



# NRA LAW ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY

## FOUR REASONS FOR USING ILLUMINATION TOOLS

BY R.K. MILLER

Whether for law enforcement purposes or for home defense, the use of lights in combination with handguns – and other weapons – is an associated skill that must be understood and practiced. When it comes to using a flashlight in concert with a firearm, there are a number of grip options, as well as having a weapon mounted light. Regardless of the grip—Harries, Ayob, etc.—understanding some of the basic concepts of using modern flashlights in low light—or no light—conditions is important. Within this, there are four basic reasons that we use illumination tools as we work in low light conditions.

The four reasons are:

1. To move through an environment
2. To search an environment
3. To identify and evaluate a threat
4. To shoot and assess

The first of these, moving through an environment, basically refers to our passage through a low light or darkened area, minimizing exposure as we move. This could be inside or outside – a room down the hall or an open field. Preferably we've at first selected the location we are illuminating from as giving us some form of cover or at least concealment. One technique employed to accomplish this is to walk with the flashlight constantly on. The problem with this approach is that by doing so, we telegraph our progress to adversaries that may be hiding in the darkness. Start thinking of your light not only as an asset but also as a "bullet magnet." An alternative to this is the "painting a path" technique that I first learned at the Sure Fire Institute. This is basically an illumination "leap frog" method: Preferably from behind ballistic cover or at



least some concealment, you point a flashlight at the ground in front of you, turn the light on and with a smooth, quick motion, play the beam forward for about 15-20 feet (depending upon the terrain), turning the light off at that point. As this happens, check the illuminated path for obstacles as well as selecting if available the next position of cover. While the possibility may be remote, you should be alert to the potential for adversaries to be present.

If anything appears suspicious or threatening, remain in place and deal with it. Otherwise, mentally transfer the picture you just "painted" with the flashlight to your memory banks. Then, use your mind's eye to walk that path to that next position without giving away your movement by activating the light. When possible, the location you move to should be selected for its tactical value, such as potential cover to

protect from hostile fire. The process is repeated as many times as necessary.

Still another flashlight technique used while moving is to forgo the use of illumination as much as possible, relying instead on ambient light. Depending upon each person's mindset, training, eyesight, and the terrain, this can be either a difficult method or tactically advantageous. The way to find out for sure is to practice this technique, as well as the others mentioned here, and see which works best for you.

The second reason we use flashlights is to search. By definition, this means that we are looking for something – or, more importantly, someone. In the latter case, it follows that we are most likely trying to locate an individual who is at least a potential adversary. Constant illumination from

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the flashlight under these conditions is a common practice. It has its uses depending upon the circumstances and personal preferences. Early in my law enforcement career, however, I assisted in a search of an open field for an armed robbery suspect. As I moved, I had my flashlight constantly on as I had been taught. After the search was completed with negative results, I realized that I was more of a target than the suspect probably ever would have been. (Remember that bullet magnet concept.) I decided to look for alternatives to this practice and learned of the “one second” rule at an IALEFI training conference. This concept preaches that as you search, the light is turned on for just a short time to illuminate and evaluate a questionable area. As you turn the light off, you immediately move to the left or right. This is done so that if an adversary returns fire in the direction of your light, you are then moving out of his line of fire, if not completely away from it already.

An integral part of this technique is to look and listen. Before the flashlight is even switched on, allowing your eyes to adjust to the darkness may help to orient you to the surroundings. It is a reality that under such low light conditions, the best you can hope for without some form of illumination is to see shape, shine, shadow and movement. But as a prelude to the employing a light with the “one second” rule, it allows for some information gathering prior to making your position known once your light is turned on. Similarly, taking a moment or two to listen in the darkness to the sounds of the environment to be searched, may provide audible clues—such as labored breathing or movement—that may guide you to the location of your adversary.

The third reason we use the flashlight as part of our weapons handling (rifle as well

as pistol) in low light is to identify and evaluate a threat. There is an old axiom that says “Shoot what you know, not what you think.” The truth of this wisdom is tremendously important in modern law enforcement. We all know that the use of deadly force can only take place when reasonable and justified by the actions of an individual who represents a lethal threat. Within a low light context, a flashlight can help us identify the person and evaluate his or her actions. One flashlight technique that may be worth consideration at this point is again the “one second” rule. Still another, however, is to use the flashlight in a constant on fashion to “dominate and disorient” the suspect. By this we mean that the light beam—especially from the high intensity bulbs that are on the market now—is directed into the suspect’s eyes. This not only allows for a more accurate identification/assessment but also makes it more difficult for the suspect to take action against you, including firing accurately if he or she makes that fateful decision.

Finally, we use flashlights in combination with firearms to shoot and assess. Clearly we are more accurate with our shots when we can see what we are firing at. Here, the “one second” rule can again be applied. With this set of circumstances, specifically a suspect that is a lethal threat, it is common sense to move rather than remain a stationary target. It is even more logical to turn off the flashlight and seek cover. Once you are in a new position, your light can be turned on to assess the suspect’s condition and position. Based on this assessment, it may be reasonable to fire again or start problem solving to get the criminal into custody

With an understanding of these basic concepts of flashlight and firearm working together, the challenge of winning a lethal force encounter in low light conditions can be handled more effectively.

# VISIT OUR PROGRAM MATERIALS WEB SITE

[MATERIALS.NRAHQ.ORG](http://MATERIALS.NRAHQ.ORG)



If you haven’t visited our program materials web site recently, take a look! We have new Blackhawk! Firearm Instructor Shirts in addition too; dummy rounds; blue guns; training certificates, “Rite in the Rain” products and much more.

You can access the Program Materials site through the links on our NRA Law Enforcement main page [www.nrale.org](http://www.nrale.org) or directly at <http://materials.nrahq.org>



R. K. Miller retired from the Huntington Beach (Calif.) Police Department as a lieutenant after 30 years of service in a variety of assignments, including FTO, trauma support, beach detail, detectives, special enforcement unit, SWAT and field supervisor. He has been on staff for over 20 years at the Golden West College (Huntington Beach, CA) Criminal Justice Training Center as an instructor and officer in charge of that institution’s SWAT Academy. He is an adjunct instructor with the NRA’s Law Enforcement Division and Combined Tactical Systems (CTS) as well as president of his own training company, National Training Concepts, Inc. ([www.ntc-swat.org](http://www.ntc-swat.org)). R. K. serves on the Board of Directors for the California Association of Tactical Officers (CATO). He holds a bachelor’s degree from Long Beach State University and is a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran. His law enforcement career has continued with him working as a reserve with the Orange Police Department, primarily with that agency’s SWAT team and Training Unit. He may be reached at [rkmiller@socal.rr.com](mailto:rkmiller@socal.rr.com).

## Retired and Off-Duty Officer Self-Defense Insurance

The NRA Endorsed Insurance Program is proud to recognize the sacrifices made by law enforcement officers. To show their appreciation, the program is offering a discounted self-defense coverage for retired law enforcement officers and off-duty police officers who are NRA members. The coverage starts at only \$50 annually and is designed to affordably protect retired and off-duty officers. With limits up to \$250,000, officers can receive coverage for criminal and civil defense costs, the cost of civil suit defense, and criminal defense reimbursement.

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## Lt. Colonel Dave Grossman Visits NRA

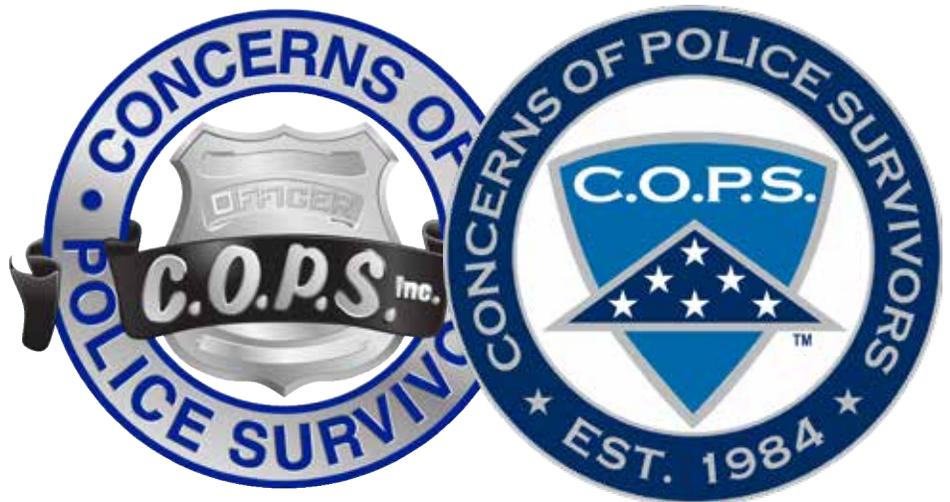


Recently, LTC Dave Grossman found himself in the Washington D.C. area with a few minutes to spare and dropped by to visit us at NRA Headquarters.

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman is an internationally recognized scholar, author, soldier, and speaker who is one of the world's foremost experts in the field of human aggression and the roots of violence and violent crime.

In the photo, Lt. Colonel Grossman is taking a close look at one of Teddy Roosevelt's pistols.

For more information on Lt. Col. Grossman, visit his website at [www.killology.com/sheep\\_dog.htm](http://www.killology.com/sheep_dog.htm)



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# Preparing for the “Race” of Your Life

BY MARK SCHRAER

I have raised and coached several distance runners, but for me, the most exciting race at a track meet is the 100-meter dash. Given a well-matched group of competitors, this race sometimes comes down to which runner can exit the starting blocks the fastest. Sprinters understand the importance of a flawless start and devote hours of training to these critical first seconds of a race.

A sprint has a lot in common with a sudden gunfight. Both can be won or lost in fractions of a second and the winner is often the participant with the most effective start. Unfortunately, there is little similarity between the time a sprinter spends perfecting his move out of the blocks and the time most officers spend developing the fast and accurate draw stroke.

The high-stakes nature of a gunfight demands that we, as law-enforcement officers and trainers, commit much more training time to this all-important skill.

Consider these statistics regarding law enforcement murders:

- Homicides are up almost 25% over the past two years.
- Ambush and surprise attacks with firearms *continue* to account for the majority of homicides – accounting for almost 75% of all murders by firearms in 2011.
- Of the over 500 officers murdered between 2000 and 2009 (excluding 9/11) fewer than 30% drew and fired their weapons before they died.

Officers and instructors need to take note of these sobering statistics and honestly assess the effectiveness of their training and their agency programs. I believe that if every officer and agency set actual draw stroke standards – say multiple hits into a threat in no more than 2 ½ seconds – these statistics would improve. But this standard will never exist through infrequent training, or the mindset that you can only prepare for a gunfight through live-fire training.

## Developing Your Formidable Start

Fifty years ago, *Gunsite* founder Jeff Copper and other shooting enthusiasts

developed the “Five-Count Presentation” described in the *Modern Technique of the Pistol*. Despite its long history and proven value, few officers spend the time necessary to develop a mastery of this critical skill.

This becomes obvious when officers are challenged with a shot timer or competitive shooting drill. Under the relatively minor stress of a time limit, many will struggle with their holsters or revert to any one of several time-consuming and inaccurate draw strokes. However, when they are given the opportunity to understand and practice their presentation, most show significant improvement in the same day.

Much has been written on the Five-Count Presentation. NRA Instructor classes, which most of you have attended, cover this important skill in the equally viable Four-Count variation. But understanding this skill is of no use in a gunfight. This draw stroke needs to be practiced and ultimately mastered, so that you or the officers you coach can rely on this skill in an unexpected attack.

## Perfect Practice

I want to emphasize that you should practice these steps slowly for at least the first several hundred repetitions. As with developing any physical skill, proper practice is your first priority. The more you practice this skill correctly, the less your draw will deteriorate under stress. However, the more you race through practice, the more likely that you will develop bad habits.

While it is important to master every step, if I had to choose the two most important, I would select Count One and Count Five. Here’s why:

*Count One* – In sudden attacks, officers are usually playing catch up to the actions of their assailant. Some officers are even shot before they realize they are in a fight for their lives. In the best of circumstances, officers have only a few seconds to fight back. Struggling with the holster or adjusting a grip will eat up this time.

*Count Five* – Given the speed of a sudden close-quarter gunfight, it is unrealistic to spend additional time acquiring a flash front sight reference. But shooting without any confirmation on where your pistol is pointing can be equally ineffective. Again, statistics make the point – officers commonly miss assailants far more often than they hit them, even at distances within 10 feet. A suspect who is willing to murder you is not going to stop his attack until you get hits into his body, preferably in the parts of the body that are fueling this attack. Misses take up time that you cannot afford to waste however, you can reduce and even eliminate these misses by developing the ability to reference your front sight as you are moving from Count Four to Count Five.

## Are you ready for the race of your life?

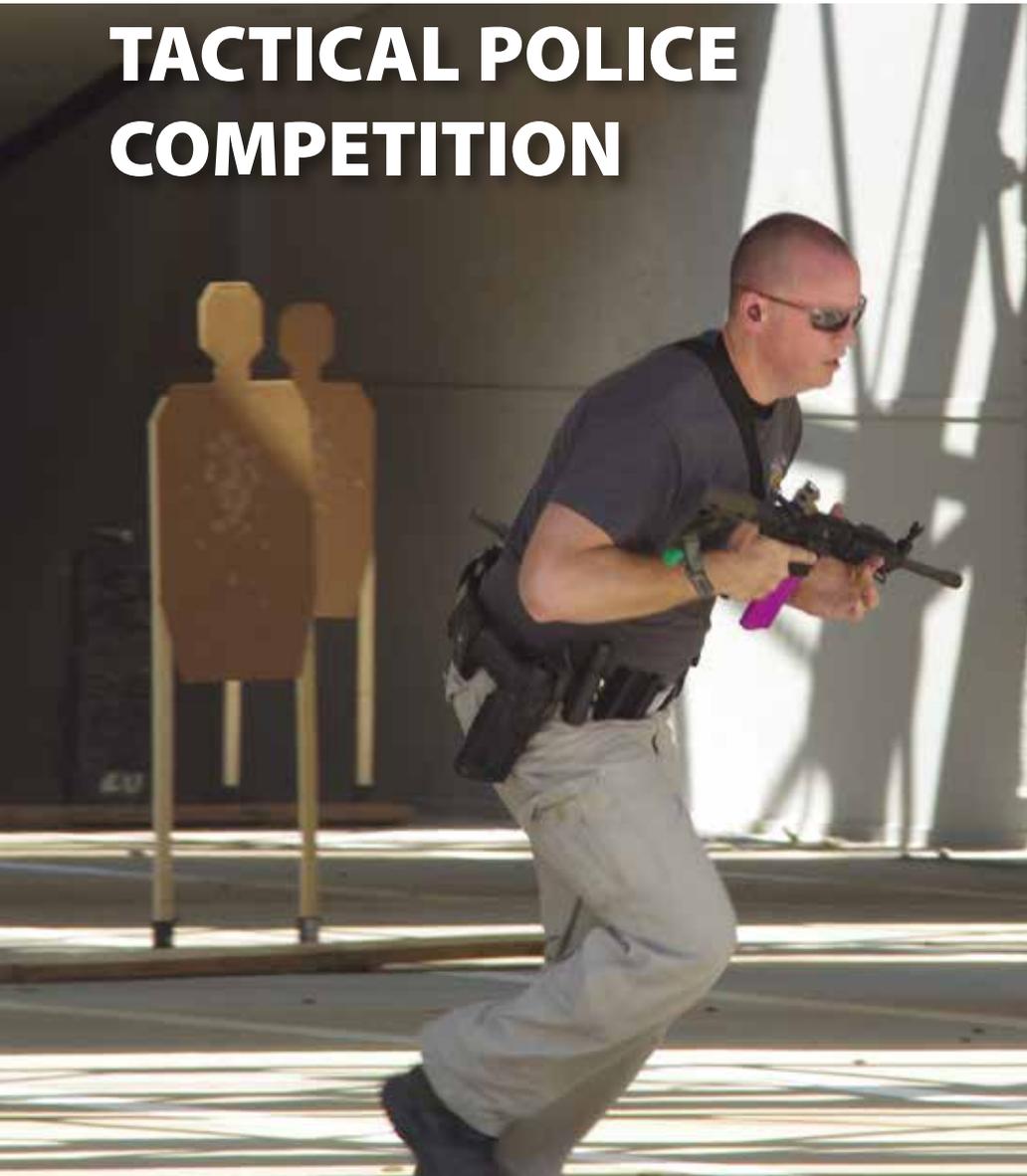
The statistics are clear - *most murdered officers continue to be killed in sudden and unexpected gunfights* – fights in which so many officers never had the opportunity even to draw their pistols, let alone shoot back. The officer who is dedicated to training, skills-building, and regular practice on their draw stroke can greatly improve his or her ability to prevail in the race for their life. But they must have the dedication of a sprinter and the determination, backed by training, to never accept second place.



Mark Schraer currently serves as a Staff Instructor for the National Rifle Association’s Law Enforcement Division. Mark served as a California police officer and sergeant for 25 years and has been a law enforcement firearms instructor for 17 years. Mark can be reached at [blkrock14@yahoo.com](mailto:blkrock14@yahoo.com).

This article originally appeared on [PoliceOne.com](http://PoliceOne.com), the online resource for law enforcement, and is reprinted by permission of the PoliceOne editorial team.

# TACTICAL POLICE COMPETITION



Recently, the NRA Law Enforcement Competitions Department conducted another NRA Tactical Police Competition hosted by the Fairfax County Virginia Police Department.

The NRA's Tactical Police Competition (TPC) program uses competitive-based training to place officers in live fire scenarios that mimic real-life situations.

At the Fairfax TPC event, one course of fire simulated the officer being shot in their primary arm and dropping their pistol during a traffic stop. To simulate loss of muscle strength in their arm, the officer had to wear a 15-pound weight belt on their primary arm. After recovering their pistol from where it was staged on the ground, the officer had to shoot threat targets as they made their way to cover.

There were five other courses of fire, including a Patrol Rifle and Duty Handgun scenario involving an officer down call at a towing lot, a Duty Handgun course based around a shooter in a school's administrative offices, and skill courses using Patrol Rifles and Duty Shotguns.

You can find the individual and team results for the Fairfax TPC event and information about the Tactical Police Program and upcoming events at <http://tpc.nra.org>

## PATROL DIVISION RESULTS

1 Molnar	U.S. State Department / DC	514.08
2 Naffziger	Lewisville Police Department / TX	522.83
3 Shaw	Lancaster County Sheriff's Office / SC	550.41
4 Swinford	Montgomery County Police Department / MD	554.78
5 Pearce	Richmond Police Department / VA	585.06

## TACTICAL DIVISION RESULTS

1 Groff	Manheim Police Department / PA	432.02
2 Wiesemann	Durham Police Department / NC	443.60
3 Duckworth	USPS OIG / VA	449.03
4 Windsor	Wake County Sheriff's Office / NC	464.42
5 Clevenger	York County Sheriff's Department / SC	488.79

For complete results visit <http://tpc.nra.org/documents/pdf/law/competitions/tpc/20130622-results.pdf>

*Top left:* After engaging the Threat Targets that can be seen behind him, an officer runs to the next cover position to engage additional Threat Targets during the "Rifle Challenge" course.

*Bottom right:* To keep his Duty Shotgun ready for the next found Threat Target, this officer TAC loads while moving to the next shooting position during the Duty Shotgun "Shoot What You Load" course.



# 2013 NRA Law Enforcement Firearm Instructor Development Schools

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New schools are added often. Check website frequently for current Training Schedule.

Range fee, if any, is payable to some hosting agencies; amount varies.

**NRA Tuition = \$595 per person**

## HANDGUN & SHOTGUN

Aug 26-30 Florence, SC  
 Aug 26-30 Maxwell, TX  
 Sep 9-13 Bethlehem, PA  
 Sep 9-13 Owatonna, MN  
 Sep 16-20 Garden Plain, KS  
 Sep 23-27 Cuyler, NY  
 Sep 23-27 Florence, AL  
 Sep 23-27 Canton, MI  
 Sep 30 - Oct 4 Las Vegas, NV (pub LE only)  
 Oct 7-11 Arnett, OK  
 Oct 7-11 Dahlonega, GA  
 Oct 14-18 Shreveport, LA  
 Oct 21-25 Defiance, MO (pub LE only)  
 Oct 28 - Nov 1 Colts Neck, NJ  
 Oct 28 - Nov 1 Greeley, CO  
 Nov 4-8 Mineral Point, PA  
 Nov 11-15 Pearl, MS  
 Nov 18-22 Horton, KS  
 Dec 2-6 Palm Bay, FL  
 Dec 9-13 Statesboro, GA

## HANDGUN

Aug 19-23 West Richland, WA  
 Sep 16-20 Salem, OR (pub LE only)  
 Sep 23-27 Deland, FL  
 Oct 14-18 Berea, KY  
 Oct 14-18 Lusby, MD  
 Oct 28 - Nov 1 Martinsburg, WV  
 Nov 4-8 Deland, FL

## PATROL RIFLE

Aug 12-16 Chino, CA  
 Aug 12-16 Wright City, MO  
 Aug 26-30 West Richland, WA  
 Sep 9-13 Dahlonega, GA  
 Sep 9-13 Mineral Point, PA  
 Sep 23-27 Maxwell, TX  
 Sep 30 - Oct 4 Manchester, NJ  
 Sep 30 - Oct 4 Summerville, SC  
 Oct 7-11 Deland, FL  
 Oct 7-11 Florence, AL  
 Oct 7-11 Garden Plain, KS  
 Oct 14-18 Owatonna, MN  
 Oct 21-25 Harrisburg, PA  
 Oct 21-25 Lusby, MD  
 Nov 4-8 Florence, SC  
 Nov 4-8 Pittsburgh, PA  
 Nov 18-22 Las Vegas, NV (pub LE only)  
 Dec 9-13 Salem, OR (pub LE only)

## PRECISION RIFLE

Sep 16-20 Bethlehem, PA  
 Sep 16-20 W. Palm Bch, FL (pub LE only)  
 Sep 30 - Oct 4 Henryetta, OK  
 Oct 7-11 Phoenix, AZ (pub LE only)  
 Oct 14-18 Las Vegas, NV (pub LE only)  
 Oct 21-25 Florence, AL  
 Oct 28 - Nov 1 Memphis, TN  
 Nov 18-22 Shreveport, LA  
 Dec 2-6 Garden Plain, KS  
 Dec 2-6 Pearl, MS

## SELECT-FIRE

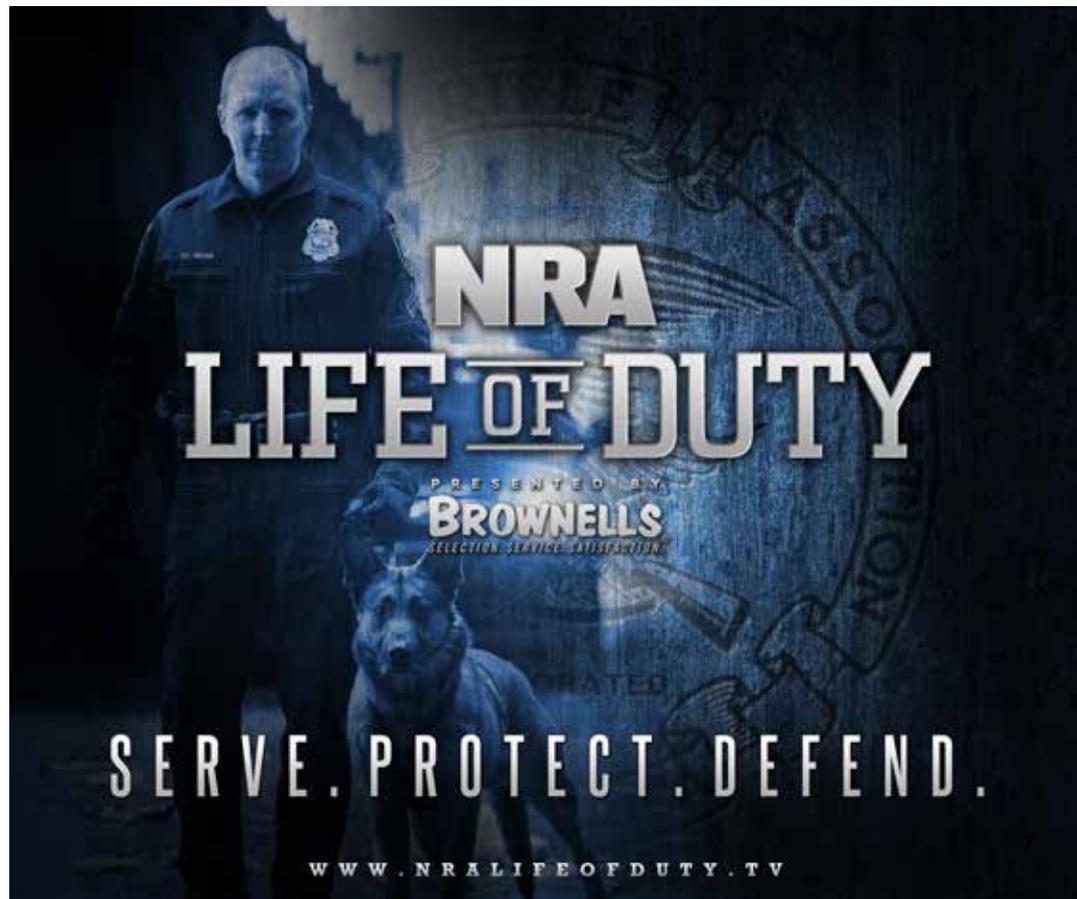
Aug 12-16 Maryville, TN  
 Aug 26-30 W. Palm Bch, FL (pub LE only)  
 Sep 30 - Oct 4 Littleton, CO (pub LE only)  
 Nov 4-8 Chickasha, OK  
 Dec 2-6 Las Vegas, NV (pub LE only)

## TACTICAL SHOOTING

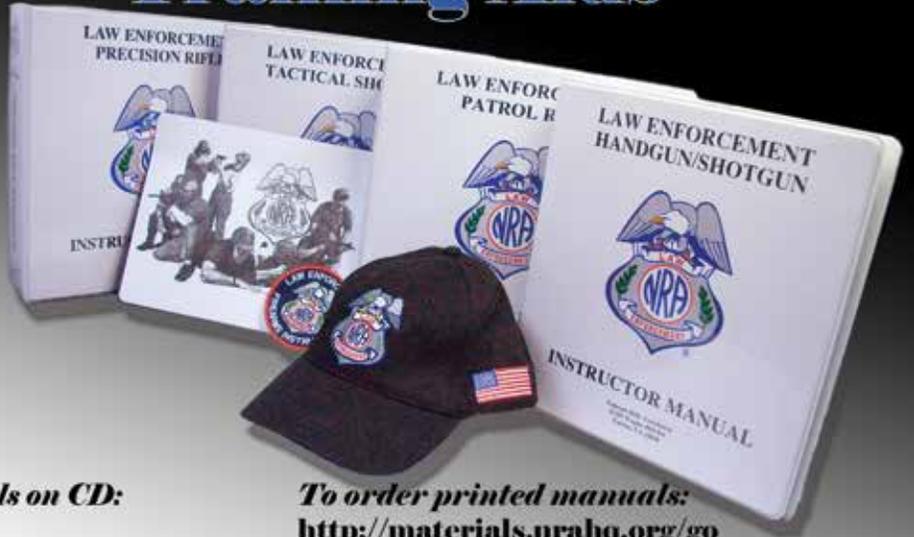
Aug 19-23 Jordan, MN  
 Aug 19-23 Littleton, CO (pub LE only)  
 Sep 9-13 Tupelo, MS  
 Sep 16-20 Smithton, PA  
 Sep 23-27 Marana, AZ  
 Sep 30 - Oct 4 Bethlehem, PA  
 Sep 30 - Oct 4 Topeka, KS  
 Sep 30 - Oct 4 Ft. Benning, GA  
 Oct 28 - Nov 1 Las Vegas, NV (pub LE only)  
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 Nov 4-8 Florence, AL  
 Nov 11-15 Maxwell, TX  
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 Nov 11-15 Chickasha, OK  
 Dec 2-6 Deland, FL

## TACTICAL SHOTGUN

Aug 26-30 Idaho Falls, ID  
 Sep 23-27 Bethlehem, PA  
 Oct 7-11 Mineral Point, PA  
 Nov 4-8 Las Vegas, NV (pub LE only)  
 Dec 9-13 Maxwell, TX



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