



# NRA LAW ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY

CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE

## Sgt. Dave Lawler: 2009 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

On February 16, 2008, Sergeant Dave Lawler of the Linn County Oregon Sheriff's Office had just finished assisting another officer on an accident investigation when he was assigned to handle a complaint of a man screaming in the middle of the street armed with a shotgun. While responding an update placed the suspect entering a vehicle.

While additional information came in, it conflicted with the original information and the suspect was found to have moved to a gas station several blocks away where he discharged his shotgun several times. As Sergeant Lawler approached the gas station he identified the suspect and saw that he was wrestling with a young woman near a car parked by the pump island.

Sergeant Lawler moved his cruiser into a tactical position to block traffic and protect innocent persons while at the same time maintaining observation of the suspect and acquiring cover. Sergeant Lawler then saw the suspect, with shotgun in hand, dragging the young girl towards the front of the gas station convenience store while yelling and screaming unintelligibly.

From his position of cover, Sergeant Lawler challenged the suspect to drop the shotgun and comply with his orders. The suspect clearly had no intentions of complying and Sergeant Lawler's efforts at negotiations fell on a deaf ear, with the suspect continuing to ramble on with no meaning to his statements.

Seeing that the suspect was preoccupied in delivering his ramblings and demands, including calling for the media, a helicopter, the FBI, and other various governmental entities, Sergeant Lawler decided he had an opportunity to move back to the driver's door of his cruiser so he could get his AR-15 Patrol Rifle.

Evaluating his surroundings, Sergeant Lawler realized that the front doors and windows of the convenience store were directly behind the suspect. Should he be forced to fire he needed to ensure his accuracy was maximized, so he sacrificed some of his cover

and took a low position between the open door and the body of his cruiser so he could support the rifle on the door frame and hood.

The suspect continued to pull and fight with the young woman while pointing the shotgun at her head. Without a clear shot and not knowing if the suspect would reflexively pull the trigger of the shotgun, Sergeant Lawler could do nothing but try to calm the suspect down and wait for an opportunity to save the hostage.

That opportunity suddenly came when the suspect pushed the young woman to the ground and raised his shotgun at Sergeant Lawler. Instantly, Sergeant Lawler acquired his sight picture and pressed off a rifle round just as the suspect fired his shotgun.

Sergeant Lawler's round hit the mark and the suspect fell, disappearing from view behind his car. Luckily, Sergeant Lawler was not hit by any of the pellets from the suspect's round.

Sergeant Lawler saw that as soon as the suspect fell the hostage escaped. Sergeant Lawler knew he had to ensure the suspect was still not a threat, so he left his cover and began his approach. As he neared the suspect's vehicle, he saw that there were two small children in the back seat, increasing the importance of making sure the suspect was no longer a threat.

As Sergeant Lawler scanned over the hood of the suspect's car, he saw the suspect on the pavement and then the shotgun being brought up to target him again. After firing three quick shots, the ordeal was over.

The valorous acts of Sergeant Lawler are a credit to himself, his office, and the community he serves. His personal actions under fire ensured that the hostage and her children survived, and no innocent persons were harmed. His calmness, professionalism and heroism are in keeping with the highest traditions of law enforcement. It is with great honor and pride that that National Rifle Association names Sergeant Dave Lawler as the 2009 NRA 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 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award may be downloaded at [www.nrahq.org/law/graphics/leoy.pdf](http://www.nrahq.org/law/graphics/leoy.pdf). Entry forms must be submitted by September 1.

Nominations are accepted from anyone having knowledge of the nominee's actions. This includes, but is not limited to, the nominee's agency head, other law enforcement officials, elected officials, fellow officers, community leaders, interested citizens, and NRA members.

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

# Vision and Shooting

BY EDWARD C. GODNIG, O.D., FCOVD  
PART 1

*Information contained within this article will give firearm instructors and marksmanship students a better understanding of how vision significantly contributes to shooting ability and success. Appreciating the dominant role vision plays in directing and monitoring most of the skills used during shooting will prove useful in updating training methodology. The ultimate result of incorporating useful scientific models and research into a training curriculum should result in shooting performance enhancement.*

A comprehensive definition of vision goes beyond the classic 20/20 sight definition. A limited concept of vision is often defined as the ability to see a sharp, clear, 20/20 or better visual acuity image. However, defining vision as a dynamic, learned process of deriving meaning and directing action from light energy establishes a scientific model to better appreciate the importance of vision for accurate and safe shooting.

Visual skills provide intelligent information to shooters concerning where targets are located, what details and characteristics constitute the target, as well as target speed and direction of movement. This type of spatial, temporal and labeling information is used to make a decision whether or not to coordinate a response to shoot the target. Understanding how visual abilities dominate the process of shooting targets accurately and quickly will provide a framework to improve firearms instruction.

An overview of the basic anatomy

and physiology of how the eye responds to light to begin the visual process establishes a framework of reference. The amount and intensity of light entering the eye dictates what neurological information is sent via the optic nerve to the brain for processing and interpretation. Generally, basic vision function is divided into three levels of light intensity; daylight (photopic), twilight (mesopic) and low light, night (scotopic) vision function.

Photopic vision functions during bright light levels. Specific neuroreceptors called cones dominate the eye's response to bright levels of light. The inner photosensitive part of the eye, called the retina, has approximately 7 million cones. Cones are concentrated in the area of the retina that corresponds to straight ahead vision. This anatomical area of the retina is called the macula, and within the macula is a depression called the fovea consisting almost entirely of cones. Cones convert light energy into neural energy sending information via the optic nerve to the brain. Reflected light from targets stimulates cones to send information to the brain about forms, shapes, textures, colors and high contrast sensitivity detection of various line forms. This information is then combined and analyzed by the brain to form an impression of the target.

From a practical perspective, only in daylight vision can very precise detail and color of a target be seen. Also, precise 3-D depth perception (stereopsis) is only possible during cone-dominated daylight viewing conditions. The highest degree of depth perception occurs when the central, straight ahead fixation



A good sight picture is critical for accurate shooting.

point in each eye sends information to the brain in a highly coordinated fashion. During low light conditions, the cones are unable to send precise signals for the brain to process depth.

Daylight vision enables the eyes to maintain the highest degree and control of eye fixation, the ability to maintain steady and accurate eye position upon a stationary target. Also, the ability to follow a moving target (called pursuit eye movements) functions optimally during photopic viewing conditions. A different type of eye movement of looking from one separated target to another target to another target, etc. (called saccadic eye movements) function much better during bright light conditions than during low light conditions. The voluntary act of allowing the extraocular muscles of the eye to position the eye such that images fall on the retina where cone density is highest is an important component of establishing visual attention on targets.

The ability to maintain accurate focus (accommodation) on a target requires sufficient light to activate the eye focusing system. The accommodative response functions most efficiently when the target reflects sufficient light to stimulate accurate eye focus. Cones have the best ability to receive the refracted light that the lens inside the eye alters during the act of focusing clearly on a target. When light diminishes, the cone function is suppressed and the quality of the eye focusing ability declines.

Once bright light declines and darkness emerges, there is a period of light transition (seen during dusk) defined as mesopia. During mesopia there is a shift from cone domination of vision to rod domination of vision. However, during mesopic vision, both rods and cones are partially active. The 120 million rods



Edward C. Godnig, O.D., FCOVD, is a 1976 graduate of the New England College of Optometry, Boston, Massachusetts. He maintains a private practice of optometry specializing in behavioral optometry.

Behavioral optometry is a clinical discipline that diagnoses and treats visual skills and abilities that have an impact on learning and movement behaviors. Dr. Godnig has a particular interest in enhancing the ability of shooters to use their visual system to improve marksmanship.

He has developed visual training exercises for shooters to improve the skills necessary for fast and accurate shooting. He can be reached at [egodnig@ak.net](mailto:egodnig@ak.net) for more information on visual training seminars for individuals or groups of marksmen. He also acts as a consultant to law enforcement professionals specializing in the areas of visual perception and visual attention.

Dr. Godnig welcomes inquiries about his visual enhancement programs and consulting services.

are located throughout the entire peripheral retina. The main functions of rods are to send visual information to the brain about movement detection, organizing spatial orientation of where targets may be located in space, and responding to low levels of light that may be present in the environment. During mesopia there is a gradual loss of color perception, gradual loss of discerning target detail, gradual loss of the ability to maintain accurate eye focus upon target, contrast sensitivity losses, and a diminishing ability to maintain accurate three dimensional depth perception. From a practical viewpoint, mesopia is complete when color perception is eliminated, and at this point, the visual system begins to function in scotopia.

When light levels fall into darkness, the human eye functions in a state of scotopia. Rod physiology does not allow for color vision nor the ability to discern detail. It is estimated that the best visual acuity during scotopia is 20/200. When you change from day vision to darkness immediately (e.g. entering a dark room during the day), the dark adaptation of cones is complete in five minutes, while full rod adaptation takes about 30 minutes. However, rods are more sensitive than cones at the seven-minute mark. Complete dark adaptation requires about 30 minutes for the rods to reach their highest level of sensitivity while in darkness.

The ability to maintain accurate eye focus upon a target is greatly reduced during scotopic vision function. Other important visual changes that accompany scotopic vision include increased awareness of peripheral light and movement, increased pupil size resulting in less depth of field, reduction in contrast sensitivity, loss of texture perspective, altered target search strategies and variability of eye focus control increases. It follows that detection of the fine details of an object of attention is greatly reduced. Unless there is added light source directed at a target, the human visual system is unable to judge accurately target characteristics such as size, shape, contour, texture and color.

*Look for part 2 in the next edition of the newsletter.*

## NRA CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Are you a former or retired law enforcement officer with a strong background in training, writing, and lesson plan development? We are currently seeking a **Curriculum Developer** in the Training Section of the NRA's Law Enforcement Division. This position is located at NRA Headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia.

To see the complete position description, or to apply for this position, go to [www.nrahq.org/careers/jobs.asp#1100](http://www.nrahq.org/careers/jobs.asp#1100)

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# Brownells announces formation of Brownells Law Enforcement Division and PoliceStore.com

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the Training Group Section contains articles, videos and the schedule of upcoming training opportunities offered through Brownells Training Group.

If you're not certain what you need or if, in this era of increasing complexity, you need help making something work, PoliceStore.com has your back with LE Tech Support. Taken together, PoliceStore.com is your single source for agency and individual officer needs!

PoliceStore.com uses *Safe and Secure Ordering* – just like Brownells.com.

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You get the best gear, as well as information and training, only at PoliceStore.com! Since it's from Brownells Law Enforcement Division, you get the gear, information, training and tech support – and you get it at a reasonable price!

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Just for NRA LED instructors and competitors, PoliceStore.com is offering a 5% discount until August 15, 2010. Instructors can contact Terri Van Scoyoc, NRA Law Enforcement Certifications Coordinator, at 703-267-1634; she will validate your instructor or competitor status, and provide you with the discount code to enter at PoliceStore.com.

## ***FBI Officer Killed Summary Seminar***

NRA Law Enforcement will be hosting the Federal Bureau of Investigations' Seminar on the Uniformed Crime Reports (UCR) of Law Enforcement Officers Killed or Assaulted.

This seminar is scheduled for November 3, 2010, at NRA Headquarters, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, Virginia.

This program will provide information on the history and policy relating to the LEOKA (Law Enforcement Officers Killed & Assaulted) Program. The emphasis of the presentation will be focused on the final companion study which was concluded in 2006, and resulted in a publication titled *Violent Encounters*. This study examines 40 incidents where police officers survived life threatening attacks. Demographic and behavioral descriptors for the victim officers and the offenders were developed and will be presented. The findings and resulting training issues will be presented.

Also provided are analyses between research projects resulting in three publications over 20 years: *Killed in the Line of Duty*, *In the Line of Fire*, and *Violent Encounters*. The objectives of these studies were to identify elements in certain situations which led to the ultimate felonious deaths and serious injuries of police officers. Demographic and behavioral descriptors for the victim officers and the offenders were developed and will be presented. Findings and safety training issues will be presented.

If you are in the Washington, D.C. area, or will be in the area at that time, please attend. For more information, please visit our website at [http://www.nrahq.org/law/training/fbi.asp?school\\_id=1177](http://www.nrahq.org/law/training/fbi.asp?school_id=1177).

You must sign up online, and it is on a first-come, first-served basis with seating limited to the first 100 officers.

# New study: the “gaze pattern” that wins gunfights

BY CHARLES REMSBERG

Highly trained, highly experienced police officers win more gunfights than new rookies because they watch and assess potential assailants according to a different “gaze pattern” that keeps them thinking and acting slightly ahead of the threat.

In a unique new study, the Force Science Research Center at Minnesota State University-Mankato compared the performances of 11 seasoned SWAT-team members who had years of experience fighting terrorists and 13 newly minted patrol officers who were about to hit the streets after graduating from police academy firearms training.

One at a time, at a training facility in the United Kingdom, the officers were mounted with a sophisticated eye-tracking head camera that allowed researchers to monitor precisely where the test subjects were looking at any given split-second. Each volunteer then participated in a live scenario in which he or she witnessed a male tourist confronting an uncooperative female bureaucrat in a heated dispute about a passport. The participating officers could only see the angry tourist from the rear. As the exchange escalated, the man drew a pistol from his waistband, spun around quickly, and fired at the watching officer from a distance of about 15 feet.

Each officer repeated the scenario seven times, but the researchers noted that repetition did not measurably change their performance.



Charles Remsberg is the editor of *Force Science News* and a member of the National Advisory Board for the Force Science Research Center. He is also senior correspondent/columnist for PoliceOne.com, the leading law enforcement training and information website, and the author of the recently published book *Blood Lessons: What Cops Learn from Life-or-Death Encounters*, as well as the best-selling *Street Survival* book series. Remsberg is the co-founder of Calibre Press and the Street Survival Seminar.

“When the eye-tracker recordings were meticulously analyzed later, there was a marked difference between how the so-called elite officers and the rank novices observed the action unfold and reacted to it,” says Dr. Bill Lewinski, who led the research team along with Dr. Joan Vickers of Canada’s University of Calgary.

Overall, the SWAT officers spent significantly less time assessing the situation before drawing their gun. Most were out and ready well before the assailant began his pivot.

After a series of brief fixations at different points on the male’s back, these officers increasingly directed their attention to his gun hand/arm. By the time he pulled his gun and began to spin toward them, the overwhelming majority were looking where the weapon appeared in anticipation of trouble, “revealing a remarkable degree of focus and concentration,” the researchers report.

In fact, most were enough ahead of the attack that they had time for a very brief, undisturbed period of super-concentration that Vickers calls “the quiet eye” as they fired to neutralize the threat.

(The quiet eye has been linked with superior performance across many different types of physical activity, including Olympic-level shooting.)

“The rookies did not show the same funneling of their attention to the assailant’s gun hand/arm,” Lewinski says. Instead, the series of fixations their gaze moved through was random and wildly varied. Only a minority were looking at the attacker’s gun hand/arm by the time he aimed and fired.

Most startling, in the critical last half-second of the scenario, when they came under attack and tried to respond, more than 80% were not even looking at their target! Their gaze was focused elsewhere and, Vickers says, “They did not see their assailant as they fired.” Few experienced anything even close to a quiet eye.

The results: 92% of the elite officers got a round off before the assailant fired, beating him by an average of nearly 180 milliseconds. On average, the rookies lagged behind their attacker by more than 13ms, “reacting to his attack rather than being ahead of him” as the SWAT officers were “during every phase of the encounter,” the researchers report.

Moreover, the elites hit the assailant nearly 75% of the time, compared to about 54% – “slightly more than chance” – or the rookies. And the SWAT hits were in the upper torso (center mass) 62% of the time, versus about 48% for the rookies.

The next challenge: Lewinski says the FSRC will be conducting additional studies in an effort to determine how police firearms training might be modified to better prepare new hires to use a winning gaze pattern before they deploy on street duty.

The Force Science Research Center can be contacted at [info@forcescience.org](mailto:info@forcescience.org).

## Firearms Info Website: NRAMuseum.org, Phase II

The NRA National Firearms Museum announced that Phase II of its extensive all-new website should launch in late May of this year.

[NRAMuseum.org](http://NRAMuseum.org) already includes a wealth of videos, photos and articles on historic firearms. The new update will include photos, text, and specs for all 2,200 firearms on display. Future updates will constantly add technical and reference material on gun related topics, and should become a primary internet destination for firearms information.



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## **2010 NATIONAL POLICE SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIPS** **September 19-23, 2010 • Albuquerque, New Mexico**

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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 = \$525 per person**

## HANDGUN & SHOTGUN

May 17-21 Amarillo, TX  
 May 17-21 Pittsburgh, PA (west)  
 May 24-28 Mesa, AZ  
 May 24-28 Roanoke, IN  
 May 31-Jun 4 Trinidad, CO  
 June 7-11 Allentown, PA (east)  
 June 14-18 Allentown, PA (east)  
 June 21-25 Mexico, MO  
 June 28-Jul2 Roanoke, IN  
 July 12-16 Salt Lake City, UT  
 July 19-23 Ithaca, NY  
 July 19-23 Maryville, TN  
 July 26-30 Baton Rouge, LA  
 July 26-30 Smithton, PA (west)  
 Aug 2-6 Roanoke, IN  
 Aug 9-13 Robinson, TX  
 Aug 16-20 Colts Neck, NJ  
 Aug 30-Sep3 Tupelo, MS  
 Aug 30-Sep3 White Sands, NM  
 Sep 13-17 Stennis Space Center, MS  
 Sep 27-Oct 1 Ft Wayne, IN  
 Sep 27-Oct 1 Panama City, FL  
 Oct 4-8 Leechburg, PA (west)  
 Oct 11-15 Abilene, TX  
 Oct 11-15 Las Vegas, NV (public LE only)  
 Oct 18-22 Defiance, MO (public LE only)  
 Nov 1-5 Pearl, MS  
 Nov 8-12 Sheffield, AL  
 Nov 29-Dec 3 Savannah, GA

## HANDGUN

Aug 23-27 Beckley, WV  
 Oct 11-15 Lusby, MD  
 Nov 15-19 North Chicago, IL

## PATROL RIFLE

May 17-21 Castle Rock, CO (public LE only)  
 May 17-21 Clearwater, FL  
 June 7-11 White Sands, NM  
 June 21-25 Pittsburgh, PA (west)  
 July 12-16 Lansing, KS  
 July 12-16 Memphis, TN  
 July 19-23 Egg Harbor Twp, NJ  
 July 26-30 Trinidad, CO  
 Aug 16-20 Canon City, CO  
 Aug 23-27 Santa Fe, NM  
 Aug 23-27 Smithton, PA (west)  
 Sep 20-24 Leechburg, PA (west)  
 Oct 4-8 Bethlehem, PA (east)  
 Oct 4-8 Robinson, TX  
 Oct 11-15 Pearl, MS  
 Oct 18-22 Lusby, MD  
 Oct 25-29 Abilene, TX  
 Oct 25-29 Ontario, Calif.  
 Nov 1-5 Panama City, FL  
 Nov 1-5 Salt Lake City, UT  
 Nov 1-5 Tulsa, OK  
 Nov 29-Dec 3 Las Vegas, NV (public LE only)

## PRECISION RIFLE

July 19-23 Salt Lake City, UT  
 Aug 2-6 Albuquerque, NM  
 Sep 20-24 Stennis Space Center, MS  
 Sep 27-Oct 1 Epping, NH  
 Sep 27-Oct 1 Roanoke, IN  
 Nov 1-5 Las Vegas, NV (public LE only)  
 Dec 6-10 White Sands, NM

## SELECT-FIRE

June 21-25 Sioux Falls, SD  
 June 28-Jul2 Independence, MO  
 July 19-23 Castle Rock, CO (public LE only)  
 Sep 27-Oct1 Bethlehem, PA (east)  
 Oct 4-8 Covington, TN  
 Oct 18-22 Sheffield, AL  
 Aug 30-Sep3 '11 Tupelo, MS  
 March 21-25 '11 Baton Rouge, LA

## TACTICAL SHOOTING

July 5-9 Allentown, PA (east)  
 Aug 16-20 Lansing, KS  
 Aug 23-27 Robinson, TX  
 Sep 13-17 Castle Rock, CO (public LE only)  
 Oct 11-15 Smithton, PA (west)  
 Oct 18-22 York, SC  
 Oct 25-29 Las Vegas, NV (public LE only)  
 Nov 1-5 Abilene, TX  
 Nov 1-5 Charleston, SC

## TACTICAL SHOTGUN

Aug 9-13 Castle Rock, CO (public LE only)  
 Sep 13-17 Leechburg, PA (west)  
 Oct 11-15 Bethlehem, PA (east)  
 Oct 25-29 Memphis, TN  
 Nov 15-19 Goddard, KS (public LE only)  
 Nov 29-Dec 3 Ontario, Calif.

## Tuition-Free Schools

Our Tuition-Free school schedule is being confirmed for 2010. We currently have:

**July 22** Glock Pistol Armorer  
**August 23-24** Beretta 90 Series Pistol & PX4 Pistol Armorer  
**August 25** Beretta M1/M2 Shotgun Armorer  
**December 13-14** Sig Sauer "P" Series Pistol Armorer

Keep an eye on our website as we will be adding more schools.

[www.nrahq.org/law/training/armorerschools.asp](http://www.nrahq.org/law/training/armorerschools.asp)

# NRA Law Enforcement Firearm Manuals and Training Aids

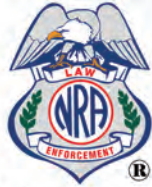


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## DISCIPLINES AVAILABLE:

**Handgun Handgun/Shotgun  
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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.

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