

THOMAS LOJEK

# THE OPERATOR

BY OPERATORS FOR OPERATORS

SWAT • BREACHING • MILITARY SOF  
INTELLIGENCE • COUNTERTERRORISM  
HYBRID WARFARE • CYBERSECURITY

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# Thomas Lojek

## Introduction

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**Every single instructor, tool, company, training center, or piece of information in this publication has been thoroughly vetted.**

One can only contribute to this magazine after being recommended and approved by acknowledged operators, agencies, or institutions.

So, you can be assured that every tool performs as it should, every instructor has experienced their fair share of combat and high-risk operations. Every training featured here is based on real-world experiences and it provides operators with exactly the skills they need to conduct their duty with the utmost operational readiness.

### What is this magazine?

This publication is a collection of articles, training recommendations, and product features developed by a unique team of instructors and operators over the past few years. We have now gathered these excellent and highly valuable insights and compiled them into this publication to make them accessible to those who are out there on duty.

**This magazine aims to serve as a knowledge database: providing a wide range of different and useful insights, giving you the opportunity to find specialists in military and law enforcement training, and reach out to them.**

I have added a few more aspects to help operators become well-rounded warriors in the modern world: technology, robotics, drones, cyber warfare, and hybrid warfare. Our modern battlefields are more complex than ever. The more we learn and understand, the more likely we are to adapt to rapid changes and “maintain our dominant position in the battlespace”, as Dutch Chris Moyer defines the key factor to accomplishing your mission.

These articles range from being a few years old to recently updated. Their knowledge is timeless because it was gained through experience, often in some of the worst places and under the most challenging conditions a human being can endure. I am grateful that these modern heroes trusted me and shared such valuable insights. I hope generations of true warriors will benefit from what we have accomplished with these pages.

Stay safe!



Thomas Lojek



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# THE OPERATOR LINKEDIN GROUP



## The Operator by Thomas Lojek

By Operators for Operators | SWAT SOF Breaching Technology Training | Vetted Members Only.  
Managed by Thomas Lojek.

Military and International Affairs · 11-50 employees

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# BREACHING

BY OPERATORS FOR OPERATORS



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# Special Feature Chuck O'Connor

## Explosive Entry Operations in Active Urban Environments

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**Charles (Chuck) O'Connor is a retired Navy SEAL with over 44 years of tactical explosive experience in various disciplines**

Over 38 years have been dedicated to explosive entry operations and study in active urban environments.

For the last 27+ years, Chuck has provided urban detonation subject matter expertise (SME) development contract services for global law enforcement agencies and military units.

The Operator is proud to have Chuck presenting a series of tactical explosive entry discussion topics for operators' review.



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# Shane Foster on Breaching: The Pros and Cons in the Debate of Commercial vs. Improvised



**GUILD**  
SOLUTIONS GROUP

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The fact is that we live in a very difficult time for Law Enforcement. With the reduction of “No-Knocks” and the constant scrutiny that domestic operations face, we must be reasonable in using what tools we have access to.



**About the author: Shane Foster is Director and Owner of Guild Solutions Group. He is breaching instructor, a USAF Veteran, and former LE/S.W.A.T.**

Context is everything!

December 8, 1969, one of the first uses of a team referred to as S.W.A.T. or Special Weapons and Tactics took place.

During this raid, another emergence took place: the use of energetics (explosive materials) to conduct a breach at 41st and Central Ave. It was the first documented “explosive” breach on U.S. soil that I am aware of. More clearly defined, this was the first documented use of energetic compounds to gain access to a stronghold.

Fast forward to 1977: testing began to take place at the Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technology Division, Indian Head, Maryland.

Then perhaps the most famous use of energetics happened on May 5, 1980, by the British Special Air Service (S.A.S.) at the Iranian Embassy in South Kensington, London, known as Operation Nimrod.

Why the context, you might ask? It gives us a basis of where it started, where it has come, and where it’s going.

It was these momentous events that initiated the modern-day methods of energetic entry.

Now more than ever, with the recent ruling of the National Tactical Officers Association disavowing No-Knock warrant services, we should consider all aspects of energetic entry.

While we know there is some controversy surrounding the use of explosives on domestic land, there is also the debate of improvised vs. commercial charges.

### **An understanding of what improvised materials are used and why**

To ensure clarity, we define improvised charges as taking construction materials such as tape, cardboard, water, and other components and using them in conjunction with energetic compositions.

Using materials such as 330B (rubber) creates a medium between the target and energetics.

This reduces the risk of spalling or pieces of the target material being propelled into the structure.

Water or saline is another common improvised component, which reduces the risk of blast pressure to the team.





Some studies show that it can reduce blast pressure by up to 68%.

With Traumatic Brain Injury being at the forefront of many studies, utilizing these types of materials can significantly reduce the exposure to the team members.

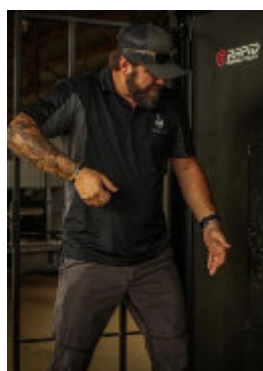
Water or saline also works as a tamping medium, causing a reflection effect, which increases the pressure on the target, simply put, we get more effect from less material.

Firehose is another type of improvised material commonly used.

Firehose enhances the effect of energetics in several capacities:

1. It provides a tamping effect.
2. It works as a limited mechanical function.
3. It provides the buffer between the target and energetics.

We could certainly go into much greater detail and discuss many more options, but this gives us an understanding of what improvised materials are used and why.



Objectively speaking, we need to consider the pros and cons of improvised charges. Keep in mind that there is no way to capture all sides of the discussion in a limited article, and it would invite further discussion.

## The Pros of Improvised Charges

Pros: It's hard to argue with "freegg" materials or cheaper options with tight budgets.

We know there are many constraints on budgets across the nation.

Pros: Improvised charges give us almost limitless modularity to adjust to uncommon targets.

There is a perpetual cat and mouse game between criminals and those that enforce the law.

Having the ability to adjust to triple barricades, steel rods through doors, and multiple locks is imperative to success.

Pros: Improvised charges are not as technical as they give a greater margin of error yet, remain effective.

Pros: Improvised materials have been used 1000's times and have produced incredible amounts of data, which aids in making a positive breach. Referencing that data gives us the ability to reproduce desired results.

Pros: Improvised materials are easily accessible.

This being more of a military mindset in an OCONUS environment (to use what you have when you have it to create success) is a solid argument, and we need to understand that, typically speaking, materials of both sides of the fence are readily available.

## The Cons

Cons: Improvised materials don't typically go through scientific testing to determine more accurate data.

The data is more from trial and error than data discovery and documentation.

This can become problematic if litigation gets involved.

Cons: Improvised materials can produce inconsistent effects because they have variables in their production methods and are at greater risk for human error.





A simple roll of an IV bag can create different results each time. Different firehose composition produces different results.

Cons: Some improvised materials can produce a greater risk to the team with high levels of injurious fragmentation.

Cons: Improvised charges can take a great deal longer to construct vs. improvised charges.

If something hasty is needed and pre-built charges are not accessible, this can be problematic.

Cons: If foundational and continual training is not conducted, then a much greater margin of failure can occur.

Using the right foam or not can increase fire hazards.

Trying to use hazardous tamping materials can create terrible consequences.

#Improvised does give the freedom to the builder to adjust, but also comes naturally with a higher probability of failure by using the wrong materials.

Pros and cons of commercial charges  
Let's change gears and look at the history of commercial charges and their purpose.

One of the first commercial charges came to light from the minds of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) and was marketed by David Hudak.

It was named the hydro cut.

This charge gained traction throughout Canada and the U.S. for its ease of assembly, consistent results, and reduction in blast pressure by using water as a tamp.

Due to some events, this charge started being produced and continues to be made by Gryphon Engineering.

And it is now referred to as the Gryphon frame or GBF-IVS. With pioneers like Cherry Engineering at the inception of commercial charges and now companies like Omni, P3D, Esoteric, and others, we must ask ourselves why commercial charges are needed?

Therefore, using the same neutral opinion, let's compare pros vs. cons.

### The Pros of Commercial Charges

Pros: Commercial charges typically go through numerous testing procedures to determine their reliability and functionality.

Pros: Commercial variants create a much more consistent effect that gives us a greater stance in the court of law.

If an agency is required to defend its position in a court of law, having this consistency and backing of the manufacturer can produce a more well-rounded argument.

Pros: Ease of construction can dramatically reduce the time to build commercial charges.



For instance, comparing a standard I.D.C. (Internal Door Charge) or 7-5-7 can take roughly 50% more time to construct than, say a BreachPop #1 from P3D.

Pros: Reducing blast pressure exposure might be one of the most significant arguments in favor of commercial charges.

Reducing the amount of energetic material by 70% alone is substantial, but then also factoring in that many commercial variants provide tamping, which also greatly reduces exposure to team members.

Ultimately, we can produce a charge that's just as effective and reduce the blast pressure by up to 80% with improvised variants.

Pros: Reduction in injurious fragmentation is a big consideration.

Although there are some improvised charges that produce little to no frag, many commercial variants virtually produce nothing with a tamping quality that surpasses the improvised charges.

Cons: Maybe the most significant disadvantage to commercial charges is the cost involved.

The question comes up, are they worth it?

My answer is that if you are caught inside of a lawsuit, are you able to articulate that what you used was the best possible option for the situation at hand?

Cons: Some commercial charges aren't as durable and demand proper construction.

Let's face it, many L.E. and M.I.L. personnel don't always exhibit the most patience, and they cut corners; this can result in the commercial variant not producing the desired results.

Cons: Weight can be a factor in many commercial charges.

It can be due to the gel, the water, and the plastic, and having a proper method of attachment can be challenging.

Regardless of what avenue you take, it's important to judge the decision by your S.O.P.'s & TTP's.

If you have a very supportive administration for the use of energetics, maybe commercial charges aren't worth it.

If you have a more scrutinized agency, it might be worth every penny and some.

Having an unbalanced perspective on these two options is never the right answer; without a doubt, there are advantages to both.

Hopefully, the pros and cons listed allow you to see where your agency would fall, and then you can make the correct decision on which option you should go with or both. The fact is that we live in a very difficult time for Law Enforcement.

With the reduction of "No-Knocks" and the constant scrutiny that domestic operations face, we must be reasonable in using what tools we have access to. Energetics can be used precision-based, similar to a competent sniper.

For that to happen, we must have consistent training programs and seek outsourced training that challenges our skill sets.

When attending those schools, judge it from a balanced perspective and don't drink the "kool-aid."

Beware of the trainer who validates himself by criticizing others and is married to one-way only.

While I have been involved in the detonation and construction of 1000's improvised charges, I have great confidence in several commercial variants and see this becoming more of the trend in the future.

Keep learning, never settle, and educate yourself on all the options.

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## Reducing Repetitive Sub-Concussive Injuries in Training with the BreachPop



Justin, P3D Solutions

When I started down the path to build what is now known as the BreachPop, I just wanted to build a tamped, shaped charge container to make me a more efficient assaulter.

Fits in a magazine pouch? Check.

Shortens MSD? Check.

Faster to build than standard charges? Double-Check.

Little did I realize (at the time) that by shortening MSD, and tamping with a water-polymer gel, I was also significantly reducing the overpressure generated!

While not as sexy of a topic as operationally popping my BreachPop out of an M4 pouch, capping in and blowing it with a CGS Pandora firing device from six feet away...its arguably more important to our longevity in the game. In a generic pole of my friends (seasoned SWAT cops, Green Berets, SEALs and even a few Tier 1 guys) the consensus was we blow 500+ charges in training for every one we blow operationally.

Those who do this for a living and have done it for more than ten minutes (or ten years...) know those little hits add up. My anecdotal research is supported by Dr. Christopher Freuh, et al, in his article Operator Syndrome. Please read it if you do this for a living, but to highlight, it is suggested that approximately 85% of TBI injuries occur in training alone.





We have to train, period, and we can do it smarter. The BreachPop is a tamped, shaped charge container that lets us run about half the net explosive weight (N.E.W.) of a traditional charge and achieve the same target effect.

This has been done over and over on the demo range, with reductions of up to 60% of the overpressure achieved. Realistic internal breaching training events, with dozens of charges blown in a single training day, have shown a general reduction of 35-40% compared to the standard “training charge” with equal or greater target effects.

Less overpressure on the incident wave equals less reflective and residual overpressure, which is the bane of our existence inside.

Comparing the BreachPop training charges to full power charges is even more of a reduction; one test we did (full data on our IG) showed the full power interior charge creating 300% of the BreachPop trainer!

Cutting down N.E.W. not only saves the assaulters doing this day in and day out, but it also cuts down on wear and tear of your shoot house.

A dollar saved is a dollar earned, or something like that, so if we spend less on upkeep and maintenance, we can spend more on additional training and new kit and equipment!

The BreachPop is great in training for all the reasons above, but it’s important to remember I designed them for operational use. What we achieve operationally is a shorter MSD without reducing your combat effectiveness.

We also create safer spaces inside by reducing those powerful colliding shockwaves, ensuring your two, three or four man doesn’t get flattened when you need them the most!

As a currently serving Green Beret, these are things that are most important to me.

**De Oppresso Liber.**

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## K-Factor Breaching: The K-Clip



The K-Clip is a quick priming solution for breaching charges. It is able to be used on any charge normally built with a priming loop. Eliminating the need for "Red Devil Systems" allows breachers to remove any unnecessary energetics.

Another added benefit of utilizing charges equipped with K-Clips is that charges can be quickly linked for attacking more complex breaches. The K-Clip can also be used "in line" on linear charges eliminating the priming loop, further reducing NEW and allowing users to use every gram of energetics to achieve a positive breach.

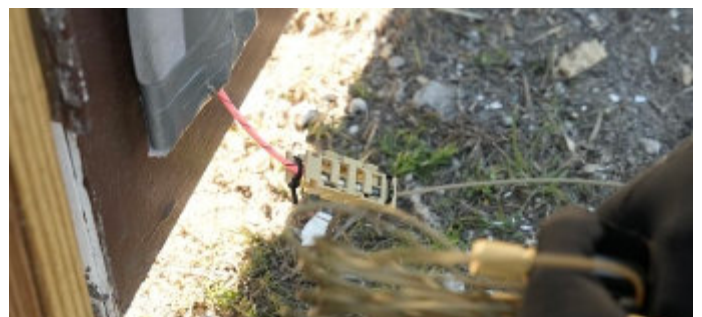
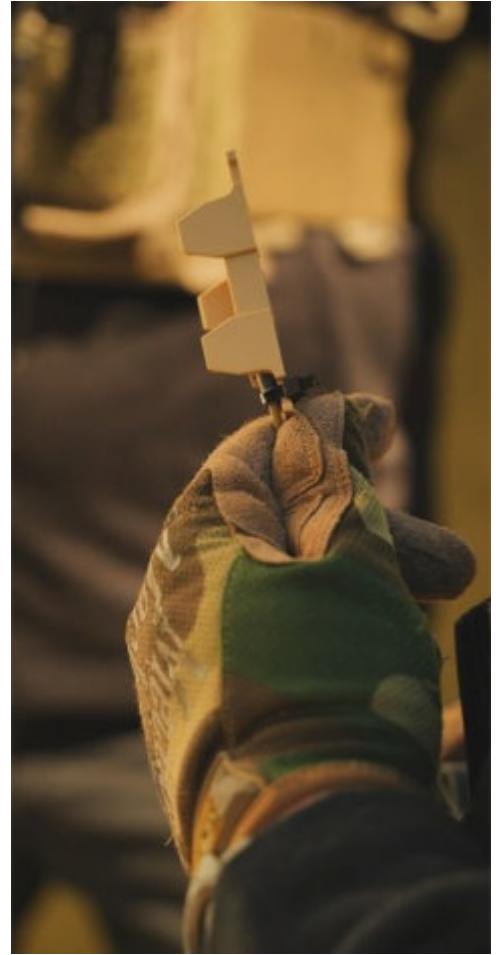
Having a K-Clip already built into a priming system allows protection of the blasting caps, while simultaneously allowing any system with a K-Clip to be attached to any charge ...

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K-Clip



# K-Clip Quickly Linked For Attacking More Complex Breaches



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# BreachPen



## PRODUCT OVERVIEW

Breachpen is indispensable for an autonomous cutting of metal products: In extreme conditions. In the aftermath of natural/man-made disasters. In the absence of a power source. In cutting anything with an electrical current. In hard to access places.

Burning Time - 23 - 25 Seconds. Weight of the product assembly - 170 (+/- 1,5) grams

Length - 310 MM Length of the product assembly - 445 MM

Diameter - 18 MM

Combustion Temperature - 2800 \* C

Ignition Temperature - 1440 \* C

Protective Rod Covering

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# Jeff Herr: The J&N Tactical Double Head Break And Rake Tool



I am one of those guys who have always taken the time to look at a concept or idea being used to try and make it better or improve upon it. It is amazing how many of us just do certain things because someone told us “this is the best way” or “this piece of equipment is the best” but never really battle test the concept, technique, product or idea.

In 2006, I designed and manufactured a commercial grade bangstick for the safe delivery of NFDD’s into an opening. At any rate, this particular product led to the inception of my company J&N Tactical. Our company continues to be a lead designer and manufacturer of innovative breaching tools, specializing in solutions for NFDD delivery systems for special operation groups and law enforcement teams around the world.



When I think back on what started the quest for this new break and rake tool, now called the Vandal BR, I recall being an operator at a NTOA Hostage Rescue course with instructors Dan Murphy and Steve Mescan. The instructors were running us through hostage rescue scenarios where we had ladder teams on the exterior of the residence, working the concept of “consuming the structure from the outside”.

The premise of this concept was to get operators/guns into the windows of the location on the target quicker than working a team through the floorplan to the target.

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# 3rd Law Breaching Tools

A 100% Veteran owned small business

Use proper kit, use proper technique, create a positive breach



Neil Held

## $F=m \cdot a$

“The force of an object is equal to its mass multiplied by acceleration.”

-Some guy much smarter than I am.

Manual Breaching methods: Human-powered push, pull, cut or break  
Manual methods aren't as sexy as other techniques, but manual is what 90% of Law Enforcement uses 90% of the time. As the saying goes, 90% of the time it works 100% of the time, sort of.

Breaching, whether on SWAT or patrol, is one of the most under-trained and underperformed events in police work. Most departments don't have the budget for a fancy hydraulic tool or a torch. Police administrators often cringe at the mere mention of ballistic breaching - too much liability and too expensive to maintain the training.

Explosives? Have you lost your mind? The truth is, manual entry methods work. While manual methods aren't appropriate for every situation, with proper kit and proper technique, it can work very, very well.

Whether it's a dynamic or medical situation, the most likely method used by patrol would probably be manual.

Having been a breacher for over 15 years, I've had my fair share of experiences with the current rams on the market. Can they get the job done? Sure. But, let's be honest. They are too big and too heavy - like a piece of outdated technology.

It was time for an upgrade. I knew that I could create something better. I had used some old and heavy bullshit for the last time. Busted fingers, jammed wrists, smashed shins from something hard, heavy and pointy... no more.

### Size & Weight

I started with the size and weight. Bigger and heavier is not better. If I can't accelerate the mass, how can I create any force with it to create the breach?

How can I accurately apply the force where I want it? What if it's too big to even swing on a small hallway or a porch? How can I swing it over my head?

Weight (mass) is important though. It's part of the force equation,  $F=m \cdot a$ . I decided to make my tool smaller by using materials that were denser.

I used materials that have 40% greater density than steel which allowed me to make a tool of the same weight, only it



would be 40% smaller. Further research at the local university revealed that I could also reduce the overall weight of the tool in an effort to maximize efficiency. 18 lbs is right where returns start to diminish. You can also create the

desired acceleration easier with an 18lb ram as opposed to a 40lb or a 50lb one. So we created an 18lb ram as well as 25lb and 32lb versions.

### Strike Face

Next was the strike face. During testing, I discovered that even mild steel dents and deforms easily. Some manufacturers place a bead of weld material along the edge of the strike face as it's harder than mild steel, it's also a cost saving measure so that cheaper materials can be used. I went in a different direction. I chose a steel that was chemically different and over 4 times harder than mild steel.

I also decided to make the strike face rounded. No hard 90° corners to smash into your hip or shin. The result is a circular strike face that maintains its crisp perpendicular edges avoiding rounding or mushrooming of the strike face.

This is one of the key factors in preventing glancing blows. Some of my fed friends requested a non-sparking strike face, so I drilled and tapped the hard steel to mount an HDPE plastic strike face. These are very useful in training venues as hammering steel-on-steel training doors isn't the best therapy for hands and wrists.

### Bounce & Momentum

I reduced the size of the tool and employed materials that were harder and denser. I thought the function of a dead blow mallet. When the dead blow strikes, the counterweight located inside the head strikes a fraction of a

second later, essentially cancelling out any bounce. I discovered that if I could cancel the "bounce" it would save time and energy so the breacher could concentrate on subsequent ram strikes on the intended target. There is also a nice little side benefit to this - the dynamic movement of the counterweight actually assists in generating more force.

### Proper Techniques

When I went through SWAT school in the mid 2000's, it was customary to take the biggest and strongest lummoX on the team and make him the breacher. Yea, that's definitely one way to do it. You could also chop down a tree with a sledgehammer, but why would you when you have a sharp axe available? Smart efficiency is key. And with it, comes proper technique. When ramming a door, the breacher plants their strong foot behind them. This is where the kinetic energy originates. Leverage and rotational forces generated from the hips




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*I discovered that if I could cancel the "bounce" it would save time and energy*

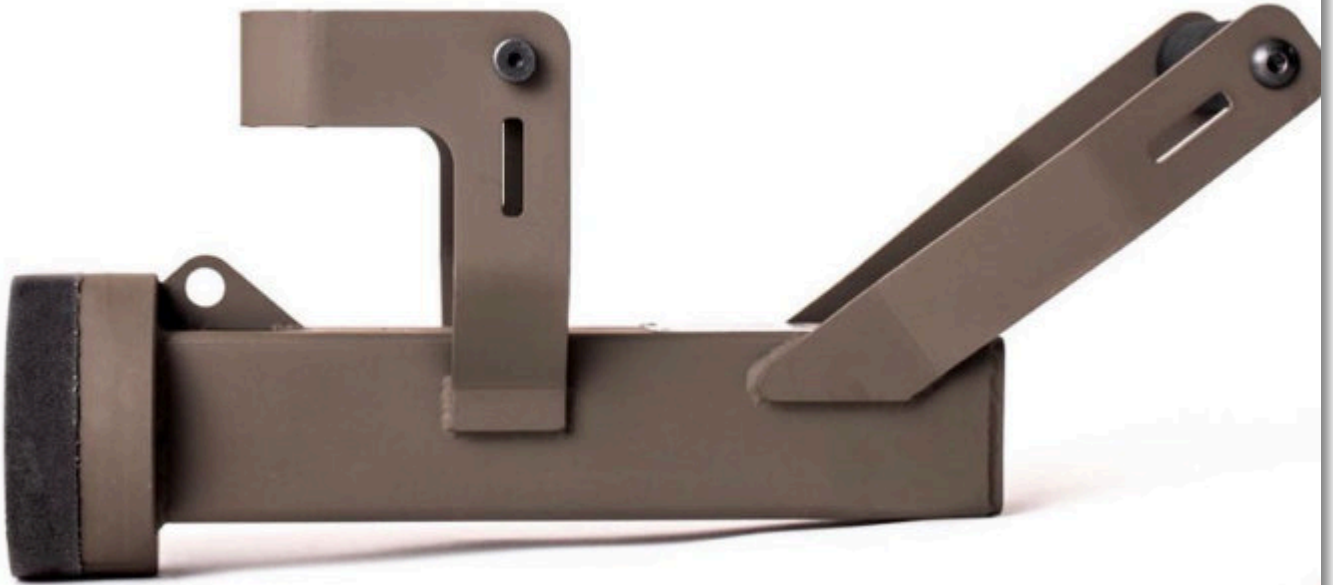
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and torso are transferred down the arms multiplying the energy, like the coiling and cracking of a whip. But this is only part of the technique. Placement on the door is also crucial. If you are attempting to breach the locking side of the door, then your target is the



crescent shaped area around the door handle and locking mechanism. With the hinges acting as the fulcrum, the further you are away from





# Click photo to learn more...

the fulcrum, the stronger you are. The final and magical part (JFM) of the technique is “taking the slack out of the door”.

This is done by the breacher or the A-breacher using their foot to put tension on the bottom corner of the door, pushing it tight into the frame.

Kinetic energy flows in a very similar fashion to electricity.

The components of the door must be in tight contact so the energy can be transmitted into the locking mechanism or the door frame in an effort to break the weakest component.

There is typically some sort of gap or slack in any door. If not mitigated, the slack will absolutely prolong your breach, or it may prevent it all together.

At the end of the day, use proper kit, use proper technique, create a positive breach.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some world class warriors that I have had the pleasure of learning from: Chaz, Rob, Ivan, Kenny, Jose and Joe this kit is what it is because of your added expertise.

-Stay tuned for my next article on the MASTUS PRY!

-Stay Dangerous!



## 3rd Law Breaching

Our Breachers are manufactured in New York State! The owner and operator of 3rd Law is a Police Officer, a Breacher on a Fema Type 1 team in New York, and a Combat Veteran. 3rd Law Breaching Tools LLC is a 100% Veteran owned small business, and is a certified Service Connected Disabled Veteran owned Small Business in NY.





The MASTUS Pry Bar, MAke Space Take Up Space, weighing in at 7.5 pounds, makes short work for breaching doors and windows as well as busting locks, hinges and even opening 2 types of water mains!

### One tool, multi purpose

Push doors  
 Pry doors  
 Pull hinges  
 Break windows  
 Open two types of hydrants  
 Twist and break chains & padlocks  
 Go Hands Free with included Sling



### Made In The USA

1.5" deviation on the shaft of the tool preventing smashed fingers

Grooved ADZ and Fork for extra bite & reduced slip

ADZ bevel is outside 90 degree of the tool

Square lug hydrant wrench

Hexagonal lug hydrant wrench



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BDS40 Products Are Powered By A  
FIREBULL Proprietary Formulated Premix  
Solution To Withstand Temps To -40F

## FEATURES

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- Rapid Cooling Capabilities
- Suppresses Class A, B, D, K Style Fires
- Neutralizes Fuel Sources
- Rated To -40F Temps

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## Delia Raptor Tool for Breaching and Rescue

### Features and Specifications:

#### Rescue Tool

Length: 30"

Weight: 18.5 LBS

Head and Fork: 8600 Tool Steel Forged

Finish: Matte Black Powder Coat

Handle Grip: Rubber Molded

**Gen 4 Delia Raptor with removable ram head!**

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## J&N Tactical Breaching Hammer

### FEATURES/SPECIFICATIONS

Tactical Breaching/Demo/Utility Hammer

Balanced weight distribution for breaching and carrying

Integrated quick release sling mounts

All steel construction

Powder coat primed and finished

Textured poly resin coating for long lasting durability and provides a good firm grip for operator

Color: OD green

Overall Length: 27"

Weight: 12 lbs



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**VITRUV17TM**

17" Body Length

4.5" Strike Plate Diameter

21 lbs

Individually Handmade In The U.S.A

**VITRUV23TM**

23" Body Length

6" Strike Plate Diameter

35 lbs

Individually Handmade In The U.S.A

**VITRUV28TM**

28" Body Length

6" Strike Plate Diameter

39 lbs

Individually Handmade In The U.S.A

**The Vitruv™ is a mechanical breaching ram specifically designed with the operator in mind.**

Comprised of high strength alloy steel, well balanced and built to last. The Vitruv™ is internally dampened with a polyurethane material, that has been scientifically proven to **reduce vibrations up to 30%**.

This design aids in reducing the energy transfer from the tool to the operator, in an effort to minimize operator fatigue and reduce potential injury.

The exterior of the Vitruv™ is entirely coated in a durable black textured urethane.



The Schivv™ forcible entry tool straight prybar is comprised of hexagonal 4140 high strength alloy steel, wrapped in military grade 550 cord.

The Prybar has a milled dual tapered point. This tool can be used in a variety of applications including prying, cutting, forcible entry, lifting, hole punching or as a wedge.

Each Schivv is individually handcrafted and will have slight variation from unit to unit.

Length: 10.5" Weight: 9 oz Color Finish : Flat Black Powder Coat

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**Dual Chem-light holder designed to hold 15 mini chem lights and 5 regular chem lights.**

Constructed of out Mil-Spec 2" webbing and elasticc, with sewn in loop of 750 paracord for attachment point. Comes with 6" subdued black cable wire for bundling large chem-lights.

Available in black and coyote.



**Assessory clips constructed of Mil-Spec 1" webbing, hook and loop fasteners, with U.S. made steel HK style hook.**

This Accessory/Gear Clip has a sewn in loop of 550 Paracord which allows for the option of a second attachment point. The Accessory/Gear Clip was designed to fit up to a 2-inch battle belt.

Colors available in Black, Coyote, Ranger Green and Multi-cam.

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**The Falcon Breaching Weapons Retention Catch** is made from Marine Grade Aluminum, wrapped in Mil-Spec fabrics, and coated with a durable polymer-ceramic black finish. When ounces matter, Falcon Breaching's Weapon Retention Catch is lightweight, durable, and can be mounted and dismantled quickly on the operator's belt using a high-quality, reliable polymer mounting system.

The new Weapons Catch with Tek-Mount™ design allows for easy quick connect, and the ability to cant your weapons catch to your desired position. The Tek-Mount™ weapons catch can be custom ordered to your desired attachment point offered in Direct to Molle, Molle-Lok, or Tek-Lok™ belt attachment.

Both the Standard and Slim Weapon Retention Catches are rigid, and are able to be bent to accommodate various weapons systems and accessories.

### Standard Size

The Standard design allows for multiple different weapon platforms, to include a breaching shotgun equipped with a receiver mounted side-saddle.

### Slim Size

The slim design is a low-profile Weapons Retention Catch designed for smaller weapon platforms, and breaching shotguns without a receiver mounted side-saddle.

Color Selections: Black, Ranger Green, Coyote, Multi-Cam



# Brian Bewley

## Cowboy Breaching

TSI's Tactical Explosives Training Program



### “Why do you need an explosives program?”

“Why do you need an explosives program?” is a question that I receive with frequency from those who live within earshot of our demo range, but it is a question that I enjoy responding to...

### “Because we can!”

For those of us who have served at the tip of the spear, the application of energetics within a tactical situation is required to help solve a problem... breaching a stronghold, collapsing a cave, removing an obstacle, the list of tasks can go on and on.

How then, does the use of explosives work within the commercial tactical training realm for qualified civilians, local law enforcement or our military members? In our experience, it meets the requirements a very small target audience and can also help solve a problem... breaching a stronghold, collapsing a cave, removing an obstacle, etc.

### Rule #1:

Tactical Solutions International, Inc. (TSI) has been conducting tactical training for USSOCOM since

early 2003 and energetics has been a specialty program:

Explosive Breaching, Home Made Explosives (HME) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) are a few of the more common courses.

Since 2014 however, the interest in civilian tactical training began to overshadow TSI's contract training with DoD, so Tactical Training International, LLC (TTI) was established as a division within TSI to service the commercial/civilian training sector.

TTI offered training in the use of energetics to a select group of personnel in early 2017 and that course has led to our annual Explosive Handlers course which normally has a waiting list for attendance.

TTI's training of qualified civilians and local law enforcement in the use of explosives requires everyone to live and breath rule #1:

Expose the minimum number of people to the minimum quantity of explosives for the minimum period of time. This provides the maximum protection possible to people and property.

There is no room for safety issues in explosives training.

In mid September 2017, a Special Forces engineer student was killed and 7 injured during a formal training event at Fort Bragg while using explosives.

Training in explosives is deadly serious and the student to instructor ration of 1:2 helps ensure all aspects of safety are adhered to... Remember rule #1.

### RECONDO'S LEAD THE WAY!

One of TTI's core training courses is the RECONDO Course. RECONDO is a 21 day brutal leadership course based upon the US military's RECONDO curriculum of yester-year.

RECONDOS are provided with basic military demolitions instruction to include the use and manufacture of field expedients such as Claymores and shape charges. Students learn to attack steel beams, pipe and plate, rail-road track,







lumber, concrete, cratering as well as the various firing systems: non-electric, electric and NONEL. Throughout the course the students conduct multiple live-fire exercises such as ambushes and raids where the use of explosives is required; Claymores on ambush initiation, shape charges on specific targets during a raid, door charges to gain entry into structures, etc.

After 21 days of training, the RECONDO is confident in the safe application of his energetic devices or materials.

Our RECONDO students recently participated in a Unconventional Warfare (UW) exercise similar to Robin Sage, where they infiltrated into an area, linked up with a resistance force, developed rapport, trained the resistance into a capable guerrilla group and led them on a Direct Action mission against a notional enemy radar installation within their Area of Operations.

After a detailed mission brief and rehearsals, the combined force began last light movement toward their objective. As one of the evaluators, I pulled up the

rear of the formation as we moved silently through the rugged Wyoming terrain that mirrored the mountainous environment that our troops are currently operating in on the other side of the world.

During that movement, I was quickly taken back to my former life on an ODA, moving to a target in some far-away land... it was real. The hit was textbook perfect!

As the team began movement off of the objective, the demo team lit their multi-charge time fuse..."Fire in the hole! Fire in the hole! Fire in the hole!" The demo team had prepared a 10 minute burn which gave us ample time to move down the valley away from the target.

Just like clockwork, at 10 minutes, the seven pounds of Helix and Dyno AP formed into specialty cutting charges, illuminated the night sky and sent shock waves bouncing off the canyon walls. I now had a hard-on! The following day the instructor cadre conducted a BDA on the target, and not at all surprising, everything that was

targeted with demo, was successfully destroyed. For our RECONDO training, the application of energetics provides the realism and tactical need to meet our training objectives. Again, remember rule #1...

### **WHY DO YOU NEED AN EXPLOSIVES PROGRAM?**

Adding explosives and pyrotechnics to augment your tactical training programs will provide the realism and often needed stress inoculation that is required for today's warfighters and defenders of freedom.

Getting the explosives support can be a bit challenging, but if you have the need the challenge is worth it.

First you will require ATF licensing. There are different types of licenses so make sure that you know what you are applying for. Initially, we applied for and received an Explosive Users License thinking that was all we needed.

We soon found out however, that to support some of the training for DoD, we were required to



manufacture HME and mix binary explosives and that required a Manufacturers license.

Storage is another issue. You are required to have secure storage for both explosives and caps (ie. 2 separate bunkers) and depending upon the quantity of explosives that you are storing, there is a minimum distance requirement from your bunker to any major lines of communication.

Then, the local requirements come into play...do you have adequate range space to utilize explosives? Are there any state licensing requirements such as a Blasters Certificate needed?

Having the ability to train with and use explosives has really assisted our training programs. If you have an interest in setting up an energetics program for your facility, investigate your local, state and federal laws.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

We don't give legal advice, but if you would like to pick our brains, please feel free to contact us at anytime. And always, remember Rule #1.



Brian Bewley (the Cowboy Breacher) is a retired SF CWO, who served with 1st & 7th SFG(A)s, USMILGRP El Sal and SFUWO in Key West. Upon his retirement, he served as an Advisor to the UAE Special Operations Command and a Security Manager in both Baghdad and Yemen. Brian and his wife S. Jessica established Tactical Solutions International, Inc. in early 2003.





# MatrEX Binary Gel Explosive



## PRODUCT OVERVIEW

MatrEX Binary Gel Explosive is supplied as a two component system. The non-explosive gel and activator are combined to form the high explosive formulation ready for use.

Non-explosive until mixed.

Distributed as two non-explosive components.

Eliminates logistical problems encountered in shipping, storing, and transporting commercial high explosive materials.

Once mixed, MatrEX is a cap sensitive, high explosive, which produces high overpressure, high bulk energy as well as a consistent detonating velocity.

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P3D Solutions Inc and the Dutch Special Operations community can trace its history back approximately five years, prior even to the founding of P3D Solutions. The founders of P3D Solutions had the opportunity to instruct at a training center in Germany where-in the Dutch were a member nation. One of the instructors was from the Dutch Korps Commando Troepen (KCT) and a positive relationship was born.

Over the course of time, P3D Solutions founders had the opportunity to train with KCT Operators and were privileged to lead the training of a company of the KCT direct support soldiers in Urban Combat and Close Quarters Battle, as well as instruct numerous other members of their armed forces in shooting and CQB.

The BreachPop was conceived based on the founders' experience in CQB and Breaching in order to reduce the net explosive weight (N.E.W) necessary to breach a target. The BreachPop was designed from the ground up with the assaulter in mind by easily fitting into existing magazine pouches and being durable enough to survive rough handling.

Additionally, to reduce traumatic brain injuries sustained in breaching operations, the tamping medium is a proprietary water-polymer gel capable of reducing measured blast overpressure by up to 60% compared to conventional charges of the same N.E.W. Ultimately, the BreachPop has proven to be a durable, easy to build, easy to carry charge that enhances safety in both the operational and training environment.







After the founding of P3D Solutions, the relationship was rekindled with the Dutch Special Operations Forces while they were engaged in a training event at Tactical Energetic Entry Solutions (TEES) in the USA. Alan Brosnan, the owner of TEES, facilitated the first KCT and MARSOF purchase of a test and evaluation pack from P3D Solutions.

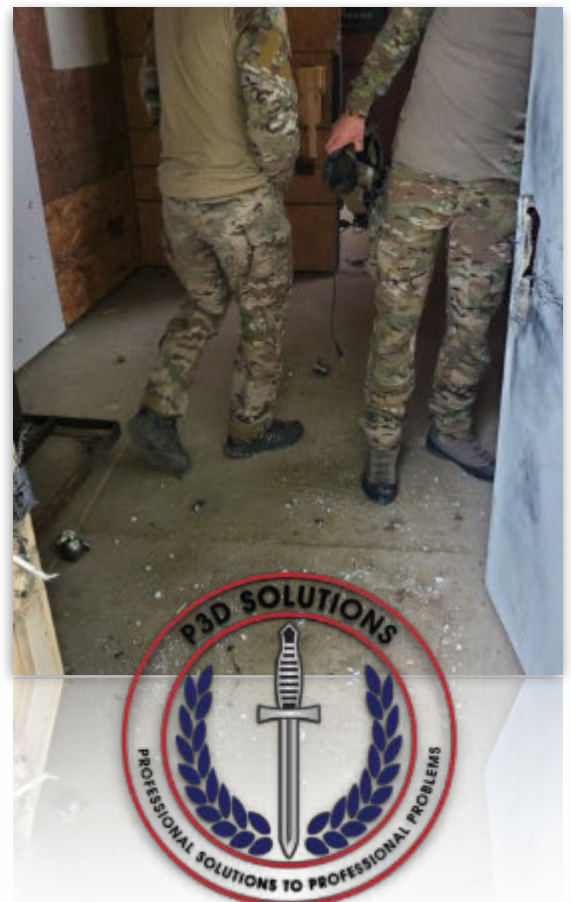


From his time working and developing the BreachPop overseas, Justin, a US Army Green Beret and founder of P3D Solutions, was able to provide them with direct instruction on application of the BreachPop to European targets.

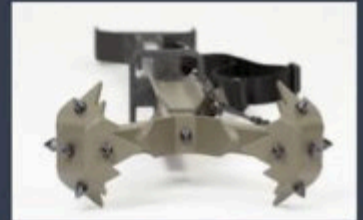
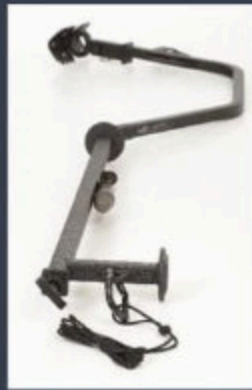
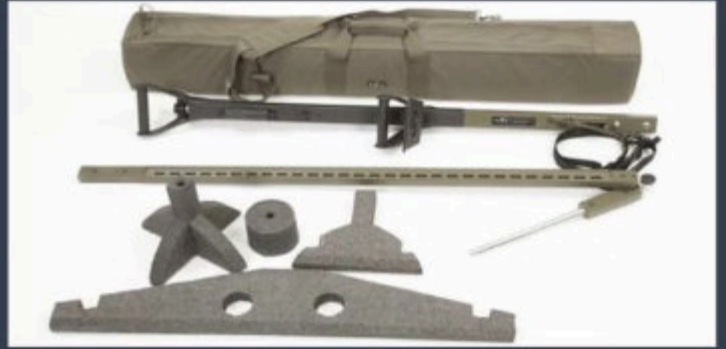
On a subsequent trip for training in the USA, Steve from the Dutch MARSOF Marines chose to make another purchase of BreachPops to supplement their training and enhance operations at home and abroad.

This was ultimately due to the failures of some other commercial products they were testing, and the positive prior results they experienced with the BreachPops. They are choosing to depend on the BreachPop 8<sup>7</sup>/<sub>2</sub>0cm strip charges and the BreachPop Bi-Fold linear due to the numerous benefits provided by both.

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# SWAT

BY OPERATORS FOR OPERATORS



# Ken Witt

## Tactical Leadership and Mastering Operational Variables



**About the author:** Ken's tactical experience spans a 25-year law enforcement career with 14 years of Special Weapons and Tactics experience, and over 30 years of active and reserve military service primarily in the U.S. Army Special Forces.

**To ensure operational success agencies need effective tactical leadership.**

Law enforcement tactical teams are deployed when a situation is hazardous, complex, or conventional methods cannot resolve the crisis. To ensure operational success, as opposed to good fortune or accidental outcomes, agencies need effective tactical leadership.

The quality of leadership is contingent upon the depth of a commander's attributes and core competencies.

Attributes learned over a lifetime offer insight into leadership potential, however, it is competencies—skills learned through education, training, and experience which provide the ability to successfully lead.

Accordingly, in the throes of a crisis, operational success is dependent on the commander's tactical competency.

Tactical planning is shaped by situation and circumstance, which in turn is heavily influenced by three interconnected variables:

Suspect courses of action, operational time, and crisis site space.

These elements are considered variables in the sense that they can be manipulated tactically.

By anticipating suspect courses of action commanders can develop defensive strategies to counter the expected threats.

By exploiting space and time commanders can create offensive strategies where the suspect is left without viable options.

With this in mind, a tactical leader's competencies must include the ability to identify these variables and then manipulate them to his advantage.





## Courses of Action

In the sixth century BC, the military theorist Sun-Tzu expressed the simple dictum that a successful leader must know the enemy and know himself.

The succeeding twenty-six centuries have repeatedly validated the importance of this principle.

Knowing the suspect is a product of the intelligence collection process, which allows a commander to determine and assess potential suspect courses of action (COA).

COAs comprise a sequence of actions the suspect is in the process of carrying out or likely to carry out in the immediate future.

The initial COA assessment includes the suspect's known objectives and capabilities, recent acts, position within the crisis site, weapons, and the presence or absence of hostages.

This assessment may be modified as more intelligence is obtained. The COA assessment should also include potential suspect responses to law enforcement actions.

Once the potential suspect COAs are determined, they are ranked by likelihood and threat level. In other words, the suspect's most likely course of action and most dangerous course of action.

Contingency plans are essential to counter suspect COAs.

Contingencies are a branch from the team's deliberate or hasty plan, and as such modify the team's conduct in response to the suspect's actions.

The use of Standard Operating Procedures—a predefined set of tactics, techniques, and procedures—provides the ability to quickly incorporate a complex set of instructions into a contingency plan.

## Crisis Site Space and Operational Time

A strategic consideration in tactical planning is the creation of a tactical dilemma. This is when the suspect is placed in a situation where no matter which course of action he chooses, it can be exploited.

Commanders create tactical dilemmas by exploiting space and time variables.

Exploiting crisis site space involves denying the suspect freedom of movement and positions of advantage.

Exploiting operational time involves interrupting the suspect's timeline or delaying his reaction to law enforcement actions. The late tactical expert Charles "Sid" Heal (LASD Special Enforcement Bureau Commander) identified five techniques for creating dilemmas that exploit space and three for time.



All of these techniques can be used individually or in conjunction.

Space dilemmas center on freedom of movement and positions of advantage.

Interlocking fields of fire (both lethal and less-lethal) limit a suspect's freedom of movement.

Chemical agents can deny space by driving a suspect from a position of advantage or preventing movement into one.

Suspects can be induced to make a false assumption through a deceptive diversion which directs attention away from law enforcement activity.

The deployment of law enforcement weapons systems in a manner that exploits suspect weaknesses may force him to expose himself in an effort to regain the advantage.

Finally, depriving a suspect of the value of his position — i.e., if darkness is an advantage, then illuminate the space.

Time dilemmas center on delaying suspect action.

Perhaps the most common technique is surprise, which is created by taking action at an unexpected time or place or using an unexpected tactic.

Another is a physiological diversion, such as a noise/flash diversionary device, which negatively impacts the suspect's senses and slows his response.

Finally, overwhelming tactics, such as sniper-initiated assaults, limit the suspects' ability to respond — this technique must be applied within the bounds of the agency's use of force policy.

It is important to distinguish between operational time as a variable (examined above) and elapsing operational time which is unrecoverable. During an unfolding crisis, where time to plan becomes a scarce commodity, it is helpful to remember the Italian proverb, "The best is the enemy of the good."

General George Patton famously expressed this as a tactical tenet, where he cautions that the time lost through excessive planning often results in a missed opportunity. In other words, time can be gained through the efficient design and implementation of a good plan rather than expending time developing the best plan.

In actual practice, a dilemma strategy that exploits all of the suspect's options may require the use of several coordinated techniques.

For example, the demonstration of an armored vehicle in a non-threatening or threatening manner can create a deceptive diversion that draws the suspect's attention to the desired side of the crisis site.

The diversion allows tactical teams to maneuver into positions of advantage at designated doors or windows. Utilizing breach and hold or gun-supporting techniques these teams can establish interlocking fields of fire within the crisis site which restrict the suspect's freedom of movement.

Multiple interlocking fields of fire can be established as long as there is no possibility of fratricide. If desired, tactical teams can enter the crisis site utilizing the cover provided by the interlocking fields of fire. Even though the suspect may not be visible at this point, the targeted use of chemical agents prevents the suspect from remaining in his present location or moving to a new position.

If the suspect does not expect these actions, then the element of surprise will interfere with his ability to respond. The suspect is now confronted with a circumstance where any course of action can be exploited. During a tactical deployment, the arbiter of operational success is a commander's well-developed set of tactical competencies.

Accepting that competencies are the product of education, training, and experience, then a well-regarded tactical training organization offers commanders the best opportunity to build upon existing leadership skills, as well as to validate their aptitude for operational planning and critical decision making.



# Ken Witt: SWAT Team Leader Course



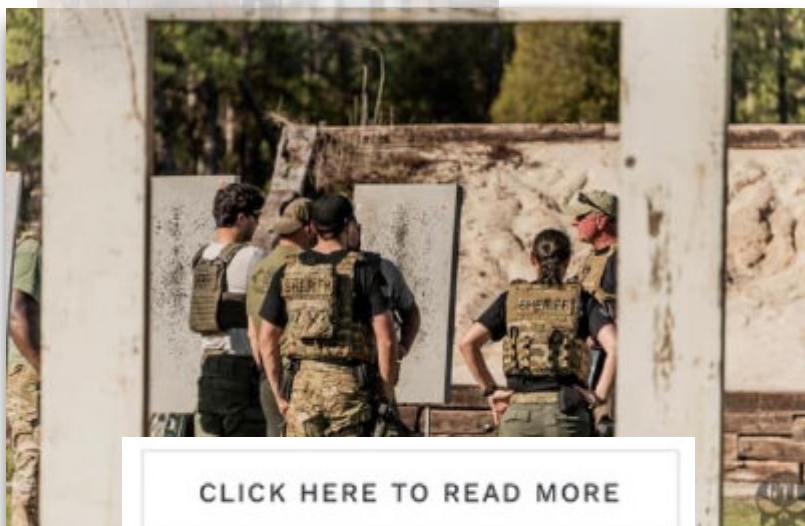
This tactical leadership course is designed to enhance operational planning prior to tactical events and critical decision-making skills during tactical situations. However, it must be recognized that the conditions for successful tactical operations are developed years in advance. Consequently, this course also guides students in how to set these conditions.

First, a clear understanding of leadership strategies, attributes, and competencies establishes the course foundation – in short, what a leader should “be and know.”

Then, it is upon this foundation that all other leadership skills are built; from personnel selection and training concepts to liability mitigation and capturing lessons learned through debriefs.

At this point, after understanding the conditions for success, we explore the planning steps for anticipated and unanticipated tactical operations. This involves anticipating suspect courses of action, assessing operational risks, developing and implementing tactical plans, and modifying plans as needed during a crisis scenario.

The course utilizes multiple learning concepts in the classroom setting: multi-media supported lecture, group exercises, class discussions, debriefs and case study critiques. Outside of the classroom environment, students validate the material covered by participating in two practical exercises. These planning exercises include site reconnaissance, intelligence collection, operational planning, and operational briefing.



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# Trevor S. Thrasher

Lead Instructor Tactical  
High Threat CQB Grey Group

## The Four Deadly Errors in CQB



Trevor S. Thrasher



Success in close-quarters battle often comes down a group of adaptive, capable, and fit operators getting the big things mostly right while avoiding major errors. Speed, surprise, and aggression will get you only so far if you fail to understand that these offensive principles need to be flexible and modulated at different times in different environments.

In my studies of close quarter battle which includes reviewing thousands of videos of both dynamic simulations in a training environment as well as real-world video of actual events I have found four very consistent big picture issues that I refer to as the “Four Deadly Errors.” They are:

1. Rushing In
2. Target Lock
3. Lack of Synchronization
4. Overpenetration

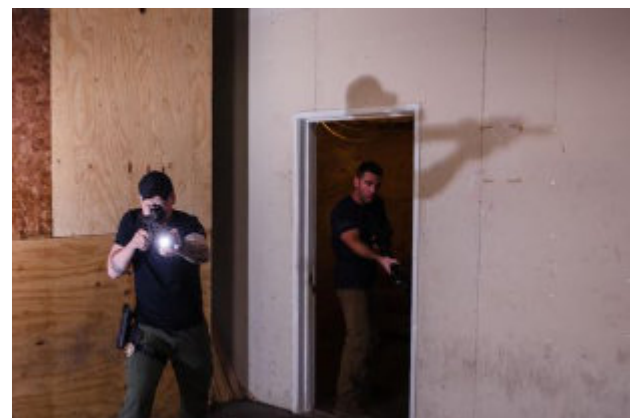
Tactics that emphasize dynamic immediate entry will tend to promote these errors when stress is elevated due to resistance or the dynamics of each situation.

Techniques that may work well in low-resistance situations or training environments that are relatively static, canned, and conducted against paper targets often fall apart when human factors come into play. At the same time, limitations in performance due to

survival stress turn theoretically perfect choreography into controlled chaos at best. Limited penetration tactics, although not a panacea, will tend to reduce the appearance of deadly errors because they are more in tune with human nature and performance during a fight-or-flight response.

Regardless of your methodology, you must strive to avoid the Four Deadly Errors.

Rushing In can be simply described as “outdriving our headlights.” Our ability to process information, especially rapidly unfolding information under duress, is very limited. When we are moving forward into an unknown area exposed to new information before we perceive, analyze and orient to the information we already have we create a log jam in our brain. In a sense, we will disrupt our own OODA (Observer, Orient, Decide, Act) loop.





When we feel rushed, the additional pressure encourages us to make unfortunate decisions and to perform skills less accurately. In a precision environment, containing non-threats and innocents, and especially in a modern law enforcement role with a difficult sliding scale of potential force options, this can lead to catastrophe.

Stress affects our perceptions. Numerous distortions can be experienced, including things such as auditory exclusion, perceptual narrowing, and even distortion in sense of time. Coupled with reduced short-term or working memory—the number of things you can maintain orientation in your head at one time—the effect can be a tremendous detriment to overall success.

Not only does moving the feet faster than the eyes can see and the brain process create more stress, it reduces your options. In the past, this has been referred to as “split second syndrome.” As you push ever

forward to the unknown or towards a threat, the time you have available to collect data and make a decision is reduced—and your response options are limited. Without the ability to safely pause, adjust force levels, or even bail out, you are very quickly put into a high stress, close range, kill-or-be-killed situation. If you have the complete element of surprise, or are facing low to no resistance, you may be able to control yourself and the situation enough to be successful.

In the tough situations you should expect and should train for, rushing in can become deadly for an individual and a team. Numerous high-profile incidents within the U.S. SWAT community involving multiple SWAT officers killed were largely because of this error combined with a ready and highly-resistant opposing force.

The cure for this is, of course, to take your time. When necessary, as Wyatt Earp supposedly stated, you should “take your time in a hurry.” As

an operator, you must train to process information at an amazing pace. That includes detecting, evaluating, and orienting on a threat in a split second. An operator that cannot maintain calm, understand the different times that speed or caution may best serve the mission, and process information quickly in a CQB environment is useless regardless of any individual shooting or fighting ability they may have.

However, there will always be limitation in the human ability to do so, especially when rushing through a breach point into a largely unknown layout while adjusting to dynamic threats. When you can be deliberate, be deliberate, and when speed is necessary, dynamic limited penetration will allow an operator to process information in chunks or step by step versus all at once. Dynamic entry methods that create a purposeful delay in entry, such as the “step center” technique before entry can to a degree mitigate the deadly error of rushing in. Anything that prioritizes getting in regardless of the situation at hand can be disastrous.

Target lock is a behaviorally-driven element of human behavior under threat that causes a person to focus nearly their full attention on a potential threat. Like time, information, and safety, attention is a precious resource in CQB. By design, we focus on a threat intensely at the exclusion of other information, sometimes other important information. Even in domestic situation where the need for engaging in deadly combat with multiple subjects in one room or area is relatively rare, target



lock can cause huge issues when the first person seen triggers a threat response, but the actual threat lies elsewhere. The orientation on the threat will often expose an operator's flank or back to the real threat and follow on operators, will also key in on the lead operator and also target lock.

I fully understand the concept of operators being responsible for their sector initially, but this rarely stands up to a reality check. If you don't believe me, just have operators make dynamic entry into a room and have a subject in the center reach suddenly for an item or weapon. If the operators are emotionally involved in the training, which means it is "real" to them, I would be surprised if operator #2 digs his corner and ignores the first operator who is nearly guaranteed to either stop in or near the doorway, or move forward locked onto the threat.

Watch real-world video, a lot of it. You will see the same pattern nearly exclusively. You must also understand that some target lock under immediate deadly threat is going to happen. The idea of training anyone to ignore an immediate threat right in front of them to check a corner when the probability of another threat actually being there is only a rare possibility, it is ludicrous. It is not in the least behaviorally compliant and is most often tactically an unreasonable thing to do.

The means to avoid target lock are the same as those needed to avoid rushing in. Instead of thinking you can avoid it all the time, you have to develop techniques, tactics, and procedures that minimize the dangers of it or trigger

operators to snap out of it as quickly as possible. Lack of synchronization is a disruption in the ability of operators to work together cohesively at the same time. Most often you will see the number one operator jump ahead and the number two operator is often more than a few steps behind.

Again, human behavior is largely responsible for this due to limited attention. It is hard to look inside the room and closely watch movement cues from your fellow operator, and action will always beat reaction. Even so, some things can make it worse, such as a crisscross dynamic entry. Operators must be synchronized to maximize the force they present against an opponent.

Fighting one operator at a time is much easier than having to face multiple operators at the same time, especially when they are triangulating from different positions. The former can lead to catastrophic entry. The latter will actually use human factors like target lock, limited attention, and reduced working memory against the opponent.

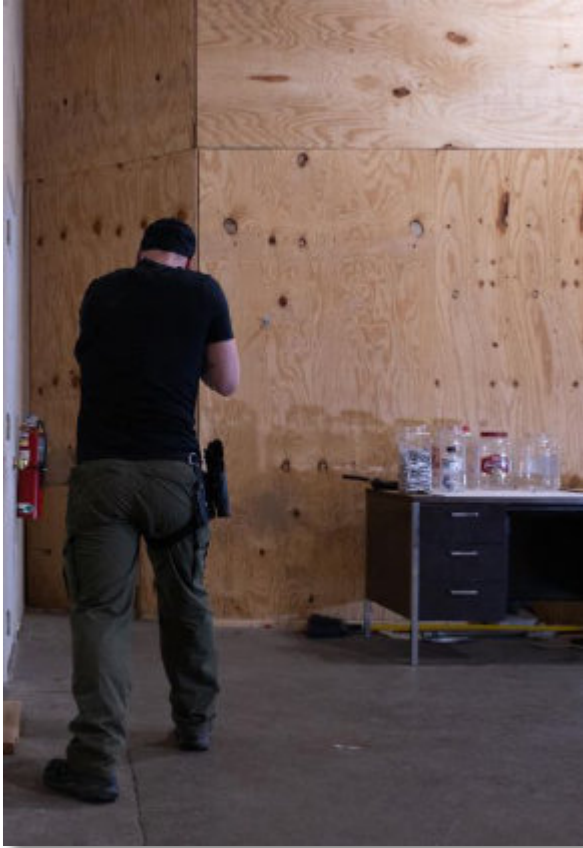
There are plenty of examples of this on real-world video leading to wounded operators and a one on one gunfight instead of

a coordinated show of force that either overwhelms the subject or eliminated the threat with maximum efficiency. Recent examples include an officer booting in a front door and basically rushing into the main room of a home and immediately being shot before the second officer even has a chance to see the suspect. The first officer is stuck on his own and has to self-extract into the garage to be rescued while other officers are held at bay outside of the house by gunfire. In another example, officers respond to an active shooter who fired a shot into the ceiling of an office and asked someone in the area to call the police for him.

The lead officer quickly enters through the front door of the office building and advances forward distracted by a third party in the building and is exposed and ambushed before the second officer can observe and orient to the new information inside of the structure. Luckily the second officer gets into the fight taking out the suspect after the first officer is wounded and self-extracts.

Over-penetration largely takes place once initial entry is made into a room or area when





operators feel compelled to keep pressing forward into a corner or area often exposing themselves to new angles, adjacent openings, and threats that are not yet covered by another operator.

It can be a combination of rushing in, target lock, and lack of synchronization. Techniques that emphasize “running corner” or “direct to threat” entry will make this error more likely.

Limited attention under stress can make this worse if an operator locks down on an opening of concern and moves forward deep into the room before fellow operators can get in, process, and cover the new angles within it.

If you do not have to move to a corner to clear a room, consider not doing it. Doing so too quickly may only expose you to new adjacent angles and issues before the issues in the first room are resolved.

Watch real-world videos, especially those leading to operators being wounded. You most likely will see a great deal of what I am writing about in this article. If you aren't using the

abundance of real-world combat videos to assess your techniques, tactics, and procedures, and instead rely on choreographed shoot house centered results to drive what you do or don't do, then you need to ask yourself if you are being ego and tradition centered to the point of risking the lives of your team.

As you probably know, CQB is a balance of many things with risk and attentions as the currency. Focusing too much on aggression can leave you vulnerable to many of the major errors. Focusing too much on caution can enable an opponent to seize the initiative and aggress against you.

Likewise, not focusing on a potential threat can take valuable time and resources away from what is important right now! Focusing too much on one threat may leave you vulnerable to another.

If it were easy or simple, anyone could do. Most can't.

Make sure your team does the big things right and doesn't make the “Four Deadly Errors.”



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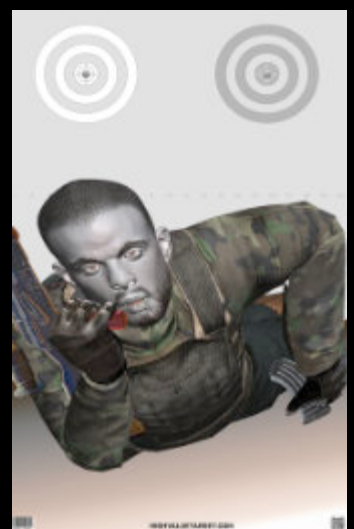
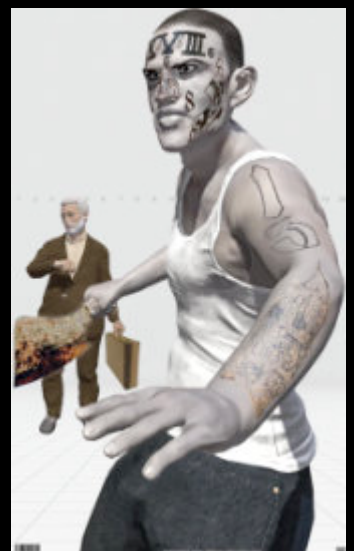
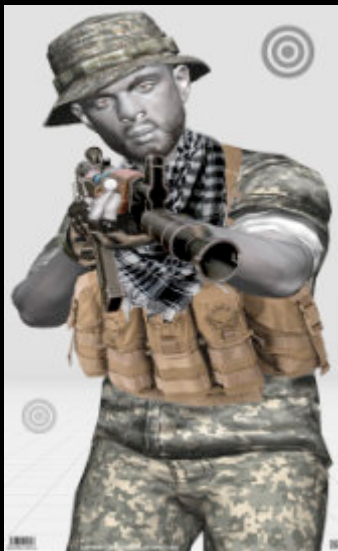




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# "Dutch" Chris Moyer

DCM Consulting LLC

**The better your training, the more effective is your controlling position in your battlespace!**



**Thomas Lojek:** Would you share a few thoughts with us about the ongoing public discussion on “defund the police” and the fear that a “militarization of the police” that has gone too far... at least for the taste of certain groups of politicians? Honestly, what do you think about all that?

**Dutch Chris Moyer:** There should be more funding for the police, not less. I will explain it to you from a military man's perspective.

If I am in charge of an area, it becomes my battlespace. This is my definition of every area that I move in or that I am in charge of.

**Thomas Lojek:** And a nice American village? A few quiet streets, and a few clean houses and everything seems so peaceful... so why call it a “battlespace”?

**Dutch Chris Moyer:** Because as a professional soldier, we see more than just the community/battlespace.

We integrate with locals in order to become trusted agents inside that particular community/battlespace.

Active patrolling/ observing/ interacting allows the law-abiding citizens to garner trust in our presence. Active patrolling also

allows us to observe the population and gather information.

It is very similar to the law enforcement officer's community as he/she needs to be part of it and work with it just like a military element does when in charge of the battlespace.

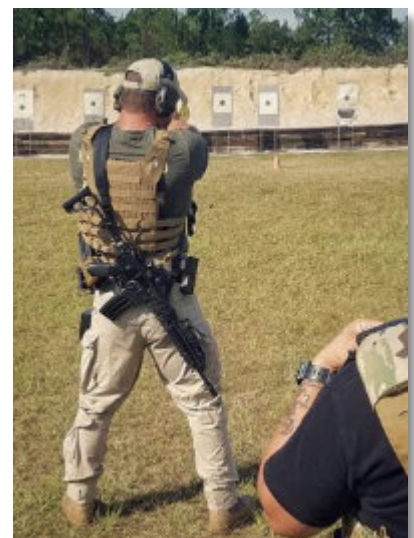
Even if it seems that there are no open or imminent threats for the moment, nevertheless, I have to control the area. If I don't, then I put everyone in danger. Not just for what we can see, but for what we can't see and don't know yet.



*If I am in charge of an area, it becomes my battlespace. This is my definition of every area that I move in or that I am in charge of.*

Therefore, the element must have a dedicated interest in that battlespace. We have a presence in this area, and it allows us to know the area and how it works. If something happens, then we should know how to react.

Even if our dominating position of the battlespace is won through non-direct actions, like showing a strong presence, maintaining an effective operational preparedness or just in a good understanding of how our





area works and how we can use that knowledge to our advantage.

But to get there, it needs certain skills. And these skills, you will only get through training. The better your training, the more effective you are at controlling your position in your battlespace, even through non-direct actions. And the more successful you're likely to be. A small group can control an area very effectively when they know what they do.

Now, let's transfer this military thinking to what our police forces are going through these days.

Each police officer, each department/constabulary has a battlespace: the community they are responsible for. And inside that battlespace, they need to take care of the people who live there. It happens in direct action, as force-on-force in the case of facing violent crime, or in non-direct action like, patrolling and maintaining a good relationship with their community. Both need a level of personnel, training and experience.

It is a very simple equation: The more our police officers train, the better they become. The more police patrols, the less crime will happen in their community. The

more effectively trained, the better they will be. With this better training, the more effective they will be at preventing crime or intervening in an ongoing situation. There is empirical data for that.

But getting there needs support. Public support in funding. An effective level of numbers in police personnel and hours in training.

You cannot take the money and public support for our police forces out of this equation and expect a positive outcome on crime prevention and public safety. It won't work this way.

We are already seeing the devastating effects in Seattle and Minneapolis. It just doesn't make sense.

I will give you another example where this "defund the police" movement has lost its touch with reality completely. Let's talk about direct action. There is a situation, and a police officer needs to pull his gun and go to work. In this situation: do we want to have the officer more training or less training?

Really, think about it. Especially, think about it in a way as if you were somehow involved in a



situation, where one or more police officers pull out their guns around you, for whatever reason.

In this moment, do you want them to be well-trained to handle the situation that is now evolving around you? Or will you be more worried about the funding they get for political reasons? Let's just be real. What matters more, now? Well-trained officers or defunded officers?

Make your choice.

And it better be the right choice in the seconds that could decide if you and your family will live or die. You can't have both.

And this is where we all are missing a good answer from the politicians, who are demanding to cut the funding for our brothers and sisters who patrol our streets every day.

What if these politicians were involved in an incident? Do they want well-trained experts standing at their side or amateurs with guns or even their so much beloved social workers?





If any politician can answer this question to me, then I will be all ears to listen to what they have to say. Until then, this “defund the police” is utter nonsense to me. Sadly, it is dangerous nonsense. And many will pay the ultimate price for it.

**Thomas Lojek:** Where does this all come from?

**Dutch Chris Moyer:** This goes back so many years. Do you remember when these “sympathetic shootings” happened and became a big thing in the media? These situations occur when one officer fired his weapon and other officers fire without identifying the threat. Maybe 15 or 20 rounds are fired and only one or two hit the target?

Of course, the public started to ask questions. I understand that. But they never asked “why” these things happen and especially, they did not ask for the right “why.” And this is when it started to get worse.

The truth is: Barely-trained people get barely-optimal results. That is a general rule in life. It is broadly accepted in every industry. Only police officers don’t get the fairness of a balanced view and a common understanding of the simple rule of “good training leads to better performance.” Especially these shootings in the early years of the last decade left a public image of an incompetent and overly-aggressive police force when, in fact, the



reason why these things happened was because of a lack of training. And the public doesn’t know that. It sees only the dramatic outcome as shown in these terrible shooting videos in the media, without an understanding of the “why” behind it.

Remember the Ferguson riots that happened after the Michael Brown shooting? Right away, the Obama administration jumped on the train of public outrage. They targeted the removal of military-type armored vehicles: BearCats, any armored vehicle that drove our police forces into these towns where the riots happened.

And suddenly the militarization of the police force was all over the news and became a thing in the public opinion. It was a big thing, and the demilitarization of the police started to find roots all over the US.

And yes, they looked like “military guys” with their multicam uniforms and helmets. To the public, they may look like “soldiers.” And maybe this wasn’t the best piece of publicity for our police.

But let’s get real here, because I have never heard one of these public critics talk about the men. And yes, there are humans in these multicam uniforms and helmets and armor. If this equipment helps police officers to survive in a very hostile situation, then why not give it to them? Why not give them tactics, techniques and procedures to survive?





the job done and then get back alive and well to their homes?! Let's not forget: It's the badge. It's the flag, and it's the uniform that we serve.

**Thomas Lojek:** I give you unlimited funds and unlimited power to build a police force that you always wanted to have for the United State: What would you do?

**Dutch Chris Moyer:** First, I would double the number of officers.

And we would train in cycles. One half of my police officers would be patrolling and doing whatever job they are assigned.

And the other half would be training. And my training would be: stay focused on the fundamentals: pistol, rifle, close quarters battle. And then dealing with non-combatants and dealing with an escalation of force.

Just like you escalate breaching. What do you do, when you come to a closed door? Do you throw a bomb and blow it all up? No! You see if it is open or closed. You use your head and determine what to do based on the mission.

So, what do we need to do? This for me is one of the biggest things. Tough, realistic training based on scenarios from past experience and tough training developed by experienced officers.

We need force-on-force training in difficult situations. Our police officers need someone to help them to train realistic scenarios with simunition, using opposing forces (OPFOR) .

OOPFOR is primarily made up of other officers in a training department.

And the helmets/armor/rifles, why not give it to them? It helps them to get back safely to their families when the job is done.

Maybe police forces don't need that multi-cam, fine... make it black, make it blue, or whatever the color of your department is.

Does a small-town patrol officer need a tactical helmet, tactical gear? Maybe, maybe not, but it should be available to them. And if there is a non-permissive/semi-permissive environment and an inherent threat of lethal

force against our guys, why not give them what they need to survive that?

And I would like to hear from the politicians, who became a public voice against giving police officers what they need to survive. What is the real reason to demand police officers in these missions and violent environments should not get the right tools?

Why should our brothers and sisters in blue not be properly equipped and well-trained to get







I will tell you the hard truth: We want the training harder than it is in real life. That's what we want.

Sweat in training saves lives in combat. We want more and harder training so that when our officers go to the battlefield, then they can feel confident. Our officers need to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations: We can do this!

Everything comes down to true leadership. This is key. An officer who is calm and always keeps his/her head in a situation is demonstrating his trained qualities that came from good leadership.

In many situations, a calm and cool demeanor can avoid conflict. Or it can keep use of force to a minimum or use only when necessary. The trouble starts when there is not enough experience on the ground to accomplish the task at hand.

And inside of our agencies, I would like to see a culture of true leadership growing from within: We have to look for leaders who are more experienced in order to train the newer officers. Men/women who have already gone through these evolutions of training and operations is what I am talking about.

We need a culture of officers who learn to trust their fellow officers, because they went through the same hard training. And they know that fellow officers will make the correct decisions.

Or those leaders who can identify what they need to accomplish the mission.

Leadership is essential. Good leaders make good operators. Both will get us better performance and a safer environment for everyone: our officers and the public.



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# PROTECTING THE PROTECTORS

## COBRA CUFFS® SPECIFICATION SHEET

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OVERALL WIDTH:	1.5 Inches
OVERALL DEPTH:	0.9 Inches
STRAP WIDTH:	0.56 Inch Strap Opening
DIAMETER:	7.5 Inches

### RESIN PROPERTIES

RESIN PROPERTIES	TEST METHOD	UNITS
TEAR STRENGTH	ASTM D-624	587 Pli
TENSILE STRENGTH	ASTM D-412	2,390 psi
SPECIFIC GRAVITY	ASTM D-792	0.94
COMPRESSION SET	ASTM D-395	43%
HOT AIR AGING AT 320°F	ASTM D-573	95% Tensile Retention
Double Loop Tensile Strength: 425 lbs.+ (Locked Loops/Static Load)		

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PART # MS240-250  
CAGE CODE # 68001  
NSN # 8465-01-676-2327

### COLORS

STANDARD COLORS: Black, White, Green, Tan  
TRAINER COLORS: Blue, Red



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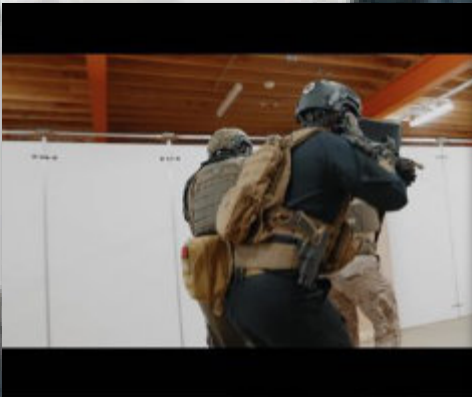
#### Features:

- Modular, easy to setup design
- Create realistic training scenarios for tactical teams
- Proprietary connection and lightweight grid systems allows for rapid deployment
- Reconfigure rooms, hallways and door access in minutes
- Great for simunitions training and K9 training
- Weather proof design
- Build exact replicas of structures for upcoming live fire missions for your team



#### Benefits:

- Cost effective design provides low cost of ownership and nearly no consumables
- Provides realistic, high tempo training, with ever changing room layouts to keep your teams engaged
- Provides flexibility for both permanent and temporary training setups
- Allows for minimal down time in training as it does not require maintenance, sets up quickly and can be reconfigured in minutes.
- The system can be disassembled and palletized for storage or transport.
- Assists departments and tactical units having hands on realistic training at nearly zero operational cost.



# Click photos to learn more...

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# Devin L. Crinklaw

In Extremis Tactical Group

## Why Limited CQB is Different from Conventional "Dynamic Entry" Methods



Devin L. Crinklaw

The purpose of Limited Penetration CQB is to offer the Operator/Soldier/Officer tactical options that enhance their survivability. Especially in a situation that is considered high risk, i.e. (searching for dangerous offenders) and can result in injury or death if confronted by a prepared and willing defender inside of a stronghold.

Limited Penetration CQB directly contrasts with the traditional "Dynamic" method, solely relying on speed plus synchronicity - and with another operator as a partner to assess, discriminate, evaluate, and act while moving into an unknown and previously unseen location.

Consequences in high-risk situations are life-threatening, and precision shots are often to make while moving. It is an incredibly difficult skill for even an exceptionally highly trained and experienced "Operator". But through training and practice, we build enough repetitions and actually become quite proficient at this skill, also known as Close Quarters Battle. Sounds simple right?

We train this all of the time in shoot houses and on flat ranges, but there is a disconnect between what we are doing in training and what really happens when we are doing it



against "resisting threats". I will explain here briefly.

Take #1: In the training scenario described above, the reasonably trained operator can move safely with a weapon and has good weapons handling/marksmanship skills. As well as the ability to assess and discriminate what a good guy target or no-shoot target is vs. a bad guy target or threat target - and can bring the gun up and shoot it. These regularly trained operators will act confidentially and do well in a shoot house situation with 2-dimensional paper targets.

Take #2: Same Operator, same scenario, same weapons system with UTM/Simms Conversion bolt or dedicated SIM upper, etc., the same room now has live role players with Simms/UTM weapons and protective gear inside the room. Role players are told to start shooting at the doorway and operator as soon as a muzzle or body part of the Lead Operator breaks the threshold.

The two-man team makes the entry, and as the first man starts to cross the doorway, they take fire from just off the center of the room. What happens? What doesn't happen is a repeat of what we saw in the paper target run. Nobody - (in general) the average officer/operator (when they are getting shot at room combat





distance) - will close on a threat that is oriented towards them and shooting them. This is entirely behaviorally non-compliant (the primal brain gets a say in this situation).

Under startle, ambush, and new experience, and when the consequences are life-threatening, with little or no time to react, our bodies will default to defensive actions first.

Don't believe me? Watch any Youtube video of a SWAT team that is postured offensively on an operation until they get shot at. They all flinch first, stop forward movement, startle drop, fall down, and some run away before they are able to get back into the fight.

It is simple physiology. The primal portion of the brain (the Amygdala) only cares about survival, so it short circuits the high brain and overrides trained responses with natural survival postures and actions like flinching, hugging cover, stopping forward movement into an ambush, etc.

Mentally sane individuals do not choose to run to their own death willingly. That is why the Military can get 18-year-old Marines to do things like that. Tell a 30-year-old Marine the same thing, and he will have choice words for you.

I challenge you to do the same demos, film them and observe the HUMAN BEHAVIORAL differences between the two drills. I am confident that you will see that there is a

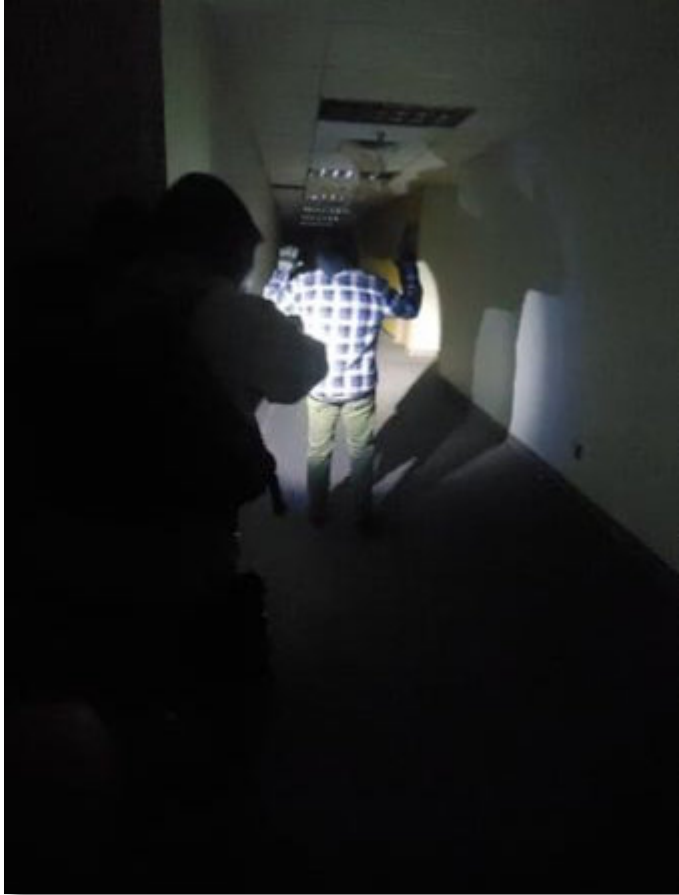
massive disconnect with how we conduct CQB training on a flat range and in shoot houses when the role players are not shooting back. For the assaulters, use face protection and t-shirts only.

True Close Quarters Battle doesn't look like the typical stuff you see on "the Gram" and on Youtube, with four Operators smoothly running into large empty rooms while "running the walls" and shooting inches off the muzzle of the opposite cornerman in the far corner.

Choreographed CQB does not reflect the real world when met with resistance. Most rooms where people dwell have clutter - lots of it. Specifically on the walls, which prohibits that dogmatic method of running the walls.

Very often, there is simply not enough room to put four men inside of a room like the CQB end-user and shoot house instructor courses taught as SOP. The open space is often in the center of the room, precisely where you don't want to move into. So the real-world changes our CQB, yet we still teach our officers/soldiers to run into rooms "blind" and guess what? It works.

Yes, I said it works. Why does it work? Because the overwhelming majority of CQB operations do not encounter prepared defenders. The dynamic method of CQB works until it is met with resistance. Then things fall apart behaviorally, and the results are catastrophic.



The Limited Penetration CQB method is an ambush system as opposed to running dynamically into a predator's lair. No predator in nature will run into another predator's cave without sniffing it first. Limited Penetration CQB allows us to "Sniff the Cave" before we ambush its occupants from the outside.

And remember, bullets will always travel faster than feet.

(Credit goes to my colleague Trevor S. Thrasher, USARNG Special Forces MSG (ret.) Career Police Officer, for the "Cave Sniffing" analogy).

To sum up what we have discussed here:

The genesis of the Behavior-Based Limited Penetration CQB Methodology is rooted in applying and enhancing primal human behaviors under duress to maximize survivability and effectiveness while reducing liability, training burdens, and training disconnects.

It provides one comprehensive principle-based methodology that can be applied at various speeds in various situations. It is compliant with what people will actually do when confronted with a real threat.

Many common methods of CQB require excessive precision in execution and extreme performance under duress. These methods are not focused on the survivability of officers, offer no flexibility in response, and are largely dogmatic and theoretical.

They are primarily based on paper targets and shoot-house scenarios. The recent wide availability of actual combat footage shows that traditionally taught immediate entry tactics are almost always abandoned upon first contact with a real threat.

- Limited Penetration CQB - is reality and behavior-based. It does not require officers/operators to work against their instincts to survive. Behaviorally non-compliant actions increase confusion, stress, and poor decision-making.
- It is survivability-based - it makes use of cover, concealment, movement, maximizing forces, and disruption of the OODA loop to increase both: defensive and offensive capability.





- It gives officers a means to pull out of and stabilize extreme situations (a massive benefit!).
- It uses a combination of limited penetration and focused entry in a flexible but universal manner to deal with various and rapidly changing situations.

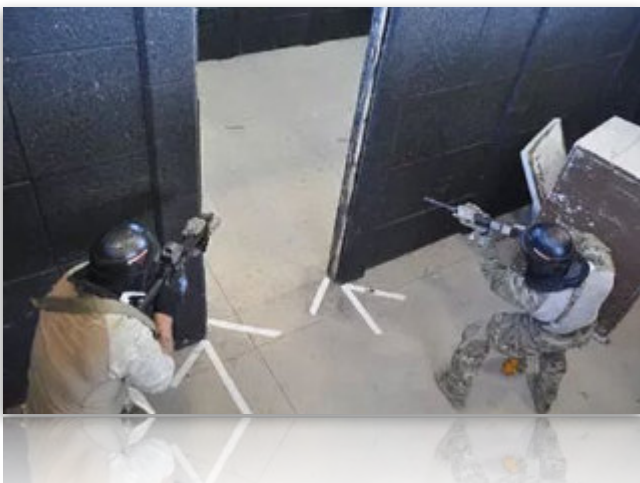
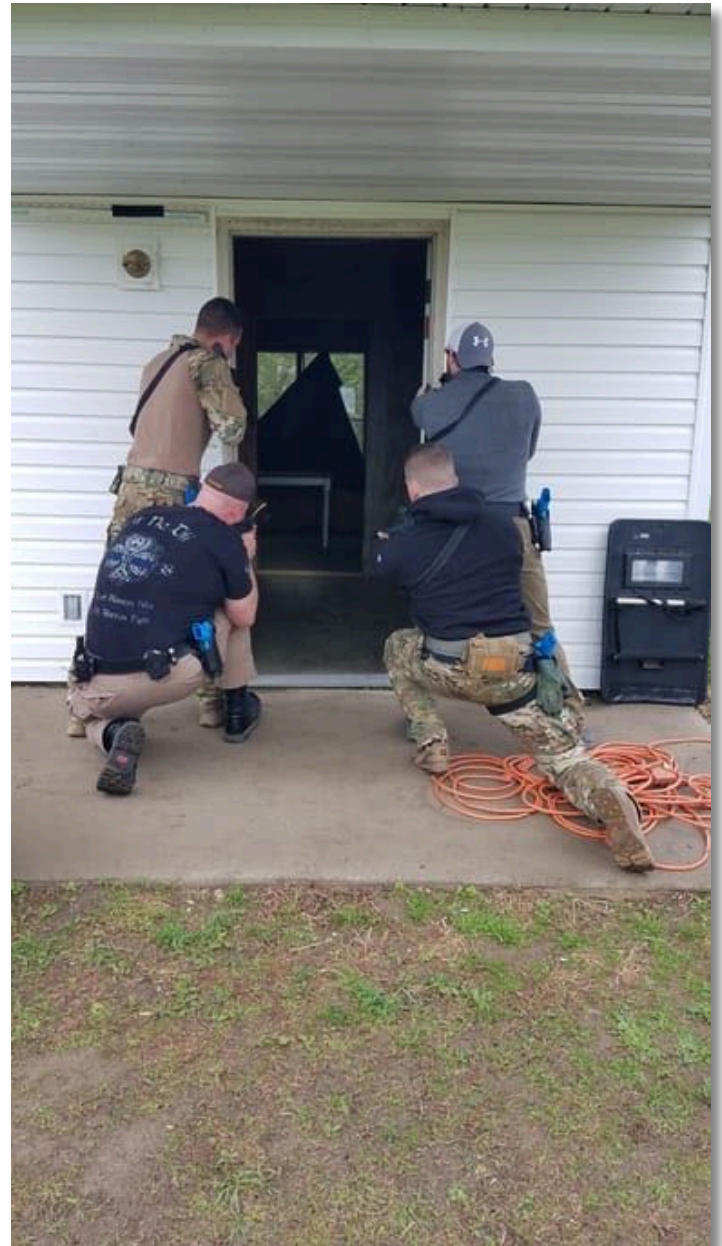
One of the best representations of a highly trained Special Operations Unit can be seen in the "El Chapo Raid" video - US SOF trained these Mexican MARINAS. They have extensive experience in combat and the drug war, conducting CQB operations against extremely prepared and well-trained defenders (once again probably US SOF trained).

During the video, you will not see one operator stack up on the side of the door, get "tapped up", and run into the room full of bad guys with machine guns waiting to ambush them. Natural human behavior is what kept these men alive, despite the Commander telling them to hurry up "Rapido!" "Rapido!"

They intuitively fought from the edges of the doorway (i.e., Limited Penetration CQB) in a hard-fought, high-intensity Close Quarter Battle against automatic gunfire and high explosives. Watch the video of this operation if you want to see what really happens with people if others are trying to kill them from inside a room.

Fortunately, we are hard-wired to stay alive. So why are we training people against nature?

We are offering an introduction to Behavior-Based CQB for Patrol and Small Units LE/MIL Omaha, Nebraska. For more information, call or email [Devin.Crnklaw@gmail.com](mailto:Devin.Crnklaw@gmail.com) or call 402-598-0639. Also, if interested in hosting a course, don't hesitate to contact me at the number and email above.





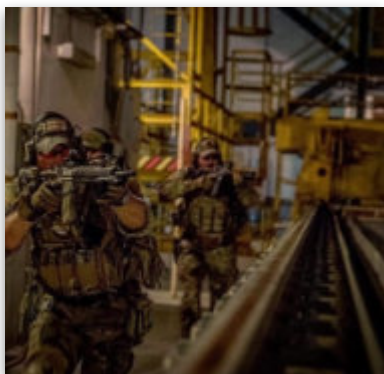






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# Mike Levy

Owner and Chief Instructor for  
Assault Dynamics

## The key to elevating your training is to challenge your decision making!

Flat range training generally focuses on competency with your firearm. As you progress and your skills improve, you find yourself thinking less and less about how to shoot your gun because much of it has become a subconscious response to feedback.

You're not thinking about a reload or a stoppage or anything else, you just fix it and shoot it based on feedback. If you really think about it, how much brain power are you actually using when you're at the range?

It's not until we venture outside of the flat range mentality do we recognize decision making and how our choices impact outcomes.

I've run this drill with many people to evaluate their decision making (click photo to watch the video). About 90% of them will plant their feet and shoot from that position without considering the things within their immediate environment that can help them.

Decision making and tactics are probably the least discussed topics on social media and for good reason. Everyone has a different opinion on what you should do while others make up context to support their argument even though no context was provided.

While there's some value to the dialogue, much of it becomes toxic and inflammatory. The key to elevating your training is to also challenge your decision making and find ways to exploit your weaknesses. In many ways this can be viewed as an "experience" as much as simply training.



1.



2.



3.



4.

Click photos to watch the video



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DYNAMICS**  
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# HRT Advanced Weapon Light System



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## PRODUCT OVERVIEW

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HRT is proud to announce the official release of the Advanced Weapon Light System, or AWLS. Our first, but not last product in the tactical electronics market. The PSF-Mk6 head is capable of being utilized on any system that shares a Surefire dual fuel threading. The system will be held together by a specially built body that connects to your rifle with an ambidextrous MLOK design. The head and tail cap threading are identical allowing multiple methods for attachment to the rifle.

The system is currently tested to an IP68 rating. However, HRT is doing testing to exceed that. The tail cap will come with Valhalla Tactical's Omni-Directional Activator (ODA). The ODA is a new design that reduces negligent discharges associated with rail mounted pressure pads. However, it is extremely ergonomic for a natural activation when needed. The ODA comes with the ability to change tension settings depending on the end user's mission.

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# Scott Usry

Instructor Special Response Teams

**When I became a commander of my first team, I had all our operators certified as Emergency Medical Responders**



Scott Usry

As a Training Officer for the Police Department's Special Response Team, it is my responsibility to plan training that makes our operators stay engaged in training to help sharpen their skills.

These skills are called upon in times where the abilities of the normal patrol officers are not enough to handle whatever situation it is that we were called to handle. Barricaded subject, hostage situations, active shooters and high-risk warrant services are just a few of the situations that may require the team's activation.

We train throughout the year to ensure that team members are proficient with all the weapons that we carry just in case we must use them to protect members of our community. We train on team movement outside of facilities, close quarter battle and room entries, tactical angles, and even less than lethal techniques.

We train to ensure when the time comes and we must spring into action to protect our community we are prepared, but what happens when we are the ones in need of help?

We have all heard the saying "When citizens need help, they call the police, but when the police need help, they call SWAT." While this holds true, what happens when it's SWAT that needs help because of an injury during an operation? While some teams have medics assigned to the team, these medics still can't perform care under hostile fire.

Meaning that if you are still in a hot zone or uncleared area, the medics can't render aid for the threat of becoming casualties themselves. So, what do you do in a situation like this?

We, as Training Officers, must ensure our operators can revert to their training and start rendering self-aid until the time we can get them to a higher level of care at a trauma center. The question is what type of training can prepare our operators for this?

As an operator I had always prepared myself for the fight, but it wasn't until years later that I realized if I ever received a ballistic injury during an operation there was no one coming to help me. This isn't because they wouldn't want to, but instead because they couldn't. This is when I decided that I needed to seek out training that would help me save myself.

This is when I decided to take a class that would push me out of my comfort zone and force me to grow as an operator. I took a Tactical Combat Casualty Care Course that was being offered to our team.

This course was intended to teach each operator techniques that would allow themselves to self-aid until the situation could be resolved, and the medics could get us to a trauma center. From that point on the medical aspect of what we do has intrigued me. Therefore, when I became a commander of my first team, I had all our operators certified as Emergency Medical Responders.

Photos: Scott Usry



EMRs are not EMTs, and I wasn't trying to make the operators Medics, but I did want to ensure my guys were trained to handle whatever came our way.

For TCCC or TECC courses seek out qualified instructors in your area and set up a course sooner rather than later.

In our area, Augusta University's Center for Operational Medicine offers these courses and is led by some of the best medical personnel in the area to include one of our team, Medics Lt. Kyle Tiller of the Burke County Emergency Management Agency.

Now that you have completed the training, outfitting your operators with the proper equipment is one of the most important steps you must take.

There are many great medical outfitters in the industry, but the one that we have been working closely with to outfit our team is Safeguard Medical out of Harrisburg NC.

Jason Fetzer and Michael Chavaree have been working closely with us to develop medical kits that fit our needs while not breaking the budget.



Safeguard Medical has everything that you need to set up some of the most realistic training outside of doing live tissue training.

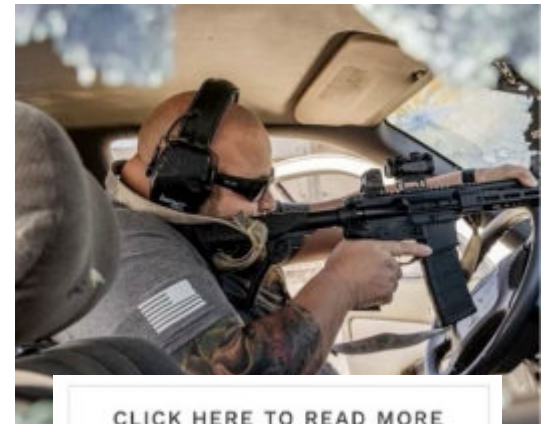
These guys have real-world experience to support your teams' training and equipment needs.

Check these guys out at:

[www.safeguardmedical.com](http://www.safeguardmedical.com)

At the end of the day training for the worst is the best you can do for your operators. Plan, train, and test their abilities whenever possible to ensure growth in their abilities.

Push your training to the point of failure, then back it down until you find the zone in which you learn and grow.



[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)





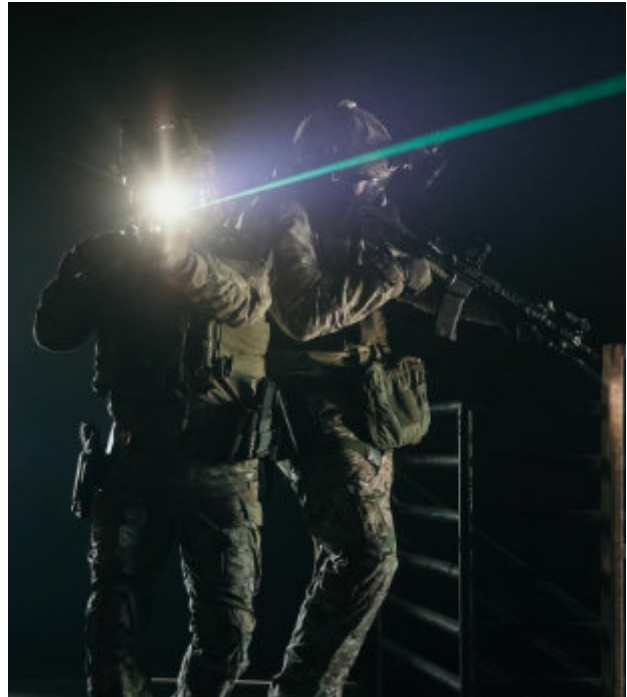


Guild Solutions Group is a consortium of professional trainers from various background and disciplines that work under one name to provide some of the best training in the industry.

Guild Solutions Group has cadre that consist of established and nationally known instructors.

Together, our team is able to provide high-end training opportunities, which is why our ethos is, "Ego is the Enemy of Success".

While working together with other companies, we seek to offer mission specific training opportunities to Law Enforcement, Military, Government, and Civilians.



### LE/MIL Courses

Critical Response Solutions CRS

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# ABOUT EIR Tactical Med & Ops



Nuestro objetivo principal es proteger y salvar vidas en situaciones de emergencia, ya sea en conflictos armados, desastres naturales o cualquier otra situación que requiera de rescate y atención médica. Estamos comprometidos con nuestro trabajo y siempre buscamos mejorar y superarnos para poder brindar la mejor ayuda posible.



Somos un equipo altamente cualificados y comprometidos que colaboran de manera cohesionada para alcanzar metas específicas, tanto en el ámbito táctico como en el sanitario. Nuestra unidad está estructurada en función de una misión particular, con roles y responsabilidades precisamente delineados para cada miembro.

Nuestro equipo se somete a un riguroso entrenamiento y actualización constante en técnicas y procedimientos de rescate y sanidad táctica, para estar siempre preparados para cualquier situación. Utilización de tecnología avanzada y herramientas especializadas. Estamos siempre en búsqueda de nuevas herramientas y tecnologías que nos permitan realizar nuestras misiones de manera más eficiente y segura.





# MISION

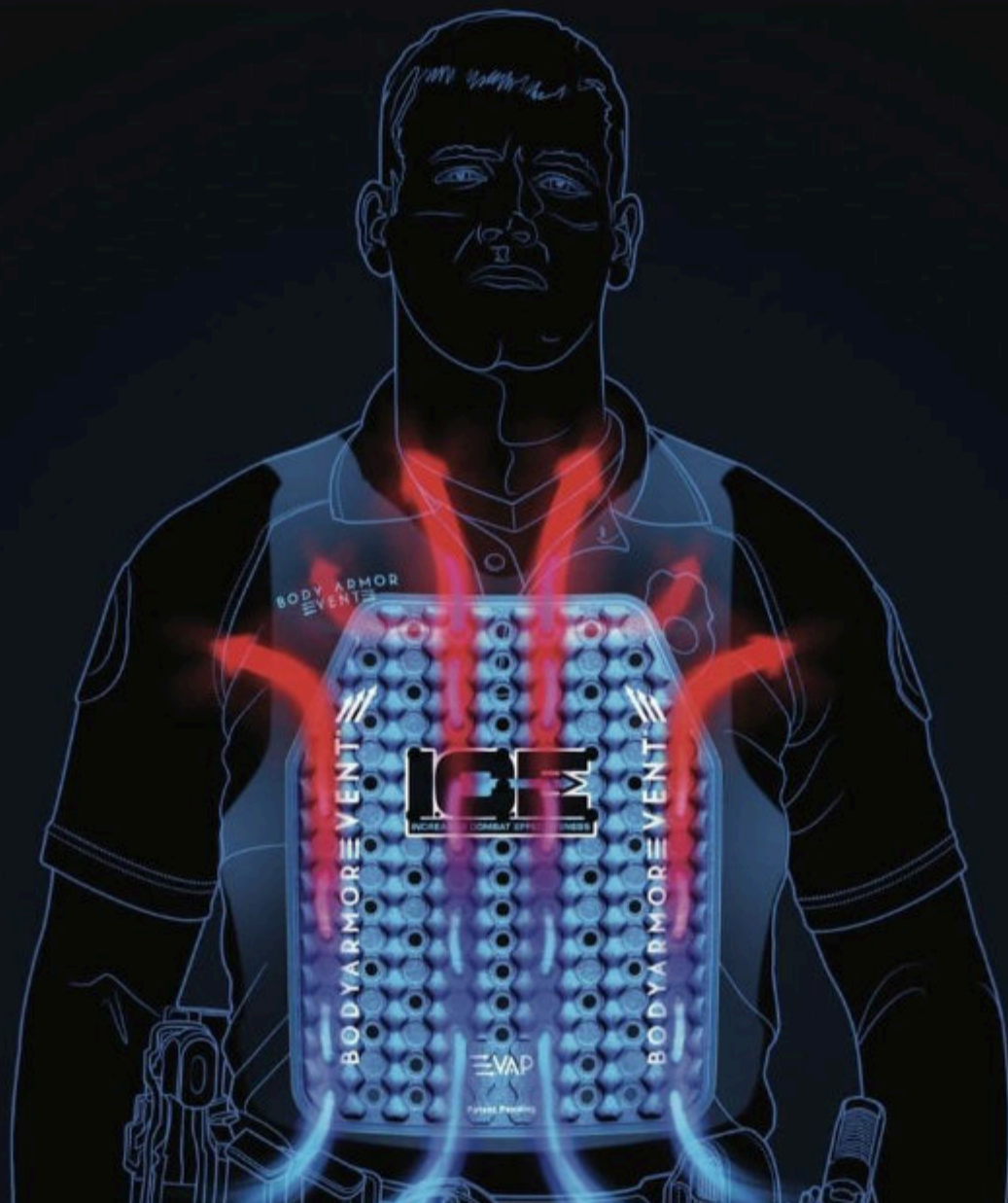
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En este programa de capacitación de un día y medio, nos enfocaremos en el desarrollo de habilidades para la atención de heridos en entornos desafiantes, hostiles, austeros, remotos y peligrosos. Los participantes adquirirán destrezas fundamentales en el manejo de las cuatro causas principales de muerte prevenible en tales escenarios, así como en el manejo de complicaciones, tecnologías y protocolos en medicina táctica. Estas prácticas están alineadas con la medicina basada en evidencia y la experiencia operativa de nuestros instructores.



Este entrenamiento está diseñado para profesionales de servicios de emergencia, bomberos, paramédicos, primeros respondedores, oficiales del orden, militares, personal de salud, escoltas y aquellos cuyas ocupaciones los exponen a entornos de alto riesgo.

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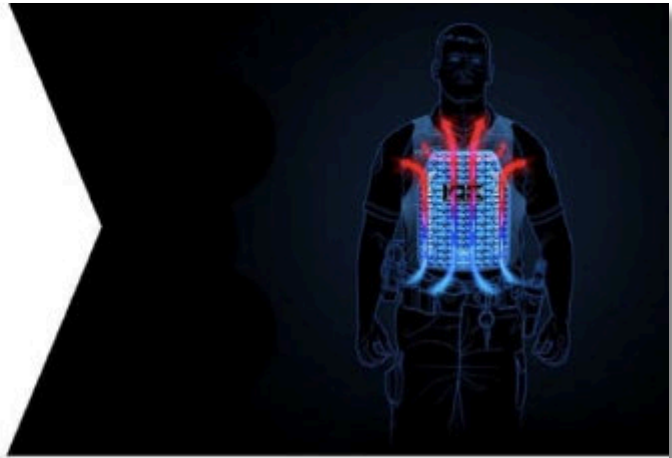
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 **VAP**  
TECHNOLOGY



GAME CHANGING  
TECHNOLOGY FOR  
EVAPORATION AND  
COOLING



Body Armor Vent EVAP Technology™ is the patent-pending evaporation and ventilation technology found in all of our vent panels.

Our I.C.E. and B-24 panels create a continuous air flow between your torso and your body armor. Cool air is drawn in and hot, humid air is pushed out by your own breathing.

This effective evaporative cooling, moving air over moisture, works just like your AC at home!

Our proprietary foam filled, vertical air channels force air flow upwards and also through horizontal vent holes to enable true evaporation of sweat from behind your armor.

This keeps your body's temperature down in the summer and your body much drier and warmer in the winter.

The right Body Armor Vent panels for you!  
We offer you choices in how you vent your body armor. Are you running a plate carrier or concealable vest?

Check out the I.C.E. Retro Fit Kits. These Retro Fit Kits are design to fit any plate carrier or concealable vest on the market.

If you looking to customize your vent or running a larger exterior armor kit, we suggest the B-24 Custom Fit Kits.

Available in three sizes, Full Sheet, Half Sheet, or Quarter Sheet. The perfect choice for the elite operator looking to truly customize their kit.

The B-24 Custom Fit Kit can be used on all your gear, thigh rigs, chest rigs, backpacks and much more.



[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



## Body Armor Vent's I.C.E. Retro Fit Kit

**Le Reseña: Ricardo McClain, Ibero First Responders, Cádiz, España**

De la mano de la revista táctica The Operator, me llega un producto innovador con un textil y fabricación ligera, que apenas añade peso extra al equipo diario. Un dispositivo con todo lo necesario para su colocación dentro del chaleco antibalas, portaplacas, etc.

Se trata básicamente de un par de paneles para colocarlo tanto en la cara frontal como la parte trasera del tórax con la misión de permitir el flujo y caudal del aire. Refrigerando algunos grados el tren superior del combatiente, haciendo más ligero el soporte del estrés y el no caer bajo un golpe de calor por falta de transpiración.

Este dispositivo va colocado sobre un chaleco antibalas de dotación con paquetes balísticos flexibles. Ideal para este tipo de prendas, ya que "abrazo" por completo el tórax del usuario haciendo difícil la transpiración y gestión del calor corporal.

Su sencillez de colocación es uno de sus puntos fuerte.

En varios tamaños o tallas para las distintas envergaduras de usuarios, es totalmente sencillo y adaptable a cualquier tipo de chaleco, portaplacas, etc.

A través de la cinta de velcro adhesivo que ya incorpora en el pack.

Otra de las ventajas que el dispositivo Body Armor Vent's I.C.E. posee sobre otros productos similares es la no necesidad de tener que inflarlo. Me explico.

Otros dispositivos poseen una "boca de llenado" para inflar los canales de refrigeración.

Esto conlleva un tiempo de reevaluación del producto que a través de un uso diario y continuo.

Que si no se tiene en cuenta, al final sigue siendo una capa más añadida que puede dejar de cumplir su función.

Body Armor Vent's I.C.E. Retro Fit Kit ha solucionado ese problema realizando unos canales semirígidos y cómodos sin esa necesidad de reevaluación y llenado del producto, conservando su capacidad de refrigeración continuamente.

La limpieza de los paquetes refrigeradores es muy sencilla.

Basta con limpiar con un trapo húmedo o con un toque de solución jabonosa neutra para la mayor y mejor conservación del textil del producto.

Ya solo queda colocarse el equipo del chaleco portamedios junto con el antibalas con el Body Armor Vent's I.C.E. Retro Fit Kit para disfrutar de una sensación de más frescor y mayor calidad durante el tiempo que se esté de servicio operativo.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)





## Body Armor Vent's I.C.E. Retro Fit Kit

Review by: Ricardo McClain, Ibero First Responders, Cádiz, Spain

Thanks to the tactical magazine The Operator, I've received an innovative product with a light textile and manufacturing process that barely adds any extra weight to the daily gear. It's a device equipped with everything needed for its placement inside the bulletproof vest, plate carrier, etc.

It basically consists of a pair of panels to be placed both on the front face and the back part of the torso with the mission of allowing air flow and volume. This cools down the upper body of the fighter by a few degrees, making it easier to manage stress without succumbing to heatstroke due to lack of perspiration.

This device is placed over a standard-issue bulletproof vest with flexible ballistic packages. It's ideal for this type of garment since it "hugs" the user's torso completely, making it difficult for body heat management and perspiration.

Its ease of placement is one of its strong points.

Available in various sizes or fits for different body types, it is totally simple and adaptable to any type of vest, plate carrier, etc.

This is made possible through the adhesive Velcro strip already included in the pack.

Another advantage that the Body Armor Vent's I.C.E. device has over other similar products is that there's no need to inflate it. Let me explain.

As you see, other devices have a "filling mouth" to inflate the cooling channels.

This entails a product reevaluation time through daily and continuous use.

If not considered, in the end, it remains just another layer added that may fail to serve its purpose.

The Body Armor Vent's I.C.E. Retro Fit Kit has solved that problem by creating semi-rigid and comfortable channels without the need for reevaluation and filling of the product, maintaining its cooling capacity continuously.

Cleaning the cooling packs is very simple.

Just clean with a damp cloth or a touch of neutral soap solution for the best and proper maintenance of the product's textile.

Now, all that's left is to put on the med-carrier vest equipment along with the bulletproof vest with the Body Armor Vent's I.C.E. Retro Fit Kit to enjoy a cooler sensation and higher quality during operational service time.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

**DANIEL  
DEFENSE**  
FREEDOM. PASSION. PRECISION.™



## Rangineering with Daniel Defense

By Joe Marler and Daniel McLeroy

**Joe Marler:** We're shooters. Plain and simple. Just like you, we like to train, attend classes, and compete in shooting events. What makes it a little different for us is that it directly relates to our job and the products we manufacture.

Actively participating in shooting sports and training courses, helps us better understand what our customers demand from our products. The DD MILE team is the military and law enforcement division of Daniel Defense. It is fairly common for a product line to

be born at the request of a Mil/LE End User. Our ability to respond and produce a product that exceeds the customers' expectations cannot be accomplished without the involvement of the entire team...

... including our customers. The only way we can check all of the boxes is by listening to our customers, going



*The only way we can check all of the boxes is by listening to our customers*







beyond arbitrary design benchmarks, and immersing ourselves into a variety of real world applications and scenarios.

As the LE Sales Manager at Daniel Defense, I work with a lot of agencies and special teams on a variety of different projects.

This can be as simple as setting an agency up with a standard DD model firearm or as complex as designing, engineering, and manufacturing a product from scratch that conforms to the customers' requirements.

It's important that I understand the left and right lateral limits of a firearms capabilities in order to make an informed recommendation so that our customer is 100% satisfied with their selection.

At the end of the day, the Daniel Defense MILE Team is committed to providing superior customer service throughout the entire product adoption process including end user product training, and lifetime product maintenance.

Throughout my career, I've had a lot of great opportunities to train with some of the best instructors, attend some amazing classes, and compete in quite a few challenging competitions.

These experiences have served me out tremendously in understanding both what our customers demand and what our products are capable of delivering. When the opportunity arose to attend the Precision Rifle Course with Elevated Shooting at GTI, I couldn't pass it up. And naturally, I had to bring my coworker and friend, Daniel

McLeroy, who's the Product Design Director for our DELTA 5 bolt action rifles.

Once we had decided to attend this class, Daniel and I began to prep our rifles and our gear. The rifle I chose to run was a stock DELTA 5 chambered in .308 with our DD WAVE direct thread suppressor.

I simply wanted to shoot a platform similar to what my customers are shooting. The only way to understand the capabilities of a new product line is to put it through the gauntlet myself.

Daniel, on the other hand, chose to shoot a prototype rifle that you'll have to read about later this year. While the future will reveal these rifles similarities, both are built around our company's corporate values: Freedom. Passion. Precision.



**Daniel McLeroy:** As important as it is to look forward to new products, it is critical to evaluate our current designs. We are continually assessing what we've done right, and what improvements we can make on newer models.

Directly comparing our current DELTA 5 with a rifle in the prototype stage, allowed both Joe and I to critically evaluate features we had modified on the current platform and new enhancements designed for the prototype. These changes might be small or go unnoticed while just plinking on a range, but trust me, these end up making a world of difference when you are pushing your gear to the edge of its limitations.

Training evolutions allow us to push our equipment beyond typical testing criteria and flat range work. More times than not, we find ourselves in adverse

shooting conditions. Whether it is an unconventional firing position, degradation of gear working together, or simply the time allowed to engage a target, these situations give us an opportunity to professionally engineer new product enhancements. This approach produces a more ergonomic and ambidextrous shooting experience. Precision rifle barrels and a smooth action are in our DNA.

With our extensive testing, I went into the training with a reliable cycling action, a known half-minute barrel, and a system that had been through tough endurance and temperature testing. What we were looking to identify at the GTI Course were the miniscule details that we could improve upon from our initial design. Things as simple as the location of a QD attachment point or the ergonomics of a stock can have a huge impact on the shooter's experience. Staying focused on that experience is our top priority.

With our company's roots in delivering products that exceed our customer's high expectations, we're committed to the task.

Listening, staying honest, and incorporating top quality features has kept us true to our word, and we are only just getting started. Something is always brewing in Black Creek, GA and we can't wait to show you what's next.

# Click photos to learn more...







NON-CONVENTIONAL ELEVATED SNIPER TRAINING

WEST

GOVERNMENT TRAINING INSTITUTE

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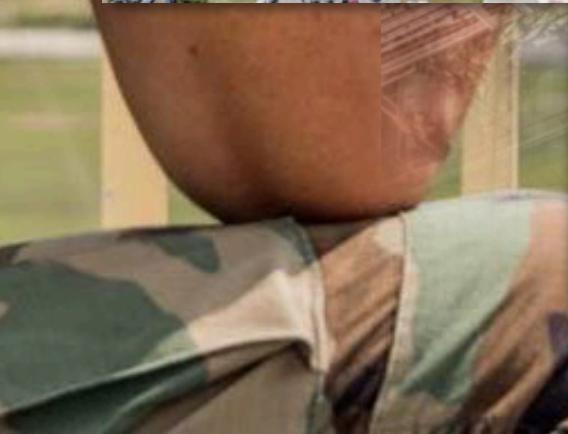
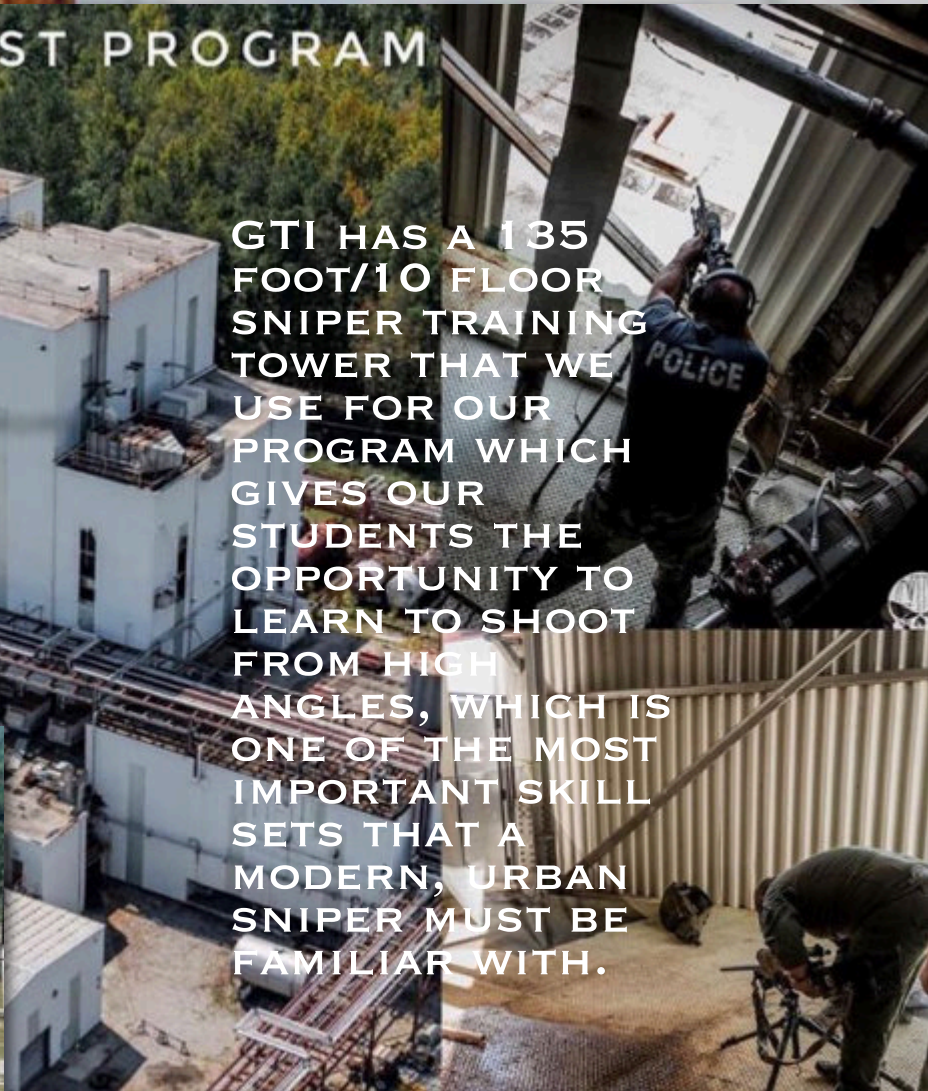




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## THE NEST PROGRAM

GTI HAS A 135 FOOT/10 FLOOR SNIPER TRAINING TOWER THAT WE USE FOR OUR PROGRAM WHICH GIVES OUR STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN TO SHOOT FROM HIGH ANGLES, WHICH IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL SETS THAT A MODERN, URBAN SNIPER MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH.







# Ken Witt Tactical Instructor

GTI Government  
Training Institute



## Vetted guidelines for tactical training

In the United States, as well as around much of the globe, law enforcement will continue to face many of the same issues in 2021 that have challenged it throughout the previous decade: reducing part one crimes against person and property, active shooters, domestic and foreign terrorist threats, hate crimes, human trafficking, crowd management, training, staffing, budgets, and public scrutiny.

Each law enforcement agency's approach to these critical issues must be reassessed through historical experience, data, and professional insight.

This approach must also be outward looking and include the experiences of outside agencies and well-regarded public safety think tanks. This provides the opportunity to either validate existing tactics, techniques and procedures or evaluate new methodologies.

Yet, the fact remains that the deployment of tactical units carries with it one of the greatest liability concerns—in both human and monetary terms—facing any agency. For this reason, agencies must adequately prepare their tactical teams for success. Additionally, this commitment to tactical preparedness must be extended to active shooter training for all field officers.

Any tactical training must begin with an accredited set of standards for training and performance.

The absence in this country of a national standard for tactical units means agencies should look to state governments such as California's Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training for guidance.

Credible organizations such as the National Tactical Officers Association also provide vetted guidelines for tactical training and policies. It is these standards that identify the core competencies which drive individual and team training.

It is essential that team training is entrusted to a vetted cadre of instructors based on their education, training, and experience not rank or time on the team. Rank and tenure do

not always equate to the afore-mentioned criteria. Equally important is the issue of tactical leadership training.

This is another area where rank and tenure are not a guarantee that a leader is prepared to efficiently plan and execute a tactical operation, let alone for the rigors of critical decision making in a dynamic high-stress environment.

Finally, new tactical methodologies should be sought out and evaluated, even if they only serve to validate existing doctrine.

Otherwise the team's training will become inbred and lose its effective edge.

The arbiter of tactical success is regular, meaningful, and realistic training.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)







# Talon Wilkinson

Tactical Tracking Training School

## Tracker Training Misconceptions in Law Enforcement



Talon Wilkinson



In the past, tracking was a skillset only possessed by those who had received training in the military or was minutely discussed in woodland courses that covered a variety of other primary topics.

In the present, visual tracking has grown in popularity in the law enforcement community over the past decade and can now be found from a variety of training venues and vendors across the globe.

As the desire to learn to track has increased in the law enforcement community, so has the misconceptions about the process, the skill set, and the benefits trained trackers can offer their agency.

One of the most frustrating expressions we hear as Tracking Instructors from within our own community is “Tracking is Tracking.”

While it is true that the fundamentals of tracking are the same no matter what terrain or environment you are applying them to; the phrase is usually said to dismiss other venues of training.

That line of thought is detrimental to the industry. We as Tracking Instructors should be encouraging our students in the Law Enforcement community to seek as much training as possible,

whether it is from our own company or others. You would never hear a Firearms Instructor or SWAT Instructor say that their course was the only course that officers needed to take to be proficient in that skill, and tracking should be no different. Basic tracking fundamentals only provide the student the base knowledge to track.

After a five-day course, the officer should feel confident that tracking works and is real. The officers should feel confident that they can track an individual through varying terrains, but the officers should also realize that to become a proficient tracker they will need as much training as possible in the months and years to come.

Tracking Instructors bring unique experiences and lessons learned to the classroom and field exercises. Those experiences are as valuable to the officers as the lesson plan itself, and further proves that the more training





you can expose yourself to, the better you can and will be as a tracker.

Another misconception is that visual tracker training is an attempt to replace the K9 tracking unit at your agency. This is simply not true.

If your agency has a robot for EOD do you throw out your bomb tech? The answer is obvious in that circumstance and it should be the same when it comes to Dog and Visual tracking units.

A K9 Officer who also has the chance to attend visual tracking courses can see his success rate with his dog increase substantially.

We have seen K9 handlers, who log their successes with their dog, improve their finds with their dog by over two hundred percent. This is an amazing testament to the value visual tracking brings to simply help confirm that the dog is or is not on track by observing visual tracking indicators along the route.

In other circumstances, the value of being able to continue the follow up once the dog reaches his burnout stage and can no longer lead the track by deploying tactical tracking TTPs with trained trackers on the K9 search team can become an instant force multiplier that offers a seamless transition from K9 to visual tracking thus helping the officers close the time/distance gap and increase their chances of success.



The biggest misconception with tracking is one of the hardest to defeat; the thought that tactical tracking courses are only for specialized teams.

While the name of the course may be Tactical Mantracking for Law Enforcement the fact is that the “tactical” style of tracking is using the Rhodesia or Macro method as opposed to the micro or step-by-step method used by many civilian search and rescue operations.

Tactical tracking is a vital tool to all law enforcement officers and with the right approach and attitude the observation and tracking skills learned in these courses can be used for so much more than the hypothetical multi-day manhunt or ten-mile follow up on escaped inmates.

Tracking can and has been utilized by law enforcement on patrol for locating missing children, locating the route used by suspects on B&E’s, investigating false claims of robbery (noticing the victim’s trackers were the only ones approaching the vehicle who’s stereo was “stolen”), as well as evidence collection to help link a suspect to multiple crimes through footprint/shoe print analysis.

The heightened awareness that tracker training brings to officers who embrace the training and buy in to the mindset needed to become a tracker has been recognized by past students around the world as invaluable; and when the need arises for a group of trained trackers for



that large manhunt it is nice to have your own team of trained trackers instead of sending a team to training after the fact.

In North Carolina, one of the best tracking teams in the state was formed after a manhunt gone-wrong. When we met the students on day one of their level one course they said “we are here because our Sheriff saw our neighboring counties tracking team and decided next time this happened he didn’t want to have to call them for help, he wanted us to be the county others called for help when they had a situation.”

That statement hit home for our cadre. After that team completed three levels of tracker training with our team, we are proud to say they have successfully tracked and found a missing nursing home patient with dementia who was naked and nearly an exposure casualty.

They have tracked fleeing suspects from their own and surrounding counties that flee into the swamps, as well as all of the incidents that

tracking has been used that do not make it into the headlines of the local news.

With an increasing portion of the law enforcement community embracing tactical tracking over the past several years, it is important to educate yourself on your options for training.

The experiences of your instructors, the past performance and AARs from those in your community who have attended the training, and to be sure you are training in as many environments and terrains as possible to better form your skill set.

Tracking through a pine forest and tracking through the jungle of Okinawa, Japan are two vastly different things. Whether it is the high desert, the swamps, or the forest the fundamentals are the same, but the indicators you look for as well as the aging factors you rely on will change.

So, get out there and track, track often, and train as much as possible.

[# Click photo to learn more...](#)



# Blaze Defense Systems



## Tactical Magnetic Retention System TACMAG Gen II

The Tactical Magnetic Retention System (TacMag Gen II) is molle compatible with gear.

The TacMag Gen II has a closed loop magnetic capability compared to the Gen I previous versions, allowing a much stronger attachment point of anything solid metal attaching to it. It attaches in seconds and has a 60 lb + pull weight with ease.

This device is great for clasp ing evidence, load bearing weapons, other gear, etc.



## First Responder Breacher Kit Pro



## SOK MK4

The SOK MK4 system is an odorless, water soluble lubric gel that was developed to address many of the legal, moral, and strategic issues associated with the use of standard non lethal sprays commonly used in law enforcement and security teams.

Though capable of immediately incapacitating an assailant or suspect, SOK can be deployed in a crowded, confined or unventilated area with absolutely zero toxicological, environmental or respiratory collateral or lasting effects.



The PIG<sup>®</sup> FDT - Alpha FR Gloves brings Flame resistant materials to the proven design of the FDT - Alpha model & the Sheepskin leather from the FDT - Alpha +. Special carbon impregnated leather is used on the forefinger & thumb providing touch screen compatibility.



## Falcon Breaching SCHIVV

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A soldier in full tactical gear, including a helmet with a night vision device and a rifle, is shown from a low-angle, rear-quarter perspective. The soldier is looking towards a large, circular structure, possibly a satellite dish or antenna, in a hazy, outdoor environment. The overall tone is serious and professional.

# **SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

**BY OPERATORS FOR OPERATORS**



# Jack Carr

Bestseller Author of "The Terminal List", "True Believer", "Savage Son", and "Targeted Beirut"

**The enemy is looking for ways to exploit every opportunity where we show weakness or diversion**



After a long career as a Navy SEAL, author Jack Carr turned to writing thrillers. Just as he did in his military career, he uses this platform to explore the present and future dangers that we face as a country and as a world.

The books in his Terminal List series, follow former Navy SEAL James Reece into missions around the globe and into the operator's culture.

Jack Carr sat down with Thomas Lojek to talk about his books and about surviving worst-case scenarios.

**Thomas Lojek:** Can you give us a short summary of the idea behind your James Reece series?

**Jack Carr:** For my novels I always asked the question "What has Iran, China, North Korea, Russia, terrorist organizations, and/or superpowered individuals learned from us over the past twenty years at war and what have they incorporated into their future battle plans?"

We've been playing poker in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and other hot spots around the world while they have had the benefit of looking at our cards and watching how we play those cards.

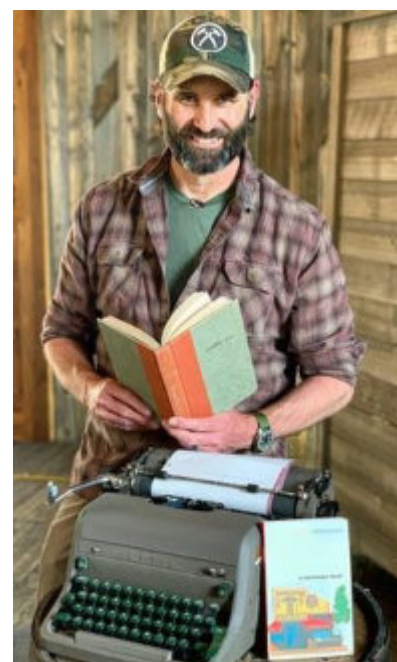
What lessons have they learned and how have they applied those lessons to future battleplans? I thought

about those questions as a SEAL, and today, I think about those questions as an author and a citizen.

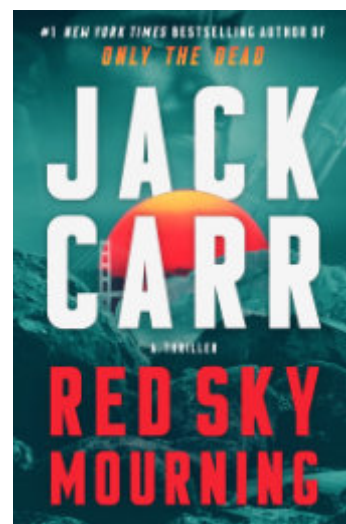
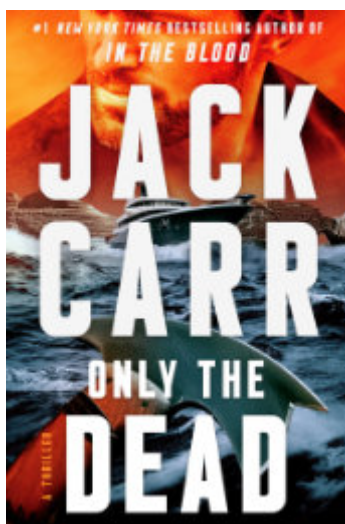
All my novels are centered around those questions. They are learning from our response to COVID. They are learning from the civil unrest that swept our cities over the summer of 2020.

And they are learning from the US election cycle that often highlighted a growing division within the populace.

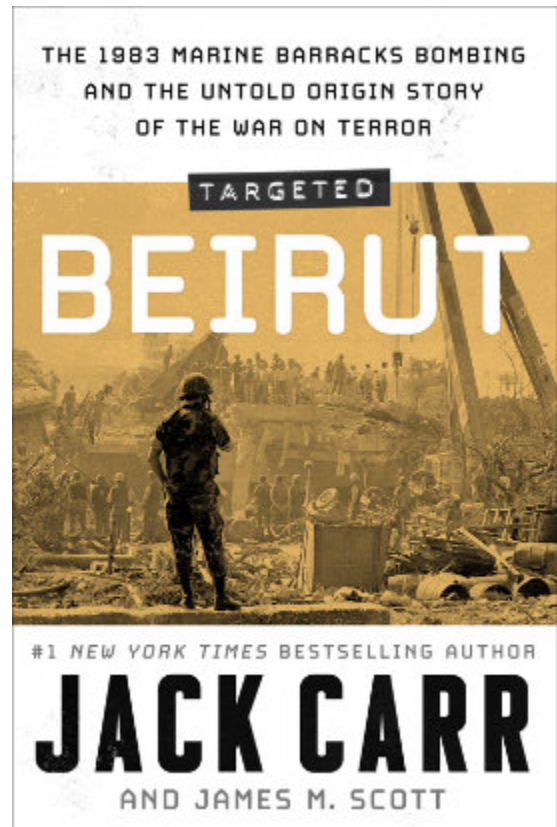
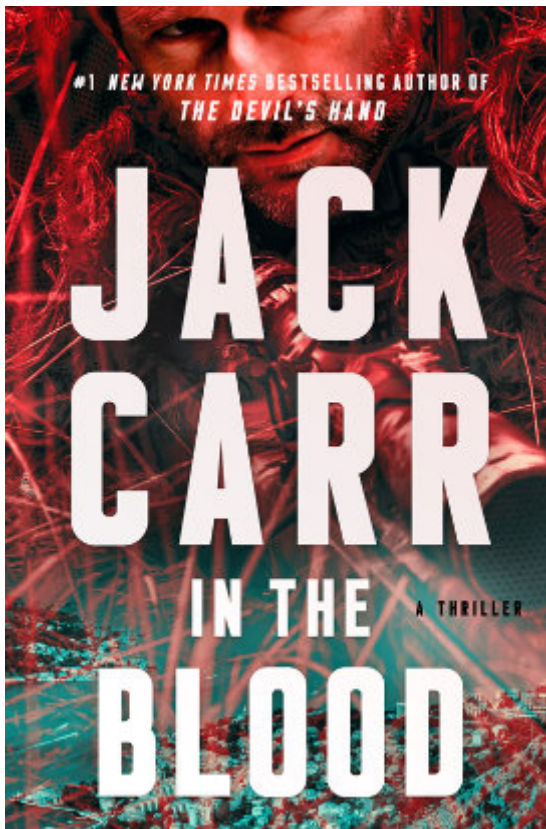
The enemy is looking at all these things with more than passing interest. They are taking notes at every opportunity on how to exploit



*There is the responsibility of taking care of yourself and being prepared.*







these domestic conditions for their potential gain in a future confrontation. Our enemies are combining the lessons they have learned from studying us over the past twenty years at war with the lessons of 2020. We have given them a lot to work with.

**Thomas Lojek:** How can we counter these efforts of our enemies to exploit our weakness?

**Jack Carr:** We have to recognize that society is fragile. That should be one of our biggest lessons from 2020. We have become comfortable assuming that there will always be food in the grocery store, that there will always be somebody at the other end of the line when we call 911 to dispatch police, fire or EMS, and that there will always be someone on duty who will fix a power outage when the lights go out. Those are luxuries and comforts that have been absent for most of the human experience.

The last year should have taught us a few lessons about personal accountability, that we have a responsibility to ourselves, our loved ones and our communities to be prepared. That does not mean running around in a constant state of paranoia. Rather, it means that you need a couple basic skills, a few tools and some forethought/ common sense to deal with adversity when things go south.

Whose responsibility is it to protect yourself and your family and to provide for them? If you remember feeling ill-prepared for the tests of 2020, then it is time to take action.

Food, water, a water filter, fire extinguishers, ways to make fire, a trauma kit (and training on how to use it), some combination of firearms that you have trained with, perhaps a generator, and a few months of finances set aside will allow you to focus your bandwidth on the problem set at hand, rather than having to allocate that bandwidth on the basics necessary for survival.

The goal is to PREVAIL, not just survive and if you have put thought into the basics ahead of time you can focus on prevailing and not just surviving.

**Thomas Lojek:** Let's talk about an end-of-the-world scenario. Zombie apocalypse, nuclear war, EMP, or just the end of civilization as we know it. It happens overnight. What will you carry next morning when you step out of the door?

**Jack Carr:** I am a big fan of choices and luckily I have a few options these days. With that being said, I'd probably choose an AR platform because I have spent so much time over the years training with it. An AR is something I am quite comfortable with.



**Thomas Lojek:** Any specific platform?

**Jack Carr:** Well, maybe that would be my biggest problem, because I have so many. So, the challenge in this situation might be to choose only one.

I have a couple from Bravo Company, Daniel Defense, SIG, and a few others. Like I said, I'm a fan of choices. Each rifle needs a light, a sling, and some sort of an optic with back-up irons.

Some of mine are set up with Aimpoint Micros and others with Nightforce or Leupold glass. It would be nice to have a suppressor, too. I have a few inbound from Dead Air Silencers.

**Thomas Lojek:** Do you think in a world of cyberattacks, pandemics, information wars, it still makes sense to spend a lot of time, money, and energy on shooting training?

Shouldn't we start to diversify and move time and money into other skills, like survival, medic, chemistry, maybe coding,

hunting... skills that will help you to survive a bioweapon attack instead of a shootout?

**Jack Carr:** Shooting is a fundamental skill. You have to know how to shoot effectively as competency with a firearm can be used both to defend your family and provide food. But you are right. That is just one skillset. Survival skills, medical skills, mobility skills, fitness, all these are important.

I am quite fortunate that Mike Glover's Fieldcraft Survival is located right down the road from me in Heber, Utah; they offer courses in all these different disciplines. In courses with Fieldcraft Survival, or Thunder Ranch or SIG

Academy, you will meet interesting people and make new friends.

I always learn something new from people in these courses as they draw citizens who have recognized the importance of building up skillsets that allow them to be more self-reliant, that put them in the asset category rather than the liability category. You want to be an asset to your family, your community and your country, not a liability.

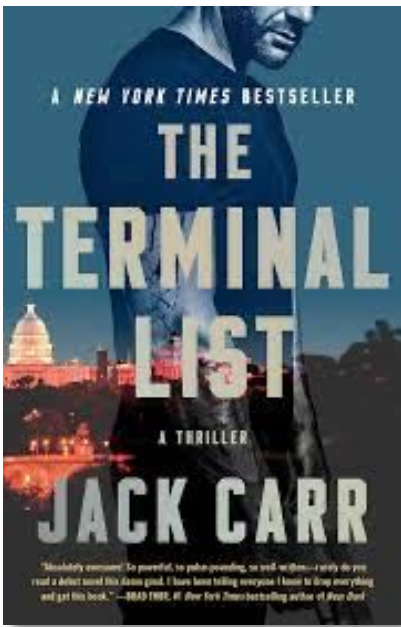
**Thomas Lojek:** In the world of cyberwarfare, bioweapons, information wars... What role will Special Operations have in this world?

Will it still be justified to spend millions of dollars to create and train highly specialized soldiers when troll farms and hackers can burn a city literally down with a few kilobytes of false information?

**Jack Carr:** We have to take the lessons from the past and apply them going forward that's called wisdom, something in which we are often deficient as we tend to think in terms of four-year election cycles. We certainly need to devote considerable efforts and energies on building up a force focused on cyberwarfare and the connected emerging threats in that space.







But, I think you will always need those special operators standing ready to go downrange at the tip of the spear.

Unconventional warfare, special reconnaissance, direct action, foreign internal defense, counter terrorism, counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, hostage rescue...

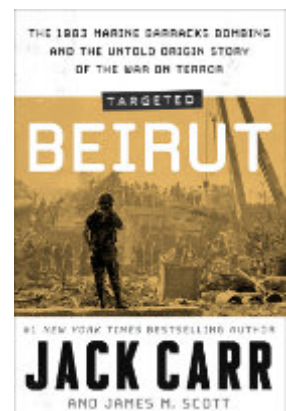
... these missions will always need the special operator; constantly training, continually honing the edge, always ready for the call...

... Break glass in case of war.



Don't miss the Terminal List Amazon Prime TV Series.

Jack Carr's books are available Amazon, or find it at your local bookstore.



Coming Sept, 2024



## Brian Bewley

Tactical Solutions International

### Mass Population Vehicular Operations

The Back Story: Peering out a small window of the HC-130 Combat Shadow on its approach to the Chittagong Airport, the waters below were colored muddy brown and dotted with hundreds of dead cattle, bloated and floating for what seemed like miles in all directions. Why were there dead cattle floating in the ocean?

Inside the belly of the Combat Shadow, my teammates slept on top of the pallets of relief supplies or were stretched out on the uncomfortable nylon troop seats courtesy of the US Air Force.

As the aircraft began its descent, the Load Master woke everyone up and told us to get our seat belts fastened for landing. It felt as if we had been on this plane for days and I could sense that everyone was looking forward to getting on the ground soon.

As everyone checked weapons and quietly secured their individual gear, I could feel the calmness of thought in all 35 of us, the newly established Damage Assessment Response Team, or DART of the 1st Battalion, 1st Special

Forces Group. The aircraft hit a couple small bumps in the sky on its downward path towards the airport, but there was no worry amongst us.

The USAF 17th Special Operations Squadron crew were masters of this aircraft and over the years we had developed a remarkably close working relationship with them, and we trusted their skill in flying completely.

The landing was sudden and without hesitation the Load Masters began to open the rear ramp of the aircraft. The outside light began to pour into the plane as the ramp opened, but so too did the outside air bringing with it the smells of death, humidity and rotting cardboard. The pilots soon brought the plane to a stop near the recently defunct air traffic control tower.

Just a few days earlier, on 29 April 1991 one of the most powerful cyclones ever recorded hit the region, and Chittagong was directly in its path. Cyclone 2B (later named Marian) packed winds of 160 miles an hour and created a 20 foot storm surge that left a high-water mark on the air traffic control tower walls at a height of 15 feet.

It was estimated that 130,000 to 145,000 people were dead or missing and over 2 million homeless with no food, shelter or potable drinking water. Welcome to hell!

I was the first American off the plane and the first thing I noticed was a half dozen or so Soviet supplied MIG-21s piled together in a heap at the edge of the runway and total destruction of almost everything in sight. The smell was horrid and there was a very large crowd of people grouped beyond the immediate carnage, being held back by security personnel with large sticks.

A tall man wearing western clothing was moving with haste towards the aircraft and was immediately greeted by our boss who had un-assed the aircraft behind me. It was our US Embassy liaison from the



Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Dhaka.

“Bewley, you and your commo guys grab your shit and load up with the Major here and get commo established with the world. Also, collect everyone’s weapons as the ambassador does not want us armed for some fucking reason, and lock them up in the Marines armory at the embassy!” my boss commanded. WTF? No guns in this apocalyptic waste land?

I was soon sitting next to two of my SF commo guys, jammed tightly in the backseat of a Toyota Land Cruiser, with all our gear and weapons filling the rear of the vehicle.

The Major was in the front with a local Bengali driver and the vehicle slowly began the trek towards the US Embassy, an estimated 6 hours away in the capitol city of Dhaka.

The guards with big sticks rapidly began swatting people upon our approach and established an initial parting of the human sea so that our vehicle could slowly pass through this newly established opening.

Initially it did not seem too challenging as the security personnel with the big sticks were beating the people who were directly in front of the vehicle which made an unhindered pathway for the vehicle to move. Suddenly, however, the guards with big sticks disappeared within the crowd and the pathway began to collapse upon itself.

People were immediately pressed up against all sides of the vehicle, their faces etched with hunger, thirst and hope that the Americans were

bringing them life. Dirty hands clawed at the vehicle desperately hoping for a morsel of food or something to drink, something they had probably not had in many days.

Hundreds of people were now rocking the vehicle, trying to get in through closed windows and doors. It was a pre-cursor to the mass zombie scenes in the TV show the Walking Dead. “Get us the fuck out of here!”

I remember yelling at the driver as he now sat motionless, unsure of how to drive through the mass crowd of people. The Major had somehow positioned his foot onto the accelerator and grabbed the steering wheel from his position in the passenger seat, immediately launching the vehicle forward while clearing the bodies to our front.

The pitiful face of the man who was laying on the vehicle hood pleading for help suddenly vanished, tossed into the crowd as we punched through the endless ranks of the desperate. Mass protests and vehicular assaults Dhaka, Bangladesh

Within seconds, we were past the crowd and onto the main slip road that runs from the airport to highway Nr that

would eventually lead to Dhaka 165 miles up the road.

The road was littered with debris, abandoned vehicles, livestock and an endless tide of the zombies slowly moving towards the airport as the driver once again took control of the vehicle from the Major and began dodging the various road hazards. This same scene was repeated almost daily until redeployment 3 weeks later.

While this was my first experience in Mass Population Vehicular Operations (MPVO), it formed the basis for my teams Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) when we were operating in like environments or situations around the globe.

Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Bosnia, the Philippines, Venezuela or the streets of major Democratically led cities within the US (i.e. Portland, Chicago, NY City), to name a few, are examples of similar mass population events triggered by war, revolution, famine, natural disaster or a combination of all.

Operating in these environments safely and successfully requires proper utilization of TTP, planning and preparation.



**What if...?** When faced with the possibility of conducting mobility/vehicular operations in a potential mass population situation, first and foremost, follow SOF Imperative #1: “Understand the operational environment.” This imperative will drive your actions.



Have you conducted a route recon during movement planning? At a minimum, conduct a map recon of your primary and alternate route and always remember to utilize PACE (primary, alternate, contingency, emergency) planning when possible.

Is there recent intel on protests, mass concentrations of people along your planned route or is there a potential for a flash mob to close a roadway along your route? If protests, roadblocks and mass gatherings are known or possible along your route, change the route! There may be times when assumption of risk (i.e. driving through these protest areas) is required, but if not required...change routes!

Are you in a militarily hostile (semi or non-permissive) environment with clear rules of engagement (ROE) and a directed mission requiring

speed of movement over security (think Black Hawk Down in the streets of Mogadishu)? If yes, guns are hot and those within the crowds are likely combatants.

Your vehicle is also a deadly weapon, employ it as required. How does a convoy of vehicles differ from a single vehicle? Are you the driver or a passenger? If the driver, there is little concern for a group of combatants standing in the roadway to your front shooting at you...they are merely speed bumps. Keep your head on a swivel...observe surroundings and respond to stimuli rapidly.

Beware of vehicular roadblocks, loss of observation through smoke and fire, channelization into potential ambush zones. Be prepared to change routes immediately. Passengers engage the threat as required, maintain communications and serve as additional eyes for the driver. Down vehicle drills should be Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), practice them!

If the vehicle does go down, do you stay in the vehicle or exit and fight/evade? Conflict areas are known for pulling dead or wounded Americans from vehicles/helicopters and dragging them around cities for a sense of motivation. How are we going to safeguard our dead or wounded within a downed vehicle?

All these questions should be addressed in our SOPs and practiced until second nature. I am sure everyone remembers the Blackwater guys hanging from a bridge in Iraq a few years back? Are you traveling in soft-skinned, low-level vehicles or full up B6/7 armored vehicles with run flats? The type of

vehicle helps with survivability when shit hits the fan. That said, however, I have maneuvered through areas in local low-level soft-skinned cars without issue, while the nice, armored vehicles were IED and bullet magnets.

Have a standard recovery kit in all vehicles: fire extinguishers, straps, chains, jacks, etc. to pull a downed vehicle out of a hot area if needed. Equipment destruction plan for installed comms, weapons or equipment that cannot be rapidly removed from a downed vehicle. Is there a QRF if things get bad? These are just a few things to think about while in this operational environment.

Are you in a humanitarian or law enforcement environment where your actions could bring discredit upon your mission or organization by driving aggressively through crowds possibly causing injury or death to those that you are tasked with saving or protecting (think previous Bangladesh story or police trying to quell the riots in Portland)?

Or are you a law-abiding citizen legally driving in your city with your family and a spontaneous protest erupts around you? If yes, the mass population surrounding you is not normally a sea of combatants, but protesters or agitators.

They can still cause grave consequences to movement and to your safety. We do not need to look far back in our history to find adequate case studies; riots in Watts, LA, Chicago - to our current unrest on the west coast, Minneapolis, Washington, DC. Or what about the unrest and criminal activities post hurricane Katrina?





Top: Brian Bewley

Protests may start off as a peaceful demonstration for social justice/reform or complaining about the slowness of government response to a natural disaster can suddenly ignite into full rioting, with mass property damage, burning buildings and cars, looting, assaults and yes, murder.

Images of Reginald Denny being pulled from his truck and having his head smashed with a brick, police slain while they sit in their cars or major highways being closed to traffic due to human blockades seem commonplace in our 24 hour news-cycle of today.

Our police and citizens caught up in this mayhem are trying to figure out their response; their TTP... "what must I do if I am suddenly surrounded by mass protesters?"

Can I shoot the protesters if I am in fear for my life?

Can I drive through protesters if they are illegally blocking my vehicle?

These are just a few of the questions I receive almost daily. I refer everyone back to SOF **Imperative #1...Understand the operational environment.**

**MPVO Tips of the Trade: Planning, preparation and a bit of TTP to keep you and your family safe...**

**1. Stay informed** of any protest activity, location and movement in your area. Social media, the local news and even some cell phone apps such as Google Maps will alert you to the potential of unrest. Brief your family before departing of what is going on in the area and what actions to take should the protests occur while in transit. Have kids use the bathroom **BEFORE** you depart. **Unscheduled potty stops can be dangerous in protest areas.**

**2. Ensure the vehicle** is properly stocked with emergency items such as first aid kits, jumper cables, flashlights, a small Get Home Bag with water, food and survival items and self-defense weapons (non-lethal/lethal). Cell phones should be fully charged or have charging blocks within the vehicle.

**3. Pre-plan routes** to your destination and return, including a primary route, alternate route at a minimum.

Use car GPS for quick referencing of location and alternate routes. If protest areas are shown along your routes, change direction and avoid at all

costs. Keep car fueled up to a full state. If you need to refuel, choose a primary and alternate fuel stop along your route. If the trip is long, preplanned rest and feeding stops should be coordinated to the greatest extent possible.

**4. Seat belts** are always worn, doors are always locked, windows are always up. Use vehicle air conditioning in the RE-CIRCULATE position. If legally authorized, maintain firearm in a concealed carry position. I personally place my pistol under my right thigh (I am right-handed), grip towards center console. This allows me quick access to my pistol, and it is not caught up in the seatbelt if I had to draw from my typical appendix carry position.

I have had plenty of civilians tell me that if I slam on my brakes, the pistol will fly onto the floorboard and will complicate things. This makes me smile as this will NOT happen and having driven armed in some of the most austere places on the globe, this works for me.

**5. Drive defensively** with at least 2 car lengths between you and the car in front of you so you have plenty of time to react to a rapidly changing situation around you. Of course, today's drivers may try to fit their car in





this 2-car space, so be prepared. Always look for an out. If something happens directly in front of you, you must plan quickly to stop, change lanes, change direction, pull onto sidewalks, conduct J turns, etc.

When coming to a stop on a city road, leave sufficient space that you can maneuver the car out of traffic if needed. You have planned, prepared and avoided all protest areas, great job! What if Murphy (of Murphy's Law fame) raises his head and you suddenly find yourself surrounded by a flash protest mob?

**1. The passenger must** immediately dial 911 and describe mob size, location, activities and that you are in fear for your life and the life of your children. Most laws state that you cannot intentionally run protesters over in your vehicle. However, in this situation where I have my family with me, I am not going to let the violent crowd dictate if my family and I get to live.

The driver will attempt to slowly navigate from the area if possible. Do not stop! if necessary, gently nudge people that are in your vehicles path out of the way. If they jump onto your hood, continue slowly

forward until clear of crowd and then accelerate.

The hood ornament(s) will soon regret their decision to hop aboard when that the speeding vehicle stops, they jump off, or your sudden breaking loosens their grip on the hood. If they are hitting the cars windows with their hands, not much will occur, but bats, poles, bricks or emergency responder window breaking pens can lead to window breakage.

Side and rear windows are safety glass and will shatter readily. Do not push this shattered glass out, as it will still offer a layer of protection from the protesters outside the vehicle attempting to reach through the broken glass to pull an occupant out of the vehicle (i.e. will cut skin quickly).

Once free of the crowd, you can push the shattered safety glass outside of the car so you can see. The windshield is laminated safety glass and has a layer of plastic that will keep it from shattering. It can white out however, eliminating your ability to see.

Should this occur, have your passenger kick the front windshield out so that you can see to your front.

**2. Children or passengers** should immediately get low into the vehicle, as close to the floor as possible. There is the possibility that armed protesters will shoot at the vehicle as you move through the crowd. Should a flammable liquid be tossed onto the car, such as a Molotov cocktail, immediately accelerate through the crowd, breaking contact and stopping at least 200 meters from the protesters.

Do not worry about running people over at this point. The 200 meters allows sufficient standoff from your vehicle and the sprinting protesters heading towards your car, to allow you to step out with your fire extinguisher and extinguish the flames. Once the flames are out, immediately get out of the area. 200 meters is also a distance that most protesters armed with pistols will be ineffective.

I also carry 1 CTS HC (heavy cloud) smoke and 1 CTS CS grenade in my emergency kit that can be used to break contact once free from protesters.

Most people do not have access to these pyrotechnics, but there are alternatives, such as bear/wasp spray that are effective up to about 25 feet.



**3. If either being shot at,** Molotov cocktails thrown at your car or rocks smashing out your car's windows - these are deadly threats. Faced with a deadly threat, we are generally authorized to protect our lives, the lives of our family and innocent 3rd parties.

Your vehicle can be considered a weapon, use it! Should your vehicle no longer be drivable, or you have been channelized into a road block or ambush with no possibility of escape, you will be required to fight for your life.

Fight from the vehicle for as long as possible. Shoot through doors and glass as needed. Do not extend your firearm outside of the vehicle as it can be taken from you with ease and used against you. When out of ammunition, be prepared to fight with whatever you have and do not quit.

If there is a possibility for escape for you and your family, do it early. Time wasted will bring more bad people to the party, so be prepared to fight your way to shelter or cover from a nearby building.

How do we train for these mass population, mob vehicle assault scenarios? Start with tabletop exercises, walk-throughs, dry fire and eventually live fire training would be a logical training hierarchy for the whole family. Shooting in and around vehicles, within confined space, such as the front seat of a vehicle, shooting through glass and doors are required skills but often not allowed on public ranges.

Qualified training facilities such as Tactical Solutions International, Inc. or its commercial training arm Tactical Training International, have 360-degree ranges, vehicles, specialty venues and real-world experience to provide all requisite skills for MPVO.

As each state is a little bit different in its use of lethal force, we recommend that you check your local laws. There is a lot of case law already in the books on use of deadly force in these situations.

Train, know the law, avoid getting caught up in protest areas but if you accidentally do, in my opinion, it is better to be judged by 12 of your peers than carried by 6.



Brian Bewley and his wife S. Jessica own and manage Tactical Solutions International, Inc. (TSI) in Crowheart, WY.

TSI and its commercial training department, Tactical Training International has been conducting cutting edge tactical training for DoD, US Govt organizations, friendly foreign governments, LE, corporations and qualified civilians since 2003.

**For more information on TSI or TTI training opportunities, please visit [www.tacticalsolutionsintl.com](http://www.tacticalsolutionsintl.com) or contact Nate Mastin or Logan Brown, TTI Training Dept., (307) 486-2336.**



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# Tom Buchino

Covenant Special Projects (CSP)

## How to master the tactical fundamentals in SOF and specialized law enforcement



Tom Buchino

**Thomas Lojek:** Dear Tom, could you give our readers a brief introduction of yourself and your company?

**Tom Buchino:** I am a Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Special Forces (Ret.), with over 23 years of active duty services. I started Tactical Ranch in 2010 and recruited a cadre of instructors from all aspects of the SOF arena and specialized law enforcement personnel.

Tactical Ranch operates in conjunction with Covenant Special Projects, LLC (CSP), a service-disabled veteran-owned and operated small business.

Tactical Ranch and CSP specialized in elite risk mitigation advisory services and training for the U.S. and allied nation governments, local, state, federal agencies, and private customers. CSP's foundation in the U.S. Military Special Operations Forces (SOF) community provides a unique experience base and specific skill-set, which serve as a base for all our instruction programs.

**Thomas Lojek:** In other words, do your teaching methods come from real combat experience?

**Tom Buchino:** Yes, CSP's cadre combat and trainer experience mean you receive training by someone who has employed what they are instructing. Our trainers hail from: U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Berets), U.S. Army Rangers, U.S. Navy SEALs, U.S. Air Force Para-Rescue,

U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations, and Elite Law Enforcement Officers.

CSP's cadre is subject matter experts in their specific disciplines, all possessing the common goal to provide fundamentally-sound, relevant, best training and services to our customers.

**Thomas Lojek:** Many seasoned instructors are worried about the growing number of new and inexperienced instructors who rush into the market with "tacticool videos" but fundamental bad advice. Do you share these worries?

**Tom Buchino:** Yes, there are a lot of tactical training courses out there, now. Some good and some, well... you be the judge. When I entered the commercial side of military, LE, and civilian tactical / firearms training, I was fortunate to have many years experience of operating complex training and advisory operations worldwide as part of the







Special Forces Regiment. It served as a solid foundation and test-bed for developing training approaches. Nothing like, not speaking the language of an assault team, you are training to execute CQB opns that work vs. all the flashy Hollywood TTP's (techniques, tactics and procedures).

There are many excellent tactical instructors out there. Many I have had the privilege of serving with and training alongside, and I learn from all of them. And then there are the "Youtube Sensations! "

They produce great videos, employ social media to build a brand, and show you in a one-minute clip their latest ninja skills. Great entertainment, I guess. But my take on tactical applications training is based on my experience. Experience in SF, experience in working globally, and experience in working with cops, soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

The only way to achieve an excelled level of tactical competency is by stressing and mastering the fundamentals.

When you can perfectly execute the fundamentals under stress... Well, then you got something.

**Thomas Lojek:** Can you tell me more about your philosophy of tactical training?

**Tom Buchino:** I have a simple but effective philosophy: There is no such thing as advanced tactics! Only perfect execution of the fundamentals under stress! This is the training philosophy of Covenant Special Projects and Tactical Ranch.

It's all about the fundamentals! Master the fundamentals, and you are well-trained to master any situation in combat.

You can't control all parameters in the chaos of a firefight. But you can control how effectively you are in executing fundamental actions that have been proven as reliable and effective in actual combat.

And I ensure my training cadre and security professionals adhere to it. So my approach and, thankfully, the methods of our trainers at CSP's Tactical Ranch is 100% based on the fundamentals whether we are conducting a patrolling and small unit tactics course or a tactical carbine train up.

We concentrate on developing solid fundamentals that complement and enhance students' prior knowledge and



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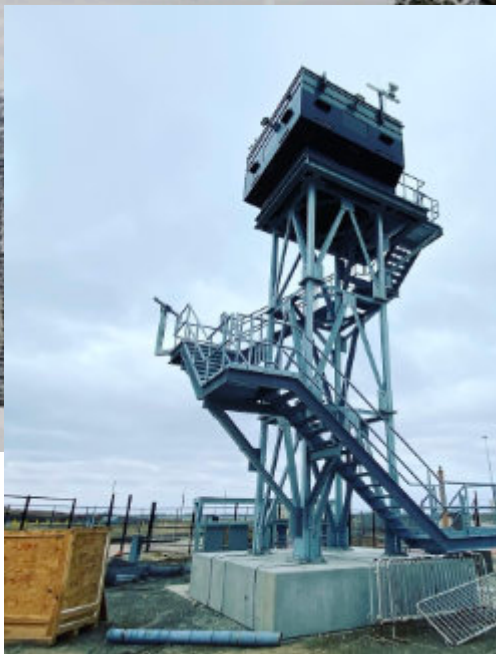
unit standard operating procedures (SOP's). As we progress with our training, we induce differing stressors to serve in adding realism, thus requiring the student/s to perform in a more challenging environment. From physical fatigue faced during a stress shoot to mentally stressing teams during a night patrol.

Or CQB training evolution that intentionally goes astray. It is imperative to ensure students have a solid baseline in the fundamentals that they can rely on to accomplish the mission when faced with adversity. We train for battle in every course. However, battle in my experience is seldom perfect, never scripted, and ever-changing. If we can replicate this in our training, it only serves our students better.

When I was a Team SGT (A-team days), I used to say... "You Plan on Paper and Execute In Dirt."

This simply meant regardless of the best planning and rehearsals, environment and dynamics will change the minute contact is initiated. It meant we had to maintain a fundamentally-based approach to everything we did.

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# Todd VanLangen

Competition Shooter, Army SOF ret.

**Competitive Shooting events will sustain or increase your Combat Shooter skill.**



Todd VanLangen

Shooting Competitions vs “Combat Training” and which is most applicable in the “real world” is an age-old argument between folks that is damn near as old as gmm vs .45, Ford vs Chevy, etc. I recently came across a heated social media debate on this very subject, so when GTI asked me to write an article, I figured...why not stir the pot?

Over the past 24 years, I have been fortunate enough to do both and as a Tactician I can without a doubt say that Competitive Shooting events will sustain or increase your Combat Shooter skill. As we all know, the more you pull the trigger, be it Dry Fire, Flat Range Live Fire, the more “in tune” and accustomed to that firearm you become resulting in a better shooter.

This reason alone should justify the argument, but Competitive Shooting has a lot more to offer than only becoming a better shooter. The most valuable skill I gained from Competitive shooting that applied to Combat was the ability to work very quick and smooth in a short amount of time. Whether competing in IDPA, IPSC, PRS, NRL, Multi-Gun, etc., time is always a competitor’s biggest hurdle (next to hitting targets obviously).

The stress a shooter puts on themselves to do well during competition closely mirrors the chaotic time sensitive

nature of combat. The ability to think and act under the stress of time is very translatable to combat, and the more a tactician puts themselves in similar situations, the brain will begin to “slow down time” (which means your brain will develop muscle memory enabling you to think more quickly and clearly) giving a clear advantage over the bad guys.

The Anti-Competition crowd will argue that competitions are not tactical and will result in “bad habits” like not utilizing cover, not changing mags during a lull in fire, and frankly this is all total nonsense. It is true that as a competitor, the ability to “game” the match better than his opponents is typically what separates top shooters from the rest of the pack.

Gaming defined as the ability to find legal loopholes in the rules to enhance economy of motion by shooting targets in an unintended manner leading to







quicker times and overall better finish. It's been my experience that the "bad habits" argument is not a realistic threat. Instead, human nature, training experience and common sense will always take over in a combat situation.

For example, it is human nature to hide behind cover for protection if getting shot at. I've heard folks say, "Competitive shooters aren't training as they fight when using tricked out race guns!".

There is some validity to the fact you aren't getting practice with your combat equipment if using guns other than your tactical rigs, but who says you must compete using a "hotrod" gun? Why not use your work/tactical rig at matches? Why not shoot these matches wearing full kit and weapons you wage war with?

My first Team Sergeant in Special Forces regularly required our ODA team to attend and compete in monthly IDPA and Multi Gun matches. We would show up to Multi-Gun matches wearing BDUs and carrying government issued M4 Carbines, M9 Pistols and whatever shotguns the 18B (Weapons Sergeant) drew from the arms room.

We utilized cover, did tactical magazine reloads and took corners appropriately, all the standard operating procedures we would execute during combat and it elevated our abilities 10-fold.



Think about it, at matches you get to show up and shoot the different stages (set up by someone else so it's all foreign to you) and when is over you just leave. If you've ever been assigned to a tactical unit, you're aware that most times you set up your own training scenarios and tear them down afterwards.

This eats into training time and overall training value is lost since everyone helped set up. The moral of the story is, shooting competitions are in fact a stellar training tool that can and should be utilized by everyone assigned to tactical units. Since training funds and venues tend to be scarce, Commanders (especially LEO) should advocate for more of





Left: Todd VanLangen Army SOF



Right: Todd VanLangen



their officers to attend competitions. I've worked with Cops from all corners of the country and their biggest complaint is: "We never get money to train". My go-to response for this complaint is my spiel about utilizing shooting competitions as training tools.

The ones that adopt shooting sports for supplemental training have positive results that are applicable in real world work situations. A long time ago I heard a quote from a shooting competitor who also happened to be an Operator that stuck with me all these years; "I would take a Competitive Shooter to Combat before I'd take a Combat Shooter to a competition".

The ability to shoot fast and accurate is a tangible skill that most in the tactical world struggle to achieve while competitive shooters do it on the regular, so why not glean some of those skills from the competition crowd? As an Operator it can only help you to become better. When you are better, your unit is better which that translates to mission success and everyone coming home alive.





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# Garrick Fernbaugh

High Value Target LLC

**Image Processing Training (IPT)** allows us to take advantage of what the disciplined and controlled mind does naturally during life threatening moments.



## About Garrick Fernbaugh:

- US Navy, 1988-2008. West coast SEAL teams, teams Three, Five and Naval Special Warfare Center (NAVSPECWARCEN) 3rd phase SEAL Instructor.
- CIA / GRS - 2008 - 2015
- Red Frog 2015 - 2020 - I provided tactical training, small unit tactics and firearms training for military, law enforcement and civilians.
- High Value Target LLC - 2020 to present

## What I'm doing with the targets:

Colonel Dave Grossman contributes significantly to what I'm doing with the targets when he described in his book *On Killing*, a study that was conducted post WWII.

The study concluded that less than 10% of the troops had the capacity to actually aim and pull the trigger to kill another man. In an effort to change and improve these statistics the silhouette target was introduced as a solution to the troops trained during boot camp and prior to deploying to Vietnam.

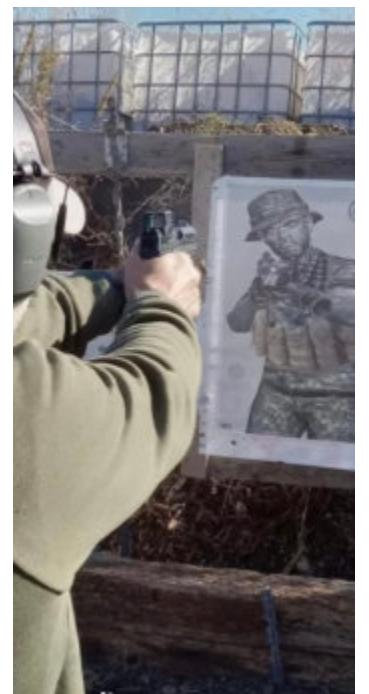
The study was conducted again post Vietnam and concluded that the statistics had basically reversed themselves, so the silhouette target was indeed successful at teaching the troops to become more effective at killing. However, today most military, law enforcement and civilians are still training on a silhouette target.

The fact is, the evolution of tactical training essentially stopped post Vietnam, I'm changing that. What I'm doing with targets is the evolution of tactical training. In my opinion, changing magazines faster, acquiring sight pictures faster is not a fundamental evolution in tactical training, but this is.

I've developed a training methodology that I refer to as Image Processing Training (IPT). The term image processing is taken from neuroscientists at MIT who conducted a study to determine how fast humans can understand what they are seeing. Images of situations were flashed before the participants of the study at various speeds, the study concluded that humans are capable of processing images in as little as 13 thousandths of a second.

No studies could be found that suggest the possibility of even faster processing speeds with the introduction endorphins commonly released during life threatening experiences and fight or flight.

During the 5 years (2015 - 2020) I was running my own training and in doing so I reviewed the materials and course books related to my formal training as a military instructor and Master Training Specialist. This formal education taught me how to be much more than a SEAL instructor, and to develop from the ground up a formal training program, implement it and maintain it.







During this time, I re-thought everything we do as shooters and why we do it. For example, when we enter a room (clearing) what do we see? Not silhouette targets, we see people standing in various positions.

The situation is normally dynamic, fluid and moving. The threat, so to speak, is rarely standing there squared off as depicted on most targets, so I depict the body in motion on nearly every target; Targets that represent the threat, is one of my phrases. Body position changes with the type of weapon being held, such as pistol or rifle.

I got started taking pictures of mannequins in various positions, then using photoshop I would include images of guns. The images of the mannequins are in fact more realistic than silhouette targets and therefore better.

However, in the interest of developing a more professional product I went to work teaching myself how to use 3D animation software and a number of different programs that enabled me to produce the targets that I'm now making.

Most of the training I went through in the SEAL teams and CIA included standard silhouette targets. Eventually, I realized that the targets me and my peer have been primarily training on restricted us from learning how to shoot a human body, better.

I was told probably 30 years ago, there are two places to shoot a human, the heart and the cerebellum of the brain. This is not a new concept, but it's never learned by most due to the targets, or it's quickly forgotten because it isn't reinforced through repetition during training.

In re-thinking virtually everything we do as shooters I examined every shooting drill I've ever done and established whether or not it's still relevant. One of favorite shooting drills was the Mozambique, two to the body, one to the head. Good chance that every Spec Ops guy has trained this drill. However, I had never done this for real and couldn't think of anyone that had, I began making phone calls.

That was a few years ago now and to date I still haven't found anyone that has done the Mozambique for real. It's an interesting case study because it's also the only example I know of that contradicts the axiom; we are truly products of our training.

What I've concluded is that in the heat of the moment the shooter, any shooter and every shooter will acquire a sight picture, maintain that sight picture and continue pressing the trigger until mentally that shooter believes the threat to be eliminated. So, the first sight picture is crucial and better be the right one!

This is imperative when we are faced with threats that might be wearing a suicide bomber vest, Kevlar vest or a ballistic plate carrier.

There is also a certain psychology that accompanies the targets. Imagine a target with flowers all over it, are flowers suitable aiming points much like a bullseye? Yes, they are and imagine the mindset is the shooter training on a target full of flowers? In another example, imagine a law enforcement agency training on a target that depicts a young black kid.

Would it be said, that agency is training to kill young black kids? Probably, and in fact psychologically they would be. High Value Target makes targets that are racially neutral, unbiased targets, which should be of particular interest to law enforcement agencies.

### How Fast Can We Understand What We See?

Back in the middle 90's, it was being preached by different shooting instructors that the human brain would take 1/4 of a second to understand what it was seeing.

Sometime after that it became commonly accepted that the human brain could understand what it is seeing, in just 100 milliseconds, that's 4 times faster than previously thought which is just 1/10th of second. One tenth of second, that's fast.

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# Bjørn Heldaas

RH Cinclus | Director of Training

**Master firearms instructors are mentors at their own unit, mentoring the instructors, and build them up to be master instructors**



I have been very interested in, and focusing on the concept "Train the trainer" for years. It is mine (and many others) belief that firearms-trainers have been left out in the cold too often. They are to show up at the range, and give the students the curriculum "someone" has decided that they are to present.

My theory is that by lifting the trainers skill level in both the skill they are teaching and even more important, their teaching-skills, you lift the whole unit that this instructor is teaching. Also, a returning problem is the lack of continuity. As one firearms-instructor quits, we start looking for another one.

I think it is important to a) recruit new firearms instructors b) keep the old ones by giving them reason to stay on in form of new inputs, the chance to grow as an instructor, and the possibility to participate in the evolvement of the training being conducted.

At RH Cinclus we offer an instructor level course, for the experienced shooter that wants to start instructing. After the class and 2-3 years of experience in their own unit, the student might be ready for the master firearms instructor class, where instructing skills and building and developing a complete curriculum for your unit is addressed.

The thought being that these master firearms instructors are mentors at their own unit, mentoring the instructors, and build them up to be master instructors that will mentor the next batch of instructors and so on. Everybody is on the same sheet of paper, instructional principals are the same all over the line, and continuity is taken care of.

One place that is trying this out with, so far, very good results, are the Icelandic police. A very small police force, who have been subject to the before mentioned problems. They are now taking steps to rectify, and is doing a very good job at it. RH Cinclus Training is very proud to be a part of the "instructor-revolution" taking place at the Saga-island.

I am very interested in connecting with other firearms instructors and/or units and groups that are thinking along the same lines (or not) as I am. Please do not hesitate to connect.



Bjørn Heldaas



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# Tony Blauer

Tony Blauer SPEAR System

## Violence Doesn't Care What Martial Art You Study



### The science of survival

Bodycam footage captured the moment when semi-truck driver Elijah Collins stabbed Police Captain Brian Dalton in the neck with a screwdriver during a traffic stop, in June 2019. The video can still be found online.

Collins was sitting in the cab of his truck. The truck driver was initially calm as the captain explained how to handle the citation. Until Collins reached towards the inner panel of the open door of his truck cab.

Collins suddenly lunged out of the truck with a screwdriver in his hand. The suspect stabbed the screwdriver

into Capt. Dalton's neck. The captain yelled out just before a rapid series of gunshots rang out.

Collins was fatally struck. Capt. Dalton was rushed to Summa Akron City Hospital by helicopter, where he remained in intensive care for two days. He returned to duty in July 2019.

### Human nature's airbag: the Startle-flinch response

When Brian Dalton was attacked his body's instinctive survival system bypassed his thinking brain and deployed human nature's airbag: the Startle-flinch response.



Tony Blauer

[Click photo to watch the video...](#)





The startle-flinch response deploys like a biological airbag, expanding in a sudden incident to create space between you and the danger.

In Brian's fight, the flinch-response expanded as nature designed it. It bought him time, created space between him and the threat and this allowed his mind to catch-up to what was happening and ultimately get to his sidearm.

### Physiology vs. Physicality

The human brain and neuroscience can play a huge role in your training and subsequently your safety. As a police officer you should learn more about how physiology, fear and physics can play a huge role in how you navigate violence.

When a violent stimulus is introduced too quickly the body's survival system hijacks executive function.

The typical psychological response is to protect the head and then push away danger. Fingers are splayed if the hands are empty and the forearms are outside ninety degrees from the elbow. The startle-flinch is hardwired into you.

When our situational awareness is compromised we must rely on instinct, intuition, and psychology.

Think of your startle-flinch response as the equivalent of your "backup" it's the back-up to your DT, your complex motor skills.

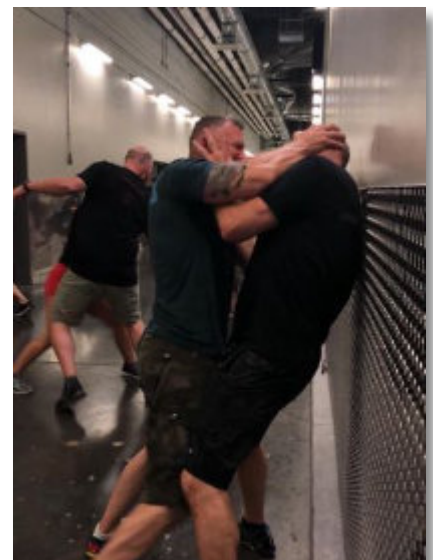
How many of you noticed the summons floating through the frame long after the attack Re-watch if you missed it. Two key points: even though officer Dalton knew he was in a fight for his life, physiology had already intervened



*Think of your startle-flinch response as the equivalent of your "backup"*

and was pushing away the danger. Dalton knew he had to get to his weapon as he was being stabbed, the whole time he was still holding the summons.

This is another vital element to understanding physiology and neuroscience. If you are holding something in your hands, your flinch-response via the crossed-extensors will cause you to tighten around that object. This is vital when seconds count. It could be







the door frame of a suspect's car, their clothing, your flashlight, or in this case the summons (again, watch it drop in slow motion long after the fight started). Understanding why allows you to recognize it sooner and fix it.

I can't emphasize how important this point is to your 'future' safety because in a future encounter you will have an object like your flashlight in your hand and it might be your dominant hand that you need to transition your weapon to.

You may be pulling a suspect out of car when he launches an attack. You will flinch and your grip will tighten around whatever you're holding. This will either delay or interfere with your next action.

Now that you understand this, intelligently build these 'physiological malfunctions' into training and you will improve your self-awareness and help convert the flinch sooner.

### Violence Doesn't Care

Sorry. It doesn't. In 1980 I began doing scenario-training. We would run scenario seminars monthly and about 7 years into this I observed how this weird but intuitive movement of pushing away the attacker seemed to mess up most attacks and interrupted the flow of the attacker. It was an ugly moment. But it often appeared out of nowhere. This movement of course is the 'startle-flinch' response.



Here was the next and more important observation: I noticed how 'everyone' flinched regardless of their training, experience or background. WTF?

After watching this for years I concluded that it was the stimulus (the aggression of the attack) that triggered the flinch and the skill of the defender wasn't really a factor if the attack stimuli- was sudden and close.

### Built around the 'action vs reaction' model

In law enforcement the phrase "Action is faster than reaction" is often used in training, but what is it's point? How is this logic applied to officer survival research?

Consider this: If action is faster than reaction ... which is accurate... well the bad-guy is 'action' in an ambush. That means the way many are training for violence isn't congruent with math, psychics and psychology.

This can get very deep, but the gist of it is that we need physiology to assist us during sudden attacks.

Had Brian Dalton brought his support hand to his sternum as he did a close quarter draw, this fight might've had a very different outcome.

I began analyzing the startle-flinch and its potential role in personal defense response in the late 80's and in 1988 wrote this thesis statement:

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“What does your body do prior to any training? Does that movement have a protective response? If yes, then why aren't we integrating this into all our training?”

In short: When a stimulus is introduced too quickly the human body flinches. This is a fact. Why not integrate an instinctive response into your training? It'll make you safer.

Friends, I've been studying self-defense for over 50 years. I wrestled, boxed, studied many martial arts and after one of my students lost a fight I thought I had prepared him for, I switched my entire approach to only looking at violence through the eyes of the predator. This challenged so many assumptions about how we should train.

It spawned an entire reframe for me and my students. It forced me to look deeper into psychology and neuroscience.

I spent decades researching this trying to figure out a reliable system that could make anyone safer sooner. After 30+ years of studying violence, I submit this to you: If you have the choice, you will always want back-up.

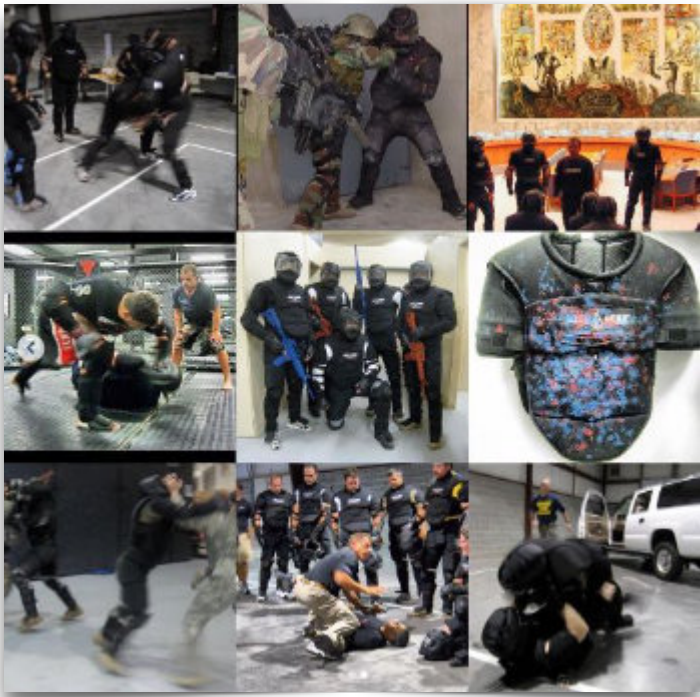
The 'startle-flinch' is your body's biological backup system. Learn to weaponize your startle flinch now, because when sudden violence erupts, it's what's going to be what's between you and the bad-guy.

Stay safe, Coach Blauer

Tony Blauer has been in the combatives industry for four decades and successfully affected training across self-defense, combat sports, and the military & law enforcement sector.

# Click photos to learn more...





## # Tony Blauer # High Gear

**HIGH GEAR** helps people understand the chaos of close quarter combatives and force-on-force training.

This helps them stress-inoculate much faster than conventional training.

The helmet design allows role-players to speak clearly.

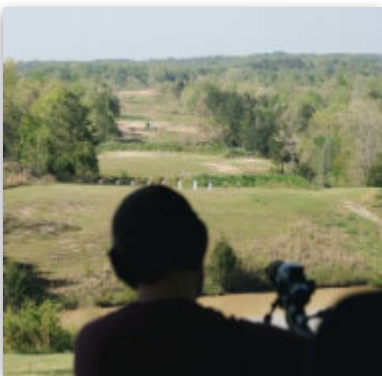
The streamline, ergonomic design allows role-players to move naturally - just like in real-life.

Only in High Gear training partners can behave like real adversaries in a real confrontation.

The High Gear suit allows combat athletes to move fluidly so their art or style can be tested while wearing gear.



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## The SawMill Training Complex in South Carolina

The Sawmill Training Complex features nearly 250 acres of diverse East Coast terrain Located in Laurens, South Carolina, USA .

The training site has its own lodging on-site, a gym, classrooms, simulation zones, as well as helicopter landing zones.

Highlights for training are the CQB house and a 50' tower.

Sniper will find a challenging 1400-yard sniper range, a 360-degree range, and 12 ranges from 25 to 100 yards.

Sawmill Training Complex is located just 39 miles from Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport in the Upstate of South Carolina.

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# Rich Graham

Full Spectrum Warrior USA

Former Navy SEAL about quick thinking and reaction skills behind the firearm !



When I work with shooters, there are two main things I focus on:

1. Building the individual's ability to move effectively from behind the firearm, and...
2. Developing the shooter's ability to think critically under stress.

Focusing on these two specific things makes people more well-rounded shooters, thinkers, and movers behind their weapons. Instead of just being able to pull the trigger and hit a target more often, my students know where and how to move and why they should do so at different times throughout different scenarios.

The shooting world often focuses on shooting fundamentals: the actual aspect of shooting the gun. Through this mindset, we have developed many shooters to be extremely fast at performing magazine changes while engaging multiple targets.

Things of that nature are beneficial, but one area I feel is personally lacking is the individual's ability to think critically under stress.

The downside to this is we have a bunch of really fast and accurate shooters who lack the ability to process information as fast as they are able to deliver rounds downrange.

Many significant problems can develop if you are breeding a culture of shooters who cannot think or react while they're shooting.

Therefore, one of our big goals at FSW has been to set up a variety of training scenarios and drills within our training programs to develop cognitive thinking under stress.

By setting up mental obstacles, the individual is forced to slow down to a pace that's slower than they are used to shooting at but at a pace more appropriate to their ability to process the information they are receiving.

In doing so, shooters receive, analyze, and process the data to make specific judgment calls or decisions to best engage a target. Where this becomes significantly important is an active-shooter situation where those responding need to process info quickly and respond effectively rather than just bursting in guns blazing.



Rich Graham



Left: Training with Universal Shield

Right: Rich Graham



Here in America, in an active-shooter situation, we have seen a rise in armed citizens attempting to help or work alongside law enforcement officers. Most of these settings are highly populated areas with many moving parts involved.

I have worked with law enforcement agencies and private citizens around our country to develop the two primary training focuses: the ability to think critically under stress and the ability to move your body behind the firearm.

The ability to assess the situation and make good judgment calls first before engaging is critical to avoid putting someone in a position where they shoot first and then realize, “Oh man, I shot the wrong target!”

The ability to move your body behind the gun allows those responding to situations to move in and around crowds, through buildings or debris, or to find better cover from the target while moving into better positioning to take down the target.

In my classes, once we have developed a foundation for students to work on, we then transition into developing their ability to move better and faster.

For almost ten years now, my business partner Greg Mihovich and I have been working on a program we call the “Combat Mobility System”.





This program works to arm a stationary shooter with the skills necessary to properly move with their firearm from position to position working angles to reduce the chance of injury from contact with the ground or other objects they might use for cover or concealment.

The best example of this is to think about how a boxer or mixed martial artist fights. One of the first things they learn to do when they begin training isn't how to punch or strike but how to move their body.

Footwork and movement are fundamental and key. Trainers really hammer this home because it is the foundation for success. We do not see this much in the firearms world, but instead, we see many people shooting stationary and being focused on the fundamentals of firing the weapon, becoming accurate, and so on. What is significantly lacking is the ability for that individual to move and think on their feet.

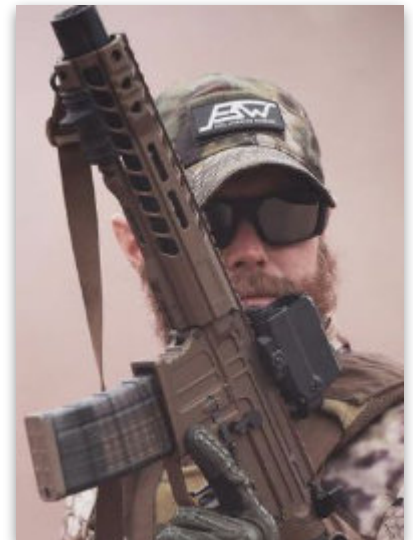
Imagine how long a fighter would last if we sent him into the ring with his feet glued into position, without the ability to access the opponent for

weaknesses in his movement or fighting style. As you can imagine, someone glued into one position without the ability to assess and analyze information wouldn't last long. Sure they could still use their fists to fight, but their ability to do so effectively would be minimal.

Transition this scenario to shooting. If we took a stationary shooter and blindfolded them, most high-level shooters with good fundamentals and accuracy could probably still hit paper.

However, just like the fighter in the ring, the shooter lacks the ability to think under stress, receive and analyze new info, and move his or her body in and around the target. Technical skills will never overcome one's ability to think and move his or her body in any situation.

This brings me to a saying we have here in the States. There's a gun control joke that goes like this: "I left my firearm out on the front porch for a week, and it didn't shoot anybody. Guns don't kill people; people kill people with guns." There is truth to that, but also truth to the fact that the firearm is only as good as the person who is behind it.





Images: Rich Graham



A Samurai's sword is sharp and can cut, but the difference is that the Samurai sword is only as effective as the person who is wielding it.

It takes finesse rather than just a baseline knowledge of pointing a gun and pulling a trigger. The Samurai is a warrior, and his success comes from his fitness mobility, technical skillsets, and critical thinking under stress.

My goal is to develop strong-moving and critically thinking warriors who can perceive and react to a variety of situations.

At Full Spectrum Warrior, we train the body and the mind to be just as effective or more than the weapons we are implementing.

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# Daniel Rocca

BOPE 2nd Lt. Ret. • Sniper Instructor

## The ability to withstand highly dangerous and violent missions



Daniel Rocca

**Thomas Lojek:** What makes a good BOPE Operator?

**Daniel Rocca:** BOPE is a greatly renowned unit. We are lethal and highly trained to act in the worst scenarios. We are a Brotherhood. That's how we define ourselves.

Embracing adversity is deeply intertwined at BOPE as an integral part of the culture of our unit. And for one reason: We face extreme violence every day. I was shot three times and lost many brothers along the way. Understanding this, you will also understand how we see hopefuls who want to become part of that culture and BOPE.

We are looking for men with a very strong mind. Of course, BOPE's selection course challenges a potential operator in many ways, physically and psychologically. But the psychological part is the main part, because if you are psychologically weak, later you will not be able to handle your own training to become a BOPE operator.

Our training prepares aspiring operators for the most extreme violent situations you can imagine. We insert the worst scenarios and challenges in our selection process, because we know from experience how extreme the violence and how exhaustive the

missions later in the Brazilian favelas will be for those who want to be part of BOPE.

That's why we start out the right way by putting them under enormous pressure to see how they handle it. In the selection part of BOPE, we focus on the psychological ability of a future operator to withstand extreme conditions. We want to see if he remains calm in extremely stressful situations.

Otherwise, the operator will later be unable to psychologically overcome the violence we have to face in the high-crime environment of a Brazilian favela. That is why adversity, perseverance and honor are part of the culture of our unity.

**Thomas Lojek:** This ability to withstand highly dangerous and violent missions, missions undertaken under extremely stressful conditions ... Do you think it is something that can be learned over the years with training and experience ... or are BOPE operators born this way?

**Daniel Rocca:** The person who chooses to become a BOPE operator is a good man who chooses to face evil and protect law-abiding citizens, even by sacrificing his own life. We choose to do this. None of us is born violent!





What happens during the selection course is the aspirants give themselves in body and soul, bringing their warrior's heart to us. Day by day, we put them through the hardest tests. We separate those who have it and who don't fit the profile. This is what really happens in our selection course and later in our training.

Look, you can't go into an operation against drug cartels in a Brazilian slum in search of peace, because you will not find peace. On the contrary, you'll face dozens of drug dealers armed with HKG3, AR10, AK 47, .50 Cals and grenades. No one is willing to make peace. It'll either be us or them.

Therefore, our operators must have this courage. They have to have controlled aggression and emotional control. They have to have this fearlessness to go through whatever it takes and carry out the mission without hesitation.

We have to accept this difficult and adverse lifestyle of our unit as the responsibility that BOPE was created for. It is what we are. We have to accept the extreme

adversity from the environment in which we conduct our operations.

Our operators are true warriors. They accept adversity as part of their lives, as the core value of our unit and as the reality of our operations. A guy who can bring that spirit into our unit will be one of us.

**Thomas Lojek:** Technology is a big topic worldwide and, of course, within all Special Operations Forces. Does modern technology change the way BOPE operates in missions and the complex battle environment of the Brazilian favelas?

**Daniel Rocca:** Of course, technology plays a big role today.

Also for BOPE. But it has always been like that, ever since BOPE's early days and on both sides. Both on our side and on our enemies' side. Drug cartels are highly adaptable and creative criminal organizations.

For example, the effect of technology on our missions began more than 25 years ago.

When the first cheap commercial cameras became available, drug cartels began placing them in all slums to know where and when the police would enter the community. And very early on, our enemies started using walkie-talkies, phones, then cell phones and, of course, today smartphones to coordinate attacks.



Click photo: Daniel Rocca Contact





Drones are not big yet. At least, not on the traffickers' end. Rio de Janeiro has about 1,800 favelas, and so far, we've seen drones in only one favela.

Of course, we take countermeasures. And, of course, BOPE is going into drone technology as well. Drones have become part of our surveillance and intelligence operations to obtain information from the battlefield, just like anywhere else and in most special operations forces. It is just a logical step in the information age. BOPE adapts and uses new technologies and we are always testing what fits in our tactical portfolio.

**Thomas Lojek:** What do you think other units could learn from BOPE?

**Daniel Rocca:** Our operational terrain is very special. Brazilian slums are uniquely complex and

challenging environments for carrying out missions against drug trafficking. Our teamwork and how we use the terrain to our tactical advantage are unique. I would accept this if other units asked me what they could learn from BOPE.

We use many combat techniques that include the terrain. And we do it in a very specific way. Of course, I cannot go into details. But we learned very sophisticated ways to include the terrain in our missions. We included the terrain to take advantage of the element of surprise during the initial phase of the mission and from there we will quickly establish a leadership position in the combat dynamics with the initiative.

The operational and tactical procedures for how we do this are very unique, because each place, the traffickers have a

different modus operandi, and for this, we use countermeasures to fight.

For example, the way in which we combine the position of our snipers and patrol units on the streets is unique and based on decades of experience in the relentless environment of street wars in the slums. I think this is one of the main strengths that makes BOPE unique in terms of operational experience.

And, of course, our spirit of brotherhood makes us unique, as does our ability to deal with stress and highly violent conflicts on a daily basis. It comes with the lessons of decades in the war against organized crime.

**Thomas Lojek:** From a psychological point of view: Working in this dangerous and highly violent environment every day ... How do you get back into the fight? Especially after days, when things were looking bad on your battlefield? What keeps a BOPE operator working? How do you stay in the fight?

**Daniel Rocca:** I'll tell you about a situation that happened recently. One night, we moved into a slum, and it was very quiet. Very, very quiet, actually. We knew something was going to happen soon. We knew that. It was everywhere. It was night, and we could basically smell the danger in the air around us.

So, we positioned ourselves and divided our teams as we always did to have a tactical advantage over the enemy. At one point, a team received incoming fire and was the main target. It was an ambush. And it was very well done. We have to give credit to the bad guys for that.



So, a team was stuck and under constant fire. A man from the targeted team was lying wounded. When the confrontation (shootout) started, they were unable to get him off the street. A bad time, really. And it got worse by the second.

For me, as a sniper, this situation meant that I had to move and reach higher ground to send cover fire at the guys who were pinned down. When I reached the perfect terrain, I had already defeated two of the bad guys on the way to my new position. Now, in my new field position, I was able to do a quick 360-degree analysis of what was going on and started the cover fire for my team.

With cover fire in effect, my team was able to get the only man out of the hot zone. He wasn't dead, but it didn't look good with a chest wound. We came to the rescue. On the way another policeman was shot.

Strong fire came from everywhere, and I shot off the street lights to darken the scene. From my position, I could see that the second wounded policeman was near a construction site, and I ran to put him in shelter. But he died

in my arms. And being with a brother dying in front of me like that are the worst moments ever.

These are really the seconds when you have to recompose yourself and try not to lose control. As a BOPE operator, you live and breathe under the understanding that only the mission matters, and if one of us loses control, we put everyone at risk. That's why you have emotional control beyond the normal range. At this point with




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*As a BOPE operator, you live and breathe under the understanding that only the mission matters.*

---

my rifle, I shot off all of the street lights until everything was very, very dark around us.

So, I provided cover fire while the rest of the team left the scene, and we rescued the first police officer who was shot when the attack started. We also took the police officer who had died at the scene.

They were taken to the hospital, and at the hospital, all I could focus on was getting my team together, getting everyone ready and properly informed.







And then, we ran back to the scene. The sun was rising on the horizon. We already had two shifts behind us. We were 48 hours at work. One of our brothers dead, another in surgery. But we didn't back down. We were there to finish our mission.

Another team joined us on the spot. And we again went in search of traffickers, where we arrested many drug dealers who had shot wounds. After the fire fight, I refused to go home. What did all this mean for my morale and my team?

You have to know: the policeman who died in my arms ... was a friend. I knew his wife and children. Holding him while he was dying was really one of the worst moments for me. But when we enter BOPE, we know that these things will happen to us. We know that.

It really hurts, losing one of us is like losing a brother. But it's all about the mission. The focus is really on the mission. And from there we get up and do the work. This is what BOPE is ... We complete the mission!





# Mark Human

## Lose Your Weapon - Lose Your Life! The In Your Face Truth About Weapon Access And Retention!

02h00 my WhatsApp message binged. As I woke, I felt for my phone next to the bed, and mumbled to my wife “I hope they haven’t started rioting again.” A message from an armed reaction officer that works for one of my clients we provide training for came up on the screen.

It was worse than the message I expected and read, “Hi Mark, I have just found a reaction officer from one of the other companies stabbed to death next to his vehicle on Main Road. His firearm is missing, we found one casing so we think he got a shot off.”

Since returning to South Africa in 1998, we have become accustomed to news of law enforcement and security officers disarmed and killed with and for their firearms.

Dealing with these scenarios quickly became a priority focus and I dare say an obsession.

Over the years we have adjusted and refined how we teach and deal with these scenarios.

We have learned many lessons over the last 25 years. Below we highlight few that have been key to maintaining the edge against the bad guys.

Good combative concepts and most self-defence or personal protection programs emphasize and a talk about threat precursors.



*Lessons that have been key to maintaining the edge against the bad guys.*

Fast is good, early is better - the later you see things the faster you have to be.

**We break these down into 4 categories...**

... just an overview and is by no means a break down of curriculum contents...







**Situational recognition skills** emphasise specific scenarios or areas, such as responding to a panic alarm, approaching possible suspects or choke points while driving an escort.

**Autonomic recognition skills** mean recognising pre fight indicators such as posturing, grooming and verbal tells.

**Mechanical recognition skills** are deliberate actions that indicate weapon access or concealment just prior to an actual attack. Telling people to watch the hands is simply not enough. These skills need to be specific such as an elbow cock indicating access along the waist line.

**In fight recognition skills** are physical reference points during the actual confrontation.

An example of this is a blade wielding opponent utilising their check hand (non weapon hand) as a measure for distance, distraction or grabbing.

Recognising changes in range are key to linking and adapting skills and tactics to successfully counter attacks.

Frame works for distance management are great tools but it needs to be emphasised that in practice they are fluid and not written in stone.



Even with the initial engagement starting outside physical contact range a committed opponent can close range surprisingly quickly. With early recognition we are able to link actions to deny contact and allow us opportunity to access our handguns.

Frameworks can be expanded and compressed like a concertina depending on variables such as pressure, time of recognition, environment, method of attack, mandate ...

For this article we will keep it simple and break down access vs edged weapon and life-threatening empty hand attacks:



**7 Meters and more with early recognition:** Stand and deliver or lateral move draw base and fire.

**3.5 to 7 meters with early recognition:** Lateral movement either movement draw and shoot while moving. In some cases this may mean moving offline in an offline backward arcing trajectory.

**0-3 to 5 Meters:** This range requires empty hand skills to deal with the attack and draw or create the time and positioning to access your weapon. It is easy to get fixated on your weapon access and get struck, grabbed or stabbed if you ignore the incoming attack.

We use a simple acronym to help embed reflexes to deal with these situations and avoid initial fixation on weapon access these scenarios.

- Deal with the attack
- Disrupt the attacker
- Deploy your weapon

**2. Absolutes apply in specific contexts but crumble when things change up.**

As a solo or small teams' operator/officer, you have to be able to adapt to a broad range of scenarios. The Keep it Simple Stupid idea is a game of percentages and often tries to force one concept or skill as a solution to chaotic challenges with a broad range of variables.

Especially when it gets to edged weapons - a basic change in pressure can destroy what would be considered the panacea of edged weapons defence. In other words, in a world of chaos, oversimplification gets you dead.

The breaking mechanism of branched decision making (the what if then/either or) needs to be addressed constructively as part of structured training.



**Lets look at two examples.**

Imagine an attacker rushing forward (maximum forward pressure with his body) at full speed with his blade hand held on his hip (narrow attack) waiting to stab you the moment he makes contact and grabs you with his front hand (delayed timing).

Now imagine an attacker in arms reach not committing into you immediate space but matching your footwork when you move forward or backward (neutral pressure with his body) while using his blade to deliver quickly retracted reverse grip stabs (negative pressure-picking and snap cuts) to your face and neck area (broken timing attacks).

It is obvious that two different skills sets are required to have a positive outcome. It is obvious that both these scenarios require different solutions.

Our job as trainers is to understand and articulate changes in pressure and link a range of embedded options to be able to adapt and triumph under stress.

From a training provider perspective this means a little more than watching You Tube (a useful resource)...

... but actually spending a percentage of your time in the field with clients to understand their, mandate, daily grind and the threats they face.





Left: Training with Mark Human



Right: Training in South Africa



### 3. Combat Sports: Good and bad

Combat sports provide excellent conditioning and attributes but need to be adapted to be congruent with the mentality, intent and skills required to be effective against challenges faced in the field.

It is not uncommon to face a criminal with poor fighting skills in the traditional sense of word but armed with street smarts and killing experience. “They are not bound by your social values and no one told them don’t bring a knife or screw driver to a gun fight.”

### 4. Adapt your gun handling and targeting mindset for contact range engagements

Simply carrying a firearm does relate to success - it is critical to combat a mindset complacency and a false sense of security just because you have a sidearm strapped to your belt.

Contact range shooting means you will be draw and possibly fire one handed, often with your non gun hand forward of your muzzle to defend against edged weapon attacks or grabs (please do not tell me there is no reason not to have both hands on your handgun while you are getting stabbed in the face).

These situations often require adapted draw strokes and shooting from “modern non-traditional” firing positions. Centre of mass shots are not always available and adapted targeting should be practiced during training. If contact range access and retention are a recognised priority for officers, skills to deal with these challenges need to be structured to teach mindset, in fight recognition, physical skills, expanded targeting and adapted firearm safety. Form follows function - adapt accordingly. Stay safe out there!!!





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# Kris Paronto

Owner of Battleline Tactical

**Stop talking and start moving!  
How to create a training  
environment that is structured to  
improve the students and not the  
instructor's ego.**



Kris Paronto

**Thomas Lojek:** Kris, you are very active in the training sector. Could you explain what you are doing and what your focus regarding your training business is?

**Kris Paronto:** I served with 2nd Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment, and later as a private security contractor for various private security companies to include Blackwater Security, SOC, and direct hire for the CIA long before the Benghazi attack happened. I spent a lot of time in beautiful countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, etc.... And they are beautiful countries, really. It's savage beauty, but beauty nonetheless.

I worked overseas for over 10 years, gaining a lot of experience in and out of combat zones. In between deployments I would come back to the US and work for Blackwater's High Threat Protection OGA program as a Lead Instructor. This allowed me to apply the tactics we were teaching in the US to real operations. I was able to see that tactics that may work in a controlled environment may not work in an uncontrolled environment.

I learned so many valuable lessons during these years... learning from other operators and instructors, and then being able to practice my craft as an instructor in between deployments and at times during deployments as



some required us to teach and train Afghanis on firearms, force protection and tactics.

I started Battleline Tactical in 2017, approximately four years after I left the CIA's GRS Program. I had not been actively deploying or active in the training sector and felt the draw to get back into training others. Battleline Tactical was started in the hopes of passing on knowledge that had been passed down to me, but also for me to get back into the firearms community.

We originally started three years ago. It was myself and a former GRS Teammate, Dave Benton. Since then, Dave has since departed, but the team gained Former 1st Batt Army Ranger Ben Morgan, Former MMA Fighter and multiple black belt holder Benny Glossop and Former Army MP Jeremy Mitchell as lead and assistant instructors.

We also partner regularly, teaching joint firearms courses with outstanding fellow instructors Daniel Lombard of Davad Defense, the Mauer Brothers of Treadproof Training, Paul Braun of Maxim Defense Academy and Brad Dillion and his crew of excellent instructors at Red River Gun Range

We do have an excellent team, and as of right now, we primarily conduct mobile training. In the past, we have



looked for ranges and facilities around the country to conduct our courses, but we now primarily use Davad Defense's facilities in Crete Illinois and Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, Defender Outdoors in Ft. Worth, Texas, Treadproof Training in Nunnely, Tennessee and Red River Range in Shreveport, Louisiana.

We are also hoping to be a regular at GTI in South Carolina, as we are having our first course in August, 2021 there.

We do a wide range of training, from stress fire training to basic pistol or basic rifle, which is great. All of them are satisfying, but I have to say my favorites are still the novice classes. It's especially rewarding to see the confidence grow in a new shooter.

During my blackwater days as an instructor and student, we traveled to many training sites around the country, and I always felt that there was a lot of standing around talking.

There was too much talking by instructors about themselves, long drawn-out Powerpoint presentations, and most times, instructors talking, not so much about the lessons they learned from their experiences, but trying to validate their credibility. However, the instructors that I learned the most from got us in, briefed us on course

expectations and course curriculum, then got us out on the range. They demonstrated tasks and had us work on the tasks right there on the range making spot corrections when necessary. So, at Battleline we wanted to expound on this latter.

Yes, we need to talk to instruct, and sometimes that means you have to stand up on your soapbox and tell the participants what we have done or explain why we conduct a tactic in a certain way to provide the example as to why that tactic did or did not work in real time.

But I felt that it always went from instruction to "Hey, look what I have done... Look how cool I am... I got all these experiences..." As a student or fellow instructor, I didn't want to hear that.

That was the part where I started to tune an instructor out and learning suffered. When the motivation to be mentally present in training drops, the quality of the training always suffers, and in the end, we have become ineffective instructors and failed the student.

So we, at Battleline Tactical begin to apply training another way. I used my experience playing varsity sports throughout high school - football, basketball, baseball and track which led to playing NCAA Football - as a training model. I thought to myself that firearms training and tactics is nothing more than a sport, and an instructor is nothing more than a coach.

Coaches are there to teach, lead, motivate, mentor, and bring the best out of an individual. Football practices are also constantly moving, going from training station to training station with little, unnecessary talking by a coach, unless it's to make a spot correction or demonstrate the task to be completed. There was little standing around.

And I took this experience and made it the fundamental principle of the training courses at Battleline Tactical. We generally have fairly big classes, but they can fluctuate. Thirty people or more in a firearms class is a big number of participants for a training class.

So, we split them into separate groups of 10 people, conducting the training that is associated with that course. For example, for our gunfighter course, we'd divide a group of 30 up, putting 10 people into combatives, 10 others at the pistol range and 10 at the carbine range. And we rotate every two hours.





Photo: Kris and Daniel Lombard of Davad Defense

Courses. Make sure safety is 100% and then have the student's carryout the training.

Let them make mistakes. Let them learn through their own mistakes and let them learn with their own hands, with their own eyes, with their own heads while they are thinking and moving. I guess you could call it dynamic learning. It's the most effective form of learning.

**Thomas Lojek:** How do you come up with this training style? Does it have something to do with your career in the military and your years of contractor work?

**Kris Paronto:** It was straight pulled from football. My dad was Division 1 football coach for the 1984 BYU National Championship team. I grew up around football legends like LaVell Edwards, Mike Holmgren, Steve Young, Jim McMahon and Robbie Bosco.

I saw how Head Coach LaVell Edwards mentored and how his assistants like my Dad, Mike Holmgren and Norm Chow taught players that would later become greats in the NFL.

It was mentoring, not instructing, trying to bring out the best in the player. The mentoring culture from an early age stuck with me, along with my own years as a player on the field. Then one day after a course, I was doing my own self-assessment and I realized: As firearms instructors, we aren't instructors... we are coaches and mentors. We are there to motivate and bring out the best of those who are coming to our courses. Changing ourselves from being an instructor to being a coach, and becoming a

You have two hours, now focus on the task, self-correct when you make mistakes, and don't forget to smile and have fun. We don't rest too much between the rotations because, as a Ranger or football player, we didn't take many breaks until the training day was complete, so it's just my style.

It makes our classes highly dynamic, focused, but most of all enjoyable for everyone, from the novice to the experienced. Everything and everyone are constantly moving. Instruct, demo, train — not over talking.

**Thomas Lojek:** How is the reaction of your students to your more dynamic training style?

**Kris Paronto:** It is fantastic. After the course people are tired, but they have a sense of accomplishment.

People love challenges, even when they don't think they do. We challenge them. We push them enough to make them realize that they have accomplished something for themselves, and their confidence grows. There is not a lot of downtime, not a lot standing

around, because I think this is the death of many courses: too much talk. We lose the attention of the student.

Bring your students on the line, demo, train, assess, correct, re-demo if necessary, train, assess, correct, etc

Because it's my belief we learn more by making mistakes, figuring out why we made those mistakes, fixing the mistakes, than by doing it correctly. We learn more by doing, learning and doing again.

Let students learn valuable lessons by what they do in your course. Don't replace their hunger for having a unique experience with what you think would make a good story about yourself, unless that story can add to the training module at hand. Challenge them to act, to move, to try out, to solve problems and to fail as well as to excel.

Of course, you have to make sure that everybody is safe, especially when you give your students room to make a few mistakes during a class. Safety is a hugely important factor in Battleline





the most simple truth in a warrior's life: There is always room for improvement.

So, we play it differently in our courses. And what we do works wonderfully! We get a lot of new people into our classes, who turn into enthusiasts, and that is humbling to us at Battleline. We do also have a lot of seasoned pros, coming from law enforcement or highly experienced military veterans, who respect the training environment we create by our individual approach and also provide their own lessons learned and training point to the class, which we encourage.

For me, it is so great to see how it works: The beginners leave our courses with confidence. And the pros with respect. And that is what we want to see. We want to see somebody smiling, because they feel that they have learned a little that they can improve with or provided a teaching point that will help someone down the line.

**Thomas Lojek:** It sounds like your training style gives students more freedom to learn... to try, to fail, to figure things out for themselves. But isn't the nature of combat training, especially in the military, somewhat more dogmatic? Where is the line for you between effective freedom in training and the pragmatism of dogmatic rules in training?

Aren't there always a few things that have to be handled with: "That is how it has to be done. Period."

**Kris Paronto:** The thing with freedom vs. dogma in combat training is it's always somehow like having our good old military kit bag with you: We want to throw so much in your kit-bag that we can pull it out when the situation arises.

mentor for those who look for our advice keeps the ego out of the training. It is about our students and how they improve and not about our stories and our experiences, unless they reinforce a technique or tactic.

We create an experience for them, based on what we have done before, but not by what our status is in the firearms community. There is a lot of arrogance in the world of firearms training. Truth hurts, but it's the truth. And this arrogance is intimidating to new shooters,

which stops those interested in firearms and tactics from getting into firearms classes.

Even in the professional sector and on a highly operational level this arrogance of a "tactical ego" creeps into training and causes damage. It stops those on all experience levels from getting into or continually learning firearms and tactics and affects their true dedication to getting better every day.

At one point, the arrogance of having a rank or name replaces







And we want to learn many different things and ways to do it so we can handle any situation effectively. But the only way to do this is to learn multiple ways and methods, so we can get into your kit bag and pull “a way” out to accomplish a task.

So, the essence of combat training is dogmatic per se, yes. When carrying out an individual tactic or technique there normally is a most efficient way to do it. For example, pressing the trigger with our index finger on our dominant hand is better than pressing the trigger with our pinky on our non-dominant hand, lol.

What we are saying is that having different methods to employ the weapon is beneficial, but one way may be the best. However, we still need to learn different carry positions, different ready positions, various retention positions, when to be dynamic with our movements vs methodical, because different situations will require different ways of completing the task. The most effective operators are those who know this and who can employ different tactics

habitually when various situations present themselves.

This cannot be done if we only learn one way or constantly train on one method. Sometimes, the best way to clear the corner is to be methodical with your movements, enter with a high ready and pie the room methodically... but on other days, maybe the best way will be just to enter a situation dynamically at full extension, get in and dominate it, adding the element of surprise by your action.

But the only way to know the best way to do it right is to learn multiple ways and relearning them over and over...until they all become habitual. And that is not dogmatic... It is learning

different ways to accomplish a task. Fill your kit bag to the brim, then train and retrain everything you have in your kit bag until they all become habit-forming movements.

So, as an instructor, I am both. Yes, sometimes one way is the best way to handle a situation or to complete a mission. But the best tacticians know several different ways to complete missions and are able to choose the best way for that moment.

So again, it is like you opening your kitbag, you look in it and you have all this stuff there... and then you say: “That is what I need right there!” You grab it and start moving! You don’t use a paring knife to cut steak.



You use a steak knife, but how would you know that if you've never held a paring knife or steak knife in your hand?

Here is one thing we really have to understand when we want to be more effective tacticians while under duress: When I started in the military, it was all about being instinctive... And I never liked the word. I never liked the idea behind it.

If we are instinctive, it tells me that our brain is not working. That's incorrect. Our brains are always working.

To me, it is "habits!" It's developing good habits. Example - We continually put a car key into the ignition to turn it on (well we used to). Over years of continually repeating this action we can do this with our eyes closed.

It is not instinctive, though. We have learned it, because we have repeated those actions many, many times, so we know what to do without much thinking about it. But it is a habit, not an instinct that leads us through that action.

It is the same thing with any marksmanship fundamental or firearms presentation. The best



Kris Paronto Homepage



option of using a high gun or low gun as we clear a building should become habitual, once we've completed the task 100s if not 1000s of times, because our brain is virtually moving you through the situation recognizing unknowns, building architecture and threats.

Our eyes are passing on to our brain what is around us, telling us "There is a window. I need to retract. There is a corner. I need to clear it. There are "friendlies."

I need to be aware of my muzzle and keep my finger off the trigger, indexing it above the trigger well and below the slide, etc.... All this is not instinctive.

Our brain is telling our muscles what to do. How efficiently we do it depends on how many times we've completed the task correctly. So we train, doing it correctly over and over and over again. Under duress, we all fall back to our highest level of training. This is not because of instincts. This is because our

brain can only process split second movements we have continually trained as our senses become overwhelmed with our own thoughts and exterior sights, smells and sounds surrounding us in that moment.

We learn dogmatic pieces that are proven effective for us individually and as a team. Learn as many pieces of dogmatic lessons for situations that demand flexibility and a choice.

Without the dogmatic learning process, you don't have the freedom of choice to adapt to the dynamic situation later.

So, yeah... we have to look at both ways in good training: We have to train dogmatically to get the basics down... but we also need to be flexible when applying them...

It sounds contrary, but it's not. It fits into the true nature of combat or any stress filled situation.





Photo Credits: Zach Stern • Squatch Media



So, coming back to your question: Yes, we have to be individually dogmatic, learning how to do something that is most efficient for “YOU” and then having it in your kit bag as an option. Because the worst thing that can happen is us questioning ourselves when time is a factor.

The “What should I do? What should I do” countdown adds to the stress. We cannot sit and wait our way for a situation where our lives may be in danger. The worst thing to do is to make no decision. But before that, we have to learn the basics, the fundamentals, and then continue to apply to those fundamentals in movements and continue to apply those movements to situations.

Then we train and retrain all situations, no matter how ludicrous it may seem at the time... Then, when the happening that you hope never comes happens... We’re ready for it. We have learned all these different ways to actively respond, and now we have the options to act, whether it be methodical or dynamic, by inputting variables according to what is going on.

We cannot learn one single thing and use it in every single situation. If we do we are setting ourselves up for failure. But we can learn many single useful “ways,” applying them to the situations at hand and coming up with the best course of action, all in a split second if we’ve made them habits.



# Kris Paronto

Owner of Battleline Tactical

## Flexibility Vs. Dogma In Combat Training - Interview Part II



Kris Paronto

In part one, we spoke with Kris Paronto about the differences in training approaches, specifically about flexibility vs. dogma in training. This article picks up where we left off last time.

**Thomas Lojek:** Last time we spoke, we were talking about flexibility vs. dogma in training. How do you balance these two aspects? How do you get people in your training to understand that they might need both one day?

**Kris Paronto:** Whatever training evolution you do, you should learn different methods to address different levels of training. In combat training, we have to train for the moment when a threat or threats are in front of you, but there will always be some variable that will change that “one way” we may know to handle the situation, so learning different methods to handle “one” situation will only benefit you.

Yes, there may be one way that is better than the others, but if a variable makes that “one” way impossible to complete then you better have a secondary, or even tertiary way.

What if you lose your hand? What if you fall off a wall and you break your arm? What if I have to break a finger? How do I counter a threat then, when everything goes wrong?

And honestly, I learned the best when that monkey wrench was thrown into the mix, when that stripper named Karma came out of nowhere to destroy even the best laid method or plan.

As I told you in our last conversation, I learned a lot from my football coaches when I was young. They gave me a certain set of rules and within the rules, they told me, “Play and try what works and what doesn’t work, and learn from your mistakes and failures so when that situation arises again, you’ll know what to do.”

I have seen guys with a plethora of experience still make mistakes or lock up because they didn’t prepare themselves for that unseen variable. Karma came in with a vengeance and caused havoc.

It’s happened to me as well, but first I was lucky to come out of the situation with all my fingers and toes. Then I did my self-evaluation or required AAR while with the 2/75 and GRS and learned the hard way, in front of my peers, what I did wrong and what correction that would need to be made so I didn’t do wrong again.

One thing that I always tell people: Even if you fail, you keep going. Don’t just stop and beat yourself up over the failure or mistake. Learn from it in the





moment. It's fresh and in your immediate memory. Make the correction in your head, but continue to train and move forward. That bullet is downrange and we can't take it back, all we can do is readjust, re-aim and refire.

And this is where very dogmatic instructors can cause harm with their training style. I've experienced it as a student and instructor: Especially in room clearing or force on force scenarios: The participant just stops when they make a mistake, almost freezes in place instead of continuing on with the drill.

When I'm the coach/instructor, they will sometimes look to me, like: "Tell me something. What do I do?" and I'll say, "I don't know. What do you think you should do?"

It's not that I'm ridiculing or patronizing them. I want them to continue to think because the worst thing in the world to do in a dynamic situation is not to make a bad decision. It's to make NO decision.

That was pounded into my head as a young Ranger private. It's that we continue to move forward. We don't stop or quit and we train through the mistakes, (unless the mistake was so egregious that my squad leader deemed that we

needed some on the spot correction, haha) and we keep finding work, keep moving forward.

I've been blessed to know, from experience, when shit goes sideways, we can't quit. We have to keep fighting, keep going. I've made a lot of mistakes during my career, but I always kept fighting. I kept moving.

That's the Ranger-Mindset that I was blessed enough to experience and ingrain into my own personality. We never stop. The most well-laid plans go to shit all the time, but if we don't stop we'll normally come out on top.

The I-quit-and-wait-for-advice-when-I'm-wrong habit is a dangerous mindset that grows around dogmatic instructors. Instead, a more flexible training approach teaches people to keep going.

No matter what, you drive on, continue to complete the mission, then we go back and evaluate so we can dig into what was going through the participant's head at the time the mistake was made.

I learned this quite extensively every Monday after a Saturday football game as we watched and dissected film of the game prior to going to practice. Nothing will humble you more than sitting in a room of your teammates, watching a mistake you made over and over again in slow motion.

This also carried on to when I was with 2/75 after a mission or training operation, but it taught me how to be able to handle constructive criticism, as well as how to provide constructive criticism the correct way, without belittling the person it's being directed to.

**Thomas Lojek:** What role has fear and the fear of failure in combat training?

**Kris Paronto:** Fear as a tool, as an element of training, including the fear of failure, has to be understood very well and where it has its place and where it doesn't.

I think fear and the fear of failure is a necessary element when we are going through vetting or trying out for a Special Ops Unit or Top Tier Paramilitary Organization. We need that sense of fear of failure to cause a little bit of stress. It causes the cream to rise to the top and weeds out those that aren't ready.



Normally the fear of getting kicked from the unit or being DNR'd is stress enough. The fear of being kicked out of unit or losing my job if I didn't pass a vetting or tryout gave me a sense of fear that was greater than any yelling or intimidation tactic ever did.

I was adequately prepared though, once I started in the PMC world, because that is the 75th Ranger Regiment. There is the standard vetting that was called R.I.P which is now called R.A.S.P to make it into the 75th Ranger Regiment, then of course there's Ranger School if you've been lucky enough to not be RFS from the unit before you have your turn to earn your Ranger Tab.

But even on a daily basis while serving with the 75th Rangers, we are continually being vetted. There's no lull, and if you screw up, then, at first, there are quite a few creative forms of physically demanding punishments. And it is necessary. It helps to remind us every day, who really wants to be there and sorts those that don't out. Because if guys can't handle the daily grind, and I'm not even talking about R.I.P or

Ranger School, which is its own special kind of hell, then they're gonna quit on you shit really hits the fan.

Buuuuuuuuuu, I don't believe it's valuable for open enrollment classes. A participant coming to a Battleline class isn't going to learn a damn thing if I'm screaming in their face, or making them elevate their feet and do push-ups until their arms come out of their sockets, or if I throw their optic across the range, because it wasn't tightened down before we started. (That last one really did happen at a well-known training site. It was uncalled for and completely unnecessary.)

Yes, it is valuable for "can you take this punishment" training environments where you are going downrange to be part of an elite team or Spec Ops Unit. I did learn by fear, though, while becoming a Ranger with the 75th and also by joining GRS, but not by fearing an instructor who thought they were intimidating me with their thousand-yard stare. The fear I learned from was my own self-generated fear, the fear of failing, the fear of not knowing what to expect and the

fear of not living up to the standards I had set for myself.

Ranger School exemplified this kind of fear. The Ranger Instructors put us under tremendous stress levels, but it was great because it made me learn quickly. We didn't have the luxury to be told or shown how to complete a task multiple times. The task, condition and standard was provided, and if we were lucky, it was demonstrated once and after that it was "It's in your Ranger Handbook. Go find it Ranger!"

The fear of being put in charge at Ranger School coupled with the fear of failing, returning to 2/75 as a tableless bitch and the feeling of humiliation in front of all other guys that would come with it, made me understand that learning curves are quick but they can be obtained and it did help me become a better GRS operator later in my career.

Again though, this fear isn't necessary for open enrollment classes. No participant wants to pay to learn a skill, only to be humiliated in front of others. We, as coaches/instructors, have to know when it's time to add a little stress and when it's time to mentor and be coaches. I am blessed to understand both ways to learn and to teach. Just another set of skills that were taught to me so I could put them in my kit bag to use when necessary.

**Thomas Lojek:** Do you use these principles in your courses?

**Kris Paronto:** Yes. We always at Battleline look to build our participants up and not tear them down. We know there are different ways to accomplish the same tasks and not everyone is alike. We do teach and maintain





fundamentals as a base to learn from as fundamentals are the heart and soul of any coaching curriculum, but we also know that variables can affect a fundamental in which case we have to be fluid with our coaching style.

There are some instructors who belittle participants, sometimes to the point of humiliation and that crosses a line. A good coach will never talk down to a participant. They will always find a way to teach, mentor and demonstrate the proper course of action with patience. Participants book a class to learn something or to work on their skill-set but not to be humiliated.

We all learn differently, but in the end we all want to learn the skills we need to feel secure in our daily lives. As coaches, we need to find the best way to teach and mentor so a participant obtains that.

We don't yell or talk down to Battleline participants. We mentor them, answer their questions, and motivate them to learn. They do want a little bit of pressure to feel challenged but to not feel humiliated.

At Battleline, we are coaches. Our belief of "We can always do

better" is something I was taught by coaches that I learned from in football when I was a kid. We can be honest with each other when we screw up, but we always use the screw up as a learning point to improve on.

This goes full circle of what we discussed before: dogmatic or flexible? We need to know what coaching style to use because it will fit into what your participant learning process requires at that point in their experience level. If you have a first-time shooter and you yell at him like it was a Ranger Battalion training evolution, we will lose him/her and possibly a whole community of new shooters.

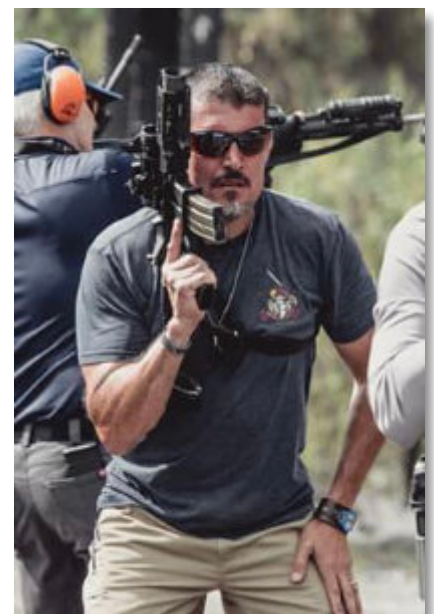
We lose new shooters in the 2a community because of unnecessary bravado or intimidation. What I'd recommend to any coach/instructor out there is if you have a course that needs yelling and screaming because you believe it adds extreme stress - make sure it is advertised correctly before the students show up at your range. Let them know beforehand. Some will love it and sign-up immediately. Others will stay away, and this is how it has to be. We need to provide environments that all can learn

from in the open training and advertise it correctly.

I have a few courses that are built around high-stress levels. And it is not yelling and screaming. It is just physically intense and exhausting. The stress level comes with heavy breathing and muscle fatigue. We don't need to yell at them. The intensity of physical training does the job over time better than intimidation or the blue box of death (pro timer). At the end of the two days, the participants felt pushed and a sense of accomplishment.

So, to answer your question: Open courses, in my opinion, should use a non-intimidating environment for best results. Highly specialized training for Special Operations of specific units like big city SWAT teams also need a learning environment that's coupled with high levels of stress deemed by their Team Leaders and Training cadre. Those that fall in between this need to take it upon themselves to seek out the type of courses and training that they respond best to. Learn from everyone and eventually you'll find that coach/instructor that you respond best to.

We lose new shooters in the 2a community because of unnecessary bravado or intimidation. What I'd recommend to any coach/instructor out there is if you have a course that needs yelling and screaming because you believe it adds extreme stress - make sure it is advertised correctly before the students show up at your range. Let them know beforehand. Some will love it and sign-up immediately. Others will stay away, and this is how it has to be. We need to provide environments that all can learn

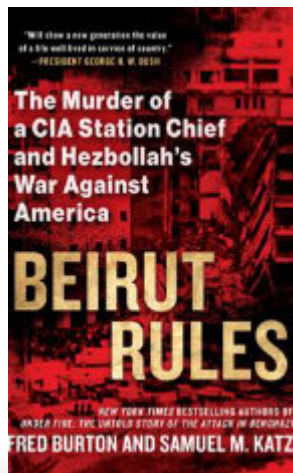


# Click photos to learn more...

# Fred Burton

Executive Director of the Ontic  
Center for Protective Intelligence

How to counter Hezbollah's global reach: In many ways, their strategy has been brilliant. They continue to play chess while many other terrorist groups play checkers.



By Fred Burton

Fred Burton is one of the world's leading experts on terrorism, terrorist organizations and international security. Burton spent much of his career at the U.S. State Department, where he served as a special agent and then deputy chief of the Diplomatic Security Service counterterrorism division. He is also an author of numerous books, including *Chasing Shadows* and *Ghost: Confessions of a Counterterrorism Agent*.

In this interview, Burton gives us a behind-the-scenes peek at what went into his book *Beirut Rules* and the story behind the abduction of CIA Station Chief William Francis Buckley.

**Thomas Lojek:** Your book *Beirut Rules* tells the story of the search for CIA station chief William Francis Buckley in Lebanon after he was abducted by Hezbollah in 1984. For more than 400 days, Buckley was tortured and then killed by Hezbollah.

Today, nearly 40 years later, Hezbollah is still active and one of the biggest power players in the Middle East.

Can you explain to our readers the success, for the lack of a better word, of Hezbollah and what they do so differently in comparison to the myriad Islamic terrorist groups that were defeated or just became insignificant over the years?

**Fred Burton:** Hezbollah, the “Party of God,” are survivors. Strategically, winning hearts and minds has been key to Hezbollah's success by providing many social programs in Lebanon to support families, including schools and healthcare. Hezbollah has successfully leveraged Iran's financial and logistical support as a guiding hand.

In many ways, their strategy has been brilliant. They continue to play chess while many other terrorist groups play checkers. And, it helps to have a robust and capable intelligence service in your corner -- namely Iran.

**Thomas Lojek:** Hezbollah has grown into an international organization that is not limited to the Middle East anymore. They have cells in Europe. They train militias in Africa and they try to get a stake in the South American drug trade and international money laundering operations.

What do Hezbollah's international operations mean for the security of the western world and how should the USA and its allies counter the global activities of Hezbollah?

**Fred Burton:** As a state sponsor of terror, Hezbollah's reach is indeed global. I've seen this first-hand. In the 1980s, the terrorist group seemed always to be one step ahead and we had a hard time figuring out their main





DSS special agent Fred Burton, somewhere over the North Atlantic, on a USAF military special air mission (SAM) with freed American hostage David Jacobsen.

players and actors. Rarely, if ever, did we forecast their next move.

The organization certainly has the capability to strike Western or Israeli interests around the globe, if desired. But, there are also constraints; if any act of terror could be directly attributed to their actions, there would be reprisals. Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, their leader, knows this.

Some intelligence services watch the group better than others, i.e., the Israeli MOSSAD.

From a tactical perspective, the penetration of the organization has always been tough due to a range of tradecraft reasons. To be blunt, we lacked the human intelligence assets to find Bill Buckley, the kidnapped station chief, and the other Western hostages (to include German hostages). It was an intelligence failure on the part of many Western intelligence services.

I think about that pretty much every day. We should have done more.

**Thomas Lojek:** The leading nations of the free Western world

give you unlimited funding and free hands to do whatever is necessary to stop Hezbollah. What would you do?

**Fred Burton:** If resources and budget were no issue, I would enhance surveillance and intelligence collection efforts on every Iranian diplomat, intelligence officer, and Hezbollah operative around the world. Work towards human source recruitment, which wouldn't be easy.

On the diplomatic and foreign policy front, continue to go after Hezbollah's global assets and work with INTERPOL on their criminal enterprises, like stolen cars and drug running.

Photo by Jack Carr



**Thomas Lojek:** Is there any blind spot western policymakers, politicians, and security advisors have when it comes to Hezbollah and its new rise to power? Is there any warning from you about specific threats/tactics most experts don't see or never expect from Hezbollah and that could be dangerous in the years to come?

**Fred Burton:** There is never a shortage of global threats facing the world.

As you prioritize those threats, where would Hezbollah fall? There are only so many intelligence officers, analysts and surveillance assets at your disposal.



Bill Buckley on patrol in Vietnam - Courtesy of Beverly Surette



ID badge photograph  
of William Buckley -  
Courtesy of the CIA

Bandwidth is always the issue for the global Intelligence Community (IC). The IC suffers from a range of stacking threats, i.e., the pandemic, never-ending cyber-attacks, nation-state espionage from Russia and China (primarily), Iran's nuclear development program, and potential mass shootings.

Threat-wise, we have yet to see Iran retaliate for the January 2020 assassination of General Qasem Soleimani of the Iranian IRGC, known as "The Shadow Commander." I find that worrisome and would expect Iranian and Hezbollah pre-operational surveillance of U.S. and Israeli targets around the globe.

The U.S. has moved on, with the new administration pursuing domestic social justice issues, the pull-out from Afghanistan, and navigating the pandemic. Still, I promise you that Iran and Hezbollah have not forgotten about Soleimani's killing.

With that in mind, when and where will they retaliate? Time will tell. History tells me that we won't see it coming.

**Thomas Lojek:** What does Hezbollah do exceptionally well? Is there any field of expertise, for example, urban warfare, unconventional warfare, making allies, specific forms of terrorism, funding, money laundering, recruiting, propaganda, etc.? Is there anything where you take note and say, "Hezbollah does



Fred Burton: Clinton School  
of Public Service book talk -  
Joshua Lane Cook

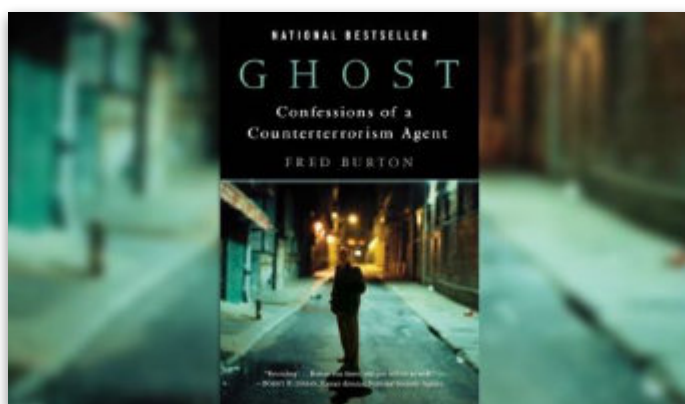
that exceptionally well?" If so, why does Hezbollah excel in that space?

**Fred Burton:** From an operational security perspective, Hezbollah is good, real good. Tough to penetrate, so their internal counter-intelligence efforts are robust. It would be fascinating to know how their intelligence officers are being trained to ferret out spies.

The organization has always had the ability to surprise the world and was known as the business's best bomb-makers. I mean big bombs. Many have forgotten the damage caused by the organization through kidnappings, hijackings and bombings, but I haven't and never will.

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Read more about this in Fred Burton's book *Beirut Rules*. Find it on Amazon, or at a bookseller near you. **Fred Burton Homepage:**



# Click photo to learn more!

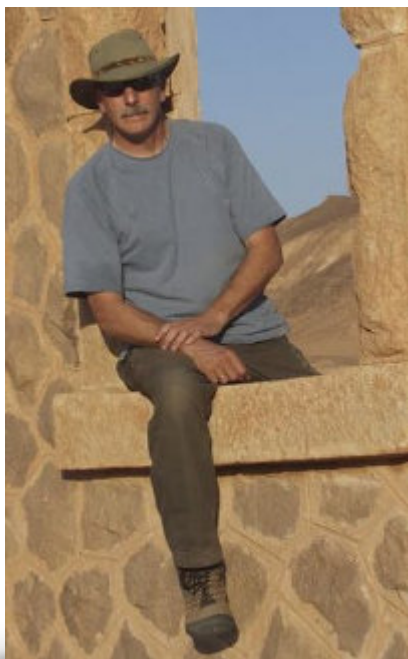




Photo: Practicing a 2-man entry with the Walther MPK. We followed strict uniform and haircut guidelines too.

## Special Forces Berlin and the Beginnings of CounterTerror Ops and CQB in the US Army

By James Stejskal



James Stejskal

Berlin, Fall 1977

The echo of pistol shots bounced off the concrete walls of the range as thin tendrils of smoke curled up out of the Walther P5 barrel that fired them. The three cardboard silhouettes were well holed.

“Clear your weapon and let’s take a look,” said Ron, our instructor.

We moved down range, walking the short seven meters from the firing line to the targets. I had fired four magazines of ammunition, double-tap, at the numbered targets according to his verbal commands.

From where I was standing, I could see what damage I had wrought but Ron wanted to show me something. My two errant rounds, “fliers” he called them, were outside the

acceptable limits. Using another target silhouette he overlapped one atop the other.

“Here, you’re okay,” he moved the cardboard a bit, “here the hostage is dead. Can’t have that. Tighten up your groups, all of them.” The verdict was matter of factly delivered. It didn’t matter that the “hostage” wasn’t displayed when I was firing; accuracy was paramount at all times.

We were located in Berlin, the “Outpost of Freedom” as it was called in the western press. There were only a few of us Special Forces types in the city, a small fraction of the 12,000 American, British, and French the Allies stationed there. That was an even smaller fraction of the roughly 1,000,000 Soviet and East German troops surrounding us.



Photo: Training with GSG9 circa 1978

It was the height of the Cold War between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Berlin was the focal point of that struggle, although many bloodier skirmishes took place elsewhere around the world.

Our mission in Berlin was secret. We were known to the outside world as Detachment "A" or Det "A" for short.

The classified designation was Special Forces (SF) Berlin. This unique SF unit had been stationed in Berlin since 1956 waiting for the moment when the Cold War might turn hot.

If conflict did come, SF Berlin was tasked to disrupt Soviet rear area security and slow the advance of the Warsaw Pact's forces towards Western Europe.

The men of the unit had to be experts not only in unconventional warfare but urban operations as well. It was a tall order for 90 men posted 110 miles behind enemy lines. The odds weren't good but we accepted them.

Day-to-day life was always interesting training for special operations under the nose of the enemy was a challenge. The men became consummate professionals at war in the shadows, much like their predecessors in the Office of Strategic Services.

They had to work under cover using esoteric intelligence tradecraft skills taught by case officer instructors from the Agency. Wearing an American army uniform was not part of the mission, but wearing someone else's was. Very good

language ability and an intimate knowledge of local customs was mandatory. Of course there were other unique tasks to learn like where and how to cross East German border defenses without being shot.

In the 1970s, the situation began to change. Terrorism had reared its head in Europe. At first it was small-scale attacks, but then came the kidnapping of Israeli Olympic Team in Munich and the subsequent debacle at Fürstenfeldbruck Airfield. Senior officers in the U.S. Army European Command realized



Photo: Practicing for a Hijacking Scenario at Berlin Tegel Airport - view from sniper/observer position.



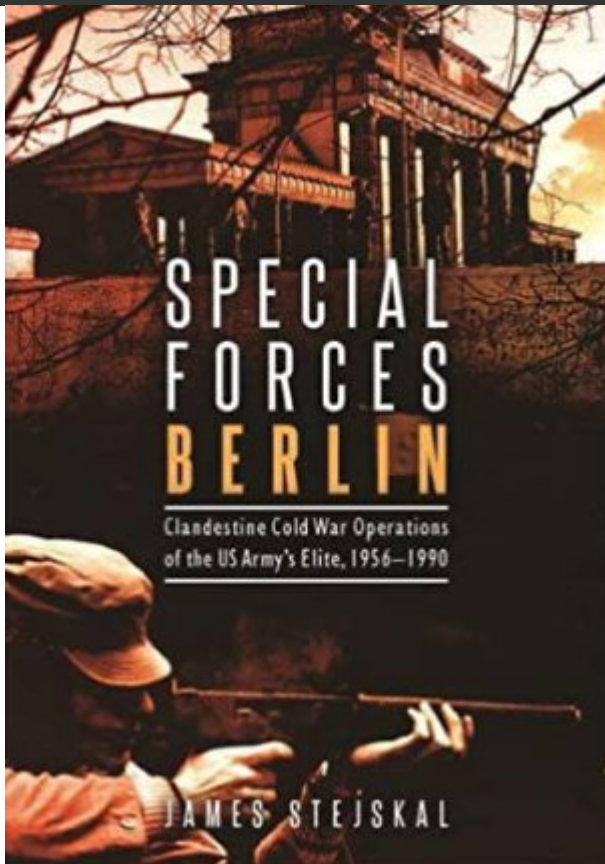


Photo: Cover Special Forces Berlin J. Stejskal



Photo: Pan Am let us borrow their uniforms when we worked on the flight line of Berlin Tegel Airport. Mac-10 gmm at the ready...

the military was not prepared for such incidents, especially aircraft hijackings. Remember, this was well before 1st SFOD-D aka "Delta" got off the ground.

So Special Forces Berlin was ordered to prepare for the job. In 1975, Det "A" became the first U.S. military unit with counter-terrorism as one of its missions. For the men of SF Berlin, there was a new skill-set to be learned while maintaining the old one.

Many of the men had trained with SWAT teams and special forces of our allies. Together with our established knowledge base, we drew on those special experiences to build a solid program that would accomplish what was needed.

Some of it came from historical examples; books came out of the closet and the masters were re-learned: what Fairbairn learned in Shanghai and Applegate taught at Area B-2. Much came from our British cousins — the Special Air Service.

Several of our troopers spent a year at with 22SASR and brought their philosophy of Close Quarter Battle to our doors. British CQB coupled with the U.S. Army's Vietnam era

"Quick Kill" techniques were integrated to teach our shooters how to acquire and hit a small target without using the sights. For longer ranger shots, the sights would be quickly visualized. The stated aim of CQB is simple: to guarantee success in killing. Six factors play a role: surprise, confidence, concentration, speed, teamwork, and offensive attitude.

Starting out at 5 meters and then moving back to 7 and 10 meters, a shooter could quickly engage a target with a rapid "double-tap" two-rounds in the kill zone of first, an 8" platter-size circle, down to a 3" tea-cup saucer.

At first it was single targets, then multiple, then mixed shoot / no-shoot targets. It became more intense with a single marksman on the line, then in pairs, then four-man teams, and static then moving targets. All timed, all under pressure. So far, so good.

To get out of the firing range mindset, we built a shooting house to practice room clearing, single and multiple rooms, hallways and closets. Abandoned buildings in the city and empty Pan Am aircraft standing isolated on the tarmac at Berlin's Tegel Airport gave us the chance to practice full-on CT scenarios.



That involved a deployment of the headquarters element, sniper/observer elements, and anywhere from four to eight assault teams to conduct practice on different scenarios – good for almost anything might come up.

But that wasn't enough. We needed to practice clandestine entry and takedown techniques – essentially getting into the target area, taking care of business, and getting off the "X" once it was all over.

That's where SF Berlin's urban unconventional warfare skills came into play. Previously, we had provided "other" agencies with back up surveillance and security, mobility, infiltration and exfiltration capabilities, all of which were all useful for a possible hard target CT operation. Who knew when you might need to extract someone – a VIP or High Value Target from East Germany?

Det "A's" soft-skills like language, intelligence tradecraft, expertise in unconventional warfare, and the ability to move unobtrusively in an unfamiliar environment, coupled with its dynamic entry, shoot to kill, special operations skills were a combination unavailable anywhere else in the U.S. military.

And soon they were needed. In November 1979, the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was overrun and more than 50 hostages taken by "radical students." Three more Americans were being held in the Iranian Foreign Ministry. It was not long before the Pentagon came calling. By then, SFOD-D was up and running. It had been certified for CT operations just days before the embassy was seized.

Although Delta had the 90 men necessary to rescue the hostages from the embassy compound, they didn't have enough for the Foreign Ministry tasking. SF Berlin got that job and ten men were selected for the operation.

Training, intense multi-service planning, preparation, and practice began but there was one small problem. There was no intelligence about the target or the enemy forces and the national systems could not (or would not, some say) provide it.

The answer was simple, send in men who understood the target and the mission requirements, men who could operate undercover in a denied area with the ability and confidence to successfully acquire the information needed, and then meet the assault force to lead them to the target. Where do you

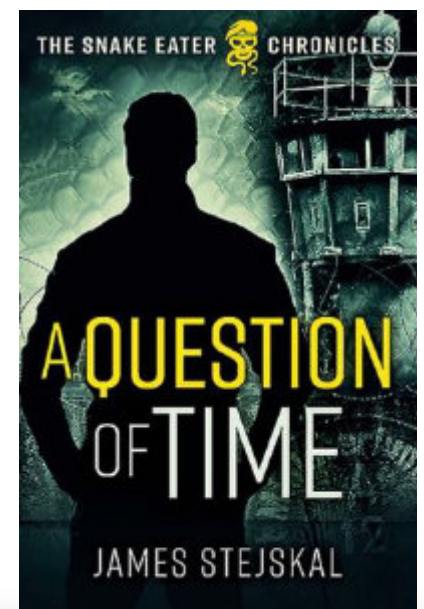
find such men? One unit had them ready to deploy: Detachment "A" Berlin.

As we know, the Iran rescue mission was a failure which ended with a terrible accident at Desert One that took eight men's lives. But there was a successful side to the mission, the advanced reconnaissance mission into Tehran that provided the required information for the operation to go forward.

The lessons learned from the Joint Task Force 79 mission resulted in the Goldwater-Nichols Act and led to the creation of U.S. Special Operations Command.

The full history of Det "A" is told in the book *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956-1990*.

Not all of SF Berlin's stories could be told but I found one way to fill the gap: as fiction. So, *The Snake Eater Chronicles* were born. The first of that series is called *A Question of Time*. (Casemate Publishers, November 2020).



# Click cover to learn more...



# Ralf Kassner

Wodan International • Former GSG9

## Kill House Training For Close Protection Services



Ralf Kassner

### Kill House Training for Close Protection Services • Interview with Ralf Kassner, CEO of Wodan Security

**Summary:** An in-depth interview with Ralf Kassner, CEO of Wodan Security and former GSG9 (Germany's elite counter-terror unit), about the essence of great kill house training and 360 degree live fire training in close protection services!

**Thomas Lojek:** Ralf, as a former SOF unit member (GSG9 and SEK) and CEO of Wodan Security, you are a leading European expert in kill house training and 360 degree tactical training.

What tactics and scenarios do you have in mind, when you set up a kill house training session for close protection professionals during a Wodan Security training event?

**Ralf Kassner:** First of all, kill house training is not so much about cutting-edge shooting skills and heavy live fire action, as someone might think.

A good kill house training, especially for close protection services, is very much about coordination, communication, speed and building up operational pressure.

The training should make you able to build teams and then operate effectively within these teams, even with people you may just have met for the first time. Because this will be a situation that you will face very often during your field operations as a close protection service professional.

It happens all the time. A company puts you in a new team, maybe one of your team members got hurt, another one leaves the company, or the overall operational parameters are just changing whatever it is: The most reliable constant in the close protection service business is change.

The grade of your professionalism in this business is your ability to make yourself comfortable working with strangers under tremendous pressure and in challenging or even lethal environments.

We do not talk about SWAT or Military SOF training here, where unit members have time and significant resources to study their team members operational behavior... often for months and sometimes for years.

Close Protection Services - especially in the private market - is a different category of specialized operations and has to deal with limited resources, restrictions and a lot of unknowns.



Therefore, a 360-degree training for close protection should be about flexibility - operational and individual flexibility. Teams, operational parameters and objectives can change very quickly. Your training should reflect that.

**Thomas Lojek:** Let's take a common scenario. There is a business meeting of Fortune 500 CEOs. And the worst case is happening: An active shooter is in the building. How do you prepare your trainees for this kind of incident?

**Ralf Kassner:** Interestingly, in most cases the biggest challenge, especially in the first crucial minutes or even seconds of the incident, won't be to deal with the threat, but to have a fast and effective coordination of all close protection service professionals at the scene. Somebody has to take the lead: Building a team!

Your scenario implies an incidence at a bigger business conference. That means there will be various close protection professionals at the site, all with different backgrounds, skill levels and experience.

They will differ in their training and in equipment. Some have a military background, others come from law enforcement. A few, maybe, have no professional background at all.

You will have a lot of people around who counter this situation with different tactics and with different field experience. But they all will be in a rush to protect their own VIP. This can be quite a challenge.

**Thomas Lojek:** Could you give us a concrete example, why this could be such a challenge?

**Ralf Kassner:** Sure. Let's talk about something that might seem insignificant at the first place but can have a huge impact

on the outcome of the situation: What if you have to run up several storeys or through a long corridor before you will get to your VIP?

During some conferences the close protection teams are ordered to wait in a different part of the building. It is a very unprofessional conduct by an event management but it still happens on some occasions. Even your VIP sometimes asks you to wait somewhere else while he meets his business contacts.

So, somehow you are not close to your VIP when the shooting starts. Now, we have a bunch of hired guns in high-modus. And even assuming that we are







talking about well-trained individuals here, we still will have different levels of fitness, reaction time and speed in this group. And an uncoordinated armed group under stress and with significant gaps in experience, fitness, reaction time and stress resistance, can turn a few seconds of running over a long corridor into an endless nightmare.

Because now, you do not have to just to worry about the active shooter somewhere in the building, but also about several armed individuals under stress around you - individuals you don't really know - and who maybe have a much more nervous trigger finger and a lesser tactical skill level than you do.

**Thomas Lojek:** So, frankly spoken: In close protection services the individual backgrounds and differences in training and fitness levels within a random group of professionals at the site of an ongoing situation is nothing less than an additional risk factor?

**Ralf Kassner:** Yes. Small differences in individual experience and training of operators at a situation can add up to big problems in close protection, especially, if you

haven't met these operators before. If you don't know them, and if you don't really understand their background it can be hard to gage.

The new guy next to you could be just an ex-bouncer with a gun. Another one might be a highly skilled Army SOF operator. But his background in military operations doesn't mean that he is also a great close protection service professional.

In this situation, we are just a bunch of individuals with a gun and with different skills and backgrounds who have to solve a big problem very quickly. And most likely, we have to solve this problem in a lethal and distressing environment full of panicking people, fleeing crowds, maybe in smoke, fire and with bodies around, or very badly hurt people, while blood and screaming seems to come from everywhere.

In this environment, a group of hired guns without coordination are only adding risk to the situation, the risk to get shot by one operator who acts unprofessional or too nervously.

Or the risk to miss the threat, because keeping the uncoordinated group in check means too much distraction for

you. Or the risk to harm innocent bystanders. Or getting into trouble with arriving police units who also don't know who you are besides that you are carrying a gun in a building with an active shooter.

If you cannot handle this type of situation effectively and at least with a basic structure of essential team work, the presence of a randomly-built group of close protection service members will make things only more complicated.

Therefore, a good kill house training or any form of 360-degree live fire training should not only be about precise shots at bad guys, but also about challenging your team-working skills and your ability to reach a professional level of flexibility in any form of tactical coordination.

You have to read and to understand people. You have to anticipate their reactions and their ability to deal with a threat. Or with innocent bystanders, distraction and tremendous stress.

It is people skills. If you are getting good at it, you will be able to team-up with different individuals at any incident and in a best case to establish a life-saving 360-degree team securing your operational progress in a mission even with strangers. But you have to train for it.

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# Ralf Kassner

Wodan International • Former GSG9

## Kill House Training For Close Protection Services Part 2



Ralf Kassner

In our last issue, we spoke with Ralf Kassner of Wodan Security about the importance of team-building skills. In this issue, we address the hierarchical importance of skills like shooting, as well as the different soft skills a protection professional needs to have.

**Thomas Lojek:** Last time, we were talking about team-building skills and why it matters so much in kill house training for close protection services.

Now, let's start with me challenging the viewpoints from the first part of our interview: In the context of training for close protection, does it mean that shooting is less important than the training of your soft skills like team-work, communication and building rapport?

**Ralf Kassner:** We train for highly complex and very challenging situations. You can't break down these complex challenges of a real operational combat situation into such a simple formula, like soft skills are more important than shooting skills or vice versa because it is not true.

You have to put a lot of different pieces together when we talk about training for a situation that may decide if you and other people will live or die.

Coordination and communication are key elements

Decision-making under pressure is highly important.

Your ability to see and to really understand your surroundings under tremendous stress is crucial.

Building operational pressure and speed is essential

Shooting and your shooting skills are very, very important. Accurate and good shooting skills are the heart of our profession.

But you should also always keep this in mind: Your gun points exactly in the direction it does and does only what your current perception and your imminent interpretation of the given situation tells you to do.

If you shoot quickly and accurately, that's fine. It's a great skill. And it is important.

But this skill will make the worst day of your life, if you shoot too fast and too accurately during an incident and just because someone moves quickly in front of you and seems to carry a weapon and later it turns out, that it was one of your close protection buddies who was trying to reach his





VIP over a different route within the building. See? It's more than just shooting, and it is more than just soft-skills, communication-skills, and team-work.

In a highly stressful situation like an active shooter scenario with crowded floors, panic, screaming, maybe smoke and fire, it can easily happen that you shoot the wrong person, when there were no steps of coordination and clear communication between the close protection service operators at the site before the shooting started.

If you only learn to shoot at everything that has a gun during your live fire training, you won't be prepared for scenarios where other close protection professionals are with you in the building or even worse, when you run into arriving police forces.

You have to go through these kinds of scenarios in trainings to avoid fatal decisions later in real life incidents.

So, it will be a solid mixture of very good shooting skills, soft skills and a lot of experience that will make a highly professional close protection service member.

It wouldn't make sense to weigh one skill too much over another. You have to aim for the full package. Or you become a one-dimensional "expert" in a multi-dimensional threat environment, which means nothing other than: "You get killed!"

**Thomas Lojek:** How do you train this with the attendees of your courses?

**Ralf Kassner:** In our Wodan Security trainings, when we work with realistic live fire scenarios, we always try to bring professionals together who have never trained before as a team.

We try to mix up all teams constantly. This is important.

If you have an incident in a complex environment like an active shooter scenario, you have to demonstrate good skills in efficient coordination and communication.

A real attack happens so quickly. Within seconds you have to coordinate yourself with people you barely know about who will take the lead, who will cover the back.

You have to communicate your evacuation routes with strangers, quickly, clearly and effectively and you may have to deal with arriving law enforcement units.

And let's be honest: A real life incident may force you to work







with somebody who really really sucks. You better be prepared for that.

So, first: In our trainings, there will be no fixed teams, but a lot of randomly mixed up groups, to make our attendees have useful lessons in how to handle any kind of tough operational coordination situation and to gain the operational flexibility under pressure.

Second: In our trainings, we confront our attendees with scenarios that teach them something about operational pressure and speed.

Like in your active shooter scenario, we bring them into scenarios, where they have to make very fast very difficult decisions with serious consequences.

Within seconds everybody has to act and to know what to do:

Can we establish teams for 360 degree securing?

Who will be in charge of an evacuation?

Is there any order in getting the VIP's out?

Will we gather them together in a safe room first?

Or will we try to get them out of the building as fast as possible?

If you take all that into account, your serious kill house won't be solely about the thrill of a live fire run, anymore. It will become a complex challenge. And that is what we want for your training.

And third: It all has to happen in a close quarters environment. You must be able to handle all the upcoming shootings in very close distances. This is not a shooting range.

During a real incident, you will have to run around objects like tables, chairs, decorations, all kinds of stuff, and maybe through smoke, fire, low light and panicking crowds.

Our training simulates these challenges by getting our trainees into a close quarters environment, where they have to handle all kinds of operational pressure.

So, essentially we set up training runs that test your coordination, your operational efficiency and your ability to fight in a close quarters environment.





**Thomas Lojek:** Could you give our readers some tips on how to do this in real life?

**Ralf Kassner:** For example, if you are with your VIP at a bigger conference or a board meeting, normally all close protection professionals are gathering together in another room nearby. And they wait.

Instead of just killing time, it will always be a good idea to talk with your colleagues in the room.

An investigation of the building, evacuation routes, alternative routes, risk spots, gathering spots or safe rooms - that should be “a no brainer.”

Establish at least a quick scenario routine to make sure that all know what to do if an incident occurs.

Be careful: Don't lecture anyone or come across with an annoying “I am the team leader, here” attitude.

Be respectful, and consider that you are talking to people with a

certain degree of professional experience

But make sure that there is a certain concept of: If we have an incident...

Who will take the lead?

Who will cover the back?

Can we build teams?

Can we leave this room as 2-men-teams?

Or 4-men-team for a 360 degree cover?

Do we know our extraction routes?

Do we know all alternatives to the main extraction route?

Will we be able to identify each other quickly?

What to do if we get separated?

What kind of equipment do we have?

Anti-ballistic shields? Vests?

TCCC equipment?

Where is the equipment?

When you have to arrange all this, while an active shooting is going on, you will be in a very tough spot.

Let's keep in mind: The average active shooter incident lasts about 12.5 minutes. Within 12.5 minutes you have to handle a



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security made in germany

complete team-setup and a bundle of very complex operational decision-making? With these kinds of odds, I would rather not bet my own life, nor my professional career nor the lives of other people.

You should be prepared before you get into this tough and very narrow time frame of a real life shooting. That's why you are a professional.

A professional attitude towards close protection services means for you to talk, to communicate and to make sure that there will be a plan or at least a basic coordination between all CPS members in the building.

This is not the “Bruce Willis Way of Life,” but it is the right thing to do for every close protection service professional who is serious with his business and the people he has agreed to protect.

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# Rick Hogg

Rick Hogg is a 29 year US Army Special Operations Combat veteran and the owner of War HOGG Tactical

## Adding realism to your training with a simple t-shirt drill



Rick Hogg

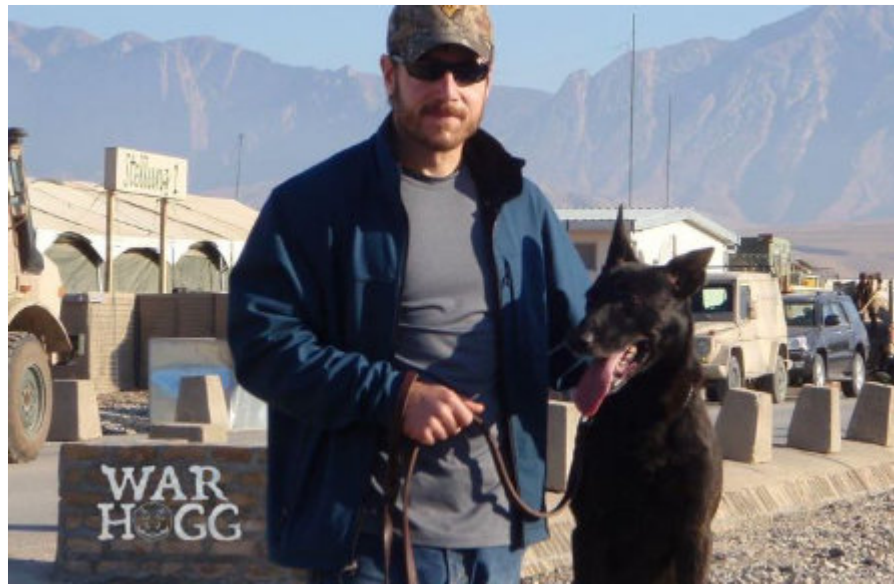
Place yourself in this scenario, late evening traffic stop on a desolate section of road. Unbeknownst to you, the individual in the vehicle is a combat veteran who has the mindset and the experience of killing another human being. Hypothetically if this man decided to cause you ill intent, do you think your training allows you to come home this night?

Just because you've graduated from whatever training course academy or course you're training should never stop! Your training should consist of a daily dry fire regiment with whatever equipment you normally use or carry. At a minimum of 3 days a week for at least 5 minutes.

Your dry fire session must be planned out. I use a notebook to plan my dry fire session.

One of the tools I use is my phone to video the session. It allows me to see if I'm adding any unneeded movement or being inefficient in my task. The other tool is a pro timer. The timer allows me to see my improvement, with time being the tangible.

When you go to the range, you must have a solid plan that should emulate what you did during your dry fire training to ensure your marksmanship skills are there and recoil mitigation. I still bring my notebook, which has my



live-fire training plan, my phone to record my live-fire training, and my pro time to the range.

The last part is: are you adding realism to your training? I do this by using an old t-shirt I can shoot. This is a drill I do in all of my War HOGG Tactical courses. I have the students place an old t-shirt over their targets by stapling only the neck and shoulder area of the t-shirt. I let the student shoot part of the drill with no instructions. About halfway through, I stop the students and let them look at their group on the paper target verse the t-shirt. Then I give them some instructions on using the shirt's collar as a reference point. What you see are two distinct shoot groups. One where they perceive as "center mass." And the other in the vitals to stop a lethal encounter.

Make sure you are adding realism to your range training so that, God forbid, you are ever in a deadly force encounter you come home to your family.



Adding realism to your training by using an old t-shirt!



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**Rick Hogg  
and Duco**



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# Mike Glover

CEO Fieldcraft Survival

## The evolution of civilian training

Recently I heard some shit-talking from dudes I used to respect in SOF. So, as someone who evolved in the industry teaching civilians over the last decade, let me offer a few tokens of advice.

Take it or leave it. If you're a toxic asshole, you'll refuse to listen, and you'll likely fail; it's pretty simple.

1. Stop being entitled. No one owes you shit. If you podcast, live feed, post, spend energy acting like people owe you shit because of your "tactical" experience, you will fail.

2. Civilians aren't military. Stop talking to people and your students like Ranger privates. The world doesn't operate as spec-4 mafia members. Act like a professional and prepare to adapt.

3. Drop the EGO. Again, your rank, your position is irrelevant. I was a SGM, that doesn't mean I have to have an ego about it.

4. Your experience is narrow AF. We often think because we "operated", we are the SMEs at

it all. I beg to differ. I've hired cops that teach self-defense better than us because they know the law. Nurses I've hired teach First Aid better because they understand the extension of domestic care - this isn't Yemen.

Finally 5. Don't be a dick. You'll soon realize your persona that revolved around your career in a unit doesn't work well in the civilian world. Be a dick; burn

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*We often think because we "operated" we are the SMEs at it all. I beg to differ.*

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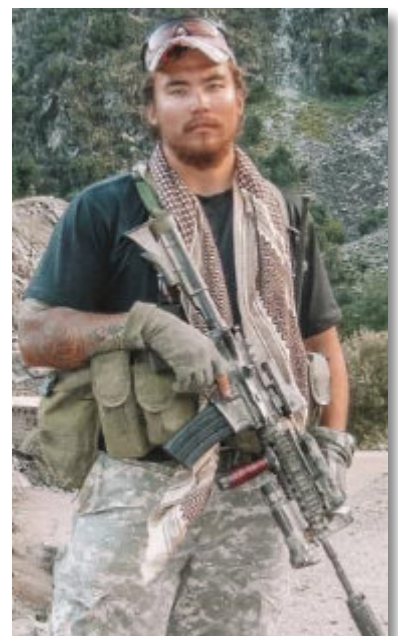
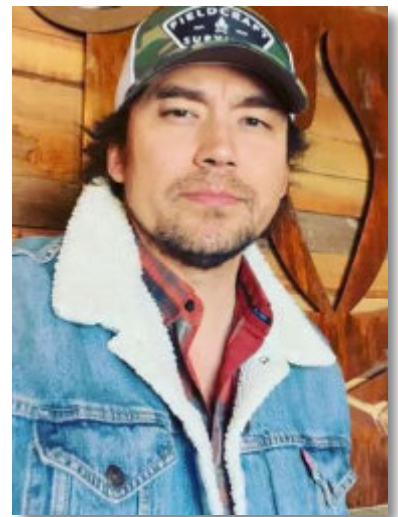
the bridges that will further isolate your potential.

Some will listen, most won't. I've seen some of the best military operators and leaders destroy their reputations operating in an echo chamber and failing to adapt to a new operational environment.

I want to see you succeed.



[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



# Jason Kelly

## C2T2 Training

Position becomes before everything in combat

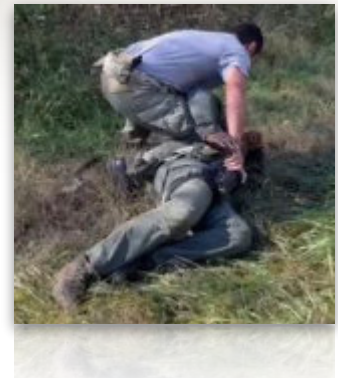


Jason Kelly

Fighting is difficult! Especially when you are unathletic, out of shape, or do not know what good position is.

Don't put all your eggs in one grappling basket. You must make sure you don't let the bad guy dictate where you go or how you get there. If you are training for self-defense or work, learn how to be solid on your feet... preferably a monster on your feet!

Don't live in fantasy land and think you'll end up the victor in an altercation because you carry a pistol. Adversity can come at any distance... far or really close.



The photo above is a screenshot from a video where my prototype offset for the holster broke. However, I was able to take off the holster with the pistol in it, including taking off leg strap, laying it on the ground, then releasing retention and drawing the student's pistol while controlling him the whole time.

Position before submission is the expression, but position comes before everything! And position starts on your feet.

I do not only teach techniques... more importantly, I teach core values and how to think! I try to preach the good word and slip messages in through stories and real-life examples. I need the things I teach to be remembered by students so that they can use them during challenging combat situations.



# Todd VanLangen

Army SOF ret. | Competition Shooter

## The Aftermath of Killing



Todd VanLangen

A large part of a Sniper's job is the ability to compartmentalize and live with taking another human's life.

Special Operations Snipers (and most LEO units) are subjected to a myriad of mental evaluations, interviews, etc. prior to being selected to begin Sniper training.

In addition to the basic "Are you a homicidal maniac?" evaluations, are tests on whether we possess the ability to take a life, and then follow-on tests to ensure we can do it again.

"One Shot Snipers" are indeed a thing and can lead to big safety considerations for the Ground Force Commanders on follow on operations.

We are poked, prodded, etc., to make sure we will kill when it is time to kill but are never assessed on the ability to handle the immense burden of killing in such an intimate way. I think it's time we start talking about it.

Hollywood likes to make killing seem like a romantic interlude that is forgotten by the victor immediately after the fighting is over and that could not be further from the truth.

Recently, I attended a LEO Marksman course as a guest instructor and during one of the breaks was talking

with another former Special Operations personnel. As usual, we were reminiscing about the "glory days" talking about shooting numerous bad guys every night in Sadr City Iraq, when I noticed a couple of the younger LEO Students watching and listening with the most horrified look on their faces.

"How can you guys live with killing so many people?" he asked.

The best answer I had for him was that we were all selected for our ability to remain mentally resilient and compartmentalize the "bad stuff".

Truth is I do not really know how I have been able to cope with the ghosts that continuously haunt me.

Those of us that are lucky enough to be resilient are very few compared to the large numbers of sharpshooters currently serving CONUS and OCONUS.

And I think its time we start discussing ways to counter the "hauntings" that will surely follow any Sniper that takes a kill shot.

If anything, I think it's time to start ensuring those that aspire to be Snipers are fully briefed on the aftermath of taking a life.



“Life or Death” killings is what 99% of the Military or LEO forces deal with and consequently comes with a lifetime of baggage.

A split-second decision to take another human’s life in a firefight (in my experience) is a lot easier to deal with mentally, than spending a lengthy amount of time watching an individual up close and personal through a high-powered optic.

When you are tracking a bad guy through a scope, you see them as the person they are. Spend enough time tracking them and you will see their emotions, ticks, and mannerisms.

At some point you realize the bad guy is a human being, not just a steel target at the range and you have the power to shut them down permanently.

Once you make the decision to eliminate them, the visual of their face will forever be seared into your memory.

That visual will manifest at random times for the rest of your life, no matter what you do to stop it. I once thought, after I had killed enough people, all the faces of the dead would blur together and maybe not be such a poignant experience.

Well, I was wrong. It gets worse. I have come to the decision that the burden of taking another’s life, is you get to relive the moment



for eternity. It’s how you deal with it mentally that makes all the difference.

Just like every Sniper situation, every person is different, and I won’t sit here and preach to anyone on how to cope with their demons. I will say as an Operator, it is incumbent upon you to seek out your own way to deal with it.

Talk to those that are senior to you about how they cope and most importantly, help teach the younger generation how you do it.

There are professionals out there that specialize in building mental resiliency, seek them out. Set up a program for you and your people so you can grow tougher mentally as well as physically.

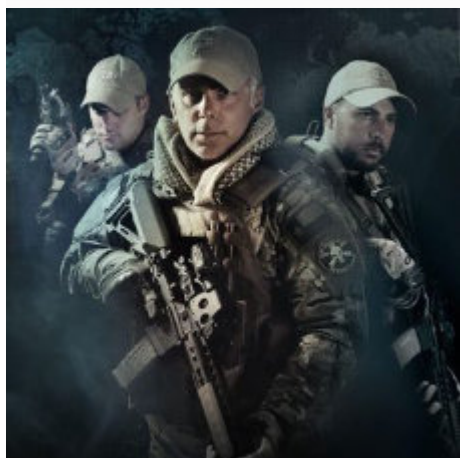






Top: Tom Buchino and cadre of instructors at Tactical Ranch

# Tom Buchino: Small Unit Tactics



## Tom Buchino

Buchino, Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Special Forces (Ret.), a decorated combat veteran with worldwide experience having served in multiple Special Forces Operational Groups, the Special Warfare Center and School, and a Counter-Drug Organization. Founder and CEO of Covenant Special Projects and Tactical Ranch®.

I feel extremely fortunate to have been included in this group of dynamic tactical instructors and asked to provide my insight into the latest tactical trends.

I've had the opportunity to review many of the submissions provided by others spotlighted in this publication. And agree with their take on the evolution of the tactical industry as we enter another decade.

To be honest, I was impressed by the lack of Knuckle-Drumming verbiage in their write-ups... instead, my counterparts exemplify the true essence of the modern Warrior; eloquent, well-spoken, professional, yet always prepared to drop the hammer if the situation requires Violence of Action. My kind of guys... No Snowflakes!

There is no-such-thing as advanced tactics; only perfect execution of the fundamentals under stress. Everything we do as tactical operators, protective agents, law enforcement officers and trainers, must be rooted in the fundamentals.

Shoot - Move - Communicate!  
Nothing else matters.

So, with that in mind, I choose to go a slightly different direction (yet mutually supporting to all my counterparts' writings) in my contribution to this publication.

I'd like to address the importance of Small Unit Tactics (SUT). I know from first-hand experience in the Special Forces Regiment, most battles are fought and won or lost by the composition of small teams. A SEAL Platoon, SF A-Team,



light infantry squad or a few police officer's responding to a school shooting fight with limited personnel, limited weapons systems, and limited supporting resources.

Success or failure hinges on factors including individual and collective skills (training and experience) and the immediate ability to operate as a Team, thus Small Unit Tactics.

As the owner of Covenant Special Projects Protective Services and our training facility, TACTICAL RANCH®, my instructor cadre and I ensure we stress the importance of proper execution of Small Unit Tactics.

Small Unit Tactics (SUT) encompasses all aspects of individual and collective element tactical competencies as well as the team's doctrine, policies, procedures (SOP's), and TTP's. SUT requires mental and physical discipline.

The discipline to execute the trained behavior that best supports fellow teammate efforts and the ground-truth situation.

Small teams rely completely on one another, it's critical to mission success. Every operator must do his/her job and not "Be the Lone Wolf", possibly placing fellow teammates or the mission at risk.

SUT is like a tactical symphony; every instrument or operator has a supporting role. One rogue violin out of key... One teammate performing something different from rehearsed SOP... Well, you get the picture.

The issue with developing robust SUT capabilities in small teams is: this aspect of training is often overlooked. It's much cooler and better for the Spotlight Ranger YouTube posts to simply allocate all training time to individual skills; El-Presidente, Tactical Reloads, etc.

Of course, those of us that carry guns for living or for defense purposes love to spend time at the range punching holes in paper or banging steel, but all too often we neglect working scenarios involving others (Team Work / SUT).

## SMALL UNIT TACTICS

... because only Rambo can do it alone...

So, let's break down SUT. Think of SUT as the combination of everything administrative, historical, and tactical combined in an Action.

An action that is based on a solid foundation of principles and doctrine. Foundations are the sturdy, never-wavering, always present blocks that support every structure, every business, and every successful tactical operator and operation. Foundations (based on doctrine) support fundamentally-based execution of an operation.

Now foundations are seldom in view, often hidden and constructed of messy, not pleasing to the eye materials, yet when the molecular structure of these elements combine with just the right mixture, the result is nothing less than a Solid Platform for everything else to stand upon.

The implementation of SUT training into group or team





training events is critical for mission readiness. As previously stated, every aspect of individual and collective skills are combined into Small Unit Tactics.

Whether conducting a Dismounted Patrol through an Afghan village, Counter Ambush Immediate Actions while operating a convoy in Syria, or Serving a High-Risk Warrant in Chicago, the immediate action of team members during emerging events must be behavioral and decisive.

### Small Unit Tactics

The application of doctrine for the combat deployment of smaller units in a particular environment.

In order to truly develop and implement SUT competencies in your small team's training, you have to first determine your doctrine. Military and most Law Enforcement elements have published doctrine, but occasionally we work with small teams that have yet to determine what their true mission is, let alone know anything about doctrine.

This deficiency leaves the team no clue how to train and often leads to confusion in team member's response in emerging scenarios, resulting in diminished SUT competency.

Think of a part-time police SWAT team in a landlocked small rural county in the US that wants to spend time training with borrowed boats on a river 150 miles outside their jurisdiction... Maybe it is fun, and a great tanning opportunity, but what a waste of valuable training time. It's not relevant to their assigned directives. Or that same SWAT team that has not developed a Tactical SOP (TACSOP) concerning Entry's; could be catastrophic should officers not know their individual and supporting officer's duties and responsibilities during the assault.

I know all this discussion of Doctrine, SOP's, Policy, Procedures blah, blah, blah are not what gets Tactical Practitioners blood pumping. For many of you, the behavioral response of such is already engrained in your soul from years of service...

But, we as trainers or unit leaders have a responsibility to set our folks up for success. Combat Marksmanship Speed and Accuracy development is quantifiable; immediate results are noted by hits on steel or the tone of a Pro-Timer, but evaluation of SUT requires non-biased evaluation of the team performance in a given scenario.

Scenarios must be of tactical relevance (SWAT Team in Boat thing) and each exercise must be followed by a facilitated After Action Review (AAR). The AAR allows teammates to discuss their actions and supporting team member actions from the Planning Phase through Actions On the Objective. We develop Lessons Learned from the exercise and subsequent AAR, then revise (if necessary), rehearse, and evaluate. An ongoing process that must evolve with the tactical environment.

Don't waste time, resources, or energy on tactics or techniques that will (a) Will Never Be Authorized by Your Agency / Unit and (b) Are Not a Mission Essential Task.

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*Scenarios must be of tactical relevance and each exercise must be followed by a facilitated After Action Review*

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Left: Tom Buchino

Stick with what is doctrine! Doctrine consists of fundamental principles, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and terms and symbols. Most of all doctrine provides the fundamental principles of what works in battle, based on past experience.

These principles have been learned through combat and conflict and although not always perspective in nature, they are authoritative and always the starting point for address new problems.

Such principles are not simply a checklist for what to do in a situation, or a constraining set of rules, these principles are designed to promote operator initiative and adaption to solve problems.

With that in mind, once the team has identified their Mission, the Mission Essential Task List (METL: skills required to fulfill mission directives, Specified and Implied Task), accepted or developed and implemented department, agency or unit policies,

procedures, and standard operating procedures, they now have the basis for doctrine. The team now knows what skills to train, how to develop team operability, and the best course of action for revising and sustaining capabilities. All of this combined become the receipt for SUT development.

My time serving on and leading small teams (Special Forces & Protective Services Teams) has engrained the importance of SUT. Knowing the learned behavior and immediate response for myself and teammates in a given situation provides teams the Tactical Advantage when “shit hits the fan.” When on the “X” what do we all do to win? That’s SUT.

SUT is not restricted to Policing and Military Units, it must be trained and employed in any aspect of battle involving two (2) or more operators. Offensive, defensive, reconnaissance and stability operations require SUT. Traveling, traveling Overwatch, Bounding Overwatch, requires SUT. Get it? Everything we do in this

wonderful world of the fight involves Small Unit Tactics.

A SEAL Team supporting a Marine Task Force, may have differing Tactical SOP’s (TACOPS), however their doctrine is consistent; allowing them to operate in support of each other.

An SF HALO (Military Freefall) Team will have mission specific aspects to their TACSOP but will integrate perfectly and operate alongside that SEAL Team. We may differ slightly in composition and capabilities but operate conducive because of common doctrine and training based on the fundamentals.

Never was this more clear than during a mounted patrol during the initial invasion into Iraq in 2003. (Unclassified)

Prior to the “Official Kickoff” of the coalition forces air campaign, a small group of Special Operations Forces (SOF) conducted an infiltration of Iraq to set up and secure an isolated abandoned airfield.



The mission was to conduct a clandestine infill of other SOF teams for reconnaissance operations from the secured airfield.

The airfield seizure team consisted of one (1) SF A-team and one (1) SF-B Team (a small headquarters command and control element) and a handful of Air Force Combat Controllers. Upon successful occupation and set up of the airfield, the SOF contingent received multiple small teams via prompt delivery from time-staggered blacked out MC130's.

With the successful and undetected infiltration of US SOF operators complete, all were dispatched to different recon sectors and the Airfield Team was ordered to initiate movement North to Baghdad to get Eyes-On the Baghdad International Airport (the called Sadaam Intl AP / SIAP).

The small SOF element traveling in GMV (ground mobility vehicles) and Toyota Tacoma's were joined by a Civil Affairs (CA) Section with two (2) HumV's.

The CA section was integrated into the SOF convoy, placing their vehicles between the A team leading and B team bringing up the rear. The combined team pushed North in the dark cold, reaching the Euphrates River crossing as the

sun began to rise. A final security halt prior to crossing the bridge provided the team confirmation that aerial intelligence indicated no insurgent presence.

As the team made their push over the bridge crossing the Euphrates, and all vehicles now approaching the Southern, downward slope of the bridge, the convoy became engulfed in enemy small arms fire from all directions. Front, Rear, Left and Right contact as the Fedayeen had laid in ambush positions covered by buildings and elevated rock walls awaiting the patrols entry into the Kill Zone.

Supporting the Fedayeen's efforts was multiple RPG teams and soviet DShk heavy machine guns positioned at multiple roadway intersections.

The US teams options to Break Contact or Fight Through was made for them when the Assistant Patrol Leader (rear of convoy) identified that there had been break-in-contact and one vehicle was no longer positioned in convoy order.

As the SOF operators continue to engage targets with both rifles and mounted machine-guns and MK-19 grenades launchers from vehicles (now at much higher speeds) the announcement of the lost vehicle was sounded over the radio.



With the team fighting from their convoy and ever expanding distance between the trucks, the trailing Tacomas made a stance at an overwatch intersection and dismounted a couple of operators to recover the lost Civil Affairs vehicle. All of this came in the midst of a seemingly endless ambush of enemy participants.

Supporting fires provided the dismounted troops to maneuver and vector the wayward vehicle back into convoy configuration, all while both the SF and Civil Affairs soldiers returned fire to the repositioning enemy forces.

The commander and lead element located an open field to assemble, set up security and defensive positions and awaited the trailing arrivals.

Upon arrival of all vehicles, defenses were set as the team prepared for counter-attack.





To this point, the Unit had received no serious casualties. However; many of the vehicles have suffered multiple non-disabling wounds of their own. Communications with higher (command) reporting the situation was established while a motivated US Air Force TACP (an attached member of the team) dispatched Close Air Support from an A-10 Thunderbolt.

Due to enemy armor positions located to the patrols North, the determination to fight back through the ambush site and cross over the Euphrates once again was made, brief to all teammates, and executed with the firepower of the A-10. The extended period spent coordinating air support, reporting, and refitting for round two allowed the Fedayeen time to re-form and position for their counter.

Never go through an ambush a second time... That's just common sense.

But, when the options are tanks vs. trucks or some buggers in

decent position vs. SOF guys and other American troops with a crap ton of bullets, the answer is a no brainer.

After positioning the Tacoma's in between the heavier HMMV's and ensuring the A-10 inbound run, the detachment began its violent egress through the city back the rivers crossing.

Round two proved to be more intense than the previous, but the A-10 showed no mercy, and the US ground element's speed and fire accuracy was more than the opposing forces anticipated.

As the egressing US forces laid waste to stationary targets the A-10 spent every grain of its combat load on the hardened positions and one poor bastard bad on a motorcycle, the team was able to cross the danger zone and egress South, over the bridge spanning the Euphrates to a secure rally point; all without a serious casualty.

Yes, many of the vehicles looked like Swiss cheese, one

even died just after making it to safety but the team was secure and in the defense. Live to Fight Another Day!

This brief overview of a contact in Iraq is not intended to showcase hero's (a word much overused these days), or lack of perfect intelligence... It is intended to highlight the importance of Small Unit Tactics.

The US forces involved in this 5-hour battle on a hectic day in foreign land remained poised in overwhelming odds and destroyed a large number of enemy forces by working together; thinking intuitively, exercising initiative, and taking the fight to the enemy.

Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and US Air Force troops although serving different units, with differing SOP's and different training and equipment, exercised the principles of Small Unit Tactics to fight. "One Team One Fight"

Small Unit Tactics is a vital aspect of tactical training.



Left: Team-up at Tactical Ranch

Right: Training at Tactical Ranch



The combination of everything administrative, historical, and tactical combined in an Action ... an Action that is based on a solid foundation of principles and doctrine.

As we face this new decade, global threats and domestic disturbances will require increased vigilance on behalf of the Tactical Practitioner.

ISIS will reemerge, Al-Qaeda will operate its terror, and others wanting to do freedom and good people harm will perpetrate their hate.

The Future brings many unknowns, but I know me and my guys at Tactical Ranch® will continue to stress relevant, mission specific, realistic tactical training and the importance of developing and/or enhancing SUT capabilities in every group we have the privilege to work with.

### “One Team One Fight”

Tom Buchino  
Sergeant Major  
US Army Special Forces (ret.)

Owner, CSP Protective  
Services  
Tactical Ranch®

“De Oppresso Liber”



# OENK9 Tactical Crixo Harness



## Why the Crixo Harness?

Lightweight harness made of highly resistant mesh fabric. With the handle, you can hold your dog comfortably and thus not harm him.

The steel V-ring is perfect for strong dogs. Very comfortable and easy to hook, it is perfectly complemented by our Frog safety leash. It has another triangular ring on the front.

It has breastplate bib, leaving the front limbs free and without interfering with the scapulae.

It has side velcro panels with MOLLE system in case more equipment needs to be adapted. The elastic webbing located on the sides of the handle, allow the placement of 2 bars of chemical light

Adjustable harness both: the neck and the chest contour. Harness for professional use, safety dogs and canine units and working dogs or for anyone who wants to carry their dog safely.

Oenk9 manufactures high quality products with a very careful and original style.

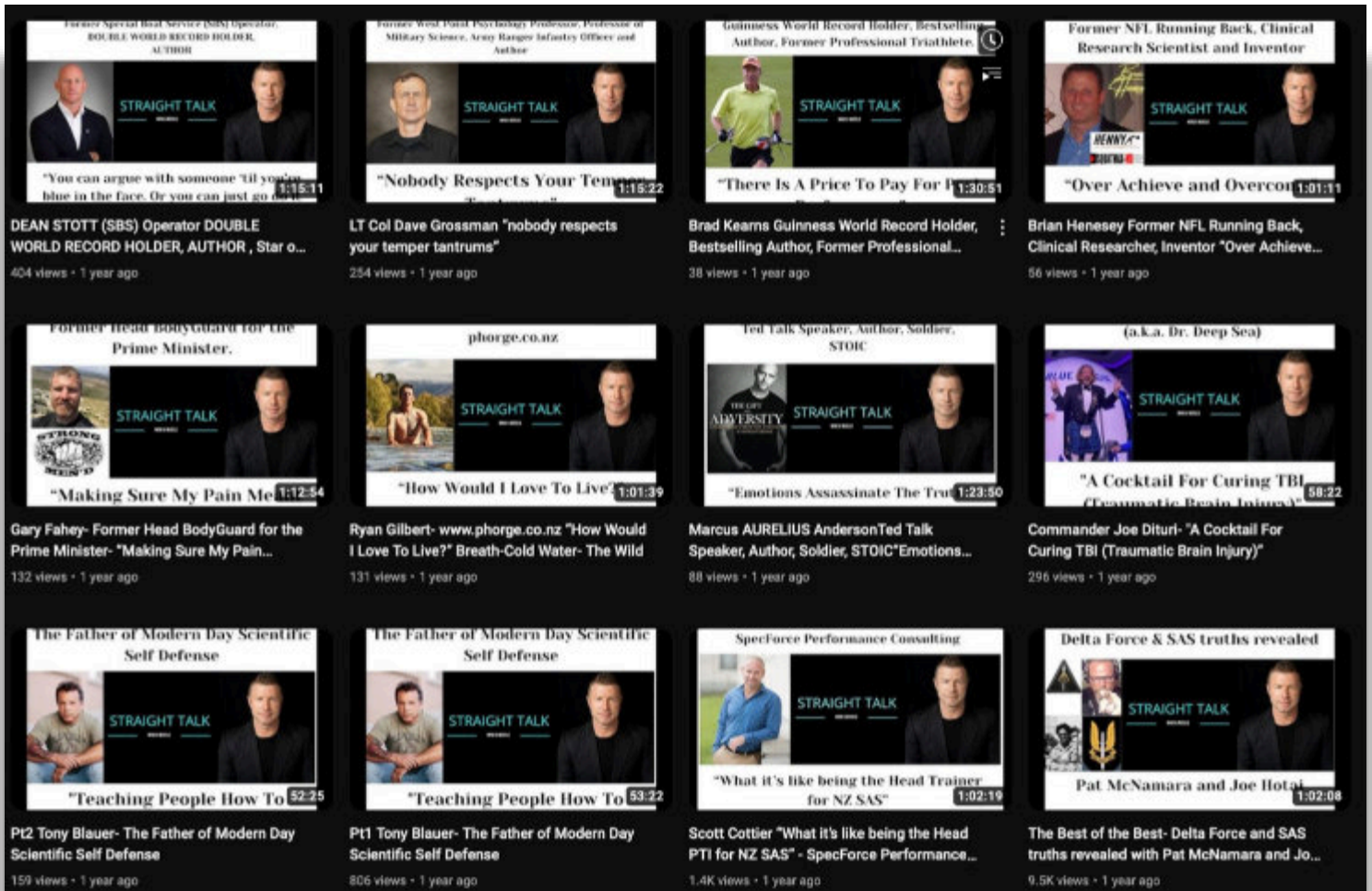
Colors: Black, Coyote and Multicam Black.



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# Damian Porter Straight Talk Mind and Muscle Podcast



Damian Porter is a former NZSAS Commando, WA Police Officer, current WA Firefighter and Health and Wellness Coach. He was one of the first Personal Trainers in the world and has been professionally involved in the health and wellness space for over 28 years.

He was an operator in the NZSAS Regiment D Squadron which is a counter terrorism role squadron part of the NZSAS. After years of service Damian moved to WA and became a Police Officer. After a few years within the Police Force Damian decided to change up his career and became a Firefighter which is his current day role.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

# Brian Bewley

Tactical Solutions International

## TSI Tactical Casualty Care Under Fire Training Program



Top: Brian Bewley

“Medic!”

“The bullet clipped the nylon edge of the right side of my plate carrier and punched through my chest, stopping at the ballistic plate on my back. I felt the punch of the round as it hit me, but it didn’t hurt really. “What the hell was that?” I thought as I ran towards my truck for cover.

As I crouched behind the rear tire of my truck, I wondered where the shots were coming from as I needed to return fire. I suddenly seemed to be having a hard time catching my breath from the short sprint to my truck.

My right hand did a quick sweep under my armpit, and when I saw the blood on the back of my glove, I knew that I had been shot...then the pain started.” The scenario above could be a military member on patrol in Afghanistan, a sheriff’s deputy moving towards an active shooter situation or a law-abiding civilian protecting his property in rural America.

Maintaining the skills of shoot, move and communicate are cornerstone tasks to those who serve or live in a hostile or tactical environment. In that environment however, one could find themselves on the receiving end of bombs, bullets, burns, blood and beyond. The ability to save the life of a teammate, family member or self while

under fire is a critical skill set and this is addressed in the Tactical Casualty Care Under Fire course presented by Tactical Solutions International, Inc., at their facility in Crowheart, Wyoming.

**ABC’s, CAB’s, ABCD, DR ABC, or...?:**

Emergency and tactical medical training has always been a part of team cross-training within a Special Forces Operational Detachment-A (SFODA).

Having a Weapons Sergeants giving IVs under a poncho using a red-lens flashlight in the field under the watchful eye of the team medic for example, was a basic skill that everyone maintained.

We understood that our operational tasks and environments would require that everyone on the team possess above-average medical skills. Mix the medical training in with the required weapons and marksmanship training,







commo, demolitions, intelligence skills, tactics such as direct action raids, unconventional warfare, combat diving, freefall parachuting, operational deployments, support tasks and activities for example, keep the ODA busy and employed.

If not in combat or deployed, the team is constantly rehearsing, training and being evaluated to ensure flawless execution of their assigned tasks.

The traditional basics of emergency medical care have revolved around the generally accepted standards of the ABC's: Airway, Breathing, Circulation. The ABC's were originally established as a protocol for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) but they were also used to establish lifesaving steps for basic first aid through pre-hospital care.

In 2010, the American Heart Association rearranged or modified the ABC to CAB as a new protocol for CPR by moving the C before the A and B and changing the meaning of C from circulation to compressions. There have also been variants of the ABCs to include ABCD, ABCDE,

ABCDEF, etc., depending upon who was instructing the medical interventions and life support.

It was explained to me a long time back, that the ABCs were to assist in medical situations (like CPR or choking in a responsive or non-responsive patient) while CAB was to be used in trauma. In 2018 while I was recertifying as a National Registry EMT-B, we were still taught the basics of ABCs and CAB.

In early 2017, one of TSI's medical instructors, Mr. Dave, a NREMT-P (Paramedic) was conducting team training for the TSI Recondo course, and he introduced the class to a new protocol that was being taught in Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) and Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) courses, which were better applied to tactical operations vs. the old standard ABCs. He introduced MARCH.

### What is MARCH?

When asked about the differences between the ABCs, CAB and MARCH, Mr. Dave said "Don't think of MARCH as a new mnemonic, but as a new framework that prioritizes trauma care, especially in a live-

fire environment." MARCH stands for massive hemorrhage, airway control, respiratory support, circulation, head injury. Here's a breakdown of MARCH (Duckworth, Rom 1 Sep 17 ABCs vs. MARCH).

### Massive hemorrhage

M reminds us that bleeding control is the top priority in trauma care. It also clarifies what kind of bleeding control we are talking about.

Not all bleeding control is a priority. For example, bleeding could easily refer to a spurting, lacerated artery; trickling blood from a skin tear; or a scrape that stopped losing blood before help even arrived. On the other hand, massive hemorrhage gives a clear picture and means the same thing to pretty much everyone; immediate, active, life-threatening bleeding that will kill a patient if not stopped.

Massive hemorrhage can be addressed by the four Ds:

- Detect: find the source of the bleeding.
- Direct pressure: hold pressure on the source of the bleeding until the clot forms.

- Devices: if necessary, use equipment such as tourniquets, hemostatic gauze and pressure bandages to supplement direct pressure.
- Don't dilute: use the concept of hypotensive resuscitation to avoid thinning the blood or pumping established clots.

### Airway control

A reminds us that airway is still key care element for severe traumatic injuries. The patient needs a patent airway to survive. Think use of Nasal or Oral Pharyngeal tubes.

### Respiratory support

R is where breathing comes in. If a trauma patient is fighting for air, remember that not only are they not getting enough oxygen in, but they may also be using a lot of that oxygen in their failing struggle to breathe.

Assisting the patient with or taking over respirations can move more air while simultaneously decreasing the patient's respiratory effort using so much oxygen.

Keep in mind that over-ventilation can also do more harm than good. Ventilation provided with too much volume, speed or force can increase pressure in the chest, reducing blood return to the heart. This can have a negative effect on circulation, especially on trauma patients progressing towards shock.

### Circulation

The C refers to circulation (shock). After massive hemorrhage, airway and

breathing have been addressed, we need to optimize the patient's circulation. Standard methods for circulation improvement, such as laying the patient flat, maintaining body temperature and careful fluid resuscitation all apply.

### Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a critical factor in trauma care that is not often discussed.

It is a key part of the so-called trauma triad of death, including hypothermia (low body temperature), H<sup>+</sup> (acidosis, and which disrupts the blood's ability to properly carry oxygen), and hypocoagulability (thinned blood or blood that has a reduced ability to clot).

The trauma triad can begin with any one of these elements, and each feeds into the other.

As the patient goes into shock, his body temperature drops, reducing his blood's ability to clot. As they bleed out more, they go further into shock, worsening their acidosis.

As acidosis worsens, metabolism slows and body temperature continues to fall. And so on.

### Head injury/hypothermia/hypovolemic

Head injury care is ensuring that a primary injury does not turn into a permanent secondary injury (injury caused or worsened by inadequate trauma care).

Care for patients with severe head injuries must avoid those H bombs:

- Hypoxia: even a momentary drop in oxygen saturation can cause permanent secondary brain injury.
- Hyperventilation: as already mentioned, too much or too fast ventilation can worsen shock. In addition, hyperventilation will blow off too much CO<sub>2</sub>, causing cerebral vasoconstriction, further decreasing perfusion to the brain.
- Hypotension: as intracranial pressure increases, the blood pressure required to perfuse the brain also increases. The rule of thumb is to avoid systolic blood pressure below 90 mm/Hg.





- Hypoglycemia: while there is nothing inherent to head injury that will drop blood sugar, an injured brain deprived of needed sugar will have a worse outcome.

Additional considerations:

- Hypovolemia: a decreased volume of circulating blood in the body.

## TSI'S TACTICAL CASUALTY CARE UNDER FIRE

The latest TCCC Summary of Changes (Aug 2019) incorporates three distinct emergency trauma management plans or phases: Care under Fire, Tactical Field Care and Tactical Evacuation.

TSI's Casualty Care Under Fire course incorporates all three phases within a single program. The course consists of 3 very long days and nights of trauma care performed in a tactical, live-fire, scenario-based program of instruction by Mr. Bob Claar, TSI's primary tactical medical care instructor.

"The real eye opener for many students attending this course, is the challenge of trying to save a life, yours or a teammate or buddy, while under constant fire. After almost two decades of war, tactical casualty care has come a long way in defining protocols of action. Life expectancy of our soldiers serving in harms way today is much higher in contrast to those who served in Viet Nam for example" stated Bob.

"Training, increased use of tourniquets and blood stoppers, field use of Needle Decompression in tension pneumothorax, understanding

TBIs and rapid evacuation are just a few of these protocols that are keeping our guys and gals alive in bad situations, and we teach it all and more in the Casualty Care Under Fire course."

Bob recounts the actions of former Green Beret John Wayne Walding and uses his example for this critical training. Walding was one of 15 Green Berets with a small group of attached Afghan commandos, that were tasked to kill or capture a high-value target in Afghanistan. They were inserted by helo into a riverbed of a remote area of Shok Valley and as they climbed the steep mountainside towards their objective, they were ambushed by approximately 250 Taliban insurgents. The outgunned Green Berets battled for over six hours, with most of the Green Berets being wounded.

About 3 hours into the battle, a Soviet 7.62x54R round hit Walding below his knee, basically amputating his lower leg. He applied a tourniquet above the wound and tied his severed lower leg to his thigh with his boot laces so he wouldn't lose it and he continued fighting for the next three hours until he was carried off the mountain by his team mates for exfiltration.

Many people would have stopped fighting over the mere psychology of the wound. Many others would have bled out and died due to shock or will to survive. John was trained in basic trauma care and also understood the need to stay in the fight for his brothers in arms. John did ultimately lose his leg, but he did not die on

that mountaintop in Afghanistan.

## From the 1 August 2019 TCCC update: Basic Management Plan for Care Under Fire

1. Return fire and take cover.
2. Direct or expect casualty to remain engaged as a combatant if appropriate.
3. Direct casualty to move to cover and apply self-aid if able.
4. Try to keep the casualty from sustaining additional wounds.
5. Casualties should be extricated from burning vehicles or buildings and moved to places of relative safety. Do what is necessary to stop the burning process.
6. Stop life-threatening external hemorrhage if tactically feasible:

- ☐ Direct casualty to control hemorrhage by self-aid if able.
- ☐ Use a CoTCCC-recommended limb tourniquet for hemorrhage that is anatomically amenable to tourniquet use.
- ☐ Apply the limb tourniquet over the uniform clearly proximal to the bleeding site(s).

If the site of the life-threatening bleeding is not readily apparent, place the tourniquet "high and tight" (as proximal as possible) on the injured limb and move the casualty to cover.

7. Airway management is generally best deferred until the Tactical Field Care phase.





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# Greg McKinney

AVC Absolute Vehicle Control

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## Tactical Drivers' Training Tactical Mobility.

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Usually when I'm asked to write these sorts of articles, I respond with a variation of an article that I've been writing for 15 years or so. I start out with statistics demonstrating the lethality of motor vehicles for both professionals and the general population.

I follow up with data demonstrating clearly that well-taught and practiced car control skills have a huge positive impact on safety. Then I'll get into a discussion of "tactical mobility" and what that means in the real world. But lately I've been feeling like a dinosaur just waiting for the asteroid. This is why.

Cars and bikes are loaded with automatic safety systems, now, automatic braking, active cruise control, lane departure warnings, blind spot warnings, and in some cases, full autonomous operation. Within a few years, autonomous operation will mature and become more common, even in tactical environments.

Within another few years, autonomous operation will become the norm. But we're not there, yet. Despite the impact of semi-autonomous safety systems, vehicles are still incredibly lethal for professionals and the general

population alike, both in the States and globally. It will probably be decades until autonomous systems are the norm around the world.

I'm lucky in a way. My own demise is likely to coincide with the demise of the human operator. So I've got a few good years left of teaching high-performance driving for tactical environments.

I've got a few good years left of value and doing what I love: Tactical Drivers' Training / Tactical Mobility.

In our world — learned from the special operations community over many years — there is really no such thing as tactical mobility. There is only driving well in any vehicle, on any surface, at any speed.

Before anyone can execute tactics effectively, they must be proficient with the tools at their disposal. For your primary weapon, you've spent countless hours on the range, in shoot houses, and classrooms.

You are proficient with your primary weapon, your lifeline.

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*Despite the lethality of motor vehicles, we spend little time training driving.*

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Although we use the term tactical mobility in our marketing, as many other training companies do, truth be told it's tough for us to use that term with a straight face.

Most imagine tactical mobility as J-turns, PIT maneuvers, ramming ... jumping your ride off a pier into a departing ferry. There are a plethora of life-saving skills that can and should be taught and practiced before those techniques of last resort.

Behind the wheel, however, your vehicle is your lifeline. Your lifeline. Despite the lethality of motor vehicles, we spend little time training driving.

The general perception is that it's easy to operate a motor vehicle. To operate a vehicle is relatively easy. But it's a learned skill to drive at or near the physical limits of any given situation. Operating a vehicle is easy. Driving well, effectively, and safely is not. Those skills need to be taught.



I'm not a soldier, never have been. However I have been working with the special operations community for many years. I listen to my students. Many of these soldiers also become our instructors.

Out of this collaboration our basic philosophy has become learn the fundamentals of high-performance driving because these skills are effective in all vehicles and environments. The knowledge is easy to impart.

With knowledge, however, students need experience to become effective drivers. And this experience can only come by driving (a lot) under adult supervision. We spend very little time in the classroom. Most of our time is spent on the range with a variety of vehicles, environments, and surfaces.

### A few personal real-life examples

As I wrote above, I'm not a soldier, never have been. But I have been traveling in South America for more than 20 years, including Colombia when it was

really interesting as a gringo to travel by land. I love South America. So, please don't let the following anecdotes characterize that continent. They're just good examples of real-life lessons.

#### EXAMPLE 1

There's a large capital city that sits in a bowl surrounded by mountains where many satellite cities and communities are located. Connecting these communities to the capital are multi-lane arterial highways, which are often mired in traffic.

Over many miles stretch bumper-to-bumper cars, stopped much of the time or only creeping along. Then traffic will move for a bit until it bogs down again, much like any urban center in the States.

However, unlike the States, here you can watch folks stroll down out of the hillside communities, pistols in their hands, preparing to rob those same cars stuck in traffic.

I sat there one day many years ago, watching the banditos

approaching. My "mad" driving skills meant absolutely nothing. There wouldn't be a damn thing I could do when they got to me.

I am not going to ram my way out or push miles of cars out of the way. I could not Jason Bourne this. Dumb luck saved me. Traffic started to move before my number was up.

#### EXAMPLE 2

Also on a downhill highway leading to a large city but a different country, I was cruising along with the flow of traffic, highway speeds. Traffic was relatively light. It was a six-lane road. At the time, one of the tactics the bad guys employed was to cause an accident then rob those involved.

A common method was to cut in front of someone, slow, then hit the brakes hard to cause a rear end collision.

Now, did I know this at the time? Maybe. Maybe I had read it somewhere. But that knowledge had nothing to do with what came next. Out of the corner of my eye I caught a four-door Dacia sedan scream by on the right. It swerved in front of me as the brake lights came on. Without hesitation I threw the wheel over hard to the right, turned back, got on the power, counter steered and continued on my way. It was over that quick.

But the thing is, I had the confidence to throw the wheel over 90 degrees without hesitation at 65 mph or so. I have no idea if I was about to get robbed or if an idiot just cut me off. I would never find out, but for sure training saved me from an accident that would have disabled my lifeline.





### EXAMPLE 3

This was a fun one. I was working with police in Northern Brazil. We had blocked off some dirt roads out in the countryside to work on a few basics. Their duty vehicles were Toyota Camry's, front wheel drive with a fairly powerful V6. My ride was an impressive GM shitbox sporting a 3- cylinder, 1.0 liter engine, also front wheel drive. We had worked on various things throughout the morning and were having lunch.

As often happens, my students were pressing me to do J- turns and PIT. Since this wasn't a formal training session and we had all these wonderful dirt roads to play on, I made a bet with them. If they could catch me and get close enough to PIT, I would teach them. But if they couldn't then we'd continue working on fundamentals.

There was one caveat, they couldn't chase me until I went by them at 80 kph (about 50 mph). Now, truth be told, my little one liter hatchback may have been faster in the corners. I was much lighter and, I think, could carry more speed changing direction. The short story is I didn't have to teach PIT. They couldn't catch me. It wasn't

because I'm an awesome driver. It was because they had not yet learned and practiced enough fundamentals. Even if I were slightly faster than them in the corners, their horsepower advantage should have made short work of me and my one liter hatch.

The point to these stories is that physics are physics. Sometimes the physics of a situation provide you with no driving options.

But if you can exploit the physics of any given situation without exceeding limits, in other words, if you can drive at limits safely, then you have many more options available. In order to drive at limits, you must learn certain driving skills that, once learned, will make you a much safer driver even when you aren't pushing.

The only way to learn these skills and retain them is through instruction and practice. You need experience. You need to gain this experience in a safe environment, in a training environment on multiple surfaces with good instructors.

### QUICK STATS ON LETHALITY OF MOTOR VEHICLES

- despite "drivers' training" year in and year out law enforcement motor-vehicle-related accidents kill as many officers as guns do and is always a leading cause of injury. - National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund

- in the long-term, three times as many US soldiers will die in cars than in combat. - Defense Manpower Data Center

- even during peak deployments over the past 50 years, about

one-third of soldier deaths were motor vehicle related. - Defense Manpower Data Center

- while school shootings are abhorrent, in the United States, we kill 3-4 kids under the age of 16 everyday in motor vehicle accidents.

If all teenagers are included (up to age 19), this number jumps to about 11 kids/day (far, far more than school shootings). - US Department of Transportation

But can car control skills help reduce the number of deaths and injury related to motor vehicles?

In Northern European countries, where true car control skills are taught over a years- long process to full licensure, motor vehicle accidents were reduced up to 20% across entire populations, including people who were licensed before such stringent requirements were mandated.

Not only do car control skills have value for the general population, they have high-value for special operations and law enforcement.

Despite the fact that it could help reduce deaths and injury, as well as operating costs significantly, even at the Federal level, drivers' training is inadequate in both depth and duration.

Good drivers' training enhances dynamic vehicle control systems. Good drivers' training enhances operational capability immensely and save lives.



A vehicle at limits. The car is sliding to driver's left. There's some counter steer dialed in. Driver is on the power, transferring weight to the back and killing rotation. His eyes are looking in the direction of travel (not where the car is pointed). All in all, he's in good shape

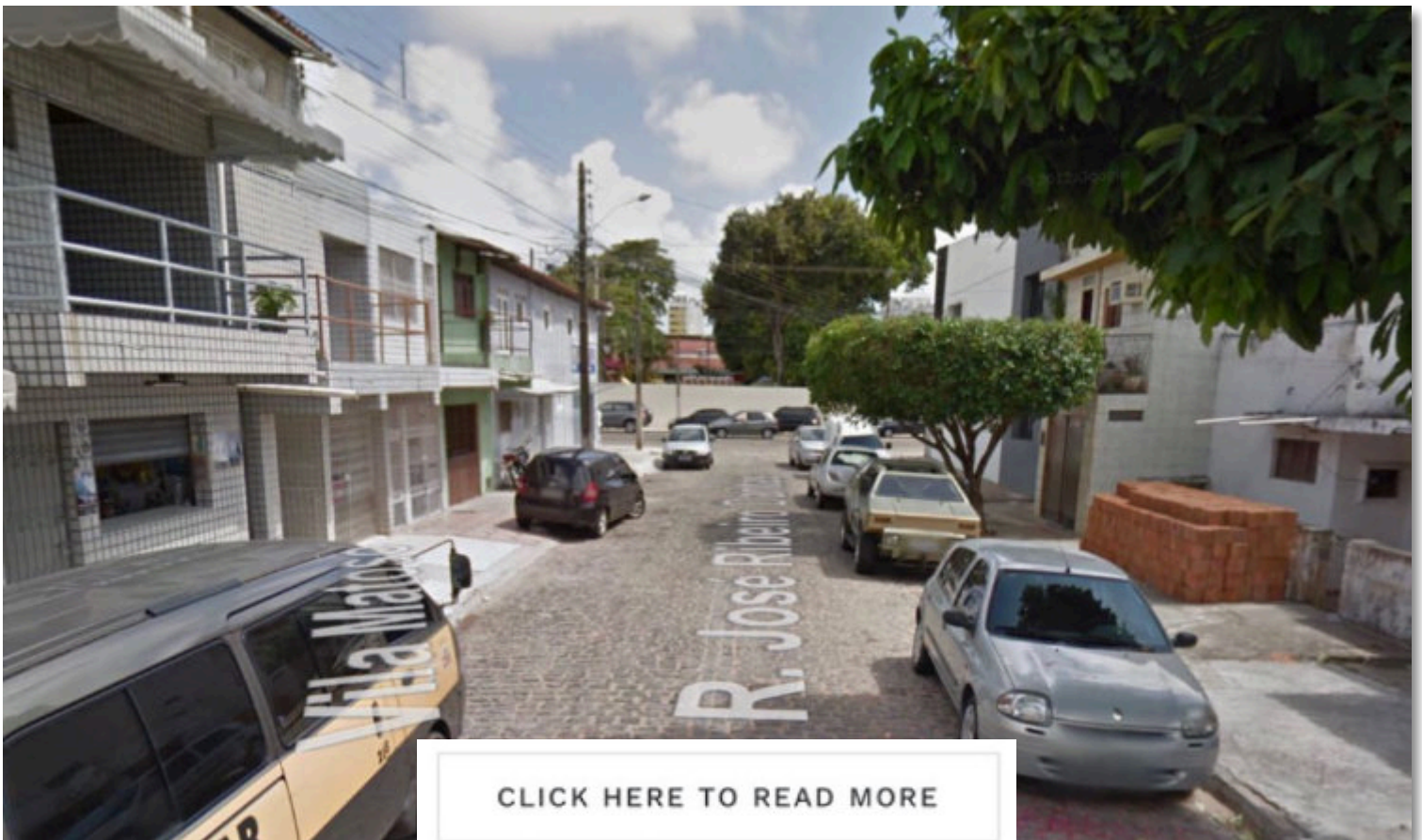


It's important that students drive on multiple surfaces, both hard (pavement, concrete) and loose (gravel, clay, snow) to develop fundamental skills across environments. It's also important for students to drive in real environments. When the hazards are real students take things a bit more seriously and learn valuable lessons regarding how easy it is to disable your lifeline





Multiple vehicle types driving at speed in low visibility. It's important to us that students switch vehicle types often. Here we have a Yukon, BMW 330xi, and Nissan Frontier. They all have different performance characteristics and students must adapt their driving to the vehicle. It's also important to us that students get comfortable driving at speed close to other vehicles.



Natal, Brazil. In real life very few, if any, drivers could throw a J-turn here and get it right the first time. Yet this road is typical of many around the world. It's a narrow street with hazards on either side and an uneven stone surface. Just the nature of the surface can toss a J-turn off by feet. Even high-speed backing is risky unless it's practiced. For various reasons, a vehicle is generally much less stable



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- Briefing areas / classrooms





## Brian A. Bewley

Tactical Solutions International

### Tactical Training in the Cold Weather Environment

“Nothing burns like the cold.”  
George R.R. Martin

I remember having multiple discussions recently over which environment is worse to train and operate in... the cold or the heat. I have been pulling an Ahkio across the Alaskan wilderness at -50F, and I have lived in a hide-site in the sands of the Middle East at almost 130F...I can tell you that they BOTH sucked!

In terms of the most memorable or ultimate misery however, my memory takes me to two different environments that in no way compared to the extremes that I mentioned above:

1. Trying to survive in the field in Fort Bragg, North Carolina during an ice storm at 31 F still haunts me to this day! There were exposure deaths during

that training exercise, and decades long memories of how badly Mother Nature could fuck you at the drop of a hat!

And, 2. Trying to survive in the jungle in Panama during a week-long recon, 88F and full rainy season.

Covered in prickly heat, crotch rot, trench foot, black palm wounds and insect bites head to toe. I dreamed of pulling the Ahkio in -50F just to stay alive until exfil!

The military understood the need to keep us trained in various environments, as we can never predict when or where the next global gunfight or police action would occur.

Since hanging up Uncle Sam's rucksack, my family and tactical training company returned to the State of Wyoming.

Besides being the least populated State in the union, fully pro-2d amendment and rich in conservative values, it can be cold. I have seen snow at our ranch in every month, except for August.

While many trainers and students have no issue with training in fair weather, many choose to conduct training indoors or worse - they cancel their training during inclement weather or in the cold of winter. Those who live and work in these cold environments MUST train in all applicable local environments, inside and outside, to develop or maintain their skills.

As an example, one of our standard monthly training events is the Wyoming Concealed Firearms Permit (CFP) course conducted for the local community through our Community College. This is a basic and required course of instruction for those who do not already possess the training and experience to be licensed by the State of Wyoming to carry concealed.

The class is conducted at our local gun club indoor range and when the students graduate, they possess the skills, knowledge and minimal experience to legally and safely carry a concealed pistol “in the environment for which they were trained.” What this means is - regardless if it was -20F or 100F outside of the classroom, the students were trained in an



**Photo: Davis Meschke, one of our local Winter Training SMEs conducting avalanche training in the Wind River Mountains.**

environmentally controlled classroom and range and have the basic skills, knowledge and minimal experience of carrying a concealed pistol under a very light jacket or shirt in a like environment.

It does not provide them with the experience or expertise to carry concealed within a different environment, such as with minimal clothing on a beach or bundled under 3 layers of clothing while wearing arctic gloves in a blizzard at -20F.

One must train in these new environments for skill proficiency.

“What does not kill you, makes you stronger” ...  
German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche

Whether you are currently living in a particular environment (urban, rural, winter, summer, desert, high altitude mountain, maritime, jungle, arctic, etc.) or you are temporarily visiting these locations or conducting environmental training, there are some general guidelines that I always recommend.

As we are currently discussing cold weather environments, let's focus on this for recommendations:

**1. Be prepared (always!).** The Boy Scout Motto. While on the range training, traveling by vehicle, hunting, hiking in the back country or while in your home/place of work - always have a fully stocked, equipped and accessible Cold Weather Survival Kit or bag (bug out or get home bag).

Winter is unpredictable and can change from an awesome 50F spring like, sunny day to -10F and blizzarding over the course of an hour or two.

There are so many stories of people being trapped in their vehicles or needing to make an emergency snow cave or were generally challenged with they lost power and heat in their homes due to rapidly changing weather.

I always have food, water, blankets, signaling devices and medical supplies in my vehicles. Preparing for every situation is nearly impossible, so plan for contingencies that you have a high probability of encountering.

There are many online resources for “how to setup a winter survival bag” or essential items that you need to have such as:

**9 Winter Survival Items Your Bug-Out Bag May Be Missing:**

**2. Training Plan and Goal.** The type of training and the training location are two critical areas to address in the planning and preparation of cold weather instruction. Firearms training, tactical training, and survival training are just some of the general areas that we concentrate on throughout the year - regardless of snow, ice, winds, freezing rain, etc.

Historically, in mid-December, we conduct our Low Light/No light pistol course on our outdoor 25m range. Winds are typically out of the west at 25 mph providing a wind chill temperature of between 0 and -15 with a high probability of





standing snow. As part of our planning and preparation, we have always positioned a warming trailer near the range with hot coffee and heat and provide breaks as required for safety. Student performance degradation due to the cold (mental weakness and potential for minor cold weather injuries) are highlighted by the instructor.

Is the cold the only difference between our Low Light/No Light pistol courses that we conduct in May or June and the December class? Absolutely not! Glove removal, weapon and magazine manipulation, ancillary equipment such as lights, reloading magazines, drawing and re-holstering from concealment under multiple garments are just some of the additional skills that must be mastered to operate skillfully in a cold environment. We could not realistically gain the experience or train these skills with any competency indoors.

*Remember, absence of a plan leads to chaos, so plan accordingly and ensure that the training has an end state or goal.*

**3. Specialty Gear and Equipment Common to All.** Proper seasonal equipment, range gear, clothing of the correct type and properly layered, survival requirements (food, water, shelter, security, comms and health). Anything and everything that we train for in the “nice” months, can be trained in the winter, but we do need some specialty gear and to ensure that the equipment common to all is adequate for the task at hand.

When the snow begins to fall and the ice forms, we have already dusted off, tested and re-acquainted ourselves with our winter gear. We are ready to continue training regardless of the temperature or cold conditions. Application of Tactics, Techniques and Procedures may change a little due to the addition of this winter equipment, but tactics are tactics. Our specialty gear is required for mission/training accomplishment, safety, health or due to direct environmental considerations and should be planned for.

My SF ODA conducted a Full Mission Profile Direct Action/demolition mission in Korea up by the DMZ years back. The task was to drop a critical bridge while conducting Unconventional

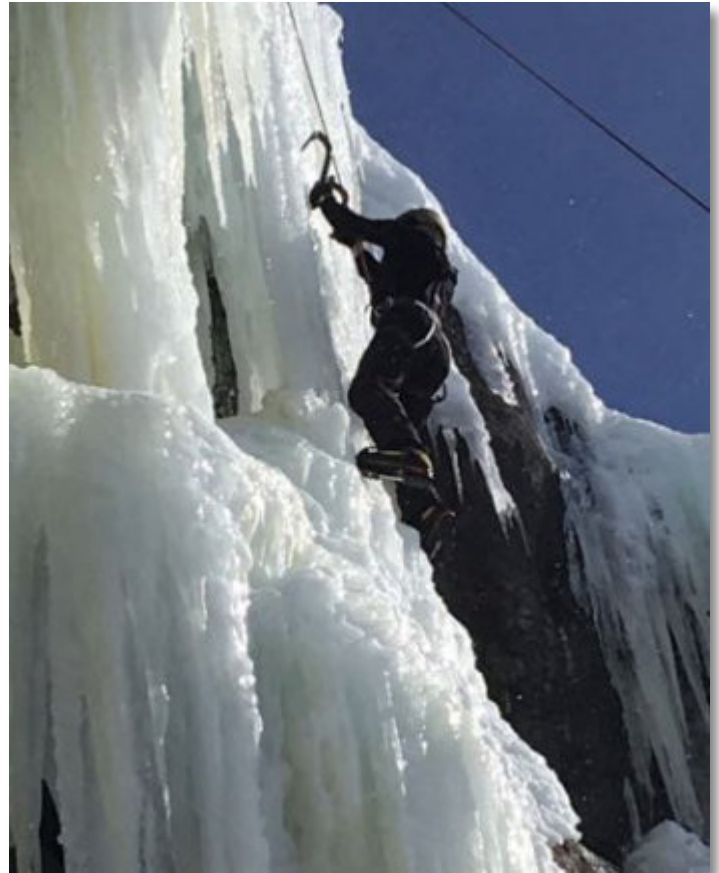


Photo: Nate Mastin, one of TSI, Inc. Mountain Warfare instructors demonstrating an ascent of ice falls.

Warfare as part of our war planning. We were already carrying what seemed like insane rucksack weights, so we chose to forego personal comfort equipment, extra water and we carried only minimal food. We infiltrated the area with all the equipment needed to accomplish the mission and little else.

A freak cold front dropped upon us 24 hours before target hit time and we were totally unprepared for the sub-freezing temperatures. I thought of our soldiers and Marines who had fought at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in North Korea, who were not too far from our position during the period of November and December 1950. They too were underequipped, outgunned and freezing. They were hard men back then and we were about to test our hardness as well.

We froze our balls off, learned a lot about the hardness of each of our teammates and accomplished the mission. If I had to do that again, I would bring a bit of cold weather personal gear however as there is a fine line between being hard and being stupid.



**4. Fitness, Health and Medical Considerations.** Winter/cold weather training is hard. There are two specific areas that can lead to different maladies that we need to be aware of: 1. Cold, and 2. Altitude. Either or both can lead to significant medical maladies.

Cold can be uncomfortably miserable if ill-equipped or not wearing proper clothing. Painful or numb fingers/toes/ears/nose that can lead to frost nip or frost bite; and hypothermia is too real. Movement through deep snow can sap energy quicker than the cold itself.

Proficiency in back country skiing, snow shoeing, rope and alpine skills, understanding terrain/avalanche prone areas, layering of clothing during movement are all requisite skills - but they also require strength, flexibility, and a good level of fitness and overall health.

Smokers are known to be prone to colder feet and hands due to poor circulation. Mental fitness is often overlooked... risk taking can and does lead to death in the mountains.

Altitude: Chronic Mountain Sickness or Acute Mountain Sickness is a reality for those training or conducting operations at altitudes over 14,000' (Huey 2001). High altitude is considered

4500' to 11,500.' Very High altitude is considered 11,500' to 18,000.' Extreme altitude is considered 18,000' with altitudes higher than 26,000' are in the Death Zone.

High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) and High-Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) can be fatal diseases/injuries. Plan for medical emergencies not only for potential altitude injuries, but also for the effects of cold weather.

Keep communications open between participants and constantly monitor each other for signs and symptoms of cold weather or altitude related injuries. Have a realistic MEDEVAC plan, communications plan and capable medical trained individuals with equipment at the training sites.

**5. After-Action Reviews (AAR).** As with any training event, the critical aspect of conducting an After-Action Review must not be overlooked.

Army Training Circular TC 25-20 A leaders Guide to After Action Reviews defines the after-action review (AAR) as "a professional discussion of an event, focused on performance standards, that enables soldiers to discover for themselves what happened, why it happened, and how to sustain strengths and improve on weaknesses. It is a tool leaders and units can use to get maximum benefit from every mission or task. It provides--

- Candid insights into specific soldier, leader, and unit strengths and weaknesses from various perspectives.
- Feedback and insight critical to battle-focused training.
- Details often lacking in evaluation reports alone. Evaluation is the basis for the commander's unit-training assessment. No commander, no matter how skilled, will see as much as the individual soldiers and leaders who actually conduct the training.

Leaders can better correct deficiencies and sustain strengths by carefully evaluating and comparing soldier, leader, and unit performance against the standard. The AAR is the keystone of the evaluation process. Feedback compares the actual output of a process with the intended outcome. By focusing on the task's standards and by describing specific observations, leaders and





**Photo: Master Survival Instructor Recondo Tony of Wyoming Survival and Tactics demonstrating winter survival skills to Recondo Students.**

I use AARs as a review of the Program of Instruction by activity, which guides both me, the instructor and the students in a cognitive return to the skills taught, learned and exercised. Use what you have at your disposal to conduct the review. If in the field, I use a stick and the earth/snow or any other surface to scratch in movements, illustrations, or specific areas that were trained.

Returning to a classroom with white boards, chalk boards, videos and the like provide the instructor and student the ability to conduct their AAR in a comfortable environment utilizing technology to enhance the AAR. Questions and answers solidify the learning process and validate the training goals. Finish your cold weather environmental training as you would with any other tactical or technical training skill... use the AAR.

soldiers identify strengths and weaknesses and together decide how to improve their performances. This shared learning improves task proficiency and promotes unit bonding and esprit. Squad and platoon leaders will use the information to develop input for unit-training plans. The AAR is a valid and valuable technique regardless of branch, echelon, or training task.

Of course, AARs are not cure-alls for unit-training problems. Leaders must still make on-the-spot corrections and take responsibility for training their soldiers and units. However, AARs are a key part of the training process. The goal is to improve soldier, leader, and unit performance.

The result is a more cohesive and proficient fighting force. Because soldiers and leaders participating in an AAR actively discover what happened and why, they learn and remember more than they would from a critique alone.

A critique only gives one viewpoint and frequently provides little opportunity for discussion of events by participants. Soldier observations and comments may not be encouraged. The climate of the critique, focusing only on what is wrong, prevents candid discussion of training events and stifles learning and team building.”

Training in a cold environment should not be viewed as specialty training but as a continuation of your current training program. The environmental training might require additional skills and equipment to accomplish your training goals, but the cold is just another day on the range. Embrace the suck and train cold, wet, tired, hungry and miserable... again, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger!

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**Brian Bewley and his wife S. Jessica own and manage Tactical Solutions International, Inc. (TSI) in Crowheart, WY.**

**TSI and its commercial training department, Tactical Training International and the Mountain Training Center has been conducting cutting edge tactical training for DoD, US Govt organizations, friendly foreign governments, LE, corporations and qualified civilians since 2003.**

**For more information on TSI, TTI or MTC training opportunities, please visit [www.tacticalsolutionsintl.com](http://www.tacticalsolutionsintl.com) or contact Nate Mastin or Logan Brown, TTI Training Dept., (307) 486-2336.**

## Editorial

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