



NRA LAW ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY

TRAINING • COMPETITION • BENEFITS

NRA Honors Captain Philip Hemphill as Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

The National Rifle Association has announced the selection of Captain Philip Hemphill of the Mississippi Highway Patrol as its 2007 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Captain Hemphill boasts an impressive record of dedication to firearm training and marksmanship as well as a legacy as a nine-time winner of the National Police Shooting Championships (NPSC).

The NPSC matches consistently draw the world's top police marksmen, and while Captain Hemphill exudes modesty, his skill is unmatched among fellow competitors. Captain Hemphill holds the distinct honor of being the first police officer to win both the NPSC and the police title at NRA's National Matches at Camp Perry in conventional pistol. His 16 years of conducting firearm training for his fellow officers have earned Captain Hemphill the reputation of being a patient and approachable mentor who is able to transfer his knowledge of life-saving firearm skills to the officers in Mississippi.

Captain Hemphill has long acted as an ambassador of the NRA to his fellow law enforcement officers, citing the credibility the NRA lends to the field. "If you go to John Doe's Shooting School and then train your people, and one of your officers is involved in a shooting, they'll subpoena the shooting records," Hemphill said. "They will have to establish your credibility. With the NRA, you don't have to establish your credibility. It's been established."

Commenting on Captain Hemphill's qualifications, John C. Sigler, NRA President and a retired Delaware police captain, said, "In addition to Philip's accomplishments within the realm of police firearms training and competition, he has been a positive role model for younger officers. His service to the cause of freedom and his dedication to the preservation and defense of the rights of all law-abiding Americans to keep and bear arms sets an example for all to follow.

Noting that competition is an extension of training which translates into life-saving skills, Sigler believes that Captain Hemphill represents a legacy not only in the world of competitive shooting, but also in the education of our nation's future law enforcement officers.



Captain Philip Hemphill
Mississippi Highway Patrol
2007 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

NRA's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award was established in 1993, and recognizes exceptional valor, public service, and dedication to the principles of our Constitutional heritage. It is sponsored in part by Component Engineers, Inc. of Wallingford, Connecticut.

Entry forms for nominating candidates for the 2008 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award may be downloaded at www.nrahq.org/law/graphics/leoy.pdf. Entry forms must be submitted by September 1, 2008. Nominations for the award may be submitted by the nominee's agency head or by an NRA member, and must be endorsed by an NRA Life Member.

For more information about NRA's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award and its Law Enforcement Activities Division, call (703) 267-1632 or send an e-mail inquiry to lead@nrahq.org.

The Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA - HR 218) Three Years Out:

The Good, The Bad and the Ugly

**BY CHRISTOPHER CONTE
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL, NRA/ILA**

Few federal laws have been of as much interest or caused as much confusion and consternation among law enforcement as H.R. 218, now codified at 18 USC 926B & C commonly known as LEOSA (the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act). The intent of the law was to give current and retired law enforcement the ability to carry a concealed firearm anywhere in the US on police credentials. LEOSA is a prime example of Bismarck's admonition that "those who like laws or sausages should never see them being made." For any law enforcement officer, this is not news, and since I have written before on the structural problems with the law, I will instead focus on where we are on the ground.

The Good

Currently, eighteen states have some form of recognition of LEOSA, but even saying that is something of a stretch. (See chart on the following page.) Some states implement by statute, some by executive order, and some by regulations or laws that preexisted the federal law but are asserted as covering it. In many states, local sheriffs have taken it upon themselves to issue ID and certifications (or not). Countless stories have come up of off duty, out of jurisdiction, and retired officers defending themselves and others successfully while carrying under the law. Overall, it is working, even if it isn't working where you are.

The Bad

If only eighteen states have a form of state-level implementation, then thirty-two states don't. While local independent action by sheriffs is a step in the right direction, it is frustrating for individual officers, and at least potentially suspect if the credentials are challenged

in court. Chicago, New York City and other major metropolitan areas have threatened, arrested, tried, but not yet convicted, out of state officers. Some of the states on the chart contain preexisting laws that do not truly or fully implement the federal law (New Jersey is one example) but the states are frankly free to be fools. A challenge to the New Jersey law proved this when the state supreme court upheld the denial of credentials to an otherwise eligible retired officer. The only ways to force compliance are at the ballot box, or in the union contract but not the courthouse.

The Ugly

In addition to misreading the law by legislators and police administrators, there are some interesting twists starting to come about. One case, charging a military reserve officer with possession of an unlicensed handgun, was thrown out by the court based on a broad reading of the federal law, despite strong evidence of a host of other potential illegal-

ities by the defendant. Perhaps a good win in a bad jurisdiction, but not a clean win by any stretch of the imagination. A LEOSA-credentialed retiree moves into a mandatory licensing state and does not get a state license in reliance on federal law. The case I am aware of resolved informally, but is bound to be repeated. Again, perhaps a good thing, but not what was anticipated by anyone. The one theme I hear over and over is, "this is not what I/we anticipated," and I hear it from cops, legislators and administrators alike, both pro and anti-gun.

Conclusion - What's next?

Efforts to amend and revise LEOSA began in congress immediately after it was signed into law. While nothing has passed to date the effort gains momentum and refinement every year. Each year one or two more states adopt some identifiable implementation system or improve a system in place. Most importantly, every year officers off duty – but under the law – save lives.



Christopher A. Conte has served as Legislative Counsel for the National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action since June 2000. Before joining NRA, Mr. Conte was in private trial practice for eleven years where among other matters he represented individual officers in civil, criminal and administrative matters, usually involving firearms issues. He is currently admitted to practice in CT, MD, and the District of Columbia. As Legislative Counsel, Mr. Conte develops NRA litigation strategy in defense of the Second Amendment and advises state and federal lobbyists on matters of policy and legislative construction and interpretation.

State Implementation of the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004

Public Law 108-277. 18 U.S.C. 926B & C

This list draws from all available electronic sources. Due to a lack of reliable information, many states are not listed here. Many state or local law enforcement agencies may have implemented their own departmental policies without state law or regulation.

Arizona ARIZ. REV. STAT. ANN. § 13-3112(x) www.azleg.state.az.us/ars/13/03112.htm

California No law or regulation, an Attorney General memorandum leaves decisions on applicability open to interpretation by local agencies ag.ca.gov/firearms/forms/pdf/leosasummary.pdf

Connecticut State Police memorandum www.ct.gov/dps/cwp/view.asp?a=2153&q=303746

Florida FLA. STAT. ANN. § 943.132.
www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0943/SEC132.HTM

Georgia No law or regulation, see Georgia Public Safety Training Center notice
www.gpstc.georgia.gov/00/article/0,2086,31062192_31062972_47148904,00.html

Idaho IDAHO CODE ANN. § 18-3302H www3.state.id.us/cgi-bin/newidst?sctid=180330002H.K

Illinois ILL. ADMIN CODE tit. 20, § 1720.210 www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/020/020017200C02100R.html

Kansas no law or regulation, however see, Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center
www.kletc.org/retired/Retired_Off_pg.htm

Kentucky KY. REV. STAT. § 237.138 and www.kentuckystatepolice.org/conceal.htm

Massachusetts 501 MASS. CODE REGS. 13.01

Maryland No law or regulation, however an executive order, and this advisory: www.mdsp.org/downloads/LEOSA_2004.pdf

Michigan no law or regulation, however see discussion at
www.michigan.gov/documents/Newsletter_August_06_167577_7.pdf

Missouri MO. REV. STAT. § 650.030 www.moga.state.mo.us/statutes/C600-699/6500000030.HTM

Montana no law or regulation, however see: doj.mt.gov/enforcement/criminaljustice/concealedweapons.asp

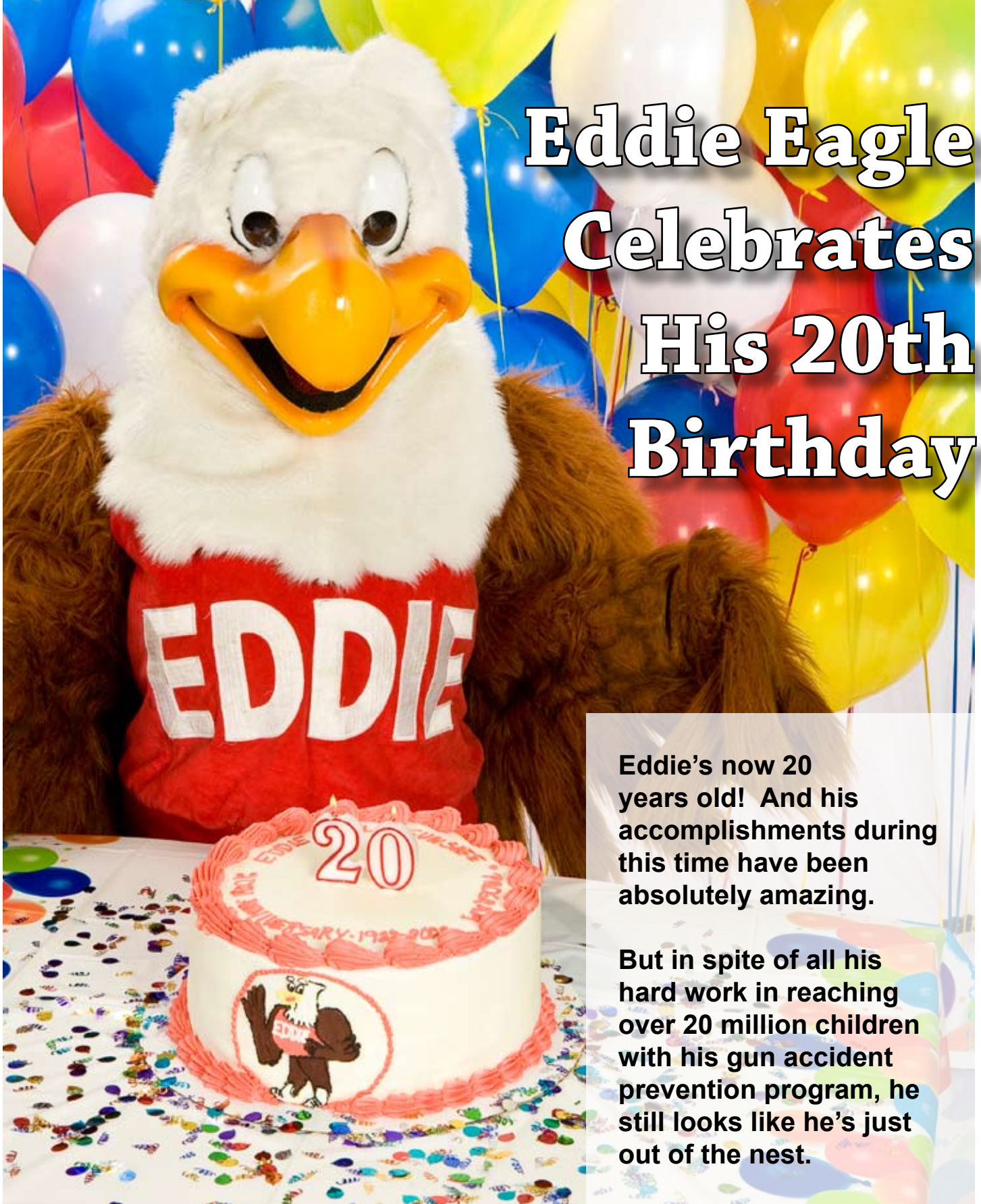
New Hampshire N.H. REV. STAT. ANN. § 188-F:26 law.justia.com/newhampshire/codes/nhtoc-xv/188-f-26.html

New Jersey N.J. STAT. ANN. § 2C:39-6(l)

Nevada Local implementation, see http://www.lvmpd.com/permits/firearms_hr218.html

Wisconsin Implementation through the office of the State's Attorney General has begun, however a bill to formalize the process is also pending. It is unclear at this time where the process will go.

Eddie Eagle Celebrates His 20th Birthday



Eddie's now 20 years old! And his accomplishments during this time have been absolutely amazing.

But in spite of all his hard work in reaching over 20 million children with his gun accident prevention program, he still looks like he's just out of the nest.

The NRA's Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program has met with resounding success across the country, and has proven itself to be an accident prevention plan that really works.

The effectiveness of the program is un-

deniable. Fatal firearm accidents in the Eddie Eagle age group (pre-kindergarten through third grade) have decreased by more than 80% since the program's creation in 1988 by former NRA President Marion P. Hammer.

The program's success is due to several factors. First of all, the program was especially designed for young children through the combined efforts of qualified professionals, such as clinical psychologists, reading specialists, teachers, curriculum

specialists, and law enforcement personnel.

Next, Eddie's four important safety steps (If you see a gun: **STOP! Don't Touch. Leave the Area. Tell an Adult.**) are easy for children to remember. And the friendly character of Eddie Eagle facilitates and reinforces the children's learning experience. The safety message is further reinforced by the use of a fast-paced and colorful animated video and fun-filled activity books. These materials are available in both English and Spanish.

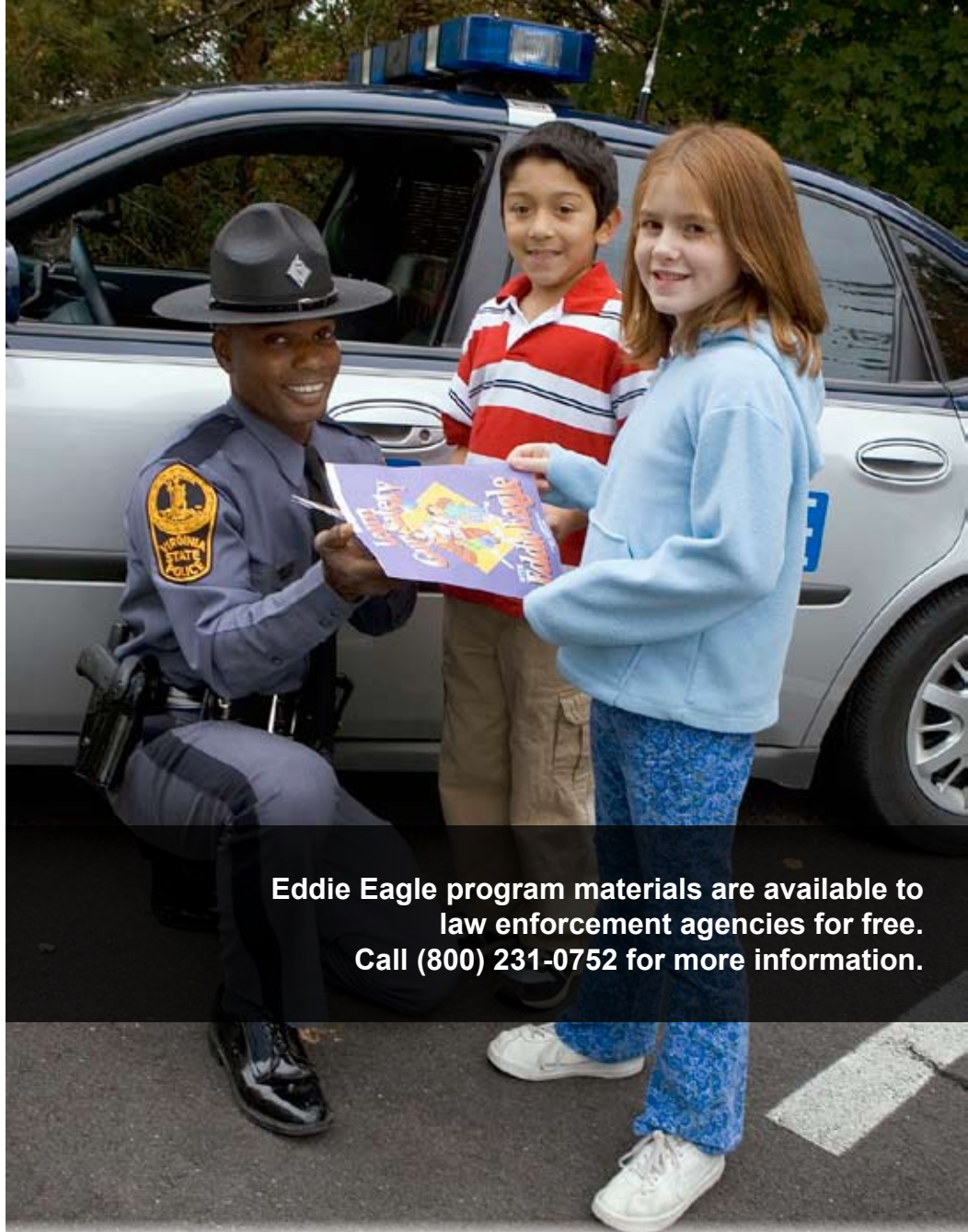
Finally, The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program is easy to teach. Clear, simple-to-use instructor materials are provided to aid in program presentation, and the time and location requirements for the program are extremely flexible. The program can be conducted in one session or in small segments that will fit into any type of schedule. Most locations are appropriate, and can include school classrooms and auditoriums, safety fairs, churches, local meeting halls, campgrounds, etc.

The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program does not teach gun handling, gun nomenclature, or gun use. It does not promote gun use or participation in any shooting sports, and the program makes no value judgements about whether guns are good or bad.

The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program has garnered numerous accolades and awards over the past 20 years from a variety of organizations. Law enforcement agencies have been especially supportive of the program, and the Eddie Eagle program has been praised by such national organizations as the Police Athletic League (PAL), the National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officers, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the U.S. Department of Justice. Numerous local law enforcement agencies throughout the country have also supported the program, and have taken an active role in it by serving as Eddie Eagle instructors and costumed mascots to millions of children.

The NRA receives numerous letters and newspaper articles about children who avoided tragic firearm accidents because of the safety rules that they learned from law enforcement personnel who taught The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program to them.

For example, Taylor Reed, a quick-thinking five-year-old boy from Great Bend, Kansas, did the right thing when he found a pistol in his grandmother's yard. Jamie Reed, Taylor's mother, said that when Tay-



Eddie Eagle program materials are available to law enforcement agencies for free. Call (800) 231-0752 for more information.

lor found the gun, he knew, as a result of the Eddie Eagle program, to leave it alone, keep his two-year-old brother away from it, and tell an adult about the gun. Of course, Taylor also had an outstanding teacher – his dad, Kyle Reed, who is a deputy with the Barton County Sheriff's Office and who has taught The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program to numerous other children.

In another incident, eight-year-old Billy Thornton of Knoxville, Tennessee, was with his father, Daryl, at the local credit union. While his father waited in line, Billy went to the restroom where he encountered a dangerous situation – a loaded handgun in plain view on the counter! Fortunately, Officer Katy Davis of the Knox County Sheriff's Office had taught Eddie Eagle's safety lessons to Billy's school class more than a year previously. But Billy remembered what Officer Davis had so carefully

taught him, and did exactly as he had been instructed. He didn't touch the gun, immediately left the area, returned to his father who was still in line, and told him about finding the gun.

These two examples are typical of the many instances where law enforcement officers have helped children avoid gun accidents by teaching them the safety rules of the Eddie Eagle program. Appropriately, because of its close association with, and support by, the law enforcement community, The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program is now located in the Law Enforcement Activities Division (LEAD) of the National Rifle Association.

For more information about The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program, call (800) 231-0752, send e-mail to eddie@nrahq.org, or visit its Web site at www.nrahq.org/safety/eddie.



2008 Shooting Championships Include Tactical Police Competition Pre-Event

Police Pistol Combat (PPC) is the long-standing staple of competitive shooting in the Law Enforcement Activities Division (LEAD) of the National Rifle Association.

Considered the crown jewel of PPC competition, the National Police Shooting Championship (NPSC) provides a competitive environment where law enforcement officers demonstrate and hone their shooting abilities. This year's NPSC is scheduled for September 21 through 25 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Joining LEAD's family of competitive shooting is a new discipline, Tactical Police Competition (TPC). TPC is oriented toward multiple targets and aims to mirror modern equipment and training standards used by today's law enforcement officers. "New competitors enjoy shooting TPC," LEAD Director Glen Hoyer said. "We've already experienced a surge of new shooters interested in this discipline."

"Tactical Police Competition is both a valuable addition to, and logical extension of, the base that PPC has built. Police firearms competitors travel to Albuquerque from the entire world for this test of their skill and to learn new techniques, exchange ideas and to test new theories and new gear," said John C. Sigler, NRA President and a retired Police Captain. "Just as their brothers and sisters serving in our Armed Forces at home and abroad are "America's heroes" in the war on terror, America's law enforcement officers are "America's heroes" in the never-ending war on crime. The National Police Shooting Championships in Albuquerque provide numerous opportunities for these heroes to improve on their marksmanship, and to participate in one of our tuition-free armor schools, and see cutting edge gear in our Law Enforcement Equipment Exposition."

As a pre-event to this year's Police Na-

tional, there will be a DPMS-sponsored two-day NRA Tactical Police Competition held at the NPSC facilities at Albuquerque's Shooting Range Park. Competitors will fire either on Friday, September 19, or Saturday, September 20. Seven courses of fire are scheduled in the action shooting bays, with courses involving duty handgun, duty shotgun, and patrol rifle.

"PPC isn't going anywhere," Sigler continued. In a recent speech to the NRA's Board of Directors at the 137th NRA Annual Meeting in Louisville, Ky., Sigler told the Board, "TPC is to complement PPC, not replace it. Tactical Police Competition is just the next logical step in NRA's continuing quest to serve America's law enforcement community."

With NPSC, the NRA stands by its commitment to increase trophies and prizes. Match sponsors' continued generosity means the future is bright for this component of the NRA's Law Enforcement Activities Division. Without the sponsorship of such well-known corporations as Brownells, Davidson, Beretta, Colt, DPMS, FNH USA, Glock, Heckler & Koch, Ruger, Smith & Wesson, and Springfield Armory, NPSC wouldn't boast one of the finest prize tables for matches and events.

The NPSC is introducing yet another new event this year: The New Mexico Challenge, developed to encourage local shooters. The match will be a duty gun and equipment event designed for new shooters who have yet to receive an NRA Classification. As an incentive for first-time competitors, the New Mexico Challenge and other events will feature special reduced registration fees.

For more information about the 2008 National Police Shooting Championship, visit www.nrahq.org/law/npsc.asp. We'll see you in New Mexico!

Imagine

BA GU

are going

*Tactical Police
Competition Event*

Armorer Training

2008 N POLICE S CHAMPION

September
Albuquerque

www.nrahq.org
(703) 267-1632 •

how the
**AD
AYS**
g to feel.

MORE AWARDS!

MORE PRIZES!

**NATIONAL
SHOOTING
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**21-15, 2008
New Mexico**

<http://www.nra.org/law/npsc.asp>
lead@nrahq.org

FNH USA Continues Their Support for NPSC

All roads may indeed lead to Rome, but last year at the NRA National Police Shooting Championships (NPSC), all matches seemed to lead to Fabrique Nationale Herstal (FNH). Their sponsorship provided the primary support for many of the individual matches at last year's NPSC. However, FNH didn't simply limit its involvement by sponsoring a plethora of matches.

Last year, FNH sweetened the prize table as it donated 39 firearms to be awarded to winning shooters. Additionally, FNH provided loaner firearms for participants in the tactical shooting match. FNH even sent a team of its employees to the event to provide any technical support necessary for the guns. It's clear that FNH is committed to their continued support of law enforcement officers around the country.

The National Police Shooting Championships provide a competitive environment in which law enforcement officers meet to demonstrate and hone their shooting abilities. Competitors begin with guns holstered, and then fire in timed matches with revolvers or semi-automatic pistols from a variety of distances and positions. The aggregate scores achieved from the revolver and semi-auto pistol matches are then used to determine the national champion. The NPSC has become a staple in competitive shooting through the continued support of the NRA and other event and match sponsors such as FNH USA.

Barbara Sadowy, the director of marketing at FNH USA, said, "We feel it's very important to be a part of the National Police Shooting Championships. We take great pride in being involved in the championships because, as a firearm manufacturer, law enforcement is very important to us." Regarding FNH USA's relationship with law enforcement, Sadowy pointed out, "That's our market. A lot of law enforcement officers use guns to protect not only their own lives, but also the lives of others. They can try to win some of FNH USA's guns, and for those officers not already familiar with us, it's a great occasion for them to discover what we have to offer."

As a result of the excellent support base for the competition, the National Police Shooting Championships boast one of the finest prize tables for match and category winners. Last year, over 400 law enforcement officers from federal, state, municipal, and private agencies, in addition to five foreign countries, competed in the tournament. About 400 law enforcement officers are expected to participate in this year's competition.

In terms of total value last year, FNH USA's support and equipment were estimated at approximately \$100,000. As we prepare to look ahead to this year's National Police Shooting Championships, we'd like to extend our gratitude to FNH USA for ensuring that last year's NPSC was the biggest and best one yet.



The Law Enforcement Activities Division shows its appreciation to FNH USA for its support of the National Police Shooting Championships. At left, Glen A. Hoyer, Director of NRA's Law Enforcement Activities Division, with Bill Buie (center), FNH's Law Enforcement Weapons Specialist, and Bucky Mills (right), FNH's Director of Sales and Marketing.

Tom White (at left), Blackhawk's Vice President of Marketing, presents NRA Executive Vice President Wayne R. LaPierre with a generous donation to benefit the NRA's Law Enforcement Training Endowment.



Blackhawk Pledges \$100,000 to Support NRA Law Enforcement Activities Division

Gift will help expand NRA law enforcement training programs

Blackhawk Products Group has pledged \$100,000 to benefit the NRA's Law Enforcement Training Endowment. This endowment provides a perpetual source of funding for the state-of-the-art instructor training and certification programs of the NRA's Law Enforcement Activities Division (LEAD).

The gift will help the NRA sustain its impressive record of training law enforcement officers domestically and abroad. Since its inception in 1960, LEAD has trained more than 50,000 U.S. law enforcement instructors.

Blackhawk manufactures, distributes, and sells gear for law enforcement, military, and corporate security personnel. Blackhawk President and CEO Mike Noell said the \$100,000 pledge reflects the Norfolk, Va.-based company's support of the NRA, and its commitment to law enforcement professionals throughout the United States.

"We have long valued our relationship with the NRA and have a great deal of respect for its initiatives, insight, and traditions," Noell said. "It is a very natural fit for Blackhawk to increase its support through the NRA's Law Enforcement Activities Division, and all of us at Blackhawk feel good about being able to make a difference."

LEAD Director Glen Hoyer credited Blackhawk's ongoing support of the law enforce-

ment profession with helping the NRA reach more officers every year and train them to become expert instructors. Hoyer, a 25-year law enforcement veteran and retired sheriff's captain, said Blackhawk's \$100,000 endowment to the NRA will enable LEAD to expand its successful training programs.

"It is an honor for us to be associated with a company like Blackhawk," Hoyer said. "Blackhawk is an icon in the industry, not only for their products, but for their support

of the military and law enforcement officers – and now the NRA's Law Enforcement Activities Division."

For details about NRA Law Enforcement gift opportunities, contact Heide Kaser, Assistant Director, Strategic Giving, NRA Office of Advancement, (703) 267-1622. To learn more about opportunities to make a gift to the NRA, call 1-877 NRA GIVE or visit www.nragive.com.

Police Firearms Training Survey

Ball State University criminal justice professor Dr. Gregory Morrison is conducting the first national survey on police firearms and deadly force training. Dr. Morrison, a former police officer and firearms instructor in the public and private sectors, aims to provide police trainers, supervisors and managers with useful insights into key policies and practices that shape their programs. His study will be helpful to individual departments and trainers as they continuously review and revise program content and delivery. It also will contribute to local, state and national discussions on vital officer safety training during a time of growing demands on resources and tightening budgets. Dr. Morrison's report will present descriptive and comparative findings in an aggregate format, for example, by states and regions, and department types and sizes. It will be available in electronic format to all survey participants. Your and your department's identities are confidential, and the information that you provide in the survey will be encrypted during transmission.

Go to www.surveymonkey.com/PFTS08 to participate in this important project.

2008-2009 NRA Law Enforcement Firearm Instructor Development Schools

www.nrahq.org/law/training • lead@nrahq.org • (703) 267-1640

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 = \$525 per person

NRA Law Enforcement Activities Division would like to thank the following companies for supporting our Tuition-Free School program.

Without their direct support, this program would not be possible.



PERFECTION



For more information, visit
www.nrahq.org/law/training/armorerschools.asp.

HANDGUN & SHOTGUN INSTRUCTOR

Aug 4-8 London, KY
 Aug 11-15 St. Louis, MO
 Aug 18-22 Gulfport, MS
 Sept 8-12 Lewisburg, PA (central)
 Sept 8-12 Stapleton, AL
 Sept 15-19 Jackson, NJ
 (Ocean County)
 Sept 22-26 Leechburg, PA (west)
 Sept 29-Oct 3 Boulder City, NV
 Oct 6-10 Cottonport, LA
 Oct 13-17 Pearl, MS¹
 Oct 20-24 Alton, VA
 Oct 20-24 Defiance, MO
 (public LE only)
 Nov 3-7 Panama City, FL
 Nov 10-14 Florence, AL
 Mar 2-6, 2009 Shreveport, LA
 Mar 9-13, 2009 Leechburg, PA (west)
 Mar 23-27, 2009 Florence, AL
 Apr 13-17, 2009 Reno, NV
 June 8-12, 2009 Allentown, PA (east)
 June 15-19, 2009 Allentown, PA (east)
 Aug 10-14, 2009 Florence, AL
 Dec 7-11, 2009 Florence, AL

HANDGUN INSTRUCTOR

Oct 20-24 Lusby, MD

PRECISION RIFLE INSTRUCTOR

Aug 18-22 Evansville, IN
 Oct 6-10 Phoenix, AZ
 Oct 6-10 Warrenton, MO
 Oct 13-17 Castle Rock, CO
 (public LE only)
 Oct 27-31 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 Dec 1-5 Florence, AL
 Dec 1-5 Las Vegas, NV²
 (public LE only)
 Sept 28-Oct 2, 2009 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 Oct 19-23, 2009 Florence, AL

SELECT-FIRE INSTRUCTOR

Aug 18-22 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 Aug 25-29 Windom, MN
 Oct 27-31 Florence, AL
 Nov 10-14 Gulfport, MS
 May 11-15, 2009 Leechburg, PA (west)
 June 22-26, 2009 Florence, AL

PATROL RIFLE INSTRUCTOR

Sept 15-19 Florence, AL
 Sept 15-19 Gulfport, MS
 Oct 6-10 Leechburg, PA (west)
 Oct 13-17 Etters, PA (east)
 Oct 20-24 Shreveport, LA
 Oct 27-31 Lubbock, TX
 Oct 27-31 Lusby, MD
 Nov 3-7 Pittsburgh, PA (west)
 Nov 10-14 Evansville, IN
 Nov 17-21 Las Vegas, NV²
 (public LE only)
 Feb 23-27, 2009 Florence, AL
 Apr 6-10, 2009 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 Apr 6-10, 2009 Leechburg, PA (west)
 Apr 13-17, 2009 Lubbock, TX
 Apr 20-24, 2009 Covington, TN
 July 20-24, 2009 Florence, AL
 Sept 7-11, 2009 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 Oct 5-9, 2009 Leechburg, PA (west)

TACTICAL SHOTGUN INSTRUCTOR

Sept 15-19 Ontario, Calif.
 Oct 13-17 Florence, AL
 Oct 20-24 York, PA (central)
 Mar 2-6, 2009 Alton, VA
 Apr 13-17, 2009 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 July 13-17, 2009 Allentown, PA (east)
 Sept 14-18, 2009 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 Sept 20-24, 2009 Florence, AL

TACTICAL SHOOTING INSTRUCTOR

Aug 11-15 Smithton, PA (west)
 Sept 8-12 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 Sept 8-12 Ithaca, NY
 Sept 29-Oct 3 Stapleton, AL
 Oct 6-10 Gulfport, MS
 Oct 20-24 Ontario, Calif.
 Nov 3-7 Las Vegas, NV²
 (public LE only)
 Dec 1-5 Panama City, FL
 Jan 12-16, 2009 Victoria, TX
 Mar 2-6, 2009 Alton, VA
 Apr 20-24, 2009 Bethlehem, PA (east)
 Apr 20-24, 2009 Florence, AL
 July 6-10, 2009 Allentown, PA (east)
 Sept 21-25, 2009 Bethlehem, PA (east)

To apply to footnoted Instructor Schools, call:
 1 Pearl, MS – Beverly Abernathy, (601) 933-2128
 2 Las Vegas, NV – Vern Zuleger, (702) 828-4291

THE FALLACY OF INDEXING

BY JEFFREY J. HALL

By now, most firearm instructors in the country are aware of Dr. Roger Enoka's study, in which he identified three specific mental/physical situations that could cause a law enforcement officer whose finger is on the trigger of a gun to involuntarily press the trigger. He identified the situations as **startle response**, **postural instability**, and **overflow effect**. If you have not read Dr. Enoka's research, you should do so, immediately.

Most of the police departments where I teach use the four basic firearm safety rules originally created by Lt. Colonel Jeff Cooper at his Gunsite training facility. These four simple rules preclude anyone from being injured by a firearm. The rules are:

1. All guns are always loaded.
2. Never let your muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target and you are ready to fire.
4. Be sure of your target as well as the background.

Pretty simple, huh?

Largely as a result of Dr. Enoka's study, police trainers across the country adopted the concept of **indexing** – keeping the trigger finger off the trigger and straight along the frame until the gun is up on the target and ready to fire.

Indexing is a good thing. I recall my days as a young trooper, searching through buildings with my finger on the trigger of my Model 19. I recall felony stops with my gun's hammer cocked, the gun aimed at the suspect, and my finger on the trigger – because we didn't know any better then!

Along the way, we adopted the **ready** or **guard** position, with the gun's muzzle depressed to about 45 degrees and the muzzle off the target, allowing us to see clearly with an unobstructed view while we searched and while we challenged bad guys to stop. The rationale for a ready or guard position was, and is, that: (1) A gun in hand is better than

a gun in a holster; and (2) If an unintentional discharge occurs, we shoot the ground instead of a person.

In the last few years, however, a new tactic has taken root. No one seems to know where it started, who started it, or who requested it, but it's like AIDS in the blood supply. A friend of mine, who was formerly in the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team (HRT), believes it came from a competition shooter who conducted some training for HRT years ago. As told to me, the rationale for using this new technique was that it was much faster in getting hits on a target. (We'll discuss this speed aspect later.)

This new technique that I'm referring to involves having the muzzle up and the finger indexed while searching and shouting commands to suspects. All coppers do it on a regular basis. I've heard it called **tactical ready**, **contact ready**, **SWAT ready**, etc. We see it on the nightly news, with patrol or SWAT officers posing for the cameras, hut-hut-hutting toward the building in question, guns up, REALLY, REALLY, TOTALLY, ABSOLUTELY ready to engage whatever threat appears. I call it **stupid and dangerous**.

We have Dr. Enoka's work, and we have Lt. Col. Cooper's safety rule #2 above. We also have research done by Dave Spaulding and by the U.S. military showing that officers will **trigger search** when going into an unknown situation.

Trigger search simply means that an officer, wanting reassurance that the trigger is REALLY still there (*Did the Trigger Fairy move it in the last hour?*), touches the trigger prior to entering an unknown situation. Trigger search is well documented, although little scientific empirical study has been

done. Your shooters **WILL** place the trigger finger on the trigger in stressful situations, no matter how much emphasis is placed on indexing.

I conducted a Level Two (advanced) instructor course for a state training commission. One phase of the course was a search through a live-fire shoothouse. It's done singly, in pairs, and in teams. I made a conscious effort to watch each of the 36 shooters who went through the shoothouse. **Every** shooter touched the trigger during the search; some touched the trigger more than once. I finally stopped one student who was preparing to enter the last room. I asked him what he had just done. He thought for a moment, and then sheepishly answered that he'd touched the trigger. When asked why, he said that he just wanted to make sure that it was there.

At a NRA Tactical Handgun Instructor class on the East Coast, we conducted a night fire training exercise. We were using an indoor range equipped with **FATS (FireArm Training System)** which displayed computerized simulated firing situations on a screen. One of the officers approached the screen, dropped to a high kneeling position behind cover, and promptly put his finger on the trigger. When asked about it, he said that he "didn't know what he was getting into," so he wanted his finger on the trigger. Does any shooter ever know what he's getting into?

Bob Maule is a rangemaster for the Tacoma (Washington) Police Department, and is also a master instructor for the Washington state training commission. He is well aware of the indexing/muzzle-up issue, and observed students specifically for instances of trigger search.

“ I asked him what he had just done. He sheepishly answered that he'd touched the trigger. When asked why, he said he just wanted to make sure it was there. ”

When the Tacoma Police Department conducted active shooter training for all 360 officers in the department, Bob found that approximately 70%, or 252 officers, touched the trigger at some point in the training, usually just before entering the unknown. Most officers who touched the trigger did not realize it.

A recent scientific study at the University of Sports Medicine in Frankfurt, Germany, tested Dr. Enoka's theory using trained police officers. A pistol was equipped with sensors that would record each time an officer touched the trigger. All officers had been previously trained to remain indexed until the pistol was on target and a decision had been made to fire. All of the test subjects knew specifically what was being tested. The Frankfurt test results revealed that a full 20% of the officers had touched the trigger – some repeatedly – but all denied having done so.

"Well, it's faster," an officer may argue in defense of the tactical ready position. Not so. I've tested instructors from Florida to Alaska, and have found, using an electronic timer, that it takes .48 to .52 seconds, either from the ready or on threat and indexed positions, to get a center of mass hit on a known target. It's the mental process, not the mechanical, that takes time.

Ron Avery is the director of the Practical Shooting Academy and a world-class International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) shooter and trainer. Ron's research showed that it took about .40 seconds to get a center of mass hit. Ron does not feel that running around with guns in folks' faces is a good tactic, either. "I strongly discourage the tactical ready position. It can be deadly to other officers, and it is not any faster than the positions I teach," Ron said.

One Seattle instructor decided to test the tactical ready position by using colored lights as the stimulus to shoot. His observations showed that it was actually faster to get a hit from the ready or guard position because the shooter's hands were not blocking the view of the lights which were located at the belt level of the target.

Some officers believe that the tactical ready position is more intimidating. It may



Jeff Hall is a retired lieutenant from the Alaska State Troopers. As a trooper, Hall worked in narcotics, investigations, traffic, patrol, and a one-man "bush" post. He is a former soldier, practicing martial artist, and founder of Hojutsu-Ryu, the martial art of shooting. Jeff is also a staff instructor for the NRA-Law Enforcement Training Department.

This article is reprinted with permission from *The Firearms Instructor*.

be, and I have done it, but show me the actual data that it's really more intimidating. I'd like to see data from hundreds of criminals who **only** stopped because they were looking down the muzzle of a gun. The data doesn't exist, and juries look at data, not what officers feel is right.

No one says that a police officer or an armed citizen can't draw a firearm and threaten the use of deadly force! It is done every day, and must continue to be done. The .48 seconds cited above is WAY better than the 1.6 to 2.6 seconds it takes most cops to draw their service pistols and shoot. However, if drawing to a ready or guard position to challenge and search allows just as fast a response, isn't it better that the bullet hits the ground, not a person, if we have an unintentional discharge?

Two years ago in Washington state, a trooper was pursuing a traffic violator, but broke off the pursuit when the violator entered a residential neighborhood. A sheriff's deputy also saw the violator and made a stop with pistol drawn. The passenger was unintentionally shot by the deputy when the indexed officer inadvertently pressed the trigger of his pistol as he turned on his flashlight (the overflow effect described by Dr. Enoka).

In another incident, an officer shot out the back window of a car when he slipped on

the ice (an example of the postural instability mentioned by Dr. Enoka), but the officer swore that he was indexed. But guns don't go off of their own free will – it takes a press of the trigger to cause it.

Human instinct being as it is, it will take a **lot** to re-train shooters. It's like making a static-line parachute jump. You hook up, check it, and get buddy-checked. The last thing you do before you stand in the plane's door will be to tug that static line again! You might believe in God, but a little insurance ...

Our students have to win more than the fight – they need to win the court dramas that may follow. Shooting the wrong guy makes it tougher. I encourage all trainers to re-adopt a ready or guard position for all challenges and searches. Depress the muzzle to about 45 degrees, and keep it off any part of the suspect's body. Keep the muzzle off the target until the decision has been made to fire (Cooper's safety rule #2). Only then, after deciding to fire, go on target, on trigger, and resolve the problem. The ready or guard position will allow better visibility during searches, allow a full view of suspects' hands, discourage tunnel vision, and keep **everyone** safer. It will take some re-training, but training is what we do, and we shouldn't be afraid to tackle this issue.

NRA Law Enforcement Firearm Manuals and Training Aids



To order training aids and materials on CD:
www.nrahq.org/law/training/

To order printed manuals:
<http://materials.nrahq.org/go>



NRA



DISCIPLINES AVAILABLE:
Handgun Handgun/Shotgun
Patrol Rifle Tactical Shotgun
Precision Rifle

Sales of these items are restricted to NRA Certified Instructors, sworn Law Enforcement Officers, bona fide Law enforcement agencies, armed security companies, and the U.S. military. Once your order is received, you may be contacted by a member of the Law Enforcement Activities Division to verify eligibility.

NRA Officers/Staff
 John C. Sigler
President
 Ronald L. Schmeits
1st Vice President
 David A. Keene
2nd Vice President
 Wayne R. LaPierre
Executive Vice President
 Edward J. Land, Jr.
Secretary
 Wilson H. Phillips, Jr.
Treasurer
 Kayne Robinson
Executive Director
 General Operations
 Chris Cox
Executive Director
 Institute for Legislative Action
 Glen A. Hoyer
Director
 Law Enforcement Activities Division
 For information on NRA programs
 or membership, please call
 (800) NRA-3888
 Law Enforcement website:
www.nrahq.org/law

NONPROFIT ORG
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 DULLES, VA
 PERMIT 156

Law Enforcement Division
 National Rifle Association
 11250 Waples Mill Road
 Fairfax, VA 22030

