

# KENT STATE: Chronology of Events, May 1-4, 1970

## May 1

On Friday, May 1, students organized a demonstration to protest the invasion of Cambodia. A copy of the Constitution was buried to symbolize its "murder." A second meeting was called for noon, Monday, May 4.



On Friday evening, warm weather, drinking and indignation over the invasion

of Cambodia resulted in a crowd which moved toward the center of town breaking some windows. Police met and dispersed the crowd at the intersection of Main and Water streets. The Kent city mayor viewed the scene, heard rumors of a radical plot, declared a state of emergency and telephoned the governor in Columbus for assistance. A National Guard officer was immediately dispatched. Bars were closed by local authorities and hundreds of people were forced into the streets and herded toward the campus with tear gas from riot-gearred police. The town was quiet by 2:30 a.m.

## May 2



On Saturday, students assisted with the downtown cleanup. Rumors concerning radical activities were widespread and threats to merchants confirmed the fears of some townspeople. University officials obtained an injunction prohibiting damage to buildings on campus. Notice of this injunction appeared in leaflets distributed by the Office of Student Affairs.

Shortly after 8:00 p.m., over one thousand persons surrounded the barracks housing the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps on campus and a few managed to set the building afire. Firemen left the scene after hoses were punctured and cut open, unable to extinguish the blaze. By midnight, the National

Guard cleared the campus, forcing students and non-students into dormitories, where many spent the night.

### May 3

On Sunday there was a deceptively calm city and campus, occupied by National Guardsmen. Meetings produced a number of conflicting perceptions, resulting in misunderstandings among state, local and University officials. A deluge of sightseers added to the problems. Near dusk, a crowd gathered on the Commons at the Victory Bell (a bell ordinarily rung after athletic victories). The crowd failed to disperse. At 9:00 p.m., the Ohio Riot Act was read and tear gas was fired.



The demonstrators reassembled at the intersection of East Main and Lincoln streets, blocking traffic. They believed that officials would speak to them, but no one arrived. The crowd became hostile and at 11:00 p.m. the Riot Act was read again, tear gas was used and a number of people -- guardsmen and demonstrators -- were injured in the confusion.

The confrontation of Sunday night caused antagonism and resentment among all parties. Classes resumed on Monday. Demonstrators were determined to hold the rally at noon, even if prohibited. The National Guard resolved to disperse any assembly.



### May 4

By noon May 4, two thousand people had gathered in the vicinity of the Commons. Many knew that the rally had been banned. Others, especially commuters, did not know of this prohibition. Chants, curses and rocks answered an order to disperse. Shortly after noon, tear gas canisters were fired. The gas, blowing in the wind, had little effect. The guard moved forward with fixed bayonets, forcing demonstrators to retreat. Reaching the crest of the hill by Taylor Hall, the guard moved the demonstrators even farther to a nearby athletic practice field. Once on the practice field, the

guard recognized that the crowd had not dispersed and that the field was fenced on three sides. Tear gas was traded for more rocks and verbal abuse.



The guardsmen then retraced their line of march. Some demonstrators followed as close as 20 yards, but most were between 60 and 75 yards behind the guard. Near the crest of Blanket Hill, the guard turned and 28 guardsmen fired between 61 and 67 shots in 13 seconds toward the parking lot. Four persons lay dying and nine wounded. The closest casualty was 20 yards and the farthest was almost 250 yards away. All 13 were students at Kent State University. The four students who were killed were Jeffrey Miller, Allison Krause, William Schroeder and Sandra Scheuer. The nine wounded students were Joseph Lewis, John Cleary, Thomas Grace, Alan Canfora, Dean Kahler, Douglas Wrentmore, James Russell, Robert Stamps, and Donald MacKenzie. Dean Kahler was permanently paralyzed from his injury.

Disbelief, fright and attempts at first aid gave way quickly to anger. A group of two hundred to three hundred demonstrators gathered on a slope nearby and were ordered to move. Faculty members were able to convince the group to disperse.

A University ambulance moved through the campus making the following announcement over a public address system: "By order of President White, the University is closed. Students should pack their things and leave the campus as quickly as possible." Late that afternoon, the county prosecutor obtained an injunction closing the University indefinitely. Normal campus activities did not resume until the summer session.

