

12th Annual U.S.N.S.T.A. Tactical Training Seminar

December 5-8, 2011
Harrah's Convention Center
Tunica, MS

A WEEK IN REVIEW

Posted 16 December 2011 by Nathan Nickels, Staff Writer

ARRIVAL

Trainers, operators, and commanders from the fields of Law Enforcement, Corrections, Security, and Military joined together once again for the Annual U.S.N.S.T.A. Tactical Training Seminar in Tunica, MS on December 5-8, 2011. Attendees spent four days developing instructor and operator skill sets in a variety of training topics spearheaded by Controlled F.O.R.C.E. Training Management Systems.

[United States National Standards of Training Association](#) (U.S.N.S.T.A.) is dedicated to working to solve critical issues faced by our nation's first responders. This year's training seminar, the association's 12th annual event, was designed to improve the first responder's ability to remain confident and operational during critical situations with a determined offender(s). Training covered content including controlling and arresting non-compliant subjects, tactics to survive a surprise attack, and responding to a spontaneously occurring critical incident with an active shooter threat.

Attendees poured in on Sunday evening for early check-in. In addition to a complimentary U.S.N.S.T.A. t-shirt and conference packet, attendees received a gift bag with items donated by US Peacekeepers, [Seal1](#), [Controlled F.O.R.C.E.](#), [Market America](#), and [Kaeser & Blair](#). Anyone not checking-in on Sunday did so on Monday morning. Throughout the week, all attendees were required to sign-in in the morning and after lunch.

DAY ONE

The conference kicked off at 9:00 sharp on Monday morning. U.S.N.S.T.A. Commissioner [Kevin Rittenhouse](#) welcomed the attendees, over 100 first responders from across the nation, and introduced Controlled F.O.R.C.E. founders and lead instructors [Tony Grano](#), Don Roberts, and [Diana Grano](#).

Kevin Rittenhouse also talked about the goal of the U.S.N.S.T.A., which is to develop training that can be delivered to students in short periods of time with maximum rates of retention in order to save lives. To emphasize the importance of this goal, Tony Grano asked attendees how many hours a year their department allows for defensive tactics training. Answers varied from 32

hours a year, to 4 hours every two months, to as little as 4 hours a year. Many attendees even said that their department had not provided any training since they graduated from the academy.

By 9:30 all attendees were up and moving with Body Positioning Drills. Body Positioning Drills provided a framework for this large group of people with various training backgrounds, levels of experience, and familiarity with the Controlled F.O.R.C.E. system to begin to work together by developing a set of common movements and terminologies that would be reiterated and expanded upon throughout the seminar. Since it was critical to establish this framework for such a diverse group of trainees, the instructors spent the entire morning working students through these drills.

After lunch, Controlled F.O.R.C.E. National Instructor [Toby Flaget](#) took the reins and dove into the certification categories of Level 1: Mechanical Advantage Subject Control. Level 1 is designed to teach first responders how to engage and control non-compliant subjects utilizing body positioning, movement, momentum, and joint manipulation. Before moving on, though, Toby Flaget introduced the Master Instructor team that would be assisting with the training.

In order to maintain the integrity and quality of the Controlled F.O.R.C.E. system, the Executive Staff identifies the most highly qualified candidates for Master Instructor Certification. Some of the requirements for qualification include length of time as a Controlled F.O.R.C.E. instructor, superior competency in teaching the system, and a demonstration of superior performance in accordance to the core values and expectations of the Controlled F.O.R.C.E. Executive Staff. A dozen Master Instructors were on hand to not only assist with training, but to demonstrate how the Controlled F.O.R.C.E. system establishes a national standard of training by providing a consistent level of instruction.

The objective of day one training for Toby Flaget and the Master Instructors to achieve was to complete the certification categories of Level 1 in approximately one hour each. The primary purpose of this plan was to show departmental instructor candidates how they can give their students a base level of proficiency in a very short period of time. This plan also made sure that attendees participating in the Level 1 End User Certification Fast Track would be proficient after one day.

Level 1 training is based on Mechanical Advantage Control Holds™ (M.A.C.H.), which consists of a series of five holds that teach the student how to use a subject's resistance against himself without the introduction of pain. Once students had a handle on the five M.A.C.H. holds, the instructors moved to M.A.C.H. Takedowns and Handcuff Positioning. This portion of training showed students how to breakdown a subject to a knee from each of the five M.A.C.H. holds, and from there perform a takedown to a prone handcuff position.

Once students had a grasp of M.A.C.H. Takedowns and Handcuff Positioning, the instructors moved to M.A.C.H. Baton Subject Control. This portion of training showed students how to perform the M.A.C.H. Holds and Takedowns and Handcuff Positioning with a baton. The purpose of using the baton as a subject control tool is to increase leverage, and provide the officer with options for maintaining control of the drawn baton once the subject shows compliance.

From M.A.C.H. Baton Subject Control, the instructors moved right into M.A.C.H. Team Arrest Tactics. This portion of the training showed the student how to perform M.A.C.H. techniques with one or more officers. Students learned how to use verbal and non-verbal communication to work together as a team to safely and effectively control and arrest a non-compliant suspect.

Day one training concluded with In-holster Weapon Retention techniques. This portion of the training gave students simple techniques to maintain control of their sidearm when a subject attempts to pull it from their holster. Once students covered all the material, the instructors wrapped for the day with a parting message from Toby Flaget: “you should be starting to see how everything we do leads to something else, and if you are feeling a little uncertain of the techniques, you will see them come together more tomorrow.”

DAY TWO

Day two kicked off with Ryan Chin giving a brief presentation on [IRTactical Training Systems](#). IRTactical offers state-of-the-art projectile-less training weapons that allow for safe and effective tactical training that can be conducted literally anywhere without the limitations of projectile-based simulations such as paintball, simunitions, and airsoft.

After this short but energizing presentation, the instructors ran the students through a 30-minute full review of day one training with Level 1 Combined Drills. From there, the instructors moved into Level 2: Survival Force Reactionary Defense. Level 2 is designed to teach first responders how to survive a surprise attack and then transition to control tactics or escalate force as needed.

The objective of day two training for Toby Flaget and the Master Instructors to achieve was to complete the certification categories of Level 2 in approximately one hour each. While the main group of students worked through Level 2, those attendees participating in the Level 1 Instructor Certification Fast Track were taken to a separate room to complete Level 1 instructor development.

Level 2 training started with Lead Hand Protection / Disruption Drills. These drills are designed to help the student identify positioning and movements to minimize damage from a surprise attack, and build eye/hand coordination to be able to disrupt an attack and gain a position of advantage. Once the students had a handle on these drills, the instructors incorporated the baton.

Baton Protection / Disruption Drills re-emphasized the concept that the baton (or any object that can be used by you or against you as an impact weapon) should be thought of as an extension of your hand. Following this concept, the instructors showed the students how the empty hand techniques work the same with the baton - the baton just provides added leverage for better control.

Following lunch, the instructors ran the students through 20-minutes of Level 1 Combined Drills and then moved right into Knife Awareness and Defense. The purpose of this portion of the training was simple: to minimize damage from a surprise knife or shank attack, create distance, and escalate force as needed.

Once students had a handle on Knife Awareness and Defense, they moved on to Ground Defense and Escapes. This portion took an hour and a half because it introduced techniques that were slightly more involved due to the dangers of being on the ground. For this very fact, the instructors showed students how to use a few simple, basic techniques to get out of a bad situation and get back to their feet as quickly as possible.

Moving on, the instructors addressed one of the most alarming situations an officer could be in, that of someone grabbing your drawn sidearm. For Out-of-holster Weapon Retention and Weapon Disarms, instructors used common denominators that had been incorporated throughout the training (such as “elbows up,” “drop center,” “angles,” and “keep moving”) to teach students how to capitalize on their own natural reactions to a weapon grab to maintain control of the weapon and gain a position of advantage through escalation of force or disengagement.

To help underline the need to be mentally prepared for the possibility of having someone grab your weapon, Tony Grano, Don Roberts, and some of the Master Instructors discussed several real incidents where officers used these weapon retention techniques to stay alive. These accounts demonstrated the intensity of that kind of situation and the potentially devastating effects of the techniques.

At this point, David Anderson gave a brief presentation on [Secure Innovations](#). Secure Innovations offers mobile weapons storage systems for a variety of weapons and vehicles. This presentation was followed up by Darlene Manczak, who presented on [Market America](#). Market America offers a range of health and nutritional products to help first responders stay healthy and alert.

With the full conference attendance having completed Level 1 and Level 2 training, the students split into two groups: Security and Law Enforcement / Military. The reason for separating these two groups came down to job function. If you do not carry a weapon you went in the Security group. If you do carry a weapon and would be reasonably expected to respond to an active shooter threat you went in the Law Enforcement group.

The Security group broke off to discuss use of force issues in the security operating environment and begin working on instructor development. The Law Enforcement group started working tactical movement, room scans, and dynamic entry. These tactics were part of the F.O.R.C.E. Critical Incident / Active Shooter Response training. Students worked the drills individually then building up to 6-man teams. The purpose of this training was to teach front line officers how to work and move as a team toward an active threat.

While the Law Enforcement group was working on team movement, officers rotated through the first round of the Tactical Competition. The objective of this round of the Tactical Competition was to move through a hallway as a lone operator and take out 10 targets using IRTactical equipment, including the irM4 and irVest as targets. Competitors were judged on time and number of targets hit.

All official day two training wrapped at 4:30. Everyone in the Level 1 Instructor Certification Fast Track submitted their written tests, and all Law Enforcement group participants were invited to stay for a taster of Level 3: Combative Counter Measures. Don Roberts led a group of about 30 dedicated trainers in M.A.C.H. 6-10 Subject Control training. Don showed the students how all

the material they covered in the first two days provided them with a platform to springboard into more advanced techniques for dealing with more hard core scenarios.

DAY THREE

All attendees were back together on Wednesday morning working on instructor development of Level 1 material. To best facilitate instructor development, attendees broke into four groups, with each group being led by two to three Master Instructors. Whereas the first two days of training rapidly pushed the students through all the content, the instructor development portion of the training slowed the pace and gave the students a chance to understand how and why the techniques work. At this point, the students were not only building an understanding and getting a lot of repetitions, they were also taking turns teaching the techniques to their group.

After lunch, W. Peachey gave a highly motivational presentation on [National Association of Field Training Officers](#) (N.A.F.T.O.). N.A.F.T.O. is a professional organization of law enforcement, corrections, and communication trainers with the goal of fostering and promoting the field training concept. This presentation was followed up by Tony Grano and Don Roberts with a capabilities brief on Controlled F.O.R.C.E. training solutions, including topics such as Protective Service Detail (PSD) and response to a critical incident with an active shooter.

After these presentations, attendees split into their Security and Law Enforcement groups. The Security group spent the rest of the day working on Level 1 and Level 2 instructor development, with the addition of M.A.C.H. Handcuff Application techniques. The Law Enforcement group resumed work on team movement tactics, reviewing the drills from day two with variations.

The instructors made a point that these team movements are not an exact science and they are not intended to make front line officers work like a SWAT Team. The drills are designed to give officers some basic concepts of tactical movement to more effectively work toward an immediate threat in a critical situation.

While working on the team movement drills, officers rotated through the next rounds of the Tactical Competition. The objective was the same as the first round, only this time officers went through in 2-man, then 3-man, then 4-man teams. Again, competitors were judged on time and number of targets hit.

As the Tactical Competition wrapped up, the Law Enforcement group debriefed on the team movement drills and the Security group finished up Level 1 instructor development. Everyone in the Baton Subject Control and Handcuff Application Fast Track submitted their written tests, and all Law Enforcement group participants were invited to stay for another taster of Level 3: Combative Counter Measures. Don Roberts covered Hand Fighting and Ground Fighting drills designed to provide students with options to gain a position of advantage in a fight that goes beyond the initial attack.

DAY FOUR

Day four started with some quick announcements and then a presentation by Greg Kolhoff and David Saad on [Cops and Doughnuts](#). Cops and Doughnuts is a community-focused doughnut

shop and bakery in Clare, Michigan owned and operated by the nine members of the local Police Department.

Following this presentation, Kevin Rittenhouse conducted the one and only lecture course of the week on Response to an Explosive Situation. This course was designed to provide the front line officer with an awareness level understanding of identifiers for possible explosive devices and potential terrorist activity. Students finished out the morning by breaking into their four Master Instructor led groups for Level 2 instructor development.

Instructor development resumed after lunch. At 2:00 all attendees and instructors squeezed together for group pictures. After a handful of photos were snapped off, the students ran through a final review and then took their written tests for Level 1 and Level 2 Departmental Instructor certification or F.O.R.C.E. Critical Incident / Active Shooter Response certification.



As students were completing their tests, officers rotated through the final rounds of the Tactical Competition. The first competition started with an officer shooting from the [Perfect-10 Training Barricade](#) with the IRTactical system. From there, the officer ran to the next station to low crawl through a barricade corridor and hit targets through small openings. The final round was a force on force competition that concluded with an every-man-for-himself 4-corners shootout.

Tactical Competition winners were recognized later in the evening at the Recognition and Awards Social. The social ended the conference on a note of camaraderie and gave everyone a chance to put the experience in perspective and look forward to bringing what they had learned back to their respective agencies.

UNITY

When the U.S.N.S.T.A. was established 12 years ago, the spirit that grew out of that first assembly was unity in training. That spirit holds true today. Even though the attendees came from different fields and from different parts of the country, everyone who attended has a responsibility to respond to threats within their operational environment. By coming together these responders get a chance to share their experiences and sharpen each other's skills.

One of the biggest challenges that training coordinators and commanders face is budgetary limitations. The U.S.N.S.T.A. would not be able to provide this training opportunity without the involvement of all the exhibitors, presenters, and sponsors that contribute in many ways to help offset the costs for attendees.