



ATF SNAPSHOT 2004

BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES (ATF)

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The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is a preeminent Federal law enforcement agency fighting violent crime in America. ATF's enforcement activities support the Department of Justice's strategic goal: to "enforce Federal laws and represent the rights and interests of the American people." Through enforcement of Federal firearms laws, investigation of arsons and explosives incidents and thefts, and efforts to combat alcohol and tobacco diversion, ATF special agents, inspectors and support personnel safeguard the American public from violent crime. For the past eight years ATF has been awarded the highest rating possible for a strong financial internal control structure and a solid record of complying with laws and regulations.

VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), announced by President Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft in 2001, is an initiative that brings to bear the combined resources of Federal, State and local agencies to reduce violent crime. The ATF Integrated Violence Reduction Strategy (IVRS) works in partnership with other law enforcement entities to focus on successfully removing armed career criminals, armed criminal organizations, armed drug traffickers, and illegal firearms traffickers from our nation's streets. An integral component of IVRS and PSN is ATF's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII). It provides ATF special agents, inspectors and support personnel, as well as equipment and training to follow leads generated through comprehensive crime gun tracing. ATF's goal is to interdict the flow of illegal firearms to youths and juveniles through partnerships with participating police departments in selected cities. Since its inception and through fiscal year 2003, YCGII has been established in 60 cities.

ATF initiated nearly 30,000 firearms investigations in fiscal year 2003, resulting in more than 6,000 defendants being convicted of firearms related offenses, and more than 900 ATF defendants being sentenced in firearms trafficking investigations. As the lead Federal agency in investigating outlaw motorcycle organizations (OMO), in July 2003 four ATF-lead investigations spanning nine states culminated in nine arrests, 118 search warrants and the seizure of 1001 firearms, \$90,000 in currency, as well as narcotics and explosives.

In FY 2003, ATF investigated nearly 400 bombings, more than 750 incidents involving recovered explosives or explosive devices, and more than 60 thefts of explosives. The effort resulted in 708 of these cases being forwarded for prosecution. ATF's three laboratories worked on 630 bomb-related cases in FY 2003, an increase of 28 percent over the previous year.

ATF also enforces Federal criminal statutes that address the diversion of taxes, including the Contraband Cigarette Trafficking Act. In FY 2003, ATF recommended for prosecution by the U.S. Attorney 13 alcohol and tobacco cases and 51 defendants. Nationally, ATF initiated 165 investigations of the diversion of taxes relating to alcohol and tobacco. ATF sustained 84 seizures of tobacco and other properties totaling \$4.7 million.

PROTECT THE PUBLIC

At the end of FY 2003, there were 104,366 Federal firearms licensees in the United States authorized to conduct commerce in firearms. ATF performed a total of 14,900 firearms-related inspections in FY 2003; 3,900 of them were licensee inspections, and another 7,800 were application inspections.

Also in FY 2003, ATF inspectors, in helping to ensure the lawful storage of explosives materials, completed 2,721 explosives compliance and 5,162 explosives application inspections and detected 1,165 explosives industry public safety violations that were corrected.

OTHER RESOURCES

NIBIN - ATF provides investigative support to our State and local partners through a leadership role in the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). NIBIN provides for the nationwide installation and networking of automated ballistic imaging equipment in partnership with State and local law enforcement agencies. Currently, 228 law enforcement locations are making use of this valuable technology. In FY 2003, NIBIN equipment assisted law enforcement agencies in finding more than 2,500 links, or "hits." In each of these instances, evidence from two or more crime scenes was identified as being potentially linked.

COMPREHENSIVE CRIME GUN TRACING - The Comprehensive Crime Gun Tracing Initiative that began in FY 2001 continues to provide nationwide firearms tracing capability. ATF's National Tracing Center has processed more than 280,000 trace requests of crime guns in 2003.

BOMB AND ARSON TRACKING SYSTEM (BATS) - Allows state, local and other federal law enforcement agencies to share information about bomb and arson cases and incidents. Participants receive a user ID and password from ATF and then they can capture, store and exchange information such as the type of incident, target, date and location.

GANG RESISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (GREAT) – Congress moved GREAT to the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs in FY 2004.

NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAMS (NRTs) - ATF maintains four National Response Teams (NRT) that are comprised of highly trained and well-equipped special agents, forensic chemists and professional support staff that can be deployed within 24 hours to major explosion and fire scenes anywhere in the United States. The NRT was activated 27 times in FY 2003 to investigate major fire and explosives incidents. In its 25-year history, the team has responded to conduct crime scene analysis and cause and origin investigations of 569 fires and explosives incidents.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM (IRT) - The ATF International Response Team participates with the Diplomatic Security Service of the U.S. Department of State to provide technical and investigative assistance at international explosives and fire incidents. There have been 24 IRT activations since 1991, including responses to Peru, Macedonia, Argentina, El Salvador, Ecuador, Pakistan, and Korea.

EXPLOSIVES DETECTION CANINES - There are 32 ATF trained explosives detection canine teams with ATF special agent handlers. Also, there are currently 56 ATF-trained explosives detection canine teams deployed with State, local, or other Federal agencies.

NATIONAL LABORATORY SERVICES - ATF maintains three national laboratory facilities, in Maryland, Georgia and California. The ATF Forensic Science Laboratories were the first Federal laboratories to be accredited by the American Society of Laboratory Directors.

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