Attacks on members of the South African Police Service in the PWV during 1993

Prof Herman Conradie
Department of Criminology
University of South Africa

Introduction

It is no secret that attacks on the police have been one of the most shattering crime experiences during the last two years in the Republic of South Africa. Woodgate (1994:3) noted that there were 4 165 incidents of unrest-related violence against the 90 000-strong police force of 1992; 35 per cent of these occurred in the Witwatersrand area. There seems to be no end to this endemic crime. In 1993 325 incidents were reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS) in the Witwatersrand Regional Command alone. In January 1994, 171 incidents were reported in the same region. This figure declined to 67 in July 1994. It seems to be decreasing, yet is still at an unacceptable level.

Attacks on police officers have a detrimental effect on the morale of the police. It is a serious stumbling block for them and increases their negative sentiments towards the communities they are to protect and serve. One could even begin to suspect that law-abiding members of the communities in which these crimes are being perpetrated will begin to lose hope of a better life. It was as a result of this desperate situation that this study was undertaken.

The reader should note that this research did not take any murders of police officials into account. It concentrated on those incidents where the policemen escaped from the attack with their lives.

Aims

The main aim of this research was to statistically describe the phenomenon of attacks on police officials as it manifests itself in the Witwatersrand region. It was also envisaged to develop, based on the findings, at least some prevention measures and other recommendations.

Hypotheses and hypothesis testing

Bailey (1978:35) says a hypothesis is a proposition that is stated in testable form and predicts a particular relationship between two (or more) variables. Dixon, Bouma and Atkinson (1987:39) support this statement by saying it denotes the relationship between two concepts. Bloom (1986:177) says that it usually takes the form of A causes B or X is related to Z. Van der Westhuizen (1977:45) states that in the formulation of research hypotheses, the researcher is making an intelligent, informed, calculated guess about the probable results of the research. Therefore, all hypotheses are by definition tentative or provisional. They can either be established or rejected by the investigation. The Ho (null hypothesis) states that there is no statistical significant difference between the two variables, while the Ha (alternative hypothesis) states the opposite (Hagan 1982:244–245). Pienaar (1980:158) observed that the sources for hypotheses are located in daily observations, the experience of the researcher, theory and other research. In this research, the hypotheses were derived from the reported cases (daily observations).

Statistical techniques are used to test whether a hypothesis is valid or not. These tests set the acceptable and nonacceptable limits within or outside which the numerical value of the test must fall to be declared valid or invalid. Hypothesis testing is regarded as the application of procedures to validate or falsify characteristics of a population (Van der Westhuizen & Oosthuizen 1983:123). Lutz (1983:149) states that the chi-square is used as a significance test to determine whether sample data warrant the conclusion that there is an association or difference between two nominal variables in a population. Thus, for the purposes of this research, the chi-square was
deemed sufficient for this purpose. The following hypotheses guided this research:

Hypothesis 1a: The victims have specific characteristics.

Hypothesis 1b: The victims do not have specific characteristics.

Hypothesis 2a: The perpetrators have specific characteristics.

Hypothesis 2b: The perpetrators do not have specific characteristics.

Hypothesis 3a: There is a set pattern in the nature of the attacks.

Hypothesis 3b: There is no set pattern in the nature of the attacks.

Hypothesis 4a: The attacks are politically motivated.

Hypothesis 4b: The attacks are not politically motivated.

Hypothesis 5a: The special weapons and ammunition training (SWAT) helped the policemen to resist the attacks effectively.

Hypothesis 5b: The SWAT training did not help the policemen to resist the attacks effectively.

Hypothesis 6a: The victims experienced positive support.

Hypothesis 6b: The victims did not experience positive support.

The empirical research

The universum and the sample

The universum indicates all possible respondents under investigation (Van der Westhuizen 1977:39; Sonnekus 1993:174). Van der Westhuizen (1977:40) says the population or universum can be defined in accordance with the requirements of the researcher. For this research, the population was all the police officials who were attacked in the Witwatersrand region, Republic of South Africa, in 1993.

The idea was to work with the whole population. This was successful up to a point. All victims were traced and completed the questionnaires. However, some made smaller mistakes such as skipping pages of the questionnaire or sending the questionnaire with a page or two missing. Therefore, only 290 of the 325 possible cases could be included in this highly representative sample, consisting of 89,23 per cent of the universum.

The nature of the research

Exploratory research refers to the study of a field that is, relatively speaking, unknown (Mouton & Marais 1985:43). Because little is known about the murder of police officials in the Witwatersrand region of South Africa, this can be classified as exploratory research. It can also be described as descriptive, because it covers an in-depth description of a situation (Mouton & Marais 1985:44). This descriptive research was undertaken because a goal of the research was to describe the existing situation regarding murders of police officials.

When research is aimed at describing what is, it is descriptive (De Wet, Monteith, Venter, Steyn 1981:12; Cilliers 1973:31).

The research techniques

The research techniques were chosen and designed according to their ability to generate the desired data. Therefore the development of the questionnaire took the whole research process into account. In the construction of the questionnaire, the goals of the study were always taken into account. This is why the emphasis is dominated by description only. Likewise, the questionnaire provided for all the hypotheses that were set to guide the project.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed to facilitate goal achievement during the research. It consisted of 44 questions. These were divided as follows: the first four were linked to biographical particulars such as gender, race (population group), age and rank. The rest concerned the nature of the attacks, motivation for these, the role of training during the attacks and the support they encountered after the attacks. A few questions were also asked about the perpetrators. It was also decided to give the respondents an open question to respond freely about prevention. Once the questionnaire was developed, a pilot survey was conducted to test it. Then it was scrutinised, finalised and applied.

Data gathering and data analysis

Gathering the empirical data began with a pilot survey to determine whether the questionnaire could deliver the desired results. The necessary changes were effected afterwards. The questionnaire was then distributed by hand to all the police stations in the Witwatersrand region, in September 1994. The station commanders were asked to identify members who had suffered attacks and to distribute the questionnaire. Respondents were
given two weeks to complete it, although the questionnaires were only received back at the end of October 1994.

The data were statistically manipulated by the well-known Statistical Analysis System (SAS). Special use was made of frequencies, percentages and cross tabulations.

**The research strategy**

For this research the nomothetic research strategy was selected. This strategy is highly associated with the formulation of ‘laws’. It is quantitative in nature and thus suitable for surveys (Mouton & Marais 1985:51). It can also enhance the utilisation of descriptive statistics (Smit 1983:212), and facilitates the quantification of the data.

**Analysis and interpretation of the data**

To be consistent, the analysis and interpretation of the data was done by the nomothetic description technique. Description was viewed as sufficient, because the sample was highly representative. The statistical data given represent only a sample of the findings. Selection was made according to two criteria: the cross tabulations showing unique tendencies and those data indicating important tendencies (Sonnekus 1993:191). In some instances not all responses could be obtained because they were not available from the dockets, therefore at times the frequencies and percentages do not add up to 290 (100 per cent).

**The report**

When writing the report on the results of the research, the hypotheses were taken as the criteria to give order to the content. Therefore subheadings were developed in accordance with the hypotheses. Thus subheadings were introduced on the profiles of the victims and the perpetrators, on the modus operandi, the role of training during the attacks, and the support the victims experienced afterwards. Because of space limitations, no cross tabulations are given. The applicable aspects of these are described, however.

**Profiles**

**The profile of the victims**

Regarding gender, 278 (95,9 per cent) of the respondents were male and 12 (4,1 per cent) were female. When it came to race, it should be noted that 133 (45,9 per cent) were white, 149 (51,4 per cent) were black and that there were 7 (2,4 per cent) coloureds and 1 (0,3 per cent) Indian. The race of the rest was categorised as Other.

Information about the rank of the police officials who were attacked was also obtained. A distinction was made between noncommissioned officers and commissioned officers. The noncommissioned officers consisted of 150 (51,7 per cent) constables, 44 (15,2 per cent) lance-sergeants, 40 (13,8 per cent) sergeants, 31 (10,7 per cent) assistant constables, and 16 (5,5 per cent) warrant-officers. The commissioned officers consisted of 2 (0,68 per cent) lieutenants, 5 (1,72 per cent) captains, 1 (0,3 per cent) major and 1 (0,3 per cent) brigadier. In total 281 (96,89 per cent) noncommissioned officials and 9 (3,1 per cent) commissioned officers were attacked.

The age distribution of these officers was as follows: 86 (29,7 per cent) between the ages of 22 and 25 years; 47 (16,2 per cent) between 18 and 21 years; 88 (30,3 per cent) between 26 and 30 years; 45 (15,5 per cent) between 31 and 40 years; 22 (7,6 per cent) between 41 and 55 years. Two (0,7 per cent) were 56 years of age and older.

Furthermore, 39 (13,4 per cent) were lightly injured, 38 (13,1 per cent) were seriously injured, 38 (13,1 per cent) were slightly injured and hospitalised, 65 (22,4 per cent) were seriously injured and hospitalised and 110 (37,9 per cent) were not injured during the attack.

During the research it was found that 187 (64,5 per cent) of these police officials were on duty when they were attacked, 98 (33,8 per cent) were off duty. Of these, 37 (12,8 per cent) of the police attacked in 1993 were attacked while on foot patrol, 97 (33,4 per cent) while on vehicle patrol, 37 (12,8) while doing investigations, 22 (7,6 per cent) doing other duties and 97 (33,4 per cent) were not on patrol (not applicable).

It should also be pointed out that 90 of the 149 (60,4 per cent) black officers were off duty, and 123 of the 149 (82,55 per cent) of the white officers were on duty during these attacks. The differences between the black and white officials were found to be statistically highly significant. The relevant readings were as follows: chi-square = 106,356; DF = 6; Prob = 0,000.

The greater majority, namely 198 of the 290 (68,27 per cent), were not wearing protective clothing when they were attacked.

The respondents were also asked whether they discharged their firearms during the attacks. Their responses are reflected in table 1.

According to table 1, 128 (44,1 per cent) used their firearms and 159 (54,8 per cent) did not. Cross-tabulations showed highly significant statistical differences between the races and the use of firearms during the attacks (chi-square = 65,246; DF = 9; Prob = 0,000). Only 30 (10,34 per
cent) blacks but 88 (30,34 per cent) of the white police officials used their firearms during the attacks.

The majority, that is 183 (63,1 per cent), retained their firearms after the attack, 78 (26,9 per cent) service pistols were stolen, 2 (0,7 per cent) R5 rifles were stolen and 16 (5,5 per cent) shotguns were stolen. In 2 (0,7 per cent) cases service pistols and R5s were stolen; in 1 (0,3 per cent) incident the service pistol and shotgun were stolen; in another 1 (0,3 per cent) case the R5 and shotgun were taken and in 5 (1,7 per cent) cases all three weapons were taken. Those who did lose their firearms said some were recovered: 27 (9,3 per cent) firearms were recovered, 82 (28,3 per cent) firearms were not recovered, in 10 (3,4 per cent) instances some firearms were recovered and in 171 (59,0 per cent) cases the recovery of firearms was not applicable.

Based on the above, the profile of a victim can be summarised as follows: He is a white (on-duty) or black (off-duty) male noncommissioned officer who does not wear protective clothing, does not discharge his firearm, and is between 18 and 30 years of age. White officials discharged their firearms more than black officials. Thus, because certain particulars of the victims stood out, hypothesis 1a was confirmed by this research.

### Table 1 Use of firearm during the attack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>44,1</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>44,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>54,8</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>99,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The profile of the perpetrators

Some questions were also asked about the attackers. For hypothesis testing, gender, race, way of attacking, and motive were selected. Also, the replies of the respondents are of critical importance in prevention of these crimes, as well as in the apprehension of the perpetrators. These were as follows:

According to table 2, 261 (90,0 per cent) of the attackers were black, 6 (2,1 per cent) of the attackers were white, 2 (0,7 per cent) of the attackers were Indians, 8 (2,8 per cent) were coloured, 3 (1,0 per cent) of the attackers were black and white, 2 (0,7 per cent) of the attackers were black together with coloured, and in 1 (0,3 per cent) case the attackers were black together with Indian and in another 1 (0,3 per cent) case the attackers were from all of the races.

Regarding the number of attackers, it was also found that in 60 (20,7 per cent) of the cases which were reported, there was only one attacker, in 42 (14,5 per cent) of the cases there were two attackers, in 44 (15,2 per cent) there were three attackers, in 35 (12,1 per cent) there were four attackers, in 28 (9,7 per cent) there were five attackers, in 7 (2,4 per cent) there were six attackers, in 4 (1,4 per cent) there were seven attackers, in 9 (3,1 per cent) there were eight attackers.

### Table 2 Race of the attacker(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>90,0</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>91,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2,1</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>93,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>93,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,8</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>96,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black &amp; white</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>97,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black &amp; coloured</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>98,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black &amp; Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>98,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All races</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>99,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to table 3, 172 (59.3 per cent) of the police officials were shot at, 23 (7.9 per cent) were stabbed, 19 (6.6 per cent) were beaten, 18 (6.2 per cent) were hit with an object, there were 10 (3.4 per cent) cases of arson, 29 (10.0 per cent) were ambushed and 19 (6.6 per cent) were attacked in various other ways. Cross-tabulations showed the following statistical highly significant differences (chi-square = 36.048; DF = 6; Prob = 0.000): most men, that is 166 (57.24 per cent) were shot at, while the most women, that is 4 (1.38 per cent), were set alight.

They were also asked if the assailants discharged firearms during the attack. The particulars are given in table 4.

The data of table 4 indicate that in 211 (72.8 per cent) of the cases firearms were discharged and in 71 (24.5 per cent) cases firearms were not discharged by the assailants.

In 5 (1.7 per cent) of the attacks hand grenades were used, in 36 (12.4 per cent) cases firearms were used, in 17 (5.9 per cent) explosive devices were used, in 90 (31.0 per cent) cases petrol bombs were used, in 50 (17.2 per cent) cases pistols were used, in 24 (8.3 per cent) AK-47s were used, in 10 (3.4 per cent) cases a panga or knife was used, in 25 (8.6 per cent) cases stones were used, in 13 (4.5 per cent) other weapons were used and in 1 (0.3 per cent) case no weapon was used.

In 82 (28.3 per cent) cases, the assailant used one weapon, in 35 (12.1 per cent) cases, two weapons were used, in 19 (6.6 per cent) cases, three weapons were used, in 11 (3.8 per cent) cases, four weapons were used, in 9 (3.1 per cent) cases, five weapons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manner</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Shot</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>59.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stabbed</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaten</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit using an object</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>80.0</td>
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<td>Arson</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambush</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discharge</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>98.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrest</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>87.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
were used, in 5 (1.7 per cent) cases, six weapons were used, in 1 (0.3 per cent) case, seven weapons were used, in 1 (0.3 per cent) eight weapons were used, in 8 (2.8 per cent) nine or more weapons were used, in 96 (33.1 per cent) cases the number of weapons were unknown and in 3 (1.0 per cent) cases weapons were not used.

According to table 5, the majority, namely 136 (46.9 per cent) of the attacks were crime related, 12 (4.1 per cent) were because of revenge, 60 (20.7 per cent) were unrest related, 45 (15.5 per cent) were political and 32 (11.0 per cent) had other motives. Statistical highly significant differences (chi-square = 24,221; DF = 7; Prob = 0.001) were registered regarding gender and motive. In the case of men, the motives were more crime related (132 = 45.52 per cent). In the case of women, the motives were more linked to political unrest (4 = 1.37 per cent).

It was also found that in 25 (8.6 per cent) cases, only one attacker was killed, in 9 (3.1 per cent) cases two attackers were killed, in 3 (1.0 per cent) cases three attackers were killed, 5 (1.7 per cent) cases four attackers were killed, in 3 (1.0 per cent) five attackers were killed, in 11 (3.8 per cent) cases six attackers were killed, in 0 (0.0 per cent) seven and more attackers were killed, in 5 (1.7 per cent) cases it was unknown and in 35 (12.1 per cent) cases no attackers were killed. Cross-tabulations showed the highly significant statistical differences between men and women regarding this issue (chi-square = 30,037; DF = 7; Prob = 0.00). In the cases of two hundred and four men (70.34 per cent) and 5 (1.72 per cent) women, no assailants were killed.

According to the respondents, in 43 (14.8 per cent) incidents one arrest was made, in 15 (5.2 per cent) cases two arrests were made, in 12 (4.1 per cent) cases three arrests were made, in 8 (2.8 per cent) cases four arrests were made, in 24 (8.3 per cent) cases five or more arrests were made and in 184 (63.4 per cent) no arrests were made. Statistical high significant rates were registered regarding gender (chi-square = 29,699; DF = 7; Prob = 0.00). In the case of the men, no arrests were made in 179 (61.72 per cent) of the incidents, while the figure for women was 5 (1.72 per cent).

Regarding the criminal proceedings, the following was found: 5 (1.8 per cent) were false cases, in 10 (3.7 per cent) the case was withdrawn, in 18 (6.6 per cent) the suspect was found guilty, in 4 (1.5 per cent) the suspect was dismissed, in 94 (34.6 per cent) the investigation is not complete and in 140 (31.5 per cent) the cases were unknown.

Based on the above, the profile of the perpetrators can be summarised as follows: He is a black male who usually works alone, he attacks by shooting at the victim, he has a crime-related motive, and usually escapes arrest. When he attacks a male officer, his chance of being arrested or killed is higher than when he attacks a female officer. Because specific characteristics of the perpetrator stood out during this research, it can be concluded that hypothesis 2a was verified.

### Table 6  Month in which the attack took place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>26.9</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>32.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>62.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>97.9</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The modus operandi

To test the hypotheses relating to the modus operandi, two questions were set. One concerned the time and the other the place where these atrocities took place. The respondents gave the following particulars:

**Time**

Data were collected on the month, week, day and time of day the attacks occurred. The results were as follows are given in table 6.

According to table 6, most attacks occurred in July and August 1993, that is 31 (10,7 per cent) in each of these two months. In December there were 29 (10,0 per cent) attacks. This was followed by March with 26 (9,0 per cent) incidents, with 25 (8,6 per cent) in June and 20 (6,9 per cent) in April 1993. It seemed as if the months of January, February, May and September were safer than the others.

Furthermore, 55 (19,0 per cent) of the attacks occurred in the first week, 71 (24,5 per cent) occurred in the second week, 71 (24,5 per cent) in the third week, 59 (20,3 per cent) in the fourth week and 29 (10,0 per cent) in the fifth week.

Statistical high significant differences were encountered regarding gender and the week of the month the attacks took place (chi-square = 73,138; DF = 6; Prob = 0,000). Men are more often attacked during the second and third weeks of the month; both weeks had a reading of 65 (22,41 per cent). The women were more often attacked during the fourth week: 4 (1,38 per cent) of them fall in this category.

Regarding the day on which the attacks took place, 60 (20,7 per cent) of the attacks took place on a Sunday, 36 (12,4 per cent) on a Monday, 31 (10,7 per cent) on a Tuesday, 37 (12,8 per cent) on a Wednesday, 30 (10,3 per cent) on a Thursday, 37 (12,8 per cent) on a Friday and 45 (15,5 per cent) on a Saturday. It is clear from the above that Sundays and Fridays are exceptional. When Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays are added together, they constitute 155 (48,2 per cent of all the attacks).

According to table 7, 38 (13,1 per cent) of the attacks took place between 00:00 and 03:59, 29 (10,0 per cent) took place between 04:00 and 07:59, 37 (13,4 per cent) took place between 08:00 and 11:59, 39 (13,4 per cent) took place between 12:00 and 15:59, 79 (27,2 per cent) took place between 16:00 and 19:59 and 66 (22,8 per cent) took place between 20:00 and 23:59. If the time slots from 16:00 to 23:59 are taken into account, it is clear that 145 (50,0 per cent) of the attacks took place during this timespan.

The majority of the men, that is 78 (26,90 per cent) were attacked between 16:00 and 19:59 and the second largest group in the time slot of 12:00-15:59, while the majority of women officials, that is 5 (1,72 per cent), were attacked during the very late hours of 00:00 to 03:59. The statistical high significance of these differences is reflected by the chi-square of 9,936, DF of 5 and the probability reading of 0,077.

**Place**

Regarding the places of the attacks, the respondents were asked to name the region, district and whether the attack occurred at their homes. The results are reflected in table 8.

Table 8 shows that 103 (35,5 per cent) of the members were attacked in Johannesburg, 53 (18,3 per cent) on the West Rand, 27 (9,3 per cent) in the Vaal Triangle and 99 (34,1 per cent) on the East Rand.

One hundred and two (35,17 per cent) of the men were attacked in the East Rand region and 89 (40,69 per cent) in the region of Johannesburg. The majority of the women, that is 5 (1,72 per cent), were attacked in the Vaal Triangle. The differences between them were statistically significant (chi-square = 16,728; DF = 5; Prob = 0,005).

---

### Table 7 Time of the attack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00:00 - 03:59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13,1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04:00 - 07:59</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10,0</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>23,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:00 - 11:59</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12,8</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>35,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 15:59</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13,4</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>49,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00 - 19:59</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>27,2</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>76,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:00 - 23:59</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22,8</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>99,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 9, 61 (21,0 per cent) of the police were attacked in the police district of Johannesburg, 19 (6,6 per cent) in Johannesburg North, 6 (2,1 per cent) in Randburg, 23 (7,9 per cent) in Krugersdorp, 5 (1,7 per cent) in Roodepoort, 48 (16,6 per cent) in Soweto, 25 (8,6 per cent) in Vereeniging, 62 (21,4 per cent) in Germiston, 9 (3,1 per cent) in Benoni, 1 (0,3 per cent) in Brakpan, 6 (2,1 per cent) in Springs and 18 (6,2 per cent) in Kempton Park. The respondents were also asked whether the attacks took place at their homes. They responded as follows: 27 (9,3 per cent) of the attacks took place at the residence and 257 (88,6 per cent) of the attacks did not. It should also be noted that 253 (87,23 per cent) of the men were not attacked at their own homes, nor were 9 (3,40 per cent) of the women officials (chi-square = 50,793; DF = 4; Prob = 0,000).

Based on the above, it can be stated, regarding modus operandi, that these attacks usually take place in July and August, during the second and third weeks and at weekends, starting from 16:00 to 19:59. Regarding place, the majority take place in Germiston. Men were attacked more often during the second and third weeks, women more often during the fourth week. Men were more often attacked during the time slot of 16:00-19:59 and women more often in the late hours of 00:00-03:59. Men were more often attacked on the East Rand and women more often in the Vaal Triangle.

**SWAT training**

Because a hypothesis was formulated about special weapons and ammunition training, some measurable statements about this training were incorporated into the questionnaire. Officers were asked what role they thought some special elements of their training as police officers played during the attacks. They answered as follows:
Table 10  Did the member complete a SWAT course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SWAT course</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>57,2</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>57,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>38,6</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>96,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to table 10, 166 (57,2 per cent) of the members who were attacked completed the SWAT course and 112 (38,6 per cent) did not. Statistical highly significant differences were registered in the race of the officials concerning SWAT training. Only 55 (18,97 per cent) of the black as opposed to 105 (36,21 per cent) of the white officials said they thought that the SWAT course training was ineffective.

It can be stated conclusively that, because the majority of the respondents said the SWAT training did not help them during the attacks, hypothesis 5a was not verified during this research. It should also be noted that of those officers who had undergone the training (chi-square = 59,403; DF = 9; Prob = 0,000).

Table 11 shows that 75 (25,9 per cent) members thought counter-ambush was most effective, 19 (6,6 per cent) members thought attending to complaints was most effective, 3 (1,0 per cent) members thought attending to robbery was most effective, 13 (4,5 per cent) members thought stopping a vehicle was most effective, 28 (9,7 per cent) members thought that shooting was most effective, 10 members (3,4 per cent) thought that weapon handling at a house penetration was most effective, 11 (3,8 per cent) members thought that theoretical lectures were most effective and 126 (43,3 per cent) members underwent the SWAT training, more were white than black. It also became clear that counter-ambush techniques helped the most during the attacks.

Support and counselling

When asked about the reactions of their superiors and colleagues to the fact that they had been attacked, the respondents gave the following replies:

Colleagues

According to table 12, 79 (27,2 per cent) colleagues were sympathetic, 9 (3,1 per cent) colleagues were
neutral, 7 (2.4 per cent) colleagues blamed them, 101 (34.8 per cent) were helpful, 32 (11.0 per cent) were protective, 33 (11.4) colleagues considered it a work risk and 27 (9.3 per cent) had other feelings. Regarding gender, statistically highly significant figures were registered (chi-square = 32.571; DF = 6; Prob = 0.000). Men (96 = 33.10 per cent) found colleagues helpful while only 2 (0.69 per cent) of the women experienced the same. Sympathy was experienced by 81 (27.93 per cent) of the men, while only 1 (0.34 per cent) woman said she experienced that.

Superiors

According to table 13, 98 (33.8 per cent) superiors’ reactions were sympathetic, 31 (10.7 per cent) were neutral, 7 (2.4 per cent) felt blame, 81 (27.9 per cent) were helpful, 19 (6.6 per cent) were protective, 30 (10.3 per cent) felt it was a work risk and 24 (8.3 per cent) reacted in other ways. Gender again came to the fore with statistical highly significant differences (chi-square = 18.799; DF = 6; Prob = 0.000). Ninety-nine (34.14 per cent) men experienced sympathy and another 80 (27.5 per cent) experienced helpfulness. However, 3 (1.03 per cent) women found superiors neutral and as if this was a work risk.

Because counselling is supposed to follow an attack, and is part of support, the officers were also asked how they experienced this procedure.

According to table 14, 73 (25.2 per cent) had counselling after the attack and 212 (73.1 per cent) did not. Statistical significant differences (chi-square = 14.747; DF = 9; Prob = 0.098) were registered regarding race and counselling.

Table 12  Colleagues’ reaction concerning the attack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sympathetic</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>79.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work risk</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13  Superiors’ reactions concerning the attack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sympathetic</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work risk</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 122 (42.07 per cent) blacks and 89 (30.69 per cent) whites who said they did not receive counselling.

According to table 15, only 73 (25.2 per cent) members considered the counselling effective and 214 (73.8 per cent) considered it ineffective.
Table 14 Did counselling take place after the incident?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counselling</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25,2</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>73,1</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>98,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 Was the counselling effective?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25,2</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>73,8</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>99,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hypothesis about positive support (hypothesis 6a) was only partly verified by this research. This is because the respondents did experience support from their colleagues and superiors. Men experienced more support from colleagues than women. This support was reassuring and sympathetic. Women did not receive that kind of support. Concerning counselling, of those who did receive counselling after the attack, whites experienced it more than blacks.

Open-ended questions

In the questionnaire the respondents were also given the opportunity to react freely to question 44 which was formulated as follows: ‘Please indicate what you think can be done to prevent attacks on members of the South African Police.’ It should be noted that 275 (94,82 per cent) of these police officials submitted responses. The answers referred explicitly to preventative measures, which were categorised according to four topics. Two other categories were also identified, namely complaints and some remarks in general. These are reflected below.

Preventative measures suggested by the respondents

- More purposeful steps should be taken to minimise the possibility of attacks.
- The ISU (Internal Stability Unit) must be expanded.
- Unlicensed firearms must be confiscated.
- More information and courses about self-defence.
- When policemen are off duty their firearms must be kept in a safe place, especially when they visit shebeens, taverns etc.
- Members of the police should always be objective.
- Members must be more aware of their surroundings and look after themselves.
- More intensive and extensive training.
- Members must approach complaints with the necessary alertness.
- Always be on the alert with everybody.
- More effective ways and equipment to protect members, for example more bullet-proof vests, nightsight equipment, radios, armoured vehicles, thunder flashes, ammunition, shock grenades, every member must have his/her own firearm, and sirens on vehicles.
- Community policing should be expanded.
- Members must work in groups or in pairs, not alone.
- Members must gain more experience and advanced training.
- Members must be alert when doing foot patrols.
- More target practice on a regular basis.
- Members must be supplied with transport to and from work.
- The SWAT course is important and must be completed by everyone.
- Members must be armed at all times.
- Members who live in dangerous areas must be protected.
- An aggressive group of people must be dealt with from a distance. Do not get too close.
- Dangerous situations must be prevented, for example footpatrols late at night.
- Refresher courses must be held regularly for all members.
- Members must be able to trust their co-workers.
• More members on patrol must be placed in dangerous areas.
• Members must be alert for ambushes.
• Vehicles and houses must be searched for unlicensed firearms.
• The SANDF must be called in to assist with operations.
• Work circumstances and facilities must be upgraded.
• Markings on police vehicles must be taken away because they make the vehicles easy targets.
• More competitive salaries.
• More manpower in the SAPS.
• Members must not be put in dangerous areas or situations straight after college.
• Firearms must not be worn where they are easily observed, especially when members are off duty.
• More effective lighting in townships and dangerous areas.
• Shorter working hours with regular breaks. Long hours are exhausting.
• There must be no racism in the Police between black and white. More black commissioned officers.
• Special radio channels must be created for every unit or station, to ensure that communication between members is efficient.
• Training to be able to cope with stress.
• Hostels must be searched more often.
• Roadblocks must be held more often.
• A democratic police service.
• Members must live nearer to the police station.
• Policemen must have the right to use their firearms when necessary.
• Members who have been attacked must share their experiences with others in order to prevent similar attacks.
• There must be communication between units, such as the ISU units and the stations, to warn people about unrest areas.
• The police must have more authority and power.
• More visible policing at taxi ranks, stations and on trains.
• When looking for suspects, policemen must be in groups.
• Intensive training in self-defence.
• Members must be alert when off duty.
• The member must know the area in which he/she works.
• Members must apply what they have learnt during training and courses.
• In case of an attack, members must have teargas with them.
• Houses of members must have bullet-proof windows to protect them.

• SWAT and observing techniques must be applied.
• There must be medical equipment in vehicles.
• Lighter and more comfortable bullet-proof vests.
• Destroy huts that are used as bases for attacks.
• Suspects must be searched to find unlawful arms.
• Squatter camps are a problem; they must be divided into areas and be patrolled.
• More than two magazines per person.

Preventative measures by central government suggested by the respondents

• Politics and the police must be separated.
• The government must support and protect the police and they must be sympathetic to the family members of those who have been killed.
• The police must serve the community and not the government.
• Negotiations must take place between the various political parties and the police. If the political parties put the police in a good light among their followers, the attacks might become less. The police are supposed to be nonpolitical.
• The government must assist the police in building up their image.
• The flow of firearms must be controlled.
• The political situation in South Africa must change, become more peaceful.

Preventative measures by the public, suggested by the respondents

• The police must have a meeting with the community to determine how they can jointly prevent crime.
• The community must become more involved in preventing crime and helping the police.
• The public must realise that the police are there to serve and protect the community.
• There must be cooperation between the community and the police.
• Better relations between the police and youth from the townships.
• Communication is important.
• The public must have respect for the police and their work.
• Peace in our land.

Punitive prevention suggested by the respondents

• Death penalty must be reinstated.
• Severe sentences for those who are in possession of illegal firearms or unlicensed weapons.
• Severe sentences for those who attack policemen and women.
• Death penalty for all crimes of violence.

Complaints by the respondents
• Officers do not tell the juniors when the situation is dangerous; nor do they listen to juniors when the juniors tell them the situation is dangerous.
• Officers do not want to assist when other members are in trouble.
• Officers do not give guidance in these situations.

Remarks in general by the respondents
• There is nothing one can do about these attacks.
• These attacks will stop because of changes in the political situation in South Africa.
• Officers do not want to assist when other members are in trouble.

Conclusion
In this research some aspects of modus operandi, such as the time and place of attacks, on members of the SAPS were recorded. A brief statistical description of the attackers was given, as well as the main biographical particulars of the victims. The role of firearms was also analysed and researched. The effectiveness of SWAT training was assessed, as well as the supportive reaction of colleagues and superiors. Counselling, as it was perceived by those officers who were attacked in 1993 in the Witwatersrand region, was also discussed.

The findings can be listed as follows:

Profile of the victims
Regarding the biographical particulars, the following profile can be drawn: it was a white or black male on duty, with the rank of constable, between the ages of 22–25 years of age who was injured during the attack. The attacks occurred mostly when they were on vehicle patrol or on foot patrol. In the majority of the cases the victims were not wearing bullet-proof vests.

Profile of the assailants
Most attackers were black. In most instances there was only one attacker. In most instances the attacks took place by shooting at the police officers. The motive for the majority of the attacks was crime related. In the majority of the cases, the assailants discharged firearms. In most instances the attackers were not killed. In most instances arrests were not made after the attack. More often than not, petrol bombs, pistols and (other) firearms were used in these attacks. In the majority of cases the assailants used only one weapon.

Modus operandi
The most attacks took place in June, July and August. There seem to be fewer attacks during the first week of each month. There are no real significant differences in the other weeks of the month. More attacks occur on Sundays and Fridays. Most of the attacks took place between 16:00 and 23:59. Most attacks occurred in Johannesburg and the East Rand. Most attacks occurred in Germiston, Johannesburg and Soweto. Most of the attacks did not take place at the residence of the members. In less than half of the cases the members did not discharge their firearms when they were attacked. In the majority of the cases the members retained their firearms after the attack.

SWAT training
The majority of those members who were attacked (more whites than blacks) had completed a SWAT course. Counter-ambush was considered the most effective technique which could be utilised during the attack.

Support
The majority experienced their colleagues as helpful and sympathetic. The majority experienced their superiors as helpful and sympathetic. The majority said no counselling took place after the attack. The majority experienced the counselling as being ineffective.

Prevention strategies
Regarding the suggestions for preventative strategies, the respondents placed most emphasis on the SAPS itself, followed by the role of the central government and the public/community.

Recommendations
Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are applicable:
• Black and white male police officers with the rank of constable should receive special training in preventing incidents. CAICI should distribute the findings on the profile of the victims to all police officers in the WWR region.
• There is a great need for continuous training. Training should be problem oriented. Specific mock crime situations should be created and used as a training tool. Participation of members
in these mock situations should be evaluated and, if need be, corrected.

- Special precautions should be taken by officers, especially when they are working in Johannesburg, Soweto, Germiston and on the East Rand, on Sundays and Fridays between 16:00 and 23:59. Under no circumstance should officers render official services alone. When they are on duty they should always be in pairs or more. Between 16:00 and 23:59, it should also be compulsory for those on official duty to wear protective clothing. Commanders should update all members when shifts change to prepare the members coming on shift to alert them for possible attacks. Security measures should be upgraded regularly. During these parades the younger members, especially the constables, should be made aware that they are the most likely to be victims of these attacks.

- These members should be trained to be on the alert (generally speaking), particularly when they approach suspect persons and vehicles.

- Noncommissioned officers should be trained regarding their legal right to defend themselves by shooting when they are under attack. Lectures on these rights should be given at least once a month.

- Special precautions which could outwit possible attacks should be taken by patrol cars.

- Serious consideration should be given to the revision of the SWAT training to make it an effective tool in training officials against these assailants. SWAT training should still be part of the basic training. Officers with practical experience should be used for this training. Officers who have survived attacks, for example, could be asked to provide some of this training. Shooting practice should be done at least each month and at every station or unit. Members should be trained to draw weapons swiftly in dangerous situations.

The content of the SWAT course should be revised on an ongoing basis. Members of the Flying Squad, Internal Stability Unit and the Dog Unit, which are usually at high risk of attack, could be asked for advice on aspects of the syllabus. Short revision courses should be presented on a monthly basis. To enhance continual preparedness, self-defence techniques, and tactical skills to be used during traps, should be included.

- The station commanders should see to it that all their staff and not only those who were attacked, should be regularly informed of what is being done to protect them against attacks. They (and their families) should also be informed about the precautions. The station commanders should also be involved in the therapy of those members who have been under attack.

- Serious attention should be given to counselling after such incidents, because many said it had not taken place. Counselling should be re-evaluated and presented in such a way that it is viewed as a normal activity.

- The display of sympathy and helpfulness by colleagues and superiors shed some light on the commendable camaraderie experienced by police officers.

- The SAPS should look into the suggestions made by these victims and take appropriate steps. Consideration should be given to establishing a committee (consisting of police members and informed members of the public) whose task it would be to assist these victims in whatever way possible.

- It should be ensured that protective clothing is distributed according to requirements.

- The central government should also look into these suggestions and take the necessary steps. The government officials should consider voicing positive sentiments about the police services as an ongoing priority.

- Community leaders should be informed about the suggestions of these victims and they should be encouraged to liaise with the SAPS and central government to bring about the appropriate changes. Greater visibility in policing, and better liaison with the public they are serving, should also be encouraged.

- Another research project, based on qualitative techniques, to do in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a random sample of these victims should be undertaken. The aim should be to gather explanatory data which can be used to improve the preventative measures.

- Special precautions should be taken in the display of personal service pistols. Different ways of carrying these weapons should be looked into to make them less visible.

- All members who perform service should be issued with protective clothing.

- Consideration should be given to effect some changes to the Criminal Procedures Act. These could, for example, include giving more power to police officers, allowing them to draw weapons under certain conditions, without the risk of being falsely accused of pointing a firearm.

**In closing**

From the conclusion it is clear that attacks on
police officers are indeed a serious matter. There are many interacting factors regarding assailants and victims. The victims seem to be unsure of many aspects regarding the attacks on them. This might have a detrimental effect on their performance and motivation. Despite this, they gave a great deal of practical advice as to how these attacks can be minimised in future. Based on the findings and their suggestions, some recommendations were also made regarding training to prevent this crime from continuing freely.

If the research which has been recommended in this paper is undertaken promptly, it could assist to a very great degree in meeting the challenge at present being put to the SAPS by the criminal elements.

Bibliography


