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**Survival Training for Law Enforcement Officers
Youth Leadership Program - 9th Session**

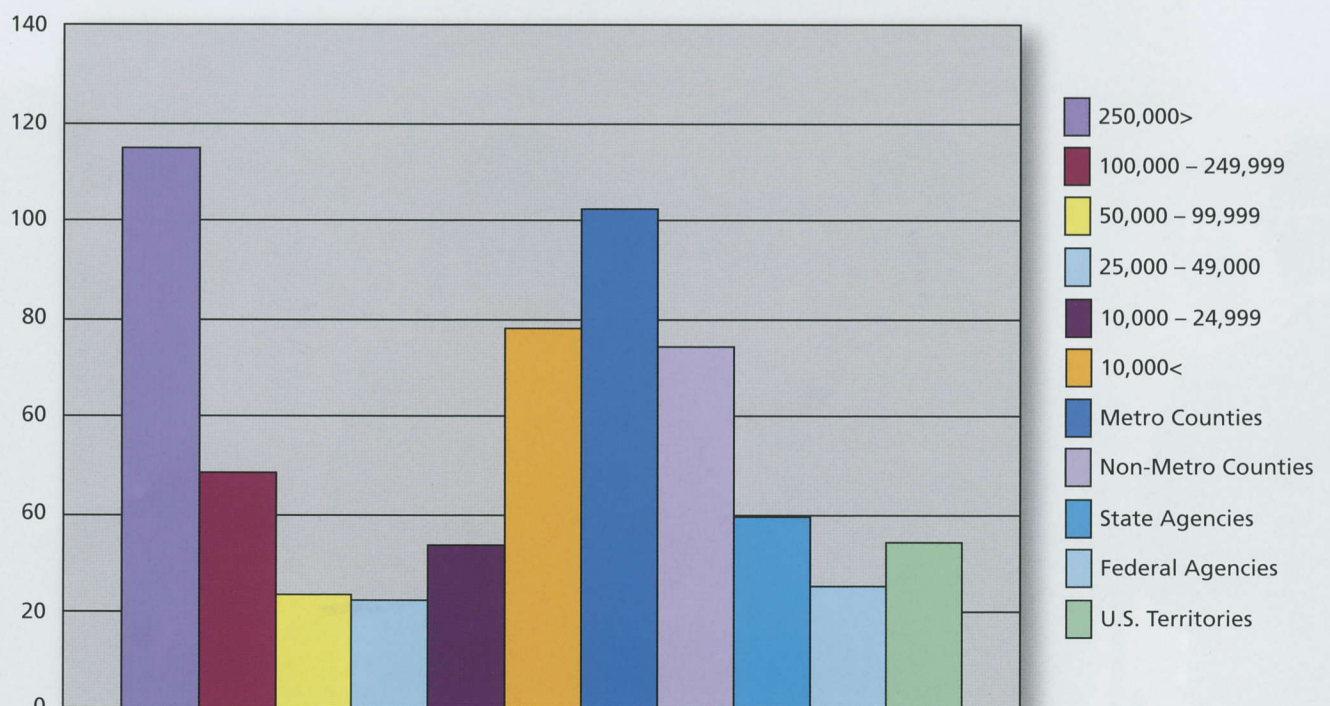
Survival Training for Law Enforcement Officers

by Philip P. Hayden, Ed.D.



Everyday police officers are making arrests of dangerous criminals and are exposed to potentially violent confrontations in the course of their work. Law enforcement is inherently dangerous, and every officer needs to be trained properly in order to safely and effectively perform the tasks associated with their duties. As stated in the U.S. Department of Justice Report, Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (2004), there were 60,054 assaults and 57 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in 50 separate incidents ¹. A review of the statistics contained in this comprehensive report reveals that inexperience was not the major issue in the majority of these incidents. The average age of the officers was 39 with an average of 12 years law enforcement experience ². As an author of curriculum and instructor of safety and survival issues for the past 25 years, I have witnessed valiant efforts by many law enforcement trainers aimed at increased training time and improved quality of the subject content, yet we have not significantly reduced the number of injured and slain officers. We continue to lose too many officers at the hands of violent offenders. Regardless of the officer's agency size (*chart 1*), the country they work in, or the political philosophy, law enforcement officers involved in apprehending criminals are constantly exposed to the risk of potentially life-threatening encounters.

KILLED BY AGENCY SIZE

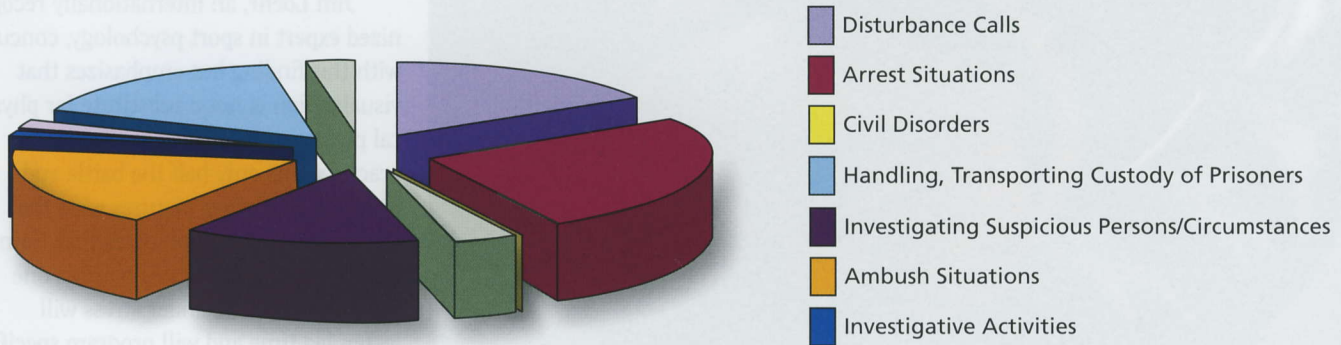


In 1992, at the request of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Behavioral Science Unit at the FBI Academy conducted the first comprehensive study into the reasons police officers were killed in the line of duty. The report

my research in this arena continues to show that officers who displayed poor judgment or make tactical errors may, in fact, have provided the opportunity for a suspect to initiate the first act in what would become a deadly confrontation.

be motivated, to survive we must motivate ourselves". Officers must remain in a constant state of readiness in the performance of their duties, but it is especially critical when approaching an imminent confrontation.

KILLED BY CIRCUMSTANCE



"Killed in the Line of Duty" pointed to a growing concern among law enforcement experts, that too many officers died in situations that could have ended differently for the officer. Even in today's world, this study is a benchmark in the foundations of safety and survival training. A review of current data³ tends to support the original conclusions of the 1992 study, which stated that many officers involved in high-risk arrests were doing so with little or no knowledge of the basic principles of safety and survival. One can ascertain from the data presented that officers handle a variety of potentially life threatening situations. Between 1995 and 2004, more than 594 officers were feloniously killed⁴. Of this number, approximately 400 were killed by criminals whom they were attempting to apprehend (chart 2). Furthermore, a significant number of the officer's deaths can be traced to an error on the part of the officer, reflecting carelessness or a failure to follow recommended safety procedures.

There are several empirical studies by the FBI and other law enforcement organizations on deadly force incidents and why they occur. Law enforcement agencies worldwide continuously search for solutions in lowering death and injury to officers. For the past 25 years,

Studies conducted by several large police departments support the contention that it is extremely important for all officers to receive training utilizing the safest methods and techniques when affecting the arrest of potentially dangerous criminals. These studies further state that it is critical to train officers in the development and maintenance of the physical and psychological skills that may be called upon when involved in a violent confrontation. The question that we all must ask is, "Are police departments and law enforcement training academies around the globe conducting training that will enhance the officers' ability to survive a violent confrontation? If not, why?"

It would be safe to say that it is common knowledge among law enforcement officers that they need to be prepared for all types of physical attack if they are to survive in the streets. However, the term prepared, as I use it, may be different than some officers understand. I use prepared as being in the best physical shape you can be, the best shot you can be, an expert with your equipment, utilizing the best proven tactical responses, and having a mindset that is realistic and geared-up for use at any given second. A key component to survival training is to remember this phrase, "To learn we must

Too often law enforcement officers fail to do the training required to bring them up to a level that will prepare them for that one violent altercation which could determine their life or death. Many authors of law enforcement journals and books, both old and new studies, agree that this should include having all the necessary equipment; thorough training prior to any incident; detailed knowledge of tactics and weapons; an understanding of the type of persons, terrain, and circumstances in which the officer will become involved; and an attitude which deals with the officer's safety and survival. They further agree, that officers need to practice their skills every opportunity that is afforded to them and the stress levels of the training should be gradually escalated until their confidence and abilities increase.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Manual of Investigative Operations and Guidelines⁵ states that "the conduct of an arrest should be in the hands of highly skilled experts." The manual also indicates that both training and experience are essential to ensure a proper response in a life-threatening situation. Through the FBI's law enforcement training program, I was able to establish that simula-

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tion training is especially valuable in developing the ability to respond rapidly to fluid situations. I found that realistic training is very important in developing survival skills and building confidence. The officer who feels confident about their ability to handle a critical situation is more likely to maintain self-control and avoid an inappropriate and potentially dangerous emotional response to a threat.

Based on the principles of adult education, skills and abilities are best taught by hands-on experiences in which participating trainees can involve themselves actively. Malcolm Knowles,⁶ who many educators consider the "father" of adult education in the United States, asserts that the mission of adult education is best served by three distinct sets of needs and goals. These are the needs and goals of individuals, institutions, and society. Robert Mager,⁷ another expert in adult education, also emphasizes this but, in addition, states that educators and instructors need to deliberately seek out procedures and practices that will give their students the skills they need, as well as the motivation they need, to use and learn to perform better.

Through realistic simulations and interactive exercises, trainees can develop the assurance and the readiness to act decisively, which is so critical to survival. My research and other empirical data reveal that an officer who is philosophically in tune with a strategic approach and can execute a proper tactical plan will generally solve most situations without resorting to the use of unnecessary force. In order to stay prepared with the best chance of winning mentally and physically, one must be prepared for every type of physical attack that might be launched against them. Force, and in some situations deadly force, is the only way to handle an encounter that has been escalated by circumstance outside the officer's control. However, there are those times when, if possible, it is safer to deescalate.

In the FBI's Survival Awareness Program, I was able to accomplish this through the implementation of realistic training scenarios utilizing role players and employing dynamic measures, such as paint gun/simulation exercises. The formula for retaining officer survival skills lies in the commitment of each officer to dedicate themselves to the regi-


mented program of physically practicing specific psychomotor skills and visualizing reactions under stressful conditions. It is important to consciously avoid negative thoughts or the positive reinforcement of poor technique applications when involved in the simulated training environment.

Jim Loehr, an internationally recognized expert in sport psychology, concurs with this finding but emphasizes that visualization is not a substitute for physical practice. He believes that physical practice wins only half the battle and thinking in positive pictures wins the other half. Loehr emphasizes that training the mind and body to react as one synchronized unit under stress will lessen lag time and will program specific action-reaction "file tapes" in both short-term and long-term memories. In my work, I took Loehr's athletic philosophies and applied them to police work. I believe the principles he embraces are directly related to the way law enforcement officers must be trained to develop the professionalism essential for ensuring safety and survival.

As a result, I developed a new curriculum module using case files and interviews from actual violent confrontations and developed training scenarios. These blocks of instruction often include the opportunity for the trainees to develop their skills and self-assurance utilizing their weapon in a deadly force confrontation. Exercises that employ paint guns and or simulation weapons allow the trainees to experience shooting at a live threat rather than paper targets. In short, the new curriculum elements were designed to be as realistic as possible in order to assist the trainees in becoming more confident and better prepared to respond appropriately at a moment's notice. In order for law enforcement officers to become proficient during actual life-threatening situations, it is imperative that law enforcement instructors try to understand all the variables that might be encountered when apprehending vio-

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lent criminals and turn those situations into realistic training scenarios. These principles are all brought together through the adult education philosophy specifically designed for officers involved in critical life-threatening situations.

Concepts And Tactics for Survival (CATS) Inc. is a program that is comprised of the training principles contained in this article. The core elements of the FBI's Law Enforcement Training for Safety and Survival Program (LETSS), initially developed by Dr. Phil Hayden until his retirement in 1999 and furthered by his successor Damian "Skip" Stites (Retired 2006) are now available for law enforcement agencies worldwide. The CATS training program embraces the mental, physical and skill development philosophies necessary to provide the officer with the tools necessary to survive in the high risk world of law enforcement. For further information on this program, you can contact Phil Hayden in the U.S. at (540) 972-7658, Damian "Skip" Stites (FBINAA Member, Counselor 171st Session) at (540) 657-9449, email us at cats_training@yahoo.com or visit our web site at www.training2survive.com. 

About the Author: Dr. Philip Hayden has spent years involved in many aspects of law enforcement and security. While in the United States Army, he was trained in infantry and demolitions and went through airborne, ranger, pathfinder, jungle and sniper schools. He received the Purple Heart, Bronze Star for Valor and the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroic actions in Vietnam.

Since the early 1970s, Dr. Hayden worked as a Supervisory Special Agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a case agent where he was involved in criminal cases, organized crime, and foreign counter-intelligence. He also served as a program manager and tactical instructor at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Dr. Hayden has certifications in Tactics and Defensive Tactics, Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Crisis Management, Firearms and Hostage Negotiation. Through his many years of experience, training and instructing, he has designed, developed and implemented lesson plans on subjects ranging from making arrests and handling subjects to tactical air operations. Dr. Hayden has authored numerous law enforcement articles and produced a variety of videos on law enforcement techniques.

¹ Killed and Assaulted 2004, pages 69,81

² Killed and Assaulted 2004, page 5

³ Killed and Assaulted 2004, page 20, table 20

⁴ Killed and Assaulted 2004, page 20, table 20

⁵ DOJ/FBI procedures of an arrest, 1993 - Present

⁶ Modern Practice of Adult Education, 1988, The Adult Learner, 2005

⁷ Making Instruction Work, 1988

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