

Members call it discrimination

All-black police unit opposed

By Ken O. Botwright
Globe Staff

The men of a new, all-black Boston police strike force began work reluctantly last night in the crime-plagued Roxbury-Dorchester area, after strongly protesting that their selection to the unit was "an unconstitutional act of racial discrimination."

And Daniel J. Sweeney, chairman of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Assn., vowed his organization would "take every step necessary, including court action, to have this thing stopped."

Sweeney represented 24 members of the special detachment of the Tactical Patrol Force — created earlier in the day by Police Comr. Edmund

L. McNamara — who reported for their first rollcall at Division 2 in Roxbury. He voiced their protests to their black commanding officer, Deputy Supt. Herbert Craigwell, who had been transferred suddenly to his new duties from the police community affairs department.

McNamara formed the 34-man strike force on recommendations of Jack E. Robinson, president of the Boston Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and other black leaders alarmed at four murders in their area in the past week. The murders brought to 100 the city's total for the year.

Robinson hailed the move as "a

truthful and favorable beginning . . . to a reliable working relationship with the police." He also said he hoped the new unit would help erase years of mistrust between black citizens and police.

The black patrolmen and detectives named to the unit reported for rollcall at 6:30 p.m., accompanied by Sweeney, patrolmen association attorney Robert Wise and other association members. They asked two black sergeants to leave their guardroom while they heatedly aired their grievances with Craigwell.

Sweeney emerged from the guardroom and spoke to a waiting reporter.

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Black officers object to strike force, call it bias

★ CRIMES

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"The men are angry and we are angry because an unconstitutional act of racial discrimination has been imposed on them. We don't want this kind of thing in the police force. Black or white, we're all police officers first.

"The black officers proved this once before during the 1968 riots in Roxbury when they were asked to go into the Grove Hall area as a unit. They refused then, to their everlasting credit."

Wise said that the assignment of men to an all-black unit "is unconstitutional because the city can't discriminate against men because of their

color." He said the creation of the special unit violated the US Constitution, Massachusetts law, and the patrolmen's contract with the City of Boston.

Sweeney said men assigned to the unit who make up more than half the 64 blacks in the 2742-man police department — had been abruptly transferred from other duties all over the city. Some who reported for rollcall had already worked all day, and others were called in on days off.

"But they'll do what they're told because they're good police officers," he said. "And they'll keep doing their jobs while we take this thing up with Comr. McNamara."

Craigwell, a tall, 46-

year-old officer with 20 years on the force, came out of the guardroom looking flustered and said: "I guess things seldom work out as they're planned."

He said the men had been assigned to their duties and would perform them "until further notice." He declined to comment on the mens' protests, except to say:

"I'm caught in the middle. I've got a job to do.

"I wasn't consulted about this, any more than they were. I was just told, 'You're in command of this new outfit.'"

Robinson, state Rep. Royal E. Lilling, of Roxbury, former NAACP president Kenneth G. Scott and other

black leaders conferred with the police commissioner yesterday morning before McNamara announced the formation of the black strike force.

Robinson called on the Dorchester-Roxbury community "to give this force 100 percent support and help to eradicate the criminal scourge from our community."

Meanwhile, Edmund J. White, 41, of Callender Street, Dorchester, was arraigned in court charged with committing the city's 100th murder this year. He was accused of slaying Robert Patterson, 23, also of Callender street, who died in Boston City Hospital Thursday of injuries allegedly suffered in a building owned by White. Police believe Patterson was

beaten with a 40-pound, wooden meat cutting block found in White's apartment.

Detectives also continued to investigate the unsolved killing of Harvey L. Horsley, 48, of Kerwin street, Dorchester, who was shot to death near a bus stop on his way to work Wednesday morning.

The management of Dexter Beef Co., where

Horsley had worked 19 years, announced the formation of a fund to aid the murdered foreman's widow and 14 children.

Checks may be made out to the Harvey Lee Horsley Memorial Fund and mailed to the Dexter Beef Co., 83 New Market sq., Boston, 02118.

Another fund, "The Harvey Lee Horsley Memorial Fund," has been established by the National Shawmut Bank of Boston at its Mattapan Branch, 1617 Blue Hill av. Contributions may be made at any of Shawmut's 35 offices.



PRESS CONFERENCE—James Loving (left) and Jack E. Robinson of NAACP listen as Comr. McNamara addresses newsmen. (Globe photo by Sam Masotta)