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POLICE SCIENCE

STATE ACADEMIES FOR POLICE

CHARLES F. SLOANE

Charles F. Sloane, Senior Personnel Technician (Police Examinations), has since 1949 been in charge of the police examining unit of the New York State Department of Civil Service. Prior to this Mr. Sloane was active in various phases of policing. He was a New York Police trooper for eleven years and the Chief of Police at the U. S. Naval Training Station, Sampson, New York, and later for the city of Cortland, New York.—EDITOR.

Crime is Making the Headlines!

Crime, on the verge of getting out of control of police officials, is exacting its toll of twenty billion dollars or more each year from the American people, and this annual "take" is increasing yearly.

Crime, rampant for years in America and on a definite upswing for the past decade, has increased 20 per cent since 1950 and is outstripping our population growth 4 to 1.

The above facts have failed to arouse many of our police officials and most of our citizenry from their lethargy. It would seem, however, that the tocsin has sounded. When no less a person than the Police Commissioner of New York City publicly acknowledges that his police department is losing its fight against crime (and similar conditions existing in many other cities and communities), every thinking person in these United States should throw off the mantle of disinterest and carefully consider what the above conditions mean to him.

It is strange that we, so vitally interested in securing the best of any material object for ourselves and our families, setting the pace for the world in living standards—the best of medical care, social services, and educational systems—should have been satisfied with mediocrity in our police for so many years.

It is time that we settled for nothing less than the best police protection from criminals and their depredations. We have every right to expect efficient, honest, and intelligent effort from our police. Efficiency in police work can only be obtained by the selection of honest, intelligent, and well-adjusted personnel for positions in the police field *and* by the proper training of such personnel. Since adequate training for police officers exists in but few police organizations, should we be surprised that our police have been woefully weak in coping with our crime problems?

All of us want to protect our families and ourselves from the criminal. However, it is only a matter of logic that, as crime increases, the chances of you or your family escaping the attention of the mugger, the rapist, the killer, and the sex psychopath, is lessened. Every day increases the chances of you or your family being murdered, robbed, assaulted, or molested in some way, or your home burglarized; every day increases the opportunity for dope peddlers to infect your children with the horrible habit-producing drugs so skillfully sold under the eyes of our police. Thus, it is strange

that we, the American public, living in the greatest democracy in the world, take so little interest in our police. Dependent as we are on our police officers for the safety of our homes and our loved ones and realizing that these few men are the only force standing between us and a return to the Dark Ages, we have not taken the necessary time out from our onerous daily duties to make sure that every police officer appointed has been properly trained in the required knowledges of his position and has been thoroughly indoctrinated with the skills required of him.

What could be more important to any community than proper training of our police officers? Our legal machinery for the enforcement of the criminal law depends upon the alertness, efficiency, and positive action of our police. Lack of training in the art and science of police work results in poor law enforcement; and poor law enforcement results in more crime. This lack of proper training, therefore, is costing us more money because crime is an unnecessary expense to the taxpayers. Thus, if we trained our police and this training resulted in a reduction in crime, the end result would be not only a substantial saving in money but also a saving in anguish and heartache which always accompanies criminal activity.

The best deterrents to crime are the *prompt apprehension and prompt punishment* of the criminal. One of the specific duties of our police is the apprehension of criminals. A perusal of the recent issues of the Uniform Crime Reports, published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reveals the poor record of our police departments on that score. There can be no question that lack of proper, thorough training is responsible for this mediocre record set by our police. The prompt detection of crime and the prompt apprehension of the criminal not only prevents the criminal from continuing his depredations unmolested, but permits the courts, the probation office, our penal institutions, the parole office, and social agencies the opportunity to deal with the criminal which is not the case if the criminal remains free.

Adequate, thorough, full-time recruit police training, following the careful selection of candidates is soon reflected in the lowered crime rates of any city or municipality. The attempts made to train our police in in-service training schools; held sporadically with sessions of two to three hours a day for several days (with attendance at the sessions the only criteria for receiving diplomas), is a totally inadequate method of teaching policework. If any value were obtained from this method of training, certainly our professional schools teaching medicine, pharmacy, and engineering would have availed themselves of this method. In-service training schools, staffed with competent instructors can be of value to police departments in imparting various skills and knowledges to men *after* proper indoctrination into the police field via full-time, comprehensive recruit training schools, if proper safeguards are maintained at such sessions and diplomas awarded only to those candidates who successfully pass written examinations.

Since police recruit training is a necessity in order to successfully perform the arduous duties required in the police field, how best can this be done? How can *all* police recruits appointed to police positions in every city, county, town, or village receive the basic training needed? The only reasonable solution is for the various states to create training schools for police, *conducted by each state* and manned by competent instructor personnel drawn from police departments, colleges, and private

industry. The state is the logical level at which training for our police should be given since the largest function of any municipal police department, and certainly the most fundamental one, is the enforcement of laws passed by the state. In the enforcement of these laws, police officers are actually and directly working as state agents, thus clearly placing the responsibility for their training upon the state.

Economically, both the municipality and the state will benefit from a program such as this. The municipality benefits through the increased morale within the police department since a well-trained man is a confident and efficient one. Material saving to the community is shown by the fact that one well-trained man can do the work now performed by several men. Where the untrained man may fumble, make costly mistakes and, in general, so confuse enforcement problems that loss of prestige and morale within the department reflects upon the entire community, the trained man can perform his duties quickly, efficiently, and economically.

Private industry has time and again demonstrated and proved that carefully trained employees frequently do better work than more experienced employees and that carefully trained employees, after several years of experience, outperform those with the same amount of experience but with no fundamental basic training.

Too frequently in police circles, dependence has been placed on the older, supposedly more experienced man to train the recruit in the duties and responsibilities involved. Inasmuch as neither have had training in police work, the supposedly experienced officer passes on to the recruit inaccuracies in observations, judgment, decision, and action. Experience is a wonderful teacher. Yes! But the wrong kind of experience is worse than no experience at all. The best combination, the combination having the greatest value in the police field, is that of proper recruit training followed by experience in actual job performance under the guidance and supervision of men trained and experienced in their work. *The combination is unbeatable.*

With capable well-trained personnel, police departments will cease their constant cry of "we need more police", since mere numbers of inadequately trained men are not the solution to the ever-increasing crime problem. The saving for the municipality is in the operating costs of the department, since salaries of the personnel are the largest item of any police budget. The state benefits through the increased prestige of the police within the state and through the uniformity of enforcement of local and state laws. A police academy would, through observations and tests, weed out the weak and those not fitted for police positions because of attitudes and temperament. A police academy need not stop at training recruits. Its establishment and use for the very important phase of "recruit training", may easily be tuned to the training of supervisory police personnel and may be advanced to the point where Command personnel can receive training in the proper administration of police departments. The pattern for such training is not new. For years, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in its careful selection of personnel from the ranks of attorneys and accountants, sends them to its training school for a twelve-week period before they are fully accredited as Special Agents. In addition, in-service training continues at regular intervals for as long as the agent remains in the Bureau. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, after careful selection of personnel, require attendance at its training school located at Regina, Saskatchewan, for a six-month period before becoming

fully accredited. England, Scotland, Wales, and the majority of the European countries train their police in such schools. The results of such training are readily discerned in lower crime rates and greater prestige of their police. Our famous New York State Police, with a reputation second to none in police circles, requires every recruit to attend the State Police School and successfully complete the six-week long extensive training course. This comprehensive recruit training is reflected in the respect and esteem in which this splendid police organization is held by the people of that state.

What are some of the weaknesses of our police departments? A list of such weaknesses can be lengthy, but let us enumerate a few. Do you live in a city or community where it is common knowledge, that persons arrested for crimes committed, are beaten up by the police? There are too many police departments in the United States whose reputations are unsavory, for the local hospitals have had to patch up prisoners who, presumably, "fell down stairs" or "fell out of the car" or "attempted to escape". Too many confessions have been wrung out of prisoners by third degree methods, to give our police anything but a brutal reputation. Remember, always, that this may happen to you upon committing even a minor infraction. Untrained police frequently resort to physical violence and brutality in order to wring a confession from the person arrested, rather than spend a little time making a thorough investigation into the matter and properly securing the evidence which would either give sufficient proof of guilt or would prove the innocence of such a person. Have you ever called your police department for immediate assistance (most people call a police department only as a last resort) and after waiting from five to twenty minutes for the arrival of the prowler car, have a surly, abusive patrolman condescendingly listen to your complaint? Any well-trained and efficient police department should respond to a call for assistance, at any time of the day or night, within two minutes of the time the call is made. Too many of our police believe that they are doing us a favor by even responding to our call for aid, information, or assistance. Have you ever reported a burglary or larceny to your police department, and upon contacting the department some months later to ascertain what has been done, learn that headquarters has no record of your report? These and many other such instances are clear indicators of poor police administration, poor selection of personnel, and poor, inadequate training.

What should we expect of our police? We certainly have every right to expect a police department to give decent, considerate treatment to every person under the jurisdiction of the department, whether he is a citizen making a complaint, or a drunk found in the street. Both are entitled to a fair, square deal.

Proper training in the fundamentals of police work gives the police officer poise in his contacts with the public since we know that when a public officer is rude, vindictive, loud, or abusive, he is displaying such an attitude because of ignorance and lack of confidence. Training breeds confidence, therefore we should see to it that our police are properly trained.

Let us take just one facet, one single aspect of police training, and carefully analyze the facts. Of all people in a community, who could have a more urgent need for actual and practical training in fast, effective revolver shooting, than our police? Do our

police get this training? They do not! Our police do not receive training in the use of firearms under conditions that in any way simulate the actual conditions that exist when an emergency arises under which shooting must be done. In fact, very few police departments give their men any training whatsoever. If training is given at all, it is the slow fire training on stationary, bulls-eye targets, which is little better than no training at all.

We laugh at an entire police department when a police officer, in an emergency, has drawn his revolver, shot at a burglar, and missed completely, permitting the felon to escape. We forget that the burglar may come back to try his nefarious pursuits again. We are quick to criticize when police, in shooting it out with desperados, shoot an innocent passerby because of bullets going astray of their intended mark. To criticize is an inherent American tradition, and such criticism is healthy since it shows interest, but to criticize and yet do nothing to correct the faults seems to be our present way of doing things.

The revolver that has been issued to members of your police department, or that the member had had to furnish himself in order to protect you, is a deadly weapon. It would seem that upon issue of a weapon, an officer would want to learn how to use it. However, police officers are like the majority of citizens. The average police officer, once he is issued his firearm, seldom takes the weapon out of its holster. There are many reasons for this disinterest. Some officers are afraid of a firearm for the simple reason that they have never become friendly and familiar with it; and even though one day their life or your life may depend upon their familiarity with their revolver and their ability to shoot accurately and rapidly with it, they do not seem to care. Others, finding that they have little skill in shooting, consider it too much of a chore to improve their skill.

There is one police organization in the United States that gives its recruits many weeks of firearms training. It requires that each and every agent qualify in small arms shooting before becoming fully accredited. Not only must he qualify in the beginning, but monthly, throughout his career with this organization, he must run the gamut of the entire course and qualify as a marksman. The shooting done by this organization is not of the slow fire type wherein the officer can take minutes to fire a shot at a bulls-eye. It is a rapid fire course requiring speed of limb and eye and a steady nerve to complete successfully. Since it is the policy of this organization to train successfully in firearms, their record, because of this thoroughness, speaks for itself. There is no police organization today that can, man for man, match the agents of the F.B.I. in marksmanship. Certainly, if rapid fire shooting were not insisted upon by the Director of this organization, its men would have the same attitude toward firearms as the average police officer in the average police department.

In the majority of instances, a police officer must shoot at a moving target, a rapidly moving one at that, for an officer does not shoot anyone who stands still. He only shoots when a criminal is escaping, is drawing a gun, or is committing some overt act. When a criminal is committing an overt act, he is far from being a motionless object. He is a moving indistinct target and is either in the dark where neither he nor the sights of the police officer's gun is visible, or in a rapidly moving car trying to get away, or else just rounding a corner or making his escape through a crowded

street. It is unfortunate but true that the law gives a criminal the first shot at a policeman. The policeman cannot begin shooting before he has tried to make an arrest quietly, and yet, the mere fact that he is approaching the criminal, puts the criminal on guard. Thus, the criminal has ample time to either shoot, surrender, or run away.

Wouldn't you, if you were in the officer's place, wish that you had had the opportunity to receive training in the art of double-action, snap, and hip shooting? An officer's life may depend upon the accuracy and speed with which he can draw and fire his gun. Accuracy is sacrificed to some extent for speed, but since most gun battles in the field of law enforcement are fought well within a distance of 20 yards, it is possible, through training and practice, to become proficient in snap-shooting and firing double-action so that any officer can repeatedly hit a target the size of a man up to a distance of 20 yards. Police badly need this type of training. Shooting as a sport, at the bulls-eye, does not train a man for the type of combat shooting he must do when confronted with a situation on a busy street, intersection, congested area, or a pitch-dark alley.

The art of rapid revolver shooting is but one phase in the proper training of a police officer. Every police officer must be thoroughly trained in every phase of his work since police work requires the breadth and depth of learning comparable to the professions. An officer should have some knowledge of the history of police, for without it how can he take pride in being a law enforcement officer? He should know his responsibility to the federal, state, and local constitutions, for it is through this knowledge that he realizes the responsibilities that are inherent in his position; he should have some knowledge of police organization and administration since his position is the very foundation of such organization, of the ideals and ethics of police service, in order to give him pride in his service and the esprit de corps so necessary to military organizations. He must be thoroughly familiar with criminal law (since he is the enforcer), with the laws of arrest and search and seizure because he frequently must resort to this knowledge in enforcement and a lack of this knowledge permits the criminal to go free. He must have some knowledge of the psychology of mobs and crowds since it is his duty to suppress or disperse such gatherings. He should have a thorough knowledge of the art and science of criminal investigation and the potential evidence resources of every crime scene since the early solving of a crime prevents further crime. He should be thoroughly versed in the laws of arrest and of the general administration of justice since mistakes made in this area are detrimental to the prestige of a police department and detrimental to the public he serves. He must know what assistance the scientific crime detection laboratory can render when he needs such help, and he must know what evidence to look for and how to preserve such evidence in proper condition, and he must know the rules of evidence. The police officer must be thoroughly familiar with the rules of traffic and with traffic law enforcement. He must understand how to investigate an accident, a burglary, or any of the diversified crimes committed daily. He must be thoroughly versed in the fundamentals of courtesy and public relations since the reputation and prestige of his department depends on the proper and courteous handling of the public. He must practice the best techniques for patrolling on foot and in patrol.

cars, for crime can be prevented by constant vigilance and alertness on patrol. He must know first aid since he is usually at the scene of an accident before the arrival of medical assistance. He must be well versed in hand-to-hand combat and thoroughly familiar with the techniques of arrest and the search of a person. He must be thoroughly familiar in the techniques used to dislodge criminals from hideouts, barricaded rooms, and houses. He must know some of the basic drives of the juvenile since crime among the teenagers is increasing by leaps and bounds, and he must, above all other matters, be thoroughly familiar and versed in as much knowledge as possible about criminals themselves, for the criminal is a police officer's most important assignment.

As a step in the right direction, citizens and interested police officials should pioneer in the police field and create the interest needed among legislators in order to establish state-wide training of its police officers by the establishment of State Academies for Police. This would bring about a new era for the police departments throughout the United States.¹

¹The views expressed in this article are the personal opinions of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the New York State Department of Civil Service.