

Elements of his record of special interest were the volume of arrests, the number of arrests resulting in eventual prosecution, the types of duty previously performed, any citations, disciplinary action or citizens' complaints, physical health, and service rating, particularly in the categories of quality of work, attitude, initiative, judgment, cooperation with fellow officers, and community contacts.

The volunteer's immediate supervisors and the men he has worked with are interviewed. Finally STRESS supervisors interview the candidate and make their decision as to his suitability for the assignment.

Since the operation was announced, about 300 officers from various units have volunteered for STRESS. About half of that total have been screened. Of those screened, about two-thirds have been accepted and assigned to STRESS duty, and one-third rejected as unsuitable on various grounds. A considerable waiting list of applicants remains. Some 15 STRESS officers have been promoted out of the operation, while others have voluntarily transferred out or been reassigned by the STRESS command after an evaluation of their on-the-job performance.

(At present, seven of the assigned STRESS officers are black. This figure fluctuates widely due to varying physical needs.)

The principal source of personnel has been the Precinct Support Unit, followed by the robbery, breaking and entering section. However, there are applicants from many other units in the department. A few recruits have been accepted directly from the Police Academy graduating classes.

Of the present complement, nearly half have five or more years of departmental experience, and one-third between one and five years. Nineteen percent are "probationary" patrolmen with less than one year's experience.

Of the approximately 4,000 patrolmen in the entire department, the experience levels run: 55 percent with five or more years, 33 percent between one and five years, and 12 percent, less than a year.

TRAINING

Officers are briefed by STRESS supervisors on a variety of functions: posing as potential robbery victims, response to "silent sentinel" alarm systems installed in selected businesses in high crime areas, plainclothes mobile and foot patrol, and uniformed duty in back-up cars. Although the name "STRESS" has been popularly associated exclusively with the so-called "decoy" operation, officers in the program rotate through the other assignments.

In preparation for "decoy" operations, they are briefed on the specific types of crimes and the types of victims most frequently accosted in the areas they are to patrol. STRESS officers have posed as pedestrians indigenous to the neighborhood--and all that implies as to dress and appearance--cab drivers, delivery men, bill collectors, newsboys and just plain citizens. A few have donned wigs and dresses to walk in areas where purse-snatching has been running high.

After general briefing on overall operations, including warnings on alertness and personal safety, and refresher briefing on the law and department policy affecting police use of weapons, volunteers are assigned to work on specific teams with more experienced officers.