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World/Nation

U.S. Marshals celebrate bicentennial anniversary

WASHINGTON (AP) — United States Marshals live in legend as the men who tamed the wild West, but their 200-year career is twined with more of the country's history than just bringing bandits to justice.

A marshal fired the gun that sent settlers scrambling for a homestead in the Oklahoma land run of 1889 at Guthrie; marshals ringed the Pentagon during the Vietnam war protests of the early 1970s and guarded the first black student at Old Miss during riots over desegregation in the '60s.

They smashed whiskey stills during Prohibition and arrested gangster Al Capone twice; took the census until 1880; captured fugitive slaves before the Civil War and protected them during Reconstruction; and did the hanging for "Hanging Judge" Isaac Parker in Fort Smith, Ark., when Oklahoma was still Indian Territory and bank and train robbers hid in the brush.

"At almost every point in history when the federal government was involved in a significant event, there were marshals participating," Marshals Service spokesman Stephen Boyle said.

The country's oldest law enforcement organization, the marshals begin celebrating their bicentennial Thursday, with the opening of an exhibit at the Supreme Court followed by a star-studded, black-tie gala at a nearby hotel.

"This is our heritage, the preservation of history," Clint Peoples of Waco said. Peoples is executive marshal for the bicentennial, and served as marshal for 15 years in North Texas and as chief of the Texas Rangers. "As a result, I hope there is more respect for law enforcement in all fields."

Sponsored by the United States Marshals Foundation, a non-profit fund-raising organization, the evening's special guest will be James Arness, who played Marshal Matt Dillon on television's "Gunsmoke" for 20 years. One of those being honored is Deputy Marshal Rey F. Cestero of Savannah, Ga., for his assistance in apprehending two murder and abduction suspects in August.

Included in the exhibit, organized by the Marshals Service and the Smithsonian Insitute, are the arrest warrant for Geronimo, an 1870 Ku Klux Klan robe and hood from a recruit in the Klan's birthplace of Pulaski, Tenn., a 1790 whiskey still from the Whiskey Rebellion era, and one of the two machine guns from the St. Valentine's Day massacre in Chicago — the bloodiest of Prohibition.

The exhibit, which will tour a dozen cities over the next 30 months, also includes a Jesse James vest and

sidearm, and original drawings by Wyatt Earp of four gunfights, including one at the OK Corral involving the legendary marshal.

During their first 100 years, "They were the federal government at the local level," Marshals' historian Frederick S. Calhoun said. "There was no infrastructure of a bureaucracy, so when the citizens got mad they took it out on the federal marshals."

Partly as a result, at least 400 and as many as 700 marshals died in the line of duty, more casualties than any other law enforcement agency, officials say.

Appointed by the president, the 94 U.S. marshals are a part of the executive branch, created by the first Congress in the Judiciary Act of 1789 — the same law that established the Supreme Court and the federal judicial system.

The marshals of the 1980s provide security in federal court and to federal judges, including Supreme Court justices when they travel beyond Washington. They operate the witness protection program that gives new identities to those whose lives are jeopardized by testifying for the government, and track down federal fugitives.

They also take custody of those accused of federal crimes and transport federal prisoners, running the government's only scheduled airline service with two Boeing 727s and smaller aircraft out of their Oklahoma City hub, says director Stanley Morris.

They are responsible for property seized in the war on drugs and other federal offenses, and currently have \$750 million in their inventory, Boyle said.

Marshals have managed horse ranches, restaurants, condominiums, a golf course and a greenhouse.

With just 3,000 marshals, deputies and staff, the service is smaller than the New York City Police Department, Morris said, yet its ranks are stationed in every U.S. judicial district from Guam to the Virgin Islands.

Calhoun, who has a doctorate in history from the University of Chicago, says the deadliest era in the service's history was before Oklahoma statehood, when about 100 marshals died in Indian Territory between 1872 and 1896.

The 1980s war on drugs is deadly, too. "There's not a day that passes that a federal judge is not under threat," Calhoun said.

"We're dealing with drug trafficking and narco-terrorism," Morris said. "We are pressed into being at the frontlines in dealing with the major new challenge to our country and to our system of government."

Mandella transferred to new site

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela was transferred Wednesday from a clinic to a house on a prison farm near Cape Town.

Aside from stays in hospital, Mandela marked the first time since that the 70-year-old prisoner of South Africa's most widely known black leader, has lived outside of a cell.

Prison officials said Mandela's wife, Winnie, children and grandchildren would have limited access to Mandela at his new quarters in a staff house on the property.

But Winnie Mandela rejected the offer and said she will continue to make the standard minute visits to her husband. He is freed, according to the lawyer, Ismail Ayob.

The government has been under intense domestic and international pressure to release Mandela unconditionally. But it has indicated that his release is not imminent and that restraints on him will be eased in stages so the government can assess the political impact of possible freedom.

The transfer was announced by Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee, who said Mandela was to be moved to a suitable, comfortable, properly secured home at Victor Verster Prison in Pretoria.

Mandela has been imprisoned since 1962 and is serving a sentence for plotting a sabotage campaign against the white-ruled government.

Attorney urges Idaho court to retry Texan convicted of woman's murder

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A Conroe man lied on the witness stand during the first-degree murder trial of his brother, and the brother is entitled to a new trial, the Idaho Supreme Court has been urged.

But the state's attorney says the brother twice has recanted his testimony, and it's a common tactic for a criminal defendant to later claim he lied on the witness stand.

The Idaho Supreme Court on Wednesday took under advisement an appeal from Mark Henry Lankford, 32, Conroe, Texas. Lankford and his brother, Bryan, 28, were convicted in separate trials of killing an El Paso couple more than five

years ago. Both Lankfords were sentenced to death.

Bryan's death sentence was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court, which asked the Idaho court to reconsider the case. Bryan Lankford's second hearing before the Idaho Supreme Court was Nov. 15 and the court has not ruled yet.

Mark Lankford attorney Greg Fitzmaurice attacked his conviction on several points. The two-hour hearing Wednesday served both as the Supreme Court's direct review of the case and also as an appeal from district court decisions denying Mark Lankford a new trial.

Fitzmaurice contended that when Bryan Lankford testified in his

brother's case that Mark killed the Bravances, he lied. He said Bryan later called an area newspaper and admitted that.

He said the testimony was critical to the case.

"The key evidence was the testimony of his brother linking him to the crime scene," he said.

Because of that perjured testimony, Fitzmaurice said, Mark Lankford's trial was tainted and he should be granted a new one.

But Solicitor General Lynn Thomas said District Judge George Reinhardt considered that claim when he denied Mark Lankford's bid for a new trial, and decided not to believe him.

"Bryan's testimony in Mark's trial was the same as the testimony in his own trial, and it was corroborated by the evidence and other witnesses," Thomas said.

The Lankfords were convicted in separate trials of the slaying of a Marine Capt. Robert Bravance and his wife, Cheryl of El Paso.

Police allege the Lankfords fled from criminal charges in El Paso County and came upon the Bravances in a campground.

The pair decided to rob the Bravances and steal their car. Bryan Bravance and his wife to death in a club in the process.



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