
**MOUT: A DOMESTIC CASE STUDY—
THE 1992 LOS ANGELES RIOTS
MG James Delk, CAARNG (Ret.)**



Editor's note: General Delk's presentation began with a videotape clip of commercial television news segments, announcing the results of the trial in Simi Valley, California, in which Los Angeles policemen were found not guilty of assaulting Rodney King. This was followed by amateur video camera footage taken by a security guard in Los Angeles, who was also a military policeman in the California Army National Guard. That footage included twenty-seven gunshots fired by those

participating in the riots. Some of those shots were aimed at fire engines and ambulances. The final clip showed looting the next morning.





General Delk: This photograph was taken about 11:00 in the morning, and as you can see, the smoke over Los Angeles almost turned day into night. That highlights one of the many differences we found regarding this riot as compared to those of the 1960s. Do you remember the riots affiliated with the Vietnam War protests? The riots in Detroit, Watts, and Newark were very clearly nighttime phenomena. The cops, soldiers, looters, and rioters rested during the daytime.

COMPARISONS		
	WATTS 1965	L. A. 1992
TIMING	DARKNESS	DAY & NIGHT
DURATION	5 DAYS	36 HOURS
ETHNICITY	BLACK	ALL RACES
GANGS	FEW / BENIGN	MANY / VIOLENT
FIRE DISCIPLINE	FREE FIRE	TIGHT
INJURIES (TO INNOCENTS)	MANY - SOME KILLED	FEW - NONE KILLED
GEOGRAPHICAL SIZE	60 SQ BLOCKS	100s SQ MILES

This slide lists some of the differences we found between the 1992 Los Angeles riots and those of earlier years. There are many, as you can see. The first one I have already mentioned, the difference between the times the riots occurred. That had a big impact. For instance, the police knew when the trial would be over. The LAPD's SWAT team was told come to work at 6:00 P.M. because previous history had demonstrated that people don't riot during the daytime. The police therefore had to be ready for deployment in the evening so as to be ready for action when it got dark. Well, by the time they reported for work, the riots were already under way.

Duration was a second difference. The 1965 Watts riots were five days long, while for all practical intents and purposes, the 1992 riots were over in 36 hours. Another big difference was the ethnicity. You get the impression from the early film clips that it was a black/white riot, which was very typical of those in the 1960s. Not so in 1992. As a matter of fact, most of the arrests were Hispanics, many of whom were illegal immigrants. Further, there were not nearly as many gangs in the 1965 riots. Gangs in earlier years were rather benign.

They settled their differences with chains, baseball bats, and knives; guns were comparatively rare. In 1992 they had literally thousands of guns, many of them better than ours. In addition, they very quickly looted gun warehouses and ended up with many more weapons. Another difference related to the fire discipline demonstrated by military and law enforcement personnel. In 1965 it was “Katie bar the door.” We had .50 caliber machine guns and we used them. If a sniper shot from behind a concrete wall, we just opened up with a .50 and cut the wall down. If he sniped at us from a rooftop, we cut off the top of the roof. There were problems with that of course; we suspect we killed at least five innocent civilians. We were very aware of that in 1992. Sergeants major and senior officers remembered that we had killed innocent people in 1965. It had a big impact on the rules of engagement and how we handled ourselves.

Geographical size—you can see the Watts riots covered 60 square blocks. In 1992 it was literally hundreds of square miles.



There's a map. From the top to the bottom of this map is 32 miles, and this reflects only the area covered by actions on the first night of the 1992 riots. And then it goes way off the map to Pomona, covering literally hundreds of square miles, and that's just LA. You may remember that these riots affected several other cities in the United States and Canada. There are a couple of notable points to be emphasized. The first deals with command and control measures. Operational types, the minute they get on the scene, look at easily identifiable terrain features and allocate areas of responsibility. For example, unit boundaries could be drawn along the big freeways because they're so recognizable. That's the automatic reaction of any good operator. Wrong! Los Angeles police commands are not divided up by freeways. Points such as these are very important to understand because the military providing support in Los Angeles had to break down and organize to work with law enforcement. Up here in the corner, you see a picture of a Humvee. The people who labeled this picture made a mistake which worked hugely to our advantage. The caption stated that Humvees were armored vehicles.

They're no more armored than a good Buick in most cases. Fortunately, the rioters didn't know that. We never did have a bullet fired at a Humvee.



I want to also dispel a myth. There are a lot of black soldiers in the 40th Division. One book written by a FBI agent talked about our having to identify gang members who wore America's uniform so as to send them home. If you'll pardon the expression, that's B.S. We know many of our soldiers are members of gangs. We had some problems before the riots with some individuals wearing their gang colors, blue for the Crips and red for the Bloods. That was quickly taken care of by our sergeants major. When those men subsequently put on America's uniform, they were good soldiers. They helped us to understand gang behavior. They were soldiers first and gang members second.

CHRONOLOGY	
WEDNESDAY, 29 APRIL 1992	
1245	NOTICE GIVEN - VERDICT IN 2 HOURS
1510	VERDICTS ANNOUNCED
1520	CROWDS GATHER AT NORMANDIE AVE.
1600	MAYOR EXPRESSES SHOCK
1615	LOOTING OCCURS
1745	LT. MOULIN DIRECTS NO FURTHER DISPATCHES TO NORMANDIE
1825	CHIEF GATES GOES TO FUND RAISER

Let me take you through the chronology. At 12:45 the judge told the police that the verdict would be delivered in two hours. They actually had more time than that. Nevertheless, within 20 minutes of the verdict, a crowd gathered at Normandie, the point at which it initially blew up. You heard the mayor's comments about "renegade cops." I don't think it's coincidental that 15 minutes later, looting occurred. You remember that there were some problems with the police department, they'd be the first to admit the terrible mistakes that they made. They didn't realize how serious this initial event was. They described the evening's events as a "Mardi Gras" atmosphere, and in places it was. However, there was a lot of killing going on also. In fact, Chief Daryl Gates went to a fund-raiser.

<i>CHRONOLOGY</i>	
WEDNESDAY, 29 APRIL 1992	
1845	REGINALD DENNY BEATEN CITY - WIDE TACTICAL ALERT CALLED
1900	PARKER CENTER STORMED (DISPERSED ONE HOUR LATER)
2015	FIRST FATALITY: YOUTH SHOT AT VERNON & VERMONT
2045	FIRST REPORT OF ARSON
2100	GOVERNOR DIRECTS MOBILIZATION OF 2,000 GUARD MEMBERS

It wasn't until 6:45 P.M. that a citywide tactical alert was called. The first fatality occurred at 8:15 P.M. during a drug bust that went bad. And at 9:00 P.M. the governor asked for the Guard.

CHRONOLOGY	
THURSDAY, 30 APRIL 1992	
0042	LOCAL AUTHORITIES REPORT NO NEED FOR NATIONAL GUARD
0300	2,000 GUARDSMEN IN ARMORIES
1007	OES : DON'T EXPECT MISSIONS PRIOR TO 1600
1100	MFC & CHP COMM. / CHP ARRIVE LOS ALAMITOS
1200	FIRST INFORMAL REQUEST FOR TROOPS
1331	FIRST TROOPS READY (MISSION CHANGES 4X)

A little after midnight they said they didn't need us even though we were already rolling troops. The reason they thought they didn't need us was because law enforcement intelligence was lousy; they believed it truly was a Mardi Gras atmosphere. There were already people being killed, but they thought they could handle it. We got a phone call from the Office of Emergency Services in California at 10:07 the following morning telling us we weren't needed until that evening. Why? Because nobody ever riots during the daytime! We were all preparing for the "last" war like we always do. That's why I keep pushing the significance of the differences between the 1992 and earlier riots. As he was calling us saying we're not going to need you until tonight, his city was burning down around him. Looting was going on and people were being killed. At 11:00 A.M. I was flown in as what we call the Military Field Commander. Maury Hannigan, you may remember him from the old CHIPs program on television, flew down with me. He was Commissioner of the Highway Patrol. Well, we stepped off the airplane and the first thing I asked was what any one of you would ask: "Who's in charge?" And they didn't know!

This is 11:00 the next morning and the riots had started during the afternoon of the previous day! Nobody knew who was in charge. Now that's cause for any good soldier to have concerns. I did. Maury sensed that; he said "Jim, I'm going to run off and try to get that put together, and I'll get back to you."

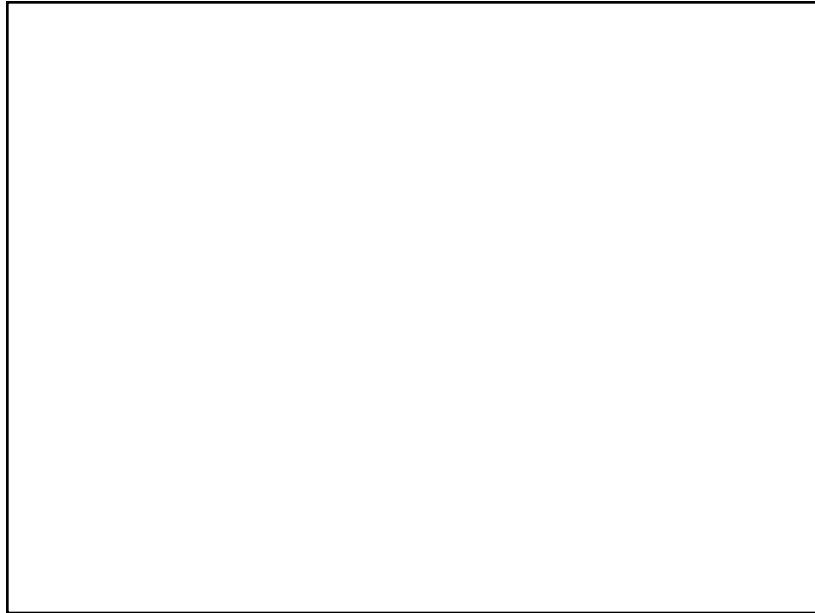
So I went off to the division to get briefed on what was going on. By noon I was getting panicky calls from the Sheriff's Department. They wanted to get some soldiers on the street. They knew they were going to have media helicopters flying overhead and this was an opportunity to let the people know that the Guard was on the ground. Well, I had some problems with that; we hadn't had enough time to do all the things we needed to do. Nobody should ever commit to providing soldiers on the street in less than 24 hours if there's going to be shooting. You have to have rules of engagement and arming orders; you have to coordinate unit orders and understand where you go to get your support. All are very important things that keep your soldiers from being killed and are essential to keep from killing innocent people.

We had our first troops ready nonetheless. I emphasize we still didn't know who was in charge. But we were old friends talking to each other, in this case, Undersheriff Bob Edmonds and I. He requested some soldiers so as to be able to at least get the word out to the press. Well, by 1:30 P.M. we had our MPs ready. They're trained for this. Not only that, but I'd say a good third of our military police in the Guard are cops anyhow, so we were very comfortable turning them loose even though we didn't know who was in charge. The mission changed four times, a good example of the so-called "fog of war." You get used to this kind of thing. Every soldier, marine, sailor, and airman gets used to this. Things were happening so fast that leaders didn't know where it was most important to send troops to keep people from getting killed.

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Ammunition was arriving in Los Alamitos for our troops. We had given the MPs our drug enforcement ammo, which we keep stocked for that mission. In the meantime, Maury says we're going to get together and agree on who's running this show, and what the flow of command is going to be. So we agreed that we would get together at 2:00 P.M. in the Sheriff's office. We flew over there in a helicopter. Everything in Los Angeles is done by helicopters landing on top of buildings, it's just a fact of life. When we got together there was the Highway Patrol, the Police Department, the Sheriff's Department, and us. We no sooner had sat down and started getting organized than we got a conference call from the governor asking "Why weren't the troops on the street?" There were some interesting discussions there. In any event, in the meantime, the Sheriff's Department took the first troops while we're still meeting to decide how we're going to run all this. Sheriff Sherman Block [head of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department] was sitting at the head of the table. He is the number one law enforcement officer in his county. Sitting to his right was his undersheriff, Bob Edmonds. Next to him was Chief

Daryl Gates of the Los Angeles Police Department. I was on the other side of Sheriff Block, and then the Commissioner of the Highway Patrol and a couple of his assistants were next to him. There was a lot of tension in the room. The mayor had not been talking to his own police chief for thirteen months. There was a lot of competition between the Sheriff's Department (county) and the Police Department (City of Los Angeles). They also hadn't been talking to each other for months. In any event, it finally did get going. The first issue decided was raised by Chief Gates. The Police Department had agreed to protect the Fire Department, but so far had been unable to do so. There had been some serious injuries to firemen. Gates looked across at Maury Hannigan and asked the Highway Patrol to take that mission. Maury said "Sure." Then the undersheriff looked at me and asked whether the Guard could take the rest of the missions. And I said "Sure." Then suddenly it slowed down when it was time to agree who was going to run the show. Finally, Edmonds looked at both the Chief of Police and the Sheriff and said it should be run out of the Sheriff's emergency operations center. The Office of Emergency Services, the military, and the various law enforcement agencies were all to have representatives at that facility and all operations would be run from there. We agreed and all went running out. That took us to 3:00 P.M., almost precisely 24 hours after the riots had started.



This is Biscaluz Center, the emergency operations center. The EOC is under ground. You can see all the antennas and what all above it.



These were the first soldiers on the scene. They are military police-
man. That's a Winchell's Donut House burning up.

I'm going to try and give you a sense of what was going on in the streets. This used to be a market. They burned out all their markets. Only problem with that was that there was almost no place to buy food in all of south central Los Angeles after the riots.

This is an abandoned parking lot with looted, abandoned cars. You can see that people just jumped out of their cars and started running.

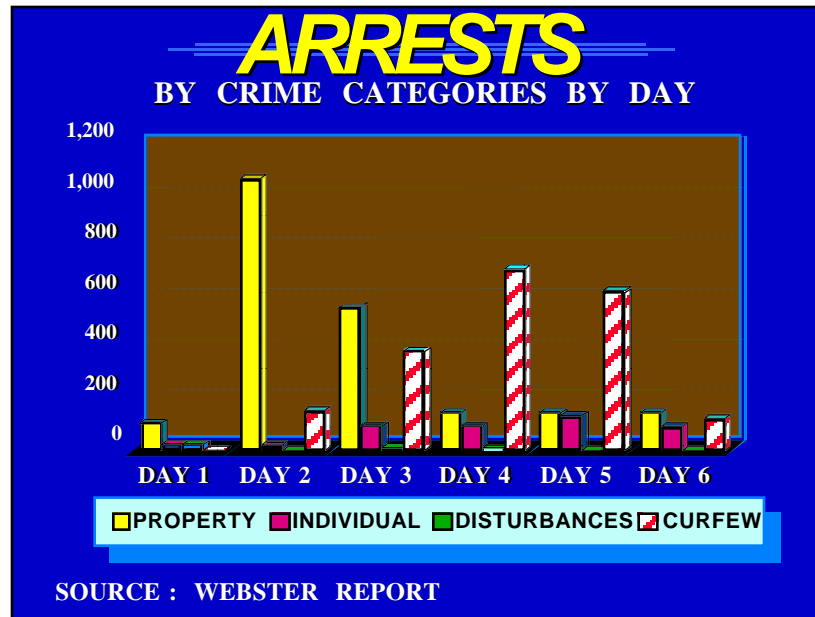
That's a furniture store.

You can tell that this is south central LA. There's grating over the windows. You can see the gang graffiti. By the way, stay on the freeways in Los Angeles. I was born here. I know the town. If you get off the freeway for any reason and you see a lot of graffiti, get back on the freeway very quickly.

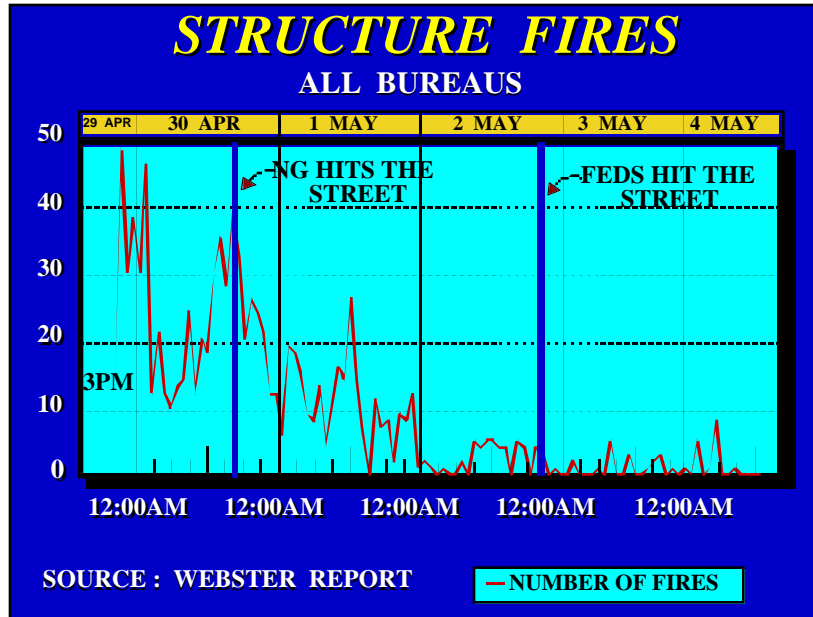
These are all little shops with an apartment building in the background.

This is my favorite photo. Rental companies did a brisk business in trucks and trailers when the looting started. That's a rental truck whose driver tried to drive in to steal from that furniture store. The truck is stuck there for good, and was damaged when the building burned down.

You heard that the agreement was that the Highway Patrol would protect the Fire Department, but very quickly it became obvious that firemen wanted rifles around because of the sniping. There's only so much you can do with pistols and shotguns. And so they said they'd appreciate it if we sent along a few soldiers with what they called "long sticks," and so we did. That stopped the sniping. I would point out that I know these guys never fired a round. But just the fact they had rifles and the bad guys knew it made all the difference in the world.



This slide lists the arrests by crime category by day. This is from the Webster Report. William H. Webster was formerly head of the FBI and a federal judge. His team researched and published the definitive report afterwards. You can see that property crimes nose-dived while the curfew crimes went up. You can also see that the riots ended very quickly.



Let's take a look at the fires. And I'm going to make a point here. The National Guard hit the street; as you can see, the fires and crimes quickly ended. This was before the federal troops arrived. Now when I say the fires and the crimes ended, I mean they dropped to about 40 percent of normal. There is normally a lot of gunfire on the streets of Los Angeles. I guarantee that if you went to Los Angeles tonight, you would hear gunfire. There are a lot of bullets flying around. That's just a fact of life. Los Angeles has three times the national average in killings by gunfire, and there are several every night.

CHRONOLOGY

FRIDAY, 1 MAY 1992

0415	ARMY'S 7th DIVISION CALLED TO RIOTS
0600	USMC CALLED TO RIOTS
0900	2,000 GUARD ON THE STREET <i>- 2,500 IN RESERVE</i>
1630	JTF - LA COMMANDER LANDS IN LOS ALAMITOS
	1st CHALK - 7th DIVISION HAS WHEELS UP
1900	GOVERNOR REQUESTS FEDERAL TROOPS <i>(REQUEST DENIED)</i>
2000	CNG HAS 6,000 ON THE STREET OR STAGED

They called in the Army's 7th Infantry Division. We are fortunate to have Brigadier General Ed Buckley with us. He was then Colonel Buckley, commanding the Second Brigade of the 7th Infantry Division (Light) out of Fort Ord. The marines were also called at 6:00 A.M. In the meantime, we still had a lot of people in reserve. This was frustrating for everybody. That afternoon, the Joint Task Force—Los Angeles commander, Major General Marvin L. Covault, landed. He was a War College classmate of mine, so that helped things. About the same time, the first chalk of the 7th Infantry Division was wheels up. At 7:00 P.M. the governor requested federal troops. We couldn't get them to him because they weren't there yet. It takes time for things to happen. By 8:00 P.M. that night we had 6,000 National Guard personnel on the streets or staging.

CHRONOLOGY

**SATURDAY,
2 MAY 1992**

0325	JTF AMMO ORGANIZED
0500	LAST OF 7th DIVISION ARRIVES
1040	EL TORO ISSUES RIOT GEAR
1700	USMC ON THE STREET (A + 36:45)
2335	FIRST 7th ID TF CROSSES SP

Early the next morning, ammunition was organized and the last of the 7th arrived and was issued riot gear. The marines were deployed at 5:00 P.M. after being issued riot gear and receiving refresher training. The 7th Infantry Division was initially being held in reserve because we were having trouble finding missions for people. We finally agreed to pull Guardsmen off the street and put some federal troops in their place.

CHRONOLOGY

**SUNDAY,
3 MAY 1992**

0955 MUTUAL AID WITHDRAWN

1206 CHP DEMOBILIZES

Now, interestingly, on Sunday they withdrew the mutual aid. Mutual aid is a civilian system for getting either fire department help or law enforcement help. It's used all over California. I can't tell you about the rest of the nation. But the first thing that's supposed to happen is, you call your fellow cops and they come to help, with the military being the last in and the first out. In this riot, it was reversed: the military was the first in and the last out. They didn't call mutual aid until after we were there. Then they let law enforcement and firemen from other areas go home while our troops stayed on the streets for three more weeks.

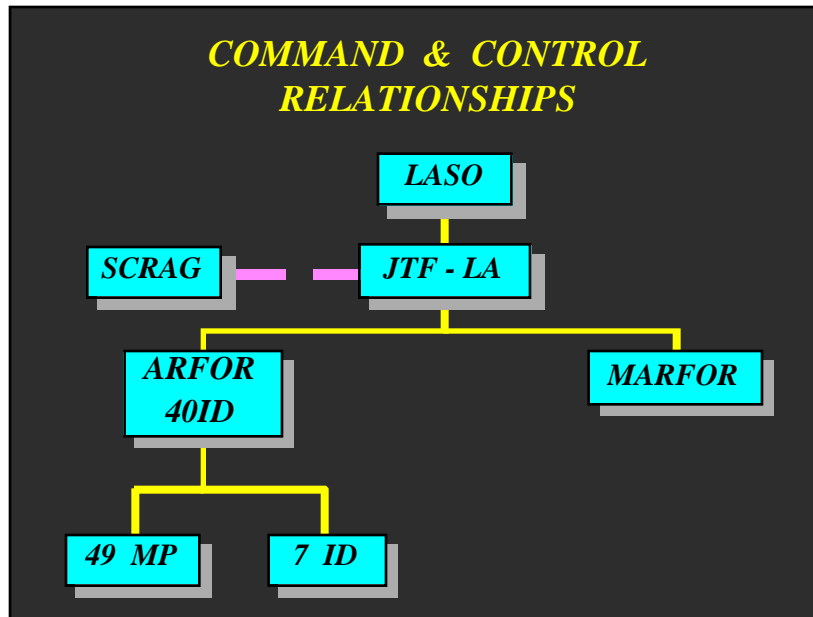
SPEED OF RESPONSE

CAL NG	18 HRS	COMMITTED
82d ABN DIV	18 HRS	1st ACFT "WHEELS UP"
GARDEN PLOT	24 HRS	TROOPS STAGED
JTF - LA	36 HRS	COMMITTED

Let's talk about speed of response. We were committed at 1:31 P.M. That's fudging a little bit, as that's just the one MP company I told you about. The rest of the troops wouldn't get there until about 24 hours had elapsed. Just to give you a sense for what the standards are, the 82nd Airborne Division's Readiness Standing Operating Procedure (RSOP) says that they will have their ready brigade's first aircraft wheels up in 18 hours. Then there's page after page after page of what our most ready division has to be doing to get ready to go. You can't believe what goes on in the supply room alone. The federal standard in GARDEN PLOT (the federal response plan) says give the military 24 hours to be staged and 36 hours to be on the street. The federal troops met that standard in Los Angeles.



The National Guard had a secret advantage: We had our own air force (the California Air National Guard) that flew 49 C-130 sorties on the first day. As I pointed out, the 7th didn't get the C-141's they immediately needed to fly them south. They're not like the 82nd Airborne with an Air Force Base right next door. So it wasn't until the afternoon of the day they were called that they even saw their first C-141.



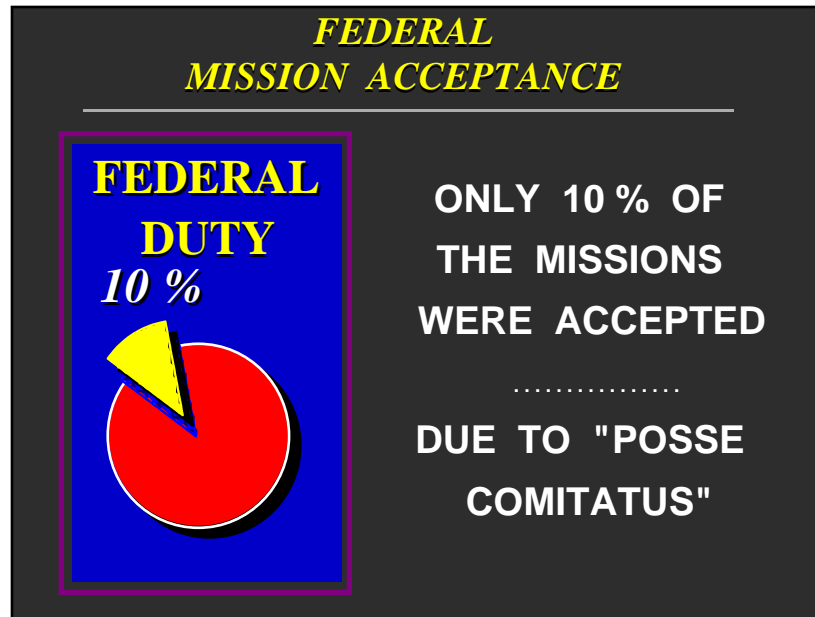
These are the command and control relationships as they existed after we were federalized. This is the standard, out of the manual. It goes from whatever the civilian agency is, in this case the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, through the military, which was Joint Task Force—Los Angeles. The SCRAG is the Senior Civilian Representative of the Attorney General. He represents the President. You notice most of the lines are solid. However, the line from JTF-LA to the SCRAG is broken; that's filled with lawyers. Suddenly the system was constipated. Everything was going great right up until then. You need to understand what happened after federalization, when lawyers had to carefully review all of the mission requests. This is so important to understanding what happened then, and what, I guarantee, will happen in the future. Missions started taking at least 8 hours to be approved.

The ARFOR (Army Forces) commander was the commander of the 40th Division, Major General Dan Hernandez. The 7th Infantry Division's brigade was commanded by General Buckley, a colonel at that time. And there was a MP brigade. We probably had 13,000 or

so Army troops on the scene. The MARFOR (Marine Forces) out of Pendleton represented slightly more than 1,500 additional troops commanded by Brigadier General Ted Hopgood.



Until federalization, virtually 100 percent of requested missions had been accepted.

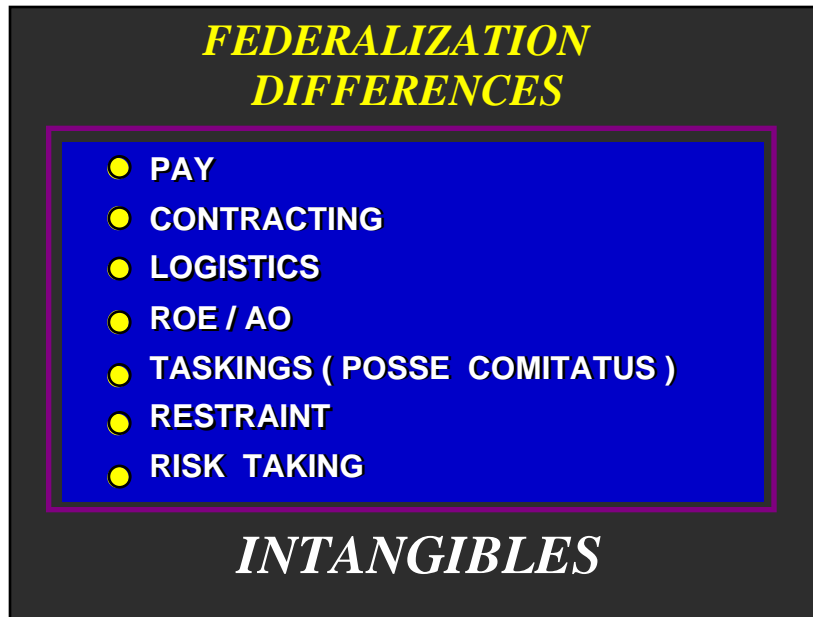


Suddenly it was down to 10 percent. I put *posse comitatus* in quotation marks, because people were saying it was because of *posse comitatus*. Not so. *Posse comitatus*, which has its origins in a federal law passed after the Civil War, says in effect that federal soldiers are not to be put on the streets enforcing laws against civilians. The law was passed because of some excesses following the Civil War. That wasn't the issue in Los Angeles. What had happened in 1992 is that *posse comitatus* had been waived. General Covault knew full well, as did many of his soldiers, that it didn't apply. I'll show you in a minute what did apply.



Soldiers were having trouble with it; law enforcement was having trouble with it. We sat some people down and asked them to put together a piece of paper that everybody could understand. You see a G3 plans officer here, a major. He represented the division. The colonel with the glasses is also a high-level detective in the LAPD; he's both a soldier and a cop. This big guy, Dick Odenthal, is now a captain in the Sheriff's Department. He also was one of the finest intelligence officers in the National Guard that I ever saw, a very, very bright guy. A great soldier, a great cop. Obviously he had the confidence of both sides. He kind of ran the team. This other fellow is a lawyer, but you might be able to see that he is wearing Armor brass. We wanted someone who knew how to say yes, not no. These men sat down and worked the issues out. The product they put out was one of the most important pieces of paper to come out of the LA riots. We handed it to everybody and they suddenly said "Bingo!" The lights went on. The product outlined what were appropriate missions and inappropriate missions depending on the status of the military forces supporting law enforcement. (The Mission Tasking

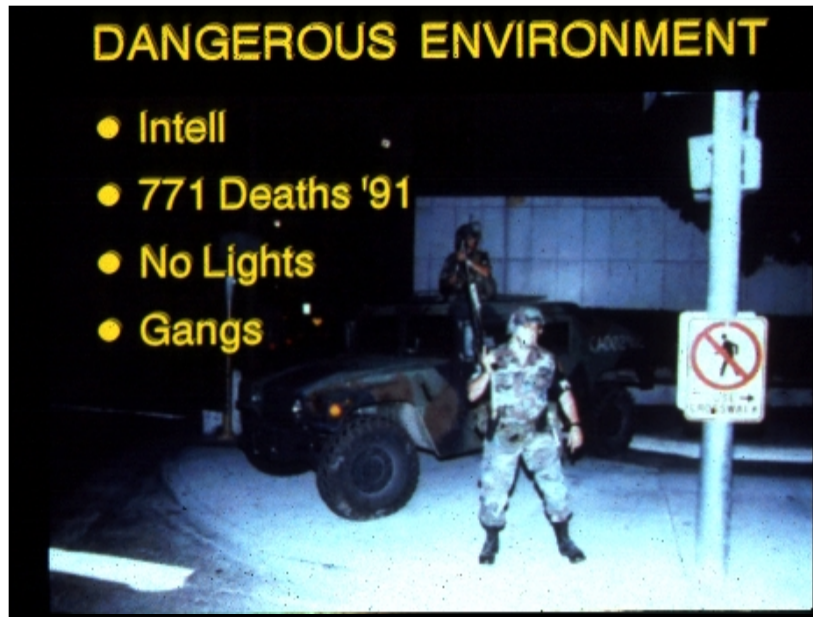
Guidelines and Rules of Engagement are included as annexes to this appendix.) We had to adjust missions on occasion. The space used to say “Haul Prisoners.” The National Guard did that just once. We had a convoy hauling prisoners from one of the housing projects, and all the mothers were standing on the side of the street crying because their “babies” were being carried off to jail by those nasty soldiers. We said let the cops do their own dirty work; that’s one we’re not going to do for them in the future. We did it once and the California Guard will never do that again. You look at these missions and you see what’s appropriate and what’s inappropriate. You can see that when you’re in state status, you can do almost anything that you both agree is a good mission. You also see, however, on the federal side, that when you’re restoring law and order, which was the mission given to the 7th ID and the Marines, that they could also do all the same things. What was the problem? The problem was when they got there, law and order had *already* been restored! So they were stuck over here in the so-called “preserve law and order” status. And as you can see, there’s not much they really could do. And that’s why these lawyers were denying most of the mission requests. Well the people of LA loved having us there. As I said, the crime rate dropped to 40 percent of normal. We had men come up to our soldiers and tell them how much they appreciated their being on the street. For the first time in years their wives could safely walk to the grocery store. That’s also why it took weeks to finally get our soldiers out of there. They simply didn’t want to let us go.



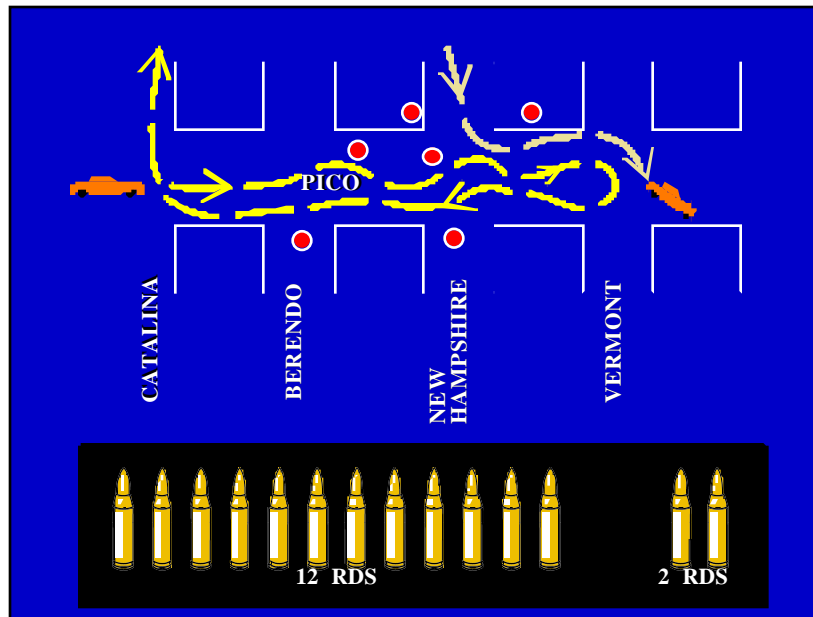
There are important differences between state and federal status. I just want to touch on a couple of them. One is pay. In California, for instance, our Guardsman are never paid less than Sergeant E-5 when we call them up for state active duty. Why? Unlike federal troops, their wives can't go off to the military hospital; their wives can't use the PXs or BXs and all those kinds of things that are standard benefits for the federal soldier. And because of the disruption to their lives, we just don't pay them any less than an E-5. What happened? The minute they are federalized, PFCs get paid as PFCs, and not only that, but the changing of the pay systems back again after several days was very disruptive. We had a lot of guys get into real financial difficulties. So that's one of the key significant differences.

Restraint was another area of difference. I used to talk about soldiers and marines being trained to kill, kill, kill. And I can remember when I took basic and went through the bayonet course, you were told to holler "Kill, kill, kill." That's how we were trained. We expect it of our soldiers and our marines. Thank God they're ready if they're called. At the time of the 1992 riots, we weren't pulling all of the

peacekeeping missions we're getting nowadays. Now our soldiers and marines are better trained to handle missions calling for restraint, so this difference is not nearly as important as it was at the time.



It's a dangerous environment. I've already talked to you about how dangerous it was in Los Angeles. There were 771 gang-related deaths in 1991. Many more people lost their lives that year in non-gang killings in a city with three times the national average of shooting deaths. There were 102,000 gang members at the time of 1992 riots, and the last time I asked that number had grown to 150,000. And many of them are very, very well armed. We were very conscious of that when we were going in.



Editor's Note: General Delk ran a video clip from a Los Angeles news account describing an attempt by a civilian to run over several California National Guardsmen. The general identified several errors in the news report.

At this point, this is what happened at Pico Blvd. These personnel were from the 40th Support Company, male and female, trying to enforce curfew. A fellow by the name of Victor Rivas, driving a 240, not a 280ZX Datsun, came down Pico Boulevard going back and forth trying to run over our soldiers. He did a wheelie and headed back trying to run over soldiers as they all hollered "Halt, halt, halt." But he drove off. They were shaken by the event, but nobody had fired a round. Unit NCOs went around to settle their soldiers down. Well, the driver came back and once again tried to run down the soldiers, hitting one. This time they fired nine rounds into the rear of that car. They knocked out both the tires and he still wouldn't stop. So they put one bullet in the window post and two in his head, and Victor Rivas was dead. Well, what did we find out? First of all, there were no license plates on the car. Number 2, there were rusted bullet

holes in the car. This [being shot at] was nothing new to Victor, who was a Playboy gangster. The cops arrived on the scene very quickly. There weren't that many of them on the streets, but they were very responsive to calls for assistance. The first cops on the scene said "This is the SOB who tried to run us over about three weeks ago!" We thought that was rather interesting. The police found meth-amphetamines in the back of the automobile. That was the story of Victor, who was a convicted felon by the way. There was nothing innocent about Victor.



An interesting thing happened as fresh graffiti sprouted all over gangland. They didn't use this word "screw." You know the word they did use. The phrase "Don't screw with the Ninja Turtles" was spray painted around south central LA. You can see why they called soldiers the Ninja Turtles; you remember they [Ninja Turtles] were big in those days. Our kids probably don't know what they are anymore. But over there on the right side is a typical soldier with his helmet, face mask, flak vest and what all, and you can see why they were calling us the Ninja Turtles.

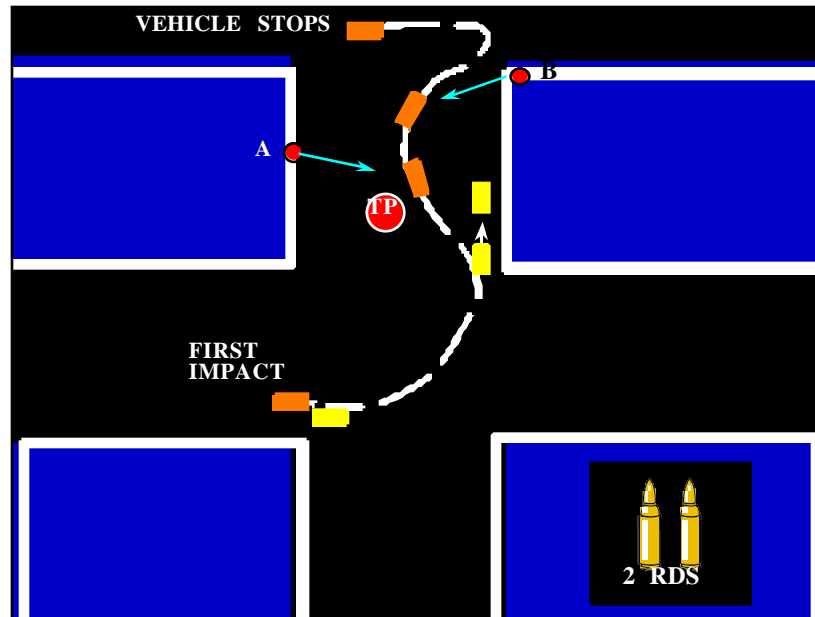
COP DOWN



2 RDS

- ◆ ***ATTEMPTED
MANSLAUGHTER***
- ◆ ***POLICEMAN DOWN***
- ◆ ***TWO SOLDIERS USE
LETHAL FORCE***
- ◆ ***GANG MEMBER***
- ◆ ***PRIOR
MANSLAUGHTER
CONVICTION (HIT &
RUN)***

This is the other side of what we consider our other more serious incident.

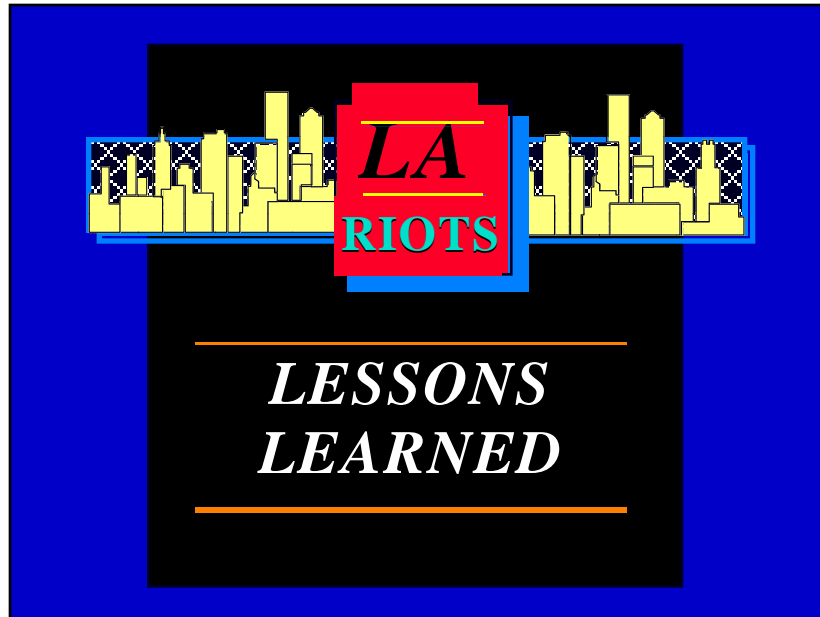


It occurred in Santa Monica on Santa Monica Boulevard. A blue Nissan Pathfinder rear-ended a white Volvo. The police pulled the drivers over here on to St. Andrews Place, a side street. A cop went over to take what they call a preliminary report. The guy in the Nissan was acting very strangely, gunning his engine and what all. He ran over the cop [who was later carried off to Cedars Sinai Hospital with a broken leg]. Then he tried hitting the soldiers, and they each fired one round. One got him in the butt, and the other made him a soprano. The perpetrator tried to walk off, but he was in no condition to walk. Now, what did we find out about this guy? He was on felony probation, 15 years probation from Florida for felony vehicular manslaughter. He was used to trying to kill people with his car. He had a .0179 blood alcohol level, much too high for California. He also had drugs on him. So these were the two people who were struck by our bullets. By the way, those kind of things are tough on soldiers, just as they are in combat, particularly when you're not shooting at a known, uniformed enemy. Our soldiers who fired needed psychological counseling afterwards. You need to be pre-

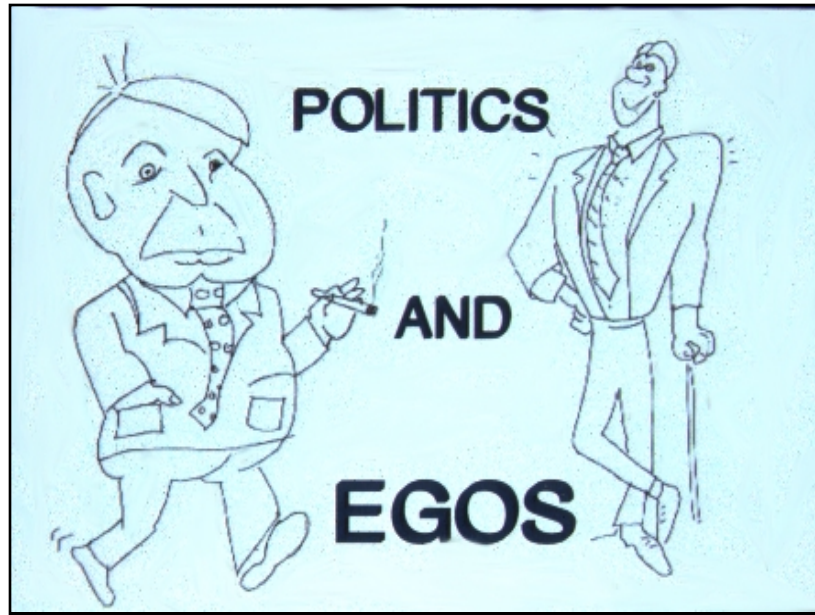
pared for that, and we were. They had medical support immediately, people who worked with these young soldiers who had struck people.



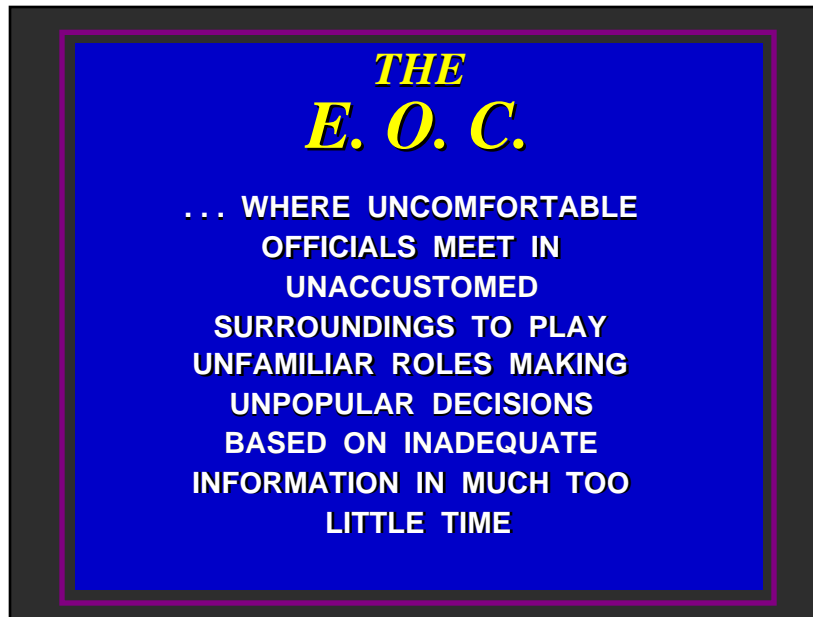
Twenty-two total rounds. That's the total number of rounds we fired. Unlike in 1965, no innocent people got shot. The only soldier, and this is mentioned in the book [*Fires and Furies*, written by MG Delk], but I normally don't brief it, the only soldier who was struck by a bullet was a young PFC clearing his .45 who shot himself in the leg. That's more common than you might think. That's why every police station has what they call a clearing barrel. Those kinds of things happen.



What did we learn? I'm going to go through some general observations first.



I've personally been involved in four riots and other incidents. In every case, politics play a big role. Egos play a big role. Even some of us generals have egos, if you can believe that. And that kind of thing needs to be considered. It does play a role. Well, we happened to be in the biennial silly season during the riots of 1992. It was just before the primaries, and politicians were there in great numbers. Every time we had a gathering for purposes of creating peace or what all, they turned into political rallies as the politicians would show up with their signs. We got used to that. But you just need to know that went on. In addition, it is smart to have somebody who knows the local politics. Lawyers normally know local politics. The JAGs in the reserve components are lawyers, and so they gave us a lot of good counsel. You needed to know that Sheriff Block and Chief Gates don't talk and haven't talked for a year. And the mayor isn't talking to the chief of police. You need to know all of these kinds of things to avoid bear traps.



Emergency Operations Centers. Most of you GIs have seen that before. We sometimes call those Crisis Action Centers. They had the LAPD Emergency Operations Center all but shut down a couple of times as the politicians would come in there to have their discussions. What we needed was a super EOC . . . with impressive maps, some public affairs types, and other people who had a handle on things so you could brief people in a venue not disruptive to operations. Politicians could make their policy decisions there, while soldiers and cops would get on about their operational business elsewhere. We did this after the riots were over, which was much too late.



Public affairs. Our public affairs were a disaster. Some of that was my fault. The trouble with poor public affairs is that it creates the environment in which we operate and it can get soldiers killed. I never did get a handle on the rumor spread by media types that our soldiers had no bullets. There was also the famous incident of the governor telling us to play Barney Fife: give one bullet to every soldier. Well, that's B.S.! No commander is going to do that with his troops, nor did we. The result was that gangbangers thought our soldiers didn't have bullets or they may have only had one. The result is that people think they can screw around with soldiers like Victor Rivas did. I didn't have a good handle on public affairs. You need an 800-pound gorilla running that show for you.



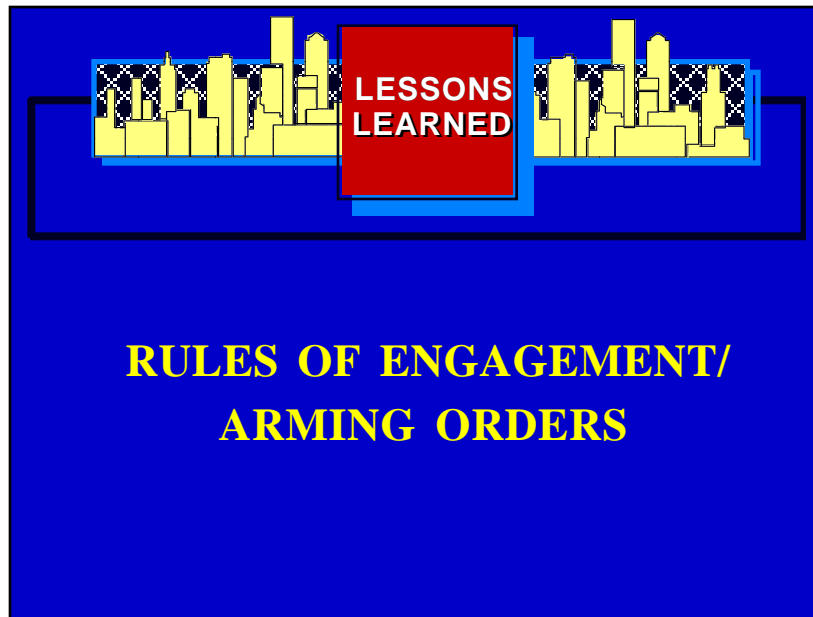
Advanced preparation plans, mutual aid, exercises. You need exercises, liaison officers, and equipment. That's all old hat to you guys.



What are some equipment needs? Body armor, face shields, ammo, and CS gas. We didn't use CS gas—the only time we used a lot of CS gas was in Berkeley and we did a great job of gassing a hospital. The trouble with gas is it doesn't always go where you want it to go, and you need to be aware of that. We've always been very aware of that and try to avoid using CS gas. It doesn't do any good to use CS gas on gangbangers anyhow. You use that on students or people that refuse to obey and can't shoot at you. I'll go into detail on Rules of Engagement and Arming Orders later.

Communications. Communications were lousy. We used cellular phones. Someday the military is going to have a radio that works well in an urban environment. They sure don't now. Even worse, you can't talk to the cops because your frequencies don't mesh (net). Flak vests you need, riot batons, no. You need riot batons in some situations; against students they will work. Something that works even better is bayonets. The riot batons are big, long suckers and they got in the way.

Maps. I want to talk about maps for just a second. In California, cops use Thomas Brothers. Do you have Thomas Brothers in the east? Well, whatever they use, you need to know what it is because if you go in there with a Corps of Engineers map you will find they are absolutely useless. You need to use the same thing the cops are using so you can communicate off the same map. So we have thousands of Thomas Brothers maps in our supply rooms. And night-vision devices . . . the military owns the night. There are a few night-vision devices out there in gangland, but we owned the night.



Regarding Rules of Engagement and Arming Orders. I wouldn't change a word of those Rules of Engagement. They worked for us; they worked all the way through. A bright young major who used to be a cop designed them. Now, regarding Arming Orders.



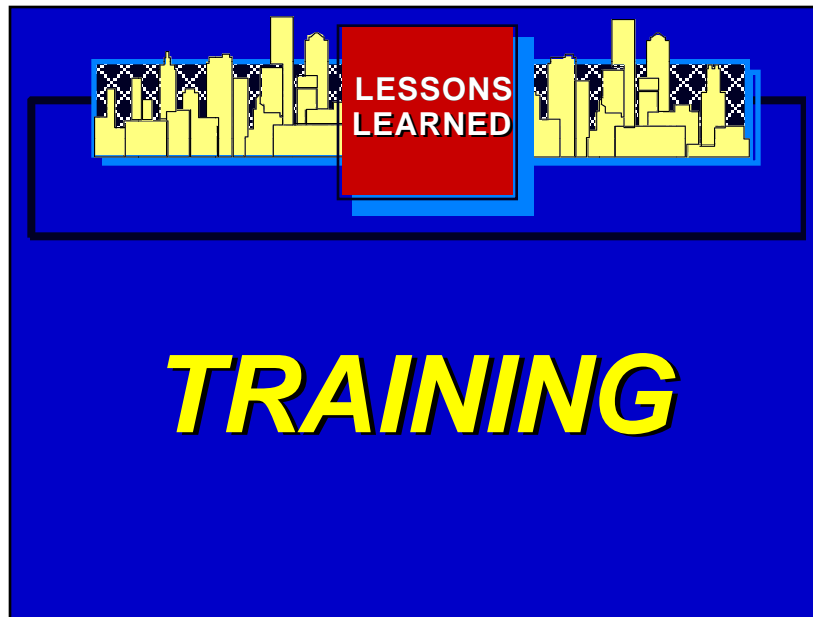
	RIFLE	BAYONET	CHAMBER
<i>AO - 1</i>	SLING	SCABBARD	EMPTY
<i>AO - 2</i>	PORT	SCABBARD	EMPTY
<i>AO - 3</i>	SLING	FIXED	EMPTY
<i>AO - 4</i>	PORT	FIXED	EMPTY
<i>AO - 5</i>	PORT	FIXED	EMPTY / MAG IN
<i>AO - 6</i>	PORT	FIXED	LOCKED / LOADED

These are the Arming Orders. We were generally at AO-5, but without bayonets fixed. Fixed bayonets can be as much danger to your own soldiers as to the bad guys, so I recommend that you don't use bayonets unless you really need them. As I say, they're good against students, but gangbangers don't get that close to you anyhow. So we quickly modified that and AO-5 became without bayonets.



Communications and language. This is very important. A platoon's a different thing to a soldier. It's a different thing to a marine. It's a different thing to a tanker, and it's certainly a different thing to a cop. A platoon to many cops is 60 soldiers, while there may be only 20 or less in a tank platoon. But there are other communications differences. The worst incident occurred in Compton. In Compton, which was marine territory, two Compton police officers took a squad of marines with them and headed out to a domestic dispute. The cops walked up to the door, knocked, and the next thing you know someone fired bird shot through the door. One policeman was hit, but not hurt. His partner grabbed him and as he pulled him back he hollered to the marines "Cover me!" Now to a cop, that was very simple command. That means aim your rifle and use it if necessary. To a marine, and there were some well-trained young patriots in that squad, it meant something entirely different. They instantly opened up. A mom, a dad, and three children occupied that house. I later asked the Compton police department to count the bullet holes for me because there was a rumor going around there were 50 or so

rounds fired. The police told me there were over 200 bullet holes. In some cases you couldn't tell how many bullets had gone through. They didn't hit anyone, but the point is, those great young marines did exactly what they're trained to do, but not what the police thought they requested. You need to understand the differences in language.



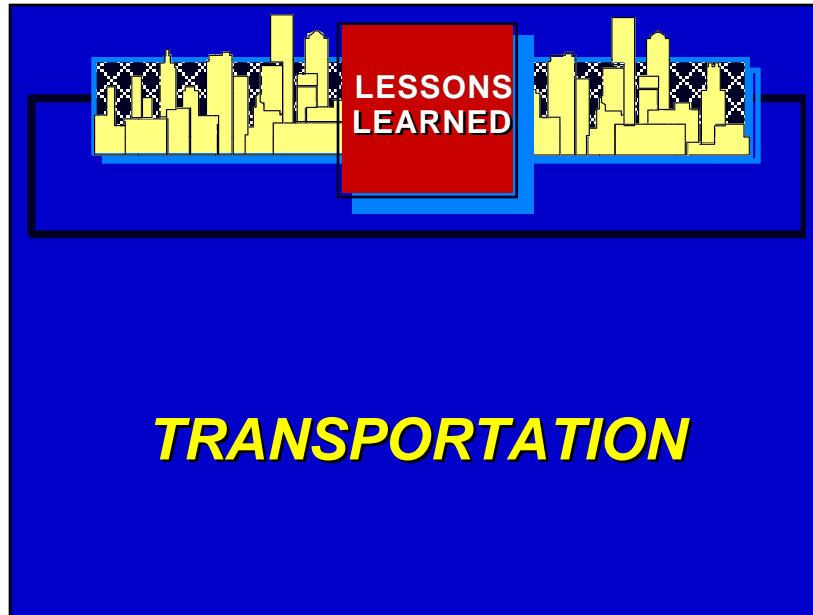
Training.



Useless. We wasted many hours on riot control formations. Now that works great when you've got a bayonet and you're coming at students. You try that with gangbangers and you're going to get your soldiers killed. What is needed is good, hard-nosed GI training. But what is especially needed is simply well disciplined young soldiers being good soldiers.



Intelligence. Very different. For the military, as you know, intelligence is predictive. Our intelligence officers fascinated the cops. We spent a lot of time working with them. Theirs is very event-oriented which doesn't work for us.



Transportation for a heavy division depends mostly on tracks. We couldn't use them; we didn't want to drive into Los Angeles with tanks and armored personnel carriers. We had to contract for buses, which meant that the civilians had to help us a lot.



Deployment strategies. This was controversial.



We sent our soldiers out two-by-two to take the streets back from the gangbangers. There's no such thing as a beat cop in Los Angeles. It's too dangerous for them to walk beats. We had to take the streets back from the gangbangers, and the only way to blanket South Central was to put soldiers out two-by-two. They ended up with two-by-two at every corner in some areas. One group could always see other soldiers; they knew they could quickly get help if it was needed.



An E-5, a young sergeant E-5 fire team leader with a total of five soldiers had total responsibility for the Gateway Plaza Shopping Center. My point is that we had to trust these young E-5s to do exactly what you would hope they would do without a commissioned officer standing there with his arm around them. And they did. He [Sergeant David McGill] ran the show at that shopping center. This young fellow is looking through binoculars at gang central right next door. They were constantly being taunted and tested by gang-bangers. Cars would come into that parking lot with the lights out just to scare them. Rocks and bottles were thrown.



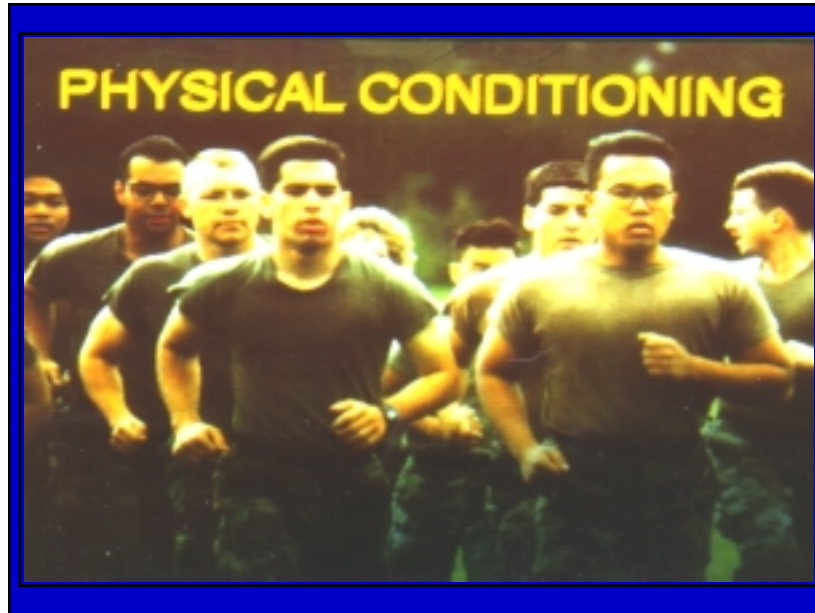
Staff Sergeant Brown is at the top of the burned-out service station looking catty-corner at the only un-burned-out business in the area, a 7-11. What he's looking at is all the gang and drug activity going on there. They didn't burn it out because it was their source for drugs.



That's an air policeman. I apologize for the quality of the photo, but I wanted to point out that the air police were working with us. We had them augmented with a chemical company and they handled protection of public utilities. We gave them that important mission and they did a great job.



Graffiti, two-by-two.



This became important: physical conditioning. The soldiers were on twelve-hour shifts, sleeping on the floor in markets and stores in sleeping bags. Physical conditioning became very important if they were to still make good decisions when they were tired. And they had every reason to be tired. They continued to make good decisions because we'd been pushing physical conditioning for years.



Exploit the differences. There is a difference.



There's a lot of enmity between the cops and the people they police, and so people wanted their Guardsmen there. The only exception to that was Salvadorans. The Guardia Nacional in El Salvador were the bad guys, and the minute our Guardsmen would grab a Salvadoran (we knew we had one when a Spanish-speaker would become extremely agitated), we quickly called for a cop. Then the Salvadoran would relax. They were scared to death of us.



The great unknowns. Laser designators. These things I'm holding in my hand [a laser pointer] were great for breaking up a crowd. If you shined it on a gangbanger's ankles and took it right up to the middle of his chest, it'd break up a crowd faster than anything. That worked great in those days. I'm not so sure it would now. As you know, every kid has one of these now. Interestingly, some of them also thought that our red flashlights were laser designators, which of course they weren't. Armored Humvees we talked about, and they were scared to death of M203 grenade launchers. We didn't have any ammunition for them, nor would we have used it if we did. But they didn't know that. Flak vests: they are so big as compared to the cop's, gangbangers were convinced that ours were better, more bulletproof. Of course, they aren't, but they didn't know that, so that worked for us.

SHOOTINGS <i>DIRECTED AT THE MILITARY</i>			
DATE	NATIONAL GUARD	MARINE CORPS	U. S. ARMY
30 APRIL	24		
1 MAY	10		
2 MAY	4		
3 MAY	4		
4 MAY	3	3	
5 MAY	11	1	
6 MAY	2		1
7 MAY	1		
8 MAY	1		
9 MAY	1		
10 MAY	2		
11 MAY	1		
12 MAY	1		

Shootings directed at the military. This is in addition to the bullets flying around any night regardless of the time of year. As I say, the riots ended on the second day. Cinco de Mayo [MG Delk pointed out another peak in firearms discharges corresponding to the fifth of May], that's what's happening there.

<i>CASUALTIES</i>		
	DEAD	INJURED
<i>CIVILIANS</i>	53	2,302
<i>LAW ENFORCEMENT</i>	0	71
<i>FIREMEN</i>	0	10
<i>MILITARY</i>	0	0
18,807 ARRESTS (2,628 FELONIES)		
5,383 FIRES		

Casualties: 53 dead civilians, 2,300 injured. You can see the number of injuries in law enforcement and firemen, but look at the military. I wasn't 'fessing up regarding our one soldier who shot himself in the leg.



It really was a miracle. It was enough to make a Christian out of a commander. When your soldiers are being shot at, you do a lot of praying. And I do consider it a miracle that none of our soldiers was hit. I would not count on that happening next time.

ANNEX 1: CIVIL DISTURBANCE MISSION TASKING GUIDELINES

Appropriate	State	Federal	
		Restore Law/Order	Preserve Law/Order
1. Main traffic control points	X	X	
2. Provide building security	X	X	X(-)
3. Escort emergency equipment	X	X	
4. Provide area security/area patrols	X	X	
5. Provide security at custody facilities	X	X	
6. Provide security for emergency work crews	X	X	X(-)
7. Protect sensitive sites	X	X	X(-)
8. Transportation for law enforcement personnel	X	X	
9. Show of force	X	X	
10. Disperse crowds	X	X	
11. Employ riot control agents	X	X	
12. Provide VIP protection/escort	X	X	
13. Provide reserve/quick reaction force	X	X	
14. Joint patrol/ride alongs	X	X	
15. Other missions mutually agreed upon	X	X	X
Inappropriate			
1. Hostage negotiation	X	X	X
2. Barricaded suspect	X	X	X
3. Evidentiary searches	X	X	X
4. Criminal investigation	X	X	X

ANNEX 2: RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Los Angeles Riots, 29 April – 1 May 1992

I understand that I may be deployed to perform law enforcement support missions including crowd control, traffic control, perimeter security, protection of public safety employees such as firefighters, area security or roving patrols. I understand the following rules on the use of deadly and nondeadly force:

Nondeadly Force

1. Nondeadly force involves the use of physical contact, restraint, baton, M16A1/2 with bayonet or chemicals such as tear gas or MACE.
2. Nondeadly force will always be the minimum necessary to protect yourself, a team member, or a law enforcement officer, or in emergency situations.
3. Nondeadly force should only be used at the discretion of a superior officer or noncommissioned officer, a law enforcement officer, or in emergency situations.

Use of Deadly Force

1. Deadly force refers to the use of any type of physical force in a manner that could be reasonably expected to result in death whether or not death is the intent.
2. The use of deadly force is authorized only where all three of the following circumstances are present:
 - a. All other means have been exhausted or are not readily available.
 - b. The risk of death or serious bodily harm to innocent persons is not significantly increased by its use.
 - c. The purpose of its use is one or more of the following:
 - (1) Self-defense to avoid death or serious bodily harm (threat of harm is not restricted to firearms, but may include assault with bricks, pipes, or other heavy missiles, incendiary and explosive devices, or any other material which could cause death or serious bodily harm.

- (2) Prevention of a crime which involves a substantial risk of death or serious bodily harm.
- (3) Defense of others where there is a substantial risk of death or serious bodily harm.
- (4) Detention or prevention of the escape of persons against whom the use of deadly force is authorized in subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) above.

Civil Disturbance Training

I acknowledge that I have received basic civil disturbance training prior to my actual deployment in support of law enforcement.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE USE OF DEADLY FORCE.

Signed/Date

ARMING ORDERS

Arming Order	Rifle	Bayonet	Pistol	Baton	Magazine/ Chamber	Control*
AO-1	Sling	Scabbard	Holstered	Belt	In pouch/ empty	OIC/NCOIC
AO-2	Port	Scabbard	Holstered	Belt	In pouch/ empty	OIC/NCOIC
AO-3	Sling	Fixed	Holstered	Hand	In pouch/ empty	OIC/NCOIC
AO-4	Port	Fixed	Holstered	Hand	In pouch/ empty	OIC/NCOIC
AO-5	Port	Fixed	Holstered	Hand	In weapon/ empty	OIC/NCOIC
AO-6	Port	Fixed	In hand	Belt	In weapon/ locked	OIC

*OIC = officer in charge, NCOIC = noncommissioned officer in charge.

NOTE: In high-threat areas, soldiers were normally at a modified AO-5, *without* bayonets fixed. This is much safer, and Arming Orders have since been modified to reflect this.