100 MOMENTS

SUPPORT OPERATIONS BUREAU 2021
By Scott Lamp (1994-current)

Merriam-Webster provides the definition of support as "to promote the interests of or cause of, to hold up or serve as a foundation for something to keep it going". These words embody what the DCI Support Operations Bureau has done since 1921 and what the Bureau continues to do in 2021. Support Operations, in essence, supports the work of DCI Agents, DCI non-sworn staff and our law enforcement partners outside of DPS. The Support Operations Bureau provides a specialized four tiered approach that is comprised of the Transcription/Administration Unit, the Records/Identification Unit, the Fingerprint Unit, and the Criminal History Records Dissemination Unit.

Transcription/Administration Unit:

Henry Passno was the first supervisor of the Bureau of Criminal Identification within the Bureau of Criminal Investigation from 1921 to 1929. He served under Oscar O.

Rock who was the first Director of the Bureau of Investigation. In the early years, the Identification section encompassed all

of what today is referred to as Support Operations, i.e. secretarial, transcription, reports, files, records and fingerprints. As the BCI was under the authority of the Attorney General's office, secretaries and stenographers from the AG's office were utilized for the recording of notes or conversations which later produced an official police investigative report. Jessica Wiley, as the current Public Service Supervisor, has researched our old case

files and it is apparent that the transcripts/interview summaries were made during the interview. The stenographer was in the same room as the interview and then at the conclusion, everyone who was present would sign the finished document or report. There are several early interviews that were signed by 6+ Agents along with the individual being interviewed.

Records/Identification Unit:

The Computerized Criminal History system has its roots many years ago in a national and State collection of paper, cardboard, typewriters, ink, manual files and procedures which could be loosely called a criminal history system.

In Iowa, the State's first use of a "Computerized" Criminal History (CCH) system was in 1979 when Iowa "plugged" into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) in Washington, D.C. CCH subject data entry was done from the DCI but the data files and program control were in Washington D.C. resulting in Iowa having a true Computerized Criminal History

system. In the Spring of 1979, information Technology Specialist Tom Murphy hand delivered a tape (automated load file) containing 16,000 Iowa CCH subjects to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Washington D.C. Going into the 1980's the FBI was getting too voluminous data from the States and in 1983, NCIC shipped Iowa's data back to Iowa. Iowa CCH system is a moderately complicated system and Iowa had an opportunity to replicate the Nebraska CCH system in an effort to minimize costs but that system was the "old" national based NCIC system converted to Nebraska's specific use. This version served Iowa's intermediate needs, but after a few years of trials and tribulations, Iowa realized they needed a new version for the CCH system to keep pace with the technical computer advancements and the national CCH application advancements.

As the 1980s progressed, the Department of Public Safety initiated the task of completely redesigning the entire CCH system which meant user applications were redesigned as well as the development, design work, programming, implementation efforts were done using our own DPS and State of Iowa employees using at that time the computer concept called "database" technology. The new CCH database system was finished around the middle of 1990 and current DPS

Information Technology Specialist Tom Murphy was instrumental in that task.

On July 5, 1990, Iowa had 150,704 CCH subjects in the Iowa database. During the time of the mainframe operation of its CCH system, Iowa implemented one of the top National/FBI/State systems based upon concept and operations that still acts as the bedrock of CCH system today. That system is called the Interstate Identification Index or Triple I (III) which was implemented in Iowa in 1997. Triple I greatly increased the capabilities of processing and distributing Iowa CCH within Iowa but also outside of Iowa.

Not long after Triple I was implemented, work began on a new CCH system design that used an Oracle database and operating system. This Oracle based CCH system was implemented in 2003 and is still operational as of February 2021 but undergoing a $2M modernization and upgrade over the next two years. The CCH system has enhanced the feasibility of the automatic interface between the AFIS automatic processing of fingerprint cards at the time of arrest from local law enforcement agencies to the DPS CCH system then to the FBI to document and produce an accurate record of arrests and prosecutions (Rap) sheet.

Fingerprint Unit:

The entire CCH process is based upon this premise: "arrest + fingerprint + conviction = criminal history record" wherein if one of the elements in the equation is missing it produces an incomplete or inaccurate CCH record. Circa 1985, Director Tom Ruxlow along with some influential Sheriffs and Chiefs procured $500,000 in funding from the Legislature to purchase a Printrak AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System). This novel idea eventually evolved into remote latent fingerprint stations at the DCI Lab and at some larger

agencies. As the years went on, remote Livescans were purchased to eliminate or reduce mail-in rolled ink criminal fingerprint cards. Upgrading allowed for automated dispositions from clerks and connection with FBI. (Contributor: Former Assistant Director Tim McDonald)

For comparison sake, in late 2020, the DCI received a National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) in the amount of $671,649.00. This Grant will allow the DCI to replace 33 antiquated, out of date Livescan machines

that were placed in service approximately 15 years ago. Each new Livescan is valued at $20,353.

As of the summer of 2021, we will have about 85% of the Sheriff's Offices in Iowa with a Livescan or a Cardscan (electronic fingerprinting technology).

Receiving accurate information from our law enforcement agencies is imperative to creating the most accurate CCH record for the DCI CCH repository (State Identification Bureau). The SIB is fingerprint based whereby every conviction validated, verified and supported by a fingerprint record. Potential negative ramifications occur when an individual's conviction for a Felony or other disqualifying offense do not appear on his/her CCH record.

Since the mid-1990s, criminal history auditors have been essential in improving the quality of fingerprint cards, timeliness of their submissions, dispositions and the accuracy of information received from local law enforcement. The three CCH auditors are still utilized today covering all of Iowa for this quality control function.

CCH Records Dissemination Unit:

Former DCI Assistant Director Tim McDonald was instrumental in this Unit's creation as he was tasked to revise Iowa Code 692.2 as Governor Terry Branstad and the Legislature wanted to provide a mechanism to provide access to criminal history records to noncriminal justice agencies. After the passage of the revised Code, the administrative rules were written, equipment purchased, DCI dissemination forms were created and staff was hired. Due to office space limitations with this increase in staff, this new dissemination group worked night shifts for a few years. The fee structure allows the Units related to the DCI Records functions to be a self-sufficient operation. For reference in Fiscal Year 2019, the Dissemination Unit processed 268,517 State of Iowa background checks and 38,478 national background checks.

As of February 18, 2021, the SIB has 810,972 active Computerized Criminal History subjects in the database. As of November 2020, the FBI maintains the fingerprints of approximately 154 million criminal and civil individuals.

Please note generous contributions for this article were received from retired DCI Assistant Director Tim McDonald and current ITS5 Tom Murphy.