

Preface

The present volume is a product of the Futures Working Group (FWG), which is a joint effort of the Society of Police Futurists International and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. The volume was first discussed at the FWG meeting held in conjunction with the Accelerating Change conference in Palo Alto, California, in September 2005. This meeting was held in the immediate aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita when our nation was still working to understand those events and governmental responses. During the past year, members of the FWG have continued to cogitate about these events. The scope of discussion was not limited to what the southeastern U.S. experienced in 2005. Instead, we engaged in a much broader dialogue about how emergency and critical services can be used in the most effective manner. Our efforts resulted in the production of this volume: a set of essays on policing and mass casualty events.

“Policing and Mass Casualty Events,” the title selected for this volume, was not chosen randomly. Certainly, this volume was motivated in part by the 9/11 attacks and in part by natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Two chapters focus on Hurricane Katrina (those by Youngs and Gardner), and several touch on 9/11. The chapters are intended to serve as exemplars rather than post mortems. The entire volume seeks to consider not what we did wrong, but rather on future opportunities to do right. Because the FWG is dedicated to positively shaping the future, the members chose to discuss how responses to future mass casualty events might be shaped to minimize loss of life and property while reducing operating costs and problems.

The present volume does not focus on a single incident of disaster or on a single type of disaster. Rather, the editors and chapter authors recognize that we have

experienced many varieties of mass casualty events, at least as far back as paleontology takes us. While myriad events have been chronicled, e.g., Winchester's (2003) review of the eruption of Krakatoa in 1883 and de Boer and Sanders' (2005) discussion of seismic disruptions, few have looked across classes of disasters, and to our knowledge none has looked at the future of mass casualty events in general. The authors of this volume attempt to do just that.

This volume crosses boundaries. It applies to climate-related events, geological events, terrorist events, war, and events caused by disease and pests. All have in common the potential for mass casualties, all have in common a threat to society beyond the immediate event, all call for durable and effective communication, and all will place demands – often-impossible demands – on emergency responders, particularly police. We recognize some overlap with previous works. Winchester (2003), for example, does, *inter alia*, weigh the role of the (then-new) telegraph and print media, but the scope of the present text differs from earlier writings. This volume addresses various communications technologies as well as the social and organizational context, emerging models, and future applications to emergency services.

The contributing authors have expertise in policing, research, and technology. Their view is broad. They see policing as a public service and police as the ultimate community caretakers. They lay out many of the issues that mass casualty events portend, and consider resources, preparation, response and aftermath. That said, this volume is an initial slice at a set of Gordian problems rather than an exhaustive tome. The authors seek to expand the dialogue of mass casualty events to look more carefully at how we can be more effective in the future. Their contributions are intended to be thought-provoking,

insightful, and initial efforts; they are neither all encompassing nor the final word on these matters. The definitive work awaits another day.

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References

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Winchester, S. (2003). Krakatoa . NY: HarperCollins