

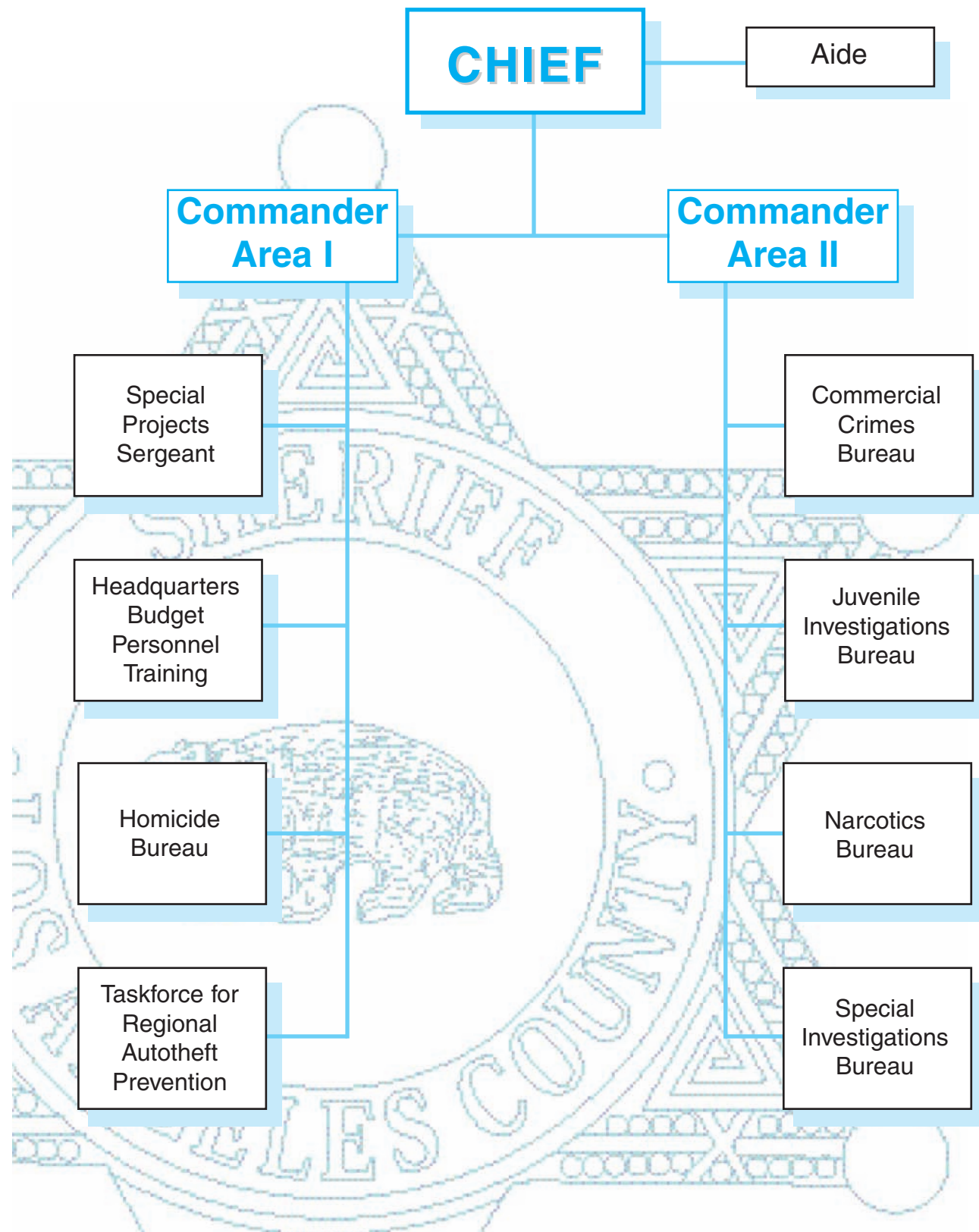


DETECTIVE DIVISION



Y E A R I N R E V I E W • 1 9 9 8

DETECTIVE DIVISION



DETECTIVE DIVISION

This Division is responsible for the investigation of crimes, identification and apprehension of criminals, recovery of property, identification and preservation of evidence, and assistance in the preparation of cases for court. Detective Division consists of Commercial Crimes Bureau, Homicide Bureau, Juvenile Investigations Bureau, Narcotics Bureau, Special Investigations Bureau and the Task Force for Regional Autotheft Prevention (TRAP).

COMMERCIAL CRIMES BUREAU

Commercial Crimes Bureau is the highlighted unit for The Detective Division. (see page 100)

HOMICIDE BUREAU

The Homicide Bureau is responsible for the investigation of all



Captain Donald L. Mauro
Homicide Bureau

homicides and questionable deaths which occur within the Sheriff's jurisdiction and participating independent cities. The Bureau is also responsible for the criminal investigation of all deputy-involved shootings within the Sheriff's jurisdiction. In addition, at the request of an independent city, a criminal investigation will be instigated for officer-involved shootings in which anyone is injured or killed. Questionable deaths are noncriminal in nature and include suicides, accidental deaths, drug overdoses, industrial accidents and infant deaths. The Bureau also consists of a Missing

Persons Unit, an Unsolved Unit, and a Foreign Prosecution Unit.

The Bureau investigated 341 homicides during 1998, a slight decrease from 1997. Of these homicides, 74 were investigated at the request of independent agencies throughout the County. Of significance were the 129 gang-related murders, which represent more than 37 percent of all the homicides investigated by this Bureau. Additionally, there were 492 questionable death cases investigated during the year.

While the number of homicides is at its lowest since 1988, the fact that over one-third of them are gang-related is a startling reminder of the violence and human destruction that gangs wreak on the communities of Los Angeles County.

JUVENILE INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU

The Juvenile Investigations Bureau handles all sexual and physical abuse cases involving children as victims. The bureau is staffed by 46 sworn and 16 civilian personnel, and is supported by a staff of volunteers and reserves. The personnel are special and unique individuals, who, on a daily basis, must provide for children who have been physically or sexually abused, or otherwise scarred for life by people they once trusted.

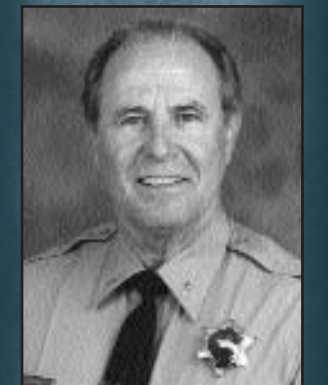
The Juvenile Investigations Bureau is headquartered at STARS Center. In addition to the command and operational staff, the offices house the Child Abuse Referral and Intake Desk, a state-of-the-art audio and visually equipped child interview room, and the South and West investigative teams. There are four investigative teams at the JIB. Each team is supervised by a sergeant.



Chief Helena Ashby
Detective Division



Commander Alan L. Chancellor
Area I



Commander Frank Vadurro
Area II



*Captain Jay A. Sowards
Juvenile Investigations
Bureau*

The South Team is responsible for cases emanating from Lakewood, Norwalk, Pico Rivera, and Avalon Station areas. This past year, this team handled several newsworthy cases, two of which involved very young girls who were brutally beaten and raped. In one of the cases, the suspect faces “three strikes” prosecution.

The West Team handles cases emanating from areas served by Century, Lomita, West Hollywood, Lost Hills, Carson, and Lennox Stations.

The North Team works out of the old, but renovated, Antelope Valley Station. It handles cases emanating from the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, and Crescenta Valley Station areas. The North Team leads the County in the number of child abuse cases handled. Several high profile cases were handled in 1998, including one where the suspect is a highly regarded professional.

The East Team has an office in West Covina, and provides services to stations

in the San Gabriel Valley and East Los Angeles county areas. Investigators are assigned to handle cases reported by Industry, Walnut, Temple, and East Los Angeles Stations. The West Covina office is equipped with a child interview room that presents a comfortable, nonthreatening environment for suitable and confidential services.

The Juvenile Investigations Bureau works closely with the Department of Children and Family Services, and has membership on several committees of the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN).

Personnel are actively involved in monthly meetings, where they provide input into issues involving child abuse from a law enforcement perspective.

Juvenile Investigations Bureau Caseload by Station Area 1995 through 1998

Station	1995	1996	1997	1998
Avalon	9	5	5	7
Carson	143	162	146	167
Century*	300	287	246	280
Crescenta Valley / Altadena	75	98	96	67
East Los Angeles	213	242	224	185
Firestone*	*	*	*	*
Industry	196	199	178	162
Lakewood	351	322	364	356
Lancaster	553	630	654	327
Lennox	188	186	169	169
Lomita	55	80	51	53
Lost Hills / Malibu	41	48	62	43
Lynwood*	*	*	*	*
Marina Del Rey	19	27	21	27
Norwalk	267	229	283	241
Palmdale	**	**	**	**
Pico Rivera	94	125	116	87
Santa Clarita Valley	156	192	180	171
Temple City	141	177	166	159
Walnut / San Dimas	238	198	213	175
West Hollywood	19	24	19	21

*In mid-1994, Firestone and Lynwood Stations merged to form Century Station.

**Palmdale Station data included with Lancaster's

Juvenile Investigations Bureau Caseload Data 1998

Cases Investigated	2,986
*Physical Abuse Cases	1,248
Male Victims	811
Female Victims	860
*Sexual Abuse Cases	1,738
Male Victims	411
Female Victims	1,729
Suspects Arrested by JIB Personnel	762
Children Taken into Protective Custody	457

*One child abuse case may involve more than one Victim.

Juvenile Investigations Bureau personnel actively participate in several multidisciplinary child abuse centers located throughout Los Angeles County. Four centers of particular importance are the Harbor-UCLA Child Sexual Abuse Crisis Center, the Antelope Valley Abuse Network Team (AVANT), the Stuart House in Santa Monica, and the Vulnerable Child Unit at USC Medical Center. Each of these locations provides a network of child protective services, including medical and psychological screening and evaluations. In addition, each of these locations provides prosecutorial services, which involve the Juvenile Investigations Bureau working in concert with the District Attorney's Office in prosecuting offenders. These centers provide what amounts to a “one stop shop” investigation which greatly aids child abuse victims and their families.

Juvenile Investigations Bureau personnel have frequently devoted their personal time and effort to helping child abuse victims and their families, by establishing or participating in fund raisers designed to offset the costs of medical care resulting from these child abuse assaults.

Safe Team

The Juvenile Investigations Bureau participates in a partially federally-funded task force specializing in child pornography on the “Internet.” Two investigators assigned to JIB are members of this specialized team known as the Sexual Abuse Felony Enforcement Team (SAFE). This team comprises federal, state, county, and local law enforcement agencies. Members work together to enforce several new laws dealing with child exploitation.

At the present time, a feasibility study is underway to determine if the Juvenile Investigations Bureau should expand its investigative responsibilities to include designated domestic violence, child death, and elder abuse cases. The bureau's name would be changed to Family Investigative Services Bureau, adding two details and several personnel

to augment the present staffing of the four investigative teams.

NARCOTICS BUREAU

Narcotics Bureau is responsible for the investigation of cases involving the use, possession, sale, manufacture, and transportation of controlled substances. The Bureau's other responsibilities include the disposal of controlled substances, providing specialized narcotics training, directing all financial asset seizures/forfeitures relative to narcotic activities, making public appearances, liaison with the County of Los Angeles Narcotics and Dangerous Drug Commission, and participation in multi agency task forces.

The Sheriff's Department drug seizures statistics mirrored a disturbing nationwide trend during 1998. Heroin, cocaine and marijuana seizures increased significantly. Heroin, in particular, increase more than 300%.



*Captain Al Scaduto
Narcotics Bureau*

Narcotics Bureau Drug Seizures and Arrest

	1997	1998	%Change
Heroin (lbs.)	6.2	19.3	+211
Cocaine (lbs.)	2194	5964	+172
Marijuana (lbs.)	11910	17971	+51
Methamphetamine (lbs.)	346	230	-34
Arrests	26220	24999	-5
Search Warrants	710	678	-5
Cash Assets	\$11,969,054	\$14,382,167	+20

In fact, heroin is being smuggled into the United States in increasing amounts. Traditional sources of heroin, such as the “golden triangle” of Southeast Asia, are being supplemented by record amounts of heroin from Mexico and Colombia, as drug organizations discover that the profit margin from heroin is larger than that of any other drug. In the past, successful heroin investigations would yield seizures measured in ounces, whereas many recent Narcotics Bureau investigations have yielded heroin seizures in the multi-pound range.

Significant Investigations

The theft of vehicles by means of fraudulent application continues to be a big problem in Los Angeles County. These fraudulent applications are completed using stolen credit cards, fake identification and other elaborate methods. Once the initial down payment is received by the dealership and the thief has obtained possession of the car, no other payments are made. In one such case, a TRAP detective was notified that a suspect he was searching for in a series of fraudulent new car leases had been arrested by the Culver City Police Department for credit card fraud at the Fox Hills Mall. Sufficient information was obtained to have search warrants issued. As a result, information was revealed about a fictitious real estate firm that was used to procure victims' credit histories. Those credit histories were subsequently used to commit fraud. This one criminal enterprise was responsible for losses approaching \$1,000,000.

Stealing cars and shipping them out of the country is still popular with the criminal element. In one case, TRAP detectives assigned to the West Team conducted a surveillance in the Rampart area. This surveillance led to the recovery of three stolen vehicles that had been sub-plated. With the information they obtained at the first address, they were able to obtain a search warrant, endorsed for nighttime service, for two locations in the San Fernando Valley where were recovered 12 more stolen vehicles. One of the main suspects in this investigation indicated that all of the vehicles recovered were to be shipped in cargo containers to the Philippines.

While conducting an investigation of two Ford Explorers that were possibly stolen, detectives zeroed in on what appeared to be a ring of thieves that stole sport utility vehicles. This ring was apparently sophisticated enough to alter the VIN in a manner in which it would still conform to manufacturer specifications. Although some of the vehicles in question were kept for personal use, most were sold to innocent purchasers. By tediously inspecting and

experimenting with possible VIN switched numbers, detectives were able to come up with 15 additional suspected stolen and VIN switched vehicles.

Taskforce for Regional Autotheft Prevention (TRAP)

TRAP is an integrated, multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency, task force, using local dollars to enhance the ability of local law enforcement agencies, in concert with other criminal justice entities, to investigate, prosecute, and deter vehicle theft crime in Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC) is responsible for the program, which is chaired by the Chairperson of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Executive oversight and policy are provided by the CCJCC's Steering Committee, chaired by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's (LASD) Chief of Detectives.

TRAP's organizational structure comprises a Program Director (LASD Captain), two Area Lieutenants (one LASD, one LAPD) who each command three of the six regional teams, and six Team Supervisors who lead each of the six respective teams.

The teams include investigators from the Los Angeles Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, 13 participating agencies, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The teams are supported by two District Attorneys from the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. In addition, there are liaison personnel from the Probation Department, the Department of Motor Vehicles, United States Customs, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), and the California State Insurance Commission.

TRAP has completed six years of operations and has experienced early and continued success in apprehending professional, career criminal vehicle theft ring members and in the recovery and seizure of a high number of stolen vehicles. These seizures have resulted in 2,512 arrests and filings, the serving

of 1,388 warrants, the inspection of 2,025 repair/restructuring businesses, and the seizure and recovery of 6,104 stolen vehicles valued at more than \$89.5 million.

AB 183 (Washington)- EXTENSION OF SUNSET CLAUSE:

At the direction of the Los Angeles Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC), TRAP has initiated liaison with law enforcement agencies, other regional vehicle theft task forces, and private sector organizations (i.e., AAA, NICB) to develop strategies and legislative initiatives to extend TRAP and other task forces beyond the sunset date of December 31, 1999. Statewide meetings have been held to develop a proposed bill and identify legislative sponsors.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU

The Special Investigations Bureau comprises details whose responsibilities range from kidnaping and involved conspiracies, to gaming violations and prostitution.

Metro Detail

The Metro Detail experienced a phenomenal year in 1998. They handled eight kidnaping cases in which all the victims were returned unharmed and the suspects arrested. This detail also investigated eight attempt murder-for-hire cases and two major extortion cases. In all ten of these cases, the victims escaped unharmed and the suspects were arrested. Eighty escapes and twenty-three erroneous releases were also handled, with a 98% capture rate. This detail received 12,848 felony warrants, and 214 suspects were captured. Five hundred and sixty-seven extraditions were received, and 155 felony suspects were returned.

In addition, two Metro detectives were assigned to the Violent Offenders Work Group housed with the FBI in Westwood. They have targeted high-risk

murder suspects and have arrested more than 1,000 violent and dangerous suspects.

Organized Crime Detail

The Organized Crime Unit has the responsibility of investigating crimes which involve organized criminal enterprises. These enterprises often target victims within our various ethnic cultures and communities. The following are examples of some of the many successful accomplishments of this unit during the last year.

Four members of a Russian criminal enterprise were arrested for multiple counts of burglary and grand theft. Their scheme involved fraudulent transactions with a major clothing store's merchandise, with losses of more than one million dollars. Detectives also dismantled a Russian criminal enterprise which produced counterfeit bail bonds, following the fraudulent release/escape from Sheriff's custody of two inmates.

Three individuals from the Peoples Republic of China, who were Triad members, were arrested for the extortion of several seafood businesses throughout California. The arrests foiled the Triad's attempt to take over seafood distribution in every Asian restaurant within our state.

Detectives solved six Asian murders which occurred in Sheriff's jurisdiction, the city of Los Angeles and Northern California. These murders had no previous leads.

Fifteen agencies joined in the monitoring of the annual Laughlin Nevada Bike Run. Two thousand outlaw motorcycle gang members were observed and 22 arrests were made for various felonies.

Detectives assisted in an investigation where multiple search warrants were served regarding the Diablos Motorcycle gang. Sixteen arrests were made in three states and several weapons confiscated. As a result of a task force operation, 33 Vagos Motorcycle gang members were



Captain Norman L. Smith
Special Investigations Bureau



Captain John S. Bryan
Taskforce for Regional
Autotheft Prevention

arrested and 13 search warrants were served in five counties within two states.

Prison Gang Detail

The Prison Gang Detail has the mission of disrupting the criminal organizations of California prison gangs. This year, the Prison Gang Detail was a central part of the Federal Metropolitan Gang work group which indicted an additional 16 leaders of the Mexican Mafia. This was phase II of the landmark RICO prosecution and conviction of 21 key members that occurred in 1997. The Assistant United States Attorneys assigned to the case have indicated that they will seek the death penalty against some of the suspects.

In 1998 the Prison Gang Surveillance/Apprehension Team continued to be an "in demand" Division resource. The team continues to specialize in high profile assignments, such as kidnap-for-ransom cases, homicides, extortions, solicitations for murder, escapes, and other sensitive cases.

Vice Detail

In 1998, the Gaming Crew continued their efforts in the identification and eradication of illegal gaming devices throughout Los Angeles County. Of note was a six-month case allegedly involving the Israeli Mafia, which resulted in 11 arrests and the seizure of more than 84 illegal slot machines. The crew seized more than 560 illegal slot machines in 1998, as well as handling countywide incidents of illegal gambling.

A booming economy propelled illegal sports betting to new highs in Los Angeles County. The Bookmaking Crew served more than 78 search warrants in 1998, putting out of business dozens of bookmaking organizations grossing more than \$150,000,000 in illegal annual revenues.

The highlight of the Casino Operations Crew in 1998 was the opening of the Hawaiian Gardens Casino. This entailed weeks of meetings to structure local ordinances to comply with state regulatory requirements, as well as the processing and background investigations of more than 141 casino employees.

The Morals Crew closed sixteen massage parlors that were fronts for prostitution in the San Gabriel Valley in 1998. These locations required undercover work and the assistance of License Detail investigators to accomplish this feat. The crew also spent a great deal of time training station COPS team members in both prostitution abatement and lewd conduct investigations. The goal was to make those teams self-sufficient, and to free up the Morals Crew to work more intricate and detailed undercover operations.

The License Detail processed 1,332 new business applications and license permits, and 490 applications and license renewals. In addition, they conducted 271 complaint investigations, 928 business inspections and 577 fingerprint assessments for the Treasurer-Tax Collector's office. Seventy of the license applications were denied, and there were six business license revocations as a result of criminal activities which included gambling, prostitution, gang activity and drug trafficking. This Detail generated \$75,810 in revenue for the Sheriff Department's general account, based on billings to the contract cities.

The Pawns Detail conducted 1,994 pawn shop and secondhand dealer inspections, and 405 investigations. This detail also processed 431,881 pawn slips. The total value of stolen property recovered was approximately \$150,000.