The Evolution of the LASD Male Uniform

By Deputy Chris Miller (retired)

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 and apprehend 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. Mulholland inspected the leakage himself and felt that the leaks were minor and not a concern. That same day, a few minutes before midnight, the St. Francis Dam collapsed, releasing a120 foot-high wall of water as 12.4 billion gallons cascaded down arid San Francisquito Canyon. The deafening surge, traveling at 18 mph, destroyed everything in its path. Sixty-four workmen and their families who lived nearby were killed and the heavy concrete structure of powerhouse no. 2 was reduced to rubble. The wave destroyed 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, located 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 150-man crew of 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 water and, due to a miscommunication, they 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, but a branch of the Automobile Club. They helped disabled motorists and issued tickets for minor traffic violations. They did not carry weapons.

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 Los Angeles 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 appear as police officers. Riding motorcycles also gave them the appearance of being official officers. Officers Edwards and Baker crisscrossed the streets, sounding sirens, and when the residents came out of their homes, they were told to evacuate.

The wave of water, two miles wide, traveled 54 miles in \five hours and 27 minutes, 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, while some, 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 citizens following orders due to the fact that they were in uniform and easily recognizable as official officers.

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'sOffice, 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 Temple Sheriff's 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 oversizecoats. The coat had chrome buttons which matched the buckle on the Sam Browne belt. The cap 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 the swivel "widow-maker" holster. This holster was called the "widow-maker" because it swiveled when the deputy sat down and the gun would fall 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.

Uniforms Adopted

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 uniform cap 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, a teletype broadcast went out to every Los Angeles County Sheriff's patrol station from Property Custodian G.D. Segelke 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 for $35.40 from the Lilley Uniform Company in Ohio, which manufactured the uniforms. It further explained that uniforms could be financed for 10 percent by Municipal Guaranty Corporation, an organization of government employees formed to loan money to city and county employees. Property Custodian Segelke just happened to be a member of their board of directors. Sheriff Biscailuz later clarified that the financing arrangement was not part of any plan sanctioned by him.

On March 10, 1933 Long Beach was shaken by a 6.4 earthquake. Buildings collapsed, water tanks fell through roofs and homes were moved off their foundations. Damage from the earthquake extended to areas policed by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, 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 areas affected by the earthquake but when they arrived, those not wearing uniforms experienced the same problem encountered after the St. Frances Dam collapse. Since they were not in uniform, citizens didn't recognize them as law enforcement officers. It was difficult to get people to follow their orders, which was not only frustrating, but added to the chaos. Sheriff Biscailuz observed the difficulty that deputies had while working in civilian clothes. He also noticed that deputies and officers from other agencies, who were 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. The shirt did not have patches, but did have brass buttons with the Sheriff's Department badge on them. The buttons were attached to the shirt using spring clips, which allowed the buttons to be removed before it 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 their uniform badges, identification cards and cap piece for their hats.

Captain Sam Browne

During the 19th century it was common for army officers to wear swords as part of their uniforms. These swords were not only part of the decorative uniform, but were also the weapon used in battle. A British army officer named Sam Browne was serving in India at that time. Like other officers, he 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 their belts, In order to draw their swords, 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 Browne 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

Browne was desperate to find a way to draw his sword with just one hand. He 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 securely hold a pistol in a flap holster on his right hip. A binocular case could also be attached to the belt.

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 the 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 Uniforms with the Sam Browne Belt

On May 1, 1933 the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department mandated deputies to wear uniforms for the first time. 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 who wore uniforms with the shoulder strap attached to the Sam Browne said that it 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. Deputies continually complained about the strap, but nothing was done to remove it.

Removal of the Sam Browne Shoulder Strap

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

On July 4, 1954, The Crimestopper's tip 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 support. Many L.A. County deputies cut out the comic and mailed it to Sheriff Biscailuz. A few days later, the Sheriff's Office issued an order for deputies to remove the D rings holding the shoulder strap to the Sam Browne belt and to remove the shoulder strap. The shoulder strap was no longer part of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office's official uniform.

Change from Chrome Buckle and Snaps to Brass

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 name plates and badge, which are made out 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

Deputies began wearing uniforms in 1933, with the widow maker holster on the Sam Browne belt. In addition to their weapons falling out when they exited their patrol vehicles, the name also reflected the large number of officers around the country killed while using this holster. The holster, worn on the officer's strong side, had a flap of leather, secured by a snap, that covered the revolver. 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 and used against the officer. This caused many officers to be killed by their own weapons.

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. The king liked the handkerchiefs so much that he made them an insignia of royalty. The style of wearing handkerchiefs eventually evolved into the bow tie.

The uniform first adopted by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office required that deputies to wear a black bow tie.

Necktie

The four-in-hand knot evolved 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 using 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 the straight necktie. Originally, ties were worn that needed to be tied around the neck, but this soon became problematic. When deputies became involved in an altercation with a suspect, the suspect would pull on the tie, causing it to tighten around the deputy's neck, cutting off their air supply. Because of this, deputies began wearing clip-on ties. This "pre-tied" tie was constructed with a permanent four-in-hand knot and attached to the shirt collar with a metal clasp. If a deputy became involved in a confrontation, the tie would simply come off, thus preventing him from being choked to death with his own tie.

Deputies were issued ballistic vests in 1976, but after a few months it became apparent that the ties were not compatible with the vests. 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. Sheriff Pitchess felt that it was important that deputies wear ballistic vests, so he agreed that ties would no longer be required. Instead, they became optional to wear with long-sleeved shirts.

Tie Clasps

The Sheriff's office replaced bow ties with regular ties in 1942. A clasp made of gold chain was used to hold the tie in position. The gold chain tie clasp continued to be worn until 1958 when it was replaced by a gold tie bar.

Patches

In the 1900s, there was a large increase in the souvenir industry. People traveling, vacationing and sightseeing around the world wanted to bring back reminders of the places they had been. Hiking was popular at the time and as people began exploring more remote and exotic places, they bought patches to sew on their backpacks and jackets to show off the places they had visited. The production of stick-on souvenir patches seems to have started in Germany just after World War I. In the U.S., the demand for patches grew as the National Parks System developed and vacationing in America increased in popularity.

The 81st Infantry Division "Wildcat" was the first U.S. Army unit authorized to wear shoulder sleeve insignia known as SSI. In 1918, during WWI, just after the 81st Division completed training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, they sailed to France. On the left shoulder of their uniforms was an olive drab felt patch with the silhouette of a wildcat. The patch was designed after Wildcat Creek, a stream that flowed through Fort Jackson. It was suggested that other divisions adopt their own patches. On October 19, 1918, the use of shoulder insignia was adopted by the U. S. Army and all soldiers were required to wear the patch of their headquarters on their uniforms.

During World War II, in an attempt to better protect their citizens from enemy aircraft during bombing raids, the people of Great Britain were instructed to turn off all lights that would be visible from the air. Street lights were turned off and blackout curtains, cardboard or paint were placed over windows. Essentials such as traffic lights and vehicle headlights were fitted with covers to deflect their beams downward toward the ground. Many unnecessary accidents and pedestrian deaths resulted from people driving with dimmed headlights.

In April 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt spoke to the United States and called for everyone to defend the country and support the war effort. There was a very real fear of an invasion on our homeland so people, especially along the coast, were taught to identify the outlines of friendly and enemy airplanes when they were flying overhead. The Japanese had already bombed Pearl Harbor and there was concern that San Francisco or Los Angeles would be their next target. Leaders in Washington D.C. already had plenty on their minds and they needed the American people to feel that they had a say in their own safety. Allowing average citizens to get involved in the war effort, but not actually having to fight, made them feel safer because they were taking a role in their own protection.
Much was learned by the U.S. from Great Britain. The blackout techniques they used to prevent or reduce bombing of their cities worked; enemy planes couldn't target what they couldn't see.

In May 1941, the U.S. Office of Civilian Defense assumed the responsibility for coordinating preparations for war-related emergencies. These preparations were organized at both the state and local levels. Civilian defense against air attacks began with pilots flying the coastlines searching for enemy planes. Along with this, plane spotters manned towers to watch for approaching enemy planes.

Blackout drills were held to monitor responses to air raid alarms, and to test residents' ability to block out light escaping from their house through windows and doors. In addition to handling calls for service and emergencies, Los Angeles Sheriff's deputies had a collateral duty to act as air raid compliance monitors. When an air raid siren sounded, deputies went door to door, instructing citizens to dim their lights or turn them off and to blackout all windows and doors.

When deputies first started as air raid compliance monitors in 1942, they wore uniforms that did not have patches, and the only form of identification was a badge. This made it difficult when confronting uncooperative residents about complying with defense rules. Technically, people who didn't obey the blackout orders could be arrested, but arrests on these grounds were rare.

Deputies began wearing patches on their uniforms for the first time in the middle of 1943. Getting citizens to follow orders became much easier when enforcing the air raid rules because the officers were more readily recognizable as law enforcement officers.

Khaki Wash and Wear Uniforms

The Jail Division consisted of the Hall of Justice Jail and Terminal Island Jail. Both of these facilities held only unsentenced inmates. All inmates processed into and out of the Los Angeles jail system were processed at the Hall of Justice Jail, also known as the Main Security Jail. The lower floors of the Hall of Justice served as the headquarters for the Sheriff's Department as well as the Superior Court and the Coroner's Office. The jail section occupied floors 9 thru 14, with the Women's Detention Unit No. 1 located on the 13th floor. Sentenced female inmates were held at the Terminal Island Jail, also known as the Women's Detention Unit No. 2. The uniforms worn by all deputies assigned to the Jail Division consisted of green shirts with a badge and patches, and green pants.

The purpose of the Corrections Division was to confine only sentenced inmates and provide them opportunities for rehabilitation. Wayside Honor Rancho held both minimum and maximum security inmates, while Mira Loma and the six road camps housed only those in minimum security. Various jobs were available to the inmates at all of these facilities. The deputies assigned to Corrections Division wore khaki shirts with a badge but no patches, and pants and brown shoes.

Deputies who were being trained in the academy were referred to as cadets. During that time Academy cadets 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 uniforms were often compared to those worn by Texaco gas station attendants. Texaco uniforms were all green with the same type of uniform cap as the deputies. The only difference in the uniforms was that the deputies' shirts had shoulder patches. Deputies felt that the uniforms looked unprofessional.

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 Marine Corps 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 Wayside Honor Rancho to sell to deputies assigned there. 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 caps were changed as well. The former cap had six points with a cap piece attached to the front that had the deputy's badge number. It also had a black shiny 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 at that time. 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 of the cap.

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. T 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. To better deal with the problem, 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. A worker strike turned violent and SED deputies were pelted with rocks and bottles. The deputies were wearing soft uniform caps which offered little protection from the projectiles. They encountered the same safety issue when confronting mobs in housing projects and protesting college students who blocked streets.

In 1962, SED deputies were issued helmets to wear when confronting situations where rocks and bottles were being thrown. The first helmets issued to SED deputies 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 would help 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. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department obtained some of these helmets 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 during riots and other major disturbances, 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 the Sheriff 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 Pitches added, "It's your head you're protecting, not mine. It's up to you if you wear them all the time."

After that meeting, an order was sent out to everyone telling deputies they no longer had to wear their helmets except for violent incidents where they may have objects 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 Lt. 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. Not only would they protect deputies' faces and tops of their heads from sun damage, it would also help when it was raining to keep water from getting on the deputies' glasses. A baseball cap would absorb a small amount of water during a light rain, but a helmet would not. At that time, there was no authorized headgear that provided sun protection since the soft caps with cap piece were no longer worn. Helmets did not provide protection for the deputy's face and were too heavy to wear for prolonged periods.

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 a shoulder patch from the female deputies' uniform shirt 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, so it couldn't be worn with the Class A uniform. The only time it could be worn was when deputies were wearing a Class B uniform, which was in the rain or on extremely hot days.

Campaign Hats

Campaign hats were first authorized for deputies who were working the Regimented Inmate Diversion Program (RID).

In 1989, Lt. Richard Hartwell had the idea to create a program based on the New York's Department of Corrections Inmate Diversion program called Shock Incarceration. He and Sgt. Bob Galarneau visited New York to learn about the program and when they returned, Lt. Richard Hartwell, Sgt. Bob 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 coming 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 they couldn't locate additional hats to purchase, the DIs 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 the RID DIs 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.

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Transit Service Bureau deputies sent a proposal to the Uniform Committee to request approval of the Class A beaver felt campaign hat. Transit deputies were experiencing severe sun damage from prolonged sun exposure and needed a hat for protection. At that time, 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 Sgt. Jowdy to obtain a sample campaign hat and design a cap piece. Sergeant Jowdy created a prototype for the new cap piece using a portion of the former corrections officer's badge. In the past, hat cap pieces were designed with the deputy's badge number. The Uniform Committee decided that it was not necessary for the deputy's badge number to be part of the cap piece.

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. Their campaign hats were purchased at local uniform stores.

The RID program was discontinued in 1992.

Badges

When the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office was formed in 1850, the badges worn by early deputies 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 for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, the appearance of the badge 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 for 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 again altered slightly. 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

Until November 1963, deputies had to purchase their uniforms and equipment. The only items issued to deputies were their badges, ID cards and cap pieces for their hats. In November 1963, starting with Class 100, deputies were issued a revolver, Sam Browne belt, holster, cuffs and cuff case and one Class B khaki uniform.

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

Executive Uniform

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

Cloth Badges

When Emergency Services Detail (ESD) was first formed in 1967, they wore Class B khaki uniforms. It was standard practice at that time not to wear patches with the khaki uniforms. Deputies wore their department badges with the khaki uniforms for identification. When ESD deputies practiced rappelling, their badges were constantly being torn off by the ropes. Sergeant Frank Waldron directed Deputy Peter Raugh to find a better way to display their badges so that they weren't torn off and lost in the mountains during a rappel. He also wanted ESD uniforms to resemble the tan and green uniforms worn by patrol deputies, rather than the all-khaki uniform worn by academy cadets and jail deputies. Deputy Raugh located an embroidery company that created the cloth badges for ESD deputies' uniforms, free of charge. He also located dark green work pants and tan work shirts at Sears and Roebuck Department Store. Sears donated the uniforms for the ESD deputies. Deputy Raugh then had patches and cloth badges sewn onto each uniform.

Class B Uniforms

In the early 1970s, Lt. Bud Hansen was assigned to the Emergency Operations Bureau's Operations Planning Unit for Patrol. He noticed that Sears and Roebuck 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 made up of all the Division Chiefs and above approved the new Class B uniform. The uniform was adopted as the utility uniform to be 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. The Marine Corps had started its gunnery program, and to identify this 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 if one wanted a proper appearance. Since the Army had just changed its chevrons to a yellow-gold color, Lt. 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 1973 or 1974, LASD deputies were only allowed to wear long-sleeved shirts. Officers with LAPD and other police agencies could wear either long- or short-sleeved shirts. There were rumors that Sheriff Pitchess would never allow his deputies to wear short sleeves. Dick Foreman, who was the captain of the Training Bureau, talked to personnel around the Sheriff's Department and no one had ever actually heard the Sheriff say this. He decided to ask Louis the Taylor Uniform Store to make a mockup of a short-sleeved LASD uniform shirt. The shirt was tailored to fit Sgt. Don Dimarzo, who wore it into the Sheriff's Office. Captain Foreman presented Sgt. Dimarzo to Sheriff Pitchess and asked him what he thought. According to Capt. Foreman in a recent interview, 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. These vests were thick and heavy compared to the vests issued today, and consisted of a front and rear panel. There were no side panels. The vests came in three sizes: small, medium and large. They had a tail on the front and back, which could be tucked in and kept the vest in place. The vests were not very comfortable. Many deputies did not like the county-issued vest so they purchased their own. The vests they purchased had a lot more coverage, with side panels for protection. They also had 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. Both deputies were wearing ballistic vests without side panels when they received gunshot wounds that entered their bodies through the unprotected sides. Deputy Barthel died from his wounds. After this shooting, the Sheriff's Department began issuing new ballistic vests that included side panels.

In 1989, Logistics Sgt. 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 to Logistics. 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 were not required to be worn all of the time. Deputies were required to have them available in case of a dangerous call, such as a suspect with a firearm or a hazardous raid. The vests were carried by deputies in their patrol cars and placed in plastic bags so they wouldn't get dirty. If time was critical, deputies removed the vest from the plastic bag and placed it 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 advised 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 also responded to the location. As Deputy McCarty and the sergeant were escorting the suspect out to the patrol car, the news reporter took several pictures of them. 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. Deputy McCarty thought that there had to be a better way to make the vest look like part of the LASD uniform. His wife was a seamstress, so he asked her to make a vest cover. Using the material from his Class B uniform pants, she sewed the material into a Mexican serape which was designed it to slip over his 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 other deputies the vest cover at the next briefing, those deputies asked if Deputy McCarty's 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 to assemble the vest cover. Deputy McCarty's wife said she would do it, but it would cost $30 labor per vest. The orders for the vests skyrocketed because everyone had to have one.

At that time, station detectives were required to have a raid jacket available in their lockers to put on in place of their suit jacket while serving warrants. Many detectives liked the idea of wearing the vest with the vest cover because it gave them ballistic protection where the raid jacket didn't. Deputy McCarty also made a vest cover for Sheriff Block and sent it to him.

The McCarty's were so overwhelmed with orders for the vest covers, that Deputy McCarty purchased another sewing machine and joined his wife in sewing. The vest covers were sold for $35 each.

Word spread quickly, and deputies throughout the Department wanted to purchase the covers. Deputy McCarty and his wife bought bolts of green fabric, along with the patches, from the Transcontinental Sales Company, and sewed the vest covers together as fast as they could. In addition to making the vest covers, Deputy McCarty and his wife were 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 developed a backlog of orders and had to take back orders. They were so overwhelmed that they contracted with Transcontinental Sales Company to sew the vests together using the patterns that Deputy McCarty provided. In order to do this, they had to agree to purchase 100 vests. They weren't sure they could sell 100 vests, 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 from Los Angeles to Arizona. Eventually they expanded their vest covers to include custom vests for LAPD, the San Francisco Police Department and the Arizona Highway Patrol.

Once deputies were ordered to wear their ballistic vests under their uniform shirts while on duty, sales dropped dramatically.

Eisenhower Jacket

It is rumored that Sheriff Biscailuz first saw the Class A jacket referred to as the Eisenhower jacket in a photo of General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He thought the jacket looked very professional, so he adopted it as the official jacket of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to wear with the Class A uniform. For years, the Eisenhower jacket was the only authorized jacket that could be worn with the uniform.

Nylon Field Jacket

In September of 1972, Hurricane Hyacinth made landfall between San Diego and Los Angeles. This caused 25 mph winds and rain throughout Los Angeles County. A huge snow storm occurred in some of the higher elevations, blocking several highways. Many of the deputies who were assisting stranded motorists wore the approved Eisenhower jacket, which was not the most effective jacket to keep a person warm in freezing weather. Other deputies wore heavier, nylon jackets that were not approved by the Department. The nylon jackets did not have patches or anything that identified the wearer as a deputy. Because these jackets were so effective at keeping deputies warm, it was suggested that the nylon jacket be adopted and approved for use by deputies throughout the department.

Sergeant Al Brown, who was in charge of issuing uniforms at Logistics, was assigned the job of reviewing a variety of jackets for approval 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 survival. The jacket had to be waist length and could not be so long that it covered the Sam Browne belt and its accessories. With the bottom of the jacket stopping just above the top of the Sam Browne, deputies could draw their weapons or access other pieces of equipment, such as their handcuffs,

while the jacket was being worn. The jacket had two exterior side pockets and an inside pocket. It also had a faux fur collar that was attached with a zipper and could be removed.

Deputies Mike McAndrews, Mike O'Hara and Gary Coniglio modeled the jackets for several captains and inspectors (the title of inspector was later changed to commander), who approved the new nylon field jacket. The jacket was then modeled for Sheriff Pitchess who approved the nylon jacket for field use.

Jumpsuits

In late 1966, while working in the office of the Sheriff, Sgt. John Kolman was instructed by Sheriff Petter Pitchess to drive over to Transcon Sales, which was a garment company in downtown Los Angeles. When Sgt. Kolman arrived at Transcon Sales, he was measured for a prototype Sheriff's jumpsuit. Once the jumpsuit was tailored to fit the sergeant, he was notified by Transcon Sales and picked up the jumpsuit, which he reluctantly modeled for the Sheriff. A photo was taken, and used to obtain the approval of the uniform committee. The prototype jumpsuit did not have any form of identification, such as patches, cloth badge or "Sheriff" on the back. These forms of identification were added at a later date.

In the late 1960s, many groups were demonstrating: civil rights, women's rights, gay rights, the environment, the Vietnam War. The Sheriff's Department began training patrol deputies in riot formations in preparation for unlawful demonstrations. If patrol deputies were dispatched to an unlawful demonstration, deputies assigned to the Intelligence Bureau and other specialized units were sent to fill in. For situations such as these, jumpsuits were issued. The jumpsuits were green with shoulder patches and a large "Sheriff" patch on the back. The purpose of the jumpsuits was for plainclothes deputies to wear when they replaced the patrol deputies who were responding to a demonstration. The plainclothes deputies in jumpsuits were responsible to handle calls for service from the community.

The deputies were required to carry their jumpsuits in the trunks of their cars. If patrol deputies responded to an unruly demonstration, the undercover deputies would place the jumpsuits and their Sam Browne belts over their civilian clothes.

Jumpsuits were soon adopted by Narcotics deputies 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 Nomex flame resistant jumpsuits to be worn by pilots and observers. These tan jumpsuits were worn for five years, until 1978 when they changed to military green Nomex jumpsuits.

In 1973, Deputy Kenneth Sutherland was assigned to work in a traffic car at Lennox Sheriff's Station. He was the first deputy at the station to be certified as a Commercial Enforcement Traffic Officer. As a Commercial Enforcement Officer, he was required to crawl under semi-trucks and trailers to inspect their brakes. When he conducted these inspections, his uniform became very dirty. Sutherland requested approval to wear a jumpsuit over his uniform when he was crawling under vehicles to conduct inspections. Deputy Sutherland was given permission to wear the jumpsuit and within a year, all Commercial Enforcement Traffic Officers were given approval to wear the jumpsuits.

In 1975, jumpsuits were the authorized uniform for Special Operations and Search Teams at the Hall of Justice Jail. Once SOS Teams were formed at other custody facilities, their official uniform was the jumpsuit.

In 1977, Arson Explosives Detail investigators began wearing orange, flame-resistant jumpsuits. The orange color allowed the investigators to easily be located at a crime scene. In order to make the investigators more easily identifiable while they were wearing the jumpsuits, Sheriff's patches were attached to the shoulders and a cloth badge to the front. On the back of the jumpsuit was a large emblem with the words "Bomb Squad."

Raid Jackets

1n 1974, Carl Seltzer, the captain of Narcotics Bureau, ordered Sgt. Ed Ward to go to nearby Chinatown to take photos of deputies wearing the raid jackets The Narcotics crew spent the entire day in Chinatown photographing deputies wearing the raid jackets. Sergeant Ward took photos using a Polaroid camera, so the prints developed in minutes. The deputies would return to the Hall of Justice where the captain rejected their photos over and over again because there were wrinkles visible in the raid jackets in the photos. Sergeant Ward and his crew repeated the procedure of taking photos in Chinatown and then reporting back to the captain at the Hall of Justice to approve them. The captain was not satisfied until there were no wrinkles visible in the raid jackets in the photos that were taken.

Captain Seltzer submitted the final approved photos, along with a proposal for Narcotics deputies to wear the raid jackets. Once they were approved, Narcotics deputies found it easier and more convenient to quickly throw on a raid jacket instead of having to 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 more readily identifiable by gang members. Gang members wouldn't talk to deputies in uniform or detectives wearing suits because they appeared more official. But when they saw deputies in a raid jacket they knew these deputies 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. Many times they had to chase and fight with gang members they were attempting to question, apprehend or arrest. They decided not to wear leather Sam Browne belts and accessories because they were too 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. The belt buckle was the type where the belt looped back through. The belts had a carabineer sewn to it that OSS deputies used to rappel down walls. On the belts were nylon holsters, cuff case with cuffs and a flashlight holder. Eventually they evolved to wearing nylon Sam Brownes with nylon accessories.

Unauthorized Uniform Equipment

In the early 1970s, just after the East Los Angeles riots in 1970 and 1971, law enforcement officers were accused of being too militaristic. They were called the occupying army. Because of this, the captains of some Sheriff's stations tried to get away from the military appearance by imposing restrictions on what accessories could be worn with Class A uniforms. At East L. A. Station, deputies were not allowed to wear boots or to have two handcuff cases on their Sam Brownes or carry backup guns. Deputies were also told not to carry knifes, especially on their Sam Brownes.

Deputies carried .38 revolvers at that time but were allowed to carry .357 revolvers as long as they loaded them with .38 ammo. Some deputies used .357 ammo, but when they became involved in a shooting, they were disciplined for using unauthorized ammo.

A Traditional Uniform

The current Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Class "A" uniform has evolved over the years to the professional looking Sheriff's Uniform of today. The uniform is worn by deputies throughout the department as they work most assignments to provide law enforcement services to the communities they serve. The badge and patches on the uniform identify deputies as members of the largest Sheriff's Department in the country and provide a sense of pride to deputies wearing it.