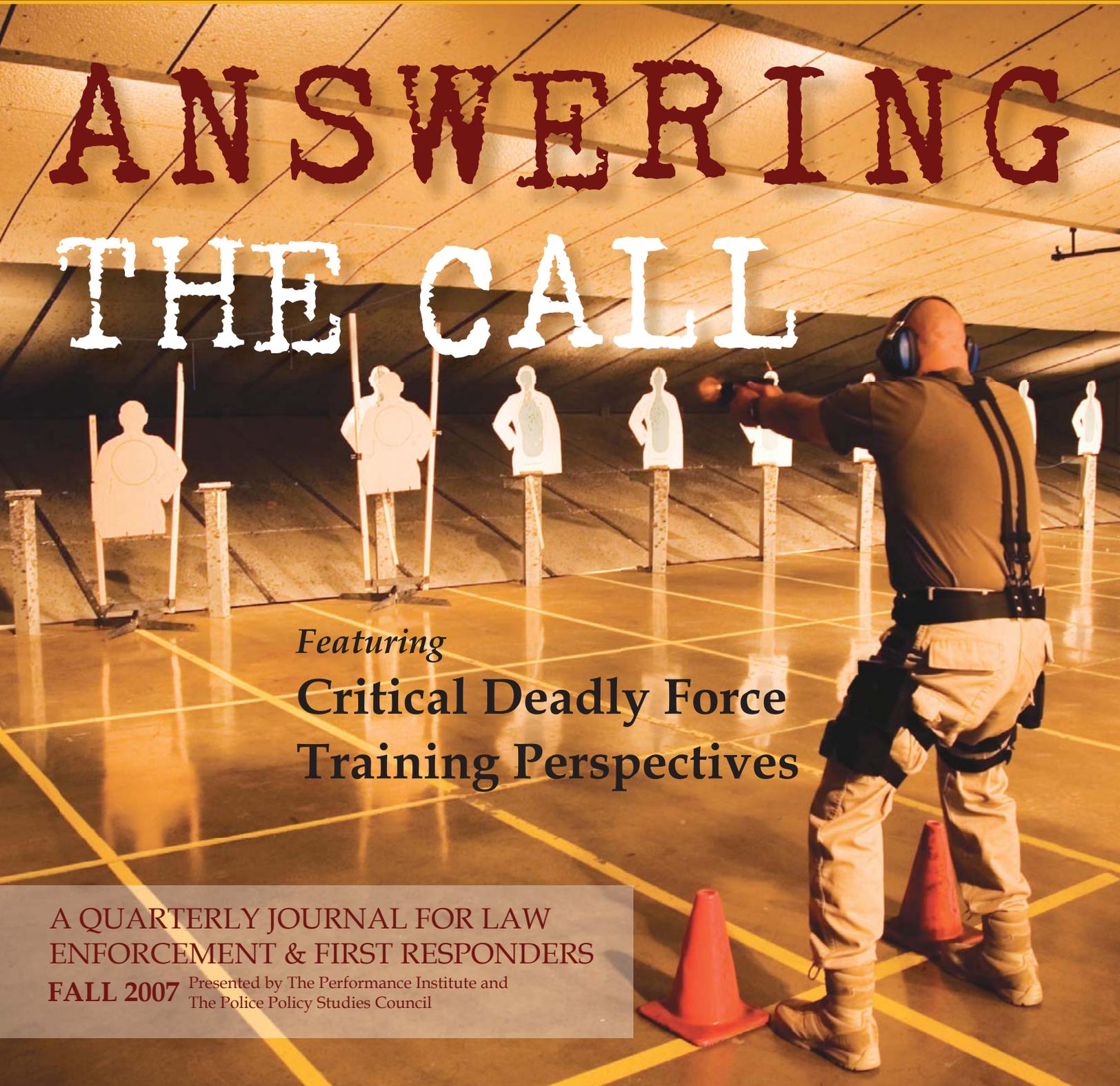




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Featuring
**Critical Deadly Force
Training Perspectives**

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Cover Story:

Critical Deadly Force Training Perspectives

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Colleague,

First responder agencies across the country are facing severe personnel shortages. Senior officers from the baby boomer generation are retiring in droves. Many eligible candidates are entering the military instead of first responder fields due to the incentive packages and other benefits first responder agencies cannot match. Fewer individuals are leaving the military, generally a good recruiting resource for first responders. Salaries for entry level positions are not particularly attractive in many communities. The work is seen as dangerous and unappreciated. In many communities, first responder agencies have a major image problem.

In San Diego, America's sixth largest city, the police department has approximately 200 vacancies they are seeking to fill. The Atlanta Police Department is short 130 officers. According to the Pennsylvania Fire Services Institute, there were 270,000 firefighters in Pennsylvania in the 1970s and now there are only 100,000.

Agencies should not raise the white flag and concede defeat in the recruitment process. There are several tactics we have identified to assist first responder agencies in dealing with their recruitment issues. One great tactic to attract the diminishing pool of military personnel is to build awareness of the Apprenticeship/On the Job training program available through the G.I. Bill. First responder personnel can earn up to \$935 per month while they are receiving training. The program offers monthly cash payments for approved training programs in lieu of formal schooling. The payments are in addition to full officers' pay. The majority of those leaving the military either don't utilize this benefit or don't use it to its furthest extent.

Agencies must also reach out to young people in order to meet their staffing needs. The values, interests and principles of these candidates often vary greatly from what the elder members of a department expect. Agencies must develop an understanding of the difference in mindset between the two generations. It is essential to appeal to new recruits without lowering departmental standards, and eliminate the inter-generational communication issues that often hinder recruitment efforts.

Two great methods for reaching out to younger people are to engage in community outreach and marketing programs and to bring in youth volunteers. Community outreach in all segments of the jurisdiction should help to put a human face on the agency, and improve goodwill and communication between the responder community and the citizens. Establishing two-way communication will enable community members to feel more empowered and engaged, and more interested in careers within the field. Bringing in youth volunteers for ride-alongs and other support such as citizens' patrols, administrative support, office staffing and technical services provides a variety of potential recruiting benefits. These types of programs relieve some of the current staffing needs, allowing personnel more time to be working on their mission instead of administration. They also build critical and essential skills in the young people, skills that will give them an advantage in securing permanent employment in the agency. Lastly, they provide education for the youth involved as to the responsibilities of the position, which will help lead them towards choosing a first responder career.

The Performance Institute and Police Policy Studies Council work with law enforcement agencies from across the country. Almost every agency says it needs more money, resources, and personnel to effectively achieve its mission. While we can't provide the money or the personnel, we do strive to be a forum of tips and tactics from successful agencies on how to deal with critical first responder issues, from recruiting to grants to homeland security. We hope these free or inexpensive to implement tips will help your agency manage its recruiting shortages. If you would like to speak to an agency successfully implementing any of these tactics, please contact me at Shioji@PerformanceWeb.org.

This Journal does not assume itself to provide all the answers. But Answering the Call is founded upon the basic principle that every additional piece of knowledge and information available to the first responder community will improve their ability to keep America safe and achieve their mission.

Sincerely,



Amy Shioji, The Performance Institute

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ANSWERING THE CALL

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Concerns Should be High over Agricultural Terrorism

As we grow further removed from September 11, 2001, there is a compulsion from lawmakers and communities to relax a little on terrorism preparedness. Though defenses and preparations for hard targets such as nuclear plants, military bases, and landmarks will remain in place, arrangements for so-called 'soft targets', like schools, public transit, and high traffic public areas, have slowly diminished. Agriculture targets are a key focus for terrorism experts, as concerns regarding e coli and other contaminants can easily cause widespread panic and concern. Additionally, large-scale agriculture operations and distribution networks can quickly spread taint-

ed grains or other materials across wide expanses of the country. Agriculture represents approximately 13 percent of our nation's gross domestic product and thus any attack could seriously cripple the US economy and many, many jobs.

These agricultural targets have been given relatively little attention in American terrorism preparations at the national, state and even local level. Agriculture targets are spread across the United States, often in remote and rural locations. Much production takes place in the Midwest, far from the major urban centers that get the majority of attention from the press and lawmakers. These targets are also often spread out over large expanses, making comprehensive



preparations prohibitively expensive and nearly impossible to maintain and properly oversee.

Despite these difficulties and challenges, it is essential that more attention be paid to these types of assets. First responder agencies must now undergo risk and threat assessments on agriculture targets, develop specific response plans to a variety of attack scenarios, and develop preparedness initiatives specific to agriculture. This is currently a critical weak link in our nation's emergency preparedness grid.

Fusion Centers Critical to Intelligence Sharing

Fusion centers are terrorism prevention and response centers. Their purpose is to create a conduit for information sharing, either between federal level agencies or between the federal government and state and local first responder agencies. They are collaborative efforts of multiple agencies to provide resources, expertise and/or information to the center with the goal of maximizing all involved parties' ability to detect, prevent, apprehend and respond to criminal and terror-



ist activity. Specifically, their main two function areas are to compile, blend, analyze and disseminate first responder and/or homeland security information and support efforts to anticipate, identify and prevent criminal and terrorist activity.

According to Congressional Quarterly (November 28, 2006), "state and regional fusion centers have become a central part of the administration's counterterrorism agenda." Secretary Chertoff has designated the Office of Intelligence and Analysis

with the Department of Homeland Security to spearhead the creation, maintenance and success of fusion centers across the US. The Department is committed to providing both tools and resources to state and local fusion centers to enhance their capabilities and build connections between all centers, with the goal of creating a national information network to fight terrorism and crime.

Currently, there are 12 DHS officers deployed in 12 fusion centers with 8 more scheduled to deploy this year. Next year, a total of 35 officers will be deployed to 35 sites nationwide. To take advantage of this valuable resource of time, manpower, and expertise please contact Robert Riegle at 202-282-9423 or by email at Robert.riegle@dhs.gov.

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Building and Maintaining A CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN



When a disaster or incident occurs, first responders will be there to risk their lives to ensure public safety. First responders will respond to the incident, alert the public, deal with the aftermath, and be busy around the clock with incident management and response. The public takes this for granted and sleeps well knowing there are others to answer the call.

But what about prolonged incidents, where supplies and essentials run scarce or run out? What services and functions should be kept running, and which can be interrupted or stopped during the

incident? How can the government and first responder agencies maintain leadership structures, communication and operations in a variety of conditions?

All of these questions must be addressed, as do a variety of other issues that range from the essential to the seemingly mundane, from maintaining a command staff to ensuring there are enough batteries for first responder flashlights or sufficient fuel resources for emergency vehicles. Regardless of the specific need, one thing is crystal clear – the time to figure out and plan for such contingencies is prior to the incident. As in home emer-

gency preparation, it is too late to buy food and water if you wait until after the hurricane strikes. Jurisdictions and first responder agencies must conduct a detailed self-analysis and make rational, sober decisions to be able to function for a minimum of 30 days.

The first step towards the development of a quality Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan is to assess your entire agency to determine which staff, materials, procedures and equipment are required for operations, and ranking those that are not to determine what should be maintained and operational given varying levels of resources. Review

Building and Maintaining a Continuity of Operations Plan (cont'd)



flow and management charts for the agency and develop contingency plans for a variety of scenarios.

Make sure to focus on detail. Things like batteries and fuel seem small, but think of the last time the power went out in your house and you didn't have batteries for your flashlight, and you'll understand. Keeping your responders happy is also essential – making sure they are paid despite a crisis or are informed about pay procedures can make people working around the clock a little more comfortable. Detailing communication plans so responders can communicate with family members and loved ones is also critical in a crisis situation, as duty and family are very difficult to choose between.

Create contact lists and supplier plans to provide for your essential needs. Develop pre-existing arrangements for essential supplies with your vendors or providers, and develop additional contingency plans with multiple backup vendors and providers. If there is some kind of disruption with your headquarters, develop a plan for an alternative base of operations.

Once you have created your plan and worked on as many conceivable scenarios as possible, make sure you disseminate the plan to everyone, and make sure they understand it. Conduct both tabletop and actual scenarios that focus on your COOP plan as well as on terrorism or disaster drills, as they will most likely be put into effect at the same time. Put yourself and your agency in the best position possible to successfully answer the call!

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Surviving the Nightshift

By Thomas J. Aveni, MSFP

THE POLICE POLICY STUDIES COUNCIL

Part IV of Six-Part Series

Low-light training has finally begun to garner the interest and concern that it has warranted for many years. While this has been a very positive development, it has also entailed some cause for concern. Occupational training pertinent to working under adverse light conditions isn't a matter of "one-size-fits-all," though that seems to be how many have packaged and marketed it in recent years. This installment of the SNS series will attempt to examine recent trends in low light training and then make suggestions regarding how shortcomings might be addressed.

"Violent Encounters"

The recent release of US DOJ publication entitled "Violent Encoun-

ters" offered some useful perspectives salient to working under adverse light conditions, and to what degree occupational risk might be exacerbated. I had heard that this publication offered documentation of officers getting shot with their flashlights "on" and was really enthused about what this document might entail.

Upon receipt of the publication I began sifting through the various sections of it until I came to "Tour of Duty at Time of Assault." This study interviewed a handful of officers who survived their encounters and also interviewed the assailants of each officer. This publication does NOT represent a "random sampling" of thousands or even hundreds of officers assaulted. To accomplish what it set out to do, it had to "cherry-pick" incidents where both the officer and his assailant were alive to be interviewed after the fact. So, after sifting through 800 incidents of felonious assaults against officers,

the authors of this publication selected 40 incidents involving 50 officers and 43 offenders. This is a far cry from being "science" but it is a useful anecdotal tool.

By time of day, the study breaks down the 40 violent encounters that they've chronicled by time of day;

- 34% Day
- 42% Evening
- 24% Midnight

The publication cites only four incidents in which officers reported using their flashlights to illuminate the scene.

Incident #1

The officer is engaged in a foot pursuit with his flashlight on but then drops his flashlight and continues his pursuit without it. At some point (unspecified) the suspect fired at and struck the officer "numerous times."

Incident #2

Two officers are engaged in a traf-

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fic stop of a lone individual. They are relying heavily on the illumination of their patrol car to allow them to see into the suspect's car. The passenger side of the car was reportedly too dark to see into and the officer approaching the passenger-side used his flashlight to illuminate that area. He was able to see the driver holding a handgun before the driver could initiate an assault with that weapon.

Incident #3

An officer engages in a foot pursuit that eventually leads him into the darkened rear yard of a residence. When the officer scanned the area with his flashlight the suspect fired at the officer and hit him in the chest. The suspect, when interviewed later, said that he "fired at the flashlight."

Incident #4

An officer engages in a foot pursuit with his flashlight on. He loses sight of the subject in a darkened courtyard. At some

point, unspecified in the incident narrative, the suspect shoots the officer in the leg and chest. He later says the officer was "lit up" by the flashlight, and "that's how I noticed him." The assailant also alluded to part of the officer's uniform being reflective, saying he saw the word "police" in a reflective area of the officer's uniform. (this sounds like the officer had a reflective strip on his jacket, as many police jackets do. If so, that is confusing, since most reflective "POLICE" strips are on the back of the jacket and the brief narrative of this incident gives no detail about direction of fire).

What can we take from this?

Unfortunately, this publication leaves us with many more adverse light questions than what it answered. From the brief narratives provided there is no evidence that any of the (assaulted) officers attempted to use cover or concealment in conjunction with the use of their flashlights. We don't know if they used their flashlights

intermittently (as opposed to constant-on) or whether they were holding their flashlights close to their bodies when shot (as opposed to holding their lights overhead or out to their sides). However, we do have some material to work with.....

Indoor vs. Outdoor Scenarios

From the publication just referenced ("Violent Encounters"), we finally have documentation of two officers being shot while they had their lights activated. However, and perhaps more importantly, we must note that each of these incidents occurred OUTDOORS and AFTER each officer lost sight of the subjects that they were chasing on foot. And, we have an officer being shot after he dropped and discarded his flashlight. And, we have an officer on a traffic stop that foiled an attack because he had his light on.

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There are certainly some training implications embedded in all of this, though we'd probably find more if the narratives of each incident were more detailed. What we might venture to discern is that when a flashlight wasn't used, one officer was shot. When it was used, two officers were saved from an attack on a car stop. When two officers were carelessly chasing suspects with their lights on, each in outdoor settings, they were shot.

It must be emphasized that the majority of low-light confrontations are OUTDOOR scenarios - a point that seems to have been lost on many trainers who focus all or most of their low-light training upon building search-type scenarios. Since many low-light trainers have SWAT or military backgrounds, they usually train others from their own specialized frame-of-reference. This often does a disservice to the patrol officers that they train. Patrol officers should be given task-oriented training that best reflects what they do most on the street - and under what circumstances they routinely find themselves severely challenged; vehicular stops, pedestrian stops, "suspicious persons" investigations, field interviews, etc. Unfortunately, almost of all of such concerns are given little or no priority by many police trainers.

When addressing indoor scenarios we might still find ourselves taking a very different approach than what many SWAT and military trainers might dictate. While I prefer leaving my light on when involved in indoor scenarios, I'm willing to concede that there may be times when it isn't appropriate. In outdoor

scenarios, the nature of the call and the topography will likely dictate specific flashlight tactics and they will likely have the flashlight "off" when the light's capabilities are dwarfed by the area that needs to be illuminated. When indoors with light directed away from you and toward likely threat vectors, it is more often an advantage to have your flashlight activated.

Another deviation from prevalent low-light doctrine that we tend to address is whether or not to activate light fixtures indigenous to the indoor environment that you're searching. For many SWAT-type trainers, this approach might seem sacrilegious - it's just not

Leveling the playing field by illuminating everything alters the fundamental psychology of the scenario - the hunter now becomes the hunted.

high-speed enough! If you can flip a light switch within an enclosed structure that would enable you to see everything within that structure, why not do it? Let's face it, none of us wants to walk blindly into a high-risk environment and yet we also know that when we

activate our flashlight we're giving away our general location.

The SWAT-Ninja trainer doesn't like the "level playing field" approach, which is what turning on indoor lighting is all about. They believe that as long as we maintain darkness and use our flashlights selectively, we maintain the upper-hand. Unless officers have had exceptional training in this realm, the SWAT-Ninja approach represents a leap of faith for most officers. In a darkened environment, bad guys have an exacerbated "home field advantage." Leveling the playing field by illuminating everything alters the fundamental psychology of the scenario - the hunter now becomes the hunted. The ambush-in-waiting has now been uncloaked. That's not to say that we've eliminated all risk by illuminating the entire structure. But in doing so we've mitigated some of the risk of not seeing someone waiting to do us harm, and we've also mitigated much of the risk associated with making the all-too-common low-light "error" of shooting someone that wasn't armed.

We must note that activating indoor structural lighting isn't always a viable option. Most commercial and residential structures have area-lighting fixtures that, when activated, only provide illumination of one room at a time. While that benefit can be substantial, officers must recognize if and when adjacent rooms and hallways (not yet illuminated areas) afford a residual refuge for potential adversaries. Be prepared to use a hybrid approach (flashlight and structural lighting in combination) when the situation dictates it.

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Validating Low Light Tactics

Tactically speaking, we all wish to benefit from compromising an adversary's vision while enhancing our own in a high-risk confrontation. Let that be our common ground throughout this discussion. I should mention that I don't malign tactics without offering something more constructive as an alternative. I've been teaching low light courses for more than 16 years and instructor level (low light) courses for more than 11. Having said this, there are many tactics that I've had to trash along the way. The evolution of what and how to teach has had these stimuli;

1. Trial and error in force-on-force training
2. Student input about past lessons learned
3. Input from vision and perception specialists on our staff
4. In-depth analysis of available gunfight data
5. Review of LEOKA data
6. Review of criminal victimization patterns (UCR)
7. Review of court decisions that impinge upon "reckless police tactics" (these are sobering)

The dynamic synergy derived from the above process is (unfortunately) not common in most police training circles. So, contrary to what some might think, the litmus test isn't merely what we derive from force-on-force training. The real crucible comes from the street, where we acquire a requisite sense of "real-



world" tactical calibration. And from the street we gain much more refined insight about the legalities of what we teach officers to do.

Some low-light trainers will assert that what they teach is "a tactical art form." There's a place for artful adaptation to tactical problems, but know where or when "art" runs contrary to science. Many of the "artful" low-light tactics being taught run contrary to what human vision and cognition will reasonably facilitate. That is most evident in many of the "blip" or "firefly" light techniques being taught to police officers. Intermittent flashlight techniques such as these generally adhere to the belief that one-second "blips" from a flashlight will provide an officer with an

adequate sense of topography of his environment. This "art-form" tends to rely on "residual imagery," whereby a residual image of the landscape remains on the retina for 1-2 seconds after the light is turned off. The sudden over-stimulation and fatiguing of the optic nerve produces a secondary negative image of the same size as the object which produced the "optic fatigue." The location of the image will coincide with the focus of your eyes.

Be mindful of the severe limitations of this phenomenon. It is so transient and the residual imagery so coarse that seldom does it enable more than brief spurts of terrain navigation. For some, especially those untrained in using it skillfully, it may actually

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cause or exacerbate disorientation. It also doesn't generally reliably facilitate threat location and/or identification. But, it gets worse. Combine movement with the fleeting imagery afforded by a split-second flashlight activation and you have the worst of all perceptual worlds.

Case-In-Point: The "Slide-By"

The "slide-by" is a technique used (ostensibly) to afford preliminary visual exploration of a room without actually entering it. It entails having an officer moving briskly across the outside of the doorway while briefly illuminating the inside of the room. If a door slide-by is completed at a brisk rate - a rate brisk enough as to discourage or defeat reactive fire from within the room, it is probably being completed in .5 seconds or less. Therein does the problem lie.....

The most important consideration is that 0.5 seconds generally allows only one visual "fixation." That is, your fixation is exactly where your fovea is pointed at a specific time. In .5 seconds, there is no time to adjust an eye movement to look at something that is not directly in the sightline. When casting this fixation into and across a room of average size, visual acuity (assuming the flashlight is directed there as well) might be limited to a few inches within that room. Considering the fact that, for instance, a typical living-room averages 150+ square feet, a few inches of visual fixation seems to offer little tactical benefit for one's effort and risk. Complicating matters further, perceptual processing is slower under low light conditions.

How much you can "see" along your sightline in 0.5 second depends on lots of factors including;

1. Object contrast/visibility
2. Whether there is much clutter in the scene (most room searches involve clutter!)
3. Whether the scene is static or moving

The eyes "see" some of the scene, the brain says "aha, I know what that is" and fills in the rest.

4. Whether you are static or moving (and you're obviously moving when using a slide-by!)

The most important factor, however, is familiarity. If the scene is familiar, your view might interpret and understand the scene more quickly. This is in part a matter of "filling in the blanks" from memory. In other words, the eyes "see" some of the scene, the brain says "aha, I know what that is" and fills in the rest. This is especially likely to occur under low light conditions where there is ambiguity about much of the scene. A problematic aspect of this phenomenon is that people will frequently report seeing things that aren't really there because the brain has filled them in from memory.

People frequently confuse perception and memory. If the

scene is unfamiliar, people will need a lot longer to "see" it. Or else the brain will treat it as if it is the closest familiar scene (in memory) and completely misunderstand the current landscape.

When performing a "slide-by," how much of the area that you're scouting falls into the "previously familiar with" category? In most police scenarios - the answer is none at all - you're on someone else's turf. In addition, how much of that brief visual fixation will be drawn to furnishings and other large objects in the room? How many shadows will your brief light activation cast in that room to further complicate the fact that you're only getting a .5 second snapshot of the room? Are furnishings and shadows (cast by your flashlight) obscuring vision of your adversary? The list of critical problems is significant, and too complex to discuss here in one post.

Whatever you've learned elsewhere about low light tactics is OK with me. Just understand that what appears and sounds sexy might not be all that it has been purported to be.

Referring back to my earlier view about when low light tactics are either "art or science," don't confuse where one ends and the other is supposed to begin.

Ask yourself; have the tactics that you've been exposed to in the past been mostly "art" and virtually no "science"?

Intuitive and Counter-Intuitive Flashlight Techniques

Another commonly encountered problem in police training circles

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lies within the fact that many flashlight tactics/techniques being taught tend to be fundamentally counter-intuitive. One noted low-light trainer who teaches counter-intuitive flashlight techniques stated, ".....anything can be made intuitive with enough training." Needless to say, that is a direct contradiction of the meaning of the word.

INTUITIVE: "Spontaneously derived from or prompted by a natural tendency."

Unfortunately, many of the traditional "tube-type" (cylindrical) flashlights don't lend themselves to intuitive application. They don't point naturally and they tend to substantively encumber the hand grasping it, making two-handed shooting less effective. One approach, viable at ranges within 7 yards, is to fire the handgun one-handed while deploying the flashlight with the off-hand. Another approach is embodied in the use of a more intuitive flashlight design that will point naturally and not encumber the non-shooting hand (see the product review for the "Firstlight Liberator" in the September 2007 issue of Answering the Call).

Parting Analysis

Gunfight statistics have historically suggested that police lack sufficient confidence in their ability to shoot with flashlights. With fewer than 2% of police gunfights involving flashlights, much can be implied but little can be proven. However, traditional flashlight techniques have always been part of the problem - as has been traditional police flashlight design. The two problems go hand-in-hand, no pun intended.



The low light dash-cam videos that I've been accumulating have been corroborating the statistics. If the flashlight happens to be pre-deployed - it gets used in the gunfight. When flashlights are used in gunfights the techniques that we see are often blatant distortions of traditional flashlight techniques. The arms/hands are punched out (toward the threat) but the hands often don't come together. I have seen exceptions to this and they tend to be the more egregious "bunch-shooting" incidents that I have video of. In such cases, individual officers seemed unstressed as they engaged suspects with multiple other officers.

Force-on-force training is an extremely useful training validation tool if structured in ways that help to eliminate or minimize confounding variables. Because FOF training tends to involve scenarios with police trainees being pitted against other police officers (being used as role-players), there is a substantial degree of anticipatory tactical preemption. Police trainees know how police perform car stops, building entries, etc. and they know how police tend to use flashlights.

How important is this? One case-in-point is that we see flashlights getting "shot" in FOF training with some degree of regularity. On the street, we see little or no documentation of this happening. So, we have to be mindful of the situational bias and skew we commonly see in FOF training outcomes.

Conclusion

The status of police low light training must be elevated beyond marketing impulses and individual egos. Being a great and "all-knowing" tactician clearly isn't good enough. As this article was meant to convey, police trainers have to be armed with a thorough understanding of how to seek validation of a broad array of salient training issues. Until then, we'll continue to police in the darkness of poor preparedness.

Tom Aveni recognizes the limitations of trying to exhaustively address low-light policing issues within an article of this length. He also wishes to acknowledge the fact that specialized low light tactics probably shouldn't be addressed in a publication that cannot be restricted to law enforcement personnel. Accordingly, Mr. Aveni welcomes your e-mail inquiries: tom@theppsc.org

CRITICAL DEADLY FORCE TRAINING PERSPECTIVES



By Thomas J. Aveni, MSFP

THE POLICE POLICY STUDIES COUNCIL

Overview

A critical training trend we've witnessed over the last two decades has involved the "trickle-down" effect of tactics and techniques from the SWAT realm to patrol officers. Even mentioning this trend is enough to cause emotional excitement amongst police trainers, as I discovered at an ILEETA Annual Conference in 2006. When this issue was broached during the formal deadly force discussion panel at ILEETA that year, police trainers responded, "Our guys on the street deserve the best tactics we can give them and SWAT tactics are proven tactics."

SWAT tactics are proven, but in what context?

The PPSC "Furtive Movement Project"

Under the auspices of the Police Policy Studies Council, a grant-funded, multi-agency "Furtive Movement" study was just

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completed in Michigan. Full results of this ground-breaking study will be published in the next issue of "Answering the Call." What we can tell you at this time is that nearly half of all officers and deputies that participated in this study shot unarmed suspects in one of three different situational contexts. One of the primary reasons in which this study was undertaken was to observe the "micro issues" salient to the police deadly force decision-making process – a process that few studies have attempted to quantify. Past research in this realm has elucidated the fact that police have been shooting unarmed suspects in as many as 43% of all deadly force incidents.¹ The nagging question that was never answered to anyone's satisfaction is "why" this frequency of "questionable" shootings has persisted. The answers are many, but I'll try to focus upon issues that police trainers can use to mitigate the frequency of this phenomenon.

The "Irresistible Force"

Post-Columbine and post-9/11, law enforcement in the United States has witnessed an "awakening" to the seriousness of so-called "active-shooter" situations. Depending on how we loosely or strictly we define such situations, we're likely to recognize that they are (1) very low on the frequency scale of felonies-in-progress calls but that (2) they generally entail a very high risk of multiple civilian and police casualties.

A great deal of "good" has emanated from this active-shooter awakening. Though such incidents have transcended generations of law enforcement

(the "Texas Tower" incident in Austin {1966}, the LAPD "SLA Shoot-out" {1974}, the San Ysidro McDonalds incident {1984}, and many more), the trend in training and equipping patrol officers to properly respond to active-shooter incidents can probably be best described as a post-Columbine (1999) phenomenon.

Some have characterized this process as a "trickle-down" of SWAT tactics, techniques and weaponry to patrol officers. Surely, we've witnessed the issuance of more AR15/M4 type rifles to patrol

Our guys on the street deserve the best tactics we can give them and SWAT tactics are proven tactics.

officers than ever before, along with a better assortment of armor (ballistic shields, helmets, ceramic Level III plates, etc.), in conjunction with incident-relevant scenario-based training. These are all extremely positive developments in police training – to be sure.

But, what happens when (SWAT) tactics and techniques designed for "proactive" tasks become used for "reactive" tasks?

SWAT personnel, even when responding to crimes-in-progress,

respond with some degree of pre-planning for deployment. Pre-planning, even of a rudimentary nature, tends to minimize risk. With SWAT deployment, cover is generally better utilized, and officers are deployed in "adequate" numbers with assigned tasks and functions. Patrol officers seldom benefit from such pre-deployment preparation and planning. Yes, the active-shooter scenario is now the exception to that rule, but we must again remind ourselves of how infrequent active-shooter deployment scenarios are.

Breaking this issue down further, past empirical research² has suggested that officers use deadly force more frequently in "officer-initiated" type scenarios than in dispatched calls – even when the nature of the incidents (i.e., "man-with-a-gun," "armed-robbery-in-progress," etc.) are the same. Why do officer-initiated calls involve a higher frequency of officers using deadly force? This isn't rocket science. Past research has suggested that patrol officers that stumble upon forcible felonies-in-progress generally do so (1) without a plan, (2) without readily available cover, (3) without readily available backup, (4) without readily available heavy weaponry.

Is a patrol officer trained in quasi-SWAT tactics "better prepared" for a self-initiated confrontation of an armed felony-in-progress? Probably – if his/her firearms and tactical training has adequately instilled competency in essential skills. However, problems arise if officers have only been taught to use a "hammer" and everything he/she encounters begins looking like a "nail."

A case-in-point: A large

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suburban agency uses its tactical team to serve all search/arrest warrants. Tactical team personnel are well-trained and very conscientious. However, they are culturally inculcated to handle all deployments in a similar manner; with their weapons drawn/deployed and pointed in the direction of the subject that the warrant is being served upon. However, even though agency policy is explicit about officers not pointing firearms at anything the officer isn't willing to destroy, the tactical team seems to have its own "flexible" definition of what a "ready gun" position is. The definition of "ready-gun" ranges anywhere from; "Six inches below line-of-sight," to, "The muzzle is pointed down toward the dirt."

As the tactical team is about to be deployed against an individual known to be a docile, well educated man, suspected of engaging in a small-time vice (non-narcotic) operation, it is learned that he (1) doesn't own a firearm and (2) has no prior history of arrests or behavioral problems. As the tactical team is deployed, they storm upon the subject as he stands in his driveway - unarmed and non-threatening in any way. One team member, his handgun aimed at the subject's chest, states that he may have "stumbled" as he approached the subject, causing his handgun to discharge. The subject is struck in the chest by the officer's errant bullet and dies within seconds.

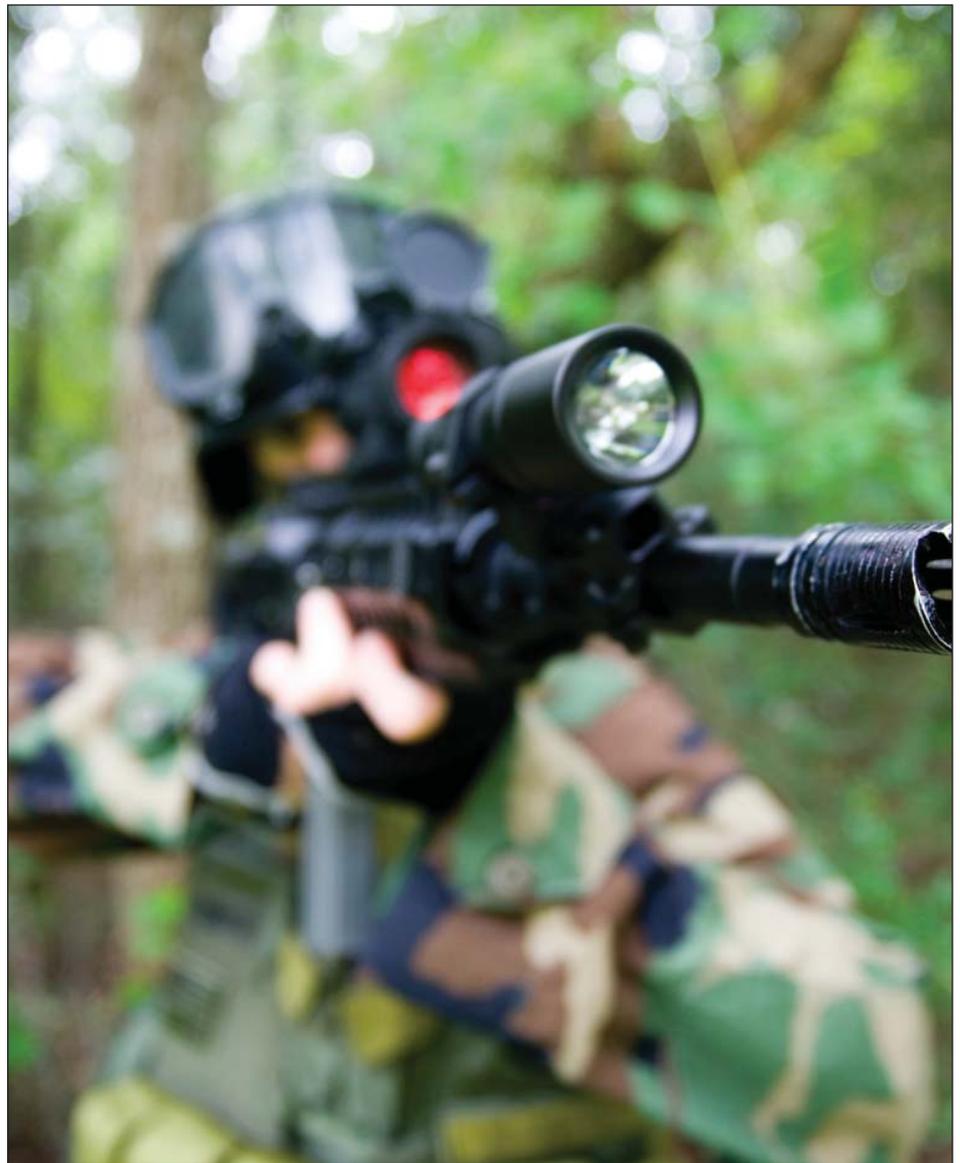
Yes, this incident actually happened, and additional detail is being withheld because litigation is pending. What can we learn from it and other tragedies that are similar?

Lessons That Should Be Applied

What we can take away from this discourse is quite simple; one "size" (tactic/technique) does not fit all police applications. The law enforcement profession has been "seduced" by training vendors that market police training using a heavy emphasis on SWAT imagery; where marketing photos depict everyone in black BDUs, Kevlar helmets, bloused boots, balaclavas

and goggles. There is an important niche for such training but agencies must discern where and when such training has value, and where and when it may do harm.

Reflecting back on our preliminary analysis from our "Furtive Movement" study, almost all of the officers that shot "unarmed/surrendering" suspects did so after "covering-down" with their muzzles pointed directly at the suspect's torso. While this tendency seems to truncate the officer's (deadly force) reaction



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time by about .10 seconds, it also truncates the decision-making process by that same margin. It may very well leave the officer more susceptible to a momentary impulse to shoot - an impulse that might be mitigated with an additional .10 seconds available for "micro-deliberation."

For whatever reason, the "muzzle-heavy" issue highlighted in this article has become a systemic law enforcement problem. Blame SWAT trickle-down, or blame the way police training is marketed but we have no one to blame but ourselves if we don't "firewall" the most highly specialized tactics and techniques so they don't adversely influence patrol officers.

As with everything else in life there are trade-offs in almost everything we do. As police trainers, we strive to assure that such trade-offs are never made where they might impinge upon occupational safety. However, we must constantly remind ourselves that occupational safety is multi-dimensional. Many trainers speak of concern about training being "court-defensible," but the ramifications of the training trickle-down effect of SWAT-to-Patrol must be carefully re-examined. If we don't, we may have some serious explaining to do, under oath, facing people who truly aren't our "peers."

¹ Aveni, T. (2003), Following Standard Operating Procedures, Law & Order, Vol. 51, No. 8, August 2003

² White, M. (2002) Identifying Situational Predictors of Police Shootings, Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, Vol. 25 No. 4, 2002, pp. 726-751



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The CAPS Live-Fire Firearms Training Simulator

By *Thomas J. Aveni, MSFP*
 THE POLICE POLICY STUDIES COUNCIL

When firearms video simulators first appeared in the mid-eighties the attraction was obvious: Making split second decisions that involved firing at live human beings on a video screen was a major step forward from the square-range “Ready on the right.” “Ready on the left.” “Ready on the firing line.” world that had been firearms training up to that point.

As time has progressed simulators have become more and more sophisticated, allowing for all force levels to be integrated. Today, everything from officer presence and voice to impact weapons, aerosol sprays and electric devices can be used in conjunction with or instead of firearms to deal with the situations on the screen.

Officer cover and concealment have been addressed with the addition of air-powered projectiles which can be remotely launched at the person facing the video screen should they leave themselves exposed. The pain penalty from the impact of these projectiles motivates the officer to make use of available cover.

So what could possibly be wrong with technology that permits officers to do so much? In essence

there is nothing wrong with the technology. However, it can have adverse effects if it is used to reduce or replace live-fire training and three-dimensional force-on-force role-playing.

The majority of modern simulator systems rely on weapons that do not fire projectiles. They fire bursts of laser light which are picked up by the simulator’s computer and translated into representations of bullet hits on the screen. While trainees may be fast and accurate with their shot placement and judgment calls when armed with the laser gun, they have no proof that they possess the skills necessary to replicate what they have done with their duty weapon and live ammo. This can have negative repercussions when officers attempt to make shots with live ammo in real situations based solely on what they felt they could do with the laser gun.

The Canadian Academy of Practical Shooting Inc. (CAPS) produces video simulator systems that allow officers to develop the skill and confidence necessary to handle confrontations with their duty guns and ammunition. Their current offering, the CAPS DVD system, is a sound-activated system designed for use with live ammunition and any firearm from handgun to rifle at distances out to 150 yards. The



CAPS motto is simple: Your gun. Your ammo. No excuses.

The CAPS DVD system consists of a projection unit, wooden screen frame covered with a sheet of paper and a control unit which freezes the image on the screen when a pre-programmed number of shots have been fired. The system is delivered with a set of hearing protectors containing speakers. The audio track of the video scenario is broadcast directly to the headset by FM radio, enhancing the realism of the training experience while protecting the trainee’s hearing.

Operation is simple. Using the system control pad the instructor pre-programs the number of shots that the system needs to hear before pausing the action on the screen. A scenario is then selected from the on-screen menu and the run key is pressed. The chosen scenario will play until the proper number of shots have been fired or until the scenario comes to an end, unless the

PRODUCT REVIEW

instructor uses the “Intermediate Weapon” button to pause the scenario should a lesser level of force be employed by the trainee.

If shots have been fired at the screen and the image has frozen,

in daylight. The complete system is surge protected and can run on a small generator if power isn’t available on your range.

The CAPS DVD system can also be used in the classroom with Si-

duction service to create scenarios for them.

Perhaps the most unusual and coveted aspect of all CAPS capabilities lies within its ability to facilitate realistic, practical precision-rifle training. My first exposure to looking through the scope of a police sniper rifle at a caps “sniper scenario” was akin to an epiphany. What the trainee “sees” downrange on the video screen through the optical sighting system is as “real” as real can get in live-fire sniper training. Movement on the part of hostages and hostage-takers is natural, and just as importantly, unpredictable. That element of realism has always been missing in police precision-rifle training. Seventy of the scenarios included with the CAPS system are designed for extended range rifle training. The system actually takes bullet flight time into consideration and permits snipers to take shots out to 150 yards. Once your snipers have trained on this system they’ll insist on incorporating it from that day forward – it’s that valuable.

For more information on the CAPS DVD system you can contact them on their toll-free line at 1-866-559-8591 or visit their web site at www.caps-inc.com

The CAPS motto is simple: Your gun. Your ammo. No excuses.

the review button is pressed. This causes the last five seconds of video to be replayed to show the correlation between the holes in the screen and the location of the suspect or suspects at the time the shots were fired. In replay mode, the system displays the time from the beginning of the potential threat to the time of the trainee’s first shot. This replay can be run in regular speed or slow motion and can be repeated as needed during scenario debriefing. On-screen teaching points in the form of still images are available during the debriefing to enhance the learning experience.

Once the debriefing has been completed, the holes in the screen are patched with white tape and the system is ready for the next scenario selection.

Scenarios can be run in any order and the instructor can select up to five programs and enter them into memory so that all trainees get the same scenarios in the same order.

The CAPS DVD System is highly portable and can be used in indoor or outdoor ranges as long as the projection screen is kept in a darkened area. A simple tent can provide enough darkness for the CAPS system to be used on an outdoor range

munition FX rounds and conversion kits. A nylon screen backstop is supplied for use in the classroom with FX rounds. While CAPS considers classroom training to be “cheating”, this versatility can be of benefit when range availability is an issue or when running Civilian Police Academy programs.

The CAPS DVD System Scenario Library consists of 570 scenarios and they are all included with the system. CAPS also offers custom scenario production services so that scenarios can be tailor-made for the end-user. Recent purchasers of CAPS DVD systems such as Brinks and the Federal Reserve Bank have made use of the CAPS scenario pro-



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THE PARTING SHOT

Thanks for taking the time to read this edition of Answering the Call. We hope you enjoyed the articles, and will use some of the ideas and lessons contained within. We work with first responders from across the country regularly to ensure the most current and essential is delivered through these pages every issue.

We have heard from many of you around the nation, and many of your ideas and suggestions have been used to improve the impact and effectiveness of this publication. We welcome case studies, ideas and input you have, which we will feature in the "Comments from the Field" section. Please send anything you feel your colleagues in the first responder and law enforcement communities will benefit from. To submit your ideas, please contact Amy Shioji at Shioji@PerformanceWeb.org or by mail at:

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Arlington, VA 22201

Answering the Call represents a joint publication of the Performance Institute's Law Enforcement Development Center and the Police Policy Studies Council. For more information about the Performance Institute, upcoming events and training opportunities, please visit www.performanceweb.org. For more information regarding the Police Policy Studies Council and upcoming trainings, please visit www.theppsc.org. The PPSC website also features an interactive forum where you can dialogue with your peers and experts on a wide variety of issues affecting law enforcement and the first response community.

Until next time!

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