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NATION

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THE BATTALION

Thursday, March 2, 2000

2 dead, 3 wounded in shooting

Pennsylvania man opens fire at two fast-food restaurants

WILKINSBURG, Pa. (AP) — A man set his apartment on fire today, then shot lunchtime customers at two fast-food restaurants and holed up in an office building before surrendering. One person was killed and four critically injured.

The suspect, who had held four or five hostages, surrendered in a hallway, said Thomas Sturgeon, superintendent of Allegheny County police. He confirmed one person was killed before the suspect went to the office building, which houses day care and senior citizens' centers.

The hostages were safely released when the man surrendered, State Police Trooper Jim Algeo said.

The rampage began at about 11 a.m. in Wilksburg, about nine miles east of Pittsburgh.

John DeWitt, a 63-year-old maintenance worker in the suspect's apartment building, said he and two other workers went to replace the man's front door, which had been broken several days earlier because the man had lost his keys.

DeWitt told The Associated Press he left to work on another apartment and later saw one of the other maintenance work-

ers carrying the other, who had been shot. DeWitt said he then saw the tenant walk toward the restaurants, about a mile away.

Police did not immediately comment about DeWitt's account.

The one-bedroom apartment on the top floor of a five-story building was charred and its windows blown out.

One person was shot at a Burger King and at least two at a nearby McDonald's restaurant, Police Chief Gerald Brewer said.

Police did not release further information about the victims, but a woman at the scene said her stepfather, Richard Clinger, was shot while sitting in his van in the McDonald's parking lot.

"Me and my stepfather were sitting in the truck, and this guy just walked up and started shooting," said Candy Zamboni, who was unhurt. "I thought maybe he was going to ask for directions or something. He just turned and walked into McDonald's."

Tony Elhaja, manager of a Dunkin' Donuts next to the McDonald's, said the

daughter of the man shot in the parking lot came into his store to wait for police.

"She ran inside and was crying," Elhaja said.

Brewer said the gunman fled into the office building and remained there with the hostages until he surrendered at about 2 p.m.

As police surrounded the building, officers led a group of children away.

Taryn Harris said her 2- and 5-year-old daughters remained inside the day-care center before the suspect surrendered. "They said they were OK. The just can't come out," Harris said.

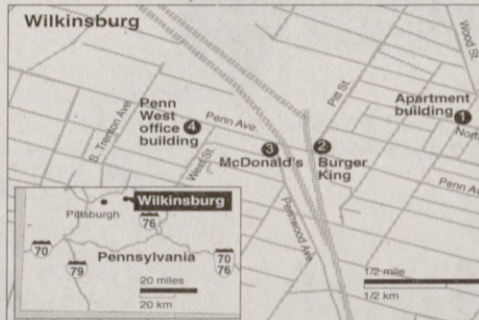
One person died and three others were in critical condition at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center-Presbyterian, hospital officials said. A 65-year-old man was in critical condition at Mercy Hospital with a single gunshot wound to the head, spokeswoman Linda K. Ross said.

As police negotiated with the gunman, Don Treser spoke on a cell phone with his fiancée, Janet Lukitsch, who was on the second floor of the building at a home health care business.

"They're OK," Treser said. "This is awful. You watch this in the movies. Not in real life."

Shooting in Wilksburg

A man went on a shooting spree in Wilksburg, Pa., wounding three and killing two, then holed up in an office building before surrendering.



Approx. 11 a.m. EST

1 One person is shot at suspect's residence at 1208 Wood St.

2 Second victim is shot inside Burger King.

3 Third victim is shot in parking lot of McDonald's. A fourth is shot behind the counter inside and a fifth in a car at the drive-through.

4 Gunman holds hostages in an office building housing a child-care and senior center.

2 p.m. EST: Gunman surrenders

AP/Wm. J. Castellio, S. Hoffmann

Lawlessness cited in severe LAPD scandal

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Poor supervision and a clique culture that encouraged officers to break rules contributed to the worst scandal in Los Angeles police history and could take years and millions to resolve, department investigators concluded.

Police working in one of the city's most crowded, violent and gang-ridden areas "believed they were in a life-and-death struggle with the gang element," said a report from a department board of inquiry.

The report was released today on the police department's Website. It said the scandal might have been avoided if supervisors had noticed a troubling series of red flags first raised in the mid-1980s.

"Pursuits, injuries resulting from uses of force, officer-involved shootings and personnel complaints had a clearly identifiable pattern. ... Yet no one seems to have noticed and, more importantly, deal with the patterns," the report said.

At a news conference today, Police Chief Bernard C. Parks emphasized that the scandal involved a small group of people and the "other 13,000 members of this department should not be broadbrushed." Those people, he said, would work "as hard as we can to bring back the luster to the Los Angeles Police Department badge."

Parks said the report did not include details of the corruption. He said details were available in criminal reports that would be released as needed for court cases.

The board's 362-page report was presented to Mayor Richard Riordan and members of the civilian Police Commission on Tuesday. Parks had briefed the City Council on the report last month, saying it would recommend more than 100 changes in procedure.

The report targeted poor paperwork, lax supervision and poor understanding of police rules and policies. Mostly, it was a case of "people failing to do their jobs," the report said.

Parks ordered the inquiry by dozens of investigators last fall. Other investigations are still under way — a police criminal investigation, Internal Affairs review and an investigation by the Los Angeles County district attorney's office.

The widening corruption probe began in August 1998, after former Officer Rafael Perez was arrested for stealing eight pounds of cocaine from an evidence room. His first trial ended in a hung jury. Seeking leniency, he began telling investigators about alleged misconduct among fellow officers, contending they beat, framed, stole from and shot innocent people in the city's crime-ridden Rampart area near downtown.

The scandal became public in September. In all, 20 officers have been relieved of duty and 40 tainted convictions have been overturned. Several hundred more cases are under review. The FBI and U.S. attorney's office have recently joined the police department in investigating.

Authorities have estimated the financial toll on the city could exceed \$125 million. Perez was sentenced last week to five years in prison for cocaine theft.

After Perez's allegations came to light, Parks ordered a board of inquiry involving dozens of investigators to make a sweeping review of the department. The board recommended 108 changes, including expanding the use of lie detector tests and the department's authority to force the retirements of some officers.

The report blamed individual officers rather than department policies themselves.

"Pursuits, injuries resulting from uses of force, officer-involved shootings and personnel complaints had a clearly identifiable pattern."

— LAPD Board of Inquiry report

News in Brief

Boeing Co. to declare impasse in SPEEA strike

SEATTLE (AP) — The Boeing Co. has notified the union representing striking engineers and technical workers that it plans to declare an impasse in labor talks and try to impose an agreement, a union official said today.

Charles Bofferding, executive director of the Society for Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, said the union received a letter from the company stating its intent. Talks between SPEEA and Boeing broke off this weekend without an agreement.

SPEEA represents 22,600 engineers and technical workers in Washington, California and Kansas. About 17,000 remain on strike.

SPEEA negotiators had sought more guaranteed pay raises and bonuses similar to those received by the larger Machinists union. Boeing has insisted on mostly selective pay increases, reductions in life insurance benefits and some changes in health insurance.

Jury deliberates Haitian immigrant torture case

NEW YORK (AP) — A jury began deliberations today in the case against three police officers charged with conspiring to conceal the role of one of them in the police station torture of a Haitian immigrant.

Officers Charles Schwarz, Thomas Wiese and Thomas Bruder are charged with covering up Schwarz's part in the 1997 attack on Abner Louima.

Schwarz, 34, was convicted last year of violating Louima's civil rights by holding him down while another officer, Justin Volpe, sodomized Louima with a broom handle in a fit of rage on Aug. 9, 1997. Schwarz faces a possible life sentence for the earlier conviction and he and the other two officers face up to five years if convicted of conspiracy.

New G.I. Joe doll honors WWII Navajo code-talkers

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Sam Billison provided the voice and phrases for the "Navajo Code Talker" G.I. Joe, and he knows of what he speaks.

During World War II, Billison was part of a specially trained group of Navajo Marines who translated radio communications into unbreakable codes using the Navajo language. They were known as code talkers.

The action figure comes with a short history of the code talkers. Lift the foot-tall toy's arm and he says seven phrases in Navajo, followed by English translations. "Request air support" and "attack by machine gun" are among them.

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