

August

2 August 2003 – Deputy Stephen Douglas Sorensen, Gunfire

Deputy Stephen Sorensen was shot and killed after he responded to a trespassing call at approximately 1330 hours near Highway 138.

After Deputy Sorensen arrived at the scene, a witness reported hearing about six gun shots and called police. When deputies arrived, they were able to locate Deputy Sorensen's patrol car, but not the deputy. After searching for about an hour, deputies discovered Deputy Sorensen's body. He had been shot six times with a .223 caliber rifle. The suspect had tied his feet together and dragged his body through the desert.

Deputies also found chemicals consistent with manufacturing methamphetamine in the immediate area, leading to the theory that Deputy Sorensen had uncovered a meth lab before he was killed.

The suspect was located a week later in a house in the Lake Los Angeles area. He admitted to murdering Deputy Sorensen when contacted on his cell phone. When the suspect refused to surrender, deputies attempted to end the standoff by firing tear gas into the house, and assaulting the structure with a huge, mechanized battering ram. They were met with gunfire minutes before the house erupted in flames and burned to the ground. The suspect's body was later located inside, along with Deputy Sorensen's gun and radio.

Deputy Sorensen had served with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office for 12 years, and is survived by his wife and son.

2 August 2008 – Deputy Juan A. Escalante, Gunfire

Deputy Juan Escalante was shot and killed when he was confronted by two armed gang members in front of his home as he prepared to leave for work. Deputy Escalante drew his weapon and identified himself as a deputy before being fatally shot.

Deputy Escalante was assigned to the Men's Central Jail and it is believed he may have been targeted by a gang as part of his duties. The suspect who fired the shots that killed Escalante was sentenced to life in prison.

Deputy Escalante had served with the Sheriff's Department for 2.5 years. He is survived by his wife and three children.

10 August 2004 - Officer Michael Lawrence Sparkes Sr. (Los Angeles County Office of Public Safety), Gunfire

Captain Michael Sparkes was shot and killed when he identified himself and attempted to take action against two suspects as they attempted to rob him while he was off duty.

Captain Sparkes was taking an early morning bike ride when he was confronted by the two gang members at approximately 0535 hours. One of the suspects was armed with an AK-47 rifle. Shots were exchanged between Captain Sparkes and the suspects. Despite being mortally wounded, Captain Sparkes was able to give responding officers a description of the two suspects.

Captain Sparkes was transported to Harbor-UCLA Medical Center where he succumbed to his wounds. Coincidentally, Captain Sparkes was assigned to the hospital and was in charge of police and security operations on the hospital campus.

One of the suspects was arrested a short time later after being stopped for a traffic violation by a Los Angeles police officer. The second suspect, who was wounded in the exchange of gunfire, was taken into custody after seeking treatment at a hospital.

Captain Sparkes had served with the Los Angeles County Office of Public Safety for 30 years. He is survived by his wife, young son, and adult stepdaughter.

13 August 1965 – Deputy Ronald E. Ludlow, Gunfire

Deputy Ronald Ludlow was shot and killed during the Watts Riots. Deputy Ludlow and other deputies were attempting to disperse a crowd from a liquor store that had been looted and set on fire. Shots were fired at the deputies as they attempted to protect the store. A car pulled up to the store and another deputy pointed the barrel of his shotgun at a suspect in the car while ordering the car to leave the area. The suspect grabbed the barrel of the shotgun and during the struggle the weapon discharged hitting Deputy Ludlow in the stomach.

Deputy Ludlow was placed in a patrol car and died while being transported to a local hospital. Deputy Ludlow was the first fatality of the Watts Riots.

Deputy Ludlow was survived by his wife and two children.

16 August 1997 – Deputy Shayne Daniel York, Gunfire

Deputy York succumbed to gunshot wounds sustained two days earlier when he was shot by a robbery suspect after being identified as a deputy sheriff.

Deputy York and his fiancée, who was also a deputy with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, were off duty in a hair salon when two suspects entered and ordered everyone to the ground. While one suspect covered the customers the other collected everyone's wallets and purses. The two suspects discovered Deputy York's badge and immediately shot him in the back of the head as he lay on the ground. Deputy York had not resisted and remained calm throughout the entire robbery trying to keep others from getting hurt.

The two suspects were arrested later in the day during a traffic stop by members of the Fullerton Police Department. In August 2000 the suspect who pulled the trigger was found guilty of first degree murder with special circumstances and sentenced to death. The other suspect was sentenced to life in prison.

Deputy York had served with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for 2 years. He is survived by his fiancée, parents, and brother.

26 August 1931 Deputy James L. McDermott, Traffic Accident

Deputy McDermott was killed in a freak accident while servicing his department vehicle at a gas station at 1705 North Broadway a short distance from the Hall of Justice. After McDermott exited his vehicle it began to roll away. He jumped on the running board in an effort to regain control of the car but was impaled in the stomach by a hook used to suspend a water hose.

McDermott, a World War 1 veteran, was forty years old at the time of his death and was survived by his wife. He was a five year veteran of the Department and a member of the county liquor squad.

30 August 1971 – Deputy Barry J. Hoffman, Gunfire

Deputy Barry Hoffman was shot and killed during a struggle. Deputy Hoffman and his partner were questioning two suspects near a bar in Lawndale when the two suspects attempted to flee. A struggle ensued between Deputy Hoffman and one of the suspects when he was wounded. Deputy Hoffman was transported to a local hospital where he died five days later.

Deputy Hoffman had been with the agency for just over two years.

31 August 2001 – Deputy Hagop “Jake” Kuredjian, Gunfire

Deputy Hagop Jake Kuredjian was shot and killed after responding to backup another deputy and federal agents who were attempting to serve a warrant on a man for impersonating a police officer and possessing a firearm as a convicted felon.

When officers arrived at the residence in an affluent neighborhood, the man came to the door several times but refused to go outside. As the officers attempted to gain entry through a window, the man opened fire with an automatic rifle, striking Deputy Kuredjian in the head.

The suspect then held other officers at bay for several hours before his house caught fire and burned to the ground. The suspect had previously been a police officer.

Deputy Kuredjian had served with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for 17 years