

**St. Louis County, Missouri  
Police Department**

**Bomb & Arson  
Investigations**



**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue**

This report covers the establishment and expansion of a special unit within the St. Louis County, MO Police Department that has the hazardous duty to investigate arson fires and respond to explosive and bomb incidents. The reader should give attention to the problems and issues that had to be resolved by a group of dedicated detectives and technicians who performed their duties during the early years with limited training and equipment.

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## ***“Concunentes Provolationem”***

Latin: Initial Success or Total Failure

### **Background**

The arson and explosive investigative responsibility of the St. Louis County, Missouri Police Department (County Police) has an interesting history. As the reader will note in this history report, the response to arson or explosive incidents in St. Louis County has not always been a clear responsibility among the several public safety agencies. During the 1950s and 1960s there were disagreements between the County Police and fire chiefs/fire marshals as to who was responsible for determining the cause and origin of a residential, business, or vehicle fire; or which agency would conduct the criminal investigation and seek prosecution if the crime of arson had been established.

As explosives and related devices (which appeared as bombs or other potential explosive hazards) became available following World War II and the Korean Conflict, the County Police relied on the 50<sup>th</sup> Explosive Ordnance Device (Army EOD) detachment to identify and render safe the device and surrounding area. If there was a crime associated with the explosive device, the County Police would initiate a criminal investigation should a federal agency having concurrent jurisdiction decline.

As background it is important to understand that when the County Police began operations on July 1, 1955 there were 45 fire agencies (20 municipal fire departments and 25 fire protection districts) providing fire, rescue and EMT or paramedics to serve the residents and businesses in St. Louis County. Providing police services were 66 municipal police departments plus the newly established County Police which had county-wide authority to enforce state law violations. However, the resources of the County Police were primarily devoted to the unincorporated areas of St. Louis County and several small municipalities that contracted for police services. The municipal police departments provided police service for the incorporated cities. This unusual public safety arrangement served nearly one million County residents and 524 square miles. As a result it took a number of years to agree which service, police or fire, was responsible for each aspect of a fire of suspicious origin. Regarding incidents involving bombs, explosives and bomb threats, the role of the County Police was established early on.

The following sections cover the organizational, equipment and staff changes that took place during the past 50 plus years as the department expanded its commitment to deal with the increasing number of arson and explosives related incidents. During each stage of expansion there were discussions about the need for specialized equipment, training of detectives and technicians and the problems the County Police had to overcome during the early years through the present. Compared to other large urban police departments, the history of the County Police is relatively short. A review of this history of arson and explosives investigations will illustrate how a group of dedicated and innovative detectives and arson technicians worked hard to make the community a safer place to live, work and operate a business.

## Bombs/Explosives

**Bomb Investigations:** Before presenting the history of bomb and explosive investigations by the County Police, it is important to have an understanding of what makes the possession or use of explosives a crime requiring an investigation by a law enforcement officer. The common definition of a bombing is “the willful and malicious explosion of any bomb or other device charged with powder or other explosive.” In Missouri the willful and malicious explosion of a bomb is considered a felony with a penalty of death or imprisonment. It is not necessary to prove that the accused person acted from motives of hate, ill will, or revenge. There are related felony crimes such as transporting a bomb or explosive substance with the attempt to use the same unlawfully against the person or property of another; or the willful and malicious injury or destruction or attempt...to destroy any building, or other property...by the use of bombs, dynamite...or other kinds of explosives. An example of the early involvement of the County Police in preventing injuries/deaths from explosive and other hazardous material can be found in a 1956 police bulletin distributed to the community. During the 1950s the handling or misuse of blasting caps was causing serious injuries. This simple bulletin titled “Don’t Touch Blasting Caps” was the first of many information bulletins prepared and distributed by the newly formed police department.



**Blasting Caps Bulletin, 1956**

**Statistics:** The availability of statistical data for St. Louis County related to bombing incidents occurring from 1955 to 1964 is not available to the degree that any meaningful comparisons, conclusions or trends can be established. For those bombings where an explosive device caused a death, the records for the 1970s and 1980s show, on an average, only one arrest for every 10 bombings. One reason for the lack of data on the number of explosive incidents investigated was because the FBI did not consider “explosives or incendiary devices” as a separate crime in the annual Uniform Crime Reports. As defined by the FBI, bombings are Part II Offenses under a group of crimes titled “Weapons.” The Weapons grouping includes violations of laws...prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, concealment, or use of firearms, cutting instruments, explosives, incendiary devices, or other deadly weapons. However, internal crime reports prepared by the County Police for 2008-2016 do provide some basic data suggesting steady increases in explosive incidents during recent years. The data in the below table includes the unincorporated areas of St. Louis County as well as the several contract municipalities.

<b>Explosive Incidents</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2016</b>
Investigated	4	3	2	36	40

The U.S. Bomb Data Center, located at the FBI facility in Quantico, Virginia, reported that for all of the United States in 2015 there were 630 explosion related incidents and 400 bombings. During the same year there were 1,670 bomb threats, a slight decrease compared with previous years. Educational and office/business properties remains the most commonly reported targets of bomb threats. Recently the U.S. Treasury Department reported that only one-third of

explosive incidents could be attributed to any specific cause or group, with the percentage breakdown of the one-third noted below:

<b>Groups/Individuals</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Campus/Student Disorders	56
Extremists	33
Labor Disputes	2
All Others	9

**Car Bombings:** History has demonstrated that car bombings are among the toughest of cases to solve because the explosion destroys most of the evidence. As car bombings usually involve organized crime figures, especially those that occurred prior to 1990, the subsequent investigations produced very few witnesses or suspects willing to cooperate with the police. Not only were the victims at risk when it came to car bombs, so were the bystanders and the subject constructing the device. As an illustration, for the year 1978 the FBI reported 18 deaths due to bombings. Eight deaths involved the intended victim, one was an innocent bystander and nine persons were killed while making a bomb. Car bombings increased during the late 1970s and early 1980s resulting in a serious investigative problem for the County Police and federal law enforcement agencies. As a result the County Police detectives began to investigate a new wave of organized criminal activity – car bombings.

The investigative hours required in each car bombing case “are astronomical and take police away from other investigations” said County Police Sergeant Donald L. Eatherton about the 1980 James A. Michaels Sr. car bombing on South I-55. As the supervisor of the Bureau of Arson and Explosives, he also said “It can take 200 man-hours to comb through the debris left at the scene of a bombing, compared with about eight hours to sift the evidence in an arson case.” Retired Lieutenant Norval Land, who served as a supervisor of the County Police Crime Scene Unit for several years, included a list of notable car bombings in his memoir that received attention not only by police agencies, but the news media and the residents across the area. The following is a summary of several car bombings that occurred during Lt. Land’s career with the County Police:

- July 24, 1970: Bombing/death of a telephone company executive on a Clayton parking lot.
- October 23, 1972: Ex. St. Louis police lieutenant bombed/killed on a parking lot in Overland.
- June 15, 1973: Pipefitters union executive lost both legs while driving in Spanish Lake.
- May 19, 1975: Convicted criminal killed and student injured in a Hillsdale car bombing.
- October 1977: South County bomber planted three car bombs killing two persons.
- April 11, 1979: Car bomb badly injures businessman while driving in Clarkson Valley.
- November 8, 1979: “Underworld” personality killed in a Richmond Heights bomb explosion.
- December 1, 1979: Wife of a Pipefitters official injured on a parking lot in North County.
- September 17, 1980: Car bomb killed an “underworld” leader while driving on South I-55.
- March 9, 1982: Businessman badly injured on a parking lot near the County Police 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

As a majority of the above car bombings involved a death and occurred in a municipality, the local police chief had the option to conduct the investigation or request the County Police or the St. Louis Area Major Case Squad to investigate the homicide. However, bomb technicians and crime scene specialists from the County Police would be called to assist in the investigation.

**Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs):** The introduction of IEDs by the violator in the early 1960s, versus the use of surplus U.S. military devices, became of serious concern for the bomb technicians responding to a scene. Because of their nature and crude design, the technicians found they were less predictable than normal munitions. Each IED presented a hazard because there were no standard identification features as the device could be concealed inside any type of container. The complexity of the device, triggering mechanisms, types of explosives, and their purpose was limited only by the ingenuity of the person who assembled the bomb.

**Bomb Threats:** During the 1960s and 1970s bomb threats were an everyday occurrence in St. Louis County as well as across the nation. They were used in religious, racial and personal disagreements or attempts at harassment. Each school/university, business, religious facility or person could have been the target of a bomb threat. The typical bomb threat was a telephone call to a school or business that was taken seriously until proven otherwise. A building or airplane receiving a bomb threat would have been routinely evacuated until the public safety responders declared the area safe. Nearly all the telephone bomb threats during this period were determined to be false. The number of false bomb threats in St. Louis County steadily decreased over the years, probably because the County Police discontinued the routine evacuation policy unless a suspect device was identified. Also, a “zero tolerance” policy was adopted which resulted in arrests and prosecutions. It was during this period that police agencies obtained the special equipment and legal authority to trace incoming telephone threats in order to identify the person making the false threat. These factors served to deter/reduce the number of false or harassing bomb threats.

The Noteworthy Bomb/Explosive Incidents section of this history report describes one false bomb threat that resulted in an arrest.

## **Arson**

**Arson Investigations:** The common law defined arson as the willful and malicious burning of the house or the outbuilding of another only if the dwelling was occupied. While occupancy was one of the elements of the crime, it was not necessary for the occupants to be present at the time the fire started. As there were weaknesses in the common law, the several states enacted more specific laws that included, for example, defining the burning of one’s own building or other structures as arson. The current Missouri state law includes the following general provisions:

1. The intentional burning of any building or outbuilding, whether occupied or not.
2. The burning of personal property, in excess of the amount designated (by the State), that is the property of another.
3. Property of any sort, regardless of ownership, that is burned with the intent to defraud an insurance company.
4. Includes the crime of attempted arson as the arranging of combustible material to ignite a fire with the intent to burn a building or for personal profit.
5. Includes a fire or explosion that started as a result of the manufacture of methamphetamine.

For the purposes of reporting state and local crimes/offenses, the FBI uniform crime classification defines arson as: “Any willful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a dwelling house, public building, motor vehicle or aircraft, personal

property of another, etc.” Prior to 1964 arson was included by the FBI under the “Other Offenses,” a general catch-all category, in their annual reporting of crime and arrest rates by state and local police agencies. In 1964 the FBI changed the classification making arson a separate crime under the “Part II Offenses” category along with forgery, fraud, gambling, and prostitution. It was not until 1978 that the FBI upgraded arson to a “Part I” or major crime.

**Statistics:** Over a ten-year period, from 1965 to 1975, building fires across the U.S. increased 325 percent, the largest increase of any crime including murder, rape, robbery and burglary. For every 100 cases of known or suspected arson, only nine suspects were arrested, resulting in a nine percent clearance rate. Of the nine persons arrested, only two were convicted and seldom was anyone actually sentenced to prison. By 1981 the number of persons arrested in the U.S. for arson totaled 20,600. This represented a 13 percent increase over 1975. Forty percent of those arrested were juveniles, who were under the age of 18. Usually, the crime of arson was associated with a financial gain, often very large, which was true across the United States. The International Associations of Chiefs of Police reported that fires of an incendiary nature are also ignited by persons attempting to conceal a crime, revenge, intimidation and by pyromaniacs.

From 1955 to 1975 the only county-wide arson data available were incidents reported to the Bureau of Central Police Records, which is operated by the County Police. An undetermined number of arson fires may have gone unreported because the 45 fire departments/districts were not required by law or ordinance to report arsons to a central records agency. If a fire official elected to investigate and/or prosecute an arson fire suspect, the information was not routinely reported to Central Police Records. The 66 municipal police departments were, however, required by law to report their crimes to Central Police Records. Therefore, as arson crime data was limited for this period, the ability to correctly present arson trends is difficult. The following chart provides a visual illustration of the annual increases/decreases in the number of arson fires in St. Louis County. The data that covers a 46 year period:

<b>Arson Cases</b>	<b>1965-66</b>	<b>1966-67</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2012</b>
Arsons Reported	24	52	166	101	49

The 1958-59 County Police annual report included a reference that two arson offenses had been cleared by the Juvenile Unit (indicating a juvenile offender had been identified). The 1964-65 annual report included a note that “15 male juveniles had been arrested” and charged with arson. During the same year the Detective Bureau had conducted 22 arson investigations. Past history has shown that the known arsonist is usually a young person less than 21 years of age.

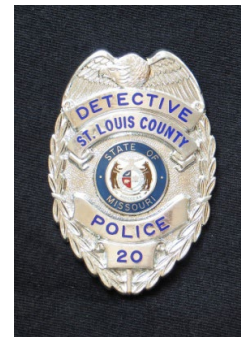
What were the reasons for the low arrest data during this early period? Interviews with retired arson detectives who served during the 1960s and 1970s revealed that proving the crime of arson was especially difficult. Arson fires are often set in the middle of the night limiting possible witnesses. Occasionally fires are started with time delayed ignition devices allowing the perpetrator(s) to leave the area before the start of the fire. Physical evidence at the scene of arson is often limited. Evidence such as fingerprints, trace evidence and/or the source of ignition, not destroyed by the flames and heat, are at the risk of destruction by firefighting measures needed to extinguish the fire. The lack of physical evidence often limits the prosecution of arson cases to circumstantial evidence. The above, combined with the confusion between fire and police responsibilities at the time, increased the frequency and profitability of arsons.

## The Generalists, 1955 to 1967

In the 1950s and 1960s a suspected arson in St. Louis County could be investigated by the County Police, a municipal police or fire department, a fire protection district, the St. Louis County Fire Marshal, or even the state fire marshal headquartered in Jefferson City. However, the criminal investigation and prosecution of the case was a task for the local police service. During this period it was a practice of larger police departments to assign arson cases, bomb threats and bombings to detectives who were considered “generalists.” A detective assigned to the Detective Bureau within the County Police could be assigned a bomb or arson incident along with a case load that included other types of felonies. However, there are indications in the vintage files that the department had begun providing crime-specific training to better prepare detectives to handle complex crimes, e.g., arsons and explosive devices. For example, the 1962-63 annual report noted that 15 police officers had completed a local training course on “Explosive Reconnaissance.” The following year, April 1964, four detectives and nine patrol officers attended a four-day Arson Workshop conducted by the St. Louis County Division of Fire and Accident Prevention.



**Blue Triangle Patch, 1955**



**Detective Badge**

The County Police annual report for 1958-59 stated that the unincorporated area of St. Louis County was starting to experience a problem with arson. The number of arson, bomb and explosives cases and arrests increased every year thereafter. During the 1960s the number of juveniles arrested and charged with arson or making bomb threats continued to increase as well. For example, the 1967-68 annual report stated that eight adults had been arrested for suspect arson/bomb threats. Likewise, juvenile detectives during the same period arrested 16 male juveniles who were charged with arson or making bomb threats. It is estimated that during the 1960s over 75 percent of the arsons and bomb threats were committed by juvenile offenders. Adults were generally responsible for committing arsons for profit and submitting insurance claims.

**St. Louis County Fire Marshal:** The first indication of a conflict between the police and fire services occurred in 1964 over who was responsible for certain aspects of an arson case. A directive issued by the County Police required the St. Louis County Fire Marshal (Fire Marshal), James L. Helbig, to be notified in all cases where there was a death resulting from a fire, or where there was sufficient reason to suspect that arson had been committed. The directive included sending the Fire Marshal a copy of the report. During this period there were several attempts by the Fire Marshal to extend its role in the investigation of suspicious fires, including arson cases.

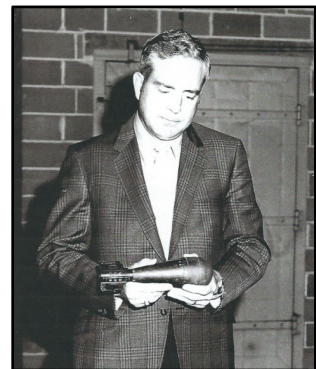
Donald E. Mueller, the Public Works Director for St. Louis County who provided oversight of the Fire Marshal, notified Superintendent of Police Raymond W. Hensley that his office was not being notified of each arson case by the County Police. Director Mueller suggested that Supt. Hensley ask the County Supervisor (County Executive) to introduce an ordinance to mandate such reporting as well as spell out the authority of the Fire Marshal in cases of suspected arson. As a result a cooperative agreement between the County Police, the Fire Marshal and Coroner's Office was approved regarding the investigation of arson fires. It is noted that the agreement was not established by ordinance, but among the three parties. The Fire Marshal would now be notified of each case of arson. This agreement came about because the municipal fire departments and fire districts were not providing, in the opinion of the Fire Marshal and others, a thorough investigation of suspected arson fires.

**Detective Squads:** During the early years of the County Police, arson fires, bomb threats and potential explosive devices were infrequent. As the number was low, the department did not fully train and equip detectives or establish a dedicated unit to handle such specialized investigations. These types of crimes were investigated by the detective squads along with all other types of crimes. However, as early as 1965 the department began to provide related training for the crime scene detectives (ID detectives) assigned to the Bureau of Identification. Apparently, ID detectives were also dispatched to bomb and arson scenes to collect, identify and reserve available evidence and conduct an investigation.

In addition to photographing the scene and collecting evidence, the ID detectives often responded to arson fires in an attempt to determine the cause and origin of the fire if the firefighter(s) on the scene were unable to determine the cause and origin due to lack of training. At the scene of suspected bomb or explosion the ID detectives were expected to make a determination as to the type of device and explosive material used and collect evidence to prove the identity of the perpetrator. If the incident was a suspicious package or commercial or military ordnance, the ID detectives would protect the scene while collecting evidence and determining if the device could be rendered safe. Robert Gebhardt, one of the first ID detectives to receive arson and explosive training, verified that the County Police also placed emphasis on sponsoring training seminars and building cooperation with the Fire Marshal and the fire departments/districts.

## **Specialization, 1967 to 1973**

**The Team:** Due to the increasing number of arson incidents and bomb threats St. Louis County was experiencing as of October 1967, Supt. Hensley directed Lieutenant David Wendel, Detective Dennis R. Long and his partner Detective Larry Clark, to plan and organize the first team of specially trained and equipped bomb and arson detectives. At the time Detectives Long and Clark were assigned to the "Detective Squads" and were investigating all types of Part I and Part II crimes. The new team to be established would serve the County Police day and night and, if requested, municipal police departments. The initial training included sending both detectives to the University of Oklahoma and Lieutenant Wendel to Purdue University where they completed a basic arson investigation course.



**Dennis R. Long, 1967**

A typical arson investigation involved running down leads, examining the physical evidence at the scene of the fire, and checking the history of the persons or companies involved. In addition to this investigative responsibility, the new team devoted considerable time educating the community and businesses on the danger of handling blasting caps, dynamite and other explosives that could cause serious injuries. About the work of the team, Detective Long gave this quote in a 1968 St. Louis Post-Dispatch news article: "Believe me this work can be rough, especially when the temperature is about seven degrees above zero and the wind is blowing at 20 miles an hour." An example of the workload involved is reflected in the number of cases examined by the County Police Crime Lab. During the first year of the new team's operation there were 65 arson and seven explosives cases submitted to the Crime Lab for examination. It is unknown how many were from the County Police, a municipal police department or a federal agency. At this time it should be noted the Fire Marshal was still a part of the arson investigation team.

The arson investigative equipment issued to team members was limited compared to today's specialized equipment. It consisted of a foot locker, coveralls, fire fighter boots with steel soles, and a hard hat. The team did not have access to a robot or X-ray machine that would have permitted the detectives to see whether a suspicious package or bottle contained a bomb. The only large piece of equipment was a metal protective vest for conducting bomb investigations.

**U.S. Army EOD:** With respect to suspect bombs and other explosive devices, the capability of the team was very limited as the detectives had not been fully trained to dismantle or render safe explosive devices. During this period the County Police, as well as the area police departments, relied upon the 50<sup>th</sup> Explosive Ordnance Device detachment (Army EOD) housed at the U.S. Army St. Louis Area Support Center located in Granite City, Illinois. The Army EOD provided expertise 24/7 to the St. Louis area as well as Southern Illinois to neutralize the hazards existing in military style explosive ordnance, training for local detectives in subjects relating to explosives, and assisting with and rendering safe improvised explosives or incendiary devices. The specialized training provided by the Army EOD also included bomb threat procedures, handling and disposal of explosives and incendiary devices, and the identification and hazards of military and unexploded ordnance. Although the County Police team did not "handle" explosive devices, the detectives were responsible for any follow-up criminal investigation, if required, as well as investigating bomb threats that were increasing in number.



**St. Louis County Fire Marshal:** The practice of notifying the Fire Marshal of every arson case was discontinued on March 17, 1970 by Superintendent of Police Robert J. di Grazia. The Fire Marshal had been active in assisting the detectives with cause and origin in the investigations of arson cases that occurred in the unincorporated areas of the County, as well as cooperating with the fire departments/districts. Apparently, Supt. di Grazia concluded that the County ordinance did not grant the Fire Marshal the authority to conduct fire or arson investigations, or to be a member of the police investigative team. This authority and responsibility was that of the police bomb and arson teams which now consisted of five detectives, including two supervisors. The revised procedure required the detectives to only send a copy of each arson investigation to the Fire Marshal's office. This disagreement about the role of the Fire Marshal continued until July 1975 when the Director of Public Works issued a directive that the Fire Marshal would not perform any arson investigations unless specifically requested by the County Police.

The ability of the County Police to regulate the sale or possession of explosives improved in March 1971 when St. Louis County Council amended the ordinance pertaining to explosives. The Explosives Code now required the obtaining of a permit to store, stock, or hold for resale any explosive. The seller of explosives was required to keep records of all sales, and sales to minors were prohibited. Apparently, the mere possession of an explosive was not previously prohibited in the Code.

Because the number of bomb threats continued to increase during the 1970s, the department issued Training Bulletin No. 30, Bombs and Explosives, intended to provide police officers with specific guidance for handling each bomb threat. The bulletin covered the types of explosive devices including their use, source, and description; incidents involving explosives; procedures to follow after a bomb threat; examination of the scene of an explosion; and related Missouri state laws.

**Federal Support:** During the early 1970s the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) also offered to assist the County Police in the investigation of serious explosive incidents. The Army EOD, and often the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (St. Louis Police) bomb squad, would be contacted for assistance if it was a military or sophisticated device. During this period the support provided by the federal agencies and St. Louis Police was very helpful as each agency had specialized equipment and special agents and technicians who had received advanced training. This valuable support and expertise provided time for the County Police to expand its capability in the area of bombs and explosives including the purchase of specialized equipment along with special training.

## **The Controversy, 1973-1978**

**Bomb and Arson Section:** A County Police organization chart dated August 1973 revealed that the bomb and arson investigative responsibility was now under the General Assignment Unit, with the cases assigned to the Bomb and Arson Section, one of five sections handling property crimes. There are other vintage records that reference this unit as the “Bomb and Arson Squad.” Although the detectives, as well as representatives from the news media, referred to this function as Bomb and Arson Squad, the term “squad” had been discontinued by the department.

The role of the County Police in arson investigations was questioned once again in May 1975 when the Normandy Fire Protection District requested guidelines from Superintendent of Police G. H. Kleinknecht. The Normandy Fire District had responded to a house fire and requested the Bomb and Arson Section to respond to the scene as well. The fire captain at the scene was advised that a team would not respond based on the information provided. Based on this request and complaint about the lack of response, the County Police existing policy was outlined in a follow-up letter to the Normandy Fire Chief, John H. Otte.

“The St. Louis County Police...bomb Squad...will investigate the crime of arson in the same manner that any other crime is investigated. We will attempt to identify perpetrators and gather evidence to aid...successful prosecution...after the offense of arson has been established by the fire department. The...squad will not respond to fires of undetermined origin in an attempt to establish the cause of the fire as this is the function of the trained firefighter.”

This position of the County Police reference arson determination was supported by the National Fire Protection Association. The association noted in its Handbook, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition (1975), the following responsibilities at the scene of a suspect arson fire:

“When the circumstances of a fire suggest incendiarism, these should be carefully outlined in the report on the fire by the fire department. The local police or the state fire marshal’s office should then be called in to assist in a further investigation. In the meantime, the fire department must do all it can to preserve what appears to be valuable evidence and seek additional data.”

The arson problem continued to increase in the unincorporated areas of the county as well as in the municipalities. The policy or procedural disagreements between several fire chiefs and the County Police also continued. This disagreement can be illustrated in a March 16, 1976 letter Chief Robert E. Mertz, Creve Coeur Fire Protection District, sent about expanding the St. Louis County commitment to arson investigations, including adding 12 specially trained arson investigators. Chief Mertz said: “In reference to the recent controversy pertaining to arson investigation by the...County Police in the unincorporated areas...I concur wholeheartedly with my colleagues the investigations...have been pathetic.” Supt. Kleinknecht sent the below response back to Chief Mertz concerning the district’s recommendations and outlining the position of the County Police.

“Your letter...illustrates the confusion among the fire officials in reference to the basic differences between arson investigation and criminal investigation. After several years’ experience...I will assure you there is a difference. You do...support my contention that the best arson investigator is a professional firefighter. {you recommended} that investigators have a minimum of five years firefighting experience and arson investigation background. Your recommendation is the main theme of the entire issue.”

Detective Thomas Gilyon, one of the County Police arson detectives at the time, offered this comment to a St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporter about the controversy: “It is my opinion that the job of the fireman and/or fire chief is to sniff through the rubble and determine the cause...I think it is a detective’s responsibility to determine who started the fire, the motive behind the fire and the prosecution of said subject.” Although there was disagreement about how to handle the increasing arson problem, the County Police response to a bomb or explosive situation was clear. Explosive devices were handled by the Army EOD unit, St. Louis Police bomb squad, or the County Police.



**1<sup>st</sup> Bomb Suit**

The vintage police files from the 1970s do not reflect who made an innovative proposal to create a “regional arson investigation unit” that experts believed would solve the problem of fragmentation in St. Louis County. The proposed unit would act similar to the long standing St. Louis Area Major Case Squad which could be called in by police agencies in the metropolitan area to investigate a homicide. In 1977, Ned Taddeucci, a senior aide to St. Louis County Executive Gene McNary, had also studied the arson investigation needs of the county and determined that an operational cooperative arrangement between the County Police and fire departments/districts needed to be developed. He wrote that the detectives should conduct criminal arson investigations after firemen determine there was evidence at the scene to suspect arson.

It was May 1975 when the County Police notified local police and fire chiefs that the Bomb and Arson Section now had the necessary equipment and training for the safe transportation and disposal of hazardous devices (bombs). This included a portable X-ray unit, delicate sound detectors, and a bomb transport trailer. The transport trailer housed the bomb suits and other pieces of equipment/tools to conduct both arson and explosive investigations. The trunk of each police sedan assigned to bomb detectives contained tool boxes with over 60 items of equipment and supplies to assist at the scene of a fire or explosive device. During the following year, detectives assigned to the Bomb and Arson Section, who served as explosive technicians, submitted a request to receive \$40 a month additional as hazardous duty pay. After consideration this request for hazardous duty pay was disapproved. It is noted that today (2017) members of the unit receive approximately \$100 each month as a hazardous duty pay.



**Vintage Single Vent Explosive Trailer, 1974**



**Team Members, 1978**

### **The Team Approach, 1978-1991**

**Bureau of Arson and Explosives:** With support from the police and fire departments/districts, in late 1978 the County Police proposed to the County Executive (Gene McNary) a progressive solution to the ongoing controversy as to who was responsible for determining that a fire was an arson fire. The proposal was approved and included the creation of the Bureau of Arson and Explosives (Bureau), a unit within the County Police that would have county-wide investigative authority at no cost to a municipality or fire district. The Board of Police Commissioners had previously, on October 6, 1978, approved establishing such a Bureau to correct many of the deficiencies in the relationship with the fire agencies and authorizing the County Police to conduct follow-up investigations on all fires where arson was suspected. At the same time the project established a centralized reporting procedure to insure accurate statistical data, increased the amount of arson investigation training, and offered programs to increase public interest and awareness regarding the crime of arson. The fire departments and districts were required to supply fire data to the central repository operated by the Bureau. The Bureau was responsible for providing 1,100 firefighters in St. Louis County with training courses in arson recognition and crime scene preservation.

The initial project recommended a staff of 10 as listed below:

- 1 Police sergeant
- 5 Detectives/bomb technicians
- 3 Arson technicians
- 1 Secretary

On November 9, 1978 the Chief of the Creve Coeur Fire Protection District, Robert E. Mertz, notified Supt. Kleinknecht that the proposed Bureau had the support of the St. Louis County Fire Chiefs Association as well as the Missouri Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators. One month later Chief Mertz wrote a second letter to the Chairman of the St. Louis County Council objecting to the County Council suggestion to place the new unit under the Prosecuting Attorney's Office versus the County Police. Chief Mertz felt that the proposed Bureau would be "in jeopardy every four years" as the prosecutor was an elected official. During this same period the County Council considered placing the proposed "arson investigations team under the auspices of the Fire Marshal's Office." Both proposals were never seriously considered.

Due to advanced planning, a federal grant was approved in February 1979 in the amount of \$11,000 (out of a \$21,484 request) to purchase specialized equipment necessary to get the Bureau started. The grant funds would also be used to provide special training for municipal/district firefighters and their supervisors, develop technical skills among the arson investigation teams, and acquire the necessary instruments and detection equipment to investigate an arson scene. The remaining equipment was purchased by transferring funds within the existing County Police budget. There would be three teams, one detective/one arson technician on each team, to conduct complete investigations throughout St. Louis County.



**Arson & Explosives Personal Equipment**



**Single Vent Explosives Trailer  
& Police Sedan**

During the previous year (October 1978) the County Police Crime Lab received funding to purchase a gas chromatograph system for analysis of arson evidence. The gas chromatograph allowed the prosecutor to introduce scientific testimony that improved the probability of a successful prosecution. The Bureau was able to purchase hand-held organic vapor analyzers (Sniffers) to detect evidence associated with an arson or use of explosives. New equipment also included the transfer of a large step-van from the Division of Field Operations to the Bureau for transporting all the extra equipment and supplies required at the fire scene. The requests for federal funds included \$65,000 from the Law Enforcement Assistance Act (LEAA) to provide

specialized training and purchase other unique investigative instruments and detection equipment.

It was not until March 2, 1979 when Special Order 79-63 officially established the Bureau of Arson and Explosives under the Division of Criminal Investigation. The Bureau had as its mission to respond to all suspicious fires and investigate those that were determined to be criminally set. The mission also included investigating all explosives-related incidents throughout St Louis County. The Bureau was now staffed with experienced arson technicians who formed teams with police detectives. With former firefighters handling the technical aspects of an arson scene, and a detective conducting the criminal investigation, the approach would serve to reduce the number of arsons and improve the successful prosecution rates.



The first group of arson technicians to join the Bureau (listed below) received their arson investigation training at the National Fire Academy located in Emmitsburg, Maryland and became experts in determining the cause and origin of a suspicious fire.

- George Snell (St. Louis Fire Department)
- Frank “Andy” Anderson (University City Fire Department)
- Michael Huffmon (Community Fire Protection District)

In May 1979 the County Police distributed to the municipalities and fire districts a contractual agreement that required approval as well actual participation by each agency. The contract described the county-wide services the new Bureau would provide in reference to arson fires. These services included:

1. Training related to the identification of arson characteristics
2. How to identify witnesses
3. How to preserve the arson scene
4. The response of an investigator(s) to an arson scene
5. How to fully conduct an investigation of the arson

Under the contractual agreement the fire departments/districts were required to provide the following:

1. Acceptance of the training as proposed
2. Protection of the fire/arson scene
3. Obtaining the names of witnesses at the scene of the fire
4. Testifying in court, if necessary
5. Supplying copies of all fire reports to the Bureau

In support of the project, the County Police implemented a public relations campaign, funded with a LEAA grant, designed to educate the general public and others as to the severity of the arson problem. The Bureau’s public education project concentrated on stimulating the “consciousness of the public to get them actively involved in the anti-arson battle.”

Based on the agreement, a police detective and arson technician began responding as a team to all suspicious fires throughout St. Louis County at the request of the fire department/district where the fire occurred. Fires found to be incendiary (criminal) were investigated by the team; or occasionally investigated by the municipal police department where the fire occurred. Likewise, Bureau detectives would respond to all incidents involving explosives including

improvised devices, recovered military ordnance, suspicious packages, and the safe disposal of explosive powder, dynamite, blasting caps, and deteriorated ammunition and fireworks.

Due to the increasing number of thefts involving dynamite and other explosives, the department in August 1979 made a request to the County Council to again amend the Explosives Code to prohibit a person from receiving, concealing, transporting, selling or disposing of any stolen explosive materials knowing or having reasonable cause to believe such materials were stolen. At the time there was no such provision in the Code. Also, the department requested a new section that would require the reporting of the theft or loss of explosive materials to the County Police as there was no requirement for a person to report such loss or theft of explosive material.

In September 1979 Sergeant Donald L. Eatherton, the first Director of the Bureau of Arson and Explosives, received approval to adopt a new set of "explosive disposal and render safe procedures" as taught and required by the Hazardous Devices School located at the Redstone Arsenal. The revised procedures included several options to be used to render safe a hazardous device, starting with the first approach to the device through removal and/or entry of the device, transportation, and final disposal. Basically, the Bureau was adopting "guidelines and options" for dealing with hazardous devices, rather than hard and fast procedures. The original detectives assigned to the Bureau (Charles Vogt, Thomas Gilyon, Leland Boyd, Gregory Holt and Arva "Red" Lee) also received their explosives related training at the three-week course offered by the Hazardous Devices School.

Due to excessive weight, detectives/bomb technicians were reluctant at first to wear the military style protective equipment the County Police had purchased in June 1979 for their protection. The equipment included a set of full body armor and a portable body shield. When not in use the body armor and shield were stored in the bomb transporter trailer. As a result a protective liability agreement was prepared for each detective to sign.



### **Explosives/Bomb Suit, 1980s**

Later in 1979 the investigative mission of the Bureau was expanded to include complaints reference automatic weapons, sawed-off long guns, or Type II firearms as defined by ATF. This assignment also included the theft of six or more firearms of the same description and tracing the ownership of all firearms seized using the ATF records warehouse located in Texas. A typical illustration of the new responsibility occurred in May 1985 when a routine stop sign violation in South County revealed the driver had a visible firearm and explosive device in his truck. Following department procedure, the detectives from the Bureau responded and determined the driver was transporting a sawed-off shotgun, a military grenade, 15 inch bayonet, two handguns, seven knives, a machete and over 400 rounds of ammo. The bomb detectives determined the suspect was some sort of survivalist who was trying to impress a female at a nearby restaurant. The subject had committed both federal and state law violations.

One of the unusual investigations conducted by the Bureau occurred in August 1981 when three detectives used an old "ruse" of a gas leak to evacuate a Maryland Heights housing complex. The County Police had developed information that one of the townhouses had a large storage of dangerous chemicals. The chemicals consisted of black powder, sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid and sodium cyanide (a deadly poison). In order to get the two male residents outside to execute a peaceful arrest and prevent an explosion or chemical spill, the detectives dressed as firefighters, and with the assistance of a fire pumper from the Maryland Heights Fire Protection District, requested all the residents to evacuate their buildings in order to avoid an explosion due

to the alleged gas leak. When the two suspects complied and walked out they were quickly arrested by members of the Bureau of Tactical Operations. A previously issued search warrant permitted seizure of the chemicals and prevented the construction of any future bombs or chemical device.

In order to improve on the number of successful arson related prosecutions, the St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney in 1981 designated an assistant prosecutor to handle all such cases. This assignment included specialized training related to courtroom strategy and understanding technical information.

Sergeant Gregory Moore, who served as the Director of the Bureau from 1982 to 1989, was responsible for fulfilling the original objective to provide training and education to other public safety agencies and the community on the issue of arson and explosive devices. During this period the detectives and arson technicians trained police officers and firefighters, college students, community groups, security officers, etc.



**Training Exercise (collapsed house), 1984**



**"Wendy," 1<sup>st</sup> Accelerant Canine**

During this period, the Bureau had not yet obtained an explosive detection canine and had to rely on the Airport Police (K-9 Division) at Lambert-St. Louis Airport for technical support reference bombs and explosives. For suspect arson cases, the first accelerant detection canine joined the Bureau in 1990. She was a yellow Labrador named "Wendy" and served the community faithfully for several years.

## **Modernization, 1991-2013**

**Arson and Explosives Unit:** Chief of Police Ronald A. Battelle, in January 1991, approved several changes to the organization chart that included establishment of the Arson and Explosives Unit (Unit) and placing it under the Bureau of Crimes Against Property. The staffing and responsibilities previously assigned to the Bureau of Arson and Explosives remained the same; however, the availability of specialized investigative equipment began to expand because of technology improvements and the availability of federal funds. During the early 1990s Chief Battelle initiated a program to provide added personal safety for the detectives/technicians and to purchase specialized equipment necessary to improve the investigative capability of the Unit.



**Equipment Truck, 1990s**



**Robot & Total Containment Vessel**

Following the “911” terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the mission of the Unit was expanded once more to include weapons of mass destruction (WMD) following the leadership of the FBI. This new responsibility required coordination and training with the other emergency services such as fire, emergency medical technicians, hospitals, emergency management, etc. During the years immediately following 911, the County Police, St. Louis Police and St. Charles Sheriff’s Office coordinated their efforts and acquired expensive, highly specialized equipment to handle WMD incidents as well as arson and explosive investigations.

Starting in 2005 the Unit saw additional improvements in the tools and equipment available for explosive incidents and arson investigations. The second phase approved by Chief Jerry Lee included a large response vehicle along with a total containment vessel designed to contain an explosion safely within a closed environment. Detectives/technicians were also provided with improved bomb suits, X-ray systems, disruptors, and remote-controlled robots. Although the investigative techniques at an arson scene remained relatively the same over the years, the use of this specialized equipment and introduction of the Accelerant Detection Canine improved considerably the investigative success of the Unit.



**Captain Jon M. Belmar & Team Members, 2005**

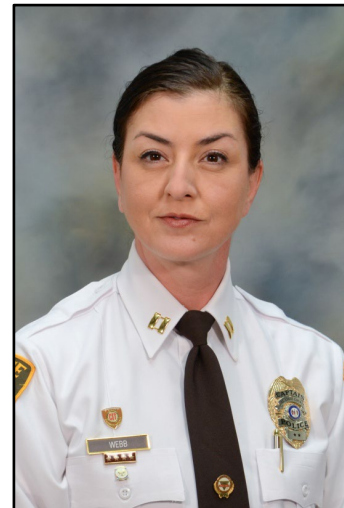
By the end of 2005 the Unit had become nationally accredited and capable of responding to and handling all types of explosive devices while in compliance with the standards administered by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This accreditation permitted the County Police to work side-by-side with other agents/technicians from the ATF, FBI and DHS. Utilization of firefighters as arson technicians was phased out in 2009 and replaced with police detectives who had completed the arson identification training and became certified. The arson technicians remained with the Unit until their retirements or separations became effective. The responsibility for investigating complaints reference to automatic weapons, sawed-off long guns, or Type II firearms as defined by ATF was transferred back to the General Assignment Unit. This transfer permitted the Unit to devote full-time to arson and explosive investigations.

### **The Regional Approach, 2013 to Present**

**St. Louis Regional Bomb & Arson Unit:** On July 1, 2013 a historic police partnership became operational. The St. Louis Police and County Police officially combined their individual bomb and arson units to create the current St. Louis Regional Bomb & Arson Unit (Bomb & Arson Unit). This regional approach for responding to highly specialized police investigations was due

to the efforts of Chief Timothy E. Fitch (County Police) and Chief Doyle “Sam” Dotson (St. Louis Police) based on the extensive research and recommendation by the staff. The merger was designed to reduce costs, increase coverage, allow better access to additional specialized/technical equipment, and to reduce response time to an emergency. Lieutenant Melissa Webb accepted the responsibility and worked out the details for implementation of the new regional unit. She was also the first female commander serving from 2011 to 2016.

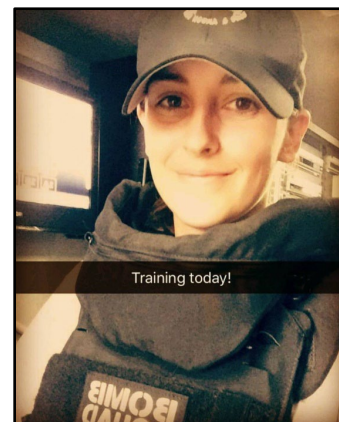
Today, the Bomb & Arson Unit is housed in the St. Louis Police headquarters and staffed with a sergeant/supervisor and four detectives from each police department. The Unit is also a part of the Eastern Missouri Bomb Task Force. Each member has been fully trained and equipped with high-tech equipment necessary to investigate arson fires and explosive incidents throughout St. Louis County and the city of St. Louis. The Bomb & Arson Unit is considered a national asset and is available to respond to incidents in the metropolitan area upon request. If a suspect explosive device is determined by the bomb technicians to be a large military ordnance, the 375<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight located at Scott Air Force Base (Southern Illinois) would respond and render the area safe. The Bomb & Arson Unit detectives would be responsible for any criminal investigation and prosecution.



**Captain Melissa Webb**

The first St. Louis County female to be assigned to the Unit as a bomb technician was Detective Jessica Wilken. Detective Wilken joined the Bomb & Arson Unit in September 2015 after completing the required interviews and physical assessment. She looks forward to an exciting career in the highly specialized unit.

Each member is issued personal equipment to assist him/her in performing their duties. This equipment includes coveralls, fire boots, hand tools, respirators, hazardous materials suits, self-contained breathing apparatus, hand-entry tool kits, radiation detection equipment, blasting tools, blast-resistant vests and ballistic helmets. In addition to the personal equipment, members have access to the following specialty equipment.



**Detective Jessica Wilken**

vehicles and unique robots/special tools:

- ❖ Two truck-mounted Total Containment Vessels (TCVs) that can transport/contain explosives including WMDs
- ❖ Two self-propelled TCVs that can transport/contain conventional explosives
- ❖ Two large command trucks
- ❖ Three all-terrain vehicles for operating in remote areas and at large events.
- ❖ Seven robots of varying sizes to handle specific tasks
- ❖ Advanced electronic X-ray equipment
- ❖ Rigging tools
- ❖ Bomb suits
- ❖ Advanced radiation detection equipment
- ❖ Remote-entry tools
- ❖ Hazardous materials trailer
- ❖ Two portable light towers

In addition, the Bomb & Arson Unit has access to a dedicated bomb range which allows for disruption and rendering safe of explosive devices in a controlled environment, safe disposal of explosive materials, and explosive demonstrations for first responders and citizens. For information about the special equipment available to the detectives/technicians see the following section titled Investigative/Support Equipment.



**St. Louis Regional Bomb & Arson Unit, 2015**

The unit has been operational for over four years and has reported success in accomplishing the intended goals and objectives. As noted in the following table the number of investigations

each year continues to increase in both jurisdictions, especially fire investigations. With equal number of detectives and supervisors from each department, it appears the workload is also equally divided between St. Louis City and St. Louis County.

<b>Bomb &amp; Arson Unit</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Explosive Investigations	30*	74	82	80
St. Louis City	33%	51%	48%	50%
St. Louis County	67%	49%	52%	50%
Fire Investigations	173*	364	325	423
St. Louis City	60%	51%	58%	68%
St. Louis County	40%	49%	42%	32%

\*Includes only 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters for 2013.

For information about the training that each member of the team is required to receive and maintain, see the following section titled Specialized Training.

**Weapons of Mass Destruction:** Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) are nuclear, radiological, biological, or other weapons that can kill or bring significant harm to a large number of humans and/or cause great damage throughout a community. Each member of the St. Louis Regional Bomb & Arson Unit is trained and equipped to conduct render-safe procedures on explosive devices containing a WMD threat. This includes using hazardous materials suits, various forms of breathing apparatus, robots, and specialized bomb suits that can be used in a WMD environment. The Unit’s two vehicle-mounted total containment vessels are designed to carry a chemical, biological, or radiological improvised explosive device and contain a blast from these devices while keeping the WMD agents contained within these air-tight vessels. Air samples can be safely taken from the interior of the vessels to determine the exact agent used in the device. Furthermore, the unit has procedures in place with the FBI and other emergency response agencies to handle radiological dispersal devices (aka “Dirty Bombs”) and improvised nuclear devices.

## **Specialized Training**

Starting in 1967, the availability of specialized training for County Police detectives was fairly extensive considering what was available for other types of major crimes, e.g., homicide, narcotics, and auto theft. Interviews with retired police officers who served as bomb or arson detectives, as well as a review of the vintage training files, revealed the following special courses that provided the expertise the detectives/technicians required:

Accelerant Detection Canine Course, ATF, Virginia Arson and Fire Investigations School, Rutgers University, New Jersey Arson for Profit, ATF, Glynco, Georgia Arson Investigation, The Traffic Institute (NW Un.), Evanston, Illinois Arson Investigation, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma Arson Investigations Seminar, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana Arson Investigations, Indiana State University, Bloomington, Indiana Arson Workshop, Division of Fire & Accident Prevention, St. Louis County
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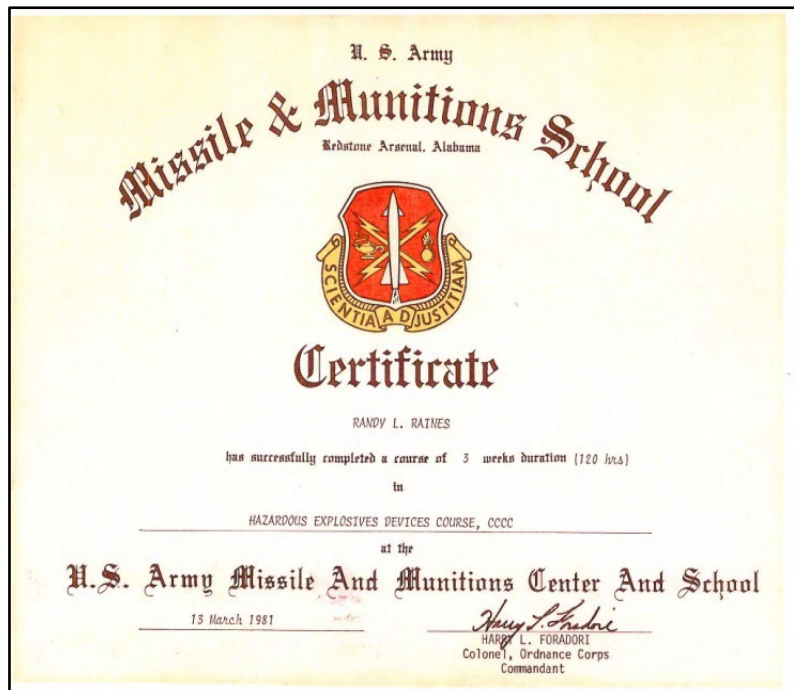
Bomb Familiarization Seminar, Motorola, Schiller Park, Illinois  
 Bombing and Arson Investigation, St. Louis County, MO Police Dept.  
 Bombing and Sabotage Course, U.S. Army Depot, Granite City, Illinois  
 Homemade Bombs & Explosives Seminar, CD Center, St. Louis County  
 Hazardous Devices School, Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama  
 Military Ordnance, U.S. Army (EOD Unit), Ft. Leonard Wood, MO  
 National Fire Academy, Emmitsburg, Maryland  
 Ohio Arson School, Columbus, Ohio

To ensure readiness, the County Police has conducted unannounced exercises to evaluate the training and procedures used by arson and explosives teams. One example of a monitored exercise was held in August 1980. Based on a telephone threat that a bomb had been hidden in a police building (227 S. Central Ave., Clayton), an evacuation drill was announced and the on-duty bomb team directed to respond. Several recommendations for improvement were noted by the staff inspectors while they observed the evacuation of the building and bomb technician's procedures used to examine a suspect vehicle found in the lower level garage. Other staff inspections evaluating training levels and performance included a bomb disposal exercise at the Affton (3<sup>rd</sup>.) Precinct and an unannounced examination of the bomb disposal trailer and related equipment.

**Hazardous Devices School:**

Starting in 1971 the County Police policy required all detectives and technicians responding to a bomb or explosives incident to have completed the Bomb Technician Basic Course offered by the Hazardous Devices School located at the Redstone Arsenal. Detective Gustave "Pete" Sahn was the first member of the department to attend the basic course at the Redstone Arsenal. This joint FBI and U.S. Army school is one of only two schools in the world capable of training law enforcement and military bomb teams. This specialized training course has expanded from a three-week to the current six-week program. The school also provides a Bomb Squad Executive Management Course and a Bomb Technician Robot Course for state and local police officers. Bomb technicians assigned to the regional Bomb and Arson Unit are required to meet the accreditation standards every three years as administered by the Hazardous Devices School.

Today, each detective assigned to the Unit receives specialized training in the areas of fire/arson investigations and incidents involving explosives; and is required to achieve certification as a state fire investigator, hazardous materials technician, and bomb technician. Each of the three certifications requires extensive training that includes completion of the one-



**Redstone Arsenal Training Certificate, 1981**

week Bomb Technician Recertification Course at the Redstone Arsenal. Members also receive advanced training in the below subjects:

Post-Blast Investigations Weapons of Mass Destruction Home-Made Explosives Explosive Disposal Techniques Military Ordnance Advanced Render-Safe Techniques	Terrorism Radioactive Incidents Explosive Breaching Advanced Electronics Robotics
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The St. Louis Regional Bomb and Arson Unit continues to provide special training for area first responders and police/fire recruits on how to respond correctly to fire-related and explosive incidents.

## Investigative Support/Equipment

**Total Containment Vessels:** When an explosive device is transported from a scene, or even detonated at a scene, the Bomb & Arson Unit can access four different Total Containment Vessels (TCVs) assigned to the Unit. These vessels are large hollow steel balls with a hydraulic door in which an improvised explosive device (IED) or material can be placed. The walls and door of the TCV are at least two inches thick and are constructed of the same steel used in the hulls of submarines. The explosive object is positioned in a sling that is centered within the vessel. The door to the vessel is then closed to total encapsulate the explosive device/material. At this point the device can then be transported to a safe location (bomb range) or even detonated inside the vessel at the scene. The TCVs are designed to withstand and contain the effects of an explosion including fragmentation, shrapnel, overpressure, and thermal damage. The excess gases produced by the explosion are vented through a small ventilation hole in the top of the vessel. The fact that the explosive is centered within the vessel allows for the overpressure to be distributed evenly throughout the vessel.



**Total Containment Vessel (TCV)**

**Portable TCV**

The Unit has available two truck-mounted and two portable TCVs. The truck-mounted TCVs are permanently fixed to the chassis of a Freightliner commercial truck. A ramp that extends out

from the rear of the truck allows the explosive material to be remotely placed into the TCV by one of the robots. In addition to being able to handle conventional explosives, the truck-mounted TCVs are gas-tight and equipped to handle an explosive device which involves a chemical, biological or radiological agent. Once the device is secured within the TCV, all chemical, biological, or radiological materials are contained within the vessel. A sampling system allows for air samples to be taken from the interior of the vessel. The two portable TCVs are mounted on tracks or a wheeled cart and towed on a trailer. Unlike the truck-mounted TCVs, the portable unit can be utilized in remote locations such as fields, airport terminals, stadiums, concourses, etc. This allows an explosive device to be safely moved over large stretches of open land or through areas that could not withstand a detonation.

**Command Truck:** The Unit has access to two large police command trucks. The trucks are often staged at large events such as parades, fairs, major sporting events, political rallies, etc. to quickly respond to any suspicious packages or IED's. Both vehicles serve as a staging point for the Unit members and equipment required at such events. The command trucks also carry extensive amounts of equipment and are used as command posts at bomb situations. Furthermore, the command trucks can transport the larger robots which allows for detailed x-ray development and interpretation.



**Command Truck**

**All-Terrain Vehicle, "MULE"**

**All-Terrain Vehicle:** In addition to the TCVs, the Unit utilizes three all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). These vehicles can carry from two to six persons and each is equipped with a winch and equipment bed. The ATVs are most often utilized at operational standby to quickly access crowded areas that would not accommodate larger response vehicles. They are also used to transport detectives/technicians wearing bomb suits equipped with breathing apparatus to the scene of a suspect WMD. At such incidents, the distances from the staging point to the device often exceeds ¼ mile. If the detective/technician had to walk the distance, he/she would certainly run out of air before being able to reach the WMD device, much less return to the staging point and go through decontamination.



**Remote Mobile Investigator  
(with Purple Hearts)**



**Wolverine Bomb Disposal Robot**

**Remote Mobile Investigator (RMI-9WT) Robot:** The RMI robot was acquired by the County Police in 2005 using \$103,000 in federal funding from the DHS. It is a lightweight, battery operated, and multi-purpose vehicle that has proven to be an invaluable aid to the bomb technicians when removing/handling remotely improvised explosive devices and other hazardous situations. The RMI-9WT is a versatile six-wheeled vehicle with removable tracks for extra climbing capability. The robot also has several special features such as five different cameras with lights, mounting for a shotgun and two disrupters, and wireless or wired two-way communications capability to handle hostage situations. One example of the value of the RMI robot occurred on July 1, 2005 when the Franklin County Sheriff's Office requested assistance from the County Police Bomb and Arson Unit to search an illegal "meth laboratory." During the initial search of the building deputies spotted an improvised explosive device that was left behind as a gift from the meth makers. The RMI robot was able to remove the device and transport it to a nearby open field where it was detonated preventing injury or death to a law enforcement officer or civilian. Shrapnel flew as far as 75 yards away. However, the improvised explosive device did cause \$25,000 in damage to the robot; thereby, earning RMI-9WT a Purple Heart presented by the County Police.

**Remotec Wolverine Bomb Disposal Robot:** In 2011 the newest robot, the Remotec Wolverine Bomb Disposal Robot (Wolverine), was delivered. Weighing in at approximately 1,000 pounds, the Wolverine is the largest robot available to the Unit and best suited for working outdoors and in large commercial buildings. The robot consists of a heavy duty six-wheel tracked drive train that can tow up to 400 pounds, move up and down stairs, and be partially submerged. The manipulator arm has seven degrees of freedom (shoulder, wrist, and elbow), has a vertical reach of 12 feet, and can lift up to 100 pounds. The arm provides detectives with an excellent tool in handling a large suspect explosive device from a safe distance. It is

remotely driven using four cameras and has special features such as a microphone and speaker.

In addition to performing bomb disposal work, the Wolverine has been used to breach doors and windows in tactical situations. For example, in November 2014 the robot sustained significant damage while assisting the FBI's SWAT team at the scene of a barricaded murder suspect. After searching for the suspect on the main floor of the residence, the robot was moved outside and its camera-equipped arm extended through a basement window to allow visual surveillance of this area. Members of the SWAT team then made entry into the basement, and while searching for the suspect, he jumped out from a hiding place and fired at the entry team, wounding two FBI agents. The SWAT team returned fire and deployed multiple flashbang devices to permit evacuation of the wounded agents. One of the flashbang devices inadvertently started a fire which quickly spread throughout the basement before the robot could be safely moved. The robot's arm, gripper, and disruptors sustained severe damage from the fire thus earning the robot a Purple Heart for its efforts.

**Med-Eng EOD Bomb Suit:** This protective bomb suit is currently available to the bomb technicians and is constructed of ceramic plates, Kevlar, and Nomex and is worn when the bomb technician approaches an item that is suspected to contain an explosive threat. The bomb suit is designed to protect the wearer from the effects of an explosion including thermal damage, fragmentation/shrapnel, and overpressure. Each suit weighs approximately 80-100 pounds and consists of pants, coat, and helmet. In addition, a ventilation system is included to combat the effects of heat and condensation which can build up inside the protective helmet. No hand protection is provided because of the need for the wearer to have good manual dexterity. Retired Captain Thomas Grimm recently offered this comment about the protective bomb suit: "The story of the bomb suit is a story within itself. I have seen it used in the field numerous times and each time I would hold my breath as it was no guarantee of absolute protection to the detective wearing it. It takes tremendous courage to go into a potential blast zone wearing only the bomb suit and work to defuse a potential explosive device when it is only an arms-length away. Those bomb techs are special people."

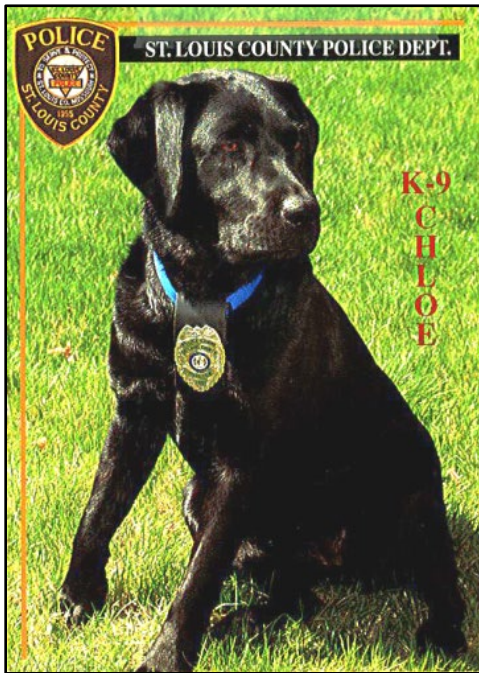


**Current Med-Eng 9  
Bomb Suit**

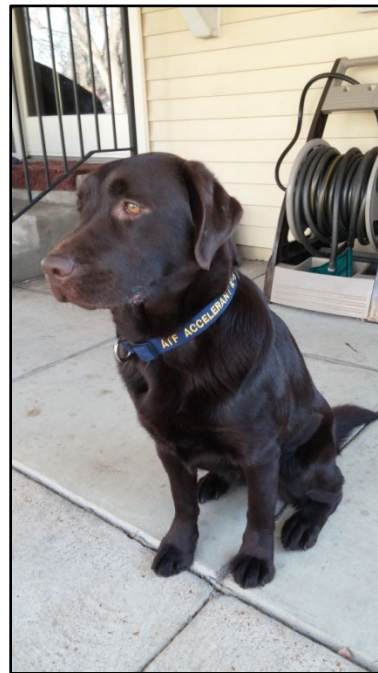
**Accelerant Detection Canine:** In order to provide detectives with additional investigative tools, the County Police in 1995 formed a partnership with ATF to acquire a trained Labrador Retriever (Wendy) to detect accelerants at the scene of a suspected arson fire. The ATF had determined that this breed was best equipped to serve as a police canine in the detection of accelerants during a fire investigation. The initial training by ATF begins when the canine is between 14-18 months old and is based on the Classical Conditioning Method – the canine works off the food reward system. The canine only gets to eat when he/she is working. Therefore, this requires the handler and canine to train everyday so that the canine gets his/her food allowance. Each canine is imprinted or trained to detect six different classifications of ignitable liquids, e.g., gasoline, camp fuel, charcoal lighter fluid, and paint thinner. They use their sense of smell to locate an area of debris within the fire scene, where the use of an

ignitable liquid has occurred. Once the canine alerts on the area, he/she will sit and wait for the handler to provide a reward – food.

Currently on loan to the Regional Bomb and Arson Unit is a three-year old Chocolate Labrador Retriever named Leia. She was trained by ATF and is highly energetic and determined when working a fire scene or in the daily training provided by her handler – Detective David Sandbach, a member of the regional unit. Leia’s predecessor was Chloe who retired in 2015 after serving faithfully for eight years. Just before her retirement, Chloe was instrumental in solving a serial arsonist case involving multiple church fires in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Upon arrival at the scene of one church fire, Chloe alerted in an area where a cigarette butt had been previously removed (by the crime scene detective), indicating the possibility an ignitable liquid odor was present. A subsequent DNA examination of the cigarette butt by the St. Louis City Crime Lab determined the name of the suspect arsonist in this case.



**“Chloe,” Accelerant Canine**

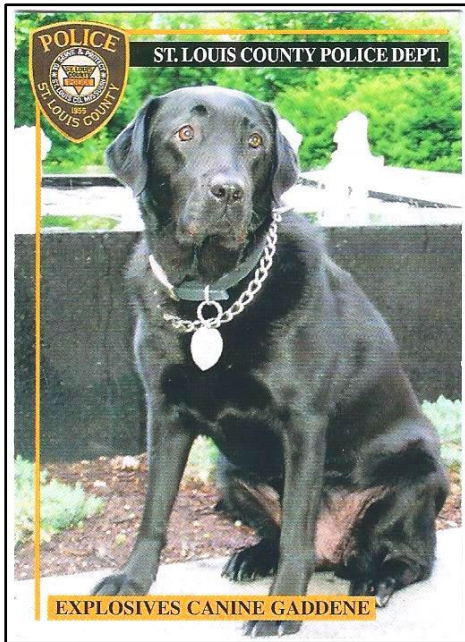


**“Leia,” Accelerant Canine**

**Explosive Detection Canine:** In 2001, a Labrador Retriever named Gaddene was the first explosive detection canine to join the County Police Arson and Explosives Unit. Her faithful service continued until 2010 when she retired and was replaced by Tommy, a male Golden Retriever. Both canines were trained and certified in explosive detection by the Vohne Liche Kennels located in Denver, Indiana. Police Officer Joseph Marcinkiewicz, the handler, and “Tommy” are currently assigned to County Police headquarters to assist with security in the Courthouse. When there is a valid bomb threat in the metropolitan area and assistance is requested, Tommy and his handler support the Bomb and Arson Unit by responding to the scene as both are on-call 24 hours per day.

The special detection capability of Tommy is somewhat different from the role or work of Leia, the accelerant detection canine. Tommy is also a single purpose canine: performs one function - locate the scent of any material associated with explosives. Upon locating a scent, the handler rewards Tommy by giving him a ball to play with. A typical situation would be a telephone threat to a school stating that a bomb will be exploded at a specific time. Tommy and the handler

would search the school seeking the scent of an explosive material. If a suspect device/location was identified, both would leave the area to permit the bomb technicians to handle the safe removal. For the safety of the handler and canine, if a suspected device was discovered before their arrival, their search would be delayed until bomb technicians rendered the device safe. When not searching for the scent of explosives, Tommy is used to educate school children and businesses about responding to bomb threats.



**"Gaddene," 1<sup>st</sup> Explosives Canine**



**"Tommy," Explosives Canine**

**Bomb Range:** The availability of a bomb fragmentation/disposal pit and burn pit plays an important and necessary role in providing bomb technicians with a suitable and safe location to detonate suspect explosives. The first bomb and burn pits were constructed at the Kehrs Mill Road Police Range located in Clarkson Valley on property leased for \$1.00 per year. The bomb pit was primitive compared to today's standards. It consisted of a large pit in the earth and the use of railway ties to form an inverse pyramid that directed the explosion safely upwards. The facility was constructed by the bomb and arson detectives in order to detonate suspicious packages, non-shrapnel type, or for demonstrating different types and size of explosives. One retired ID detective recalls transporting to the Kehrs Mill Road bomb pit, in the trunk of his police vehicle, a suspect suitcase bomb. After placing the suitcase in the pit, it was detonated revealing the case was empty. The County Police would also use nearby sand/rock quarries to safely detonate explosives, e.g., Rock Hill Quarry.



**Fireworks Burn Pit**



**Fragmentation Pit**

In 1976 the St. Louis County & Municipal Firearms Range moved to its current location in West County at Antire Road and I-44. Now referred to as the bomb range, a new set of bomb and burn pits were built adjacent to the firearms range. The design of the bomb range was based on the needs of the time to safely detonate explosives or burn hazardous materials. Finally, in 2008, under the leadership of Lieutenant Michael McFarland, the bomb range was redesigned and expanded to handle all the various explosives police agencies were experiencing. This modern bomb range continues to train bomb technicians, test specialized equipment, provide basic training for police officers, and to demonstrate for the public how bomb technicians handle dangerous situations in a safe manner. The Lieutenant Michael McFarland Memorial Explosives Range expanded the capacity of the County Police to service not only the community, but also the neighboring police agencies.



## **Noteworthy Bomb/Explosive Incidents**

**Normandy Car Bombing:** Richard Lee Bodecker, a St. Louis County low level criminal during the 1960s, was killed on May 10, 1967 when a car bomb exploded in his vehicle as he was leaving the parking lot at the Normandy Shopping Center. Major F. J. "Pete" Vasel, Chief of Detectives for the County Police, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch newspaper reporter that "Bodecker had been in a tavern...and left at 11:30 AM...the bomb apparently was wired to the car's stop light and detonated when Bodecker stopped at the exit." The force of the explosion knocked the car about 20 yards. Major Vasel also told the reporter he thought "as many as eight sticks of dynamite were used, and probably had been placed under the front seat...the bombing damage the worst he had ever seen." There are no vintage records that indicate this car bombing was ever solved. However, there were more organized crime/labor related car bombings to follow. St. Louis Post-Dispatch

**Bomb Threat, TWA Plane:** A 1968 bomb threat at Lambert-St. Louis Municipal Airport was handled by the newly formed bomb and arson team and resulted in the arrest of a Trenton, Michigan man who was charged with making a bomb threat. As he boarded a TWA flight he handed the stewardess a large package to be placed in the overhead storage. When the stewardess asked what was in the package, the executive replied, "It's a bomb." Detective Denny Long, a member of the team, responded and determined the package/tube contained only blueprints. The suspect said he made the statement "in jest. I never realized this would happen." The suspect was released by Detective Long pending warrant application. The FBI reported their agency was looking into the case. Just previous to this bomb threat incident the County Police had adopted a "zero tolerance" policy reference phony bomb threats. St. Louis Globe-Democrat

**Wrong Home Bombed:** A 1968 bombing occurred at 3:30 AM at the home of a minister and his wife who lived near Creve Coeur, Missouri. Just before the bomb exploded, the wife, while assisting her husband with his flu medication, thought she saw a flickering light just outside the front room picture window. As a result of the blast she was injured and treated at St. John's Mercy Hospital. The newly appointed bomb and arson detectives responded and conducted an extensive investigation that determined the bomber left a fuse bomb at the wrong house. The investigation concluded the bomber was a "jealous husband who had mistakenly thought he was targeting his wife's paramour's home, which was in fact next door." St. Louis Post-Dispatch

**Dynamite, Police Vehicle:** After responding to a routine call in Lemay during the summer of 1969, a County Police patrol officer returned to his unlocked police car and found 75 sticks of dynamite on the back seat. The officer told a news reporter that the dynamite was probably part of a batch of 105 sticks stolen several weeks prior from the National Lead Company's south county plant. Some of the dynamite sticks were wet and all were without detonator caps. Further, the officer "believed that the person who deposited the explosive in the police vehicle simply wanted to get rid of the sticks rather than injure him." The officer was away from the patrol vehicle less than 30 minutes taking a stolen auto report. The patrol sergeant again reminded all officers to lock their police vehicle when away for any period of time. St. Louis Post-Dispatch

**"The South County Bomber:"** This group of three vehicle bombings in the fall of 1977 created the most panic the residents of St. Louis County, including many police officers, had experienced since the establishment of the County Police. The first victim, Ronald T. Sterghos, escaped serious injury on October 7 when a low-yield bomb exploded under his car that was parked on his apartment complex parking lot. The next bombing occurred 11 days later, on October 18, when a car bomb exploded killing Robert C. Jackson. This bombing was similar to the first as the explosive device was planted under the Jackson vehicle while it was parked on the Clayridge Apartments parking lot. Several days later, on November 3, Shirley M. Flynn, a computer programmer, was killed when a bomb blew apart her vehicle on the Southridge apartment parking lot. During this four week period all three South County car bombings occurred when the victims attempted to start their cars in the morning. A criminal investigation was initiated using 15 County Police detectives under the supervision of Captain E. J. Hanneken. Fifteen special agents from the local office of ATF responded immediately with investigative expertise and specialized equipment seeking leads and conducting interviews.

Speculation that the bombing victims were picked at random touched off a wave of fear in South County as well as the entire St. Louis area. "The County Police received more than 100 calls in one day from persons who said they were too frightened to start their cars." Some of the callers asked for police officers to come and check their cars for bombs. Car alarms were even

installed plus clear tape placed on car doors and hoods to show any entry during the night. The Board of Police Commissioners even approved a \$20,000 reward to be paid for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the murders of Flynn and Jackson. The person responsible for the bombings became known as "The Mad Bomber." The crime has never been solved although a person of interest was identified, but there has been no proof to bring this person to justice. St. Louis Post-Dispatch; St. Louis Globe-Democrat

**Dynamite, Lambert-St. Louis Airport:** It was the summer of 1978 when a routine training exercise by the Airport Police (K-9 Division) at Lambert-St. Louis Municipal Airport turned into a major news story for several days. During the training exercise to detect explosives in various situations/locations related to airport operations, an Airport Police K-9 officer hid dynamite on three civilian vehicles parked in the valet parking section of the airport. The vehicle drivers were apparently on flights and had not given permission to use their vehicles for such a training exercise. The purpose of the exercise was to determine if K-9 handlers, using trained explosive dogs, could detect the dynamite hidden on a parked vehicle. One of the private vehicles left the valet parking section before the dynamite could be recovered. As a result, this incident became the top news media story for a week. "Where is the missing dynamite?"

The County Police was notified and initiated an investigation. The several news outlets well publicized the missing dynamite, described the vehicle suspected of transporting the dynamite, date and time the vehicle was retrieved from the parking lot, and asked the owner to contact the County Police so the dynamite could be safely retrieved. Several days passed before the vehicle's owner, who was very embarrassed, not about the dynamite, but where he had traveled and with whom, decided to contact the County Police. The bomb technicians safely disposed of the two sticks of dynamite that were recovered right where the K-9 handlers had planted the explosives. The community quickly returned to normal. There were two lessons learned that day!

**Pipe Bomb, County Police HQs:** On August 22, 1978 an employee in the personnel office noticed an unusual package on the front counter. Upon further inspection it was suggested that the contents could be an explosives device, or pipe bomb. The first floor of the police building, which is located in Clayton, Missouri, was evacuated and the Bureau of Arson and Explosives notified of the suspect device. A preliminary X-ray by the bomb technician revealed no blasting cap or any other initiating device that would cause the 11-inch steel tube to detonate. As X-rays are not 100 percent conclusive, the suspect device was carefully transferred to the bomb trailer and taken to the Rock Hill Quarry where an explosive charge was used to open the steel tube. A preliminary report from the bomb technicians suggested the suspect device may have been a pipe bomb.

The police bureau/unit supervisors were instructed to show their staff photos of the suspect device along with instructions or the steps to take should another device show up in the building. During a briefing session two days later the manager of the police print shop, after examining the photo, advised his supervisor that the alleged pipe bomb was actually a worn-out roller from the off-set press. He had used the roller as a weight to keep the print job from scattering when he delivered the order to the personnel office. He was unaware the roller was missing until shown the photograph. A few days later the Crime Lab notified the bomb technicians that the chemical tests of the surrounding earth and suspect device revealed no trace of explosives.

**Car-Bombing of James A. Michaels Sr.:** A well-publicized car bombing occurred on September 17, 1980 when James (Jimmy) A. Michaels Sr., 75, was killed by a bomb that ripped through his car while he was driving south on I-55 near Reavis Barracks Road in south St. Louis

County. Parts of the victim's body landed on the pavement with his vehicle blown off the highway into a ditch. A large contingent of uniform patrol officers responded to secure the crime scene and direct traffic after closing all lanes of I-55, which created a traffic gridlock. Detective Randy Raines, a member of the Bureau of Arson and Explosives, was the first bomb technician on the scene and began directing uniform officers in securing the crime scene. Additional County Police detectives as well as ATF special agents were requested with both agencies working together to collect evidence and investigate the scene. Special agents from ATF took the lead in this case and after a lengthy investigation concluded that the car bombing and murder of Jimmy Michaels had organized crime implications. [The St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#)

**“The Midwest Bank Robbers:”** In 1994 and 1995 St. Louis County experienced three highly unusual bank robberies where explosives were used as part of the robbery scheme to allow the male robber's time for a successful escape. The St. Louis FBI Field Office reported that the two bank robbers, using a handgun and the same modus operandi (MO), hit 18 banks in seven Midwestern states taking in more than \$250,000. Before fleeing the three banks robbed in St. Louis County, one of the robbers would place a bomb on the floor of the bank and advise the bank tellers and customers not to move, or he would detonate the bomb! This tactic gave the robbers time for an escape. Detectives assigned to the Arson and Explosives Unit responded to the scene of the three St. Louis County bank robberies and rendered the explosive devices safe and collected valuable evidence and intelligence for the FBI agents conducting the investigations:

On [August 16, 1994](#), during the robbery of the [Magna Bank](#) in Bridgeton, a bomb was placed on the floor and everyone told to remain still or it would be detonated. Before they drove off, the robbers set off a green smoke bomb outside the bank.

On [December 27, 1994](#), during the [Commercial Bank of Westport](#) (Maryland Heights) robbery, a canister bomb was placed on the bank floor along with a red gym bag with an antenna sticking out.

Nearly one year later, on [November 22, 1995](#), the [Roosevelt Bank](#) in South County was also robbed. Following their previous MO, the robbers left a suitcase in the middle of the bank floor noting that it contained a bomb.

In 1996 the Midwest Bank Robbers were apprehended and subsequently convicted due to exceptional investigative work by the FBI and local police departments (Midwest) plus valuable information provided by an informant. [The St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#)

**Clayton Garage Bombing:** A three year joint agency investigative effort resulted in the July 2011 federal court conviction of Milton “Skip” Olsen III who had placed a car bomb in a downtown Clayton parking garage. The [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) reported that Olsen on October 14, 2008 “tried to kill his wife’s divorce lawyer with a bomb...but mistakenly wounded (seriously) a different lawyer with a similar car.” The news article also reported that a “man in a bright hooded poncho and sunglasses, carrying a handful of helium balloons, walked into the garage...and left behind an exploding gift basket” next to the victim’s car. However, the bomb was for a different person, his wife’s divorce lawyer, who had parked a similar Acura vehicle in the same garage, but one level up. The bomb was packed with black powder and gasoline and exploded when the unintended victim picked up the package. Detective Joseph Marcinkiewicz, a member of the County Police Arson and Explosives Unit, was the lead detective on the case and noted that the parking garage video system and police interviews played a significant role in identifying Olsen as the suspect. Olsen was sentenced to 20 years in prison for this felony crime. The U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri said at the time: “Family law cases

lead to violence directed at lawyers more than any other field of law.” The identification of the suspect and collection of evidence took the combined efforts of the County Police, Clayton Police Department and ATF. St. Louis Post-Dispatch

## **Noteworthy Arson Incidents**

**ROTC Arson Fire:** The police records and newspaper articles from 1968 to early 1970 describe how a series of disturbances on the Washington University 10,000 student campus led to an arson fire that destroyed the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) building. Student disturbances had been encouraged by groups promoting anti-Vietnam war protests and calling for the ouster of the U.S Army and Air Force ROTC training programs. Starting in 1968 there were numerous student protests and disturbances occurring on campus, including a failed attempt to burn one of the ROTC buildings. The seriousness of the campus protests increased through March 1970 along with the number of students participating, ranging from 20 to several hundred at a protest. The protests included a second attack on the Air Force ROTC building when students attempted to board up the building and attach condemned signs. The last of the major disturbances occurred when the Air Force ROTC building was destroyed by a fire during the early hours of May 6, 1970.

County Police detectives responded, along with the bomb and arson detectives, and determined the ROTC fire was an arson case. A criminal investigation was initiated and a “person of interest” identified as a potential subject. However, the evidence collected would not support a conviction in court for arson. Two former students were convicted, however, for “interfering with and obstructing a fireman and policeman who were performing duties” at the ROTC demonstration and arson fire. One of the students was observed throwing cherry bombs at the firefighters and police officers. He was convicted in federal court for violating the federal 1968 Civil Disobedience Act and sentenced to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Soon thereafter, he disappeared and 21 years later was discovered living secretly in Scottsdale, Arizona.

**Serial Hotel Arsonist:** This serial arsonist operated between September 2007 and October 2008 and set 20 fires in hotels throughout the St. Louis area. All of the fires were set in trash cans located near the elevator on different floors of the hotels. The criminal investigation initiated by the County Police bomb and arson detectives identified and arrested the suspect, John Lyerla, who lived in the Fenton area. Lyerla was a pizza delivery driver and admitted to habitually setting fires in hotel trash cans after he would complete a pizza delivery to a guest staying at the hotel. John Lyerla was subsequently convicted on seven counts of arson and attempted arson, and received a 10 year prison sentence.

**Ferguson Civil Unrest:** Following the November 24, 2014 evening announcement that the St. Louis County Grand Jury would not indict Ferguson, MO Police Officer Darren Wilson in the death of Michael Brown, civil unrest occurred throughout the night in both Ferguson and the surrounding communities. This unrest included numerous fires erupting in businesses and vehicles. Assisted by the Missouri Fire Marshal and ATF agents, the St. Louis Regional Bomb & Arson Unit responded to the scene of each fire and initiated a criminal investigation that is still ongoing as of May 2017. Several of the arson investigations resulted in arrests and convictions in state court.

**Serial Church Arsonist:** During the first two weeks in October 2015, seven church buildings located in both north St. Louis County and north St. Louis City were set on fire. Although the

fires were confined to the exterior of the buildings, they garnered national media attention. With assistance from the ATF National Response Team, the St. Louis Regional Bomb & Arson Unit detectives ultimately identified and arrested David Jackson. The benefits of the neighborhood and business video systems proved to be a key to identifying the person who started these arson fires. While Jackson never provided an explanation for setting the fires, he did enter a plea of guilty and was sentenced to five years in a Missouri state prison.

## The Future

This history report has outlined the major changes in mission and equipment of the bomb and arson detectives during the past 50 years. Describing the types of bomb and arson incidents that are anticipated for the St. Louis area during the next 25 years, as well as the types of investigative equipment and techniques to be adopted, is difficult to foresee. Recent events worldwide have changed the role of local law enforcement for many years. The terrorist-related incidents using explosives, firearms, knives, and even large trucks to cause death and injury have required local emergency services to implement major adjustments in their security and response staffing and operational practices.

The nature of arson incidents and the investigative capability has changed as well. Improved training and specialized equipment has allowed arson investigators to determine those fires that had been set intentionally, usually by persons seeking large insurance claims. The potential for large residential and industrial fires causing major damage and death/injury is still an everyday factor that emergency services must address. As explosive and arson investigations are quite different in the area of training and equipment, there may be a future initiative to separate these two areas, possibly returning arson investigations back to the fire services.

The expansion of public and privately owned closed-circuit TV (CCTV) systems in high risk locations and public events will serve as a deterrent for future terrorist-related attacks seeking to cause personal injury and/or damage. The use of CCTV systems as a public safety tool will require strong coordination among agencies and a commitment to provide full-time monitoring of the cameras if the deterrent factor is to be effective. Access to quality video will also serve to improve the ability to identify the perpetrator(s) and obtain successful prosecutions.

As the establishment in 2013 of the St. Louis Regional Bomb and Arson Unit served to improve response to incidents in St. Louis and St. Louis County, similar consolidation efforts may be necessary for other emergency services, e.g., tactical units, fire services, EMTs, trauma centers, and local National Guard units. Likewise, appointment of a single "incident commander" over all public safety/emergency services during a major emergency or disaster would be an appropriate step in preparing for the future. The use of a single command structure, consisting of professionals from the emergency services, has proven successful versus a command structure using a committee. Limiting the regional approach to only bomb and arson investigations will not be enough to prepare the community for related problems in the future.

Future history reports may record that the three most significant changes that occurred during the past 50 years were the (1) acquisition of highly specialized equipment; (2) requiring each bomb technician to successfully complete the Hazardous Devices School at the Redstone Arsenal; and (3) the expanded mission following the "911" terrorists attacks. Also of importance was the availability of federal funding, such as Homeland Security and asset forfeiture sharing,

which made it possible for the County Police to remain current with the evolving trends of new methods and technology.

***“Risk more than others think is safe,  
Care more than others think is wise,  
Expect more than others think is possible.”***

Claude Bissell, 1916-2000

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## **Contributions By**

### **Retirees**

Chief Ronald A. Battelle  
Chief Timothy E. Fitch  
Director Robert Gebhardt  
Captain Thomas Grimm  
Detective Dean Joerling  
Major Dennis "Denny" R. Long  
Sergeant Walter Morrow  
Detective Randy Raines

### **Active Duty**

Research Associate Jaclyn Lam  
Sergeant Jon Martin  
Detective David Sandbach  
Captain Melissa Webb  
Detective Jessica Wilken

## Appendix A

# “The Proud Ones”

Current and Former Police Officers and Technicians  
Who Honorably Served During the Period of this History Report

### St. Louis Co. Police

^Anderson, Frank “Andy”  
 \*Battelle, Ricky  
 \*Belmar, Jon M.  
 Black, Larry  
 \*Boercker, William  
 Boyd, Leland  
 Calfee, James  
 Clark, Lawrence  
 \*Eatherton, Donald L.  
 Ewing, Bruce  
 Gebhardt, Robert  
 Gilyon, Thomas  
 Holt, Gregory  
 ^Huffmon, Michael  
 Joerling, Dean  
 Kaufman, John  
 +Keithley, Robert  
 Klekamp, Thomas  
 \*Knarr, Gary  
 Lee, Arva “Red”  
 Long, Dennis R.  
 +Love, Columbus

Marcinkiewicz, Joseph  
 +\*Martin, Jon  
 \*McFarland, Michael  
 Monteleone, Marion  
 Moore, Robert “Bobby”  
 \*Moore, Gregory  
 \*Morrow, Walter  
 Raines, Randy L.  
 Reiter, Peter  
 Roberts, Clifford  
 \*Roche, William  
 Sahm, Gustave “Pete”  
 \*Shepard, Gerald  
 #Sampson, Judy  
 +Sandbach, David  
 \*Schupp, Robert A.  
 ^Snell, George  
 \*Webb, Melissa  
 \*Wendel, David  
 +Wilken, Jessica  
 Valenti, Nicholas  
 Vogt, Charles

### St. Louis Police

+Burkemper, Nate  
 +Cochran, Gary  
 Eaton, Troy  
 Jones, John  
 +\*Stamper, Chris  
 +Wilderson, Richard “Josh”  
 +Wuellner, Michael

+Current Regional Member  
 \*Supervisor  
 ^Arson Technician  
 #Secretary

\*\*\*\*\*

*List prepared and maintained  
by the St. Louis Regional  
Bomb & Arson Unit*