

Police History

THE HISTORY OF THE SPECIAL CRIME SQUAD.



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From B0300832

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1. During the 1920's a number of Detectives were attached to Police Headquarters in a section popularly known as the Detectives' Office. In the 1930's the Detectives' Office was renamed the Criminal Investigation Branch. A number of Squads were formed, the first of which I believe was the Company Squad. As the years went by, other Squads were formed and added to the Criminal Investigation Branch. A number of senior Detectives were appointed to the Criminal Investigation Branch and were placed on "general duties" and were referred to as General Duty Detectives. The number of these Detectives varied from time to time.

2. These General Duty Detectives were under the direct control of the Superintendent in Charge of the Criminal Investigation Branch and he detailed them to carry out investigations into offences which did not come within the scope of the Squads which had been formed. Where murders which required intensive investigation were committed and the resources of the local Division where the murder was committed were not sufficient, Detectives from the General Duty Section were sent. The intention at the time was for these Detectives to assist in the investigations. However it was sometimes found, for various reasons, that the General Duty Detectives did not always remain on the investigation and consequently if the offender was not apprehended it was left to the Divisional Detectives to place the matter before the Coroner's Court. As a result of this, some friction did occur between the Divisional Detectives and the General Duty Detectives.

3. For about twenty five years after World War II, Detectives from the Criminal Investigation Branch were called upon more and more frequently to participate in murder investigations and a system was developed to enable a methodical approach to be made to these investigations. The Officer in Charge of the investigations detailed appropriate Detectives to carry out various important functions such as preparation and compiling of the "running sheets"; the carrying out of the house to house canvasses; inquiries into the deceased's

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background, friends and associates; the interviewing of witnesses and to fully develop whatever information was available as to the identity and whereabouts of the suspect.

4. In the early 1970's, it became apparent that the General Duty Detectives who occupied offices on various floors and rooms of the Criminal Investigation Branch should be amalgamated into a Squad. Several names were suggested for the new Squad, the name Homicide Squad was suggested but rejected by the then Commissioner of Police and ultimately he directed that the Squad be named the Special Crime Squad and it came into being as such about 1973. The Superintendent in Charge of the Criminal Investigation Branch at the time continued to assume operational control over the Squad and therefore no Sergeant was appointed as Officer in Charge until Detective Superintendent Bradstreet appointed then Detective Sergeant H. Tupman as its first Officer in Charge. The strength of the Squad was then about sixteen units but the members were still scattered in various offices of the Criminal Investigation Branch.

5. As the work load increased, it was found necessary to add to the number of Detectives employed on the Squad with the result that there are now thirty one Detectives including one First Class Sergeant, two Second Class Sergeants, and ten Third Class Sergeants. More suitable office accommodation was provided and the Squad now occupies a number of offices in the one section on the Ground Floor of the Criminal Investigation Branch.

6. Eleven cars are attached to the Squad including high powered vehicles.

7. Records are kept of all murders that occur in New South Wales and their assistance is required. Members of the Special Crime Squad are detailed to attend at the scene and to carry out the murder investigations. These Detectives will remain on the investigation until such time all inquiries are exhausted and in most cases they assume control of the inquiries and ultimately put the matter before the Coroner's Court.

8. For information, there were sixty five murders committed in this State during 1970, sixty

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- 3 -

of them being cleared up. In 1975 there were eighty five murders of which seventy five were cleared up. To date, 1976 (27th August, 1976) there have been sixty six murders committed and inquiries are continuing in respect of eight of these murders which have not yet been cleared up. Most other States of Australia have Squads dealing exclusively with murder investigation but the New South Wales Special Crime Squad is by far the biggest in numbers. In 1975 there were more murders committed in New South Wales than in Victoria and Queensland combined. There is no doubt that the strength of the Special Crime Squad will increase as time goes on and in fact a current application is being considered for the provision of six extra men and four extra vehicles to the Squad.