



FEMA

PRACTICE NOTE

Special Event Coordination: The Minnesota Joint Analysis Center's Support to the Carlton County Sheriff's Office for the 2009 Annual Hells Angels Motorcycle Run

PRACTICE

The Minnesota Joint Analysis Center (MNJAC) assisted the Carlton County, MN, Sheriff's Office in gathering and disseminating threat information prior to and during the 2009 Annual Hells Angels Motorcycle Run. MNJAC analysts also served at the emergency operations center (EOC) during the event period, providing real-time threat information to on-duty law enforcement officers as well as maintaining an open channel of communication with other state fusion centers in the region.

DESCRIPTION

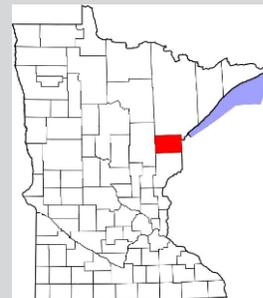
Background

The Department of Justice (DOJ) defines outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMG) as, "highly structured criminal organizations whose members engage in criminal activities such as violent crime, weapons trafficking, and drug trafficking." There are more than 300 active OMGs within the United States, including the Hells Angels, Mongols, Bandidos, Outlaws, and Sons of Silence. According to the DOJ, these five gangs conduct the majority of criminal activity linked to OMGs in the United States. Previous OMG mass gathering events, such as motorcycle runs, have resulted in violence perpetrated against rival gangs or the general public.

The MNJAC is an all-crimes, all-hazards, state fusion center established by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and several state and local law enforcement agencies in 2005. The MNJAC's mission is to collect, manage, and distribute strategic and tactical information and intelligence in order to protect the state against terrorism and criminal activity.

In January 2009, the MNJAC and the Carlton County Sheriff's Office received information that the 2009 Annual Hells Angels Motorcycle Run was scheduled to take place in and around Carlton County from July 29 to August 2, 2009. Law enforcement agencies

Carlton County is an 874-square-mile area located in the northeast region of Minnesota and bordering Wisconsin. As of 2000, the county had a total population of 31,761 residents.



Location of Carlton County within Minnesota

in the area predicted that over 1,000 Hells Angels members would attend the run, which would begin in Carlton County and conclude in Sturgis, South Dakota. As with past Hells Angels runs, this event had the potential to attract violent OMG members to Carlton County.

In February 2009, MNJAC analysts met with the Carlton County Sheriff's Office and the Northeastern Regional Law Enforcement Coalition (NERLEC) to begin planning security operations for the event. The sheriff's office requested assistance from the MNJAC to manage the intelligence function for the event. MNJAC agreed to serve as the lead entity responsible for gathering, developing, and disseminating pre-event threat information. To accomplish this, the MNJAC requested and received permission to create a special interest group (SIG) on the FBI's Law Enforcement Online (LEO) network, which would serve as an information and intelligence sharing platform for event planning. Within the SIG, members would be able to access the Virtual Command Center (VCC) for real-time information sharing during the event.

NERLEC is a collaboration of state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies from northeastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin that was formed to plan for this event.

Conducting Threat Assessment

The MNJAC began by gathering threat information related to the event. MNJAC analysts contacted fusion centers across the country that had been involved with security planning for other motorcycle runs. Specifically, the Montana All-Threat Intelligence Center, which had participated in running the security operations for the 2008 Hells Angels run held in Montana, provided the MNJAC with their threat assessments, after-action report, and VCC data. Other fusion centers from West Virginia, Arkansas, Wyoming, and Colorado provided the MNJAC with after-action reports, threat assessments, and lessons learned from previous motorcycle runs held in their states. The MNJAC also worked closely with the Wisconsin Statewide Information Center (WSIC) to share regional threat information leading up to and during the event. The WSIC operated their own information and intelligence function in support of law enforcement operations in Douglas County, WI. Additionally, the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center worked with both the WSIC and the MNJAC regarding pre-event intelligence and provided real-time support during the event.

After MNJAC analysts reviewed the information they had gathered, they determined that the event was a credible threat to public safety. The Outlaws, one of the Hells Angels' rival OMGs, has a strong presence in Wisconsin and wished to prevent Hells Angels members from encroaching on Outlaw territory. MNJAC received information that the Outlaws planned to camp in close proximity to the event in order to observe the Angels' activities during the run. MNJAC anticipated that interactions between the two gangs could result in violence. If these were to occur in public places, this would pose a threat to residents of Carlton County as well as to non-violent Hells Angels members participating in the run. This threat information influenced the development of the event security operations plan and remained one of the main areas of focus for law enforcement authorities in both Minnesota and Wisconsin during the event.

SIG/VCC Training

Once the SIG became operational in March 2009, MNJAC staff coordinated training for law enforcement and public safety agencies in the region through the center's liaison program initiative. Two OMG subject-matter experts from the St. Paul, MN, Police Department conducted briefings during the training courses on how to recognize and prepare for the arrival of OMGs. The briefings highlighted information on violent tactics used by the gangs and strategies that law enforcement agencies employ to mitigate the threat. MNJAC staff then explained the different types of information available on the SIG/VCC, showed

participants how to register, and trained them on how to navigate through the system. MNJAC coordinated nine training sessions in Duluth, MN, and one in Superior, WI. Several participants in the training sessions provided the MNJAC with positive feedback, stating that the training played a critical role in helping officials plan for the event in their own jurisdictions.

Event Operations

In the months leading up to the Hells Angels run, MNJAC analysts uploaded event information and threat assessments from The El Paso Intelligence Center, FBI, and other fusion centers to the SIG. The MNJAC also produced threat bulletins and uploaded them to the SIG. On July 26, MNJAC assigned six staff members to serve with representatives from the FBI, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, US Customs and Border Protection, and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension at the Carlton County EOC.

During the event, MNJAC analysts uploaded real-time threat information to the VCC and worked with LEO representatives to ensure the smooth operation of the system. MNJAC analysts also communicated threat information to EOC dispatch personnel who radioed relevant information directly to officers on duty for the event. Further, MNJAC analysts delivered twice-daily intelligence briefings to EOC staff members in order to provide them with current information on security developments and threats. Throughout the event period, MNJAC maintained direct and continuous channels of communication with the WSIC and other fusion centers in the region to ensure that MNJAC analysts had the most current information.

WSIC Support

During the run, the WSIC provided parallel intelligence support to a multi-agency task force located in northwestern Wisconsin. Federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel assigned to the task force conducted aggressive patrolling and surveillance operations in the Minnesota-Wisconsin border area. Prior to the run, the WSIC published a statewide threat assessment and disseminated a Request for Information (RFI) to law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin. The RFI sensitized law enforcement agencies to OMG activity and requested that they immediately report OMG activities in the state to the WSIC. Using Wisconsin's Web-based E-Sponder Express system, WSIC collected 164 documentations as OMG members transited the state. After collation, information was passed to the MNJAC. Overall, WSIC updates comprised 81 of the 340 total entries posted to the VCC for the run.

E-Sponder Express is a Web-based collaboration tool that provides members of law enforcement agencies, the fire service, emergency medical services, hospitals, and universities with effective incident management capabilities. The system offers advanced data tracking methods and real-time communication techniques. To learn more, please visit the [E-Sponder Express Web Site](#).

Event Conclusion

Approximately 400 Hells Angels and 150 Outlaws gang members attended the event, which was significantly fewer than what law enforcement authorities had originally estimated. Law enforcement officers issued 33 citations to Hells Angels members and arrested 3. The Carlton County Sheriff's Office hailed the event as a success and attributed the low number of arrests to a strong police presence at event locations and to effective operational planning prior to the event. State and local agency officials involved in the event praised the MNJAC for its ability to provide critical threat information to authorities. This information helped authorities develop an effective operations strategy for the event. MNJAC analysts also leveraged their contacts in the national fusion center network to obtain timely and relevant threat information prior to and during the event. This helped provide

officers with the information necessary to police against a dynamic group of potentially violent individuals.

CITATIONS

Anthony, Kelly. Analyst, Minnesota Joint Analysis Center. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 16 Oct 2009.

Bosacker, Michael. Director, Minnesota Joint Analysis Center. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 16 Oct 2009.

US Department of Justice, Motorcycle Gangs.
<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/gangunit/gangs/motorcycle.html>.

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