

The Evolution of the LASD Male Uniform

By Deputy Chris Miller (retired)

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In the Beginning

The Wild West years were in full swing when the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office was established in 1850. In those days, the Sheriff and his deputies did not wear uniforms, but dressed like everyone else. The only visible means of identifying a lawman was by his badge. Since everyone in town knew who he was, the Sheriff generally chose not to display his badge openly. Instead, it was worn inside the lapel, allowing him to reveal his identity only if it became necessary. When a stranger came into town, he could observe the person without drawing attention to himself, covertly determining if the newcomer was a law-abiding citizen or an outlaw. When groups of lawmen gathered to pursue an outlaw, they wore their badges openly for easy identification. This prevented them from shooting each other during a gun fight.

When a posse was needed to hunt down criminals, they were chosen from the townspeople. Any person who looked trustworthy and was willing to help, was deputized on the spot as the Sheriff pinned a badge on them. The law of *posse comitatus*, which allowed a deputy to deputize average citizens, was enacted in 1872 and is still in effect today.

The Need for Uniforms

The Los Angeles Aqueduct, the longest of its type in the world, was designed and built by William Mulholland in 1913. This amazing feat of engineering used gravity to move water over 200 miles, from the Owens Valley to Los Angeles. Since the population was growing rapidly and Southern California was prone to extended periods of drought, Mulholland decided to build the St. Francis Dam. The dam, which was located in Saugus at the narrowing of San Francisquito Canyon between powerhouse number one and number two, provided a large area where a reservoir of water could be stored.

On the morning of March 12, 1928, several leaks were discovered in the St. Francis Dam. Inspecting the leakage himself, Mulholland felt the problem was minor and not a concern but hours later, a few minutes before midnight, the dam collapsed. 12.4 billion gallons of water in a wall 120 feet high cascaded down arid San Francisquito Canyon. The deafening surge, traveling at 18 mph, destroyed everything in its path, reducing the heavy concrete structure of powerhouse no. 2 to rubble and killing 64 workmen and their families who lived nearby. The wave decimated the Southern California Edison Saugus Substation, leaving the entire Santa Clarita Valley and parts of the cities of Ventura and Oxnard without power. The town of Castaic Junction, nestled between State Route 126 and the current location of Magic Mountain Amusement Park, was washed away.

Although boulders, brush and other obstacles eventually reduced the height of the wave to 55 feet, it was no less destructive. A crew of 150 Edison Company workers was sent to repair the damage and restore power to the area. Unbeknownst to them, their temporary camp was directly in the path of the flood and, due to a miscommunication, were not warned to evacuate. The water struck the group, killing 84.

Santa Clara River Valley telephone operator Louise Gipe received a call that the St. Francis Dam had collapsed and a torrent of water was heading down the valley. Told to notify the authorities, she

immediately called California Highway Patrol Officer Thornton Edwards, who lived in nearby Santa Paula. Officer Edwards then contacted CHP Officer Stanley Baker to assist him in notifying residents.

At that time, the California Highway Patrol was not a law enforcement agency and did not carry weapons. Instead, they were a branch of the Automobile Club that helped disabled motorists and issued tickets for minor traffic violations. In early 1929, Undersheriff Eugene Biscailuz took a leave of absence from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office. On August 14 he became the first Superintendent of the California Highway Patrol, establishing it as an official state law enforcement agency and giving its officers police powers for the first time. Returning to the Sheriff's Office, Biscailuz eventually went on to lead the Department as Sheriff.

Although the CHP officers did not have police powers when the dam collapsed, they did have uniforms that made them look like police officers. They also rode motorcycles, which added to the official appearance. Officers Edwards and Baker crisscrossed the streets sounding their sirens and when the residents came out of their homes, they were told to evacuate.

It took 5 hours and 27 minutes for the two mile wide wall of water to travel 54 miles from the dam site to the ocean, killing 431 people in its path. Bodies were found in the Pacific Ocean all the way down to Mexico. Others, either washed away or buried under tons of mud and debris, were never recovered.

The area devastated by the flood was policed by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office. Deputies responded from all around to rescue victims, direct traffic and assist where they could as frantic people rushed to the scene in search of missing family members. Since the deputies did not wear uniforms, directing traffic and attempting to secure the area was incredibly frustrating because motorists and pedestrians didn't recognize them as law enforcement officers. The Los Angeles Police Department officers who had also been called in to assist had much greater success with people following orders due to the fact that they were in uniform and easily recognizable.

Prototype Uniforms

Due to the high concentration of people in small downtown areas, police departments in large urban areas adopted uniforms sooner than their rural counterparts. Uniforms not only allowed the officers to be easily seen while directing traffic, but the higher visibility was considered a deterrent to crime.

On the east coast, uniforms were first worn by Boston and Chicago police departments in 1858. On the west coast, the San Francisco Police Department began wearing uniforms in 1862, but the LAPD didn't begin wearing them on a daily basis until 1876. The Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, being spread over such a wide area, didn't feel the need to wear uniforms until major disasters brought an influx of people, requiring a need for easy identification.

After the difficulties encountered during the multi-agency involvement at the St. Francis Dam disaster, Sheriff William Traeger suggested requiring deputies to wear uniforms, and on October 21, 1932, the first prototype LASD uniform was unveiled at Temple Sheriff's Station. Fifteen deputies wearing the new uniform lined up in front of the station to be reviewed by Sheriff Traeger, Undersheriff Biscailuz and other Sheriff's officials. Two hundred spectators were also on hand as the deputies were inspected. The uniform's appearance was the same as the state's motor patrol officers with tall, black, English field boots and oversized coats. The coat had brass buttons which matched the brass buckle on the Sam

Browne belt. The hat displayed a cap piece with a gold eagle and star and the words “Los Angeles County Sheriff” along with the deputy’s badge number. The Sam Browne belt was worn along with a swivel holster. This holster was called the “widow-maker” because it swiveled when the deputy sat down and the gun would slide out. When a deputy got out of a patrol car, his gun would be left sitting on the seat. The largest complaint about these uniforms was the heavy, hot, inflexible material. The station captain, Sheriff’s officials working the station, and patrol deputies were required to wear the uniform, however investigators assigned as detectives could continue to wear plain clothes. Sheriff Traeger wanted deputies at all of the Sheriff’s stations to wear the new uniform, but there was such a backlash that the idea was dropped and these uniforms were never adopted.

New Uniforms

In January of 1932, Sheriff Traeger was replaced by Eugene Biscailuz as Sheriff. Biscailuz also saw a great need for uniforms. Over the next year, a variety of uniforms were researched until they finally came to an agreement: Green pants with a matching green shirt, black bow tie and a hat with an eagle-topped cap piece. It also included a Sam Browne belt with a shoulder strap to support it. A widow-maker holster, which held the revolver, was attached to the Sam Browne. By 1933, only four of the nine Sheriff’s substations had adopted the new uniform.

On January 19, 1933, Property Custodian G.D. Segelke sent out a teletype broadcast to every Los Angeles County Sheriff’s patrol station instructing all deputies and jail employees to purchase and begin wearing uniforms by May 1 in order to avoid a mandatory order to do so. The detailed teletype also included recommendations on purchasing uniforms from the manufacturer, Lilley Uniform Company in Ohio, for \$35.40. It further explained that uniforms could be financed for 10 percent by Municipal Guaranty Corporation, an organization of government employees which loaned money to city and county employees. As it turns out, Segelke just happened to be a member of their board of directors and Sheriff Biscailuz later clarified that the financing arrangement was not sanctioned by him.

On March 10, 1933 a 6.4 earthquake shook Long Beach. Buildings collapsed, water tanks fell through roofs and homes were moved off their foundations. Destruction extended from the epicenter all the way to downtown Los Angeles, even damaging the Red Sandstone Courthouse next to the Hall of Justice. Deputies rushed to the affected areas but when they arrived, those not wearing uniforms experienced the same problem encountered after the St. Frances Dam collapse; no one recognized them as law enforcement officers. It was hard to get people to follow their orders, which was not only frustrating, but added to the chaos. Sheriff Biscailuz saw the difference in public response to officers from other agencies and deputies in uniform, compared to the deputies working in civilian clothes. Those in uniform were respected and people readily followed their orders. It was definitely time to implement a change so on May 1, 1933, all deputies were mandated to wear uniforms. The uniform shirt was green with long sleeves, accented by a black bow tie. It did not have patches, but did have brass buttons with the Sheriff’s Department badge on them. The buttons were attached with spring clips so they could be removed before the shirt was sent to the cleaners. Matching green pants were worn with a black belt. A Sam Browne belt worn over the standard belt was attached with D rings in the front and back to secure the shoulder strap that supported the belt. A widow-maker holster and cuff case were attached to the Sam Browne. Deputies were required to purchase their own uniforms, Sam Browne belts, holsters, cuffs and revolvers. The only items issued to deputies were badges, identification cards and a cap piece for their hats.

Captain Sam Browne

During the 19th century it was common for army officers to wear a sword as part of their uniform. These swords were not just decorative, but were also the weapon used in battle. A British army officer named Sam Browne was serving in India and, like other officers, carried a sword which was inserted in a sheath that hung from a metal clip attached to his waistbelt. When they charged the enemy, the sheath would slide around on the belt and in order to draw the sword, it was necessary to hold the sheath in place with the left hand and draw the sword with the right.

An Injury That Motivated Change

Captain Sam Browne served with the 2nd Punjab Irregular Cavalry in India during the Indian Rebellion of 1857. On August 31, 1858 Captain Browne, who was involved in a battle near Seerporah, realized a cannon was being reloaded by the enemy and charged its crew. One of the cannon crew members saw him approach, drew his sword and attacked, cutting Brown's left knee and then swinging his sword again, severing Browne's left arm at the shoulder. Browne survived, but without a left hand he was unable to hold his sheath in place to draw his sword.

The Sam Browne Belt Was Created

Desperate to find a way to draw his sword with just one hand Browne realized that if he wore a wider, heavy leather belt over his existing waistbelt and stabilized it with a strap that went over his right shoulder, the sheath would be held in place without moving. The exterior belt could also be used to hold a binocular case as well as secure a pistol in a flap holster on his right hip.

The Belt was Adopted by Foreign Armies

Other cavalry officers in the Indian Army began wearing Sam Browne belts and they quickly became the standard uniform. Imperial and Commonwealth troops involved in the Boer War noticed how effective the belts were in holding the Indian Army's holsters and sheaths in place as they drew their weapons, so they copied the belts, which eventually became their standard issue.

American Armed Forces Adopt the Belt

During World War I, American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), consisting of the United States Armed Forces, were sent to Europe. These troops fought in France alongside French and British allied forces. General Pershing, commander of the AEF, approved the Sam Browne belt to be worn by American officers as a rank of distinction. The Army, however, did not approve of the belts and when officers returned to America, Military Police were stationed at the docks to confiscate them. In 1918, the United States Army mandated the Sam Browne belt for overseas soldiers, calling it the "Liberty Belt," and in 1921 the Army reversed its stand and all service members began wearing the Sam Browne belt as a standard part of their uniform.

In 1940 the Army abandoned sabers, thus limiting the use of the Sam Browne. The Army later replaced the Sam Browne with a cloth waistbelt that was sewn to the officers' jackets.

American Law Enforcement Adopts the Sam Browne Belt

In 1919, after World War I, most U.S. law enforcement agencies with formal uniforms adopted the Sam Browne belt as part of their standard uniform.

Los Angeles Sheriff's Office Mandates use of the Sam Browne Belt

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department mandated deputies to wear uniforms for the first time on May 1, 1933. The uniform was a green shirt without patches and green pants. A standard waist belt with a Sam Browne belt worn over it held a cross-draw holster and cuff case. D rings attached to the front and back of the Sam Browne belt secured the shoulder strap.

Deputies said the shoulder strap helped distribute the weight of the belt so the attached accessories were supported by their shoulders rather than their hips and lower back. Although it helped reduce lower back pain and injury, the drawbacks outweighed the benefits. When a deputy was in a struggle with a suspect, the suspect used the strap as a handle to manipulate and control the deputy, but despite many complaints, nothing was done to remove the strap.

Removal of the Sam Browne Shoulder Strap

In the 1950s, Dick Tracy comics appeared daily in newspapers across the country. One section of the comic was called "Crimestopper's Textbook" and offered suggestions on stopping crime. The Crimestopper tip for the day included a drawing, along with an idea on how to prevent crime.

The Crimestopper's tip for July 4, 1954 stated, "Officers should not wear a shoulder strap holding up their gun belts. Criminals can grab the belt and use it to control the officer." The tip included a drawing of an officer in uniform wearing a Sam Browne belt with a shoulder strap. Many L.A. County deputies cut out the comic and mailed it to Sheriff Biscailuz who, a few days later, ordered that the shoulder strap be permanently removed.

Change from Chrome Buckle and Snaps to Brass

When Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies first began wearing uniforms, metal items such as buttons and belt buckles were brass. In 1942, when America became involved in World War II, metals were in high demand to manufacture planes, ships, military vehicles and other equipment. Material for uniforms was also in short supply, so many deputies donated their extra uniforms to the military. Since brass was needed to make bullet casings, its use by civilians was restricted and by 1943 this rationing began to affect the Sheriff's Department who did their part to reduce use of brass by changing the buttons and buckles on the official uniform to chrome. After the war ended, the metal buttons and buckle of the uniform continued to be chrome even though they clashed with the gold uniform badge and cap piece.

In 2014, when Jim McDonnell became Sheriff of Los Angeles County, he realized that the chrome plating on the Sam and Sally Browne belt buckle and duty gear pouches clashed with the uniform badge, name plates and tie bars, which are made of brass. For the purpose of consistency and to promote a more professional uniform appearance, Sheriff McDonnell suggested converting issued leather gear with chrome-plated snaps and buckles to leather gear with solid brass snaps and buckles. A proposal was submitted for review by the Department's Uniform and Safety Equipment Committee, which recommended the proposal for final approval. On January 13, 2016, the conversion to solid brass

snaps and buckles was approved by the Executive Planning Council and the Sheriff. The Sheriff's Department acquired machines to replace the chrome snaps and issued new, solid brass buckles.

Widow-Maker Holster

The widow-maker holster got its name for good reason. The holster, worn on the officer's strong side, had a flap of leather secured by a snap that covered the revolver. In addition to the gun falling out when they exited their patrol vehicles, the leather impeded the officer from quickly drawing his weapon. During a foot pursuit the single snap would come apart and, should a struggle ensue when the officer caught the suspect, the gun would fall out or was easily removed by the suspect. This caused many officers to be killed by their own weapon.

Bow tie

The uniform first adopted by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office required that deputies wear a black bow tie. The bow tie originated in 1660 when soldiers from Croatia visited Paris after a hard fought victory. The soldiers were wearing brightly colored handkerchiefs around their necks as they were presented to King Louis XIV. He liked them so much he made them an insignia of royalty. The style of wearing handkerchiefs eventually evolved into the bow tie.

Necktie

In the 1850s in Great Britain, carriage drivers who worked for the Four-in-Hand Driving Company knotted the horse reins with the four-in-hand knot. Members of a London gentlemen's club, who rode in these carriages, began tying their scarves with the same knot used on the horse reins. The square tie eventually evolved into the necktie shape that is worn today.

In 1942, the uniform bow tie was replaced by a straight necktie that was worn around the neck, but this soon became problematic. When deputies were involved in an altercation, the suspect would pull on the tie, causing it to tighten around the deputy's neck, choking him. Because of this, they began wearing a clip-on tie that would simply come off if someone pulled on it. This "pre-tied" tie was constructed with a permanent four-in-hand knot and attached to the shirt collar with a metal clip. A clasp made of gold chain was used to hold the tie in position until it was replaced by a gold tie bar in 1958.

When deputies were issued ballistic vests in 1976, it became apparent after a few months that the ties and the vests were not compatible. Association of Los Angeles Deputy Sheriff's representative Bob Hermann met with Sheriff Pitchess and explained that when deputies sat down, the ballistic vest would push the knot of the tie into the deputy's throat. Since it was important that deputies wear ballistic vests, Sheriff Pitchess agreed that ties would no longer be required. Instead, they became optional to wear with long-sleeved shirts.

Patches

Deputies first started as air raid compliance monitors in 1942. Their uniforms did not have shoulder patches and the only form of identification was a badge. This made it difficult when confronting uncooperative residents about complying with civil defense rules. Technically, people who didn't obey the blackout orders could be arrested, but arrests on these grounds were rare. Getting people to follow orders became much easier when deputies began wearing patches on their uniforms in the middle of 1943 as they could now be recognized as law enforcement officers. The first patches were dome shaped with the bottom of the patch a straight line all the way across. In 1944, they were modified to the shape in use today. The top of the patch didn't change but now the sides angled in to a shorter bottom.

Khaki Wash and Wear Uniforms

The uniforms worn by all deputies assigned to the Jail Division consisted of green shirts with a badge and patches, and green pants while the deputies assigned to Corrections Division wore khaki shirts with a badge but no patches, pants and brown shoes.

Deputies who were being trained in the academy were referred to as cadets and wore khaki shirts, khaki pants and brown shoes.

Deputies assigned to what was formerly known as Special Enforcement Detail (now Special Enforcement Bureau), wore the khaki uniforms for major incidents, such as wildland fires, where they might get dirty.

Changing from Green Shirts to Khaki

Sam Cook owned Sam Cook Uniforms in Los Angeles and talked to hundreds of deputies over the years about the Sheriff's Department's uniforms. Many deputies were upset that their all-green uniforms appeared unprofessional. They looked just like those worn by Texaco gas station attendants, right down to the same type of cap. The only real difference in the uniforms was that the deputies had shoulder patches.

In 1955, Cook met with Sheriff Biscailuz about the deputies' uniforms. Explaining their frustration, he then presented a simple solution: change the uniform shirt from green to tan. The Sheriff liked the idea and decided to implement the change. Cook contacted the marines to locate a vendor for their khaki shirt material. He was told that the Marine Corps had bolts and bolts of khaki material sitting in a warehouse that they would sell to him at a discounted price. Cook purchased the material and had it cut and sewn into shirts. Unfortunately, while the material sat in the warehouse, it collected moisture and was damaged with mildew.

Fully aware of the impending change, Cook offered his green uniform shirts at half price. He even drove a truck load of the shirts to Castaic to sell to the deputies assigned to Wayside Honor Rancho. Some of the deputies working in the jails would soon be going to patrol, so they purchased several green shirts. The next week, on July 1, Sheriff Biscailuz announced that the Department's 2,500 deputies would no longer be wearing green shirts, but would be wearing khaki shirts instead. Cook had already unloaded all of his green shirts, and the deputies who purchased them resorted to selling them at a discount to Texaco gas station attendants.

Cook's prior knowledge of the uniform shirt change gave him a great advantage when it came to selling the newly approved khaki shirts. Deputies flocked to Sam Cook Uniforms to purchase their

shirts. Unfortunately, when they sweat and had the shirts cleaned, the mildew- damaged material would not hold up and the armpits fell apart. Now they had to purchase new shirts to replace the inferior ones. This whole incident caused deputies to refer to Sam Cook as Sam Crook.

Uniform Caps

At the same time the uniform shirts were changed, the uniform hats were changed as well. The former hat had six points with a cap piece attached to the front that had the deputy's badge number. It also had a shiny black bill and resembled a Texaco gas station attendant's hat. Since deputies did not like to be called gas station attendants, the hat was changed to resemble the hat worn by mail carriers. This cap, also referred to as a "cover," had eight points, a bright, shiny bill, a cap piece attached to the front and a gold button with the Sheriff's Department's badge on each side.

In January 1976, when the cadets of Class 178 were issued a badge and I D card, only half of the male cadets were given cap pieces with their badge number on it. The other half of the class was told that they would not be getting a cap with their uniforms as the caps had, at that point, been discontinued. The caps continued to be worn by the recruit training staff until they were replaced by campaign hats.

Helmets

In the early 1960s, patrol deputies were encountering problems with large crowds when they attempted to take law enforcement action in or near housing projects or controlling protesting college students who blocked streets. To better deal with the issue, the Sheriff's Department trained the Special Enforcement Detail (SED) in crowd control. The Ford Motor Company had an assembly plant at the corner of Rosemead and Washington in Pico Rivera. When a worker strike turned violent, SED deputies were pelted with rocks and bottles and the soft uniform caps they were wearing offered little protection from the projectiles.

In 1962, SED deputies were issued helmets to wear when confronting situations where rocks and bottles were being thrown. These first helmets were white, but a few years later changed to tan and green. The helmets were placed in the back windows of SED patrol cars so they would be readily available, and also to identify the vehicles as belonging to SED during saturation patrols in different areas of the county.

After World War II there was a large surplus of military helmets, so the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department obtained some and issued them to deputies to wear during special events, such as the 1965 Watts riots. After the Watts riots, it was determined that helmets needed to be readily available, so they were issued to all deputies. Deputies assigned to patrol stations were required to wear the helmets at all times, with the chin strap fastened.

In 1972 Sheriff Pitchess visited Lakewood Station. During a meeting with the station personnel, Deputy Vern Yandel asked why deputies had to wear their helmets all the time. Sheriff Pitchess turned to the Undersheriff and asked if they had to wear them all the time. When the Undersheriff said, "Yes", Sheriff Pitchess said, "It's your head you're protecting, not mine. It's up to you if you wear them all the time." After that, an order was sent out saying that helmets no longer had to be worn except for violent incidents where objects may be thrown at them.

Baseball Caps

Baseball caps were approved in 1969 for deputies working inmate detention camps. In 1970, the caps were approved for Emergency Services Detail and in 1971 for Special Enforcement Bureau.

Around 1993 Lieutenant Bob Osborne, assigned to Temple Station, noticed that other police agencies allowed their officers to wear uniform baseball caps. Since Lieutenant Osborne was very fair skinned and susceptible to sunburn, sun damage and skin cancer, he thought the Sheriff's Department should also adopt the baseball caps to protect deputies' faces and the tops of their heads from the sun.

Since the soft caps with cap piece were no longer worn, there was no authorized headgear that provided sun protection. Helmets did not provide protection for the deputy's face and were too heavy to wear for prolonged periods. Also, water ran off the helmets during the rain, making it very difficult for those who wore glasses; a baseball cap would solve these problems.

Lieutenant Osborne submitted a proposal to the uniform committee suggesting that a baseball cap, green with a cloth badge on the front, be adopted for deputies to wear in the field. Months later, a green baseball cap with the smaller shoulder patch used by female deputies, and a gold and green braided strand across the front, was finally approved. The back half of the top of the hat was mesh, which allowed for air circulation but, at the same time, also allowed sunlight to shine on the deputy's head, potentially causing sun damage. The baseball cap was considered part of the Class B uniform, which could only be worn in the rain or on extremely hot days. It couldn't be worn with the Class A uniform.

Campaign Hats

Campaign hats were first authorized for deputies working the Regimented Inmate Diversion Program (RID). In 1989, Lieutenant Richard Hartwell had the idea to create a program based on "Shock Incarceration" the New York's Department of Corrections Inmate Diversion program. He and Sergeant Bob Galarneau visited New York to learn about the program and when they returned, Lieutenant Hartwell, Sergeant Galarneau, Deputy IV Ron Malneck, and Deputy IV Gene Weaver, all of whom were assigned to the Wayside Ranch Facility, wrote the plan for the RID Program.

The New York program was six months long and designed to work with inmates who were spending years in prison. The county, however, had inmates who spent a lot less time in jail, so the Sheriff's Department's program was only three months. The purpose of RID was to break the cycle of being arrested, being released, and then committing more crimes and going back to jail. It was felt that creating a military-style boot camp environment would have the greatest impact. This was the first program of its kind to ever be tried at a county jail level and all of the deputies who were selected as drill instructors spent a week at Marine Corps Drill Instructor School in San Diego.

When deputies involved in the RID program started training inmates in June of 1990, the deputies wore the old six-pointed soft caps with cap pieces displaying their badge numbers. Since there weren't enough six-pointed caps for all of the DIs and additional hats couldn't be found, they changed to the round soft cap.

Months prior, when deputies visited the New York program and the Drill Instructor School in San Diego, they noticed that all of their DIs wore campaign hats. The consensus was that the campaign hat conveyed the no-nonsense, military image RID wanted to portray. In order to receive permission to

wear these hats, a proposal was submitted to the chief of Custody Division. After the Class B campaign hats, which were made of pressed straw, were approved, members of the RID Program searched for and located a vendor.

Transit Service Bureau deputies sent a proposal to the Uniform Committee requesting approval of the Class A beaver felt campaign hat. Transit deputies were experiencing severe sun damage from prolonged exposure and needed a hat for protection. The Uniform Committee was comprised of two commanders: Larry Jowdy, who was the sergeant in charge of logistics, which issued all uniform equipment, and Roy Fisher, who was assigned to Fiscal Services. The committee asked Sergeant Jowdy to obtain a sample campaign hat and design a cap piece, so he created a prototype using a portion of the former corrections officer's badge. In the past, cap pieces were designed with the deputy's badge number, but the Uniform Committee decided the badge number was not necessary.

In 1991, campaign hats were approved by the uniform committee for all department members to wear. The Sheriff's Department's campaign hats were made of green beaver felt with two lanyards. Black lanyards were worn by personnel below the rank of sergeant and gold lanyards were worn by personnel who were at the rank of sergeant and above. Sergeant Jowdy worked with Don Sachs, general manager of the Sheriff's Emporium, to carry the generic cap hat pieces. The campaign hats could be purchased at local uniform stores. The RID program was discontinued in 1992.

Badges

When the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office was formed in 1850, badges were made of sheet silver and hand engraved with the words: "L.A. COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF" or "DEPUTY L.A. COUNTY SHERIFF." The badge issued to the Sheriff was gold and engraved with "L.A. COUNTY SHERIFF."

During the first 50 years of the Sheriff's Department there was no standard badge, so the appearance varied; some were shaped like a star, others like a shield. The badges were made by local jewelers and each deputy had to pay for his own. The more a deputy paid, the more elaborate the badge. In 1880, the Board of Supervisors authorized Sheriff William Roland to purchase new badges at a cost of \$5 each. These sterling silver badges read, "DEPUTY L.A. COUNTY SHERIFF."

After the turn of the century, the design of the badge was slightly altered again. Ball-tips were added to the points of the star so that deputies were not injured when involved in a physical altercation. Ranks such as sergeant and lieutenant were not stamped on the badge until the 1930s. The current badge was designed in 1947 by Deputy Bob Brown and approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1948.

Equipment Issued by the Department

Deputies had always been required to buy their own uniforms and equipment. The only items issued were badges, ID cards and cap pieces for the hats. However, in November 1962 starting with Class 96, deputies no longer had to purchase the revolver and handcuffs as those items were now being provided.

On May 15, 1963, the deputies in class 98 were given an authorization form for Sam Cook's Uniform Store where they received one Class A uniform and hat, one Class B uniform, a Sam Browne belt, holster, handcuff case and cartridge case. The badge, hat piece, S&W K-38 revolver, S&W handcuffs, and ID card and flat badge for their wallet were still issued directly by the Sheriff's Department.

Sap Pocket

Class A uniform pants have two front pockets and two rear pockets. They also have a sap pocket. A sap is a flat, beavertail-shaped weapon made of leather and weighted with lead on at least one end. Years ago, deputies carried saps to use as impact weapons during encounters with suspects. The Sheriff's Department issued a rat-tail sap to all deputies, but it was not very effective when trying to gain compliance from a violent suspect. Deputy Gonzales was assigned to East L.A. Station, and realized that larger, more effective saps were needed, so he devised one that was more suitable. The various saps were named by their size. The smallest was the 415 (Penal Code for disturbance), the next larger one was the 242 (Penal Code for battery), the next size 243 (Penal Code for assault on a peace officer), and 245 (Penal Code for assault with a deadly weapon). Although saps are no longer authorized, the sap pockets remain as part of the Class A uniform and used to hold flashlights or expandable batons.

Name Tags

In 1965, prior to the Watts riots, name tags were required to be worn on uniforms for the first time. The name tags were a gold metal frame with a black plastic insert with a white border and the letters of the deputy's last name in white.

In 1990, Sergeants Jowdy and Fisher decided that these name tags, which had been issued for years, were cheap looking and needed to be changed. The name tags that replaced them were gold metal with blue letters that matched the deputy's badge. They looked much more professional

Executive Uniform

When Sherman Block first became Sheriff in 1982, one of his first directives was having a uniform designed for the department executives. The uniform included a formal jacket and hat with cap piece.

Cloth Badges

When Emergency Services Detail (ESD) was first formed in 1967, they wore Class B khaki uniforms. Since shoulder patches were not used on the khakis, deputies wore their badges for identification. However, when they rappelled, their badges were constantly being torn off by the ropes. Sergeant Frank Waldron directed Deputy Peter Raugh to find a better way to display the badges so they weren't torn off and lost in the mountains during a rescue. He also wanted ESD uniforms to resemble the tan and green uniforms worn by patrol deputies, rather than the all-khaki worn by academy cadets and jail deputies. Deputy Raugh located an embroidery company that created cloth badges free of charge. He also found dark green work pants and tan work shirts which were generously donated by Sears department store. Deputy Raugh then had patches and the cloth badges sewn onto each uniform.

Class B Uniforms

In the early 1970s, Lieutenant Bud Hansen was assigned to the Emergency Operations Bureau's Operations Planning Unit for Patrol. He noticed that Sears stores were selling wash-and-wear khaki

shirts and green pants that not only matched the colors of the Class A uniform, but were perfect for utility purposes. Lieutenant Hansen wrote a proposal to adopt the wash-and-wear shirts and pants as the Department's Class B uniform. This included uniform patches, cloth badge and cloth name tag. The Executive Planning Council, consisting of all the Division Chiefs and above, approved the new uniform which became the utility uniform worn in custody facilities, foul weather for patrol and for situations where a deputy's uniform could get dirty or damaged. The all-khaki uniform was discontinued.

Sergeant Chevrons

Sergeants working custody facilities in the early '70s wore Marine Corps chevrons on their sleeves. When the Marine Corps started its gunnery program, rifles were added to the bottom of the gunnery sergeant's chevrons. In order to continue using the Marine Corp chevrons on LASD uniforms, it was necessary to cut the rifles off, which was very difficult to do if one wanted a proper appearance. Since the Army had just changed its chevrons to a yellow-gold color, Lieutenant Hansen included in his proposal for Class B uniforms that the Department use the Army chevron, which did not need to be altered. This was also approved.

Short-Sleeved Shirts

Up until 1967, deputies were only allowed to wear long-sleeved shirts. Officers with LAPD and other police agencies could wear either long, or short-sleeved shirts. Rumor had it that Sheriff Pitchess would never allow his deputies to wear short sleeves but Dick Foreman, who was a lieutenant at Norwalk Station, talked to personnel around the Sheriff's Department and no one had ever actually heard the Sheriff say this. Foreman asked Louis the Taylor Uniform Store to make a short-sleeved LASD uniform shirt for Sergeant Don Dimarzo, who wore it into the Sheriff's Office and Pitchess was asked what he thought. Sheriff Pitchess' response was, "I thought deputies had been wearing them for years."

After that, deputies were allowed to wear long or short-sleeved shirts. Long-sleeved shirts still required ties to be worn with them, but ties were not allowed to be worn with short-sleeved shirts. During summer months, when the temperature rose to 85 degrees or higher, Code 11 was broadcast over the Sheriff's radio. This signified that deputies could remove their ties and unbutton their top shirt buttons. In 1976, ties were no longer required to be worn all of the time in patrol.

Ballistic Vests

In 1976, Logistics began issuing ballistic vests to deputies. Compared to the vests worn today, these were thick and heavy, and consisted only of a front and rear panel with no side panels. There was a tail on the front and back, which could be tucked in to keep the vest in place. They came in small, medium and large, sizes and were not very comfortable. Many deputies did not like the county-issued vest, so purchased their own. The vests they bought had a lot more coverage, with side panels for added protection and a pocket in the front over the heart where a trauma plate could be inserted. The trauma plate would stop a rifle round.

On April 19, 1979, Deputy George Barthel and his partner, Deputy James Hollingsworth, were involved in a shooting. Although both were wearing vests, there were no side panels and when they were shot, the bullets entered their bodies through the unprotected sides. Deputy Barthel died from his wounds. This prompted the Sheriff's Department to issue new ballistic vests that included side panels.

In 1989, Logistics Sergeant Jowdy implemented a program to stock a larger variety of ballistic vests, in a wide variety of sizes. Deputies were fitted for their vests at Logistics. If they couldn't fit a deputy, Armor, the manufacturer, created a custom vest and sent it overnight. Sergeant Jowdy negotiated a price for the vests of \$90, which was a great savings compared to the \$350 they used to pay. The vests now issued by the Department are some of the best on the market.

Ballistic Vest Covers

When ballistic vests were first issued they did not have to be worn all of the time, but were required to be available in case of a dangerous call, such as a suspect with a firearm or a hazardous raid. Kept in plastic bags so they wouldn't get dirty, the vests were carried in the patrol cars. If time was critical, deputies would simply place the vest over their uniform before taking action.

In the summer of 1982, Deputy Dan McCarty was working at Antelope Valley Station when the patrol sergeant requested two units to assist in serving an arrest warrant for a murder suspect in Valencia. Deputy McCarty was one of two units that responded, and happened to be the only deputy who had a ballistic vest with him that day. The sergeant told him to place the vest over his uniform prior to approaching the house. Deputy McCarty led the way as he and the sergeant neared the house, knocked on the door and arrested the suspect. A news reporter from the Newhall Signal was listening to a police scanner and heard about the warrant service, so he went to the location and took several pictures as Deputy McCarty and the sergeant were escorting the suspect out to the patrol car. The next day these pictures were on the front page of the paper, and the white ballistic vest with the tails hanging down stood out like a sore thumb. Dan thought there had to be a way to make the vest look like part of the uniform so he asked his wife, a seamstress, to make a vest cover. Using material from his Class B uniform pants, she made a Mexican serape which was designed to slip over the head. The bottom was open and sealed closed with Velcro fasteners so the ballistic panels could be easily slipped in, and then removed for cleaning. An 11 inch "Sheriff" patch attached to the back of the vest cover, and a cloth badge attached to the front, gave a professional look. A cloth name tag purchased from the Transcontinental Sales Company in Los Angeles provided the finishing touch. The vest covers looked like part of the uniform and were readily accepted.

When Deputy McCarty showed off the vest cover at the next briefing, the deputies asked if his wife would make vest covers for them and if so, how much she would charge. The deputies suggested that they would provide the materials and pay her for the labor. Deputy McCarty's wife said she would do it, but it would cost \$30 each. Orders for the vests skyrocketed because everyone had to have one.

Since station detectives wore plain clothes, they were required to have a raid jacket available in their lockers to wear while serving warrants. Many detectives liked the idea of wearing the vest as it gave them ballistic protection where the raid jacket did not. Deputy McCarty even made a vest cover for Sheriff Block and sent it to him. At a cost of \$35 each, the orders for vest covers were so overwhelming that Deputy McCarty purchased another sewing machine and joined his wife in sewing.

Word of the vest covers spread quickly. The McCartys bought bolts of green fabric, along with the patches, from the Transcontinental Sales Company, and sewed as fast as they could, but they were both still working their full-time jobs. The orders kept coming in and since the vest covers were now being sold at the Sheriff's Emporium, demand increased to the point that they were backlogged. It became so overwhelming that they provided patterns and contracted with Transcontinental Sales Company to sew

the vests together. In order to do this, they had to agree to purchase 100 vests. They weren't sure if they could sell that many, but took a chance and ordered them.

In 1984, a few years after Deputy McCarty retired and moved to Arizona, he took on Jim Greene as a partner. Greene was able to handle the liaison with the company in Los Angeles so that McCarty wouldn't have to keep traveling back and forth. Eventually their business expanded to include custom vests for LAPD, the San Francisco Police Department and the Arizona Highway Patrol, but sales dropped dramatically once deputies were ordered to wear their ballistic vests under their uniform shirts.

Eisenhower Jacket

It is rumored that Sheriff Biscailuz saw a photo of General Dwight D. Eisenhower and thought the General's uniform jacket looked very professional. The Eisenhower jacket was adopted and for many years was the official jacket to wear with the Class A uniform.

Nylon Field Jacket

Hurricane Hyacinth made landfall between San Diego and Los Angeles in 1971 dumping rain, 25 mph winds and, in some of the higher elevations, a huge amount of snow. Highways were blocked and many of the deputies who were assisting stranded motorists wore the Eisenhower jacket, which was not the most effective at keeping a person warm in freezing weather. Other deputies wore heavier, non-approved nylon jackets that did not have patches or anything that identified them as a deputy. Because these jackets were so much warmer, it was suggested that the nylon jacket be adopted and approved for use by deputies throughout the department.

Sergeant Al Brown was in charge of issuing uniforms at Logistics when he was told to review a variety of jackets for use in the field. He assigned Deputy Gary Coniglio, who worked for him, to contact vendors and obtain sample jackets to display for the Department's executives.

It wasn't just the appearance that was important, but the critical issue of officer safety. The jacket had to be waist length and could not be so long that it covered the Sam Browne belt and its accessories. The jacket they selected stopped just above the top of the Sam Browne, allowing deputies to draw their weapons or access other pieces of equipment, such as their handcuffs. There were two exterior side pockets and an inside pocket, as well as a faux fur collar that was attached with a zipper and could be removed. Deputies Mike McAndrews, Mike O'Hara and Gary Coniglio wore the jackets for several captains and inspectors (the title of inspector was later changed to commander), who gave their endorsement. It was then modeled for Sheriff Pitchess, who approved it for field use.

Jumpsuits

Sergeant John Kolman was working in the Office of the Sheriff in late 1966 when Sheriff Peter Pitchess told him to drive over to Transcon Sales, which was a garment company in downtown Los Angeles. When Sergeant Kolman arrived, he was measured for a prototype Sheriff's jumpsuit. When the jumpsuit was ready, John reluctantly modeled it for the Sheriff. A photo was taken and used to obtain approval from the Uniform Committee. The prototype jumpsuit was plain, with no form of identification. Patches, a cloth badge, and "Sheriff" on the back were added later.

In the late 1960s, since many groups were demonstrating: civil rights, women's rights, gay rights, the environment, the Vietnam War, patrol deputies began receiving riot training. If patrol personnel were dispatched to an incident such as this, deputies assigned to the Intelligence Bureau and other specialized units were sent to fill in. Green jumpsuits with shoulder patches and a large "Sheriff" patch on the back, were issued for plainclothes deputies to wear when they had to replace the patrol deputies. The plainclothes deputies were required to carry their jumpsuits in the trunks of their cars and were responsible to handle calls for service from the community. During the East L.A. riot in 1970, Narco deputies were issued the jumpsuits and instructed to wear them around East L. A. Sheriff's Station so that they could be easily identified.

In 1973, Aero Bureau adopted tan, Nomex, flame resistant jumpsuits for pilots and observers. These were worn for five years until they were replaced by military green Nomex jumpsuits in 1978.

In 1973, while working a traffic car at Lennox Sheriff Station, Deputy Kenneth Sutherland became the first deputy at the station to be certified as a Commercial Enforcement Traffic Officer (CETO). As a CETO, he was required to crawl under semi-trucks and trailers to inspect their brakes and his uniform got very dirty. Sutherland was given approval to wear a jumpsuit over his uniform, and within a year, all Commercial Enforcement Traffic Officers began wearing jumpsuits.

In 1975, jumpsuits were the authorized uniform for Special Operations and Search Teams at the Hall of Justice Jail. As SOS Teams were formed at other custody facilities, they too, wore the jumpsuit.

In 1977, the Arson Explosives Detail began wearing orange, flame-resistant jumpsuits. The orange color made them more easily located and the Sheriff's patches on the shoulders, cloth badge and large emblem with the words "Bomb Squad" on the back made them readily identifiable at a crime scene.

Raid Jackets

In 1974, Carl Seltzer, the captain of Narcotics Bureau, ordered Sergeant Ed Ward to go to nearby Chinatown and take photos of deputies wearing the raid jackets. Using a Polaroid camera so the prints developed in minutes, the crew spent the entire day taking pictures. Each time the deputies returned to the Hall of Justice, the captain rejected their photos because there were wrinkles visible in the raid jackets. Sergeant Ward and his crew continued to repeat the procedure until the captain was satisfied that no wrinkles showed in the raid jackets.

Captain Seltzer submitted the photos along with a proposal for Narcotics deputies to wear raid jackets. Once they were approved, Narcotics deputies found it easier and more convenient to throw on a raid jacket than climb into a jumpsuit. After seeing Narcotics deputies wearing the raid jackets, Operation Safe Streets (OSS) deputies began wearing the raid jackets along with blue jeans.

Raid jackets made OSS deputies easy for gang members to identify. Gang members wouldn't talk to deputies in uniform or detectives wearing suits because they appeared more official. But they knew deputies in raid jackets were more approachable, easier to talk to and had a great knowledge of gangs. Another reason OSS deputies began wearing raid jackets, blue jeans and tennis shoes was about practicality. They often had to chase and fight with gang members they were attempting to question, apprehend or arrest. They preferred not to wear leather Sam Browne belts because they were heavy and bulky, and made noise when they moved. At first, the Sam Browne belts they wore were made of material used for automobile seat belts and had the type of buckle where the belt looped back through.

On the belt was a nylon holster, cuff case with cuffs and a flashlight holder. There was also a carabiner sewn on that was used to rappel down walls.. Eventually they changed to a nylon Sam Browne with nylon accessories.

Unauthorized Uniform Equipment

After the East Los Angeles riots in 1970 and 1971, law enforcement officers were accused of being too militaristic and became referred to as “the occupying army.” Because of this, the captains of some Sheriff’s Stations tried to soften the military appearance by imposing restrictions on what could be worn with the Class A uniform. East L. A. Station deputies were not allowed to wear boots, have two handcuff cases on their Sam Browne, or carry backup guns. They were also told not to carry knives, especially on their Sam Browne.

Deputies were issued .38 revolvers, but could carry .357 revolvers as long as they loaded them with .38 ammo. Some deputies used .357 rounds, but if they became involved in a shooting, were disciplined for using unauthorized ammo.

A Traditional Uniform

It has taken decades for the Class A uniform to evolve into the professional appearance it has today. The badge, name tag and patches provide the finishing touches to a uniform worn with pride by the thousands of deputies of the largest Sheriff’s Department in the country.

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