

April

5 April 1986 – Deputy Raul “Rudy” Aauto, Duty Related Illness

Deputy Aauto died following surgery to a knee injury received while assigned to the Special Enforcement Bureau several years earlier. The knee injury continued to cause physical trouble which required him to undergo surgery. He was put under anesthesia for the surgery and never regained consciousness.

Deputy Aauto had been with the agency for 17 years and was survived by his wife and two daughters.

15 April 1957 – Sergeant Vernon J. Corbell, Airplane Accident

Sergeant Corbell and Raymond Willis, a civilian polygraph technician for the department, were killed in an airplane accident while searching for a downed plane near Malibu. The plane Sergeant Corbell was piloting experienced engine trouble and he attempted to land at an emergency landing strip in Puerco Canyon. During the landing the plane struck a ridge and burst into flames, crashing only 500-feet from the landing strip.

Sergeant Corbell had been with the agency for nine years and was assigned to the AERO Bureau.

16 April 1983 – Sergeant Larrell Kent Smith, Gunfire

Sergeant Larrell Smith was shot and killed while a member of the Special Enforcement Bureau's Special Weapons Team which was serving a search warrant on a dangerous suspect. Smith was the third man on the team making an entry through a window. As the team entered, the suspect, who was flanking the team, opened fire and struck Sergeant Smith in the head. Other team members returned fire and killed the suspect.

18 April 1883 – Deputy Adolfo Celis, Accidental Gunfire

Deputy Adolfo Celis and future Sheriff George E. Gard were sent to the San Fernando area to investigate claims of cattle rustling. After stopping to shoot some small game to make a meal, the two deputies climbed back in their buckboard to resume their search for the rustlers. Deputy Celis was driving the wagon and Gard was seated beside him. Due to the uneven ground Celis reached over to adjust a blanket between Gard and him that shifted on the trail. Seconds later Gard heard the report of a rifle and Celis fell backward struck by a bullet in the center of his chest. He died almost immediately. It is believed Celis's rifle was dislodged when he adjusted the blanket, fell out of the buckboard striking a wagon wheel and firing. The rifle was later recovered on the trail.

18 April 1978 – Deputy Thomas H. Pohlman, Gunfire

Deputy Thomas Pohlman was shot and killed while attempting to make an arrest. Deputy Pohlman was on patrol when he smelled ether, used to manufacture PCP. He called for assistance but before back up could arrive, the suspect ran from the scene.

Deputy Pohlman started a foot pursuit and was able to capture the suspect. While the suspect was being handcuffed, he was able to gain control of Deputy Pohlman's revolver and shot him. Deputy Pohlman died at the scene.

Deputy Pohlman had served with the agency for 4 years.

19 April 1979 – Deputy George Barthel, Gunfire

Deputy Barthel was shot while investigating a group of suspicious males. He and his partner Deputy James Hollingsworth were assigned to the Sheriff's Special Enforcement Bureau and were on a special duty patrolling a housing project.

Deputy Barthel and his partner were walking up to a group of males when they threw drug paraphernalia into the bushes. As Deputy Barthel's partner went to pick up the drugs, the shooter opened fire from across the street with a rifle, striking both Deputy Barthel and Deputy Hollingsworth in the face and torso. Both deputies were wearing bulletproof vests, but the bullets entered through the gaps in the sides.

Deputy Hollingsworth used his own body to shield Deputy Barthel as they retreated to their patrol car taking fire from the suspects. Both deputies were transported to a local hospital where Deputy Barthel died later that day.

29 April 2002 – Deputy David William March, Gunfire

Deputy David March was shot and killed after stopping a vehicle in Irwindale, California, at approximately 10:40 am.

The suspect had stated to friends that he wanted to kill a police officer during a traffic stop. The suspect intentionally got stopped and waited for Deputy March to get in front of his patrol car so he could open fire, as Deputy March would have no place to take cover. Deputy March was shot several times in the head and chest.

The suspect, who was identified shortly after the shooting, fled to Mexico where he remained for 4 years. On February 23, 2006, the suspect was arrested in Mexico by US Marshals and Mexican federal agents following a joint investigation. He was extradited back to California and on March 2nd, 2007, he plead guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Deputy March had served with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for 7 years. He is survived by his wife and stepdaughter.

30 April 1970 – Deputy Gordon D. Erickson, Fall

Deputy Gordon Erickson was killed when he fell from a moving vehicle. Deputy Gordon was a passenger in a Sheriff's Department bus when the driver made a left turn. Deputy Erickson fell out of the open door, struck his head on the pavement, and sustained massive head injuries. He died from the injuries six days later.

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