

Vows New Plan to Cut N.O. Crime

By ROSS YOCKEY

Police Supt. Joseph I. Giarrusso announced today a new approach to crime prevention in New Orleans which he said will significantly cut New Orleans' crime rate in two months' time.

Giarrusso said he is not ready to announce details of the program yet but that it would be a community project involving close cooperation of Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison and Mayor Victor H. Schiro.

The superintendent said the new approach will have a significant effect in halting crimes such as that in which Police Sgt. Lloyd Verrett was shot and critically injured yesterday.

He said, however, that it is "silly" to suppose that four times as he attempted to stop a hold-up at Mighty Duke's Bar, 2600 Louisiana ave.

He remained in serious condition this afternoon after surgery at Charity Hospital.

Giarrusso said crimes such as the shooting of Sgt. Verrett point up two serious problems of law enforcement in the community.

One of these problems, he said, is illegal firearms; the other is the recidivist—the repeating criminal who lives almost continuously outside the law.

GIARRUSSO HINTED THAT THE NEW approach to crime prevention will go far to counteract these two problems.

The superintendent said that details of the program cannot be released yet because there are legal details to be worked out.

"Our of our constitutional amendments grants a person the right to bear arms," Giarrusso said, "and this makes it very hard on police."

He said, however, that it is "sily" to suppose that the purpose of the original amendment is still applicable in modern society.

But so far, he stated, the courts have done nothing to bring the law up to date in this area.

THE NEW CRIME PREVENTION program, said Giarrusso, will become a permanent fixture in New Orleans if it is successful.

"This is going to be a long-range project," he said.

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"I don't believe in flash-in-the-pan programs.

"The people have got to take this seriously. We don't want them to think this is a gimmick.

"We think this will be an effective tool for controlling crime in the community, and we'll be able to prove it. Just give us 60 days."

The superintendent said both Mayor Schiro and Garrison are interested in the project and have offered their cooperation.

GARRISON SAID THIS MORNING that "something must be done about all the loose firearms in this city."

The DA chided the Legislature for not acting on a 1962 Firearms Control Bill proposed by Garrison's office.

He said the bill apparently was defeated by a strong lobby and "never got out of the committee stage."

"The people against stiffer firearms regulations seem to argue that all these guns are necessary so that they can go squirrel hunting.

"We tried to amend the bill so that it would apply only to ex-convicts, but the lobbyists seemed to think the ex-convicts should be allowed to hunt squirrels also," the DA asserted.

ACTING MAYOR MOON LANDRIEU (Mayor Schiro is in Spain) said he thought there was very little the City Council could do to effectively control guns in the city.

The councilman-at-large pointed out that the proximity of neighboring parishes would make it extremely difficult to halt the flow of illegal weapons into and out of the city.

"I'm afraid I just don't have any ideas," Landrieu said. "It seems to me that if something is going to be done about it, it will have to be by the state."

Garrison agreed that a state law might be the most desirable method at this time.

Two men have been booked with armed robbery and attempted murder in the shooting of Sgt. Verrett.

They are Richard Brown, 21, 318 S. Dorgenois, and Henry Johnson, 19, 2507 Belmont pl.

VERRETT WAS alone in a patrol car when he received a signal about 1:30 a. m. for a possible holdup involving armed persons.

When Verrett attempted to disarm Brown, police said, the man fired, hitting Verrett four times.

Verrett managed to walk to the sidewalk, where he was met by two other officers, Ptn. Woodrow Wilson Jr., and Jerry Williams. They placed Verrett in their patrol car and took him to the hospital.

AN INTENSIVE search followed for Brown and Johnson. Sgt. George Delph Delpidio and detectives Clement Da Salla, Joseph Vitari and Dominick Verdi closed in on Johnson's residence later in the day and found both men.

Police Supt. Joseph I. Giarrusso said of the shooting "It is a real tragic situation when a police officer, in full uniform, is gunned down by an armed thug during the commission of a crime. We feel strongly about this but this incident forcefully brings to our attention that our citizens are also being gunned

down on our city streets with some regularity.

"Incidents such as this vividly point out the fact that there is a great amount of illegal firearms floating around. We must take a real hard look at the illegal carrying and use of firearms in our community."

Giarrusso pointed out that both men had previous convictions on their records.

Johnson, he said, has been convicted of attempted simple burglary, and Brown, of theft. He said Brown is presently awaiting trial on another auto theft charge.

THE SUPERINTENDENT refused to blame the shooting on the fact that Sgt. Verrett was alone in his patrol car.

He said sergeants have been traveling singly for years, not as a result of the recent change in procedure allowing a single patrolman in a car.