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## THE ROLL CALL TRAINING PROGRAM OF THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT\*

Richard Simon

Richard Simon, Deputy Chief, Los Angeles Police Department, has been a member of this force for the past twenty years and has served in all of its major police divisions. For the past four and one-half years he has been Director of the Personnel and Training Bureau, which is responsible for all of the department's training activities. In addition to his departmental work Chief Simon also holds an appointment to the faculty of the University of Southern California where he lectures on Special Problems in Law Enforcement in the School of Public Administration. The development of the Roll Call Training Program has been one of the high lights of his tour of duty as head of the Training Bureau, and the Journal is fortunate in the opportunity to present this concise discussion of its development and scope.—EDITOR.

Every police administrator recognizes, and at least pays lip service to, the necessity for adherence to the principles of sound organization. One of these principles is that there must be a clear-cut statement of authority and responsibility in order that each person thoroughly understands his duties. Those who are responsible for the operation of a police department cannot expect a policeman to perform with dispatch and maximum efficiency unless he has been told first of what his job consists. However, the mere knowledge of the elements of his job does not ensure intelligent, satisfactory performance, just as a knowledge of the elements of a crime does not guarantee the ability to enforce the law properly. In both instances a person must know the interpretation and the various policies which circumscribe his actions. Informing the individual of these things is accomplished by various methods of administrative communication. One of the most effective means of communication is training.

This function of communication has presented the Los Angeles Police Department with problems which are, in many respects, unique but which are nevertheless sufficiently common among law enforcement agencies to justify this sharing of experience with the hope that it will help raise standards of performance in the rendering of police services. It is not the intent of this paper to propose a particular approach as a panacea; rather, is submitted with the hope that this step-by-step history of the development of the "Roll Call Training" program of the Los Angeles Police Department will assist other law enforcement agencies in their thinking and planning in developing a similar training technique.

\* For many of the techniques employed in this survey, we are indebted to John Gerletti, Ed. D., Instructor at the Delinquency Control Institute of the University of Southern California.

Los Angeles, like many other cities, has experienced a rapid growth in population, which of itself, in normal times would have created a difficult situation. This rapid growth, coupled with the impossibility of recruiting permanent police personnel during the war years, has necessitated filling in a very short time a personnel shortage which developed over a period of years.

Over 2,700 policemen, constituting eight out of ten policemen presently employed, have been added to this department within the last three and one-half years. Fifty-nine per cent of all those in the rank of policeman have not had more than two years experience. If this rapid increase in manpower had been tempered by the stabilizing influence of the "old timer", it would not have presented such an acute problem. Normally, relatively few police officers are hired during a year, and when a recruit goes into the field he is assigned with an experienced officer. Not only can authenticity of information acquired during recruit training be tested by experience but also many of the fundamentals that the recruit did not learn in training can be taught him by an experienced partner. This procedure has not been possible under rapid post-war personnel expansion. Many experienced officers have been promoted in rank, others have been called upon to perform specialized duties, and still others, in large numbers, have retired on service pensions. The percentage of experienced pre-war officers remaining in the patrol divisions today is so small that it is impossible for them to do any appreciable amount of individual on-the-job training.

In spite of this disproportionate ratio of experienced and inexperienced field officers, an effective job of policing had to be done. In line with national trends, our police problems had increased.

Decentralization of an organization often tends to be, of itself, an influence towards disintegration. Just as centrifugal force becomes greater as the radius increases so does the administration of a police department become more difficult and complex as its activities are decentralized and great distances separate units from headquarters. This outward pull toward local autonomy in policy and practice, while desirable to a degree, must be curbed sufficiently to ensure unity of effort. Los Angeles, sprawled over an area of over 400 square miles, has compelled the police department to divide its activities into twelve geographical areas. These divisional stations are separated from headquarters by distances, averaging ten miles. These distances vary from two blocks to over twenty-five miles. This problem of

decentralization, while not peculiar to Los Angeles, is further complicated by sheer distance to the extent that centralized training could not begin to cope with the department's training needs.

Faced with these problems, the supervisory officers themselves found an answer which experience has shown to be basically sound and a long forward step. As a group, and as individuals, they recognized and met one of the first obligations of a supervisor—the duty to teach. Many supervisors, of their own volition, made a point of passing on, at assembly time, information calculated to inform the policemen of the best methods for performing his routine duties. The subject matter of these informal training sessions was usually based upon those problems reflected by inadequate work performance, observed or brought to the attention of the supervisors.

In some patrol divisions the commanders and their supervisors organized rather elaborate training schedules. Usually the watch lieutenant or one of his sergeants conducted the training. In many cases, however, specialized officers were called in to discuss problems that pertained to their work. For example, if a policeman's mistakes had made a burglary investigation rather difficult, a detective was brought in to discuss the problem with the watch. If the problem involved the handling of juveniles, the watch might be addressed by a juvenile officer.

This roll call training was watched with great interest, and it was soon recognized that the program was part of the answer to the total training problem.

In January 1948 the work day of all officers in the patrol divisions was lengthened by fifteen minutes, and each division commander was directed to organize and administer in his division a fifteen-minute Roll Call Training Program.

As might be expected, the quality of the training in the twelve divisions varied. Some programs were excellent. Others did not seem to fill the need. An analysis of the excellent programs indicated that they were usually good because considerable time had been spent in developing the training material. Unfortunately, in most cases, this material was given by one man to only one watch.

Several difficulties occurred in the program as it was then conducted. Often the field supervisor found that he did not have sufficient time to adequately research the subject assigned to him for teaching. There was duplication of effort in having thirty-six watch commanders throughout the city spend several hours in research on a subject when this job could be done more

effectively and efficiently by one man, specially assigned and adapted to that task. It was further observed that as a result of decentralized training without a centralized control the material had a great many subjective interpretations of departmental orders and policies.

It became apparent that a uniform policy must be adopted and to this end, in the Spring of 1948, a conference was conducted by the Director of the Personnel and Training Bureau with the field commanders. It was decided to set up a central agency to prepare material for Roll Call Training. Plans were then formulated for a Field Training Unit to assist the division commanders in administering their local training programs.

The Field Training Unit of the Training Division was created, and a Sergeant of Police assigned to coordinate the program. The first assignment of this Field Training Coordinator was to consult the patrol division commanders who were administering Roll Call Training in their divisions. The benefit of these consultations were threefold. It enabled the training staff to get the ideas of these commanders as to just what type of training was needed to fill the needs of their divisions. It enabled the staff to learn the specific training needs which the commanders thought should be treated. It further provided an opportunity to sell the program to those commanders who were somewhat dubious as to the efficacy of a coordinated training program. As a result of these personal consultations, all of the concerned division commanders felt that their training interests could best be served by a well coordinated Roll Call Training Program.

A plan to effect a coordinated Roll Call Training Program was then formulated. The plan was as follows:

1. Each division was to continue its roll call training as it was being administered at the time.
2. The Field Training Unit was to conduct a survey of work problems of the field officers.
3. A curriculum based on the needs indicated in the work survey was to be formulated.
4. Through adequate research, authentic material was to be developed to cover the work problems.
5. The material obtained from research was to be published for each day that training was to be given. The form of publication was to be a daily training bulletin distributed to each officer.
6. A sufficient number of supervisory officers were to be trained to carry on an effective teaching program in the divisions.
7. The new coordinated Roll Call Training Program was to be set into operation by October 18, 1948.

In order to determine the areas of need, a survey to determine the work problems of the field officer was conducted. To determine exactly what problems should be covered in the Roll Call Training Program, the following methods were employed.

One hundred and fifty officers of superior rank were interviewed and asked, "From your observations of the work and the results of the work of field officers, what is it that you think they should know how to do, that they do not know how to do"? Each response relating to a work operation was recorded on a separate piece of plain white paper (3" by 5" in size was used). A sample response from an Inspector of Police was, "How to deploy properly on a robbery call".

Three hundred and fifty policemen were interviewed in the survey. This was usually done during the pre-work assembly period, when the men were addressed as a group. The men were asked to reflect upon their past work experience and to recall those situations where they did not, at the time, know the proper course of action. They were asked to indicate, on separate pieces of plain white paper, those things they did not know how to do that they felt they should know how to do. A typical response was, "How to handle a private person's arrest properly".

The persons interviewed were asked to indicate specifics and to refrain from broad statements such as "How to write reports". They were told that if reporting was a problem they should indicate a specific report and the portion of that report which was confusing. One supervisory officer responded that an officer should know "How to describe a scar when booking a suspect". This problem related specifically to a particular line of a departmental identification report. From this specific information, it was quite easy to establish the particular training need. It directed the training not at the broad field of general report writing, or even at the completion of a whole report blank, but to the preparation of teaching material for the correction of a specific problem, i.e., "How to describe a scar properly".

While the three hundred and fifty policemen interviewed were addressed in groups, the one hundred and fifty supervisory officers were, primarily, personally interviewed. In the survey, conducted during a six weeks' period, about one-seventh of our total force of sworn personnel was reached. Each rank and each specialized division and unit were contacted. This constituted a very comprehensive cross section of the department.

As a result of these surveys a total of 1,219 responses relating to specific work operation were received. These responses represented about one hundred and fifty-six work operations.

A survey summary was then prepared from the original response slips, and the results grouped in the four categories listed below:

1. The 156 work operations were categorized under thirty general subjects. For example, "How to deploy on prowler calls" was listed under the general subject "Field Deployment."
2. The thirty general subjects were listed in alphabetical order. After each subject and each work operation, the number of responses was tabulated to show, in addition to a total count, the level of authority from which the response came.
3. The subjects were listed in order of numerical response frequency.
4. Each work operation was listed in order of response frequency.

It was found that the numerical intensity of individual work operations ranged from one to sixty-six responses. However, mere numerical intensity was not always a valid indication of the need for training. This was especially true in the lower range. For example, "How to roll fingerprints" was listed as a problem by only one person. In checking the source of this response, it was found that the one person who indicated "How to roll fingerprints" as a problem was the Commander of Records and Identification Division. Obviously this man was in a position to indicate competently that training was needed on this particular problem.

The survey also showed that in many cases people on a command level were not aware of the problems of the men in the field. For example, while many policemen wanted to know "How to make a traffic accident investigation", only a few sergeants indicated this as a problem. No response on this point was received from lieutenants, captains, or higher ranks.

Examining the source of the response made it obvious that in many cases the field officers and their supervisors were not aware of things that the specialized and technical people consider to be problems in the work of the field officers. By the same token, it was indicated that the specialized and technical people in many cases had failed to communicate clearly the methods for proper procedures and techniques to the field officer. While in a situation such as this, allowances must be made for subjects dictated by administrative decision, in most cases when an officer on a higher level had indicated that a problem should be covered, it was found that this same problem was indicated in the survey and was scheduled as a subject for training.

Through careful evaluation of the survey material, a tentative curriculum was developed to cover a period to the end of the fiscal year—June 30, 1949.

Because of the limitations of time in a fifteen-minute roll call training period, the approach was conditioned by the fact that conventional methods of curriculum planning could not be used. In the usual teaching situation, a subject is ordinarily covered thoroughly in its logical development from beginning to end. It was felt that, if a maximum number of problems were to be covered in the training year, a fragmentary approach must be used, and that it would be possible to do only a "trouble-shooting" job.

By July 1, 1948, the Field Training Unit, at this time consisting of the sergeant, two policemen, and a stenographer, started to develop subject material to cover the proposed curriculum. Most naturally in attempting to get answers to the policemen's knotty problems, the staff first checked existing literature. It was found, with rare exceptions, that existing literature in the law enforcement field did not cover typical problems of the field officers. This is no reflection on the fine material that does exist on law enforcement subjects. It does indicate, however, that much of this material has been written, not by policemen, but by others who were more interested in the technical, legal, and administrative aspects of police work. It is a clear indication that, generally, the experts in the law enforcement field have thus far shirked their responsibility of recording valuable information for others in the field.

In addition to the dearth of police texts, it was found that existing Department manuals and orders did not adequately cover many of the policeman's procedural problems. The fact that this policy and procedure was not known by many officers indicated the need for effective communication.

While existing literature in general did not answer many of the policeman's problems, it was found that local experts were a valuable source of information. In many cases one expert could furnish valid answers. As an example, the Chief Forensic Chemist could be accepted as an authority on the proper marking of physical evidence. In those cases where the information given by an expert was of a controversial nature, the research man worked with two or three persons on the same problem and set up a cross fertilization of ideas that usually resulted in sound conclusions.

In many cases there was no one expert who could supply certain information. This situation existed especially in the field of Deployment and Tactics. Here again it was found that valuable information was accessible within the Department. When the need was indicated for information on the controversial problem

of "How to deploy properly on a 'Burglar There Now' call", a conference group of men who had been most successful in handling this situation was assembled. Such a conference group was "milked" of valuable information that was well accepted by the rest of the Department.

There were and still are many problems for which answers cannot be obtained from books, experts, or conference groups. To face the issue in these cases, it was necessary to perform original research work. For example, "How to drive an emergency vehicle" is a subject which required information regarding limitations on the audibility of the siren. To gather this information, the Field Training Unit worked in collaboration with the Chief Radio Technician of the Department, and a physicist from the University of California at Los Angeles, performing experiments under field conditions which indicated some of the limitations of the siren as a warning device.

In order to insure authenticity, a policy was adopted which required that, before publication, all of the information be carefully checked for correctness, and revised when necessary by the concerned experts. It must be further checked, revised if necessary, and approved by the Commander of the Training Division, the Director of the Personnel and Training Bureau, and the Chief of Police or the Assistant Chief of Police.

In recording the material, two factors were of primary consideration. For the officers, it was to be put into a form for study and reference; for the instructor, into a form to assist in teaching.

The instructor's material was designed to contain four main parts: (1) The scope, indicating material contained in preceding and subsequent bulletins; (2) introductory material, designed to assist the instructor in obtaining the interest of the class; (3) a step-by-step coverage of the subject matter; and (4) suggested verbal quiz material, based upon the lesson.

For the officer this same material, with the exception of the scope and the suggested verbal quiz, was, and is now, produced in attractive format as a *Daily Training Bulletin*. The bulletin has a distinctive masthead, and is cleverly illustrated by our Policeman-artist, Jack Dederick. Considerable thought is given to the illustrations, and they usually depict the key points of the lesson, thus supplementing the oral presentation and encouraging subsequent study by the individual officers.

The *Daily Training Bulletins* are printed on 8½" by 11" paper, punched to fit a standard, three-ring notebook. Sufficient copies are made for each officer of this Department. Following

the presentation of a lesson by a supervisor-instructor, the bulletins are distributed.

While these Bulletins, themselves, are worthwhile, it was realized that maximum returns could not be expected unless a competent staff of supervisors was available for teaching the material. Although many of our experienced supervisors, without formal training in teaching techniques, were doing an effective job of instruction in the decentralized, uncoordinated training program, it was felt that their effectiveness would be increased if a short course in Teacher Training was given. At the request of this Department, Mr. Samuel L. Fick, Chief of the Bureau of Trade and Industrial Education of the California State Department of Education, assigned Melvin Barlow, Ed.D., to assist in the Teacher Training program.

The objective was to train ninety supervisory officers by October 18, 1948. Dr. Barlow developed a short sixteen-hour course for groups of fifteen men. He also arranged for the services of Mr. Lee Ralston, Director of Trade and Industrial Education for the Los Angeles County Schools Department, and Mr. John P. Peper, Supervisor of Peace Officers' Training, State Department of Education. Through the cooperation of these three men, over one hundred supervisors were trained in these basic Teacher Training courses by the date specified. The four-step plan of teaching was taught. It was grasped readily and used effectively by the supervisors.

This program included the training of higher ranking, as well as the first level, supervisors. Seventeen captains, thirty-two lieutenants, and one hundred and thirty sergeants have been trained at this writing. It was observed that, in most cases, the experienced police supervisor made an excellent instructor on police subjects. He is often able to strengthen the material furnished him by citing experiences, observations, and cases from his own background.

On October 18, 1948, the coordinated Roll Call Training Program was put into operation. Each of the twelve uniform patrol divisions, the traffic divisions, the Juvenile Division, the Metropolitan Division, the Personnel Division, and the Training Division participated. In these divisions, daily fifteen-minute classroom teaching sessions are conducted. It is felt at this time that this type of program is not practicable in those other divisions which are engaged in investigative or functional service operations because of the size of the groups, the staggered hours of reporting, and the difficulties in assembling members of the watches. However *Daily Training Bulletins* are distributed to

every officer in each of these other divisions, so that he can maintain a personal file. Informal discussion groups are also encouraged.

At the present time fifty-five watches in nineteen divisions are conducting the Training Program. This means that the classroom teaching is reaching in excess of twenty-nine hundred officers.

The instructor's material is accompanied by a weekly training schedule which is prepared and distributed by the Field Training Unit. The training week is usually divided as follows: three days for teaching of new material; two days for review and discussion, and two days for special divisional problems. One training session a month is devoted to the taking of an examination. This standard examination is prepared by the Field Training Unit, and is based upon material taught during the previous month. Watch, divisional, and city-wide averages are tabulated. This information assists in the evaluation of the training performance of the various divisions and watches.

The keystone to the success of the Field Training Program is that it has kept in close touch with the needs, feelings, and reactions of the field officers, thus giving them a feeling that they are actually participating.

One of the best methods of stimulating this feeling is a discussion of problems with the supervisors attending the Teacher Training sessions. These relationships are further developed when a Field Training Unit Instructor-Counselor visits the divisions participating in Roll Call Training. He is able to consult with the supervisor-instructor regarding teaching problems and to get the reaction of the policemen to the training program.

Considerable effort is made to procure criticism and evaluation of the program from participating divisions. To further this end, a suggestion sheet was devised. This form makes it easy for any supervisor to record his observations and feelings regarding the training material. When these sheets are returned to the Field Training Unit, prompt action is taken to rectify any mistake or make any improvements indicated. The main criticism received to date, however, reads, "You should have started this program ten years ago".

Since the inauguration of the Roll Call Training, many benefits have been reflected throughout the entire organization. Roll Call Training helps the individual field officer meet his everyday problems. He knows that he has dictated much of the curriculum. He knows that the answers come from practical sources, and he gets the needed answers to his problems with a minimum of delay.

While the quality of teaching by the police supervisors varies, those who have taken their new role seriously state that they are learning more than their students. Through preparation for teaching assignments, instructors gain a new insight into police problems and are broadening their field of information. By teaching at roll call, a good instructor establishes rapport with his men. It is observed that in many cases the policemen are "grading" their supervisors by the quality of instruction. Many supervisors have reported that their field supervision tasks have been made easier in those fields which have been covered in Roll Call Training.

Roll Call Training helps the division commander "get across" policy and procedure to his men. He now has at his disposal a device which *teaches* the answers to many of his problems.

Through the uncovering of field problems in a survey that covers all levels of the hierarchy, the police administrator is made aware of:

1. Areas in which no clear-cut policy exists.
2. Areas of disagreement on interpretation of policy by persons in positions of command. (This becomes obvious during the development of material on a particular problem.)
3. Areas where existing policy is not being followed.
4. Areas where existing policy is not workable.

After completing a particularly difficult assignment, a Field Training Unit research man recently remarked, "No wonder the policeman is confused; the people up topside haven't made up their minds yet".

At this early date, it is not possible to prove the worth of Field Training by "cold" statistics. It is felt, however, that after more time a statistical analysis on certain subjects will indicate, to some degree, the effectiveness of Roll Call Training. At the present time the conclusion that it is an effective program has been drawn mainly from the enthusiastic acceptance by the people participating in the program and from reports of those in specialized functions, who after seeing their information taught in training sessions and training bulletins, observed a desired change in behavior of the concerned officers.

Despite this enthusiastic response, a certain degree of conservatism must be applied in approaching this program. After hearing of our program, one police administrator recently remarked, "This is *the* answer to my training problem. I won't have to bother with these other schools. I'll just set up Roll Call Training". It is not felt that this is actually the case, but rather that Roll Call Training is now a desirable adjunct to the other conventional types of training.

Roll Call Training cannot take the place of induction training, which must be used for: (1) Indoctrination, (2) basic background material, (3) physical conditioning, and (4) initial observation and discipline inculcation.

Roll Call Training does not take the place of retraining, where the men get: (1) Re-evaluation of their jobs and their place in the public service picture, (2) physical conditioning, and (3) retraining in field subjects that do not lend themselves to Roll Call Training.

Roll Call Training does not take the place of specialized training, where a man gets specific information on how to do a specialized job and the philosophy of the specialized work.

Neither can Roll Call Training take the place of supervisory or command conferences. That training is on an entirely different level. It is considered, however, that for a large department, Roll Call Training is essential in "bridging the gap" between centralized training periods in an officer's career.

"Professionalization" is a word that is used loosely in law enforcement circles. One requirement of professionalization is the mastery by the individual of a complete body of knowledge regarding the field. We feel that this knowledge is not well developed within the law enforcement group. Until this is done, we are deluding ourselves in using the term, "profession", for our group as a whole. It is true that there are professional policemen within law enforcement groups. One of the functions of Roll Call Training is to pass on part of the vast body of professional knowledge that should be possessed by all law enforcement officers who serve the public. It will not be accomplished this year, nor next year, but it is a constant goal.