

Request 125

Police Services Study Fact Sheet No. 5

KANSAS CITY AREA METRO SQUAD

by

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Kansas City MO Police Department

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ACQUISITIONS

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WORKSHOP

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KANSAS CITY AREA METRO SQUAD

Formation

Former Chief Clarence M. Kelley of the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department suggested the formation of the Metro Squad in December, 1963, at the monthly meeting of the Kansas City Metropolitan Chiefs and Sheriffs Association. This was proposed because many smaller jurisdictions in the five county, two state Kansas City metropolitan area needed assistance when solving a major crime. Furthermore, because of the numerous jurisdictions in the greater metropolitan area, criminals tended to commit crimes in one jurisdiction while they resided in another. This aspect became more complicated when criminals crossed state boundaries to perpetrate crimes.

The formation of the Metro Squad was approved by members of the Kansas City Metropolitan Chiefs and Sheriffs Association in January, 1964. Members of the Association were requested to select members of their respective agencies whom they believed could work well in this type of setting. Members were to be chosen for their enthusiastic approach toward law enforcement rather than for their experience.

By-laws of the Metro Squad were established by the association prior to training of members.

Members

Initially, it was estimated approximately 40 men were all that could be expected from the participating agencies. However, when the recommendations were received, 90 officers from 29 agencies indicated they were interested in attending the Metro Squad training session. Ten years later the squad consisted of 299 officers from 44 agencies and served Cass County, Missouri, in addition to the original five of Jackson, Clay and Platte Counties in Missouri and Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas.

Legality

The legality of search, seizure, and arrest by officers of a foreign jurisdiction was an issue which had to be resolved. As a result of consultations with several prosecuting attorneys, determination was made that visiting officers could conduct crime scene searches, interviews and interrogations, but arrests would have to be made by officers having legal jurisdiction where the arrests were effected.

Training

The first training session was held in January, 1964, with 91 officers in attendance. Three F.B.I. Agents constituted the core of the instruction

staff and were aided by local area persons having expertise in certain fields. This first session was held at the Kansas City, Missouri Police Academy. By-laws of the Metro Squad require 40 hours of instruction to new members in the areas of search and seizure, interrogation techniques, report writing, use of the polygraph, crime scene searches and preservation of evidence. Furthermore, all new members are given a practical problem which they solve together on the sixth day of training. The purpose of this exercise is to acquaint new members with various procedures utilized by the Metro Squad with emphasis placed on the fact that procedures will probably be different than those of the officers' home agencies. This instruction is given once a year, if necessary, at a central location by local area authorities.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Metro Squad is composed of two (2) representatives each from Missouri and Kansas. These representatives may be either a Police Chief or a Sheriff (they must be the head of their agency). This totals four (4) board members. Directors are elected by the Kansas City Metropolitan Chiefs and Sheriffs Association.

Staff Officers

The Officer in Charge is permanently appointed by the Board of Directors and is delegated to direct all Metro Squad investigations. Below him are six (6) staff officers appointed by the Directors upon recommendation of the Officer in Charge. These officers are: (1) Personnel Officer; (2) Investigative Officer; (3) Equipment Officer; (4) Report Officer; (5) Evidence Officer; and (6) Press Officer. The Officer in Charge has full authority to issue orders and instructions to all personnel, regardless of their agency or rank, who are working a case. The Officer in Charge may also appoint additional supervisory personnel as he deems necessary.

The Personnel Officer has a complete record of each member of the squad regarding his experience and training, with any specialized capabilities listed. The Investigative Officer is Chief Assistant to the Officer in Charge and assumes control of the crime scene and all following investigation. The Equipment Officer is responsible for the condition and availability of all property and equipment which may be used. The Report Officer is responsible for receiving, editing, indexing, filing, summarizing, and reviewing all case reports and for supervising assigned clerical employees. The Evidence Officer is responsible for examining the crime scene, protecting the chain of evidence, and for proper handling and preservation of evidence from the crime scene through the various administrative procedures to the laboratory and its return until final use in trial. The Press Officer handles all phases of news coverage, as directed by the Officer in Charge, and serves as liaison officer with the press. He is also the only person allowed to make press releases and must be available at all times for this purpose.

Activation

The by-laws of the Metro Squad state an agency desiring to utilize it must notify the Officer in Charge who notifies a director in the state where the crime occurred within eight (8) hours after discovery of the crime. The decision of a director is final although he may confer with the other directors before making a decision regarding activation. Although the complement of officers will vary with each case, a normal complement numbers between 20 and 30 officers and has been as high as 77. The requesting agency determines the number of investigators needed. Occasionally, when more than one serious crime occurs in the same relative time span, the Metro Squad will have more than one squad working on different cases simultaneously. Also, when dual jurisdiction in a particular crime exists between local and federal authorities, the Metro Squad will not activate.

Assessment

The Metro Squad has been activated 79 times from 1964 through 1974 inclusive. Although it will investigate any crime which poses a threat to the community, the squad thus far has been activated only for homicides with one exception which was a bombing. The Metro Squad has cleared over 70% of the cases they have investigated. One reason for the success of this organization appears to be the enthusiasm of the members. However, the key factor, from the origin to the present, is the capability of the entire organization to work together without dissension or jealousy and the ability to concentrate on the specific crime and completely saturate the area quickly with manpower.

END

7 miles/min