

## OpTac International News Bulletin:

### Identifying Learning Strategies that Impact Tactical and Incident Command Decision-Making in a High-Threat Situation

OpTac International News Bulletins present topics of interest for the law enforcement and military communities. This edition describes a current research study approved by the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board (IRB), titled "Identifying Learning Strategies that Impact Tactical and Incident Command Decision-Making in a High-Threat Situation." The study is OpTac International CEO, Stuart Meyers' dissertation research culminating his Doctor of Education degree in Adult Learning and Leadership. Active-duty tactical or incident commanders interested in participating should email: [smeyers@optacinternational.com](mailto:smeyers@optacinternational.com). All participants and their responses will be kept strictly confidential per Columbia University IRB policy.

#### Study Overview

Tactical and incident commanders make decisions in the high-threat law enforcement context of hostage rescue, armed barricaded suspects, and armed suicidal individuals that can result in successful or catastrophic outcomes. This qualitative study is expected to offer more evidence—as an integral part of emerging research on education and reaching effective decisions to the current literature—by extending and detailing the decision-making process of commanders that occurs during a high-threat incident. It intends to describe the experience and methods of making decisions in this environment.

Furthermore, areas addressed by this research will include determining learning strategies that could better prepare commanders in the processing of information, while optimizing speed and accuracy in decision-making. The study is informed by decades of personal experience in the fields of both high-risk police operations and education. Published research from the following areas is also used to explain the complexities of decision-making discussed throughout this study: decision-making theory, decision-making in high-threat training simulations, decision-making in real-life situations, related elements of adult learning theory, and cognition.

The study's results are expected to inform recommendations for improved educational practices while expanding the knowledge base for SWAT commanders, critical incident managers, law enforcement executives, and academia, thereby leading to better preparation in successfully resolving these events.

The study will start in June 2021 and consist of the following three phases:

Phase 1 – 20 Participant Interviews

Phase 2 – 100 Participants for completion of a survey questionnaire

Phase 3 – 5-10 Participants for inclusion in each of two separate focus groups: one for Tactical Commanders and the other for Incident Commanders.

Regular updates will be provided in future News Bulletins and at our Tactical Command, Tactical Team Policy & Organization, and SWAT Operations and Critical Incident Management Programs.