

**"EXPANDING  
PROBLEM  
ORIENTED POLICING  
CONCEPTS INTO  
TRAINING ISSUES!"**

**A PROBLEM  
ORIENTED POLICING  
PROJECT**

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## **Expanding Problem Oriented Policing Into Training Issues.**

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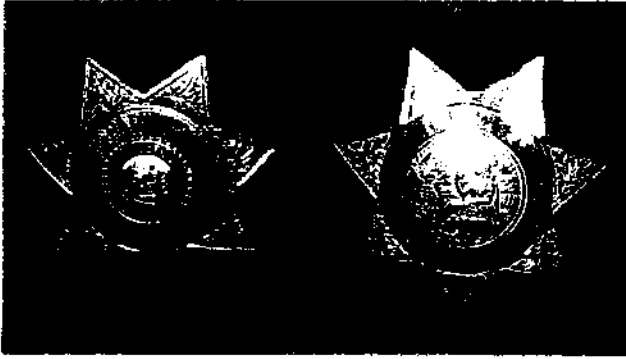
### **ABSTRACT:**

**SCANNING:** A multi-agency search warrant service was conducted on a fortified crack house in southwest Fresno in 1996. As a result, an officer was injured requiring the Fresno Police Department to develop a specialized training course.

**ANALYSIS:** Through research, the Training Unit was able to identify a variety of training deficiencies which may have contributed to the injury. These included a lack of participation in multi-agency training, search warrant training and firearms training between allied agencies.

**RESPONSE:** Through a cooperative effort involving State parole agents and the Fresno Police Department, a Search Warrant Execution Course was developed using Simmunition, a non-lethal training ammunition, which allowed officers from this Department and allied agencies to be trained in intelligence gathering, investigations, tactical planning and site diagramming for high risk entries. Additionally, students demonstrated the learned skills in realistic scenarios where the role players presented an actual threat to the participants if the tactics learned in the course were not employed. This course allowed instructors to evaluate performances and to remediate problem areas immediately.

**ASSESSMENT:** The benefit of this training has been immediate and very positive. Participants feel more secure in joint operations and subsequent multi-agency operations including Project Safeguard involving over 200 officers have been conducted without a single reported officer injury.



## Expanding Problem Oriented Policing Into Training Issues.

### SCANNING

Traditional law enforcement is incident driven. Unfortunately, the problem addressed as the focus of this paper was identified as a result of a single incident, a multi-agency search warrant operation, where an officer was injured. As members of law enforcement, safety for the community and safety for officers is paramount and critical to effective performance. On August 20, 1997, members of the Southwest Problem Oriented Policing Team developed a tactical plan to serve a search warrant for narcotics in an area of southwest Fresno known as the "Dogpound."

A joint warrant service was planned with two members of State parole.

Preliminary intelligence and surveillance established that one of the suspects was on parole. A search warrant was obtained after several narcotic buy operations were conducted at the location.



A tactical plan was developed to address the security measures employed by the suspects. There was a combination of a spiked wrought-iron fence around the entire yard, security screens and bars on each window, and a very aggressive 120 lb. Rottweiler that roamed the front and back yards. Additionally, there had been previous narcotic warrant services at this location within the last year. The suspects also used "spotters" or juveniles just

entering street drug sales carrying walkie-talkies, cell phones and pagers, acting as look outs for police and flaggers for customers. This house also sits on the northwest corner of two streets making police movement, in this high drug and gang-infested



neighborhood very easy to detect.

In order for the operation to be successful, precision in executing the warrant would have to be maintained.

This would require officers to simultaneously negotiate the outer fence, neutralize any threat that the dog may present, and gain access into the front door for the entry team as a parameter was set up. The tactical plan was developed to use members of two POP Teams and the State parole agents to gain entry into a house where weapons, drugs and police scanners had been found on previous search warrants. At approximately 11:00 a.m. on August 21, 1996, the warrant teams moved in to serve the warrant. A tow-truck with a front-cabled winch was used to knock down the fence and pull the security door. As the entry team approached the front door, the Rottweiler ran towards the point man to attack.

Two officers with Remington 870 tactical shotguns were assigned as a contingency to stop the dog if other containment efforts failed. One of the officers fired the shotgun twice from a distance of five feet, using a standard law enforcement shotgun load (12 gauge 00 buck shot.) The dog was visibly injured but not stopped and continued to charge the point man of the entry team. Other officers discharged their sidearms in an attempt to stop the vicious dog. Several shots were fired until the dog turned and went towards a State parole agent who discharged his weapon,

stopping the dog. An officer from the southeast POP team was struck by a bullet fragment in the lower leg as officers made entry into the home.

Not knowing if the bullet came from inside the house, the point team made a dynamic entry taking several people into custody. Illegal drugs and weapons were recovered, the injured officer was taken to an area hospital for medical treatment. The Fresno Police Department and State parole shooting teams responded to thoroughly investigate the incident and document any evidence obtained.

## **ANALYSIS**

A post-warrant debriefing was conducted to determine the successes and errors in the strategy. Critical analysis allow operational personnel, administrative staff and departmental executives to identify areas of concern in planning and tactical deployment. Analysis of the event occurred by reviewing:

- The departmental shooting investigation,
- Crime reports and documents created as a result of the incident,
- Training records information within the Department and with State Parole, and
- Interviews with the participants.

Armed with a substantial amount of data obtained from different investigative units, data gathered from debriefing sessions and critical incident reviews, the joint State parole and Fresno POP Team set out to distill the information and diagnose issues. A consensus determined that three preliminary issue must be researched prior to drawing any conclusions from the data:

- First the team had to determine whether continuing these search warrant operations was consistent with modern Problem Oriented Policing strategies,
- The team would then have to determine the root cause of the problem and not merely identify the manifestation of the issue or event,

- Finally, the team would develop and implement a permanent solution for the issues identified by the data or set of factors that were identified as contributing to the officers injuries.

In his book on *Problem-oriented Policing*, Herman Goldstein stated that "[c]risis stimulates progress." Other people have said that necessity is the mother of invention. This incident became the catalyst for change within our agencies. In the Preface of *Problem Oriented Policing*, Goldstein opens his book by acknowledging that:

The police, especially in our large urban areas, are currently struggling with the overwhelming problems associated with the sales and use of drugs. Goldstein notes that modern law enforcement agencies are under enormous pressure to deal with indiscriminate shootings of innocent citizens, escalations of violence among rivaling drug gangs, the frequent involvement of children in both drug use and sales, and the concern of entire neighborhoods terrorized by drug-related activities.

Informal inquiries were made to surrounding law enforcement agencies in the Central Valley of California that practiced some form of Community or Problem Oriented Policing to determine if officers involved in those programs conducted street level narcotics operations and executed search warrants. Of the 8 agencies contacted including the Fresno County Sheriffs Department, Clovis Police Department, Bakersfield Police Department and the Merced Police Department to name a few, each in varying degrees used Problem Oriented Policing officers in street level and high level drug investigations.

Information was also obtained from a joint research project conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation's Behavioral Science Unit and the National Center for Community Policing at Michigan State University. The research was conducted under the direction of Dr. Robert C Trojanowicz. The basis for the research was to determine the role of Community Based Policing concepts currently used by law enforcement agencies across the nation. Dr. Trojanowicz discovered that "... [according to the respondents, the factors most often considered when instituting

community policing are: high crime (68.8% of the departments), drug problems (65.8% of the departments), fear of crime (56.9%), [and] gang problems (43.1%)..."

In Dr. Trojanowicz's study, almost 100% of the reporting law enforcement agencies stated that their Community Oriented police officers responded to serious crime (Table 93), that these officers address low-level drug dealing (98.5%, Table 95), and that 84% of the Community Policing Officers deal directly with high-level drug dealing (Table 96). The National Center for Community Policing defined stemming drug activity as a priority for agencies across the nation and identified Community Policing officers and units as having the responsibility to deal with these issues in the community. The initial research was definitive, these types of investigations and operations were vital to law enforcement functions and absent adequate alternatives, would be a common police practice for some time.

The next step was to identify whether or not the collaboration between the State parole agents and the Fresno Police Department was essential to the continuing success of these operations. Going once again to the seminal work of Herman Goldstein on Problem-Oriented Policing, a foundational aspect of modern policing is the formation of partnerships. The U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno echoed the current administrations support of multi-jurisdictional collaborations when she announced "... I want to form a true partnership between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies throughout this nation; to ensure that career criminals, dangerous offenders, and drug traffickers get strict and certain sentences that put them away and keep them away..."

Goldstein also acknowledges the use of targeted enforcement techniques as a possible alternative to traditional reactive control of criminal drug activity. Goldstein states authoritatively that "...[a] relatively small number of individuals usually accounts for a disproportionate share of practically any problem the police handle." This widely held belief has led to the formation of inter-agency crime units targeting career

criminals and repeat offenders. This collaborations have been successful in concentrating police resources and identifying "one-man crime sprees". With the increase in drug activity, it is presumable that many of these repeat offenders have been through the judicial process before, and proportionately many are currently on active parole or probation. This itself would suggest the need to continue the joint operations as an efficient exchange of information regarding targeted offenders.

The past working relationship between State parole and the Fresno Police Department has been very successful. Although several joint operations have been conducted in the past, results such as the numbers seen on a citywide operation conducted in February of 1996 are typical. In this 8 hour operation, a total of 40 arrests were made for a variety of parole related violations, outstanding warrants and weapons violations. These included the recovery of 6 guns, 7 illegal knives, PCP, marijuana and several persons in possession of drug paraphernalia. In addition, 10 persons wanted for absconding and avoiding supervision were arrested as well as 1 prison escapee. 5 California Youth Authority revocations occurred and 4 warrants were issued on at-large parolees who were found to be in violation of terms of their parole.

Perhaps the most impressive benefit of the joint operation was the effect it had on citywide calls for service. Beside taking serious and habitual offenders off the streets of Fresno, police calls for service were decreased when compared with crime statistics from the previous date. Overall the crime rates, as reflected by calls for service for the day of the operation, decreased by 6% in 1996 over 1995. This included decreases in disturbance calls by 13% and a decrease in suspicious person calls for service by over 18%. More dramatic was the immediate impact on calls for service for the following day. On February 25, 1996, Fresno realized a decrease in the citywide calls for service by 19.2% (930 CFS in 1996, 1136 CFS in 1995). Disturbance calls in 1996 decreased by 24%, suspicious person calls decreased by 39% and



narcotic related calls for service in 1996 on the day following the operation decreased by 36% citywide.

The past success of this partnership between State parole, County probation and the Fresno Police Department indicates a need to continue, if not expand, the scope and frequency of these operations as an effective crime control measure. The information available led to only one conclusion, the partnership must continue but that operational parameters must be restructured to ensure safe tactical programs.

By application, the problem solving analysis looked at the critical aspect of training as it applied to performance. Stan Niizawa, a State parole agent who took part in the warrant service in August 1996, stated that the fundamental error and subsequent injury to the Fresno Police officer was a result of inadequate familiarization with police officer movements during high risk situations and that the field of fire reflected this lack of understanding. This sentiment was reiterated by many of the agents and officers involved in the shooting. Training is a basic aspect of effectiveness. Job performance relies on proper initial and continued training.

In California, training for law enforcement is so critical that the State has empowered the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training to mandate minimum training requirements for entry level officers as well as continuing professional education requirements.

The critical issue was identified as a training issue. The question then became how to effectively deal with shooting policies and firearms training between different agencies with differing range proficiency standards and develop a joint tactical training course.

#### RESPONSE:

The problem analysis was successful in identifying several inherent training deficiencies within the joint operation:

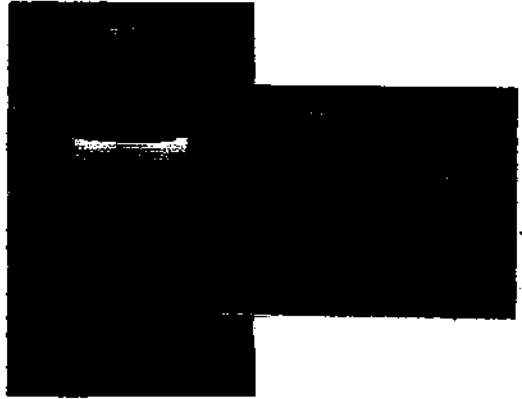
- There was no formalized search warrant training available in the area,
- There was no inter-agency training provided for participants in joint operations,
- There was no available range training for joint participants.

Both agencies maintained a certain autonomy in training and each was regulated by a differing administrative agency. Range training was another issue that would have to be dealt with. Agents carried different weapons than police officers and each had different levels of expertise and ability. The first step was to look for existing training so as to not reinvent the wheel. There were few classes that incorporated elements of tactical planning, dynamic entry into high risk situations and live fire training. Of the courses that were available, the projected course dates, cost or locations made the courses undesirable.

Through the Training Unit of the Fresno Police Department under the direction of Captain Roger Enmark, Sgt. Tom Laband and Sgt. Wade Engelson of the Violent Crime Suppression Unit, an outline for a course was developed which met the training needs of each agency. In this course, participants would learn essential aspects of intelligence gathering, investigations, tactical planning and site diagramming for warrant services and high risk entries.

After extensive debate, it was determined that separating the range training aspect would be of little use on the execution phase of the training. True situational training would require that a "live fire" component be injected into the training exercise to put the students under approximately the same physiological and emotional conditions that they would encounter in a warrant service. In order to accomplish a merger of the dynamic entry and firearms training, the use of several training aids including simulators, live fire scenarios and the use of non lethal training ammunition was researched. Although the live-fire house would give the most realistic shooting experience for the student, the risk of injury to participants outweighed its benefits to the students.

A company called Simmunition was contacted about their product and a meeting was scheduled. A factory representative came to Fresno and demonstrated, how this training tool could be incorporated into present training needs. Simmunition is a soft-form projectile made of paraffin wax that contains a liquid soap in a standard brass casing. The soap round is placed



in a specially modified barrel that replaces the standard barrel in an officer's duty weapon. The modified barrel adds an element of training safety by not allowing



standard issue ammunition to be shot through a gun with the modified barrel conversion kit in place. The soap round is expelled through the weapon by the firing pin striking the primer in the casing and the sub-sonic projectile, on contact, leaves a marking where the round struck the participant.

Added safety features include substantial head and neck protection and a requirement for appropriate tactical training attire and additional safety equipment such as ballistic vests and gloves to be worn at all times during the training. A member of the Violent Crime Suppression Unit, Officer Tom Rowe, was sent to San Diego to participate in an instructors school put on by Simmunition. This allowed Officer Rowe to learn the safety precautions, technical aspects and design training scenarios under the instruction of national experts. Once the training was complete, the Fresno Police Department was certified to use the Simmunition training ammunition in their search warrant class.

This type of training aid has a very distinct advantage. First it allowed the role players to be armed and to capitalize on the mistakes made by warrant teams during the class by shooting back at them. This was the first time that participants would be

put under stress conditions which approximate field conditions. Second, it allowed the class to be taught in locations other than the static range that officers and agents in Fresno County have been shooting at for many years. Entries could be made in almost any setting with minimal effect on the structure. The California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) generously allowed the training to be conducted inside houses that were scheduled to be moved and auctioned near a freeway expansion project.

Finally, this type of training would allow instructors to teach theory first, then contemporaneously observe the fruits of that training in live exercises. From a risk management standpoint, this type of training allows instructors to view the full use of force continuum as demonstrated by the participants. By changing the instructions to the role players or modifying the scenarios, instructors or proctors were able to accurately assess individual abilities and target specific and quantifiable areas for additional training.

The primary objective was to provide collaborative training for inter-agency participants in operations to:

- Increase officer safety and safe execution of tactical operations.
- To train officers from several agencies on common principles for warrant services and to familiarize joint participants with common base operational guidelines.
- To test knowledge and officer safety techniques through realistic training scenarios.

Each of these objectives was defined as a result of intensive analysis of the officer involved shooting and were considered fundamental to safe future operations. Prior to outside agency participation, the Fresno Police Department ran all of their tactical, POP and specialized units through the training course to insure the integrity and quality of the course and to make any needed adjustments.

For safety, students participating in this class could not have any weapons including back up handguns, knives of any kind, mace or O/C. sprays, any electronic devises or projectiles on their person or in the training areas. Each student was searched prior to entry into this area and safety inspection identification cards were issued. The student was not allowed to leave the area once searched, then the student was issued a specially marked and appropriately modified weapon containing training ammunition. Strict adherence to safety regulations is enforced and a proctor, safety observer and instructor accompany each team through the entries.

Once the class was fine tuned, members of the State Parole, County Probation, Alcohol Beverage Control and allied agencies around the Central Valley participated.



To date over 180 students have successfully taken the class since the first of May, 1997. The popularity of the class is best demonstrated by the waiting list needed to accommodate all the requests for attendance.

**ASSESSMENT:**

Assessing the benefit of this training as it relates to the stated objectives is accomplished by three means. First a tactical entry on completion is immediately followed by a debriefing in which specific aspects of the performance are discussed. Team members are encouraged to ask questions and elicit comments from instructors. This allows for an immediate identification of issues and comments while the scenario is still fresh in the participant's mind. After the training is complete, a course evaluation

form is filled out by the participants. These forms are used to further refine the course and are sent to the Commission on Police Standards and Training for analysis. The scores and comments are then



reported in a course evaluation sheet so that the course can be compared quantitatively to other search warrant courses. This insures consistency in training and also allows the instructors to be evaluated by the participants.

Perhaps the best measure of evaluation comes from the comments of class participants. For instance, the comments of State parole agent Stan Niizawa were very instructive to both developing the course and its evaluation. Agent Niizawa has been involved in a number of arrests and high risk entries since attending the Search Warrant Execution Course reported that he feels "much more comfortable" working in joint operations with the Fresno Police Department members. Agent Niizawa reiterated the importance of familiarization with movements during operations and stressed the importance of field of fire. Stan Niizawa believes the training significantly increased his ability to work with allied agencies in a safe and effective manner.

Since the class was taught the Fresno Police Department, State parole agents, Fresno County probation officers, California Highway Patrol officers and the State Department of Justice have combined to conduct 5 Project Safeguard sweeps throughout Fresno involving over 200 officers from different agencies. The operational objective of these joint projects is to arrest persons for outstanding warrants, recontact crime victims for follow-up investigations, conduct

parole and probation compliance searches and to verify the residency information and adherence to special registration requirements for sexual offenders. As a result of the joint operation there have been 126 felony arrests, 198 misdemeanor arrests, contacts with 1,296 crime victims for additional crime report information, and searches on the residence of record for 501 persons on felony probation and 88 parolees conducted. In addition, the Safeguard members verified the information of 613 registered sex offenders in the City of Fresno. Many of these individual accomplishments required tactical entries into high risk situations.

From these multi-agency tactical operations, there have been no reported incidents of injury to officers. Officers involved in the joint operation attributed the success to the overall program organization, and the safe operation of the program being due in part to the search warrant training that was supplied prior to the operation. The search warrant class was able to provide most of the members of Operation Safeguard with a basic understanding of common operational tactics and a framework of coordination during high risk situations.

Although an unfortunate event occurred, it was the catalyst for positive change. The Fresno Police Department, through the use of critical analysis under the problem-oriented policing model, was able to define and resolve problems in their training and search warrant service tactics. The training course that was developed allowed a variety of officers to learn practical skills that could be used in most tactical situations that officers might be confronted with. Additionally, the Training Unit for the Fresno Police Department was able to successfully use problem-oriented policing analysis as an internal means of problem identification and resolution.

This process successfully demonstrated the versatility of problem-oriented policing as an internal management tool, and as a means of evaluating existing programs and developing future training classes designed to meet the needs of officers and the community.

**AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION:**

This process for training needs assessment was developed with the invaluable assistance from members of the Violent Crime Suppression Unit, Southwest Problem-Oriented Policing Team, the Fresno Police Department Personnel and Training Unit, the Commander of the Management Services Bureau and supervisory personnel from the State parole office, California Department of Corrections.

The successful implementation of this problem solving technique is now the standard for the Training Unit and has been implemented for restructuring training for the entire Department. As a result, the many allied agencies in the State of California that travel to Fresno to receive training will benefit from the courses developed and offered under this model.

The implementation of this program required no additional revenues or expenditures. The Department, through the Training Unit, has been able to implement this critical training needs assessment without incurring additional time or expense. The benefits to officers and agencies throughout Central California have been immediate and very positive.

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