

KENT STATE SHOOTINGS

BACKGROUND: KENT STATE

- Public University
- Established in 1910
- Located in Kent Ohio
- One of the larger Universities in Ohio



BACKGROUND: PROTESTS



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- In 1968, President Nixon promised the nation that he would begin winding down the Vietnam War
- “Peace with honor”

BACKGROUND: PROTESTS

- Initially kept his word
- But, in April it was announced on live television that the United States would be invading Cambodia
- Caused public outcry across the nation



MAY 1ST (FRIDAY)

- Students at Kent State held a peaceful anti-war protest
- Planned another protest for Monday the 4th
- Later that day students out at the local bars restarted the protest on the Kent city streets.

MAY 1ST (FRIDAY)

- In response, the mayor of Kent (LeRoy Satrom) called in all available police to contain the demonstrators
 - Also closed the bars, causing more people to join the protests
 - As time went on the protest increasingly more violent; bonfires, blocked traffic, and throwing rocks and bottles
 - Police eventually used teargas to push the protesters back to the Campus
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MAY 2ND (SATURDAY)

- Kent Mayor meets with advisors and National Guard representatives



- On Campus, the ROTC building was set on fire and burned to the ground
- Decision was made to ask Governor Rhodes for National Guard assistance
- Fearful of rumors that revolutionaries were in the crowds

MAY 3RD (SUNDAY)

- By Sunday morning over 1000 Guardsmen were on the campus
- Beautiful and warm day, students chatting with the Guardsmen



MAY 3RD (SUNDAY)

- Ohio Governor James Rhodes flew into Kent State to see the situation
- Made several inflammatory statements
- Called the protestors: “the worst kind of people in America”
- Decision was made to ban Monday’s rally

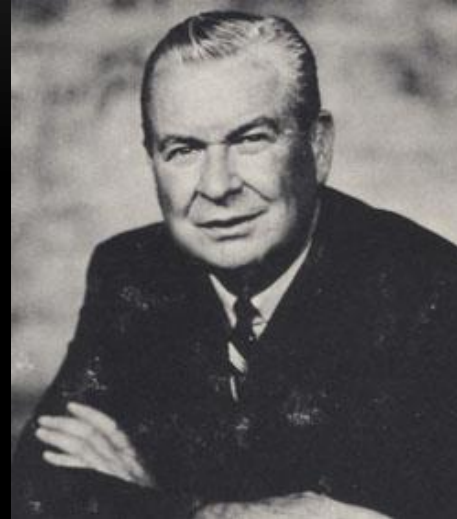


Photo © Howard Ruffner

MAY 4TH (MONDAY)

- University distributed leaflets informing students that the protest had been banned



- Rally was held anyway, but now against the National Guard presence on the campus
- University and National Guard leaders got on bullhorns and ordered students to disperse

MAY 4TH (MONDAY)

- Guardsmen were ordered to lock and load their weapons
- Began to march across the commons, intending to push the students back
- Inadvertently got separated and trapped in a sea of students/protestors



MAY 4TH (MONDAY)

- 28 Guardsmen suddenly opened fire
- Most fired into the air, but some fired into the crowd
- 4 students were killed, 9 wounded



MAY 4TH (MONDAY)



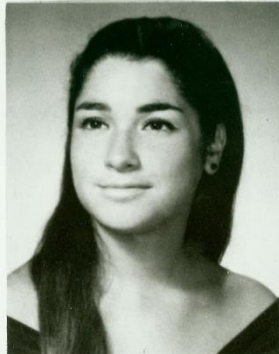
ALLISON B. KRAUSE



WILLIAM K. SCHROEDER



JEFFREY G. MILLER



SANDRA L. SCHEUER



REACTION TO THE SHOOTING

- Nation was sent into an uproar
- Kent State was closed for the semester
- Hundreds of other colleges around the country were closed
- Nixon (and many in the nation) blamed the protestors
- Guardsmen claimed they were acting in self defense, later proven by the FBI to be false
- A week later 100,000 people gathered in Washington D.C. to protest the invasion of Cambodia
- When he heard of the tragedy Neil Young wrote the song "Ohio"