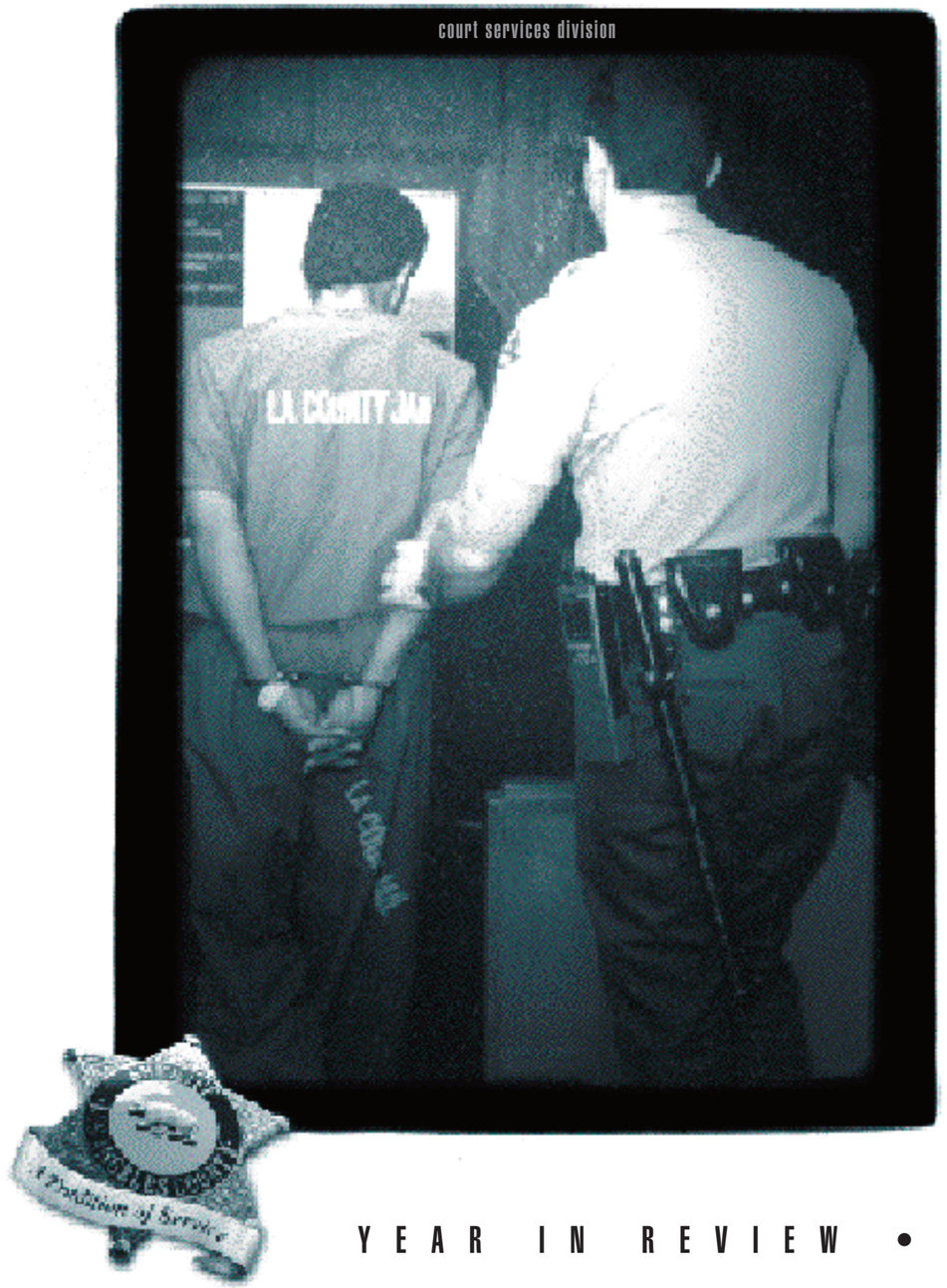
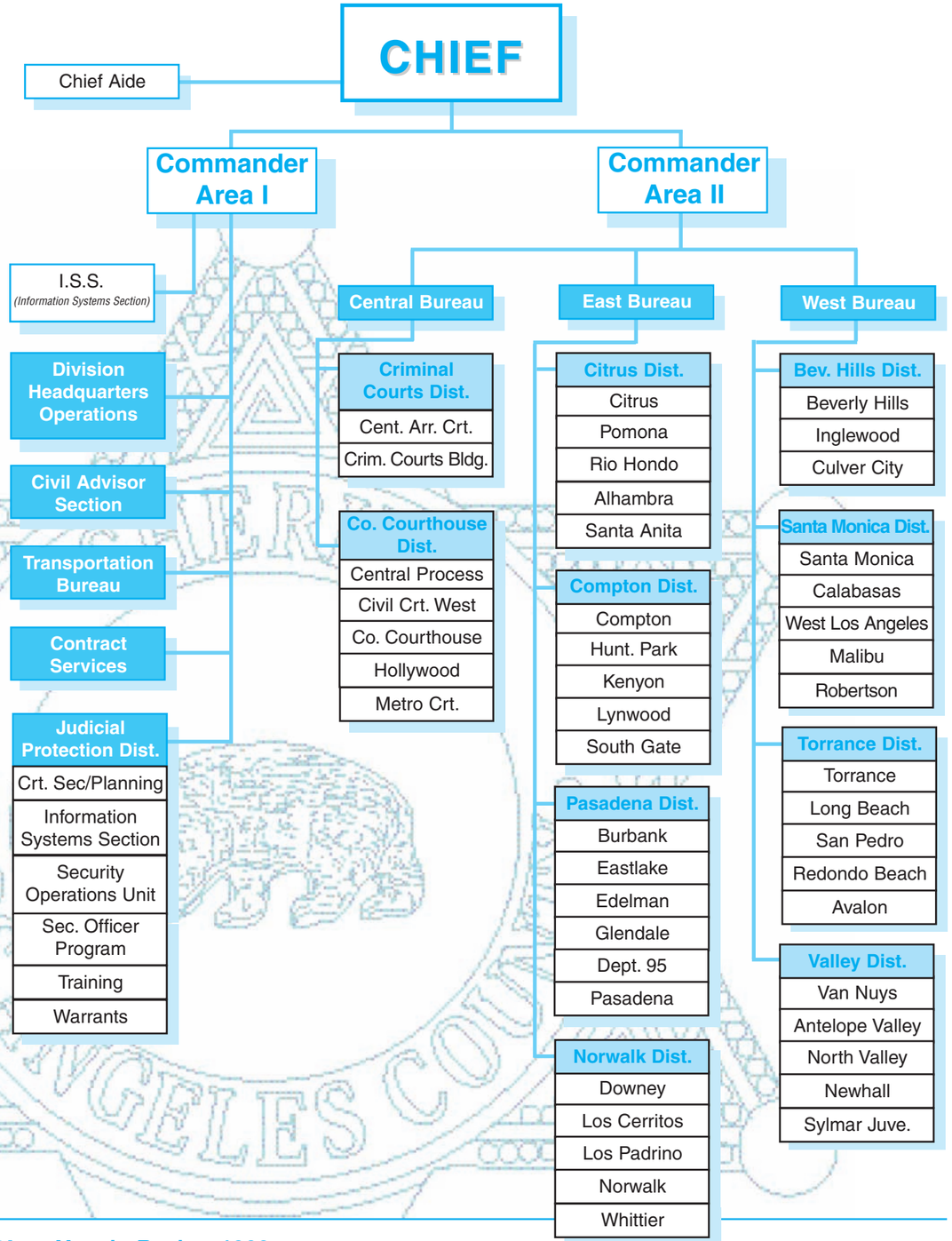


Court Services Division

YEAR IN REVIEW • 1998

COURT SERVICES DIVISION



COURT SERVICES DIVISION

Court Services Division is tasked with the security of all Superior and Municipal Courts in the County of Los Angeles, which encompasses providing bailiffs, prisoner detention and transportation, serving and enforcing all civil and criminal processes and judicial protection. The Division, which is the second largest in the Department, consists of 1,478 sworn members and 385 civilians. The Division is made up of four Bureaus: Central, East, West and Transportation, and the Judicial Protection District Unit.

During 1998, the Division handled 309,642 pieces of civil and criminal processes, resulting in $75,720,919 in court-ordered collections and $10,918,271 in fees for services. Of those fees, $9,259,692 was channeled into revenue for the Department, to partially offset the costs of Division operations.

Throughout the year, the Division continued to hire and train armed Security Officers and unarmed Security Assistants. These new positions included weapon security screening at many courthouses, as well as guarding other Department facilities.

The Division continued to make progress in managing the Trial Court Funding Contract. At almost 100 million dollars, it is, by far, the largest contract for the Department. Coordinating the services, billings and payments for the numerous entities involved has been an ongoing challenge that has directly or indirectly affected nearly every employee of the Division.

JUDICIAL PROTECTION DISTRICT

The Judicial Protection District consists of five distinct units:

Court Security & Planning

This unit is responsible for evaluating the physical security needs of the courts and ensuring that the Department's security requirements are adhered to on all new and renovation projects.

Other duties performed include assisting with dignitary and witness protection and training. In addition, in 1998 the Security Officer Program was merged into the unit, and introduction of various automated computer systems into the court lockups became the responsibility of the Court Security & Planning Unit. Over the past twelve months the following three automated computer systems have been implemented:

Live Scan Release Project

This system makes it possible to release inmates directly from the courthouse, instead of transporting them to the Inmate Reception Center for processing.

DIMMS (Defendant Inmate Movement Management System)

Fifty-one courts are currently using this computer system. DIMMS gives Court Services Division personnel access to AJIS and other law enforcement computer systems which track and process inmates.

Sheriff's Security Officer Program

The Sheriff's Security Officer Program provides security at various courthouses, Custody and other Department facilities.

Security Operations Unit

This is a tactical unit that investigates threats made against Superior and Municipal Court Judges, members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Chief Administrative Officer and other County elected officials. Additionally, a member of the Security Operations

Chief Robert F. Mann
Court Services Division

Commander Michael I. Quinn
Area I

Commander Patrick J. Holland
Area II

Captain Jeffrey B. Springs
Court Services Central Bureau

Unit fills the position of Sergeant-at-Arms when the Board is in session.

When needed, security, protection and transportation is provided for elected officials and dignitaries. The unit is tasked with assessing the security needs for high profile, high risk cases, and developing operational plans to ensure the optimum level of security.

Training Unit

The Training unit provides Continued Professional Training (CPT), which is job-specific training. It coordinates specialized training for both sworn and civilian personnel.

During 1998, the unit trained approximately 1,500 Court Services Division personnel and 200 other employees from the Department's Advanced Training Bureau and from private agencies.

An automated tracking and recording system was developed for the unit's training program. This system has the capability of producing management reports instantly.

Warrant Unit (Detail)

This unit serves "priority" bench warrants, and felony and misdemeanor criminal warrants issued by the Courts of Los Angeles County. During the year, the unit received 818 priority warrants which were assigned to deputies for investigation. The unit also provided assistance to the Security Operations Unit, Civil Branches, Detective Division, the Warrants & Detainers Unit, and the County Probation Department in serving warrants.

Information Systems Section (ISS)

The primary function of this unit is to supply support for the Division's "Modified Automated Processing and Accounting System" (MAPAS). Additionally, the members of this unit are tasked with the accounting of all earned fees, and of trust funds received and disbursed within the MAPAS system.

During 1998, ISS oversaw the receipt and disbursement of more than $9,259,692 in earned fees and $75,720,919 in trust disbursements.

CENTRAL BUREAU

Court Services Central Bureau provides service to the Criminal Courts Building, County Courthouse, Central Arraignment, Hollywood, Central Civil West and Metropolitan Courts. It also operates the Los Angeles Process Branch which provides all civil process services for the central Los Angeles and Hollywood areas.

Los Angeles County Courthouse

The County Courthouse is the largest court facility in the County with 79 Superior Courts and 26 Municipal Courts. Approximately 8,000 people come though the doors of the courthouse on a daily basis. Since it is a Civil courthouse, the number of in-custody defendants for 1998 was only 443.

The Los Angeles Civil Process Branch is the largest civil process branch in the County, handling in excess of 3,500 civil claims a month, and from $50,000 to $250,000 dollars a day.

Criminal Courts Building

In 1998 more than two million people passed through its doors, and, in the midst of a rather hectic environment, the First Impressions Program continued, bringing more than 2,000 school children into the courthouse. Sixty courtrooms and the Grand Jury provided service to 114,942 in-custody persons.

The Criminal Courts Building was one of several chosen for the Live Scan pilot program. During the year, there were approximately 3,000 inmates checked for release eligibility, with approximately 350-400 on-site releases.

The “Black Gorilla Family” trial of three defendants for multiple robbery charges, and an attempted murder of a police officer, was also held at the Court.

Central Civil West Court

Central Civil West reflects a unique environment, with its sixteen Superior Courts housed in a leased office building. CCW specializes in divorce and child support cases, and has two criminal failure-to-provide child support courts.

Central Arraignment Court

This is a satellite courthouse of the CCB. It is a Municipal Arraignment Court consisting of four courtrooms into which approximately 450 persons enter daily. The monthly custody count fluctuates between 1,700 and 1,900, with a daily average custody count of 95.

Hollywood Court

Hollywood Court operates three courtrooms, handling 8,187 defendants in 1998.

Metropolitan Court

Metropolitan Court provides service to more than seven thousand people daily. In 1998, the number of inmates in the system exceeded 25,000, resulting in the courts handling more than 1,100 cases daily. Throughout the year, the vehicle inspection station inspected 21,303 vehicles for mechanical violation corrections.

EAST BUREAU

Their responsibilities include the coordination of 220 bailiffs for 211 Municipal and Superior Court Bench Officers. In 1998, East Bureau was responsible for the security, movement, and processing of 224,232 inmates by 106 deputies.

Services are provided to the following courts: Alhambra, Citrus, Pomona-Municipal, Pomona-Superior, Rio Hondo, Santa Anita, Compton, Huntington Park, Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center, Lynwood Regional Justice Center, South Gate, Downey, East Los Angeles, Los Cerritos/Bellflower, Los Padrinos Juvenile Court, Norwalk, Whittier, Burbank, Eastlake, Edelman Children’s Court, Glendale, Mental Health and Pasadena.

In 1998, the receipt and service of 98,690 pieces of civil and criminal process were accomplished by 27 court record systems clerks, 16 deputies assigned to field process and 20 court services specialists. East Bureau personnel conducted 25,285 vehicle inspections during the year.

On June 1, 1998, an out-of-custody inmate was convicted in a criminal trial in Compton Court. He stabbed one deputy in the chest, collapsing her lung. He attempted to stab another deputy in the throat before he was shot and killed. The entire incident occurred in the courtroom, in front of the jury for that case. The Homicide Bureau, the judge, and the attorneys commended our personnel for handing this incident in an appropriate, yet professional manner.

Huntington Park Court

This is one of the older courthouses in East Bureau. The metal screening program has been implemented for added security. Plans are in the developmental stages to build a new courthouse which would house the current Huntington Park and South Gate courts.

Pomona Municipal Court

A unique “Readiness Conference” program was instituted. This conference is scheduled each Friday, and requires both attorneys and defendants be present. The Court requires all cases to be ready for trial, otherwise, a plea must be taken on that Friday. Should a continuance be requested, that motion must be filed no later than Thursday - the day before the Readiness Conference. This process resulted in a savings of overtime for those subpoenaed officers whose testimony was no longer needed.

Captain Danny Kammerer
Court Services East Bureau

Whittier Court

All cases involving a charge of escape are filed in this court. Whittier Court handled more than 12,500 inmates during the year, including the high-risk, escape inmates.

Captain Irene Mc Reynolds
Court Services West Bureau

WEST BUREAU

The courts serviced by West Bureau are Antelope Valley (Superior and Municipal), Valencia/Newhall, Sylmar Juvenile, North Valley (San Fernando), Van Nuys (Superior and Municipal), Santa Monica, West Los Angeles, Robertson, Malibu, Calabasas, Beverly Hills, Culver City, Inglewood (Superior and Municipal), Torrance, Redondo Beach, San Pedro, Catalina Island/ Avalon, Long Beach (Superior and Municipal), and the LAX Court, which is under construction and staffed by a transition team.

The Bureau's staffing of 558 employees includes 429 sworn and 129 civilian staff members. During 1998, West Bureau personnel served 105,598 pieces of civil and criminal process. Additionally, 6,339,723 persons passed through weapons screening, 20,600 vehicle inspections were completed, and 211,632 prisoners were processed through West Bureau lockups.

West Bureau was the host to many trials involving celebrities. Arnell Simpson (O.J. Simpson's daughter), rocker Tommy Lee, pop music artist George Michael, and rapper "Old Dirty Bastard" were all defendants at Beverly Hills Court. Roger Clinton, the brother of President Clinton, and actress Elizabeth Taylor's ex-husband, Larry Fortensky, were tried at Torrance Court. Santa Monica Court was the site of trials for Whitewater figure Susan McDougal; Mikail Markhasev, the man convicted of the murder of Bill Cosby's son, Enos; Steven Spielberg's accused stalker; and Thomas Orr, who was convicted of assaulting actress Farah Fawcett. Van Nuys Court held the trial of actor Alec Baldwin, who was accused of assaulting a photographer.

Antelope Valley Court

Antelope Valley Court opened a new Juvenile Dependency Court, and a Juvenile Delinquency Court was opened in the "refurbished" Antelope Valley Sheriff's station. The 24 sworn and six civilian personnel of Antelope Valley Court processed more than 480,000 persons through weapons screening, and 18,648 inmates through its lockup.

Inglewood Court

The 27 sworn and 17 civilians assigned to Inglewood Court processed 221,563 persons through its weapons screening, processed 16,374 inmates through its lockups, and served 17,622 pieces of civil process. Inglewood Court was the host to several high-profile cases; one being the trial of the defendants in a gang-related shooting in which two children were with their mother in a parked car. Gang members pulled up and began shooting, striking both children in the head. One child died, the other survived, but lost an eye. Another trial was that of the Hollywood Park Casino incident, where a woman was followed home, sexually assaulted, and then killed. Her body was found burned in the trunk of a car.

Long Beach Court

The 57 sworn and nine civilian personnel of Long Beach Court processed 985,102 persons through its weapons screening, processed 43,859 prisoners through its lockup, served 12,023 pieces of civil process, and inspected 3,157 vehicles. Long Beach Court held several high-security trials, including that of a man accused of killing a store clerk. This case was aired on "America's Most Wanted." Long Beach Court was also the site of the Judge-ordered electronic stun belt activation on a defendant, whose case then received national media attention.

Of particular significance is the fact that Long Beach Court personnel were the recipients of a unit-level certificate and commendation for exemplary teamwork and attendance.

North Valley Court

This facility reopened in January, 1998, after repairs of damage from the 1994 Northridge earthquake were completed. The facility consists of two courthouses housing 22 Superior and Municipal courtrooms. This branch processed 1,236,938 persons through weapons screening, processed 24,458 inmates through its lockup, served 7,137 pieces of civil process, and conducted 2,306 vehicle inspections.

Santa Monica Court

The 30 sworn and nine civilian personnel of Santa Monica Court processed 12,184 prisoners through lockup, processed 668,116 persons through weapons screening, and served 8,264 pieces of civil process. Santa Monica Court was host to several "high-media" trials, including the accused killer of Bill Cosby's son, a man accused of assaulting actress Farah Fawcett, another man accused of stalking Steven Spielberg, and the trial of "Whitewater" figure Susan McDougal. Santa Monica Court also houses the West District's Drug Court. District Attorney Gil Garcetti, actor Larry Hagman, and the late Sheriff Sherman Block were guest speakers at the graduation ceremonies.

Torrance Court

The 49 sworn and nine civilian personnel of Torrance Court processed 712,800 persons through its weapons screening, processed 21,501 inmates through the lockup, served 9,365 pieces of civil process, and conducted 2,071 vehicle inspections. It was also host to the trials of President Clinton's brother Roger, a defendant in a civil suit in which someone was bitten by the defendant's dog; the man convicted of killing Manhattan Beach Police Officer Martin Ganz; and actress Elizabeth Taylor's ex husband, Larry Fortensky, who was carrying a concealed weapon without a permit.

Van Nuys Court

The Van Nuys Court consists of two courthouses, one Superior and one Municipal. The Superior Court houses 27 courtrooms run by 26 judicial officers. The Municipal Court houses 24 courtrooms run by 21 judicial officers. With the reopening of the North Valley/San Fernando Branch in January, 14 courts moved back to North Valley. However, the Superior and Municipal Courts moved new judicial officers into the vacant Van Nuys courtrooms and reopened them. During 1998, Van Nuys Court held the Asian Boyz trial. This was the trial of seven gang members accused of committing a dozen homicides and two dozen attempted homicides. That trial will conclude in 1999. Van Nuys also held the "Death Row Records" trial, which was a three-defendant trial of gang members accused of kidnaping and a home invasion robbery.

Culminating the year was the December 1998, telephonic anthrax threat that resulted in an initial six-hour evacuation of the courts, followed by closure for the remainder of the week. All occupants of the court, including the inmates, were confined to a specific area in order to prevent spread of any possible bacteria on their person. It was a significant, emotion-provoking, logistical undertaking.

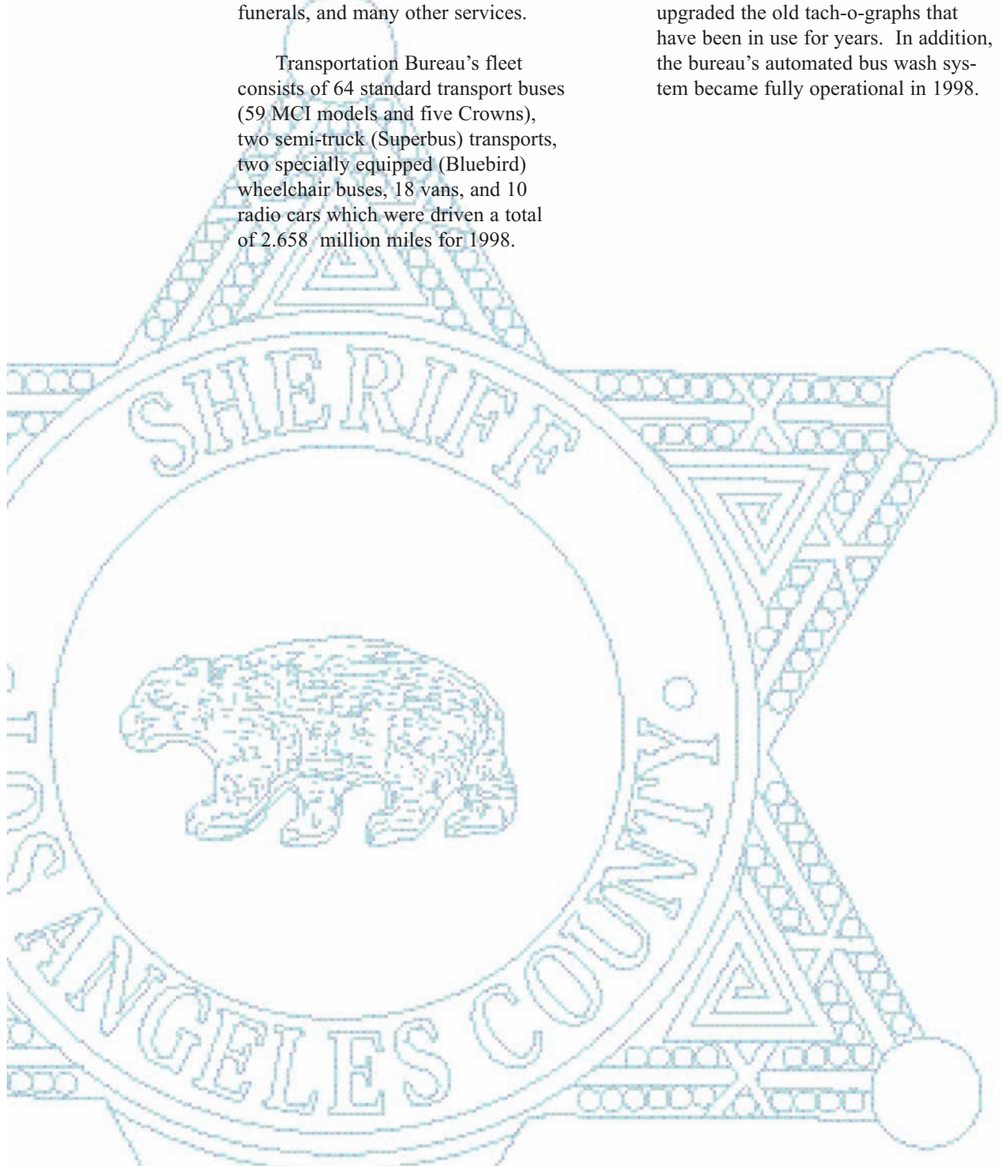
The Van Nuys Courts' 104 sworn and 16 civilian personnel processed 2,281,630 persons through weapons screening, processed 39,519 in-custodies through the lockup, served 20,048 pieces of civil process, and completed 4,875 vehicle inspections.

TRANSPORTATION BUREAU

Captain Patrick J. Mallon
Transportation Bureau

In addition to the Headquarters Unit at the Central Jail complex, Transportation Bureau operates a North County Facility at the Pitchess Detention Center, and the Statewide Transportation Detail. For 1998, the Bureau transported 1,490,088 inmates and Court Services Transportation North transported 195,970 inmates, which makes an average of 4,082 inmates each day. Of that number, 2,098 inmates were transported to court. The Statewide Detail, which moves inmates to and from State Prisons and other counties throughout California, transported a total of 41,644 inmates.

Besides transporting inmates to and from court and State Prison, the bureau provides court ordered transportation to private medical facilities, private psychiatric visits, hemodialysis, clinics, funerals, and many other services.

Transportation Bureau's fleet consists of 64 standard transport buses (59 MCI models and five Crowns), two semi-truck (Superbus) transports, two specially equipped (Bluebird) wheelchair buses, 18 vans, and 10 radio cars which were driven a total of 2.658 million miles for 1998.

To stay at the forefront of technology and automation, the bureau completed installation of the "Silent Witness" monitoring system on the bus fleet. The system replaced and upgraded the old tach-o-graphs that have been in use for years. In addition, the bureau's automated bus wash system became fully operational in 1998.