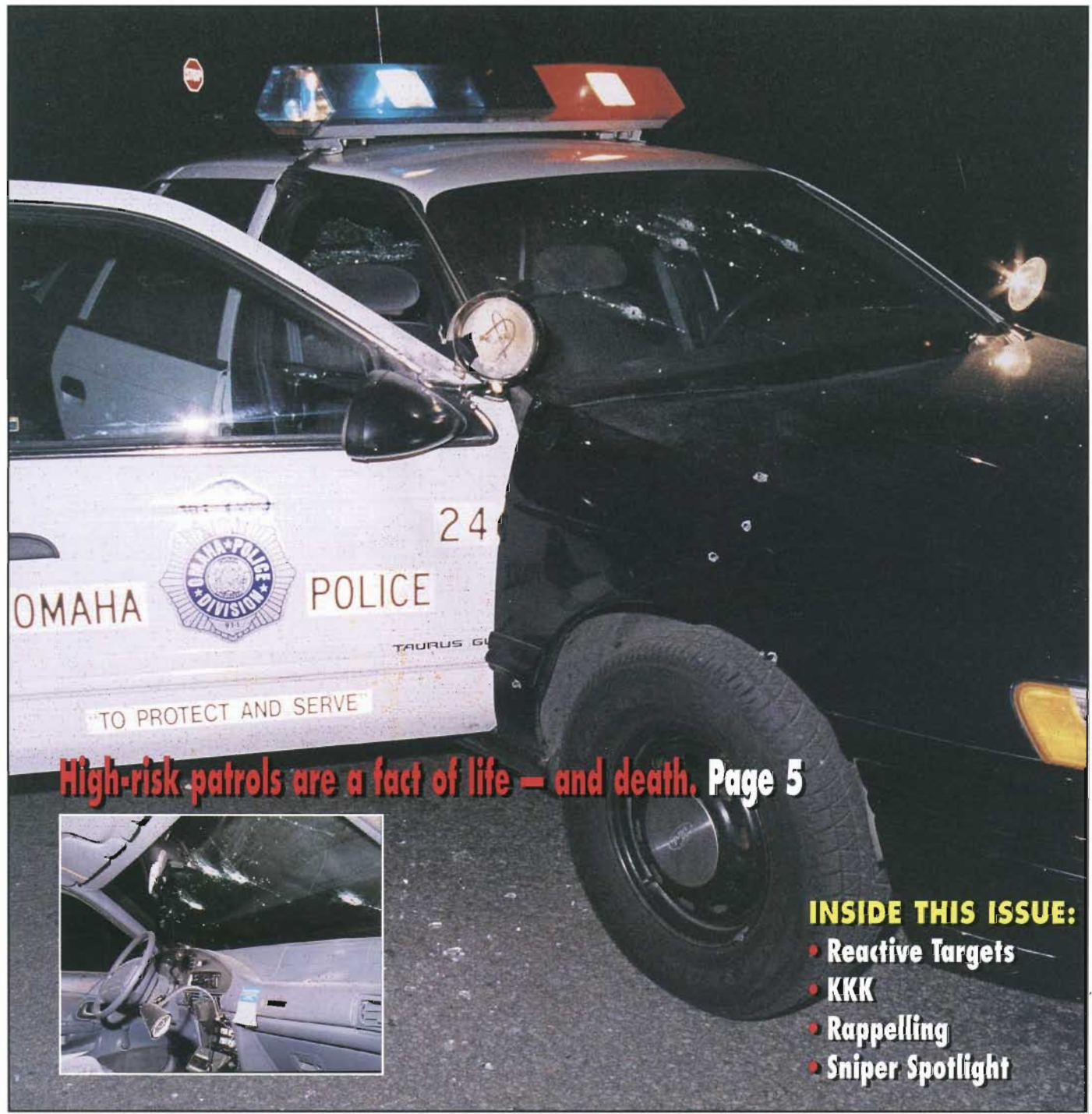


THE TACTICAL EDGE

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High-risk patrols are a fact of life — and death. Page 5

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Tactical EMS Training For The 21st Century

By Lawrence E. Heiskell, M.D., FACEP, FAAFP; David H. Tang, M.D., FACEP, and Peter A. Carlo, NREMT-P

An article published in the July — September 1996 issue of *Pre-Hospital and Disaster Medicine* released the results of a study to determine the current experience and training of emergency medical support personnel for SWAT teams in North America. This study by Jeffery S. Jones, M.D. et. al. at Michigan State University College of Medicine conducted a cross-sectional epidemiological survey that was sent to SWAT unit commanders from the 200 largest metropolitan areas. Mailing addresses were obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

THE MOST COMMON MEDICAL SUPPORT WAS A CIVILIAN AMBULANCE ON STANDBY AT A PREDESIGNATED LOCATION (69 PERCENT).

Interrogatives included basic demographics, specialized training of EMS personnel, and where they are deployed during tactical operations. SWAT unit commanders were also asked to estimate the number and type of injuries sustained during tactical operations and to list recommendations to improve the EMS response.

Results of the study proved to be quite interesting. A total of 150 surveys were completed and returned for analysis, demonstrating a response rate of 75 percent. The most common medical support was a civilian ambulance on standby at a predesignated location (69 percent).

Ninety-four percent of the pre-hospital care providers had no specialized training, and could not enter an area that was not tactically secured. Police officers with first aid or EMT training comprised the next largest portion of medical support. Overall, 31 percent of SWAT commanders depended on remote EMS dispatch by radio to the scene when injuries occurred. Thirty-eight percent of respondents reported a significant injury had occurred during their tactical operations within the past 24 months of the study.

Common injuries reported included gunshot wounds, chemical exposure and fractures. An amazing 78 percent of respondents did not have a medical director and 23 percent of the teams did not have an EMS preplan or protocol.

The results of the study suggested a need for established EMS protocols, medical direction and Specialized Tactical Medical Training (STMT) for EMTs, paramedics and physicians that support law enforcement special operations teams.

Perspective

Currently, law enforcement SWAT teams are often confronted with a diversity of tactical problems, including but not limited to hostage situations, barricaded suspects, high-risk warrant service, dignitary protection and clandestine drug laboratory raids. As a result, law enforcement agencies now recognize the benefit and value of having Advanced Life Support and Advanced Trauma Life Support personnel immediately available at the scene of any incident involving SWAT operations.

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Tactical medics perform a physical assessment during a simulated tactical-medical scenario.

The key concept for a successful mission is to effectively integrate the medical support component with the tactical team and to place the medical component as close as possible to the site of injury without disrupting tactical operations. To enable the medical support team to function and integrate within the tactical team parameters, STMT is mandated.

Heckler & Koch STMT

The International Training Division of Heckler & Koch, Inc. has a worldwide reputation as providers of comprehensive and realistic training. Of the 31 courses offered by the International Division, the Tactical Emergency Medicine Course is the cornerstone of the Heckler & Koch Specialized Tactical Medical Training Program. The training program was developed by John T. Meyer Jr., Director of the Heckler & Koch International Training Division, and Lawrence E. Heiskell, M.D., FACEP, FAAFP, to fulfill the needs of federal, state, county and local law enforcement agencies to adequately train medical personnel for special operations in an efficient cost-effective manner. Heckler & Kochs STMT Program training mission is dedicated to one fundamental goal: officer survival. For that reason the objective is to teach EMTs, paramedics, nurses and physicians the fundamentals of tactical operations in conjunction with the integration and application of emergency medical services. With this body of knowledge and skills, graduates will be able to effectively

integrate with a tactical team as a tactically-safe pre-hospital care provider. What is learned during the training could save your life or the lives of others.

Course Description

The Heckler & Koch Tactical Emergency Medicine Course employs a building block approach. Each day students are taught skills that build upon those learned the previous day. The core content curriculum consists of both medical and tactical instruction. This body of knowledge culminates on day five of the course as the candidates must successfully complete 12 tactical-medical scenarios which require the application of medical and tactical skills learned during the week.

The course faculty consists of six tactical instructors and four medical instructors. The tactical instructors have many years of experience in law enforcement and military operations as tactical team leaders and tactical operators. Physician instructors are residency-trained, board-certified emergency physicians who are active on SWAT teams as emergency medical care providers. All HK physician instructors have prior law enforcement training and experience and are graduates of numerous SWAT schools including the FBI SWAT school. In addition, the physician instructors are Basic and Advanced Trauma Life Support Instructors.

The medical instructors have created realistic training scenarios while drawing upon their years of experience, utilizing the art of moulage and working closely with the tactical instructors.

Continued on page 78.

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A military medic learning the fundamentals of dynamic clearing discovers that the team has entered an unexpected clandestine drug laboratory.

The afternoon of day four is devoted to classroom instruction and range training exercises with the MP5 family of weapons. Each student is issued an MP5 submachine gun for use during the course. In the evening, following lectures on medical aspects of chemical agents and field decontamination, there are chemical agents demonstrations at the range.

Day 5

On the morning of day five, there is a one-hour written examination. Then, in order to appreciate the realities of tactical medical care, students are required to complete 12 tactical-medical scenarios in which they are critiqued by the instructors both medically and tactically in their decision making, as well as field triage, assessment and treatment.

Each tactical-medical scenario lasts approximately 20 minutes with students rotating as tactical and medical personnel. To enhance the quality of training, Simmunitions are also utilized during some of the training scenarios to give students a feel for what it is like to render care-under-fire. Upon completion of the tactical exercises the students return to the classroom for a debrief, graduation and closing remarks.

Continuing Medical Education

An important component of any medical education course is the availability of approved and accredited continuing education hours. The HK Tactical Emergency Medicine

Course is currently approved for 22 advanced hours of continuing education by the Continuing Education Coordinating Board for Emergency Medical Services. Continuing medical education is an ongoing dynamic process. The medical staff at Heckler & Koch is active in academic emergency medicine in private practice and stay current with the medical literature as well as update all medical material taught in the course.

The course is also approved for 16 hours of category 1 CME of the physician's recognition award of the American Medical Association through the American College of Emergency Physicians. Certificates are awarded to each student upon successful completion of the course

Prerequisites and Preparation

All applicants must submit a letter from their agency requesting training or a letter of good standing from their local law enforcement agency. Candidates should be in good physical condition.

The mission of the HK course is to teach EMTs, paramedics and physicians the fundamentals of tactical operations in conjunction with the integration and application of emergency medical services. With this body of knowledge and skills, graduates will be able to effectively integrate with a tactical team as a tactically-safe, pre-hospital care provider.

Internet address for the Heckler & Koch Specialized Tactical Medical Training Program is <http://www.hktacmed.com>. The site offers information about the program, view course schedules, faculty profiles, equipment requirements, and even allows pre-registration for the course.

About the Authors

Lawrence E. Heiskell is an emergency physician and SWAT team physician for the Palm Springs, Calif. PD. He is residency-trained and board-certified in emergency medicine and family practice. Dr. Heiskell is an adjunct instructor for the International Training Division of Heckler & Koch, Inc., and the medical director for the HK Tactical Emergency Medicine Course. A reserve police officer in California, Dr. Heiskell is a regular contributor to *The Tactical Edge* and is the 1992 recipient of the Kern County Sheriff's Foundation Citizen of the Year Award.

David H. Tang is an emergency physician and a team physician for the Emergency Services Team (EST-West) of the Riverside County, Calif. SD. Dr. Tang is residency-trained and board-certified in emergency medicine. A reserve deputy sheriff in California, he is a graduate of POST and FBI SWAT schools.

Peter Carlo is a former Navy Corpsman, now working as a paramedic and EMS instructor in the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Mr. Carlo is also a graduate of the HK Tactical Emergency Medicine Course.

Editor's Note:

The National Tactical Officers Association recognizes the Heckler & Koch Specialized Tactical Medical Training Program as a valid training program for the training of tactical medical personnel. It is fully endorsed by the NTOA.