

**ANTITERRORKAMPF:  
BESSERE AUSTRÜSTUNG  
UND TRAINING**

**SUIZID IM POLIZEIDIENST:  
EIN SITUATIONSBERICHT  
AUS FRANKREICH**

**USA:  
COUNTER AMBUSH TRAINING  
FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT**

# EDITORIAL

## SUIZID – NOT ONLY IN THE POLICE SERVICE

BY ECKHARD NIEBERGALL

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### DEAR READERS,

I am writing this editorial on suicide after a long inner dialogue. As a result of the pros and cons, I have come to the conclusion that after 42 years of service and 67 years of life, I have a duty to share my experiences in order to perhaps protect others from harm or help them to better survive crises.

### PID MAGAZINE AND POLICE TRAINERS CONFERENCE

Already in 2019, we described suicides of police officers in France as a disturbing phenomenon in the article "Policiers en Colère – Polizisten in Wut" in *Polizeitrainer Magazin* No. 23. This is not the only reason why the topic was on the agenda of the EUROPEAN POLICE TRAINERS CONFERENCE 2022 and is represented in this issue with a contribution by our French colleague Harald Wilmin. When people – not only police officers – choose suicide, it is usually not a spontaneous decision, but the end of a path, combined with the feeling of hopelessness. When a person commits suicide, the suffering of partners, children, families, friends and colleagues begins.

### FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE

I was about eight years old and working in our garden when Hugo, a neighbour and good friend of the family, stopped by me briefly on his way to the forest. Hugo, who was in daily pain following a chemical accident, which doctors were unable to explain, showed me a rope and said he couldn't take it any more and would hang himself in the forest.

In the evening he was found dead at a high seat. Afterwards there was an ongoing discussion in our (Catholic) village whether a church funeral was allowed, since suicide was a sin and an outrage against God's will.

In 1976 I was in my second year of training with the riot police and visited my parents sporadically at weekends. One Saturday I was sitting in the kitchen, heard a loud noise from the bedroom and found my father dying in his bed. He had shot himself in the temple with a rifle.

Two weeks after a boisterous party, which my schoolmate Hubertus also attended, he killed his girlfriend and then himself with a revolver he legally owned as a hunter. Some time after I had left my police office in downtown Frankfurt, I received news from colleagues that my patrol partner had shot himself. Several colleagues from other units, where I would not have expected the same, ended their lives in the following years – most of them with their service weapons.

After I received the worried call from his daughter asking me to look for her father, I found him – one of my best friends – dead in the basement room. He had taken his own life with a charcoal grill and had put a sign on the door beforehand.

### GRIEF, ANGER, GUILT, QUESTIONS

These events have affected me massively and have weighed heavily on my mind and soul. My initial feelings of paralysis were followed by bewilderment, deep grief and the feeling of latent guilt – not legal, but moral – combined

with the question of what could have been done to save the person's life. In another context, I once read that what matters is not how a person dies, but how they lived their life. That may be true for the person themselves - for children, partners, family, friends, those who are left behind, how a person passes from this life can make a significant difference. This is especially true if you were a police officer and had to take the life of an attacker in self-defence or emergency aid. If this takes place through so-called "suicide by cop", meaning that the person provoked the use of firearms in order to be killed and there is no criminal charge, there may still be a sense of moral guilt. I became aware of this when describing a case from the USA: after an older police officer had to kill a young man who had attacked him with suicidal intent, colleagues heard him say: "Son why did you make me shoot you?"

### WAYS OUT OF DEEP VALLEYS

When you grow up as a child and pass through adolescent in an environment where crying is seen as a sign of weakness and masculine strength is the measure of all things; rather than "coming to terms with traumatic experiences" they are often just repressed. For a long time I was not able to talk about my feelings with others. Even with those closest to me. The fact that the police service at that time was a "man's world", where "tough guys" were in demand, certainly contributed to this. And that's how we saw ourselves and behaved. Suppression – as part of an overall strategy – may, for some be (in the short term).

Unfortunately, it only worked for me for a certain time. In order to emerge strengthened from the perceived “deep valley”, I was helped above all by talking to people I trusted and with whom I had a close bond. And: Yes, the scars remain, but they no longer hurt as they used to.

### RESILIENCE

In my life I have always asked myself what I could endure without breaking. Physically and mentally. I felt I owed myself a credible answer. That’s why I try to put it in positive terms. Apart from innate resilience, a few things that you can influence yourself certainly help. These include – among other things – a healthy diet, good sleep, physical and mental flexibility. Stable family relationships. Good friends. Attention to developments in the environment and a dialectical analysis. Belief in positive values, love and hope for yourself and the people you care about. And not to forget: self-confidence.

### PREVENTION

It starts with strong children. We, parents and grandparents, are the ones who can help strong children become strong adults. Nobody promised us that this task would be easy. But it can be solved. How? First and foremost by setting a positive example. The following applies: Do your best and keep going in case of failures, because: It pays off. Setting an example of values such as good social behaviour, compassion, discipline (in a positive sense) and perseverance increases the chance that these children will grow up to be adults who may hit rock bottom but manage to get back up stronger. It reduces the danger that they will give up in situations that seem hopeless and choose a path that may lead to suicide. If kindergartens, schools and clubs accompany young people in this context and promote their strengths, this has a considerable influence on a positive life path. Yes, current developments are

far from this ideal situation. But giving up is not an alternative here either. During police studies, there should be an intensive examination of the topics of violence and death not only in a legal context, but also from an ethical and moral point of view. Although considerable improvements can already be seen in psychological services in Germany, there is still considerable need for action here. In this context, too, the principle applies: the smart person learns from the experience of others. It is therefore advisable to look beyond the (national) horizon – especially when it comes to practical implementation. In the USA, there are – apart from the state institutions – private organisations for suicide prevention and help for relatives, which support those affected nationwide with good ideas and a high level of commitment. These include initiatives and actions that address both individuals and authorities and thus promote collective awareness. This results in a higher awareness of alarm signals.

### THE ROLE OF LEADERS

“The fish stinks at the head first,” is a saying that has unfortunately proven true in some cases during my time in service. In particular, the emotional damage done by so-called leaders cannot be compensated for with any salary increase or prescribed team development measures. The most important leadership task (at all levels) is to ensure a good working atmosphere and to give people the feeling that they are respected, considered and valued. From this comes trust and strength. It is the basis for a positive team spirit and gives people support when they are in crisis. It motivates colleagues to talk about problems in an environment where they feel listened-to and un-judged. I always think back to my first service group leader in Frankfurt. Heinrich – everyone called him Henner – had snow-white hair and a police expertise

that was impressive. But much more impressive to me was how he dealt with all his colleagues. Even in difficult situations, he remained calm, respectful and polite. He always had an “open ear” and advice if you asked for it. I would have liked to have people like him as lecturers for future leaders, to teach what you only learn in real life: compassion, understanding – humanism. If I had to nominate someone as the most human police officer I have met in 42 years of service, it would be him.

Chapeau Henner – you were my best teacher!!! ■

*YOUR ECKHARD NIEBERGALL*

# COUNTER AMBUSH TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

WRITTEN BY JOHN T. MEYER JR. AND STEVE JOHNSON (TEAMONE NETWORK)

Currently throughout the world, law enforcement officers are being attacked for no apparent reason and while conducting no specific task. The concept of an ambush is an attack in which the aggressor(s) take advantage of the element of surprise to attack an unsuspecting officer who is in no way engaged with the aggressor.

In layman's terms, an ambush is an attack from a concealed position. It can take many different forms, but the goal is always the same: to catch the victim off guard.

**In the world of law enforcement, an ambush is a very real danger – something officers are at risk of every minute of being on duty.**

Every day, these officers wear the uniform and badge with pride before setting out to serve their beloved nation and protect people from harm. Sometimes, the most mundane of calls turn quickly into violent, unprovoked attacks from individuals trying to avoid capture or send a message to law enforcement.

Too often, we witness the news of ambushes against law enforcement officers and how multiple casualties were reported. Sadly, this is a reality across the world, demanding attention to the vulnerability of those who put their lives on the line every day to serve their country.

**Call it 'cowardly' on the part of attackers, but it doesn't change the reality that ambushes against law enforcement officers have become one of the biggest causes of in-the-line-of-duty deaths.**

Yet we often fail to take into consideration the ripple effect each of such incidents can have on public safety officers and the community as a whole.



When those charged with protecting the public can't do their job without fear of being gunned down, it leaves people feeling helpless.

**The takeaway:** officers must not only focus on protecting the public but also train to win against violence targeting them.

**Highlighting an Oft-Neglected Topic:** Ambush Attacks on Law Enforcement Officers Across the World

The incidents of officers being attacked without warning have become more frequent – and no country is an exception.

The statistics are alarming: according to the FBI, 25 police officers lost their lives in premeditated, ambush-style attacks through December 27, 2021. A Baltimore officer was shot while sitting in her patrol car, while two police officers in Illinois faced an ambush attack as they responded to a call about dogs barking in a hotel parking lot.

In January 2022, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) recorded 103 "ambush-style attacks" on officers.

Let's look at some specific case studies of ambushes of law enforcement officers.

## LAKEWOOD, WASHINGTON, USA

On November 29, 2009 in Lakewood Washington, four highly trained officers were at the Forza Coffee Shop working on reports. Two of the officers had their laptop computers on the table. The killer, Maurice Clemmons, had been

recently released on bail and also had a history of violent offenses. Clemmons walked into the shop, walked directly to the officers' table and shot Officer Tina Griswold in the back of the head killing her instantly. He then shot Officer Mark Renniger in the right side of the head killing him as well. When Clemmons handgun malfunctioned, he pulled a second weapon and shot Officer Ronald Owens in the head. Officer Greg Richards advanced on Clemmons and Clemmons fired his weapon several more times striking Richards' Taser and Taser holster. Officer Richards shot Clemmons in the torso but Clemmons was able to take control of the weapon and shot Officer Richards in the head killing him instantly.

Maurice Clemmons had no formal handgun training, the attack lasted less than one minute then Clemmons fled to a getaway vehicle. Two days later he attempted to ambush Seattle PD Officer Benjamin Kelly who engaged him and killed Clemmons.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Routines kill The concept of a "normal day" – when repeated activity occurs without incident – lulls officers into a false sense of security,
- Multiple officers present does not equal less risk of attack

## FROM AN ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCE TRAINER

Jerusalem, shortly after the banning of US Reps. Omar and Talib.

Teenage perpetrators, the kind that could walk right up to you.

Armed with knives willing to attack numerically superior and heavily armed police.



Speed of engagement: one minute, taking a break; the next under attack.

Willing to die there.

Notice how fast cops in a terror environment respond. The guy with the pack went right into a hard Krav Maga defence and went down still kicking; others engaged attackers until they went down.

Never underestimate the power of hatred and commitment. All the training in the world can be overcome by an enraged 12 year old with a common kitchen knife.

Someone is training to kill you right now. Are you ready?



### CASE STUDIES

- Important aspect of C.A.T.
- They prove it has happened and WILL again
- They honor those who paved the way
- Realistic; they happened
- Get the facts right. Credibility is paramount

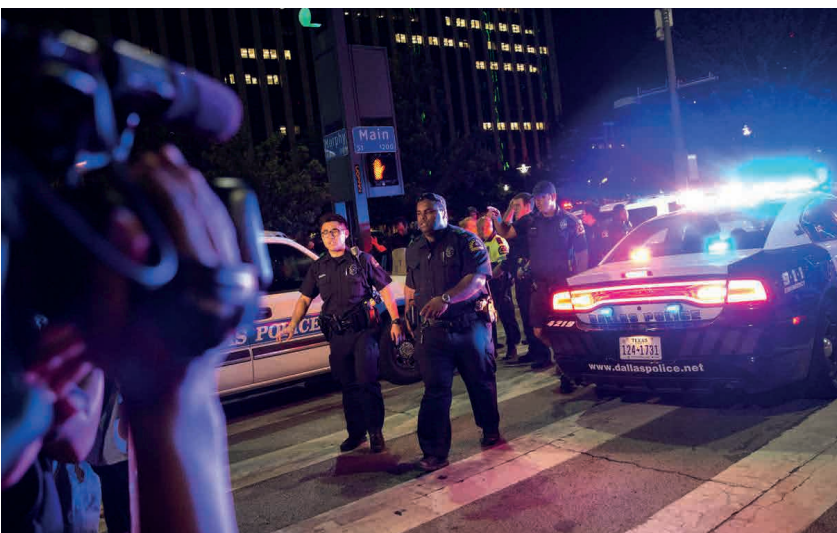
Unfortunately, many officers are not aware of the dangers of ambush and what they can do to protect themselves from it. Criminals are becoming increasingly brazen in their attacks, and officers are caught off guard. Thereby, ambushes remain a threat to officer safety.

In order to better protect themselves and the community they serve, officers need to receive training on responding to ambush situations.

Ambush Survival Training for Law Enforcement Officers

When it comes to law enforcement ambushes, there is no room for error. Such attacks can happen anywhere and at any time. Officers must be aware of their surroundings at all times and know how to react if confronted with an assailant out of the blue.

This guide provides an overview of the steps to increase the chances of ambush survival for law enforcement officers.



## STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING AMBUSH

The following characteristics define an ambush attack in relation to law enforcement:

Characteristic	Description
Suddenness	Quick execution of the attack
Surprise	Concealment of the assailant, their motive, or weapon
Lack of provocation	Officer actions are non-threatening/routine
Excessive force	Assailant actions exceed officer's at the onset of the assault

Ambushes are typically classified as:

- **Deliberate** – a ‘traditional’ pre-planned attack where the assailant lures a law enforcement officer into a location to execute assault.
- **Impromptu** – an unprovoked, spontaneous attack where the offender grabs the ‘opportunity’ to attack an officer.

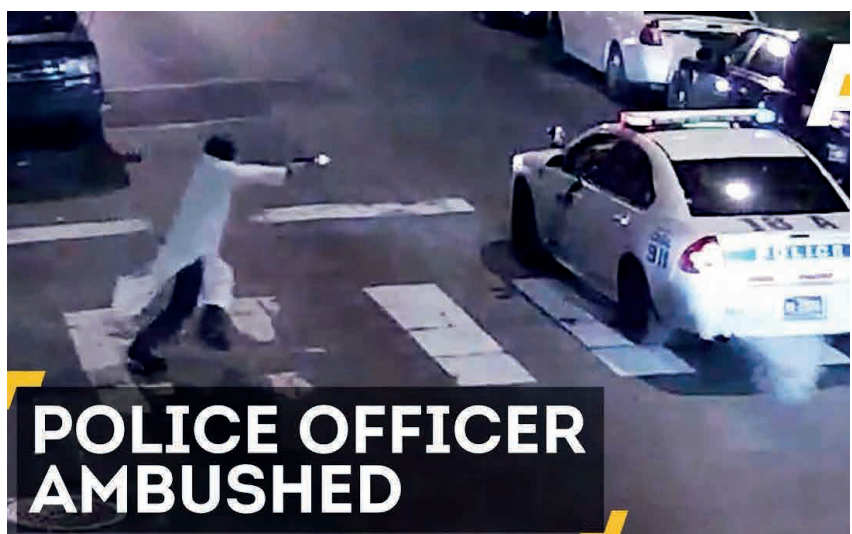
## STEP 2: UNDERSTANDING THE ASSAILANT MINDSET

Law enforcement officers can't afford to underestimate offenders. An attempt to understand their mindset, intention, and approach can go a long way in ensuring ambush survival.

As Jeff Chudwin said:

“Not every offender is an #\$\$%%; taken as an untrained and ineffective opponent. He or SHE may be highly trained and skilled and, most importantly, highly motivated to murder you and anyone else that attempts to stop them. Respect the fact that they are willing to fight and plan/respond accordingly.”

Literature review indicates that ambush attackers are 30 years of age on average. The majority (75%) have a criminal record, with 40% involved in



violent crimes. More than 25% were under judicial supervision at the time of the ambush.

It was also derived that 83% of assailants attacked alone. Only 8% of the time, there were multiple offenders. Almost 25% were somehow linked with the victim (previous arrests or personal interactions).

Furthermore, most assailants were rational robbers – they had fled the crime scene and routinely used potentially lethal weapons. Often, interactions between an officer and an assailant influence the likelihood of violence. For instance, some assailants decided to assault an officer based on the perception of whether they were fulfilling their duties properly.

Past incidents also reveal that most assailants were actively involved in other crimes when they committed the offense. Some offenders also exhibited extremist behaviour, mental illness, or a state of delirium.

As for the ‘tool of the trade,’ firearms have been most commonly used by ambush attackers. However, several assailants use only their hands to attack. Interestingly, some ambushes involve “other” weapons, like a motor vehicle, while knives and other sharp objects are less frequently used.

#### ADDITIONAL ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS

- 96.7% of offenders are male
- 66.7% belong to a racial minority
- 73.3% have a history of drug abuse
- 66.7% have a history of alcohol abuse
- 33% have had prior law enforcement confrontations
- 50% had attempted suicide once or multiple times

#### STEP 3: KNOWING ABOUT COMMON AMBUSH SITES

Knowledge is power, and law enforcement officers can be better prepared to handle any situation by understanding dangerous locations with

the possibility of an ambush attack. Some examples include:

- Often travelled routes to and from station
- Officer’s patrol car
- Entrance or exit of the police station
- Coffee spots
- One-way streets and T-intersections
- Dark alleys

Some assailants may even consider ambushing an officer’s home to catch them off-guard because they know the officer will be off-duty and not as alert.

Additionally, the following scenarios also pose a threat of an ambush attack.

- Congregations of officers after incidents or hot calls
- Demonstrations
- Riots
- Strikes
- Formations during unusual occurrences

#### STEP 4: UNDERGOING TRAINING TO RECOGNISE AND COUNTER AMBUSH ATTACKS

Law enforcement officers must train to win against unforeseen assaults. They must undergo proper training to immediately recognise and respond to such situations in order to survive and counter the attack.

#### AN IDEAL TRAINING PROGRAM WILL INSTRUCT OFFICERS ON:

- The dynamics and evolution of an ambush attack
- Enhancement of situational awareness with advanced threat identification techniques
- Counter-attacking from every position in a vehicle
- Rapid, tactical exit from a vehicle
- Unconventional pistol and rifle combat tactics
- Precision immobilization techniques
- Utilising assistive technology like weapons, cameras, proximity alarms, personal and vehicle armour, and lighting

- Team concepts in counter ambush response
- Development of an enhanced mindset by controlling thoughts to defeat ambush-style attacks
- Casualty care techniques

#### AREAS OF CONCERN FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

##### ■ Distractions and Obstacles to Situational Awareness

Often, officers fail to recognise an ambush situation. In nearly half of the cases (48.5%), they couldn’t see the assailant. This could be because of a lack of situational awareness or distractions from the offender.

Needless to say, the inability to recognise an ambush or spot the offender in such a critical moment can be deadly.

Therefore, law enforcement officers must be adept at performing a preemptive assessment of the surrounding area to safeguard themselves against a potential attack. In the case of a crime scene, they must know how to ensure no offenders are lurking around before commencing the containment and scene protection procedures.

Lastly, officers must be trained to identify distractions and make conscious efforts to redirect their attention to stay in control of the situation at all times.

##### ■ Misperception of the Offender’s Behaviour, Location, and Mindset

Often, assailants intentionally treat police officers nicely and show compliance to get them to relax before initiating an attack. Officers must remain alert at all times and consider each individual a threat.

Another common reason officers fail at counter ambush attacks is that they are quick to believe the offender has left the crime scene. It’s critical for all officers to maintain an awareness of their surroundings, even if the investigation officers confirm the assailant has left the area.

It’s also important to note that an



officer's appearance, lack of attention, lack of professionalism, and deviation from training are the top factors some offenders consider when deciding to attack.

Lastly, getting too comfortable in 'routine' spots may also pose a risk of an ambush attack. Law enforcement officers must never treat a service call as 'routine.' They should always follow all protocols to evaluate the area and be extra vigilant doing routine tasks like patrolling or launching.

#### ■ Altered Perceptual Acuity

Law enforcement officers must understand altered perceptual acuity and be familiar with its challenges, including time distortion, tunnel vision, and audio exclusion. An effective way to overcome these challenges is by participating in realistic scenario-based training that addresses altered sensory experiences.

#### ■ Avoiding Surprises

In 39.4% of ambush cases, police officers are taken by surprise by the assailant. Additionally, 44.4% of the time, they were not prepared for the attacker to fight back after sustaining critical injuries.

This reiterates the importance of situational awareness and scenario-based training for officers. They must also be quick with weapons to fight the offender back.

#### ■ Offender Escape and Disposing of Evidence

Officers must realize that assailants don't come unprepared. More often than not, they have an escape plan in mind in case things go south. The only way to beat them at it is by thinking like them and knowing all possible escape routes assailants can use.

Disposing of evidence is also a critical issue faced in ambush situations. Officers must be familiar with possible ways an offender may get rid of the evidence after escaping the scene.

Regular training on scenarios related to escapes and arrests significantly helps overcome these challenges.





### ■ Backup Support

Law enforcement teams must always have a backup, regardless of the number of officers at a scene. In 60.6% of ambush incidents, assailants initiated an attack in the presence of multiple officers. In fact, many offenders carry out targeted assaults on officer groups.

Hence, officers should never lower their guards after arriving at a scene where a report is made of a person with a firearm or shots fired. On the other hand, backup units must properly evaluate a situation instead of jumping in, while ensuring they don't block the path of EMS vehicles.

### ■ Communication Issues in Emergency

Prompt communication with the unit becomes critical when a law enforcement officer suspects an ambush attack. All officers must have properly functioning radios and be aware of their functions.

Proper training should be provided to officers on the use of radio. This will prevent miscommunications regarding patrol locations too.

### ■ First Aid Training

Since most assailants use deadly weapons in ambush attacks, all law enforcement officers must realise the possibility of sustaining serious injuries and fighting regardless.

They must be trained to handle injuries and have adequate knowledge of first aid (including self-administered first aid). They should also be proficient at CPR and haemorrhage control procedures.

More importantly, law enforcement units must ensure all officers have access to appropriate first aid equipment, including tourniquets and haemostatic dressings.

### ■ Mental Preparation

Mental preparation is as important as physical training when it comes to counter ambush response. Law enforcement units must acknowledge the possibility of a 'freeze' that typically prevents officers from responding or deciding the best course of action during

an ambush attack.

It's critical to train officers so that certain counter behaviours become automatic (development of muscle memory). Pre-planning and mapping out all possibilities also significantly help do the right thing in the face of a life-threatening attack.

Creating training scenarios where officers recognise the benefit of pausing or slowing down to enhance safety in particular situations should also be a critical aspect of counter ambush training.

### ■ Will to Survive

Law enforcement agencies should incorporate a will-to-survive course into counter ambush training to prepare officers to come out of life-threatening situations after sustaining critical injuries during an assault.

Officers must fight to survive and believe that they can make it, regardless of how critical their condition is. Mental exercises significantly help in this regard.

### ■ Physical Training

Preparing for a counter ambush response involves learning self-defence tactics, firearms training (shooting from various angles and on the move), first aid training (including self-body drag), and communication strategies.

Officers must also be prepared to tackle all 'what if' scenarios so that there's minimal risk of surprises.

### ■ Ambush Cognition

What goes on in an officer's mind during an ambush is of utmost importance. Mindset can make or break their ability to counter the attack.

Most officers (75.8%) thought of self-protection, while 42.4% were concerned about the safety of others. 39.4% had their minds focused on how to win against the offender, and 33.3% were telling themselves, "I'll win." None of the officers had any thoughts of lawsuits or department rules.

Law enforcement agencies can shape their officers' mindset to train to win. Cognition training may include case

studies and visualisation. All officers must know about the frequency and seriousness of ambush attacks and be willing to rehearse countermeasures to maximize their chances of survival.

Visualisation also helps overcome the fear of the unknown, enabling officers to think rationally in the face of danger and make well-informed decisions.

Invest in Proactive Measures Against Ambush Attacks With Team One Network

Law enforcement agencies need to train their officers to survive ambush attacks, where acting quickly and decisively can be the difference between life and death.

Whatever the impetus for the assault, it's not known ahead of time and may be challenging to mitigate. Officers must adopt proactive measures against the increase in frequency and lethality of ambushes and train to win!

Team One Network is a globally recognised entity offering the most realistic, practical, and intense counter ambush training to law enforcement officers and military in the US and worldwide. Sponsored by some of the top companies in the industry, it features a well-knit team of professional instructors and consultants who boast outstanding credentials and a successful track record of training thousands of officers to win against ambush attackers.

The training course offered by its instructors is known to save officers' lives, prepare them for challenges they may face during an ambush attack, and equip them with the skills and resources required to train others to win. ■