

# “The History of SWAT”

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During the late 1960s. American Law Enforcement experienced a surge in domestic terrorism and sniper attacks. These attacks in most cases targeted either the police or the general citizenry.

As a result the Law Enforcement community, (predominantly west coast L.E.) took a hard look at the situation. What they found was a lack of effective response capability in relation to such incidents. The problem mandated a solution. That solution came in the form of “SWAT” (Special Weapons & Tactics). Since that time SWAT Teams have evolved and now respond to almost any dangerous situation that falls outside routine patrol capability.

In the 1980s most standing SWAT Teams started to add hostage rescue and high risk warrant service to their expertise. The skill required to safely execute these types of operations helped propel SWAT onto a more professional level and helped standardize tactics.

In 1983 this Department eventually saw a need for such a specialized unit and formed its first “Emergency Response Team”. This team was originally staffed by five Deputies and one supervisor on a part time basis. In 1984 the team was expanded by four. All team members attended a 40hr. SWAT school for their initial training.

The teams’ equipment during the 1980s could be described as primitive compared to its current inventory. They went from a hodge podge mix of two uzis, a couple of M-16s, and some old shotguns to MP-5 sub-machineguns, AR-15 .223 cal. carbines, Remington .308 sniper rifles, new Remington 12ga. Shotguns, night vision, and a host of other modern equipment fielded by the average SWAT Team.

Training has also increased as has the team’s roster which now maintains a total of twelve members who are commanded by Lt. Anthony Cundiff. The team, like most SWAT units are part time. They however can be on the ground and operational within 45 minutes of being called out. The unit averages about three barricaded/hostage call outs each year as well as numerous high risk warrant services. The warrant services are usually associated with narcotic operations. All current SWAT Team members are pooled from the Patrol Division.