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POLICE SCIENCE

POLICE TRAINING FACILITIES AND TRAINING PERSONNEL

THOMAS M. FROST

Since 1946 the author has been a member of the Chicago Police Department and is presently assigned as an instructor in the Police Training Division. Mr. Frost has recently received a Master of Social and Industrial Relations degree from Loyola University, Chicago. His present article is based upon a chapter of his master's thesis, which dealt with various aspects of police training. In the May-June 1955 issue of this Journal his article, "Selection Methods for Police Recruits," appeared.—
EDITOR.

Not so many years ago police training programs were hastily arranged affairs accomplished by spontaneously assigning a few veteran police officers to the task of informing a group of police recruits the functions of their job. It was not uncommon to find this instruction being given in a dirty squad room located in the rear of a local station. Generally, the academic phase consisted of dictating a series of questions and answers which were to be memorized by the students.

The method commonly employed consisted of the repetition of a crime definition in two or three different forms of phraseology and recitations by the students. Crimes were dealt with in alphabetical order and without reference to some of their intimate relationship.¹

This program was augmented by a physical conditioning program often accomplished only after borrowing boxing gloves and other athletic equipment from local parks or schools. At the termination of this indoctrination, the instructors were sent back to their regular assignments, and the training program dissolved until such time as another group of police recruits was assembled.

Today, the police departments throughout the nation maintain a healthy and more sensible attitude toward police indoctrination. The police leaders of the United States are cognizant of the value of good police training and fully realize the importance that proper facilities have toward making education a successful operation. This attitude is expressed by Chief Macklenburg of Charlotte, North Carolina.

It has been said, and it is true, that you get what you pay for. Nowhere is the application of these words more applicable than in law enforcement.

Municipal, county, and state officials who control the purse strings are not blind to a well-planned, periodically executed in-service training program which develops better officers. They want to see results, get public reaction to the department, know that their police are respected for the way they do the job, not feared because of their authority.

It works both ways, when the individual is properly trained for his job, or improperly trained. The individual reflects credit, or discredit on the department, and the department does the same for the individual.²

¹ The Citizens' Police Committee, *Chicago Police Problems*, Chicago, 1931, 80.

² *Federal Bureau of Investigation Bulletin*, vol. 19, no. 2, p. 16.

This modern attitude is further exemplified by the fact that many of the cities have established a training unit within their own department. It is the purpose of this training unit to organize and conduct all phases of police training needed by its department. The following criteria have been proposed to determine and measure the efficiency of the training programs.

Experience in the organization and operation of the training programs in a great variety of occupations furnished justification for the statement that successful programs, those which are accomplishing the purposes for which they were set up, possess certain characteristics. These are as follows:

1. The group enrolled in the training program should be properly selected.³
2. The instructor should be competent not only from the standpoint of knowledge and skill in his field but also from the stand-point of his ability to teach what he knows.
3. The course of study should be based on functioning subject matter.
4. The working conditions should be sufficiently favorable to make it possible to do a good job:
 - A. Heterogeneous out—homogeneous in.
 - B. Experience in the active field in order to have knowledge of the subject matter adds respect from the students and makes the task easier. In addition to police experience, the instructor should know enough about training methods and techniques to be able to do a good job.
 - C. Course of study should be determined by need and not by guess. Conduct job analysis.
 - D. Favorable working conditions include—size of student group, time allotted for training, facilities available including visual aids.

To illustrate the importance of these factors, it may be pointed out that a properly selected group, with a thoroughly qualified instructor with a suitable course of study would never accomplish much if favorable working conditions are lacking. Lacking freedom from interference and opportunity to give continuous attention to the consideration of an important problem it would be impossible for him to function in an efficient manner.⁴

Considering the idea expressed above, what facilities would be absolutely necessary to establish "favorable working conditions"? Fundamentally the facilities are four:

1. *Classroom*: standard classrooms, number necessary determined by the size of the department. Each classroom should conform to recognized educational standards as to light, sound, etc. In addition basic visual aids should be available.

2. *Gymnasium*: an area properly suited and equipped to give the officers a thorough physical conditioning program. This area should be so designed that it could be used also as a drill floor.

3. *Pistol Range*: adequate facilities to accommodate four to six shooters simultaneously. The range should be equipped with exhaust fans strategically located, electrically operated targets, a public address system, and a safety glass partition between firing line and spectators' area.

4. *Library*: a room set aside conducive to reading and supplied with elementary

³ This aspect of the study was fully treated in "Selection Methods for Police Recruits," *Journal of Crim. Law, Criminol., and Pol. Sci.*, vol. 46, no. 1, May-June, 1955, pp. 135-45.

⁴ United States Office of Education, *Training For the Police Service*, Washington, D. C., p. 18.

and advanced works of Police Science, State Statutes, and current law enforcement periodicals.

Ordinarily such Utopian criteria are only to be found in the head of a criminologist or sociologist; consequently, it was quite enlightening to learn that several cities have already taken the proper steps to further police training. Among these are: Baltimore, Kansas City, Los Angeles, and Seattle.

On the other hand, a perusal of the data submitted by the responding cities shows that several of the police departments are still not too well established in terms of training facilities. The data shows that some cities are still compelled to resort to a make-shift arrangement or omit some aspect of the training. This fact is even more startling when we consider that the twenty-three responding cities have an aggregate population of over twenty-six million people and have in excess of 52,320 law enforcement officers.

In a previous article⁵, the author pointed out that all cities demand that police applicants be subjected to a thorough medical examination and a strenuous physical performance test. Yet only seven out of eighteen cities provide their officers with facilities to keep in the good physical condition which the department demands. This is indeed astounding when we realize that police officers are engaged in a profession where physical conditioning is an essential requisite to good job performance. Some cities have attempted to overcome this deficiency by borrowing gymnasium facilities from the city school system, from the National Guard, from the Y.M.C.A., or from some other private agency.

Among the responding cities, only ten are equipped with a police department library where police officers can go from time to time to keep abreast of the current advancements in the legal and law enforcement professions.

The only facility which all cities possess is the firing range. However, even in this category not all department heads are satisfied with their range's suitability. In the over-all picture, the responding cities appeared better equipped in this category of police training equipment than any other. Five cities, i.e., Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Kansas City, have outdoor firing ranges in addition to the standard inside variety. Cincinnati has its range located in Lockland, some twelve miles from Cincinnati proper, and it includes among other things, housing facilities so the recruits remain at the range for an entire week of intensive training in firearms.

Boston, Los Angeles, and Louisville have modern ranges. The outdoor range of the Los Angeles Department has forty-two firing positions on its standard target range and six positions on its combat range. The range at Louisville has fifty firing positions. The Chicago Department has just completed a twenty-seven thousand dollar remodeling program of its Central District range. The new range is equipped with six firing positions, the targets are operated mechanically by the range master at the control panel and a glass partition separates the shooters and visitors.

Undoubtedly, the most essential and elementary piece of equipment of any school is the classroom. It is the core of the school, the place where most of the teaching is done. Perhaps this is why all the cities, with the exception of one, were able to state that they had classroom facilities.

⁵ Opus cited note 2.

The larger cities, i.e., Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Seattle, have two or more classrooms. This is probably due to two reasons: first, a larger number of recruits per class; and, second, these departments need classrooms to provide space for in-service training which is found to be rather continuous in most of these cities.

Although at first reflection it may seem that too many of the police departments are compelled to borrow facilities of outside agencies, in the interest of fairness the extent and degree of borrowing should be weighed against three essential considerations: first, the number of officers trained per year; second, the duration of the training program; and, third, the efficiency of the total program considered in terms of borrowed equipment. For example, if a particular city hires less than fifty men per year, and the training program is less than two months in duration; perhaps the borrowing of a well-equipped gymnasium would be justified as an economy measure provided the borrowed gymnasium does not hamper the training program, i.e., if the gymnasium is too far from the police classrooms, too much time may be lost traveling from one place to the other.

As the size of the police force increases the justification for borrowing diminishes correspondingly. Any city having a police force of five hundred officers should have a fully equipped police school.

In order to justify borrowing, the following factors must be considered: the training program must not be impaired, the borrowed facility must blend in harmoniously with the rest of the program, and there must be certainty that the facility will always be available for the training program. If any of these three elements are sacrificed in the interest of economy, the continued and future safety of the community is being seriously jeopardized. The government's responsibility to safeguard the community is a stronger duty than its efforts to reduce expenses and lower taxes. Basically, there can be no such thing as cheap police protection for what is considered saved by cheap training programs may well be lost a hundred times over by a high crime rate.

POLICE INSTRUCTORS

There is a premise found in the Philosophy of Education which cautions that if the students are not learning it may be due to the ineptness of the teachers rather than the mentality of the students. This writer has seen veteran police officers attempt to teach a group of police recruits by relating exciting and stimulating episodes from their police careers. Indeed, it was an enjoyable respite from the rigors of the school routine, but the instructors accomplished nothing insofar as teaching is concerned. This situation merely illustrates that a police instructor must be more than an experienced police officer, he must be a teacher as well.

It would be a simple matter to state that all police instructors should be college graduates and possess teacher's certificates. Although it would be beneficial if the instructors had these qualities, one must never lose sight of the impracticality of such an idea at this time. In this particular field of education, active job experience is just as essential as formal academic training. In fact, because of low financial remuneration, limited chance of promotion, and strong community disrespect for police officers—which keep many promising qualified persons from joining—it is rather dubious if the aforementioned criteria can be employed at the present time.

Perusal of the answers from the responding cities shows that no unified standards exist. In general, it seems to be a question of whether the selectivity is to be premised on the basis of formal education, actual and active police experience, years of service, military background, or his rank. Although these are all essential points to consider when qualifications are set, it is not known which point takes precedence over others.

In the professional teaching field recognized standards are established, and a prospective teacher must meet these requirements before being accepted. Although there is some slight variance from state to state, in essence the requirements are uniform throughout the country. Analysis of the data acquired by this writer shows that no such unification of teaching qualifications exists among police instructor staffs even though the qualifications are few in number and broad in meaning. For example, some cities report that their instructors are college trained. However, further clarification is necessary because the standard does not say whether the training was for four weeks, four months, or four years. It also fails to indicate whether the course was a specialized course or a general college course.

The qualifications for a police instructor have been aptly expressed by Mr. Gordon H. Sheehy:

Enthusiastic, industrious, well qualified instructors capable of inspiring students providing leadership, developing good habits and necessary skills, and imparting information needed by the students are also part of the list of essentials.⁶

In the questionnaire, the question was posed, "What training and background are needed to qualify an officer to be a police instructor?" In almost all cities, the selecting and appointing of police instructors was done by the commanding officer of the police school. Although there was some variance in the answers, most commanding officers took into consideration the applicant's formal education, his rank, years of service, sincere desire to teach, and whether or not the officer had a military background.

The second query asked, "What amount of education do your instructors possess?" In seven cities, Berkeley, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Louisville, Newark, and Philadelphia, all or some of the instructors were college graduates. In three cities, Baltimore, Chicago, and Los Angeles, some of the instructors were college trained but not graduates. Baltimore, Chicago, Louisville, Newark, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh have instructors who graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Police School in Washington, D. C. The departments of Buffalo, Louisville, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh have instructors who graduated from Northwestern University's Traffic Institute.

In the main, the training divisions are composed of a permanently assigned skeleton force augmented from time to time by temporary instructors detailed to the training units to assist in the training programs. The employment of temporary instructors gives rise to conflicting opinions as to the feasibility of this rotating system. The principal advantage of using temporary instructors is that during a recession in the training programs the temporary instructors can be reassigned to active police work. This serves to eliminate a waste of manpower during the non-training periods of the

⁶ *Traffic Institute Northwestern University*, "Police Training for Recruits and In-Service Personnel", December, 1949, p. 7.

year. On the other hand, under this system, the instructor never has a real sense of belonging as he is being shifted from one assignment to another and consequently is never permanently assigned. Because of this shifting, commanding officers tend to regard these officers as surplus and assign them to the most simple and routine police duties. Naturally, when such a condition exists it injures the morale of the officers affected. By the same token the efficiency of the training division is impaired by this constant alteration of training staff members.

In an efficient department there is little slack in training operations; consequently the training staff is continuously busy. However, a sound policy seems to require that a limited number of instructors be detailed to busy units for short periods of time in order to keep abreast of active police routine.

Although the creation of sound requirements for police instructors is highly admirable, the computation from this survey shows there are not more than 250 men permanently engaged in this work. Consequently, with such a small number of officers engaged in this work, about the only solution is to have a recognized police organization, i.e., International Association of Police Chiefs, create teacher qualifications and try to have the police departments incorporate them into the training of the police instructors.

CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to acquire insight into the procedures and policies employed by various law enforcement agencies in their selection and training of recruit police officers. On the basis of these findings, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Today, the essentialness of adequate training is fully realized by all police departments. Although the recognition of a need is one thing and satisfaction of it is another, this survey shows that the trend of the American Police system is toward constantly improving the level of police selectivity and training. Some departments have separate buildings and facilities that serve as police academies, while others are planning for a similar arrangement. Almost every police department in the principal cities of this country have a permanent staff assigned as police instructors.

2. In order to be a competent police instructor, an officer should have a rather advanced amount of academic training (two years of college should be the minimum) some teaching experience if possible, or some instruction in the rudiments of teaching, plus several years of actual and active police experience.

The insistence of present day society for better law enforcement has culminated in a renaissance of the law enforcement profession. Years ago, police officers were appointed by politicians, the work day was endless, and the pay was low. The supposition seemed to be that the police officer was dishonest, and he could make a living wage by taking graft.

Today, times have changed. Although scandals, like taxes, will always be with us, the politician and the citizen know that the average police officer is an honest and sincere public servant who wants to be respected in the community. Because of this, the pay—though still inadequate—is rising slowly, the work week is being shortened, and graft is almost non-existent.

This renaissance has also spread to the field of police education. The emphasis is on better trained and better educated police officers. In addition to basic indoctrination, officers receive in-service training. Colleges and universities have joined with police departments in the training of police officers. Some schools, e.g., Indiana University, Ohio State University, Michigan State College, and San Jose State College, offer a full curriculum in police work and award a Bachelor's degree in Police Science.

Police education has made great strides since the pioneering efforts of Vollmer, Healy, and Smith. Here is a crisis faced clearly and honestly by the American Police departments which they solved to the satisfaction of themselves and to the welfare of the American people.