

What's So Special About S.E.D.?



by Scott McClintock

Personnel of the Special Enforcement Detail (S.E.D.) are often asked about the requirements and working conditions of the unit. We hope to answer some of these questions in this article.

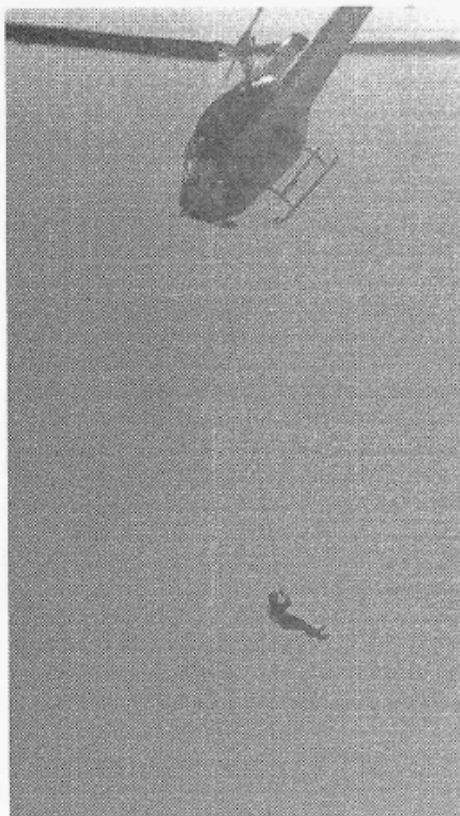
S.E.D. is the only unit in the department with marksmanship as well as physical conditioning entrance requirements.

Applicants with two years of patrol and at least a year of detentions experience must run the obstacle/agility course under 4-1/2 minutes, and complete a revolver/shotgun proficiency shoot in order to get an interview for openings.

The rationale behind the physical fitness emphasis is this: On the scene of a Code 11, if a team leader assigns a deputy to a specific position such as a rooftop or the far side of a tall fence, that deputy must get there, very quickly, with all of his gear, without making noise, every single time.

Also, physical conditioning favorably affects reaction time, stress management, and recovery from injury.

The rationale behind the marksmanship requirement is obvious. Although the entry qualifying shoot utilizes the Model 66, new

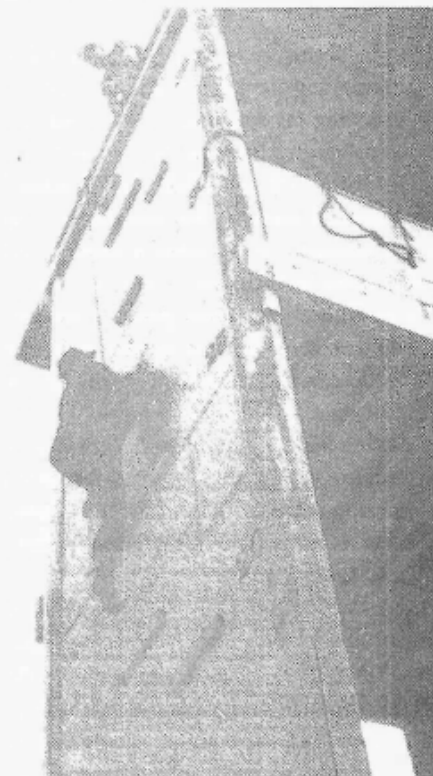


Vertical assault training with San Bernardino Sheriff's Office.

S.E.D. deputies are issued and taught to use a .45 semi-automatic pistol as their primary tactical weapon.

Other weapons, such as sniper rifles, assault rifles, and semi-automatic shotguns are issued according to the deputies' individual assignments and preferences.

In fact, by the time equipment issue is completed, new S.E.D. deputies have some 50 items to maintain and keep available at all times.



The "Flywalk" on the A-range rappel tower develops upper body strength, endurance and a confidence of heights.

This array of gear includes weapons, uniforms, ammunition, communications gear and other miscellany.

After a call-out or two, deputies begin collecting many other personally owned items to make their job easier or more comfortable. Add the required wetsuit, fins, mask and snorkel, and you have filled the trunk of any car.

The true test of an S.E.D. deputy's state of organization is how quickly he can retri-



Counter-sniper Derek Clark sets up with his rifle.

We figure that about every sixth time the phone rings in the office, a service request is either added, cancelled, or modified.

About half of these details are last minute, or "need 'em now" in nature. A sergeant then attacks the schedule board with the grease pencil and alters between one and 18 shifts, locations, and quite often, days off. He must then contact every one affected to tell them the bad news. Thus the phone company gets rich, the Communications Center gets annoyed, and the wives get thoroughly ticked.

S.E.D. deputies tend to trade the stability of a consistent patrol or traffic beat for the variation of the entire county. It is not unusual to work a C-shift surveillance in North County; double back to a B-shift border bandit detail, double-back again for an 11-hour Wednesday training session at the A-Range; then stand by for God knows what, where, or when on Thursday.



The good 'ol obstacle course—keep a low profile, minimize the target.

...eve one small item (e.g. a tube of camouflage face paint) from an entire trunk full of stuff.

Among all of that gear is a pager to which the S.E.D. deputy becomes married 24 hours per day.

After a while, touching your hip and not feeling the pager is like noticing that your wallet is gone or your fly is down.

To further ensure availability, S.E.D. deputies cannot leave the county on their off time without first checking to see that minimum staffing levels are met.

All of this availability is to ensure S.E.D.'s response to barricaded suspect missions and high-risk warrant services.

It takes a special public employee to crash through a door knowing that inside there is a doped-up, gun-toting crazy who hates cops.

The bulk of S.E.D.'s work is in filling service requests from outlying stations and agencies. In these day-to-day operations, the most important quality of our S.E.D. deputy is flexibility.



Deputy John Pokorny executes a "Bunga drop" 35 feet off the deck.

It takes a special level of interest and dedication to endure such a schedule.

We have all seen the kind of deputies who walk around with the MOA in one hand, their lawyer on a short leash in the other hand, and the words "They can't do that to me!" forever etched upon their lips. They are not attracted to this kind of work.

Finally, S.E.D. deputies believe in and work under the following principle: Although elite specialist units and vast vertical stacks of bureaucrats are important to a department of our size, the deputy sheriffs who handle inmates, radio calls, and caseloads are the life blood of the SDSO, and are so deserving of what technical, tactical, or fraternal support S.E.D. can provide.