

A DECADE OF PEACE OFFICERS MURDERED IN CALIFORNIA THE 1980's

From where I've gone, I cannot return...

...Learn from my passage.

--The Authors

INTRODUCTION

In the 1980's, law enforcement personnel in California faced a wide spectrum of complicated and dangerous situations that unfortunately resulted in the felonious murders of sixty-three peace officers. These killings underscored the difficult role of law enforcement in the past decade.

The peace officer's goal, to effectively provide the best possible service to the community, was constantly challenged throughout the 1980's. Societal changes made law enforcement more hazardous and complex. Realizing this, the authors have gathered many facts surrounding peace officer killings in California during the 1980's. This information was obtained from personal interviews and on-site research with law enforcement personnel involved in the incidents or follow-up investigations. The data are presented in both narrative and graphic format with identifiable learning points stressed. This study includes only those local, county, state and federal peace officers feloniously murdered in California. Accidental deaths are not addressed.

As law enforcement enters the 1990's, the authors predict that society will require more police service, and that peace officers will face increasingly

diverse and violent situations. The purpose of this study is to examine the data from the 1980's and to identify the "lessons learned." Recognizing these learning points will aid the law enforcement professional to move forward more safely. Additionally, it is hoped that these conclusions will be addressed at every level of professional law enforcement organizations, and incorporated into training programs.

TABULATED INFORMATION

Listed, by year, are twenty-one variables, presented in nineteen tables related to the murders of sixty-three peace officers. In many instances the authors use percentages associated with the numbers to present the reader with a better understanding of over 1400 pieces of information.

Table 1: Year and Month

Sixty-three peace officers were murdered during the 1980's for an average of 6.3 per year. This table shows that California experienced a range of four to nine peace officers murdered each year, with 1983 and 1988 containing nine murders each, and 1985, 1987, and 1989 having four murders each. Thirty-six of the murders (57%) occurred during the first five years of the decade.

Over the decade the month of June was the most lethal, and was the only month which experienced a double-digit figure, with ten killings. June was closely followed by March with nine murders. April was the least lethal month (two murders), while August, November, and December each accounted for three murders. Thirty-nine peace officers (62%) were killed in the first six months of each year.

Table 2: Day of Week

Peace officers were murdered every day of the week in the 1980's. Three days accounted for double-digit murders, and in rank order were Saturday (15), Thursday (13), and Friday (10), which sub-totaled 61% of the murders. Tuesday (4), and Monday (5) were the least lethal days

Table 3: Hour of Day

This table lists the murders as they occurred over each of the twenty-four hour periods of the day, and by what is generally considered as hours of light (0600-1759), and hours of darkness (1800-0559). Thirty-six of the murders (56%) occurred during daylight hours, and every daylight hour accounted for at least one killing. By one-hour intervals the hours of 1600 and 1700 had six peace officers murdered in each, closely followed with five murders in each of the hours 0100, 1200, and 2300. Four of the one-hour periods contained no peace officers murders - 0200, 0400, 0500, and 2200.

Table 4: Victim by Agency

In this table the murders are identified according to the slain officers having been employed by a (1) police department, (2) sheriff's department, (3) State of California agency, (4) Federal agency, or (5) other local/special district agency. Thirty-eight peace officers (60%) were city police, fourteen were sheriff's personnel (22%), three were from the California Highway Patrol, four were federal agencies, and four were from "other" local agencies. Of the four federal agencies, one United States Secret Service agent was killed in 1980, two Drug Enforcement Agency agents were murdered in a single incident in 1988, and one Immigration and Naturalization agent was slain in 1989. Among the "other" local agencies one sworn peace officer was killed from each of the following: Sacramento County District Attorney Investigator, Los

Angeles County Parks and Recreation, Orange County Fire Department, and Compton Unified School District.

Two of the sixty-three slain peace officers were females: U. S. Secret Service Agent in 1980, who was the victim of a robbery attempt while on surveillance, and a San Diego Police Officer murdered in 1984 while conducting a search of a suspect who had just been cited for an alcohol violation.

Table 5: Location of Murder-Urban vs. Rural

This category was included to indicate if the slain officers were employed in urban/metropolitan areas, or in rural parts of the State. Fifty-five victims (87%) were employed in urban areas. In four of the ten years (1980, 1986, 1987 and 1988) the murdered officers were killed only in metropolitan areas.

Table 6: Rank of Officer

This table lists the rank of the murdered peace officers by (1) entry-level (officer, deputy, or agent), (2) supervisor, or (3) other. Fifty-three of the murder victims (84%) were entry-level, nine were sergeants (14%), and one was an elected county sheriff. In the supervisory category four of the nine sergeants were working detective assignments, two were uniform patrol, and three were working special assignments - two with special weapons and tactics teams, and one with the explosives ordinance detail.

Table 7: Assignment of Officer at Time of Murder

Recorded in this table are the assignments the peace officers were detailed to within their departments as to (1) uniform, (2) plainclothes, (3) special detail, or (4) off-duty at the time of the killings. Forty of the victims (63%) were assigned to uniform or patrol duties. Sixteen murdered officers (25%) were working detective or investigations, and six victims (10%) were

working special enforcement or tactical assignments. One detective sergeant was intentionally ambushed off-duty in 1985.

Table 8: Officer's Age

The ages of the victims are listed by five-year increments in this table. By increments the age thirty-one to thirty-five years accounted for the largest number of deaths with twenty-three of the total (37%), followed by fourteen peace officers (22%) in the twenty-six to thirty year range. Only three peace officers (5%) were over fifty years of age - an elected sheriff at age fifty-six, a unified school district officer at fifty-one, and a federal Drug Enforcement Agent at fifty-two.

The average age for the sixty-three victims was 34.6 years, with twenty-one of the peace officers (33%) being over age thirty-five years, and forty-two officers (67%), under the age of thirty-five.

Table 9: Officer's Years of Experience

The years of peace officer experience for each victim is indicated by five-year increments from zero-twenty years and twenty-one years plus. Eighteen victims (29%) had five years or less experience, twenty-four had six-ten years on the job (38%), twelve were in the eleven-fifteen years increment (19%), and seven were sixteen-twenty year veterans of law enforcement (11%). Two peace officers had over twenty years experience - an elected Sheriff with thirty-three years, and a police sergeant with twenty-two years. The average law enforcement experience for the sixty-three victims was 9.4 years.

Table 10: Type of Incident

This table lists seven specific categories of activities the slain peace officers were responding to at the time they were murdered: (1) disturbance,

(2) man with a gun, (3) robbery, (4) ambush, (5) traffic, (6) narcotics, and (7) suspicious person/vehicle. The suspicious person/vehicle category accounted for the most murders with eleven killings (17%), closely followed by narcotics-related activities with nine victims (14%). An eighth category is listed as "Other" because the fourteen murder victims (22%) listed therein do not fit into the previous categories - failure to appear warrant arrest (2), contributing to delinquency of a minor citation (2), defusing a bomb (2), mentally deranged person (2), and one each dealing with a murder suspect, non-support warrant, shoplifting suspect, arson investigation, burglary, and illegal alien smuggling.

Table 11: Number of Additional Officers at Scene

The numbers reflected in this table indicate that in twenty murders (32%) the victim officer was alone at the time of the killing, but in an equal number of murders the victim had either a partner or one back-up officer at the scene when the event occurred; in five of these latter cases, both officers were killed. In twelve of twenty murders the victim was functioning with a partner officer, and in one of these partnerships both officers were killed. Three murders occurred with two additional officers at the scene, eight murders (13%) occurred with three to five additional officers at the scene (6%), four killings when six to ten additional officers were at the scene, and in eight murders (13%) there were more than ten officers present at the time of the slayings. Overall, forty-three of the slain officers (68%) had additional assistance at the time of their murder, and in those instances, twenty-three officers (37%) had two or more additional officers present.

Table 12: Murder Suspect's Age

A total of seventy-two suspects were arrested or identified in the

sixty-three murders. The suspect's ages are listed by five year increments through age fifty years. The largest group, consisting of sixteen suspects (22%), was age sixteen to twenty years. Fifteen of those sixteen suspects were teenagers (94%). There were thirteen suspects (18%) who were ages twenty-six to thirty, and eleven suspects each in the twenty-one to twenty-five, and thirty-one to thirty-five year age groups (15%). Therefore, the majority of suspects, fifty-one were under the age of thirty-five (71%), forty of the suspects (56%) were under the age of thirty, and twenty-seven were under twenty-five years of age (38%).

Not included in the table, but of importance is that the majority of murders, fifty-four of the sixty-three or 86%, were committed by suspects acting alone. In nine murder cases (14%) there were multiple suspects ranging in numbers from two to five. Six murders involved two suspects in each case, two murders involved three suspects each, and in one case there were five suspects - Riverside Deputy Sheriff in 1980 during the pursuit of bank robbers. In three double police homicides (Riverside, and two San Diego cases) there was only one suspect each.

Table 13: Suspect's Race

The race of identified suspects are listed in this table as (1) Caucasian, (2) Hispanic, (3) Black, or (4) Asian. Thirty-three of the seventy-two suspects (46%) were Caucasians, eight were Hispanics (11%), twenty-four were Black (33%), and seven were Asian (10%). The Asian category identified three suspects in a double homicide of DEA agents on a narcotics buy, three suspects in an armed robbery responded to by Los Angeles Police Officers, and one suspect in a San Diego Police double homicide.

Table 14: Suspects Killed/Committed Suicide

Data here indicates that of the seventy-two suspects, twenty-eight were either killed by peace officers or committed suicide shortly after the peace officer slayings (39%). Seventeen of the slain/suicide suspects (61%) were Caucasians.

Tables 15-A and 15-B: Murder Weapons

Information on the type of weapon used in the murders of the peace officers is tabulated by type of firearm (handgun, rifle, or shotgun) or other weapons in two separate tables. Fifty-nine of the sixty-three murders (94%) occurred through the use of firearms, with forty-one involving handguns (69%), twelve involving rifles (20%), and three with shotguns. A description is given in table 15-A for handguns from .22 to .45 with the calibers most frequently used being .38 (thirteen murders) and .357 (eleven murders). In table 15-B, rifles ranged in caliber from .22 to .308 with the 5.56mm (.223) being used the most frequently in four of twelve rifle murders (33%). All three shotgun murders involved the use of 12 gauge weapons.

In 19% or eleven of the firearms murders (nine of the forty-one handgun killings and two of the three shotgun murders) the peace officers' own weapon was taken and used as the murder weapon. Suspicious persons were involved in three gun take-away murders, mentally deranged persons in two cases, and one peace officer was murdered with his/her own weapon in each of the following activities: suspicious vehicle, failure-to-appear warrant arrest, disturbance, booking a drunk driver, silent burglary alarm, and victim of a robbery attempt while on a surveillance.

Table 15-B also lists weapons other than firearms, which accounted for four murders. Two Los Angeles Police personnel were killed by a pipe bomb,

one Kern County Deputy was killed by a fleeing robbery suspect's pick-up truck, and a Hayward Police Officer was killed with a knife by a man in a suspicious parked van.

Table 16: Distance in Feet From Suspect When Struck by Gunfire

The information on the fifty-nine peace officers killed by gunfire is listed in five-foot increments for the distance between officers and suspects when the shots were fired. Symbols "R" or "S" indicate that the weapon was a rifle or a shotgun, all others were handguns. Twenty-seven peace officers (46%) were killed within zero-five feet, twelve within six-ten feet (20%), seven within eleven-fifteen feet (12%), and six from sixteen-twenty feet (10%). An additional seven peace officers (12%) were shot to death at distances ranging from twenty-eight to seventy-three feet. Five of the shootings at over twenty feet involved rifles. The three shotgun murders were one each within the three increments of zero-five, six-ten, and eleven-fifteen feet. In one of the zero-five feet and two of the six-ten feet shootings a rifle was the murder weapon (an ambush and two disturbance calls, respectively).

Table 17: Location of Fatal Gunshot Wound

This table describes the fatal gunshot wound for fifty-nine murders as to (1) head, (2) upper torso-front, (3) upper torso-back, (4) upper torso-side, or (5) below the waist. The category that accounts for the greatest number is the twenty-eight officers (47%) killed with head shots, while fourteen officers were killed by upper torso-front wounds (24%). Five peace officers (8%) died of upper torso-back wounds and nine from upper torso-side wounds (15%). Three peace officers died of gunshot wounds below the waist. The asterisk* indicates which twenty-seven (46%) peace officers were wearing soft body armor at the time they were shot.

Table 18: Officers Murdered With Single Gunshot Wound

Twenty-eight of the fifty-nine peace officers shot (47%) were struck with only one round or a shotgun blast. This table lists the location of that fatal wound as to (1) head, (2) upper torso-front, (3) back, (4) side, or (5) below the waist. The symbols "R," "H," and "S," respectively, indicate whether a rifle, handgun or shotgun was the murder weapon. Nineteen of the twenty-eight victims were struck in the head (68%), six were struck in the upper torso-front (21%), and three in the upper side torso (11%). No murder victims died from a single gunshot wound to the upper torso-back or below the waist. Eighteen of the wounds were by handguns (64%), seven by rifles (25%) and all three of the shotgun (11%) murders were a single round fired in each case.

SUMMARY

An analysis of the murders of sixty-three law enforcement officers in California during the 1980's raised many questions as well as identifying relevant learning points. Law enforcement administrative, investigative, operational, and training issues should address such questions as:

- What led to each murder?
- Who was responsible?
- Were the victim officers. . . :
 - applying sound decision making?
 - exhibiting the proper mental attitude?
 - physically fit?
 - proficient with their firearm?

- proficient with their equipment?
- using contemporary and safe tactics?
- Could the murder have been prevented?

The authors recognize that it is easy to identify learning points and offer suggestions in the academic atmosphere of post-incident examination.

However, it is vital for the law enforcement profession to face these issues and make appropriate organizational changes. Failure to meet this challenge increases our vulnerability in facing dangerous incidents without benefit of proper preparation.

The following learning points are presented for consideration and evaluation:

CALIFORNIA'S STANDING IN THE NATION

1. On a national and state level, murders of law enforcement officers decreased when a comparison is made of the 1980's to the 1970's. Although this is an encouraging trend, one must remember that California has always been a leading state in the felonious killings of peace officers.

In the 1960's and 1970's California suffered the greatest number of law enforcement murders, and in the 1980's was the second ranking state in the United States following Texas.

MONTHS, DAYS, TIMES OF KILLINGS

2. Traditionally, many law enforcement officers believe that a certain month of the year, day of the week, and time of the day is more dangerous. These thoughts are the products of their experience and many times create false expectations of security or danger. Throughout the 1980's, statistics show that the murders of the sixty-three officers occurred in every month, in each day of the week, and during twenty-one of the twenty-four hours of the

day.

During the 1980's, June was the most deadly month with ten of the sixty-three murders (16%). Saturday was the most dangerous day of the week with fifteen of the sixty-three murders (24%). Two time periods, 1600 to 1659 and 1700 to 1759 hours, each accounted for six of the sixty-three killings, or approximately 20% of the total. Also, 40% of the total deaths (twenty-five of sixty-three) occurred on Friday and Saturday. Therefore, the most deadly month, day, and hours were June, Saturday, and 1600 to 1759 hours.

While law enforcement personnel should recognize these trends, they must always remember that no month of the year, day of the week, or time of day renders them invulnerable. The most important component of any survival system is the maintenance of the proper mental attitude, and alertness to enable an officer to provide the best and safest police service at all times.

RURAL VS. URBAN

3. Comparing the types of law enforcement agencies and the areas policed (urban versus rural) revealed the following facts. The majority of the murdered officers, fifty-five of the sixty-three involved personnel from city police, county sheriff or highway patrol (87%). The remaining eight deaths occurred among three federal agencies (Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Naturalization Service and the United States Secret Service), and four local agencies (District Attorney's Office, the fire department, Parks and Recreation Department, and a local school district).

Historically, murders of peace officers have generally occurred within city police, sheriff's, and highway patrol agencies as this study indicates. It must be recognized that in recent years federal and specialized law enforcement agencies are facing similar law enforcement challenges and dangers. It is

imperative that department leaders of all law enforcement agencies provide instruction on proper officer safety practices, tactics, self-defense skills, and firearms proficiency during training and that these skills are utilized in field operations. Failure to provide such training will not only negatively impact morale, but also increase the potential for liability judgement against the jurisdiction, agency, department head, supervisor, and individual officer.

ASSIGNMENT

4. During the 1980's, forty of the sixty-three murdered officers (63%) were working uniformed assignments; sixteen of the sixty-three were assigned plain clothes (25%), six of the sixty-three were on special assignments (10%), and one officer was murdered while off-duty (2%).

Also as dangerous as uniform assignment is that of the deputy/officer rank, as shown by the finding that fifty-three of the sixty-three murdered (84%) were deputies or officers, while nine of the sixty-three (14%) were sergeants, and one killing involved an elected sheriff. Patrol duties within a law enforcement agency are the most hazardous assignment, but it is of paramount importance that in-service officer safety training continue at all levels, and for all divisions or units of the agency.

AGE AND EXPERIENCE

5. In the 1980's the average age and length of police experience of the murdered officers was 34.6 and 9.4 years respectively. The average age of the suspects was 27.9 years. These figures alone may be misleading. The data reveals that 30% of the murdered officers were under age thirty, and two-thirds were under age thirty-five. This shows that the majority of officers were young, though this trend may be expected as it is the young officer who is usually on patrol. Also, the largest number of officers killed had less than

ten years experience, forty-two of the sixty-three or 66%. Eighteen officers had less than five years experience (29%). It may be repeated that the younger officers, with fewer years experience, are the officers in the field.

The suspects' ages also showed their youthfulness, with over one-third of the suspects (38%) under the age of twenty-five years, and 21% teenagers. Another one-third of the suspects were aged twenty-six to thirty-five, and 25% were aged thirty-six to forty five. These figures demonstrate that on many occasions the younger suspect responsible for the murder was willing and capable of using deadly force.

Training programs must deal with the issues of complacency, routine, and the finding that it is the younger officers and suspects involved in most of the deadly encounters. Survival skills must be targeted to the young patrol officers. To effectively control a suspect, particularly a young violent suspect, physical fitness programs should become a regular component of every agency's operations. Cardiovascular health, flexibility, speed, endurance, and strength must be maintained and frequently monitored.

MAINTAINING CONTROL

6. An officer becomes involved in an incident as a result of direction by dispatch, a request from someone in the community, or through self-initiation. Once at the scene, immediate tactical decisions may be necessary. The officer's ability to take safe position and employ effective tactics is paramount to personal safety.

Throughout the 1980's a wide variety of incidents led to the murders of sixty-three peace officers in California. Some of these situations by their very nature-man with a gun, suspicious person/vehicle circumstance, and robbery, are inherently dangerous, while others as innocuous as shoplifting or alcohol

violations relating to minors, could easily present a false sense of security. One of the most difficult challenges in law enforcement is to constantly be alert, flexible, and prepared to immediately escalate your tactics or use-of-force options to an appropriate level which will provide for control of the situation. This control must be compatible with community, department, and legal standards. Inability to maintain this control will surely increase the officer's vulnerability in such circumstances.

An analysis of these murders during the 1980's demonstrates the necessity for every member of law enforcement to fully understand the appropriate tactical steps to apply, be flexible, and maintain control in any situation. You control the situation-don't allow the situation to control you! Lack of training in these procedures will only create uncertainty in the officers and the persons responsible for reviewing the peace officer's actions. It is extremely important to develop the proper mindset at any incident requiring the presence and intervention of a peace officer. Failure to address this need will result in needless tragedy and liability.

BACKUP

7. Peace officers are constantly reminded of the advantages gained through the proper utilization of additional personnel within an effective and safe teamwork concept. However, in the 1980's, forty-three of the sixty-three murdered officers (68%) had additional backup officers on scene. In twenty-three cases (36%), there were anywhere from two to more than ten officers present. As incredible as it may seem, the data shows that from 1986 to 1989, there were seven incidents when murders occurred in the presence of more than ten additional officers. Those peace officers who were murdered in California in the decade of the 1980's generally had backup personnel present.

These facts support the premise that there is a definite need within training programs, and day-to-day operations for a greater emphasis on communication, coordination, and tactical control in situations involving more than one peace officer. Officers, detectives, supervisors, and managers must recognize that a false sense of security and relaxation may occur due to a feeling of "safety in numbers." However, this increase in numbers may increase the odds of an officer being killed if direction, and information is not communicated and coordinated on a timely basis. Variables such as crossfires, involvement of weapons, numbers and locations of suspicious persons, and outstanding warrants must be communicated among officers at, or responding to a scene. The failure to properly address this issue through preparation, field evaluation, and practical application training will only permit this trend to continue. There must be a clear understanding of verbal, and non-verbal communications, and an agreement that any officer has the obligation to communicate warning of an unsafe situation. Lacking the courage to take this position may be the result of complacency and a poor understanding of officer safety.

SUSPECT'S RACE

8. It should be noted that the greatest number of suspects, thirty-three of the seventy-two were Caucasian (46%). This refutes the mistaken belief of those who hold the view that the minority suspect is the major threat to the peace officer. The remaining murders involved Black suspects in one-third of the cases, Hispanics in 11%, and Asians in 10% of the incidents.

HANDGUNS

9. Firearms caused fifty-nine of the sixty-three peace officer deaths (94%). The firearms consisted of handguns in forty-one of the sixty-three

deaths (61%); rifles in twelve cases (20%); and shotguns in three situations (5%). It is interesting to note, in the current hysteria over semi-automatic and military look-alike weapons, that the most common weapon used in the decade to murder peace officers was that of the .38 Special and the .357 Magnum revolver which totaled 59% of the handguns and 38% in overall weapons use. Calibers which correspond to military-style shoulder weapons accounted for 26% of the rifles used to murder officers, and less than 8% of the total firearms used.

Peace officers must maintain a constant awareness of the proper use of distance, cover and positioning. To compliment these techniques, peace officers must also realize the importance of handgun proficiency and the value of body armor.

DISTANCE

10. The examination of distance in feet from the suspect when the peace officers were shot and killed revealed that twenty-seven of the fifty-nine occurred within zero to five feet (46%), and twelve of the fifty-nine were within six to ten feet (20%). A combination of these distances (zero to ten feet) accounted for 66% of the fatalities. This data shows that two-thirds of the shootings occurred at very close range. The issues worthy of examination include current distances at which peace officers qualify with their firearms, and skills stressed at firearm practices during the qualification process; i.e., decisions regarding movement and cover, reloading under stress, weak-hand shooting, utilization of available backup weapons, flashlight discipline and techniques, etc.

GUNSHOT WOUNDS AND BODY ARMOR

11. The greatest number of officers, twenty-eight of the fifty-nine officers

killed by wounds inflicted by gunfire (47%), were killed by a gunshot to the head. Unfortunately, modern technology has not created an every day device suitable for law enforcement to protect the head.

An equal number of officers (47%) were struck by gunfire to the back, front, or side portions of the upper torso. These gunshot wounds hit parts of the body normally protected by proper fitting body armor with appropriate side panels. Taking for granted that some of the deaths occurred while an officer was performing duties which would not allow for the wearing of a ballistic vest (undercover), one must question why only twenty-seven of the fifty-nine officers killed (46%) wore body armor when shot. Since nearly half of the fatal wounds occurred to the upper torso and a significant majority of the ammunition involved was not able to defeat most levels of protection provided by commonly used body armor, every peace officer must seriously reconsider the decision not to utilize body armor. Additionally, every law enforcement trainer, supervisor, and leader must recognize their obligation to endorse and support the constant utilization of body armor, to include the mandatory wearing of ballistic armor by all uniformed officers and plainclothes personnel during appropriate activities in the field.

WEAPON TAKE-AWAYS AND RETENTION

12. Analysis of countless criminal encounters and interviews with criminals reveals that many of these individuals have been schooled in two primary techniques to gain in advantage over the peace officer. These are the utilization of either verbal or non-verbal actions to distract the officer, and the ability to take the peace officer's weapon.

In eleven of the fifty-nine murders, or 19%, the suspect was able to successfully disarm the officer. Nine of the eleven disarmings involved the

officer's handgun (82%), and the remaining two involved the officer's shotgun. Training programs must constantly stress effective self-defense skills, proper positions of advantage, and weapon retention. The design of the service sidearm holster must be evaluated, and as regularly as sidearms inspections are held the holster should be checked for weakened leather, particularly the restraining straps, and belt connection stitching.

DOUBLE MURDERS OF PEACE OFFICERS

13. The death of a single peace officer in any incident results in a thorough post-examination. Many times it becomes obvious that the officer either made a tactical mistake or was not mentally attuned to the danger signs generally preceeding the murder. This frustrates everyone in the profession when it is recognized that the death might have been prevented. It is even more difficult to acknowledge that ten of the sixty-three peace officers murdered (16%) were double killings during single events. In the 1980's, this occurred on five occasions when officers were involved in the disposal of a bomb, the response to a neighborhood disturbance, service of an arrest warrant, a stop of four suspicious people, and the undercover purchase of narcotics. No matter how many officers are present, there will always be inherent dangers associated with police work.

RANK OF THE PEACE OFFICERS

14. The need for special emphasis on officer safety and field tactics training within the different rank structure of any law enforcement organization will always be necessary. All too often, certain levels of an organization are exempt from classroom and field tactical training if their current position is perceived as one not involved in dangerous operations. In the 1980's, nine of the sixty-three murdered officers (14%) were sergeants,

and one was an elected sheriff. There is a need for all ranks to be reminded of the contemporary tactical techniques of officer safety and to review where their current assignments may create a sense of "it will never happen to me."

WOMEN VICTIMS

15. During the 1980's, only two of the sixty-three murdered peace officers were female (3%). The two incidents involved a city police officer and a federal agent who were each dealing with multiple suspects in the presence of another police officer. Officer safety training should be constantly reviewed with an equal understanding of the tactical requirements and applications shared with all personnel.

CONCLUSIONS

At any moment a peace officer may become involved in a set of circumstances that can be complex or routine, innocuous or deadly, that would require a variety of interpersonal, physical and mental skills. The ability to select the safest acceptable course of action is directly related to the peace officer's mental attitude, which is dependent upon his/her physical conditioning, tactical skills, equipment, weapon proficiency, and decision-making skills. The decision-making skills frequently have to be exercised in micro-seconds, and under rapidly changing, often violent conditions. To function effectively in crisis situations, that is, acting quickly when the potential outcome may involve serious bodily injury or death, is not a profession for everyone. It requires an individual who is disciplined, well trained, and maintains his/her training. An officer must be confident, alert to the dangers that might be encountered, and flexible in actions.

The most traumatic event in any law enforcement agency is the murder of a peace officer. This tragic occurrence will continue to happen and professional law enforcement must have the courage to examine all factors surrounding the killing. The ability to determine the how, what, and why are vital to the continued safety of others. We must identify the "lessons learned" and stress that individuals make the necessary adjustments to develop and foster the proper attitudes concerning their safety and that of all peace officers.

As in the past years, the authors deeply appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to them in their research efforts by the agencies who experienced an officer murder in the 1980's. We sincerely hope the information imparted in this article will in some fashion assist all law enforcement personnel in performing their duties in a safe and effective manner.

#1 Year and Month

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
1980					2	2			1	1		1	7
'81					2	3		1		1	1		8
'82					3		2				1		6
'83	2	1	2	1		1		1		1			9
'84			1				1		2		1	1	6
'85			1				1	1		1			4
'86		2	1	1		1				1			6
'87			2			1						1	4
'88	3	2	1			2			1				9
'89	1		1						1	1			4
Total	6	5	9	2	7	10	4	3	5	6	3	3	63

Average of 6.3 per year

#2 Day of Murder

	M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU	Total
1980		1	2		1	2	1	7
'81				1	1	5	1	8
'82	1	1		3		1		6
'83	1	1	2	3	1		1	9
'84			1	—	2	2	1	6
'85	1			1			2	4
'86	1			1		2	2	6
'87	1		1	1		1		4
'88		1	1	2	3	2		9
'89			1	1	2			4
Total	5	4	8	13	10	15	8	63

#3 Hour of the Murder

Hours of Light		Hours of Dark	
0600	1	1800	4
0700	1	1900	2
0800	3	2000	4
0900	2	2100	2
1000	2	2200	0
1100	4	2300	5
1200	5	0000	3
1300	1	0100	5
1400	3	0200	0
1500	2	0300	2
1600	6	0400	0
1700	6	0500	0
Total	36		27

#4 Victims by Agency

Year	City Police	Sheriff's Dept.	CHP	Federal Agency	Other	Total
1980	5		1	1 * (A)		7
'81	5	1	1		1 (D)	8
'82	3	2	1			6
'83	5	4				9
'84	5 *				1 (E)	6
'85	3	1				4
'86	4	1			1 (F)	6
'87	2	1			1 (G)	4
'88	5	2		2 (B)		9
'89	1	2		1 (C)		4
Total	38	14	3	4	4	63

KEY: (A)-U.S. Secret Service

(B)-Drug Enforcement Administration (2)

(C)-Immigration and Naturalization Service

(D)-Sacramento D.A.

(E)-Los Angeles Co. Parks and Recreation

(F)-Orange Co. Fire Dept.

(G)-Compton Unified School District

* -Females Murdered (2)

#5 Location of Murder-Urban vs. Rural

	Urban	Rural
1980	7	
'81	6	2
'82	5	1
'83	7	2
'84	5	1
'85	3	1
'86	6	
'87	4	
'88	9	
'89	3	
Total	55	8

#6 Rank of Officer

	Officer/ Deputy	Sergeant	Sheriff	Total
1980	7			7
'81	7	2 (U+D)		9
'82	4	1(U)	1	6
'83	8	1(S)		9
'84	6			6
'85	3	1(D)		4
'86	4	2 (E+D)		6
'87	4			4
'88	7	2 (S+D)		9
'89	4			4
Total	53	9	1	63

Key: (U) Uniform (2) (D) Detective (4)
(E) EOD (S) SWAT (2)

#7 Assignment of Officer at Time of Murder

	Uniform	Plain Clothes	Special Assignment	Off- Duty
1980	6	1		
'81	6	2		
'82	2	4		
'83	6	2	1 (A)	
'84	6			
'85	3			1
'86	3	1	2 (B)	
'87	2	1	1 (A)	
'88	4	4	1 (A)	
'89	2	1	1 (A)	
Total	40	16	6	1

Key: (A) Special Enforcement/Tactics Unit (4)
(B) Explosives Ordinance Disposal (2)

#8 Age of the Officers

	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51+	Total
1980		3	2	1		1		7
'81		1	6	1				8
'82		1	2	2			1 (56)	6
'83	1	2	3	3				9
'84	1	1	3		1			6
'85		1	1		2			4
'86	1		2		1	2		6
'87		3					1 (51)	4
'88	2	2	2	1		1	1 (52)	9
'89			2		2			4
Total	5	14	23	8	6	4	3	63

Average Age=34.6 years

#9 Officer's Years of Experience

Years	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+	Total
1980	4	2		1		7
'81	3	4	1			8
'82		3	2		1 (33)	6
'83	3	3	1	2		9
'84	2	3	1			6
'85		1	3			4
'86	2	2		1	1 (22)	6
'87	2	2				4
'88	2	3	3	1		9
'89		1	1	2		4
Total	18	24	12	7	2	63

Average Years of Experience = 9.4

#10 Type of Incident

	Disturb.	Man w/ Gun	Robbery	Ambush	Traffic	Narco	Suspicious pers/veh	Other	Total
1980	1		3		1	1		1 (A)	7
'81	2	2	1	1			1	1 (B)	8
'82	1				1	1		3 (C/C/D)	6
'83			1	1	1	2	4		9
'84		1	1	1		1		2 (E)	6
'85			1 (F)	2			1		4
'86		1					1	4 (G/G H/I)	6
'87		1		1			2		4
'88		2	1			3	2	1 (J)	9
'89	1					1		2 (H/K)	4
Total	5	7	7	5	5	9	11	14	63

Key: (A) Murder Suspect
 (B) Non-Support Warrant
 (C) Failure to Appear Warrant (2)
 (D) Shoplifting
 (E) Contributing to the Delinquency (2)
 (F) Off-Duty
 (G) Bomb (2)
 (H) Mentally Deranged (2)
 (I) Arson Investigation
 (J) Burglary
 (K) Illegal Alien Smuggling

#11 Number of Additional Officers at Scene

	0	1	2	3-5	6-10	More than ten
1980	2	2 (P)		3		
'81	1	5 ^(P) (P) (P)	1	1		
'82	3	2		1		
'83	4	1 (P)			3	1
'84	1	4 (P)	1			
'85	3	1 (P)				
'86	2			1	1	2 ^(P) (P)
'87	1	1	1			1
'88	1	4 ^(P) (P)		1		3
'89	2			1 (P)		1
Total	20	20	3	8	4	8

Key: (P) = Partner Present (12)

#12 Suspect's Age

	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51+	Total
1980	2	1	4	4				1(64)	12
'81		1	1	2	5				9
'82				2		2	1		5
'83	1	3	1		1	2		1 (52)	9
'84	2	2	1		1				6
'85	2	1	1			1			5
'86		1	2		1	1			5
'87	3				1	1			5
'88	6	2	2	2					12
'89			1	1		2			4
Total	16	11	13	11	9	9	1	2	72

Average Age: 27.9 years

#13 Suspect Race

	Caucasian	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Total
1980	10		2		12
'81	5	3	1		9
'82	4		1		5
'83	4	1	4		9
'84	1		1	4	6
'85	2	1	2		5
'86	2	1	2		5
'87	1	1	3		5
'88	2		7	3	12
'89	2	1	1		4
Total	33	8	24	7	72

#14 Suspects killed/Suicide

	Suspect Killed/ Suicide	Number of Suspects
1980	3	12
'81	5 (B/H)	9
'82	3	5
'83	2 (H)	9
'84	1 (A)	6
'85	1 (H)	5
'86	3 (H)	5
'87	1	5
'88	6 (A/A) (B/B)	12
'89	3 (B)	4
Total	28	72

Key: (B) Black (4)
(H) Hispanic (4)
(A) Asian (3)

#15-A Pistol Caliber of Weapon Used in 41 Murders

	.22	.25	.32	9mm	.357	.38	.380	.41	.44	.45
1980	1			1	1	1				
'81		1			4	1				
'82					2	1*	1			
'83			1	1		4*				
'84	1			1		1				
'85				1		1*		1*		
'86					3**					
'87							1			
'88	1					4*			1	2
'89				1*	1*		1			
Total	3	1	1	5	11	13	3	1	1	2

Note-Asterisk (*) denotes individual officer murdered with his personal weapon (9)

**#15-B Rifle Caliber of Weapon Used in 12 Murders
(Shotgun and Other Weapons Included-7 Murders)**

	.22	.223	.30	7mm	8mm	30-30	30-06	.308	Shot-gun	Other
1980		1		1					1*	
'81							1			
'82						1				
'83		1							1*	1 Veh
'84					1	1				
'85									1	
'86			1							2 Bomb
'87	1	1								1 Knife
'88		1								
'89								1		
Total	1	4	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	4

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes individual officer murdered with his/her personal weapon (2)

**#16 Distance in Feet from Suspect
When Struck By Gunfire-59 Officers**

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
1980	4 (S)	1		1 (R)	1 ^(R) (53)
'81	3	3 (R)		1	1 (23)
'82	3	1 (R)	1	1	
'83	3	2 (S)	1 (R)	2	
'84	4 (R)	1			1 ^(R) (73)
'85	2		2 (S)		
'86	2	1			1 ^(R) (40)
'87			1 (R)		^(R35) 2 (38)
'88	5	2		1	1 ^(R) (50)
'89	1	1	2 (R)		
Total	27	12	7	6	7

Key: (R) Rifle (12)
(S) Shotgun (3)
(Number) Distance in Feet

**#17 Location of Fatal Wound (Gunshot)
59 Officers**

	Head	Upper Torso			Below Waist
		Front	Back	Side	
1980	2	3		1*	1
'81	3**	1	2	2*	
'82	1	1	2*	2	
'83	4***	3		1*	
'84	3***	1*		2*	
'85	3*	1			
'86	1*	2*	1*		
'87		1		1*	1
'88	8*** ***	1			
'89	3***				1
Total	28	14	5	9	3

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes each individual officer wearing body armor at the time of death (27)

**#18 Officers Murdered with
a Single Gunshot - 28**

	Head	Upper Torso			Below Waist
		Front	Back	Side	
1980	2 ^(R) (R)	1 (S)			
'81	1 (H)			1 (H)	
'82	1 (H)			1(H)	
'83	^(H/R) 4 (H/S)	1 (H)			
'84	1 (H)	1 (R)			
'85	^(H) 2 (S)				
'86	1 (H)	1 (H)			
'87		1 (H)		1 (R)	
'88	^(H/R) 4 (H/H)	1 (H)			
'89	^(H/H) 3 (R)				
Total	19	6	0	3	0

Key: (H) Handgun (18)
(R) Rifle (7)
(S) Shotgun (3)

Biography

Rich Wemmer

Lieutenant Rich Wemmer is a nineteen year veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department, currently serving as the Officer-in-Charge of the Department's Airport Detail at the Los Angeles International Airport. He has researched the murders of over one hundred California peace officers and serves on the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training's Advisory Committed for the Study of Killings and Assaults of Peace Officers. Lieutenant Wemmer holds a Bachelor of Science in Police Science and Administration from California State University at Los Angeles, and a Master's of Art Degree in Public Administration from Pepperdine University.

BIOGRAPHY

Charles B. Moorman

Charles Moorman has served California law enforcement over twenty-eight years with the Fullerton Police Department, California Highway Patrol, and the California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI), San Luis Obispo. He has been the Chief of the resident Emergency Management, and Criminal Justice Courses at CSTI since 1984. Mr. Moorman earned Master's Degrees in Police Administration and Education from the California State Universities, Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo. He holds several California Community Colleges Life Teaching Credentials, and is a Life Member of the California Peace Officers Association. Mr. Moorman has provided file review, and expert witness testimony for police, and sheriff's departments.