

OpTac International Law Enforcement Officers Shot-Update

On Friday, August 18, 2016, six law enforcement officers were shot in a span of two hours. Two of the officers were shot and killed in Kissimmee, Florida, two were shot in Jacksonville, Florida, and two were shot in Fairchance, Pennsylvania; thereby prompting the early release of data on a continuing and disturbing trend in policing. As CEO of an international police training corporation, I have conducted extensive research on high-risk policing. This News Bulletin contains the preliminary results on the number of incidents in which U.S. law enforcement personnel were shot and the corresponding number of officers shot throughout 2016.

The data comes from a meticulous search of news reports and is exclusively limited to law enforcement personnel who were shot with firearms. Officers who were blown-up, burned, stabbed, beaten, run over, crashed into, thrown off buildings, and pushed onto subway tracks (all of which occurred in 2016) were excluded. Additionally, officers who committed suicide with a firearm were also excluded---police suicides, another alarming topic, will be part of a future research project.

I have confirmed that at least 315 U.S. law enforcement officers were shot in 245 separate incidents in 2016. These numbers are projected to increase by about 10 percent when the database search concludes. The totals could be even greater because some incidents may not be reported or could be missed in the search. Additionally, data on suspects who shot at, but did not hit officers, is excluded as well. While many people focus on the number of officers killed by gunfire, officers surviving a gunshot should be an equally intrinsic part of the discourse on officer safety and the dangers of policing today.

Safety is paramount for law enforcement officers. The mentality that accepts officer shootings as "part of the job" permeates law enforcement and society in general, thereby creating a false normalcy. Attitudes toward police, and policing itself, must radically change in order to protect the protectors of society while improving this vital community service.

Stuart A. Meyers is author of "SWAT Operations and Critical Incidents: Why People Die" and the CEO of OpTac International, Inc. The results of the research project will be presented as part of our command curriculum and in a future op-ed piece. The following link is to an earlier op-ed article on this subject published in the *Baltimore Sun*.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-shooting-police-20160821-story.html>