

TACTICAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THE DETROIT POLICE NARCOTICS  
ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Detroit Police Department has a division within its organization whose sole purpose is to eradicate the availability of illicit drugs within the boundaries of the City of Detroit. This division is comprised of officers selected from all other units within the department. Once assigned to the Narcotics Enforcement Division the officers receive a two-week course in “Undercover Techniques” which trains mostly in undercover work and little training in tactical procedures, then assigned to an enforcement crew.

Each of the thirteen crews is responsible for narcotic enforcement within their precinct, averaging two raids a day. This is a significant number of physical assaults on single family and multi-family dwellings as well as apartment buildings and business places within the city. Officers execute these raids, with little or no tactical training and over the years this has caused injury and unfortunately death.

For this project I will conduct interviews with personnel assigned to both Narcotics and Tactical Response Teams. Research will also come from tactical publications, news articles, Detroit Police Manual, the Narcotics Enforcement Division and Tactical Response Team Standard Operating Procedures, as well as statistical information from the Narcotics Enforcement Division.

Through this research I will show the need for a comprehensive and mandatory Tactical Training Program to be established for the Narcotics Enforcement Division.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Narcotics Enforcement Division of the Detroit Police Department is responsible for coordinating and directing the department's efforts to enforce the Controlled Substance Act and City Ordinances, by investigating, apprehending, and prosecuting persons involved in the violation of these laws and ordinances.

The Narcotics Enforcement Division is mandated by the City of Detroit Goal Based Governance System to implement a comprehensive drug enforcement program to significantly reduce drug trafficking problems within the city. The mission statement as stated in *Narcotics Enforcement Division Standard Operating Procedures Manual* (2001), states in part that the division will use all legal and effective tactics to aggressively enforce pertinent federal, state laws and local ordinances.

In an effort to achieve the aforementioned goals the administration of the Detroit Police Department established a policy that requires a minimum of "Two Raids A Day" for all enforcement crews unless a few specific exceptions exist.

With the above mandate the officers assigned to the enforcement crews conduct a significant number of physical assaults on single-family, multi-family dwellings, apartment buildings and business places within the city. Officers, who receive very little or no tactical training regarding the entry into a possible hostile environment, are conducting these raids.

Over the past five years the Narcotics Enforcement Division have conducted more than 16,000 raids. *Narcotics Enforcement Division Analysis Report* (2001). Many of these raids have resulted in officers sustaining serious injuries as well as the injuries and even death to suspects and officers. With the potential for violence erupting at every raid, it is the responsibility of the administration to provide the officers with the best operational training, equipment, and support that the budget can afford.

Efforts to improve the training as well as the equipment used by raiding officers, has been met with resistance by not only the administration but also some of the officers.

Research will show the need for vast improvements in equipment used as well as a comprehensive tactical training program for all officers assigned to enforcement actions. This documentation will incorporate past as well as recent events to highlight the need for a change of the mindset of administration and the rank and file officers. It will also use interviews from officers involved in raids that resulted in serious injuries to them as well as injuries and even death to the subjects of the raids. A comparison of different agencies will be studied to obtain the best approach to the current policies.

## **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

February 5, 1986, members of the Narcotics Section conducted a raid at a dwelling on the cities' near east side. When the raid was over 2 Police Officers were dead. After the investigation was complete it was discovered that other officers shot the officers. How could this happen, what went wrong? These questions haunted the city, the administration and definitely the police department.

As reported in the *Detroit Free Press* (1986), on Wednesday February 5, 1986, members of the Detroit Police Narcotics Section, where conducting an investigation of a

suspected drug house in the central part of the city. A paid informant had purchased suspected narcotics from an address on E. Euclid in the Thirteenth Precinct. A search warrant was obtained for 537 E. Euclid and at approximately 5:30 p.m., members of the narcotics crew had a pre-raid briefing a short distance away from the Euclid address.

At 6:01 p.m., a officer at the Thirteenth Precinct received a phone call from an unknown female who stated that “shots are being fired at 537 E. Euclid and a lady just ran out of there bleeding from her legs.”

At 6:05 p.m., Scout Car 13-2, manned by Police Officer Mark Radden and Jeremiah Wilkins, were dispatched and responded to the call. Two other scout cars backed up scout 13-2.

Once at the scene the officers determined that probably no shots were fired and one of the back up cars left the scene. Officers Radden and Wilkins along with the other two officers conducted interviews with the persons that were inside the dwelling. The dwelling had no lights therefore, the officers had to use flashlights for illumination.

Meanwhile, after the briefing the narcotics crew arrived at 537 E. Euclid to execute the search warrant. Not seeing the marked scout cars that had parked down the street based on procedures for responding to the shoots fired call; the narcotics crew conducted the raid.

The narcotics raid crew was led by Sergeant Dennis Kitchen and among the crewmembers, was Police Officer Giacomo Buffa who was assigned as the shotgun man and dressed in plain clothes.

Uniformed officers from the Tactical Services Section, who were with the raid crew to provide a uniform presence, for unknown reasons did not immediately enter the

dwelling with Officer Buffa and Sergeant Kitchen, as was required by department procedures. Officer Buffa entered the dimly lit dwelling dressed in plain clothes and carrying a 12-gauge shotgun yelling, “We’re the police. We’re the police.” Sergeant Kitchen had stumbled and was a little behind Officer Buffa.

At this point everyone was yelling police and gunfire erupted. In the span of seconds both Officer Buffa and Officer Radden laid mortally wounded.

The subsequent investigation revealed that upon seeing a person dressed in a long army coat armed with a shotgun rushing towards him, Officer Radden opened fire fatally wounding Officer Buffa. After seeing his partner shot Sergeant Kitchen returned fire in the dimly lit dwelling also fatally wounding Officer Radden.

This incident revealed some serious flaws in the tactical raid procedures used by the Narcotics Section. This incident under scored the need for improved communications between officers assigned to the narcotics crews and precinct scout car units. It also showed that visible identification of the raiding officers is imperative on all raids.

With this incident in mind the Narcotics Section developed the policy that all members involved must wear a Detroit Police issued uniform or a department approved raid uniform, and all members must wear a department issued flak vest with “Police” stenciled on the front and back of the vest. Also a marked scout car shall accompany the raid team and be positioned in front of the raid location with the overhead oscillating lights activated.

The other major change was with the raid notification procedures. The *Narcotics Enforcement Division Standard Operating Procedure Manual* (2001) addresses this issue. The manual states in part: Prior to departing the rendezvous point to the raid site,

the Raid Commander shall cause the Narcotics Base, Communications Section, and any possible surveillance unit to be notified of the impending narcotic raid. The raid commander shall wait for the communication zone dispatcher to give the “All Clear” prior to proceeding to the raid location. The purpose is to insure that no other police activity or units are at or near the raid location.

The policy changes affected raid procedures; however, the narcotics officers involved in this deadly raid had very little or no tactical training. From the date of this incident to present officers assigned to the current Narcotics Enforcement division still receive very little or no tactical entry training. Tactical training is very important in the planning and execution of drug raids but also essential in the planning and execution of an undercover buy.

The *Detroit Free Press* (1988) sadly reported that on November 22, 1988, Police Officer Charles Beasley, was assigned as a undercover officer and had \$20,000 to buy a kilo of cocaine during a planned buy and bust operation.

Beasley arrived at the pre-arranged parking lot of a fast food restaurant located at Livernois and W. Warren in the City of Detroit. As he exited his vehicle and approached the four suspects he was shot in the face by one of the suspects.

Another suspect grabbed the bag containing the \$20,000 and ran. Narcotics crew members who were staking out the parking lot moved in. One crewmember returned fire, striking the suspect in the leg.

Using tracking dogs, the suspect was captured and the money was recovered but no drugs. The story goes on to quote an unnamed investigator as stating “this was apparently a rip from the beginning.”

As reported in the *Detroit Free Press* (1987), October 27, 1987, members of the Narcotic Section executed a search warrant at a duplex in the city. Police Officer James Willis was shot in the arm, when at least one bullet fired through a steel door apparently was deflected by the officer's flak vest. Officer Willis sustained a bullet wound to his left arm, a bruised chest and possibly broken ribs.

Officer Willis was attempting to pry a steel security grate off the outside door when someone inside fired a carbine through it. Officers at the rear of the duplex arrested a man, a woman and a juvenile male as they tried to escape. Officers confiscated a shotgun and a semiautomatic M1 carbine from inside the house

On a fall evening in early nineties, members of the Narcotics Section executed a search warrant at a dwelling located in the central part of the city. Upon approaching the dwelling and attempting to ram the door, the raid team received gunfire from within the location. Police Officer Myron Love was struck just below his flack vest, thus sustaining a stomach wound. All the suspects inside were arrested and a large caliber handgun was recovered.

On another occasion members of the Narcotics Section executed a search warrant at a dwelling within the city. The initial entry was made without incident, however, after the location was deemed secure the raid crew removed their tactical raid vest and began to search the premises.

While the officers were inside the dwelling searching, one of the suspected targets of the investigation drove by and fired into the dwelling wounding two officers. The execution of a search warrant is considered a tactical situation and therefore, all tactical rules apply. One of the main tactical theories is that a raid team is not safe and secure as

long as they are on scene, someone must be deployed to protect the team while at scene. (*Detroit Police Special Response Team Standard Operation Procedures Manual, 1991*)

In February 1996, members of the Narcotics Section execute a search warrant at two-family residence in the City of Detroit. The warrant was for the upper unit of the dwelling. As the raid team began to breach the lower door, the suspects in the upper unit began firing rounds from an AK-7 type assault rifle through the upper unit door. As the entry team took cover, the suspects run through the upper unit and down the rear stairs to the rear door.

As one of the suspects began to open the rear door he encounters Police Officer Byron McGhee. The suspect immediately fires rounds from a 9mm handgun towards Officer McGhee striking him in the right arm. The suspects retreated back into the dwelling and are eventually apprehended.

Wednesday March 4, 1998, members of the Narcotics Section executed a search warrant at a location within the city. Minutes later, three officers were wounded and one civilian was dead. On this occasion what went wrong?

All of the current raid procedures were followed. The officers were clearly identified as police; the zone dispatcher was notified and gave zone clearance of any other patrol units.

As reported in the *Detroit Free Press* (1998), Chief Isaiah Mckinnon stated that the officers “followed the book” in raiding the suspected dope house. All the procedures used during the raid on the southwest side were correct.

This incident proves that if a person is willing to suffer the consequences, no matter how well the policy is followed injury or death may still be the end result.

However, could different tactics have prevented this incident from happening and if not prevent three officers from getting wounded.

The investigation of the incident detailed how the sequence of events occurred. A search warrant was obtained for the location. The location was described as a single story apartment unit connected to a business. The officers followed current raid procedures and approached the front door. Police Officer Stephen Sosa was assigned as the shotgun man and was the first to enter the location. Officer Martini Rossi was backing up Officer Sosa and Police Officer James Tolbert was the third through the door.

When the raid team reached the door a person from inside opened the door and the three officers entered. Officer Sosa as is the common practice within the Narcotics Section, continued into the location followed by Officer Martini. The officers continued into the dwelling to the right because the door would not open all the way back, thus concealing an area that had not been cleared of suspects, this would prove disastrous. As the team started moving forward to the right, the subject that opened the door was passed to Police Officer Michael Stefani who remained near the front door.

As Officer Stefani was engaged with the person who opened the door, another subject popped out from behind the door that wouldn't open all the way and fired shots at Officer Stefani wounding him. Almost simultaneously Officer Tolbert turns and engages in an exchange of gunfire with the subject, both he and the subject are wounded.

Although wounded, the gunman is able to exit the front door where he encounters Sergeant Arthur McNamara, who is approaching the front porch. The gunman again exchanges gunfire with Sergeant McNamara, Sergeant McNamara is wounded and other officers fatally wound the gunman.

What went wrong with the drug operations mentioned previously? Could there have been different outcomes with some of the operations? Interviews with some of the officers involved in some of these operations may be able to explain what went wrong and could the results have been different using other techniques or tactics.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In an effort to heighten positive community perception of the efforts of the Detroit Police Department, the Narcotics Enforcement Division instituted a policy that requires Enforcement Raid Crews to execute a minimum of two (2) raids a day. The increase in raids achieved inconsequential results.

The requirement of two (2) raids a day limits the amount of time required to adequately investigate a narcotics complaint or narcotics operation. This results in a high number of search warrants being executed with very minimal time to tactically plan. With the mandate of increased productivity there is little or no time to effectively train to achieve the level that most tactical teams require.

According to statistics of the *Narcotics Enforcement Division Analysis Report*, (2001), 16,208 raids were conducted during the period of January 1996 thru December 2001.

The number of firearms confiscated during the same period is alarming. The statistical data revealed that raid crews confiscated 9,910 firearms during the above listed period. Of all the weapons confiscated 85% were long guns and a large majority were assault type weapons.

Even with the large number of weapons confiscated on a daily bases by raid crews, the officers still tend to get complacent simply due to the number of raids conducted yearly. This complacency can cause any raid to turn into a deadly encounter.

The mind is the most important tactical tool available in any given situation. If you are not mentally prepared for a situation then it is apparent that it will not be handled in a tactical manner, which can lead to disastrous results. According to *Street Survival: Tactics for Armed Encounters* (1980), the mind is one side of a triangle for street survival. This street survival triangle is made up of Tactics, Shooting Skill, and Mental Conditioning.

Because of the lack of mental preparedness, which resulted in poor tactics, many of the officers assigned to raid crews are not prepared for the violent encounter, which they may ultimately face.

As described in *The Tactical Edge* (1994), there are five levels of awareness. This is the awareness spectrum.

- **CONDITION WHITE-** This is a state of unawareness, you are totally relaxed and unaware what is going on around you.
- **CONDITION YELLOW-** A person is relaxed but at the same time is alert.
- **CONDITION ORANGE-** An officer in Condition Orange is in a state of alarm. His training, education, common sense, tells him that something is not right. He doesn't know what the problem is but he is constantly evaluating the situation and is planning a course of action.
- **CONDITION RED-** In Condition Red danger is obvious. Threat recognition is mandatory. You see the threat and then you act upon it using verbal commands,

physical force, or deadly force. You are totally committed to neutralizing the threat in a controlled manner.

- **CONDITION BLACK-** An officer in condition Black has completely lost control of the situation. He is in a state of panic, or mental paralysis.

What is the mental condition of many of the officers assigned to raid crews, when they execute warrants daily without incident. Do they let down they're guard because of repetitive routine.

As stated in *Police Defensive Handgun Use and Encounter Tactics* (1988), encounters happen in a three-part phase. The first is before an encounter begins, will you be ready for any possible threat(s) and be prepared to handle them if they arise or would you be completely off guard and unaware that something is about to happen? When the encounter begins and during its sometimes very brief happening will you be caught unprepared or will you be ready to deal with the threat. And third, after the threat has ended will you maintain your tactics or believe that it is over and let your guard down.

Usually, a lethal encounter instantly begins, is quickly over and you will be able to use only that which is available. Your mind, your physical abilities, and the equipment you have on your person are all that you will have.

As stated in *The Tactical Edge* (1994), the mind is the most dangerous weapon you carry on patrol. The extent to which it is prepared for high-risk, high-stress encounter determines for whom it is dangerous. Properly mentally prepared an officer can be overwhelming superior to any adversary encountered. However, if mentally unprepared, it can prove devastating to the officer or to his or her fellow officers.

An interview was conducted with Police Officer James Tolbert who was a member of the raid team that encountered an armed suspect that was willing to shot it out. Officer Tolbert related the sequence of events that led up to and eventually took place on that fateful day.

Members of the Narcotics Conspiracy I Squad conducted this raid. The squad consisted of Police Officer J. Tolbert, Officers S. Sosa, J. Rossi, M. Stefani, J. Lightfoot, and Sergeant A. McNamara. A typical narcotics raid crew consists of a "Shotgun Officer" followed by the "Shotgun Backup Officer," to enter the premises first and clear the premises of any persons. This is what happened in this case, the shotgun man and backup along with Officer Tolbert, entered and had to go right because the door wouldn't open completely to the left. They first encountered one person who had actually opened the front door. They left him near the front door with Officer Stefani to cover. But because of the design of the location, as the entry team went in one direction the gunman came around from a hiding position that was left of the front door. The gunman opened fire on Officer Stefani, who was caught by surprise, and who fell out of the door. Officer Tolbert rushed to the front and exchanged gunfire with the gunman at which time both he and the gunman was hit. The gunman stumble outside where he fired other shots which wounded Sergeant McNamara as he was approaching the front of the location. Sergeant McNamar returned fire along with Officer Lightfoot fatally wounding the gunman. This whole encounter lasted less than one minute with some events happening simultaneously.

The first question I asked of Officer Tolbert was if he felt that the training he received from the Narcotics Division was adequate?

I didn't receive any tactical training when I was assigned to the Narcotics Division. I attended an undercover training class that didn't really touch on raid tactics. Most of my personal tactical training came from my military experience. The narcotics tactical training I achieved from trial and error over the years of raiding.

Prior to the day of the shooting, how many raids had you been on with this crew, and did you and your crew train or practice together?

No we never trained or practiced together. I had been on approximately 200 or more raids with this crew. The general rule on the crew was that who ever obtained the search warrant for a particular location, that officer would be assigned as the "shotgun man" as was the case in this incident.

On this day what went wrong and what could have been done to change the outcome of events?

No matter how much one train there are times when you run into a person that has a certain mentality. The mental state of the perpetrator was that he was not going to jail and he would shoot it out with the police. The layout of the location was to his advantage. It allowed for his concealment near the front door and for the entry team to go in beyond his location without him being detected. When the shooting started, the training I had received in the military and outside of narcotics helped me survive the encounter. I relied on my impulse and hip shooting techniques.

Aside from the lack of training what other factor played a part in the perpetrator being able to wound so many officers before being killed?

The weapons assigned to raid crews are inadequate based on the mission and the firepower available to the dealers. The raid crews should have at least one shoulder weapon that can deliver a burst of rounds with pinpoint accuracy such as the H&K MP-5 9mm full auto submachine gun, one semi-auto shotgun and of course each member arm with the department issued handgun. Although wounded the perpetrator was able to continue to fire because the rounds fire at him were hitting him were spread out, thus not immediately causing a fatal wound. There was no one covering Officer Stefani or the area left of the door that had not been cleared. This was not tactically sound in my opinion, however, the layout of the location was in favor of the gunman.

An interview was conducted with Lieutenant Lewis Bray who is currently assigned to the Narcotic Enforcement Division. Lieutenant Bray has been assigned to the division for over a year and was one of the original members of the Detroit Police Departments' Special Response Team.

According to *Detroit Police Special Order 91-48*: The Special Response Team (S.R.T.) of the Tactical Services Section was established for the purpose of assisting department personnel during circumstances which involved life threatening situations. The S.R.T. has highly trained personnel skilled in the use of special weapons, equipment and techniques designed to reduce the risk of injury to department personnel and innocent citizens in dangerous situations. One of the listed responsibilities of the S.R.T. is to "Provide a trained force capable of conducting narcotic or other high risk raids, where forcible entries are required."

When asked about his experience with tactical situation and how he relates it to the mission of the Narcotics Enforcement Division, Lieutenant Bray had the following comment:

Since I came to the Narcotics Enforcement Division I have had the opportunity to participate in and as well as observe enforcement crews execute search warrants. My first impression was that given the circumstances and the level of training the officers have they do the best that they can. However, I immediately realized the dangerous situations that the raid crews are placed in on a daily bases without proper training and equipment to accomplish the mission.

Lieutenant Bray you received a lot of training as a member of S.R.T., would more training help the members of the Narcotics Enforcement Division and if so how?

Members of the S.R.T. received a minimum of 480 hours of tactical training to even be certified. The members had to be extremely proficient with the firearms that were issued; they were highly trained in tactics that provided the safest means to accomplish a specific mission.

Lieutenant Bray back in October of 1988, on Springle Street in the City of Detroit, you were involved in the first S.R.T. "call out" that ended in disaster for not only the team but also the whole police department. What went wrong considering the equipment and the training that the team had available?

First you have to understand the mentality of the command officers of the Detroit Police Department. They were very cautious not to offend the general public and have the appearance of the use of excessive force. Second S.R.T. was a new concept in the city and command officers who had no formal tactical training

were making the tactical decisions. Just like at narcotics the raid commander is responsible for the planning and tactical execution of a raid. There are no command officers standing around telling the raid commander how to conduct his or her raid.

On the day of the Springle incident when S.R.T. was called to the scene, a mentally unstable man had already shot one officer. We knew the man was armed with a high-powered rifle. From that point on the trained S.R.T. command officers should have had full command of the situation. However, the higher command officers of the department took over command, which in my opinion contributed to the death of team member Frank Walls.

The following is the sequence of events that occurred after the S.R.T. was called to respond to the barricaded gunman situation in which one officer had already been killed. The article in part as report in the *Detroit Free Press (1988)*, which was titled "Script Wasn't Followed In Standoff \ Police, Gunman Died After Springle Miscues," shows the tactical errors made by command officers at the scene of the Springle Street incident:

After deciding to assault the apartment, Bannon, Younger and other command officers discussed which unit -- SRT or TSS -- should handle the situation.

Younger called for SRT and Bannon did not object.

A plan was formulated, but it was not consistent with SRT training that stressed moving slowly, methodically, precisely. Haste makes death, the unit had been taught.

There was little information about the inside layout of Knowles' apartment. Hess of TSS drew a basic sketch of what he had managed to see.

About 1:45 p.m., the Alpha entry team -- including Frank Walls and headed by Sgt. Ted Montgomery -- and other SRT officers gathered at the rear of the building for a final briefing.

There was a weapons check: German-made MP5 9mm carbines and P7 9mm semiautomatic handguns, backup revolvers, commando knives, flak vests, tear-gas grenades, stun (flash-bang) grenades and "body bunker" bulletproof body shields.

Worried about possible injury to civilians or other officers, Bannon and Younger decided not to have the SRT members use their MP5s, which can be fired single shot or as a machine gun.

For Alpha members, this was a hitch. Power had been cut to the building. The apartment was dark, and the MP5s have flashlights attached.

The SRT members also were told to use their secondary weapons, the handguns, which bothered some of them because they recently had been returned after repairs at the factory and had not been field-tested.

Walls was not carrying a P7 handgun. When they were handed out, he refused one because it had not been field-tested. He had opted for his personal 9mm handgun.

The black-clad SRT members began moving into position. Alpha Team crept silently down the hallway toward Knowles' apartment, followed by Younger and Lt. Spurgeon Dotson, SRT's commanding officer.

Suddenly, a voice crackled on a police radio being carried by one of the command officers at the end of the hallway. Knowles immediately fired a shot through the wall at the sound. He now knew somebody was outside his door.

At 2:10 p.m., the assault began.

The tank rolled up to the front window and an officer in the vehicle-fired tear gas into the living room. Knowles, who was seen briefly in the northwest corner of the apartment by a sniper, fired a shot out the front window at the tank. The tear gas had been in the apartment less than five minutes when Younger gave the SRT team the order to break down the door.

From outside, another SRT member broke the window to Knowles' kitchen and pitched in a gas grenade and a stun grenade.

Because no battering ram was available, Walls braced the body shield in front of himself and slammed into the door. He backed up and slammed into it again and then repeated the maneuver. The door caved in the third time and a second stun grenade was lobbed in.

"Go! Go! Go," barked a command officer.

Walls moved quickly into the apartment, but he could see little. He was wearing a gas mask and looking through a small plexiglass window in his shield into a darkened apartment that was filling with tear gas.

Walls turned left to face the northwest corner of the living room. As he did so, Knowles, who had run 13 feet to the bathroom and dropped into the rubble on the floor, fired a shot from his lever-action .35-caliber rifle.

The high-powered slug ripped into Walls' right side, in between the heavy protective plates of his vest, piercing bullet-resistant material that holds the vest together.

"I'm hit! I'm hit!" Walls yelled, spinning and firing two shots from his handgun in the direction of Knowles. Then he dropped his shield and slumped onto a mattress in the living room.

Officer Emery Esse, who moved in directly behind Walls, spun and fired a barrage of shots into the darkness at his right. As he ducked behind a wall, Knowles fired another shot before Esse, again firing instinctively, unleashed more shots toward Knowles.

"We need more firepower! Light! Light! We need light!" Esse yelled.

Montgomery, moving in behind Esse, fired two shots toward Knowles and then bathed the living room with his flashlight as other officers moved in to cover Knowles, who lay dying on the floor.

Walls quickly was carried outside and officers tore off his vest in a futile attempt to find the fatal wound and stop the bleeding. He was loaded into an EMS truck and rushed to St. John Hospital, where he died at 2:34 p.m.

As Walls was rushed out of the building, Younger stood outside, where he was told that Knowles was dead. Hearing that, he flashed a sign of success.

Thumbs up.

Lieutenant Bray advised me that the above situation may have had a different outcome if tactics and procedures that the team had trained in had been followed. Also

the team had trained with certain weapons for certain missions and the mission on springle called for shoulder weapons with mounted lights.

When asked if the weapons used while executing raids by member of the Narcotics Enforcement Division were sufficient, Lieutenant Bray responded:

After observing the types and caliber of weapons that are being confiscated by raid crews, I realized that we are out gunned. Each raid crew should have at minimum one automatic shotgun and at least one MP-5 type weapon that can provide a burst of pinpoint penetrating rounds on a target within a dwelling. Thus eliminating a threat before they can open fire with one of the many high-powered weapons available in drug houses. Seeing raid crews armed with these types of weapons can help deter a potential assault by perpetrators within the dwellings.

During the mid nineties the Narcotics Division invited S.R.T. to accompany raid crews on their raids. The program was established to provide some training, assistance and additional firepower during raids. The members of S.R.T. at the beginning enjoyed the opportunity to practice their tactical skills in real life situations. However, the members of the Narcotics Enforcement Division felt threaten by the presence of S.R.T. The narcotics officers felt that the officers of S.R.T. would replace them during raids thus eliminating their involvement in the investigation and subsequent court proceedings. This attitude by narcotics officers developed tension between the two units, thus eventually derailing the program.

Many of the officers assigned to the raid crews saw the S.R.T. tactics as slow and methodical, which would allow the perpetrator time to either destroy evidence or attempt escape. The confiscation of drug evidence is one of the primary goals of a raid crew.

The mission of a narcotics raid crew is almost in direct contradiction with a tactical entry by a Special Response Team or SWAT. The narcotics crew's mission is to as quickly as possible make entry into a location, apprehend suspects and confiscated contraband before it can be destroyed. Although most drug operations have weapons on the premises, and at times the dealers are willing to use them, the premises can't be entered with this single thought. Many times there are innocent children and other persons on the premises. This must be taken into consideration when entry is made into a location. In contrast usually when the Special Response Team is called to a scene it is because of a known hostile threat, therefore, a dynamic entry by this unit is based on the assumption that hostile fire will be encountered.

As pointed out in *Supervision of Police Personnel* (1994), a potentially dangerous person may take refuge in a building or other structure to escape arrest or detention. A direct assault upon him usually should be avoided especially when he can be neutralized and apprehended by the use of special weapons without creating unnecessary danger to police personnel or other innocent persons in the area. This is not an option in narcotics enforcement.

After spending some quality training time with the Special Response Team, the Narcotics Street Enforcement Unit has developed a different raid tactic. This tactic incorporates the speed and focus of the narcotics mission with the tactics and safety of a dynamic entry. One of the changes incorporated by the Street Enforcement Unit when executing a search warrant, is the use of a point man covered by two officers armed with shoulder weapons. The entry team moves slower and in most circumstances clears all areas before moving forward.

These are the drug operations that have occurred over the years and resulted with injury and even death to officers involved as well as suspects. Many of the situations showed that with proper tactical training and operational planning some of these injuries and possibly the deaths could have been avoided.

I have discussed the lack of training and tactics as it applied to drug raids, however, there is another aspect of narcotics investigations that require proper planning and tactics, and that is the Undercover Buy. As described previously in the Beasley situation, attempting an undercover buy can be just as deadly as raiding a fortified dwelling.

Undercover officers are posing as either drug dealers or users. Because they usually arrive at the scene of a deal with either drugs or money, they have become vulnerable targets of “ripoffs” or robberies. These events can end in injuries or even death to the undercover officer.

Prior to the Beasley operation did the crew establish a plan? Was the safety of the officer paramount or was the completion of the “deal” the most important aspect. According to *Stasch (1992)* money management is a very important tactic in undercover work. The buy money should always be separate from the undercover officer during the initial contact between the officer and the suspect

In the Beasley case, Officer Beasley approached the suspects with the bag of money presenting the perfect opportunity for the “ripoff” by the suspected dealers. Officer Beasley was shot and the moneybag taken before the backup officers could react.

An interview was conducted with Sergeant Ramon Valdez who is currently assigned as the Narcotics Enforcement Divisions’ training sergeant. Sergeant Valdez has

been assigned to the Narcotics Division for over eight years as both a police officer and as a raid team sergeant.

When asked about the training the officers receive upon transferring into the division, Sergeant Valdez related the following:

Given the time to train, I generally concentrate the training on drug identification, report writing, some undercover techniques, search warrant and court preparation.

Raid procedures are covered briefly due to the lack of training time.

## **PROCEDURES**

The Detroit Police Department has a great history as one of the countries oldest and largest law enforcement agencies. Throughout history the Detroit Police Department led the way with innovative and technological advances in law enforcement. The Detroit Police Department was one of the countries first departments to have radio communications with patrol units in vehicles and on foot.

Over the years the Detroit Police Department began to lose ground when it came to advanced training and technology. Because of this failure to advance, some officers have paid the ultimate price. The history of the unit, which I am assigned, provided the resource for this project.

I personally responded to some of the scenes that narcotics officers had been shot while executing search warrants. The tactics of the raid crews were consistent with the Narcotics Division procedures and department policies. However, they weren't consistent with modern tactics.

Interviews were conducted with officers who had been involved in shooting situations during raids.

An interview with Police Officer James Tolbert was conducted right after the incident. As a personal friend and as a raid commander it was important to obtain as much fresh information regarding the incident. This information was vital to not only my crew, but also other crews within the division so that if there were mistakes, they would not be repeated. Research of current tactical manuals revealed the lack of training the narcotics officers received that would allow them to engage a dangerous situation competently.

The interview of Lieutenant Lewis Bray took place shortly after he was assigned to the Narcotics Division. Lieutenant Bray was my police academy classmate and I knew that I could get an honest opinion based on his tactical experience at S.R.T. regarding the narcotics raid tactics or lack of.

The Narcotics Enforcement Division Standard Operating Procedure Manual, outlines the operating procedures of the division. The manual covers mission of the Narcotics Division and how to accomplish it. The manual covers raid procedures but not tactics. However, it clearly states what weapons the raiding officers are limited to have on a raid.

Officers are required to attend a two-week undercover training class when they transfer into the Narcotics Enforcement Division. Research as revealed that although raid procedures are taught in the course there is no tactical training incorporated in the raid procedure faze.

## **RESULTS**

The results of this research paper have revealed that the Narcotics Enforcement Division of the Detroit Police Department is doing everything in its power to accomplish

the mission put before it by the city administration. But at what cost is this mission being pursued?

Police officers readily volunteer to join the ranks of the Narcotics Division, with little worry for their own safety. The officers receive 80 hours of training at the undercover officer class. This training consists of basic narcotics investigation, drug identification, report writing, court preparation and raid procedures.

The raid procedure training only covers the department and division policy as it pertains to the execution of search warrants. The training briefly touches on the role of each member of the raid team. However, there is no specific training or even practical exercises dealing with tactical situations.

At some point because of manpower shortages a newly assigned member of a raid crew may be called upon to perform the duties of ram or halligan man which is responsible for breaching the door to a raid location. Many times the officers have never handle the ram or halligan. As the incidents documented previously revealed that officers have been shot while attempting to breach the door. This is not the place for on the job training.

## **DISCUSSION**

Fighting the war on drugs is a dangerous business. Each year the number of drug related deaths to officers' increases, with the largest portion of these involving drug raids. One of the most dangerous aspects of law enforcement is the execution of a search warrant on a fortified drug house where the occupants are usually heavily armed with weapons superior to the police. Subsequently, a large number of police agencies are opting to use highly trained and heavily armed SWAT type teams for these raids.

The Detroit Police Department is one of the few police departments in the country that has a full time Narcotics Enforcement Division that conducts its own raids. This being the case these raid teams should receive the highest tactical training and be armed with the best weapons available.

In the private sector the lack of proper training for employees may cost company increased revenue. However, in the business of drug enforcement the lack of proper training can cost an officer his or her life.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The evidence is clear with the number and type of weapons confiscated on a daily bases by narcotics raid crews that the potential for deadly encounters is great. The history shows that serious injuries and even death have occurred while executing search warrants and undercover operations.

The administration must establish a tactical training plan for officers assigned to the Narcotics Enforcement Division. The desire to have high number of raids should not diminish the need for a comprehensive tactical training program. If the administration is unwilling to slow the process then I recommend the following:

Assign one to two members of the S.R.T. to each raid crew. These officers can accompany the raid crews on raids and conduct evaluations of the tactical aspects of each raid. This evaluation can then be shared with the raid team after the event thus, at least begin to make the officers aware of the possible tactical errors and possibly give advice as to an alternative approach that would be safer for the raid team.

Another recommendation would be to have one raid team at a time assign the primary entry officers to the same three-day tactical training course sponsored by S.R.T.

that the Narcotics Street Enforcement Unit attended. After the Street Enforcement Unit attended this course they were able to modify the tactics learned from the S.R.T. and apply them to fit the drug enforcement raid situation.

The other option is to not fill the need for tactical training and continue to flirt with potential injury or death to another member of the Narcotics Enforcement Division.

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