these competitions. Other teams participating in this year's event included the German Police and Military, the Czech Military, as well as teams from Belgium and England.

Del Rio, continued...

Center, with approximately 150 people joining sector staff and other dignitaries for the historic occasion.

The new facility will be built on a 23-acre parcel of land. Construction of the first phase of the complex—the administrative building—is

expected to be completed in the spring of the year 2000. The administrative building will include offices for the sector support staff, including senior sector management, administrative, communications, financial management,

personnel, and public affairs operations.

It is anticipated that the first phase of the construction operations will cost approximately \$11 million, with the second phase to include a garage, maintenance, and warehouse facility.



Excellence Recognized

El Paso Border Patrol Agents Oscar Sartuche and Rainer F. Bauer stand together with their certificates of appreciation for assisting in the apprehension of a robbery suspect. After being notified that an individual was robbing the Good Time Store in Socorro, TX, the agents observed the suspect leaving the store armed with a shotgun. After arriving on the scene, Agents Sartuche and Bauer drew their weapons and ordered the man to drop his weapon. He immediately complied, was arrested by the two agents, and turned over to the El Paso, TX, Sheriff's Department without incident.

INS NEWS FROM *the Field*

Border Patrol Dedicates Vessel

IN MEMORY OF ALEXANDER KIRPNICK



Named for fallen INS Border Patrol Agent Alexander Kirpnick, the boat was officially christened on October 21. Shown at the christening ceremony are (l. to r.): Grand Forks Mayor Pat Owens, Kirpnick's sister Zhanna, his parents Boris and Eta Kirpnick, and Chief Patrol Agent Jerry Armstrong. (photo courtesy Grand Forks, ND, sector)

With his parents and sister proudly looking on, the U.S. Border Patrol sector in Grand Forks, ND, formally dedicated its newest vessel to the memory of fallen agent Alexander Kirpnick who was killed by drug smugglers along the Southwest border earlier this year.

Unveiled at a special ceremony in late October that was also attended by Grand Forks Mayor Pat Owens; Chief Patrol Agent Jerry Armstrong; assistant chief patrol agents Lonny P. Schweitzer and Royce Johnston; and Deputy Chief Patrol Agent Gary F. Nowack, the 'Alexander Kirpnick Patrol Boat' was

shown for the first time outside of the sector headquarters.

Also attending the ceremony and presenting remarks were Gary Labbe, associate chief patrol agent at INS Headquarters; Douglas Bectel, Western Region deputy chief patrol agent; Rowdy Adams, Central Region deputy chief patrol agent; John Packett, chief of the Grand Forks Police Department; and Grange Morrow, a constable with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

"It is with great pleasure that the agents of the Grand Forks sector have the honor of dedicating our newest patrol boat in memory of Border

Patrol Agent Alexander Kirpnick," Chief Armstrong wrote in the ceremony's welcome letter. "On behalf of the family of Alexander Kirpnick and the agents of this sector, I thank you for attending today and paying tribute to a fellow law enforcement officer who [made] the ultimate sacrifice while upholding the law and defending his country."

The 24-foot Lund Baron boat, he said, will be used by agents assigned to the Warroad station on Lake of the Woods, MN, for both border enforcement and emergency assistance activities.

An Early Christmas: INS Donates Computers to Local Schools

Continuing what has become a tradition for INS both during the holidays and around the year, two Service offices recently donated a wide variety of excess computer equipment to local elementary and high schools.

In the east, the New York district's asylum office donated more than 40 computers to elementary schools in the inner-city section of Rosedale. After receiving computer system updates earlier this year, an INS staffer recalled that, "getting rid of the old computers became a nightmare" due to regulations and other requirements. Luckily, the office discovered Executive Order 12999, he said, which authorizes INS and other Federal agencies to donate surplus computer equipment to local school districts.

Both officers and support staff dressed in jeans and sneakers, and pitched in to deliver the computers to various classrooms within the

district—some of whom until that day had never had a computer to use. Each of the classrooms will now have four computers, helping the students learn the skills they need to achieve their educational goals.

Memphis, TN. A bit farther south, INS' Memphis, TN, office donated 93 pieces of excess equipment to the Frayser High School in mid-October. According to Officer-in-Charge Leslie R. Klinefelter, Frayser Principal Charles Green said that the equipment would immediately be put to good use, "as the faculty attempts to prepare students for the next millennium."

"This outreach activity is another example of the Service's efforts to interact with the community and to provide needed...equipment to local schools," Klinefelter said after the computers were delivered.



INS Memphis, TN, staffers (l. to r.) Henry Lavender, Charles Green, Michael Hopkins, and OIC Les Klinefelter stand with a piece of the computer equipment donated to an area high school. (photo courtesy Memphis, TN, suboffice)

Bangkok District Disrupts Smuggling with Operation 'Stagger Step'

Showcasing INS' ability to conduct "disrupt"-type anti-smuggling operations in Asia, the Service's Bangkok, Thailand, district recently conducted Operation 'Stagger Step,' with teams of INS officers deployed to airports throughout the region to detect malafide airline passengers, identify alien smuggling escorts, and assist local authorities and airline staff.

The operation was begun on August 17, when detail personnel attended briefings in Bangkok on the goals of 'Stagger Step' and the current smuggling situation in Asia, in general. Teams were then deployed at the international airports in Bangkok; Seoul, South Korea; and Taipei, Taiwan. After further briefings, the teams were re-deployed at the airports in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Bangkok, with the operation concluding with a final meeting in Thailand to summarize their experiences and make recommendations regarding how to conduct future operations.

Malafide Interceptions. Between August 18 and September 11, INS 'Stagger Step' airport team members intercepted 130 malafide passengers. All either had fraudulent travel documents or were participants in other alien smuggling schemes. Most of the aliens (57) came from the People's Republic of China, with Sri Lanka and Iran providing the second greatest number of undocumented travelers. Nationals of several other countries also attempted to travel with fraudulent passports, including three males with altered passports from Oman who also had Somali passports.

Several of the malafide passengers were being assisted by escorts, at least 22 of whom were identified over the course of the operation. In addition, it

appears that 'Stagger Step' may have succeeded in shifting some smuggling routes through Asia, as many of the Asian individuals who arrived in the United States during the operation came via flights across the Atlantic instead of the Pacific.

Pursuing Leads. 'Stagger Step' personnel also included three investigators who pursued leads developed by airport teams during the operation, as well as uncovering further information on smuggling schemes and fraudulent document production rings. Their activities led to the identification of several document vendors and smuggling arrangers in

Thailand. In addition, working with personnel from the Anti-Fraud Unit of the American Embassy in Bangkok, the investigators interviewed several Nepalese nationals with counterfeit U.S. visas, and were able to identify the vendors of these documents. This information enabled Royal Thai Police to arrest two Sri Lankan nationals who were selling the counterfeit travel documents, and effectively shut down the ring.

Solidifying Contacts. Finally, 'Stagger Step' allowed INS officers throughout the Bangkok district to

solidify their contacts with local law enforcement personnel and airline staff. Team members worked closely with U.S. Embassy anti-fraud units and airport officers from other embassies, including Canadian and Australian personnel who are assigned to airports



Bangkok District Director Jean Christiansen presents a special award to Shin Joong Chae, chief of inspections at Seoul, Korea's Kimpo Airport, along with officers in the Investigations Branch, recognizing their support during Operation 'Stagger Step'. Also pictured below are (l. to r.): Gerald Durand, SPM; William Chronisher, HQIAO; Darwin Tchan, LOS; Dow J. Clark III, HKC; Mark Steele, SEA; Charles Ferrigno, NYC; James McCain, ADDI-BKK; Richard Campbell, HHW; Cynthia O'Connell, DDD-BKK; Byron Farley, AGA; Lola Parocua, SEK; John Longshore, DAL; Chi Tsang, SPM; Sunsiri Inchin, BKK; Jeff K. Todd, BKK; Earl Turner, SAT; Carl Lichvarcik, BKK; Tony Lam, POO; Jacob Achterberg, SNP; and Ricky Murata, HHW; operation participants not pictured include: Tina Tucker, DAL; and Un Suk Coldiron, HHW. (photo courtesy Bangkok district)

throughout the region to help detect malafide passengers.

Laying the Groundwork. While 'Stagger Step' was the first "disrupt"-type of operation conducted in Asia, therefore, it laid the groundwork for further cooperative efforts in the region. In fact, Australian Immigration has already initiated discussions with Bangkok District Director Jean Christensen about conducting a similar multi-location operation of their own sometime this year based on this initial success.

INS members of Operation 'Stagger Step'



LA District Cracks Two Major Fraudulent Document Operations

INS had significant success in conducting its anti-fraudulent document operations in November, cracking what are believed to be the largest production and distribution rings ever uncovered, both in Los Angeles, CA, and in the nation, respectively.

In the first case, INS worked through the night of November 5, executing five search warrants at the same time at businesses and homes in Los Angeles' MacArthur Park area and in South Gate, GA. In all, more than 50 Federal, state, and local law enforcement officers assisted in the operation, which led to

the arrests of nine suspects and the seizure of more than 141,000 fraudulent documents. Agents also seized several pieces of counterfeiting equipment, 40 plates used to make false documents, and over \$13,000 in cash.

The second case, which is believed to have uncovered the largest structured counterfeit production and dissemination organization known to date, was announced at INS Headquarters on November 12. Led by agents of the L.A. office's Investigations Unit, the operation resulted in the identification and seizure of more than two million fraudu-

lent identification documents destined for locations around the country. The high-quality documents, which included Resident Alien Cards, Social Security Cards, and driver's licenses from nine states, had a minimum street value of \$800 million in Los Angeles, where similar documents sell for \$40 each. In other parts of the country, according to the district, such documents can bring \$200 or more.

"We put out of business what we believe to be the largest organized crime group responsible for manufacturing and distributing phony identification documents in the

United States," Commissioner Meissner said when the operation was announced at Headquarters. "This... should have a significant effect on the supply of counterfeit immigration documents nationwide."

The investigation was ongoing at the time it was announced by INS, with additional arrests anticipated in the near future. Before the case was cracked, the Service's most successful fraudulent document operation involved the confiscation of 400,000 counterfeit documents, also within the Los Angeles district, in 1993.

Special to the INS Communiqué

El Paso Sector Technician Develops New Infrared Locator

By Agent Lisa Calzada
Sector Border Patrol
El Paso, TX

Border Patrol agents in the Field will tell you that operating one of their vehicular infrared units is sometimes an inex-

act science. In fact, it can be quite challenging. One reason is that the camera's depth perception is somewhat limited, often making the operator's ability to guide agents to specific locations a time-consuming process.

Aware of this problem, Andres (Andy) Batista, an electronics technician at the El Paso, TX, sector headquarters, took it upon himself to develop a device to help Border Patrol agents more easily locate and apprehend illegal crossers. Now, at the touch of a button, the detection system that Batista has engineered sends a laser beam directly from the bottom of an infrared camera to a specific area of observation. This "laser locator" adds the precision of the laser to the formidable infrared technology already available.

Batista created the device after hearing first-hand of the difficulty some agents had encountered when operating traditional infrared cameras in the Field. After researching the problem and postulating solutions, he designed an apparatus to give the agents the ability to accurately "point out" intruders in hidden areas through the use of the laser.

"[This device] will make the job a lot easier and create a safer working environment," according to Batista. By taking away the "cover of darkness," he said recently, the laser locator removes much of the guesswork involved in determining the location of illegal immigrants. This in turn saves time and reduces the danger to agents searching in often treacherous border areas.

Batista's system has been tested in the Field, and was found to be effective from 1.5 to two miles in distance. Accordingly, as the need arises, El Paso sector agents now have the luxury of precision laser-location technology that takes the agency one step closer to the 21st century.



Andres Batista of the Service's El Paso, TX, sector stands with the 'laser locator' he designed for use by INS in locating and apprehending illegal border crossers. (photo courtesy El Paso, TX, sector)



In Opening Remarks Commissioner Looks Back, *Focuses Ahead*

Saying that INS is once again at “an organizational crossroads,” Commissioner Meissner opened the 1998 Commissioner’s Conference in Denver, CO, by briefly looking back over the past five years and with a more focused view on the challenges INS will likely face in the next five.

The 1993 conference, also held in Denver, primarily involved strategic planning, she said, “bringing together the ideas of the senior leadership of the organization.” The result was a strategic plan designed to project INS growth and program development through the year 2000.

In the five years since that conference, she said, “an enor-

Specifically, the Commissioner cited a budget increase of 165 percent since 1993, from \$1.5 billion to nearly \$3.9 billion for FY98.

Personnel growth has also been enormous, she said, with INS’ 17,000-person employee base in 1993 expanding to nearly 28,000 at the time of this year’s conference. She commended the Service for managing this growth well, with 97 percent of all available positions (including all of those in the Border Patrol ranks) currently filled. She credited this accomplishment to factors including a new table of organization and hiring suitability exams that have been developed. “This has

criminal alien removals, and benefits and services. INS’ border enforcement successes (including operations ‘Hold-the-Line,’ ‘Gatekeeper,’ and ‘Rio Grande’) have shown that “when we concentrate our resources, it equals impact,” the Commissioner said.

The results are striking, she continued, with apprehensions in the San Diego sector at an 18-year low and a corresponding decrease in crime along the border seen with the concentrated Border Patrol presence in the sector. She also cited the recently implemented Border Safety Initiative as an example of innovative and responsible Service programs.

With inspections being integrated into the overall INS border management strategy, the Commissioner cited the expansion of the port court program and the implementation of expedited removal at selected ports-of-entry as examples where Service personnel have risen to meet increasingly complex challenges. “We are not by any means finished with our work on the border,” she said, “but we are showing that our borders can be effectively managed, and that INS is about the business of doing that.”

Continued on page 13

“LET’S MAKE THIS ANOTHER DENVER TO REMEMBER”

mous amount of time and energy has been spent putting that agenda into action. Now, 2000 is virtually around the corner. An enormous amount has happened, and what we have accomplished has been remarkable.”

truly been a cross-agency effort,” she said.

Noted Accomplishments. Among the most significant accomplishments noted by the Commissioner during her remarks were those in the areas of border enforcement, inspections, asylum reform,

Year's **Fallen** Border Patrol Agents *Honored* in Moving Ceremony

With the solemn respect appropriate for such a ceremony, Attorney General Reno and Commissioner Meissner presented the families of INS' three fallen Border Patrol agents with special framed certificates commemorating the courage and heroism of these fine men and women.

Signed by both the Attorney General and President Clinton, each certificate was presented formally, bringing waves of emotion from those in attendance at the Tuesday afternoon



Commissioner's luncheon. This was followed by a standing ovation for the families of those who had paid the ultimate price to uphold the laws of their country: Border Patrol Agent Alexander Kirpnick, Border Patrol Agent Ricardo Salinas, and Border Patrol Agent Susan Lynn Rodriguez.

An Honor Guard Presence. The ceremony was made even more special by the attendance—for the first time at a Commissioner's Conference—by the U.S. Border Patrol

Honor Guard, in full uniform and carrying the newly unveiled Patrol flag.

With the Border Patrol logo and 22 stars (one for each sector nationwide and one for the training academy) the flag will be an integral component of the Border Patrol's 75th anniversary commemoration next spring—a time when all fallen agents will be remembered, just as the three lost in 1998 were at this year's Commissioner's Conference.



The families of fallen Border Patrol agents Susan Lynn Rodriguez, Alexander Kirpnick, and Ricardo Salinas stand with Attorney General Janet Reno and Commissioner Meissner during the presentation of their posthumous commendations.



Attorney General *Commends*

Service for Success in FY98

Speaking at her fifth consecutive INS Commissioner's Conference in the five years that she has been the nation's top law enforcement officer, Attorney General Janet Reno commended the Service for all that it has achieved since 1993, and urged all employees to use their resources in the best ways possible to accomplish INS' varied and wide-ranging responsibilities.

Called a "true advocate for the Service" in her introduction by Commissioner Meissner at the conference luncheon on Tuesday, the AG confessed that the reason she has attended the past five conferences is "actually because I'm selfish." Explaining this statement, she continued, "I draw strength and inspiration from you. I come back [from each conference] more dedicated than ever to ensuring that the Department of Justice does its duty and does it the right way."

"Your work is so important," she told those in attendance—and by extension all INS employees worldwide—"because it goes to the basis of this nation...a nation of immigrants and the need to enforce [its] laws." Then, citing INS' increasing budget and personnel growth over the past five years, she said, "We've got the resources and we've got the vision...and you've run with it. When I have seen what you have had to do...you have done an incredible job."

Still, she said, much remains to be done. And in working to accomplish it, she said INS should stress customer service and building "user-friendly" components into everyday operations.

Specifically citing 1998 Commissioner's Conference Award Winner Ron Churlin who recently lost a courageous battle with cancer, the Attorney General remembered that, "for Ron, the best measure of the success of his [Deferred Enforced Departure] program was that it has been widely praised as user-friendly." And while she said that that particular term is not



Attorney General Janet Reno talks with Commissioner Meissner during the conference luncheon.

Reno:

**"I DRAW STRENGTH AND
INSPIRATION FROM YOU"**

one of her favorites, the idea it conveys is a good one. "In his memory," she concluded, "let us ask...if this [customer] were a member of our family, how would we want them to be treated. Let's put it in those human terms."

In concluding her remarks, the Attorney General stressed other themes including interagency and international cooperation, as well as seeking continued improvement in responding to the needs and concerns of all INS customers.

"You do an incredible job of serving the nation in the greatest example of public service that I have seen," she said emotionally. "Thank you, from the bottom of my heart."

Continued from page 11

Regarding asylum reform, the Commissioner said that as a result of this "stand-out" Service program, 80 percent of all asylum interviews are now granted within 45 days of the receipt of the initial application. "This has shown that we can continue to provide the generous tradition of political asylum" in a timely manner, while effectively combating potential fraud, she said.

Concerning criminal alien removals, she noted that the 42,000 total removals completed by INS in FY93 has more than quadrupled in

five years, with the number of criminal alien removals this year alone expected to top the total number from five years ago.

Finally, in the area of benefits and services the Commissioner said that while many INS receipts are hitting record highs, all employees should take pride in the fact that in the latest external audit conducted, the consulting firm of KPMG PeatMarwick concluded that INS "has initiated a quality mind set" into its benefits processes. She specifically thanked Eastern

Continued on page 29

Deputy Commissioner Provides Service Restructuring Update

Saying that “we cannot continue to reap the benefits of our achievements unless we change the way we do business,” Deputy Commissioner Wyrsh briefed conference participants on Tuesday afternoon regarding the progress INS has made in continuing its organizational restructuring efforts.

Attending her first Commissioner’s Conference since joining INS, the Deputy spoke on “Enhancing Operational Effectiveness and Getting Better Results” as the overriding themes of the ongoing restructuring initiative. With new Restructuring Director Robert

new approach to doing business,” she said. Site visits to the Field, therefore, which had included more than 200 interviews as of late October, are considered essential to quantifying how INS employees view the idea of “reorganization.”

The results of these on-site field focus groups, the Deputy said, were wide-ranging, with responses varying from concerns about the likely success of such a large-scale restructuring effort to questions about how it will be implemented on an organizational level. There was also much positive feedback, she said, with many staffers seeing this as an opportunity to improve cross-office coordination, clarify lines of authority, and help reduce the number of detailees needed to ensure the Service is achieving its multi-faceted mission. The field visits were essential, the Deputy concluded, because “we need to know what the concerns are so we can address them, talk about them, and get this process into the open so we can proceed apace.”

A Six-Month Development Plan. Following the Deputy Commissioner, a PwC lead representative presented the six-month restructuring development plan, saying that with the completion of the first phase of information gathering, the INS/PwC team has begun the preliminary operational design phase that will examine the details of how the three new Service branches—Enforcement Operations, Immigration Services, and Shared Support Services—will operate functionally at the ground level.

Finally, Restructuring Director Gardner closed the session by describing how the success of the restructuring implementation process will be gauged, including measuring how it: 1) increases INS effectiveness and improves [overall] results; 2) works at the local level for our customers; 3) works for our employees, for example, through increased job satisfaction; 4) meets the needs of our stakeholders; and 5) addresses congressional interests and concerns.

“As the Commissioner said earlier this morning,” Gardner noted in concluding his presentation, “we need to do this...we have no choice. We are the best navigators of our course...if we want to achieve the best results.”



Deputy Commissioner Wyrsh, seated next to incoming Restructuring Director Robert Gardner, presents a recap and overview of the Service’s ongoing restructuring effort during a conference session. Seated next to Gardner are the PricewaterhouseCoopers team leader and INS Western Region Director Johnny Williams.

Gardner at her side, she began by outlining the overall goals of the detailed plan being developed in coordination with the management consulting firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). These include: 1) improving enforcement and immigration services results; 2) clarifying organizational responsibilities and establishing clear lines of accountability; 3) improving career paths and the level of professionalism of INS staff; 4) improving customer service; and 5) improving INS’ overall potential for success in fulfilling its mission. Each of the goals, she said, “underlies the whole effort in which we are engaged. This is the beginning—where we are starting—we now need to put the meat on the bones.”

Continuing on this theme, she stressed that INS has now reached the “blueprinting stage” of the effort—with site visits to field offices including those in New York, Miami, San Diego, and Seattle already completed—in an effort to help develop an institutional understanding of how employees nationwide perceive any restructuring would affect them and their operations. “Everyone will be affected by this

Weber **Outlines** Details of Service's FY99 *Budget*

Allocation Bill Passed to

Fund INS Operations Through June 15, 1999

In outlining the details of the congressional bill passed in October authorizing the Service's funding for FY99, HQ Office of Budget Director Jeff Weber stressed that for two basic reasons this year will be financially like few in recent memory. For while the Service will have a budget of approximately \$3.9 billion, only 70 percent of the budget has currently been appropriated (through June 15, 1999), with that money divided by Congress essentially along the lines of the proposed INS reorganization.

Slowed Funding Growth. While INS' FY98 budget was approximately \$3.8 billion, the new budget represents an increase of just \$100 million, Weber said in opening his presentation. And although the FY99 budget represents a 163 percent increase compared to FY93 levels, "the growth is definitely slowing down," he said. This, combined with the fact that the budget bill allocations have been split into two parts "to establish clearer chains of command," and provided only for the first nine months of the year "may cause some problems for us, but we will try to minimize [the effect of these] changes on the Field."

Selected Highlights. Continuing with a more detailed FY99 funding preview, Weber noted that the Service will hire 1,140 Border Patrol agents and support staff in the coming year, but received \$6 million less than requested to accomplish this task. Among the other funding INS has received for FY99, he said, is:

- \$171 million for naturalization enhancements (including an additional \$5 million for Records Program enhancements (e.g., the development of a national records center);
- \$21.8 million and 200 positions to establish "Quick Response Teams" to ensure the expeditious removal of illegal aliens;
- \$3.1 million to expand the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) by 16 positions;
- \$11.4 million for 400 new beds at the Port Isabel, TX, Service Processing Center (and additional juvenile beds);
- \$1 million for the programs within the Headquarters Office of Internal Audit;
- \$90 million in construction resources (including \$36.1 million for Border Patrol projects);
- \$11.7 million for 200 term employees to form "Backlog Reduction Action Teams" in selected areas;
- \$10.9 million to support the Charleston, SC, Border Patrol Training Facility; and

- full funding for 200 new adjudications positions nationwide.

Other "ear-marked" items in the congressional bill include:

- allocations for four new Dedicated Commuter Lanes (DCLs) in Washington State;
- a continuation of the four-position limit on the number of noncareer employees within the agency;
- a 30-month extension for the development and implementation of an exit/entry management program (Section 110 of IIRIRA);
- an extension on the time allowed to replace existing Border Crossing Cards;
- an INS presence of no less than one Special Agent in Kodiak, Alaska; and
- a new Service field office in southwest Utah.

In addition, Congress has also requested that INS prepare 15 program-related reports, ranging from a study on the deployment of INS resources nationwide to an overview of planned road and fence construction initiatives.

A Challenge Offered. In closing his presentation, Weber revisited the idea that the days of \$500 million annual funding increases may be in the past. Accordingly, he challenged INS' managers to look for ways to save money that can later be used for "discretionary funding." One of those ways, he said, was to reduce the amount spent on overtime when possible. The Service spends approximately \$300 million in overtime each year, he concluded, and while much of this is "essential and/or uncontrollable," this may be one area where the Service can save some much-needed funds for future use.

A Trajectory of Growth. "This FY99 budget allocation continues a trajectory of growth that began some years ago," Commissioner Meissner said after Weber concluded his plenary presentation. While the increase is not as large as seen in previous years, she said, "we have come a long way" in explaining the agency's programs and budgetary requirements to Congress and other Service constituents in attendance.



Office of Budget Director Jeff Weber discusses the Service's FY99 funding appropriations.

Gordon, Fitzpatrick Recognized for *Distinguished Career Service*

In a special and emotionally touching ceremony held during the conference banquet on Wednesday evening, Commissioner Meissner joined the Service's senior managers in recognizing the distinguished careers of two of

INS' most well-liked and -respected leaders: Acting El Paso Border Patrol Chief Al Gordon and former Portland, ME, District Director Eugene "Mick" Fitzpatrick, who passed away earlier this year.

A Symbol of Perseverance. Al Gordon, who, with 34 years at INS is among the longest-serving Border Patrol agents, began his career in 1964 as an Immigration Inspector in Chula Vista, CA, transferring in 1966 to become a resident Border Patrol agent in Jacumba, CA. Over the next 20 years, he moved up through the ranks of the Patrol, working as a supervisory Border Patrol agent in Campo, CA, patrol agent-in-charge in Campo, patrol agent-in-charge in San Clemente, CA, and finally as assistant chief patrol agent in El Centro, CA. He held that position for 10 years, and was promoted to deputy chief patrol agent in 1994. He transferred one final time in 1995, to El Paso, TX, where he was named the deputy chief patrol agent.

Called "a symbol of perseverance and dedication to duty" by

Commissioner Meissner, Gordon was also given accolades by current Border Patrol Chief Gus De La Viña, San Diego Sector Chief Bill Veal, and former San Diego Chief (and current

Western Region Director) Johnny Williams, who noted that the Gordon Border Patrol tradition will continue in the future, because Al's son is now a supervisory agent at the Campo station.

"Al, we wish you well in your retirement," the Commissioner concluded. "You have served the Border Patrol with honor and have earned an enjoyable retirement. Congratulations on this well-deserved award."

A Dedication to Excellence. Eugene Fitzpatrick, represented by his wife Pam at the presentation ceremony, was recognized by the Commissioner as "exemplifying what the Distinguished Career Service Award is all about." Mick, as he was known to his friends, began what she called "a remarkable career" as a Border Patrol agent in several Texas locations, returning to his native New England to hold positions as an immigration examiner in Rhode Island and within the Eastern regional office. He then moved back west to Phoenix, AZ, serving as deputy district director, and was appointed as the district director in Portland, ME, in 1985.

Fitzpatrick was a "smoke jumper," the Commissioner recalled, because he "was sent in whenever the flames of crisis engulfed the agency." He was also exceptionally dedicated to his employees, she remembered, and if there was an award presentation anywhere within the district—one of INS' largest—he was sure to be there.

He was also a loving family man, she recalled, with "no louder fan at his sons' basketball games."

"He will be greatly missed as a cherished member of the INS family," she concluded to a standing ovation offered in his memory by the more than 300 banquet guests in attendance.



Pam Fitzpatrick (wife of former Portland, ME, District Director Eugene "Mick" Fitzpatrick) and Border Patrol Chief Al Gordon stand with Commissioner Meissner in accepting their respective Distinguished Career Service Awards.

Managing Change,
**STRENGTHENING
PERFORMANCE**

INS Technology *Demonstrations*

Throughout the conference, selected technology programs, products, and initiatives that have helped the Service accomplish its mission over the past year were demonstrated.

A summary of these demonstrations is provided below.

BORDER MANAGEMENT

The Integrated Surveillance Information System is based on the “melding” of several surveillance technologies. This strategy incorporates Remote Video Surveillance, Global Positioning System, Geographic Information System, ICAD III, and a static display of night vision goggles and short-range infrared camera. The demonstration featured “live feeds” from selected Border Patrol sites, as follows: Remote Video Surveillance (El Paso/Laredo/Nogales and San Diego) and ICAD III (San Diego). Demonstrators included participants from the Department of Defense’s (DOD’s) Counterdrug Technology Program who displayed the Global Positioning System and other DOD/INS shared-technology initiatives. Agents from the Del Rio and San Diego sectors demonstrated field-developed applications of Geographic Information Systems, as well.

The Encrypted Voice Radio Program demonstrated the interoperability with other DOJ agencies and the USCS.

They also discussed the operations of the Technical Maintenance Facility in Largo, MD. This program is a 1998 Commissioner’s Challenge Award recipient.

Mobile ENFORCE with IDENT integrates the Service’s biometric fingerprint system with ENFORCE. ENFORCE has been recently enhanced with new “Notice to Appear” screens to satisfy user requirements.

INTERIOR ENFORCEMENT

INS’ Biometric Retrieval Terminal offers query and retrieval of image sets (photo, fingerprint, signature) of 13 million Permanent Resident Alien cards that were issued by the ICF between 1989-1998. The system is already showing results with regard to identifying fraudulent identification and false claims to INS benefits.

The Institutional Removal Program (IRP) system demonstrated the tracking of deportable inmates as they move to the incarceration period. The system will notify release location and dates of inmates who can be immedi-

ately deported after their sentence is served.

The Intranet allows INS employees to keep abreast of the latest Service information, statistics, program developments, etc. This capability will introduce a powerful tool for programs requiring quick dissemination of information.

IMMIGRATION SERVICES

CIPRIS (Coordinated Interagency Partnership for Regulating International Students) is a reengineered process for students with visa forms I-20/IAP-66. The prototype system demonstrated at the conference was developed in cooperation with the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of State’s Office of Programs and Schools. The system is currently undergoing design and development improvements to meet national requirements.



Demonstrating one of the tools INS uses for border management, a technician (left) introduces a conference participant to the Service’s Remote Video Surveillance system. While the system was running live during the conference, a number of illegal aliens were seen attempting to cross the Rio Grande near Laredo, TX.

1998 Commissioner's *Award*

Winners

1998 COMMISSIONER'S CHALLENGE AWARDS

Special Recognition

INS Hiring Initiative

Human Resources
Headquarters and Administrative
Centers

Over the last three years, Congress issued mandates and provided accompanying resources to INS for increased staffing levels in order to better defend our borders against illegal immigration and drug smuggling as well as to provide improved assistance to immigrants. This effort necessitated the abandonment of traditional systems and procedures for recruiting, examining, referring, selecting, clearing, appointing and training applicants and employees. It also required the formation of new partnerships across organizational lines and shows the true spirit of teamwork. INS has grown from less than 19,000 to nearly 30,000 employees in 1998.



Michael C. Anderson, a deportation officer within the Newark, NJ, district office, accepts his Officer Corp Employee of the Year Award from Commissioner Meissner.

Office of Naturalization Operations Headquarters

The Office of Naturalization Operations (ONO) was established to address the pressing need to improve the integrity of the Nation's naturalization system. The first priority of ONO was to improve quality assurance by the publication of Naturalization Quality Procedures in June 1997. INS received a record 1.6 million naturalization applications in 1997, nearly three times the 1993 level. ONO developed an array of innovative steps to address the backlog, consistent with maintaining the high standards of integrity of the process that are essential.



1998 Newton-Azrak Award winners Border Patrol agents John C. Pfeifer, Benjamin M. Batchelder, Martin G. Hewson, and Stephen A. Brooks stand together during the Commissioner's Awards ceremony.

Enhance Data & Data Systems Integrity

William S. McElhaney
Chief, Office Systems Section
Office of Information Resources
Management
Headquarters

Radio Systems Section
Office of Information Resources
Management
Headquarters



INS Human Resources and Development Director Carol Hall accepts the Commissioner's Challenge Award for INS Hiring Initiatives on behalf of the Headquarters Office of Human Resources and Development and INS Administrative Centers.

Achievements in this category may be demonstrated by successfully implementing the Attorney General's initiatives by enhancing the integrity and integration of data and data systems supporting the enforcement and service functions of the INS and to enhance the sharing of relevant data with other Federal agencies.

Continued Improvement Within INS

Raul Acosta
Adjudications Officer
Los Angeles District

Roy L. Hendricks
Immigration Officer
Office of Human Resources
and Development
Headquarters

James H. Michel
Supervisory Case Resolution
Technician
Nebraska Service Center
Lincoln, Nebraska

Investigations Branch
San Diego District

Achievements in this category may be demonstrated by enhancing the automation processes, including the fingerprint clearance process, telephone-based information and forms services for customers and to expand capabilities for the submission of applications received by mail. Continued expansion of IIRIRA with special emphasis on new pilot activities.

Strengthen Border Enforcement & Facilitation

Gregory Eddy
Supervisory Immigration Inspector
JFK Airport

Edward M. Piegdon
Immigration Inspector
Newark Airport

Operation Child Care
Miami Sector

Achievements in this category may be demonstrated by continued development of program initiatives to deter unlawful migration and to enforce immigration



Tyrone Mitchell, assistant U.S. attorney in Phoenix, AZ, receives the 1998 Commissioner's Interagency Assistance Award.

laws to reduce unauthorized employment and assistance of aliens between law enforcement entities of the government.

Strengthen Interior Enforcement

Angela M. Malacari
Special Agent
Washington District

William D. West
Supervisory Special Agent
Miami District

Fugitive Task Force
Los Angeles District

Operation Mission Impossible
Washington District

Special Agents
San Antonio District

Achievements in this category may be demonstrated by continued development of program initiatives to deter unlawful migration and to enforce immigration laws to reduce unauthorized employment and assistance of aliens between law enforcement entities of the government.

Enhance Community Impact

Daniel P. Kane
Executive Assistant
El Paso District
(Currently, Office of Policy and Planning
Headquarters)

Institutional Removal Program
San Diego District

Achievements in this category may be demonstrated by improving the development and implementation of immigration-related policies and practices by engaging in cooperative activities with other Federal, State and local governments; law enforcement agencies; national and local non-government entities; and local communities to enhance providing services and enforcing the laws.



Angela Reading accepts her Commissioner's Challenge Award for Broadening Communications within INS.

Broaden Communications Within INS

Linda E. Greene
Acting Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the Commissioner
Headquarters

Mitchell J. Katz
Public Affairs Specialist
Office of Public Affairs
Headquarters

Sheila M. Magruder
Liaison Officer, Administrative
Centers
Office of Management
Headquarters

Angela M. Reading
Special Assistant
Office of the Commissioner
Headquarters

Pamella M. Smith
Chief, Employee Labor Management
Relations Section
Human Resources Branch
Headquarters

**Deportable Alien Control System
Training Video**
Eastern Regional Office

Achievements in this category may be demonstrated by increasing communication of information and guidance for all levels of INS personnel to foster increased participation in INS' mission accomplishments to effectively enhance the work environment and conditions.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT AWARD

Raymond P. Adams

Assistant District Director
San Antonio District

Felix F. Bangs

Supervisory Border Patrol Agent
Casa Grande Station
Tucson Sector

John W. Clarke (Posthumous)

Director of Facilities
Administrative Center
Burlington, Vermont

Doreen M. Kennedy

Assistant Chief Patrol Agent
San Diego Sector

Glenn C. Pritchard

Director, Environmental Occupational
Safety and Health Division
Office of Administration
Headquarters

Cherritha Rowe

Chief, Employee Pay and Records
Human Resources Branch
Headquarters

Theodor Schwartz

Manager, Employee Assistance Program
Office of Human Resources
and Development
Headquarters

John A. Wyscarver

District Adjudications Officer
Houston District

Deaf Mexican Nationals Working Group

New York District

Debt Management Center

Burlington, Vermont

Federal Detention Facility

Buffalo District

Human Resource Department

McAllen Sector

INSpect Program

Office of Internal Audit
Headquarters

Law Enforcement Support Center

Burlington, Vermont

Operation Eastern Star Team

El Paso District

Permanent Change of Station Group

Administrative Center
Dallas, Texas

Violent Gang Task Force

San Diego District

Presented in recognition of meritorious action during an emergency or in response to an unforeseen urgent situation; significant and noteworthy accomplishments of goals or programs despite problems or setbacks; significant and noteworthy improvements in systems, operations or procedures as a result of creative and/or innovative initiatives; and/or any activity taken over a significant period of time with high public visibility and resulting in efficient and effective furtherance of the Service's mission.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AWARD

Carole Ann Riley

Legal Assistant
Central Regional Office



Raul Acosta, an adjudications officer with the Service's Los Angeles, CA, district accepts his 1998 Commissioner's Award for Continued Improvement Within INS.

This award honors non-attorney personnel in the Legal Proceedings Program who have distinguished themselves in the pursuit of excellence by demonstrating exceptional assistance to attorneys in the preparation of documents for legal proceedings; consistent handling of priority or rush work in a calm, professional manner; or demonstration of diligence in working to accomplish office goals, exceptional initiative, flexibility, innovation and creativity in the accomplishment of achievements.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S ROOKIE ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR AWARD

Thomas F. Muther, Jr.
Assistant District Counsel
Miami District

This award honors attorneys hired during the previous year who have distinguished themselves by demonstrating exceptional skill in presentation/advocacy of the service's position in legal proceedings; demonstrated expertise in complex areas of immigration law and agency policies; or effective dealings with courts, clients, and public interest groups.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Secretarial/Support

Teddy O. Davis
Management Assistant
Office of Records
Headquarters

Genevieve Dent
Secretary
Human Resources Branch
Headquarters

Giovanna Pinto
Secretary
Newark District

Administrative/Technical Support

Vivian L. Miller
Assistant District Adjudications Officer
Miami District

Officer Corps

Michael C. Anderson
Deportation Officer
Newark District

1998 COMMISSIONER'S DISTRICT COUNSEL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Samuel Der-Yeghiayan
District Counsel
Chicago District

This award honors District Counsels who have distinguished themselves by providing exceptional contributions in the area of program development, operations and procedures resulting in substantial benefits, increased productivity and decreased backlogs; creativity and resourcefulness resulting in improved service programs; demonstration of exceptional legal analysis of complex, unusual or novel issues which offers creative but fully supportable solutions; skillful application of personnel administration principles resulting in observable organizational benefits; or superior leadership resulting in outstanding organizational achievements.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AWARD

Charlie F. Robinson
Supervisory Criminal Investigator
Chicago District

Presented in recognition of superior service in motivating employees through direct encouragement and assistance to develop their full potential and utilize their skills to the greatest possible extent, evidenced by promotion of lower graded and under utilized employees, and recognition through awards of lower level



INS Supervisor of the Year (GS-14 and above) Rick Sloan accepts his award from Commissioner Meissner.

employee achievements; achieving effective employee utilization as evidenced by integrating women, minority groups and handicapped employees successfully in the unit; or demonstrating concern for employee needs as evidenced by attendance at EEO training and consideration of EEO goals in providing training, promoting employees, assigning overtime and creating new job opportunities.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR AWARD

Amy L. Brice
Assistant District Counsel
El Paso District

Anne E. Gannon
John Mulrooney
Assistant District Counsels
New York District

Tara Naselow-Nahas
Assistant District Counsel
Mira Loma Detention Facility
Los Angeles District

These awards honor attorneys who have distinguished themselves in the pursuit

of excellence for the benefit of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Catherine Stansell
Supervisory Applications Clerk
Los Angeles District

Edwin Martinez
Supervisory Immigration Inspector
Vancouver Inspection Station

Richard A. Sloan
Director, Policy Directives and
Instructions Branch
Office of Policy and Planning
Headquarters

Presented in recognition of demonstration of unusual ability in overcoming organizational difficulties and/or shortages in manpower, funding and/or equipment resources to achieve objectives; exceptional organizational and/or planning ability in the achievement of a major project or objective that was extremely complex, sensitive and/or labor intensive; or ability to create a working environment in which subordinates work to their utmost capacity and achieve objectives over a sustained period of time in an efficient manner and with exceptional quality.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S LABOR-MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP AWARD

**California Service Center and
AFGE Immigration and Naturalization
Service Council, Local 1200**
Laguna Niguel

**El Centro Border Patrol Sector
and AFGE, National Border Patrol
Council, Local 2554**
El Centro

This honorary group award is designed to recognize recipients for superior achievement in furthering the objectives of labor-management partnership within the service. Achievements in this area

may be demonstrated by the degree of improvement in the parties' relationship achieved through their partnership efforts. It may be evidenced by a variety of indicators, such as a reduction in grievances, unfair labor practice charges and other disputes; resolution of difficult problems through voluntary means, without the need for third-party intervention, and cooperative implementation of programs without the need for formal negotiations (as contrasted with prior adversarial methods of resolving problems and disputes); and the existence of favorable external publicity for the INS as a result of its improved cooperative labor-management relationship.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S INTERAGENCY ASSISTANCE AWARD

Tyrone Mitchell
Assistant U.S. Attorney
Phoenix, Arizona

Brownsville Police Department Brownsville,
Texas

St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Department

Presented in recognition of invaluable assistance to the Service in an emergent situation to which the Services could not otherwise have responded.

NEWTON-AZRAK AWARD

Richard L. Ashlaw
Supervisory Border Patrol Agent
Massena Border Patrol Station

Alexander Kirpnick (Posthumous)
Border Patrol Agent
Tucson Sector

LeAlan L. Pinkerton
Supervisory Border Patrol Agent
Casa Grande Border Patrol Station
Tucson Sector

Benjamin M. Batchelder

Martin G. Hewson

John C. Pfeifer
Border Patrol Agents
Newport Border Patrol Station



Newton-Azrak Award winner Stephen A. Brooks stand with his wife and daughter during a break in the awards ceremony proceedings.

Stephen A. Brooks
Border Patrol Agent
Beecher Falls Border Patrol Station
Susan L. Rodriguez (Posthumous)
Ricardo G. Salinas (Posthumous)
Orlando Sanchez
Border Patrol Agents
Harlingen Border Patrol Station

This award is named in honor of Theodore L. Newton, Jr. and George P. Azrak and is presented for contributions, services accomplishments reflecting unusual courage or bravery in the line of duty and/or a heroic or human act during times of extreme stress or in an emergency.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

Jose E. Garza
Supervisory Border Patrol Agent
McAllen Sector

Virginia C. Kice
Director, Congressional and
Public Affairs
Western Regional Office

Ronnie F. Myers
Deputy Chief Patrol Agent
Border Patrol Training Facility
Charleston, South Carolina

Kelly Ryan
Associate General Counsel
Headquarters

Gary L. Thomas
Application Clerk
Omaha District

Presented in recognition of accomplishment of assigned duties in such an outstanding manner as to be clearly noteworthy among all those who have performed similar duties, or performance of assigned tasks in such an exemplary manner as to set a record of achievement that will inspire others to improve the quality and/or quantity of their work. This is the second highest award granted by the Commissioner.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S DISTINGUISHED CAREER SERVICE AWARD

Eugene M. Fitzpatrick (Posthumous)
District Director
Portland District

Richard K. Rogers (Retired)
District Director
Los Angeles District

This award shall be granted in recognition of the completion of noteworthy careers with the Service.

1998 COMMISSIONER'S EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD

Ronald S. Chirlin (Posthumous)
Senior Adjudications Officer
Headquarters

Kathleen M. Stanley
Assistant Director
Office of Internal Audit
Headquarters

Presented in recognition of the performance of a special service in the public interest which is over and above normal requirements and of an outstanding and distinctive character in terms of improved operations, public understanding of the Service's mission, or accomplishment of one of the major goals of the service. This is the most prestigious award granted within the Service.

FOIA/PA Reduction, Hiring *Successes* Cited at Conference Banquet

Continuing a tradition begun at last year's conference banquet, Commissioner Meissner took time on Wednesday night to present special awards recognizing Service excellence in the areas of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/Privacy Act (PA) backlog reduction and regional hiring efforts. Both FOIA/PA

processing and expeditious hiring remain high on the Attorney General's list of initiatives not only to improve professionalism within the agency, but perhaps more importantly to hire and train employees dedicated to effective and efficient communication with external INS publics.

Those offices recognized for excellence in FOIA/PA backlog reduction efforts in FY98 included the:

- Miami, FL, district for reducing its backlog by 28 percent;
- Dallas, TX, district for processing all 52 of its pending requests;
- Los Angeles, CA, district for reducing its backlog from 410 to 30 cases;

- Texas Service Center for reducing its backlog from 297 to four cases; and
- The Headquarters FOIA/PA Office for its overall backlog-reduction operations.

In addition, Each INS region was cited for excellence in hiring FY98, including:

- Western Region, which met 98 percent of its hiring goals;
- Central Region, which continued to meet its consistently high hiring standards; and
- Eastern Region, which exceeded its overall hiring goals, and had just 22 total vacancies as of the end of the year.



Florida District Director Robert Wallis accepts an award from Commissioner Meissner for reducing the pending FOIA/PA request backlog.



Central Region Director Mark Reed accepts an award from the Commissioner recognizing excellence in hiring initiatives.

Union Heads Stress Continued *Cooperation* as INS Moves Ahead

In the conference's plenary session on Thursday morning, the heads of the two unions representing INS employees nationwide stressed continued partnerships and cooperation as the Service moves forward into the next century.

T.J. Bonner, executive president of the National Border Patrol Council and a 20-year Patrol veteran, opened the session, sharing what he called his "secret" for labor-management cooperation. "Treat your people fairly," he told the managers and supervisors in attendance, "and they will have no reason to complain."

He continued by saying that "partnership" is "simply a new way of stating an old concept: cooperation—and this cooperation is in the interest of both labor and management." The question, over the past four years, he asked rhetorically is "has this partnership made a difference? I

truly believe the answer is yes."

In saying that the success of such partnerships at the regional level remains "mixed," Bonner concluded by stressing that "even at the most successful locations there is room for improvement...to show the world what we can achieve through partnership."

An Eye to the Future.

Continuing with this cautious yet optimistic view, National INS Council Executive Vice President Dennis Smith called the state of the agency's labor-management cooperative efforts "guarded."

In some locations, he said, "you are doing great things because you are doing [them] together. But there are other areas where you are not doing so well, and the question is 'why.'" The INS Council, he said, "is a big believer in partnership. We've had some great successes [over the past year, but] we expect more."

Finally, Smith turned an eye to the future, saying, "One

of our biggest challenges...will be the restructuring. Our council is going to be involved in this in a big way [because] every one of us recognizes that if we don't do it, someone else will." The INS Council, he concluded, "is committed to working in partnership with the agency to make this work and lead us into the next century."

Detailed Regional

Overviews. The union presidents' session was followed by a more detailed presentation by three regional union representatives, each of whom outlined specific labor-management partnership successes from the past year.

Selected INS managers, including regional directors Mark Reed and William Yates, then presented the management perspective on the agreements reached, also stressing continued labor-management cooperation in the future.

Guest Speaker **Geist** *Focuses*

on 'Managing Organizational Change'

Change” was the word of the day for Sam Geist, a successful entrepreneur and businessman who was the guest speaker on the final morning of the 1998 Commissioner’s Conference.

He made his point quickly—and with quite a punch—by holding up a foot-wide aspirin tablet in front of the packed house at the morning session. “This is the pill of change,” Geist said to a round of laughter. “The problem is not [envisioning] the change, the problem is swallowing it.”

And while acknowledging that change within any organization is difficult for all those involved, he stressed that in today’s business world there is no alternative. With perhaps an inkling of the proposed INS restructuring in the back of his mind, he said, “getting people to change is still one of the hardest things to do. But look out...here comes tomorrow. And a strategic plan for managing change provides the connection between customer service and organizational performance.”

While he admitted that the comparison was not quite analogous, Geist pointed to the telecom industry as one that has been slow to change to meet the needs of tomorrow’s customers. While the Bell companies “were comfortable with

things the way they were,” he said referring to their virtual control of local and long-distance service, they didn’t immediately anticipate the impact that cellular communications would have on their market share. And when they did finally get into the cellular market, they were already behind the curve on Internet communications.

This “technology connection” is more important today than ever before in ensuring that an organization’s employees have the tools they need to improve performance and customer service, Geist said. “Change and technology are directly interconnected.” Using this technology, he continued, “we have no alternative than to be better at what we do. To move from information to knowledge—shaping tomorrow today.”

Mastering Change. In closing his remarks, Geist let the audience in on what he called “the seven words of a dying business.” Words that all businesses—including Federal agencies—need to avoid at all costs if they want to manage change successfully and survive in the future.

The simple words that can lead to an organization’s downfall? “We’ve never done it that way before.”

“Either we master change,” by using new approaches to solve old problems, Geist concluded, “or it will master us.”



Special guest speaker Sam Geist

In Closing Remarks, Commissioner

Focuses on 'Two-way

Communication'

The Service's pending restructuring and the need to keep all employees involved in the communication process during its continuing progress were the main themes stressed by Commissioner Meissner in her closing remarks on the final day of the conference.

"I do think and hope that we are setting the tone for an issue of this gravity," she told the Service's managers and supervisors on the heels of what was viewed by all as an informative and productive week. "[That tone is one] of inclusion in determining what is the best way to accomplish these goals."

She continued by stressing "how important it is to build a [new INS] structure that maintains the connectivity of the agency effectively." At the same time, all "assurances we can provide to

our employees are absolutely essential. We have the INS of tomorrow already in your officers, and our stewardship of those individuals is one of the most important things that we can do as a leadership team."

This year's conference, she continued, "underscores what we all know—that communication and two-way dealing are crucially important, and that in the coming months, as we face the issues we have to look forward to, we all need to participate in that two-way communication."

In doing so, the Commissioner concluded, "we will find that we will work better together... we will get through this [change], and we will be better off for it."

Continued from page 13

Region Director William Yates for "helping to get the new adjudications organization off of the ground," and said that the new platform "will establish fundamental reform for the service side of the agency across the board."

Another Crossroads. "What I have mentioned is the tip of the iceberg and represents nothing less than the beginnings of our making ourselves into a new INS," the Commissioner said shifting her view to the future. "Today we are at another crossroads. What we are looking at is INS *beyond* 2000. What I am asking for is nothing less than a dedication to managing change and strengthening results in the future."

The key to rising to the challenge expressed in this year's conference theme, she said, stems directly from the realization that INS must strive for "a commitment to civil rights and professional law enforcement, delivering world-class customer service,...[and] a continued focus

on the naturalization backlog reduction process."

Much of the agency's success in the coming year, she said, will stem from an identification of our 'core values.' "Change and the demand for excellence are facing us on all fronts. But some things don't change and must not change. The core values of this institution—integrity, honor, and service to our nation do not...cannot change. This is something for us to collectively define. We must attempt to define [these values] and infuse them on a daily basis into the work that we do.

"Let's make [this conference] another Denver to remember," the Commissioner said in enthusiastically concluding her remarks to the applause of the INS managers, supervisors, regional and district directors, and chief patrol agents in attendance, encouraging them to make the conference as productive as possible.

Commissioner's **Conference** 1998
at a *Glance*





RECRUITING *Update*

FY98: Oh, What a Year!

Summary of Selected FY98 INS Print Advertising Initiatives

In FY98, INS placed recruiting display ads in the following publications:

- The National Career Centers Conference Booklet;
- The SCSU Scholarship Banquet Journal;
- The Tribal College Journal-Winter Edition;
- The Student Leader;
- Planning Job Choices-Minority Edition;
- Planning Job Choices-Two- and Four-Year Colleges Edition;
- The Publication of the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives;
- The Publication of the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice;
- Sheriff Magazine;
- The Organization of Chinese Americans, Inc. Conference Booklet;
- The National Association of Police Organizations Convention Booklet;
- The Seminoles Futures Career Expo Handbook (two inserts);
- The National Association of Colleges and Employers Conference Handbook;
- The National Native American Law Enforcement Association Newsletter (two inserts);
- The Native American Connections Yearbook/Directory;
- The Washington Times (special insert for Public Service Recognition Week);
- Black Collegian-Fall 1998 Edition;
- The National Indian Education Association '98 Convention Program;
- The National Congress of American Indians Annual Session Agenda Booklet;
- The Oracle Job Search Guide-University of Southern Florida; and
- The Folsom, CA, Third Annual Law Enforcement Career Fair Guide;

In addition, the Service included advertising in placement manual guides at 23 different universities that have either high minority study body concentrations or criminal justice majors, and placed advertisements in the following college papers announcing upcoming visits:

- *The Daily Texan*, The University of Texas, Austin;
- *The State Press*, Arizona State University;
- *The Gramblinite*, Grambling State University;
- *The Northeastern News*, Northeastern University; and
- *The State Hornet*, California State University.

At the beginning of FY98 the National Recruitment Program (NRP) was a brand new office, with a brand new staff and a giant goal: recruit enough interested and qualified applicants to result in nearly 2,000 new Border Patrol agents!

It would be a monumental task, even for a well-known company, and for a recruitment staff of any size. But for a staff of just five in Washington, DC, to recruit this many applicants for a job almost unheard of north of the border....could it be done?

The answer is yes—it was actually accomplished. Despite the odds, a small staff including three recruiters, a limited budget, no recruitment incentive items, and very little name recognition across the country rose to meet the challenge. In FY98, INS attracted more than 45,000 qualified* applicants to be scheduled for the Border Patrol entrance exam; and by the end of the fiscal year, INS had hired 1,971 new Border Patrol agents.

A Comprehensive Approach. How in the world do you get that many people interested in applying for this unique and demanding job? You travel a lot—to more than 90 recruitment events—and you advertise, a lot—placing more than 350 classified ads in newspapers around the country. In addition, the NRP's advertising manager, Marisa Harper, placed four-color display ads in a large number of conference brochures, college placement manuals, minority publications, and law enforcement publications. Staffing assistant Ed Ames also created a fax database, faxing flyers and announcements to hundreds of military bases, colleges, National Guard centers, and INS offices nationwide—not just once, but on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Press releases, announcements in your earnings and leave statements, and DOJ-wide broadcast e-mail announcements also heightened people's awareness of the

Border Patrol hiring campaign. Our goal was to produce at least 4,000 qualified applicants each month. Falling just short, the average number of qualified applicants per month was 3,825, with a high of 5,300 in March.

Interesting, Surprising Statistics. The statistics collected from FY98 are interesting and sometimes a little surprising. Where do all these applicants come from? The Southwest, right? Actually, although the largest number of applicants did come from California and Texas, state yielding the third greatest number of applicants was New York, with five other East Coast states (Pennsylvania, Florida, Virginia, Massachusetts, and New Jersey) rounding out the top of the list. The only other western state in the top 10 was Arizona, and the only midwestern state to make the top 10 was Illinois.

Regardless of gender, education, or ethnicity (except for Hispanics), the number one source for finding out about the Border Patrol hiring campaign was the Internet, followed closely by newspaper advertising and INS employees. Hispanics reported most often hearing about the job through an INS employee. A big difference from



Members of INS' National Recruitment Program staff include: (seated, l. to r.) Chris Lesser, recruiter; Julia Peeler, recruiter; Isabel Kaufman, recruiter; (standing, l. to r.) Marisa Harper, advertising manager; Ed Ames, staffing assistant; and Ellie Miller, National Recruitment Program manager.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT *Update*

Congress Approved RAPID Project Establishing National Records Center

The National Records Center is very close to becoming a reality!

The Office of Files and Forms Management (HQFFM) and the Office of Records (HQREC) are pleased to announce that Congress has approved the Records and Process Improvement Design (RAPID) Project, which establishes the National Records Center (NRC) facility. HQFFM/HQREC planned extensively for the NRC in FY98 in preparation for eventual congressional approval, thus enabling INS to move immediately to create the NRC in FY99.

If the facility buildout proceeds as scheduled, the NRC is expected to open its doors in September, and will begin taking in files as soon as it has opened. HQFFM/HQREC anticipates that all files without pending benefit or enforcement actions will be relocated into the NRC within the first six to eight months after opening, and all file movement will be completed by April of the year 2000.

Expected Benefits. Numerous benefits are anticipated with the establishment of the NRC, including ensuring the consistency of operations, increasing Central Index System (CIS) data integrity, ensuring file completeness through the consolidation of A- and T-Files, and improved customer service. The last of these is expected as the NRC represents a controlled environment that will ensure a greater level of customer service through standardization of A-File movement and control throughout the Service, enabling continual process improvements.

In addition, the National File Tracking System (NFTS) will be developed concurrently with the NRC facility buildout. Transition to the NRC will coincide with transition from multiple-site local RAFACS systems to the NFTS, a single-tier, Servicewide automated file-tracking system. After implementation of the NFTS, the CIS will no longer be the Service's primary file-tracking system.

Significant Challenges. The Service will be presented with a number of significant challenges to successfully establish and operate the NRC, including those inherent to moving large numbers of files, operating a records center, and reorganizing the Records Program to support the new operational environment.

Additionally, HQFFM/HQREC realizes that the current organizational structure must change as files flow from file control offices to the NRC. Current policies and procedures must be modified to reflect changing conditions, and new roles and responsibilities must be defined. Accordingly, the Centralization Work Group, which was established at the inception of the RAPID project in FY97, will address these issues (and others) as it continues its series of conference meetings. A wide range of INS offices from districts, regions, and Headquarters are represented on the Work Group, and all stakeholders will have an opportunity to participate in this exciting project.

Recruiting Update continued...

the year before is that in FY98 50 percent of all applicants applied for the test "on-line," with the rest applying via the telephone application processing system (TAPS). Twelve percent of the applicants were female, up from 11 percent in FY97; and 11.3 percent were African American, up from 10 percent in FY97. Slight gains were also seen in the number of Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American applicants.

Varied Accomplishments. INS' National Recruiting Program accomplished much in the past year and has much more to do in FY99. The challenge of recruiting enough

applicants to hire nearly 2,000 new Border Patrol Agents in FY98 is surpassed only by the challenge to do it all over again in FY99. Accordingly, plans are well underway to increase our outreach and our effectiveness. Stay tuned and we'll let you know how we're doing.

* "Qualified applicant" means an applicant who answers a series of questions (either on the phone or over the Internet) indicating their interest, meets the basic qualifications of the entry-level Border Patrol position, and is scheduled to take the written exam.

INS SPECIAL Events

Disability Employment Awareness Program

HELD AT HEADQUARTERS

‘OPENING DOORS TO ABILITY’

Drawing the standing-room-only audiences that have become a hallmark of Headquarters Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) events, the Service’s Disability Employment Awareness Month commemoration on October 20 focused on the theme of “Opening Doors to Ability.”

Following a rousing welcome by Acting EEO Office Director D. Diane Weaver, remarks by Deputy Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsh, and an introduction by Facilities Space Management Specialist Leah Rowland, those assembled heard Ed Walker, a local news personality (who happens to be blind) talk about life with Willard—Scott, that is.

Walker, a former host of Good Morning Washington from 1975-80 and currently a talk show host on Washington DC’s News Channel 8, was partners with Willard from the beginning of the rotund meteorologist’s career, which started in Washington more than 40 years ago. Working together for 20 years, the ‘Joy Boys,’ as they became known, certainly

proved that when one has talent, blindness—or anything else—does not have to be considered a disability.

After the team split up, Walker recalled, “I was unsure of what to do.” Willard tried to convince him to try his luck with television, but Walker was not sure that his blindness would work in this visual medium. Still, “there were people who had faith in me and believed in me, and that opened the door a little wider,” he remembered. “I just hope that the people who are [now] in the position of hiring or firing look at a person’s abilities...because they may be disabled in one way, but not necessarily in doing their jobs.”

Remember that door, he concluded, “and remember that if you are a disabled person, don’t hold that door back. You have to keep it open for the next person.”

No Barriers to Success. According to figures released at the event, between December 1997 and June 1998 (the last six-month period for which numbers were available), individuals with disabilities earned 27 promotions within INS. And of the 400 special act awards given out over that time, 37 (nearly 10 percent) went to disabled Service employees.

“We have the know-how to help those people with disabilities to realize their dreams for employment,” Deputy Commissioner Wyrsh said in her remarks during the program. “By opening the doors of ability, emerging businesses gain access to the skills of those with disabilities...and those individuals clearly provide excellent skills in the work environment.”

Disabled individuals, she noted, “serve at INS in a wide variety of fields. I challenge you to give them every opportunity. Seek out the skills we need at INS to achieve our mission,” without looking negatively upon the special challenges the individuals with those skills bring with them.



During this year’s Headquarters ceremony recognizing Disability Employment Awareness Month, Deputy Commissioner Wyrsh presents the Service’s Statue of Liberty to guest speaker Ed Walker.

INS AWARDS

Notes

SENTRI, Biometrics Programs Recognized

INS' Secure Electronic Network for Travelers' Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) program has been recognized as an

Also on the technology front, at a special awards ceremony held on October 28 in Washington, DC, by *Government Computer News* (GCN), INS' Image Retrieval System of

Initially developed in early 1997, the system is currently in its third phase of implementation, and "has contributed to INS' ability to achieve its mission responsibilities, even as the number of immigrant applications and petitions has grown steadily," according to the GCN nomination package.



Accepting the Government Computer News (GCN) Federal Government Agency Award for INS' Image Retrieval System of Biometrics (and standing with GCN Publisher Frank Quigley) are: Tanya Shinawatra, Examinations Systems Section, Benefits Systems Branch, OIRM; and Richard Tryon, Examinations Systems Section, Benefits Systems Branch, OIRM. (photo courtesy GCN)

"Innovation in American Government" by *Government Executive Magazine*. Presented at a Government Technology Awards ceremony in Washington, DC, in November, the special award was given to recognize INS' success in reducing average wait times at SENTRI-equipped inspection sites from 45 minutes to just two minutes.

The SENTRI system allows pre-approved travelers to use special lanes to facilitate the inspection and crossing process. Based on the initial success of the program, the Service hopes to expand implementation to additional sites along the border in the near future.

Biometrics was presented with a Federal Government Agency Award. Managed by the Office of Information Resources Management's (OIRM) Data Systems Division and represented by Assistant Commissioner Fernanda Young in the award nomination, the system has accomplished the conversion of more than 13.5 million image sets from a proprietary format to an industry standard image file format. Each image set consists of an alien's photograph, fingerprints, and signature. In addition to facilitating the development of the INS Permanent Resident Card, the new capability has greatly expanded the Service's ability to access, display, and share a wide range of biometric image data.

El Paso Sector Intelligence Unit Recognized for Analysis Improvements

The El Paso, TX, sector's Intelligence Unit has received the 1998 International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEIA) Award as the "Organization Making the Most Significant Progress in Using Intelligence Analysis." Presented at the joint 1998 Chiefs of Police and IALEIA Convention in Salt Lake City, UT, in October, it is the first award of its kind ever received by the Service, and was accepted on behalf of the Border Patrol by El Paso Sector Supervisory Intelligence Agent Walter Kittle III.



El Paso Sector SIA Walter Kittle, right, accepting the IALEIA award from Robert Fahlman, Customs Canada at the 1998 IALEIA convention in Salt Lake City, UT. (photo courtesy El Paso, TX, sector)

INS AWARDS

Notes

According to IALEIA Awards Committee Chairman Paul Andrews, "The 1998 IALEIA Professional Service Awards competition this year witnessed many submissions from a number of justice agencies such as Canada's [Department of] Revenue, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Illinois State Police, and others. As in the past, the competition was keen and the judging was rigorous."

The El Paso Intelligence Unit was recognized for providing outstanding intelligence support and analytical services to over 900 agents throughout west Texas and New Mexico, and for actively promoting intelligence sharing with many U.S. law enforcement agencies, as well as their counterparts in Mexico.

"We are absolutely thrilled to receive this award on behalf of the sector," SIA Kittle, said after the presentation was made. "Our intelligence agents, analysts, and support staff continue to provide outstanding support each day to the entire sector."

Among other programs and activities conducted over the past year year, the Unit was recognized for:

- Developing and hosting the 1998 El Paso district and Border Patrol sector annual collateral intelligence agent training seminar for over 40 Border Patrol agents, investigators, inspectors, detention officers, and intelligence analysts;
- Providing intelligence instruction for journeyman and senior Border Patrol agents at the Artesia, NM, training facility.
- Providing extensive analytical support to sector prosecution agents regarding Jamaican narcotics operations and other illegal activities, resulting in the development of a joint case with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration;
- Supporting information-sharing practices through weekly and monthly intelligence meetings with more than 20 Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in west Texas and New Mexico; and
- Interacting on a daily basis with U.S. Customs Service Intelligence staff members operating in El Paso.

Service, OSHA Share Hammer for Health and Safety Partnership

At a special ceremony held in November at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center in Washington, DC, INS was presented with a National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) Hammer Award for its work with the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to reduce the number of safety and health hazards at Service facilities.

Presented at the annual OSHA conference, the Hammer was awarded for work cited as a "reinvention success story" by Department of Labor (DOL) Secretary Alexis Herman. Specifically, staff from the Service's McAllen, TX, Border Patrol sector, the Central Region office and the Dallas administrative center worked together to form the partnership coordinating OSHA-led hazard-recognition training



INS award winners attending the Washington, DC, Hammer Award ceremony included: Barbara Blessing (Administrative Center, Dallas), Debbi Dusenberry (Administrative Center, Dallas), Jim Haley (Administrative Center, Dallas), John Sciascia (formerly McAllen sector, now Administrative Center, Laguna Niguel), and Juan Garcia (McAllen sector). OSHA employees representing the group at the awards ceremony included: Regional Administrator John B. Miles Jr., Area Director Mike Hunter, Federal Agency Program Manager Geronimo Gomez, and Safety and Health Officer Tony Fuentes.

for INS employees and OSHA technical assistance visits to key INS worksites.

As a result of the partnership, INS employees received training in hazard-recognition

practices, with 82 percent of all OSHA safety and health conditions abated, including the allocation of \$1 million to upgrade fire protection systems at Border Patrol stations and traffic checkpoints.

Over the course of the program, according to materials released at the OSHA conference, INS experienced a 13.2 percent reduction in the number of accidents reported at its facilities.

INS Receives Hammer Award for N. Dakota Flood Response

The U.S. Border Patrol sector in Grand Forks, ND, has received the National Partnership for Reinventing Government's (NPR) Hammer Award for its outstanding clean-up and response efforts in the wake of what has become known as the 'Great Flood of 1997.' Presented on October 21, the award was accepted on behalf of the sector by Chief Patrol Agent Jerry Armstrong, Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Lonny P. Schweitzer, and Deputy Chief Patrol Agent Gary F. Nowacki.



Presented for outstanding work following North Dakota's "Great Flood of 1997," the Hammer Award was accepted on behalf of the Grand Forks sector by Chief Patrol Agent Jerry Armstrong (center), Assistant Chief Lonny P. Schweitzer (left), and Deputy Chief Gary F. Nowacki. (photo courtesy Grand Forks, ND, sector)

Laredo, continued...

"With both a growing Border Patrol sector and dynamic ports-of-entry, Laredo plays a key role in Operation 'Rio Grande,'" the Commissioner said during the event. "To do their jobs effectively, our employees need the right tools. Providing these tools, including a spacious, well-equipped facility, is part of

INS' commitment to improved enforcement of immigration laws and facilitation of legal immigration in Texas."

Since FY95, the Commissioner noted in closing her remarks, the number of Border Patrol agents in the Laredo sector has increased from 421 to 644, with the number of inspectors also increasing from

79 to 134. The growth has mirrored that in Texas as a whole, she said, with the total number of Border Patrol agents statewide increasing from 1,958 to 2,999 and the number of inspectors jumping two-thirds, from 507 to 855 over the same time.

PEOPLE ON *the Move*

At Headquarters:

Maria T. Cardona has been named director of the INS Office of Public Affairs, pending approval by the Department of Justice and the Office of Personnel Management. Prior to joining INS, Cardona worked for the U.S. Department of Commerce from 1993-98



Maria T. Cardona stands with Border Patrol Pilot Tom Maxwell during a recent visit to the Laredo, TX, sector.

as press secretary for Commerce Secretary William Daley and before that as deputy press secretary for the late Commerce Secretary Ronald H. Brown. From 1990-93 she was Brown's press secretary when he was chairman of the Democratic National Committee, before which she worked in public relations in the private sector. A graduate of Duke

University, Cardona replaces Julie Anbender who accepted a position with a private public relations firm in Washington, DC, last year.

In the Field:

Thomas J. Schiltgen, most recently the Service's district director in San Francisco, CA, has been selected as the new district director in Los Angeles, CA, replacing the recently retired Richard Rogers. A native



Thomas J. Schiltgen

of St. Paul, MN, Schiltgen began his INS career in 1975 as a criminal investigator in Chicago, IL. After holding a series of positions early in his career including prosecutions liaison officer, supervisory criminal investigator, and supervisory special agent, he was promoted to deputy district director for the St. Paul district in 1987. He was named acting district director in St. Paul in 1998, a position he held through 1991 when he transferred to the Bangkok, Thailand, district office to become deputy district director. He was named district director in San Francisco in September 1994.

As district director in Los Angeles, Schiltgen, who is scheduled to officially begin his duties this month, will oversee the operations of INS' largest office, covering seven counties and employing more than 1,700 staffers within the main office, at six suboffices, and 12 Application Support Centers.

Edward A. Stubbs has been named by Florida District Director Robert Wallis as the director of the Krome Service Processing Center (SPC). A certified U.S. Marshal's Service (USMS) jail inspector, firearms instructor, threat coordinator, and Title III



Edward A. Stubbs

listening post supervisor, Stubbs previously worked with the USMS in the Southern District of Florida as a supervisory marshal from 1991-98. Other positions he has held

within the USMS include senior criminal investigator and deputy U.S. marshal. In addition, he formerly served as a board member and USMS representative on the Criminal Justice Commission, Downtown Development Security Program, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. He has also worked with the USMS' Headquarters Prisoner Operations Division to develop medical and health guidelines for handling disease-infected inmates, and assisted in drafting the memoranda of understanding for the Miramar Detention Facility in San Diego, CA, as well as for the Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS) in which INS currently is a participant.

Luis E. Barker, most recently the chief patrol agent in Laredo, TX, has been named as the new chief in the Service's El Paso, TX, Border Patrol sector. A 20-year Border Patrol veteran, Barker began his INS career in El Paso in 1978, after six years as police officer in Jersey City, NJ. Following several promotions in the Field,



Luis E. Barker

he transferred to the Border Patrol's regional office in Dallas, TX, in 1990 and has remained on Texas-based assignments since that time. While assigned to the Del Rio sector as an assistant chief patrol agent, he was promoted to deputy chief patrol agent in 1993, and then to Laredo sector chief in 1995. A naturalized citizen, Barker was born in Panama and moved to the United States in 1970.

Field Retirement:

Richard K. Rogers, INS' district director in Los Angeles, CA, since 1994 retired in September 1998 following a 28-year career with the Service. Beginning his career as a Border Patrol agent in San Diego, CA, in 1969, Rogers left the Border Patrol in the early 1970s to become a criminal investigator in the Los Angeles district. In the mid-70s he transferred to the Buffalo, NY, district office where he served as a trial attorney, as well as the district's liaison officer to Canada.

Other positions held over the course of his career with INS included Western Region associate commissioner for Operations, assistant regional commissioner for anti-smuggling, and acting regional administrator, staff assistant for Field Operations, prior to being named the district director in Los Angeles.



During his farewell luncheon, Richard Rogers (left) stands with Western Region Director Johnny Williams.

At the INS Commissioner's Conference in Denver, CO, Rogers was presented with the Commissioner's Distinguished Career Service Award, the highest such award for long-serving INS employees. The award was presented based on "the consistent excellence and efficiency achieved during [his] career, as well as exceptional contributions to [his] field made during his tenure," including the myriad of relationships he helped to develop with the State of California, law enforcement entities, and community-based organizations (CBOs). Through his tenure, California developed and implemented a cooperative program that involved working with the Service on significant detention issues. He also supported the efforts of CBOs, and was continually involved in working with them to ensure that their relationships with INS were maintained as well as possible.

IN *Memoriam*

Three Border Patrol Agents Lost in Vehicle Accidents

In a year that saw more Border Patrol agents killed in the line of duty than any in recent memory, the Service suffered three additional losses toward the end of 1998 that deeply affected INS employees nationwide and led the Commissioner and Attorney General to offer their personal condolences.

The first accident, which claimed the lives of Border Patrol Agents Jesus De La Ossa and Thomas Williams occurred in late October, as the two were returning to San Diego after successfully competing the instructor training course in Artesia, NM. Both were killed when their car collided with a privately owned vehicle while traveling west on the state's Highway 82. In the second accident, which took place on October 23, Border Patrol Aircraft Pilot Walter Scott Panchison was killed when the Service airplane he was flying crashed on a steep hillside in the foothills of Washington State's Cascade Mountains.

Agents Jesus De La Ossa and Thomas Williams. Young and full of seemingly limitless energy, agents Jesus De La Ossa and Thomas Williams were actively involved in Border Patrol training and were dedicated to becoming the more professional agents they could be. That they were returning from the Artesia

Academy when they were killed demonstrates their dedication to passing on what they had learned over the course of their careers to the Service's newest officers.

In personal letters written to the families of the two agents following the accident, Commissioner Meissner called De La Ossa "so full of promise and so dedicated to INS' mandate of enforcing our nation's immigration laws day in and day out." While saying that no words could provide adequate comfort, she wrote that "his commitment to excellence, coupled with his young age, have made this loss even more difficult to bear.

To Williams' family, the Commissioner wrote, "the senselessness of this tragic accident made me once again realize how sacred life indeed is." She cited his many Border Patrol successes, but ended her letter by saying, "Most importantly...Thomas was a dedicated husband and father who loved his family above all else. There can be no greater testament to the success of a man's life."

Aircraft Pilot Walter Scott Panchison. An agent in the Service's Blaine, WA, sector, Walter Scott Panchison joined the Border Patrol in 1978 as an agent in Nogales, AZ. Before coming to INS, he had already

served 10 years as a U.S. Marine, including time as a jet-fighter pilot during the Vietnam War. Five years after joining the Patrol, he qualified as an aircraft pilot in the Tucson sector, and, when he transferred to Washington State, was the first permanent pilot in the Blaine sector. Known as a consummate 'team player,' he worked tirelessly to forge closer ties with other agencies before such close cooperation became the defining principles of INS' national enforcement strategy.

Leaving the Commissioner's Conference to attend and speak at Agent Panchison's funeral, Commissioner Meissner called his skills as a pilot "unquestionable," saying that, "There was no better pilot in the entire Border Patrol, his supervisors tell me, but what really impressed them was that Agent Panchison always kept both feet on the ground."

She concluded her remarks solemnly, saying, "At times like these, words are always woefully inadequate...But I want you to know that in this time of grief, my thoughts, and those of the 28,000 other members of the INS family are with you—his family, his friends, his co-workers. And I hope we all choose to remember Scott by emulating his good work."

Clarification: Revocation of Naturalization

In the November 1998 issue of the *Communiqué*, it was reported that: "as of July 9, 1998 INS had completed the final review of 4,450 of the 6,358 naturalization cases...in which the applicants were considered 'presumptively ineligible' to become United States citizens."

The statement should have read that following an external audit, it was determined that 369 cases were considered 'presumptively ineligible,' with 5,954 deemed to 'require further action.'

Correction

Also in the November *Communiqué*, the name provided for Doug Mosier's office was incorrect. He is a public affairs officer with the El Paso, TX, Border Patrol sector.

In addition, in the December issue the area code provided for the Laguna Niguel Administrative Center was incorrect. It is 949.

And the fax number for the Dallas Administrative Center is (214) 915-6292.