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2017 - Maine: Closing Capability Gaps

Multi-Assault Counter Terrorism Training

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SUMMARY

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In 2014, the police department in Brewer, Maine used State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) funds to establish the Multi-Assault Counter Terrorism Action Capabilities (MACTAC) training program to enhance regional response to complex coordinated terrorist attacks and active shooter events. To date, more than 45 officers have participated in the program, which includes a virtual training simulator. Said a representative from Brewer, “MACTAC’s primary value, to me, lies in the coordination of multiple teams (and even agencies) to respond to threats, specifically coordinated attacks. It taught us command and control lessons we had previously not been exposed to.”

DESCRIPTION

Brewer Police Department created the MACTAC program in response to real-world events, including the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting and the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. The department invested \$58,305 in SHSP funds from Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-FY 2016 in this project, which included purchasing a virtual Use of Force Training Simulator and airsoft guns for use in the program’s live action training. The virtual Use of Force Training Simulator offers over 500 discrete scenarios to train officers for complex terrorist and active shooter events, as well as a range of community policing scenarios. To increase realism, the simulator invokes stress factors (e.g., background noises, increased room temperature). Operators can also tailor the training scenarios to mimic specific environments that an officer may encounter, such as a local school or municipal building.

Since 2016, the Brewer Police Department has offered MACTAC as a regional asset and has conducted four joint trainings with nine different police departments across Maine. These interagency trainings have helped officers develop specific skills necessary for tactical response. For example, trainees learned about “bounding” techniques (i.e., moving from cover to cover during a response). Officers have since applied their training to real-world incidents, including when responding to a call from a citizen reporting two children being held at gunpoint. Although the call later proved to be a false alarm, MACTAC training led to a safer and more controlled response.

REFERENCES

FEMA National Preparedness Assessment Division. Stakeholder Interview with the Maine Emergency Management Agency. September 28, 2016.

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