

## The US Border Patrol

Created in 1924, this was a Federal Agency of the United States Department of Labor before becoming part of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. They were responsible for the deterrence, detection and apprehension of illegal immigrants and those involved in the drugs trade. Most of the agents operated on the Mexican border although some were stationed on the Canadian border. In addition a number dealt with the coastal waters off the Florida Peninsula and the island of Puerto Rico. In the early 1990s Congress mandated that agents were moved away from interior checking and instead forward deployed to the border to catch people as they crossed. Internal checkpoints within 100 miles of the border were still used however as were roving patrols checking trains, buses and roads in the same area.



*Illustration 1: The US Border Patrol badge worn on both shoulders by agents.*



*Illustration 2: Border control checkpoint. March 1996 (US Border Patrol Museum)*

As there was roughly only twenty thousand agents to cover the 6,000 miles of land border and 2,000 miles of coastal border, high technology solutions were also used including ground surveillance radars, video monitors and movement sensors. In addition specialist teams who were trained in covert surveillance were used to back these up when intelligence was available.

In 1986 moves were made to catch illegal workers by going after employers who were employing them illegally and a number of agents were tasked with auditing businesses. By the 1990s however, Congress mandated a shift back to border patrols known as "Line Watch."

Even prior to the Twilight War, a number of agents patrolled the Mexican border on horseback due to the difficult terrain smugglers had adopted to try and evade vehicle patrols. These could reach the areas the 4x4s, bikes and quad bikes had difficulty in.

In May 1998, when Mexican troops crossed the border, Border Patrol Agents were told to retreat north ahead of the Mexicans. A number however were cut off and often formed the nucleus of guerilla movements (some using their radios managed to contact their headquarters and these then often received supplies dropped by the CIA). One such unit lead by Lead Border Control Agent Oliver Ziski was an ex US Army Ranger who had left the service after being injured in Delta Force selection. He used his skills to call in air strikes against the lead elements of 2<sup>nd</sup> Mechanised Brigade of the Fourth Army near San Antonio. These air strikes are credited with delaying the Mexican flanking manoeuvre by twenty four hours allowing hundreds of civilians to escape the Mexican advances. Ziski was last heard of operating in the Brownsville area as the leader of a small group. All contact was lost with this group in June 2000.



*Illustration 3: US Border Patrol mounted agents and quad bike. Location and date unknown although it is unusual to see such patrols near an urban area implying this may be after fuel shortages started to bite. (US Border Patrol Museum)*

The US Operation Flying Start in January 1999 by the 5<sup>th</sup> Army relied heavily on the radios of the Border Patrol agents acting as guerilla leaders to identify movements of Mexican units. The information provided by agents identifying that four Mexican brigades had been moved up proved to be instrumental in stopping the attack after the damage inflicted on the 85<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Light) reduced the forces available to the 5<sup>th</sup> Army.

By 2001 most of the Border Patrol agents behind the Mexican



*Illustration 5: US Border Patrol agent undergoing specialist shooting training prior to being sent behind Mexican lines. These agents were trained by the CIA and operated in three person teams after training. They were officially known as US Border Patrol Infiltration Teams (USBPINFIL) but were more commonly called "US Cross-Border Patrols" CIA Archives*

front line had either been captured or had abandoned the fight. Those who were north of the front line were usually attached to US units, often acting as guides or intelligence officers (using their interrogation and language skills). Most of these were now wearing standard US Army uniform (or at least as much as a soldier would wear) although most retained their shoulder flashes (many switched to wearing it only on the right shoulder with the divisional patch of the unit they were attached to on the left shoulder).

In 2010 the agency reformed by CIVGOV as the Department of Border Security with a stronger paramilitary role. In 2020 with the US government reunification, the combined forces were reorganised

by the government as the Border Security Agency. In 2024 all living veterans and serving members were awarded the Border Defence Centenary Medal to commemorate one hundred years of the organisation (in addition all deceased members who had been issued the Newton-Azrak Award were also given a posthumous award).



*Illustration 7: US Border Patrol maritime unit checking the shoreline in Texas for signs of infiltration, these units are known to have supported special forces teams infiltrating Texas in 2001. US Border Patrol Museum*

It is estimated that 16,000 members of the Agency died during the war. It is estimated that 1,200 of these died undertaking guerilla warfare (or were executed as a result of it). A memorial was unveiled in Oklahoma City in 2023 dedicated to all who served.

There were 20 Border Patrol sectors, each headed by a



*Illustration 4: US Border Patrol Agents attached to the 49th Armoured Division's Divisional Cavalry Squadron are inspected by Brigadier Oscar Tell, February 2000. Note the wide variety of uniforms being worn by the agents. 49th Armoured Division Museum*



*Illustration 6: US Border Patrol agents operating behind Mexican lines near Victoria, Texas greet William Robert Kingsley Sr, Mid 2001. Many operated in uniform in the hope of evading being shot as spies if captured. Kingsly Memorial Archives*



Sector Chief Patrol Agent. Sectors have between one and twelve stations depending on the local terrain.



*Illustration 8: Agent Alan Jove acting as part of a patrol stopping vehicles looking for Mexican agents (the skills developed tracking immigrants pre-war gave agents a good founding in identifying suspicious people). Note the desert BDUs (although he appears to be missing both name tags and shoulder patches – clean fatigues were a common sight among agents who were interrogating suspects). US Border Patrol Museum*

## Uniform

Border Patrol members prior to the war generally wore green cargo trousers and work shirt with either a baseball cap or tan stetson. With the outbreak of war and the expansion of the organisation a large number of OG military style uniforms with the standard shoulder flash was worn. In early 1997 small numbers of BDUs with the shoulder flashes were issued (in both woodland and desert patterns). By mid 1998 these three items could all be mixed, even on the same individual.

## Awards

Prior to the war, the following awards were authorised:

- Newton-Azrak

Award for Heroism

- Purple Cross Wound Award

After the Mexican invasion, Border Patrol Agents became eligible for military awards (although the Purple Heart was not available as the Purple Cross Wound Award was still issued). The Newton-Azrak Award continued as an award for non-military heroism. In addition agents were entitled to the American Resistance Award if they had acted as guerillas (this was unofficially known as the “Couldn't Run Fast Enough Medal” by it's recipients).

## Weapons

Border Patrol agents were issued the following weapons:

- .357 Magnum revolvers (various Smith and Wesson and Ruger models)
- Remington Model 870 shotgun
- M16 rifle (mainly M16A1 but some M16A2 and a number of M16EZ)
- Car-15 Carbine
- M14 rifle (ceremonial and specialist units)
- Uzi sub-machine guns (specialist units)
- Heckler and Koch MP5 (specialist units)



*Illustration 9: US Border Patrol Training Depot staff awaiting trainees late 1996 (from the NBC documentary "Training to Defend"). Note the OG uniforms and the Training Depot badge worn on both shoulders showing the Seal of the United States.*



*Illustration 10: US Border Patrol agents patrolling a rear area road after reports of Mexican Army infiltrators. May 1999*

In addition agents could purchase pistols from an approved list, this included:

- Glock Model 17
- Glock Model 19
- Sig Sauer P220
- Colt Python .357 Magnum
- Smith and Wesson Model 19/66 .357 Magnum

In addition a number of Sidewinder sawn off semi-automatic shotguns that had been held in storage since the late 1980s were reissued in early 1998.

## **New Career: Border Patrol Agent**

### **Entry requirements:**

No prison record, US citizen

### **First term skills:**

Spanish: 1

Unarmed combat:1

Small Arms (rifle or pistol): 1

Wheeled vehicle: 1

Interrogation: 1

**Subsequent term skills** (where or is used only 1 may be chosen from the list each term). Choose four from:

French or Spanish

Melee combat (unarmed)

Small Arms

Observation

Persuasion

Tracking

Instruction

Forgery

Computer

Riding or Wheeled vehicle or Small Boat Handling or Motorcycle or Pilot or Snow Skiing

**Ranks** are gained as per the military (this is not a full list of ranks):

1: Border Patrol Agent

2: Lead Border Patrol Agent

3: Supervisory Border Patrol Agent



*Illustration 11: US Border Patrol agent checking along the Rio Grande. Prior to the Mexican invasion there were a number of under reported incidents involving firefights between the Mexicans and US Border Patrol agents (and other US groups). A number of casualties were suffered by both sides. This photo was taken by Tammy Hunter of the New York Times minutes after one of these fire fights. She later died in a further one of these firefights.*

4: Assistant Patrol Agent in Charge

5: Patrol Agent in Charge

6: Division Chief

### **Contacts**

1 per term criminal or law enforcement (7+ contact is foreign)

### **Special**

The character is not subject to the draft but may volunteer for the military when war breaks out.



*Illustration 12: US Border Patrol agents being sworn in, late 1996 (from the NBC documentary "Training to Defend"). Note the black diagonal stripe on the chest badge showing that they are still trainees.*