

An officer of the Ohio State National Guard said Monday [4 May] that all the Guardsmen on duty at Kent State College went through the 16 hours of riot control training that the Department of Defense required after disturbances in Detroit and Newark in 1967.

The AP cites various sections of the National Guard riot control training manual which says in part, "Full fire power by small arms is employed only on command of the senior commander. This extreme measure would be used as a last resort only after all other measures have failed or obviously would be impractical and the consequences of failure to completely subdue the riot would be the imminent overthrow of the government, continued mass casualties or similar grievous conditions. It has never been used by federal troops." The training manual continues, "Use only the necessary force. Meet force with greater forces but avoid bloodshed. When firing, troops should aim low to disable rather than kill. Snipers should be engaged only on order and by a single selected marksman or firing team." The National Guard regulations on riot control include the provision that prior to use of military forces in civil disturbances, local rules for them must include conditions under which weapons may be fired. These rules of engagement must be reduced to writing and a copy provided to each soldier.

The State Adjutant General of Ohio, S.T. del Corso, said today that he had no evidence to support his earlier statement that a sniper fired at National Guardsmen before they began shooting at demonstrators. He also said that no order was given to the Guard to fire and that a cease-fire order was given seconds after the firing began. However, one student who was at the area where the shooting occurred said that the Guardsmen were "definitely ordered to fire," and another said that she heard the Guard ordered to "pivot and fire."

[Following reading of the news, an item was added dealing with a later story received from the AP on National Guard training.]

... the training manual and also about National Guard training in general, and in this dispatch [the AP] reports on some interviews that they conducted with various National Guardsmen. One of the National Guardsmen they interviewed was a man named Richard Gillette in Chicago. The AP quotes him as saying, "Almost all our meetings were spent on riot control. The rules about firing weapons were very explicit, in fact our unit was never issued ammunition unless it was very apparent we were going to have to use it." Mr. Gillette added, "We didn't have ammo during the 1968 convention disturbances." But he said some of the troops carried their own pistols because they knew they wouldn't get any bullets. He said, "The whole attitude in the National Guard was that hippies and long hairs were freaks and you could do anything to them."