

Carlisle Barracks Bike Patrol keeps community safe

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Carlisle Barracks Bike Patrol strives to keep community safe



Carlisle Barracks Police Bike Patrol Sgt. 1st Class Mike Finkenbinder, Officer Mike Owen, Sgt. 1st Class Svend Sheppard, Officer Brad Cramer and Officer Jeff LeMasters post with their police mountain bikes outside the Department of Emergency Services Headquarters on Carlisle Barracks. The team focuses on keeping residents, staff and visitors of Carlisle Barracks safe during the warm

summer months. Photo by Spc. Jennifer Rick.

May 13, 2009 – The warm weather brings people of all ages outside to enjoy the sun, including the Carlisle Barracks Police Bike Patrol who are constantly on the move during the summer and fall months to keep post residents, workers and visitors safe.

The program was started two years ago by Department of the Army Police Sgt. 1st Class Svend Sheppard, in order to create a connection with the community and increase their safety.

"Our main goal is to watch out for the pedestrians on post," Sheppard said. "Part of that is making sure drivers are following the laws and being safe. Also, cyclists fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles."

The five-officer team has many of the same capabilities and equipment as their counterparts in patrol cars. The specially-designed police bikes are equipped with space to carry equipment, and even have a siren and red and blue LED lights mounted on the handlebars.

"When we pull over a vehicle, it's pretty much the same as when a car does it. The only difference is that once the car has stopped, we park the bike off the road, and approach the vehicle from the right side," Sheppard

explained. "Because we don't have the protection of a vehicle behind us, it's safer for the officer to be on the right."

In some ways, officers on bicycles have an advantage over vehicles.

"We can go places that cars can't, such as under the bridge on Ashburn Drive. If we get called to AHEC [the Army Heritage and Education Center], we actually beat the patrol cars there because we can take the jogging trails around the golf course and AHEC. We've timed it before, and we can almost always get anywhere on the installation in the same time or faster than the patrol cars," he said.

The officers learn to use the bike as a tool, and are continually training in bicycle handling skills, including the correct way to fall to avoid injury and damage to the bike, laws, police tactics and maintenance.

Each officer must be recertified in April of every year through the International Police Mountain Bike Association.

Officer Mike Owen spent two weeks in Albuquerque, N.M. learning the nuts and bolts of bicycle mechanics.

"I am able to do everything from a quick tune up to a complete overhaul of the bike," Owen said. "Being able to do all the mechanics in-house saves a lot of time and money because we aren't sending our equipment out or bringing someone in to service it. Officer safety and efficiency is increased when the bikes are in top condition."

Post hosting bicycle police training, bike rodeo slated for Aug. 15

June 16-19 Carlisle Barracks will be hosting a Police Cyclist School to train other officers in the field of bicycle policing.

The course includes learning about effective cycling, group riding, hazard recognition, basic bike maintenance, traffic laws and legal issues, uniforms and equipment, patrol tactics and maneuvers, and other topics designed to maximize their effectiveness and keep them safe, Sheppard said. After completing the course, the officers will be certified by the IPMBA.

"New Cumberland will be enhancing their program by going through our training," said Sheppard, who is a certified instructor for the course. "What we do helps support many Department of Defense missions."

After the class, the Carlisle Barracks Department of Emergency Services will be adding three new officers to its bicycle program. Sheppard said the plan is to enhance the program to include night patrols.

August 15 will bring the annual Bike Rodeo, a class to teach kids and their parents about bike safety. Parents and children from on and off post are welcomed to attend. No registration is necessary. Parents are required to attend with their child.

Biking: state and local laws

-Every person operating a bicycle shall yield the right of way to pedestrians at all times.

-Bicycles shall not be ridden upon any stairway, bench, or other structure or facility. Bicycles shall not be ridden within any building, nor on or over shrubbery or flowerbeds.

-No person riding a bicycle shall be attached in any manner to a moving vehicle.

-Bicycles shall not be ridden on any sidewalk except in front of the person's quarters or at vehicle access points.

-No person riding a bicycle shall carry any package, bundle, or other article that prevents the operator from using at least one hand on the handlebars.

-Every bicycle shall be equipped with brakes, reflectors and other safety devices at such times as is required by state law for operating a bicycle on streets or highways.

-Bicycles shall not be parked on or at handicapped ramps, handicapped entrances or other facilities designated for handicapped traffic or in such a manner as to impede to free and clear use of such facilities.

-Bicycles shall not be parked at or attached to any fire hydrant, standpipe, building service equipment or other safety device.

-Joggers and bicycle riders are required to wear a reflective belt or vest during the hours of darkness (including the period from one-half hour before sunset to one-half hour after sunrise).

-Joggers and bicycle, scooter and rollerblade riders are encouraged to wear a reflective belt or vest at all other times to maximize their visibility and increase their safety.

-Joggers, non-motorized scooter, bicycle and rollerblade riders will wear a shirt and appropriate shoes at all times.

For a complete list of state and installations laws, go here: [State Carlisle Barracks](#)

