

# Sheriff's Orientation Training-Six Years Later

James M. Bradford

## **Abstract**

*The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office implemented a paramilitary based basic law enforcement recruit program in July 2006. The program consists of a two week "boot camp" followed by a recruit academy and holdover training at the agency. The program stresses discipline to enable the recruit to develop positive habits through physical fitness and personal accountability. The program was evaluated for effectiveness through surveys administered to program graduates, field training officers, and supervisors. While the program is still developing, the source of this study may be used as a baseline for a future longitudinal study. The survey results provided confirmation that the program is effective in the positive attitudes portrayed by its graduates to those whom they work with.*

## **Introduction**

March 17, 2013, 6 p.m., St. Patrick's Day. It's the annual celebration of Irish heritage marked with green - clad revelers who identify mostly with shamrocks and the term, "kiss me, I'm Irish". However, a different scene unfolds at the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office as new careers are starting at the Walter C. Heinrich Practical Training Site in Lithia, Florida. The only green that is being worn is by the 10 uniformed deputies in campaign hats who march in step up the road toward the 31 new recruits who are lined up facing that road, filled with anticipation at what the next two weeks will hold. Sheriff's Orientation Training, referred to as "SOT," begins.

As the deputies come to a halt, one lone instructor continues his march toward the gate, which will separate the new cadets from the outside world. The lead instructor barks an order to bring the line of sweaty -palmed cadets to the position of attention while the training commander, Major Alan Hill, takes center stage to address the formation. Hill, a 24-year law enforcement veteran who is an imposing figure at six foot five inches tall, commands, "Instructor Brown, secure the gate!" After the gate is closed, Major Hill tells the group of the proud history of the agency; from a lone sheriff on horseback in 1845, to the now 1,500-strong force of road deputies who patrol in cars, boats, and helicopters to keep the residents and visitors of the county safe. Hill tells these men and women, from all walks of life and varying experiences, that during the two-week camp they will be pushed to the limits of their physical and emotional endurance. Some, not all, he says, will make the cut. Others will leave for various reasons. The ones who conquer their fears and self-doubt, will continue on to the law enforcement training academy for 30 more weeks of classroom and practical training.

Major Hill turns the group over to the lead instructor, former US Marine drill instructor turned Deputy Sheriff Jeffrey Grant, to continue with this phase of training.

After the recruits are given some basic instruction on close order drill, they file into a formation under the watchful eyes of the remaining instructors, who bellow and bark orders from what seems like every direction. The lingering thoughts of St. Patrick's Day disappear as the formation marches, and halts, and marches again on the road known as the Green Mile, toward a group of prefabricated structures known as SOT Village. A journey into law enforcement begins.

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) provides law enforcement, detention, court, and child protective services to an urban population of 840,438 ("Hillsborough Community Atlas,"). Established in 1845, the agency has an authorized strength of 4,048 positions. Actual staffing vacancies provide a different outlook on the agency as a whole. As of August 1, 2013, the agency had the following staffing rates:

Position type	Authorized total	Filled	Vacant	Percentage Vacant
Total Law Enforcement Certified Positions	1,415	1,218	197	14%
Total Detention Certified Positions	1,061	917	144	14%
Total Civilian (non-certified) Positions	1,570	1,349	221	13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,048</b>	<b>3,484</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>14%</b>

**Source: HCSO-August 1, 2013**

In 2006, the agency identified a growing trend in the applicants that were interested in employment. Senior leaders identified a growing issue: applicants were very "vanilla" or "middle-of-the-road" with average work experience and educational background. There was no process in place to ascertain the candidates' willingness to succeed, leadership qualities, and abilities to sustain the rigors of the profession. A plan was implemented wherein candidates, once hired after a thoroughly vetted background investigation, were put through a paramilitary style two-week residential training program with a clear emphasis on physical fitness, high liability training, team building, and leadership skills. Throughout this training, a military-styled discipline and order were taught and reinforced in each area of instruction. This discipline was also reinforced in recruit life at the training site, in the following Law Enforcement Basic Recruit Training Program at Hillsborough Community College and the post-academy training held at the agency training center.

There are three basic tenets that guided the SOT program,

1. Attention to detail (recruits must bring everything listed on a packing list as it is important to have exactly what you are told to bring instead of what you think you will need. This translates to good investigative and performance habits in future work),
2. Sense of urgency (what citizens expect out of its first responders), and
3. Quick response to commands (generally and globally trained through military drill, which instills quick reactions to commands that may impact them later in their career).

Top leaders within the agency were committed to the process that they believed would forge a deputy committed to themselves (through personal fitness), their fellow deputies (through teamwork), and the agency (through leadership, discipline, and commitment to excellence). Most decision makers thought real results might not reveal themselves for a decade or more. This research will review the quality of the law enforcement employees produced by the program through individual SOT graduate surveys, and surveys of their Field Training Officers and supervisors.

## **Literature Review**

As the topic of this research is focused on a review of the agency's current law enforcement academy program instituted in 2006, there has been no formal review of its effectiveness to date. In 2010, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office's industrial psychologist, Dr. Albert Murillo, PhD, formed focus groups composed of former members of SOT classes IV, V, and VII. The focus groups convened in October 2010 and discussed their training in Module and in the Field Training block. The term Module refers to HCSO's post law enforcement academy training, which varies in length from seven to 10 weeks. The training is composed of expanded blocks of instruction to include defensive tactics, emergency vehicle operation and firearms. Members of the agency training staff conduct the in-house instruction, which is in addition to state mandated training. The focus groups identified areas of improvement, and those areas of improvement did not reflect the goals of this research report.

As stated, this program is somewhat unique to the agency. There have been no published works specifically directed towards this program, but there have been works published in professional journals documenting paramilitary police academy environments.

Authors Allison T. Chappell and Lonn Lanza-Kaduce studied the effects of the paramilitary police academy environment and the teaching of the community policing concepts. The authors found that paramilitary emphasis "undercut the notion that community policing is 'real' police work" and that, the most relevant police training received reinforced paramilitary structure of law enforcement. "First, recruits learned about positional authority and the command hierarchy; they learned what discipline and deference meant in law enforcement.

Second, the recruits learned about law enforcement's emphasis on loyalty, solidarity, and reliance on fellow officers. Third, the academy structured stress into the regimen so that recruits would learn to expect stress and how to perform under stress." (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2009).

Although not directly paramilitary related, Violanti has studied stress-coping mechanisms in police training. Certainly, paramilitary type police academy training involves stress being placed on recruits to illicit a response. Violanti discusses the use of coping strategies by recruits and the mechanisms to deal with stress. Some of these were beneficial and others were not. Those recruits who experienced higher levels of stress had inadequate coping techniques. His response was to suggest training facilities employ different methods of instruction in order to help students cope more efficiently in the academy program (Violanti, 1993).

Author Jess Gundy, in his June 2007 Law and Order magazine article, *Paramilitary Training in Police Academies*, submits an overview of paramilitary type police training that has become a law enforcement industry standard. Paramilitary police academy training (also referred to as stress academy, adult learning, or character based training) places the police recruit in an environment where the physical, verbal, and time-management stressors applied on the individual to produce “highly disciplined, fully functional, and physically fit police officer who is capable of making decisions as well as follow instructions.” (Gundy 2007) Programs of this nature, typically residential in format, consist of five phases of training, each building on each other with a heavy emphasis on discipline. While there is some form and function to the programs, a typical downfall of some of the programs has been that the staff and administrators have made up the program as they have progressed. This provides a lack of consistency from class to class. Contrary to this scheme is the community oriented policing (COP) style wherein supporters challenge that graduates of a paramilitary-type training school are incapable of solving problems or making decisions by themselves. While there is no evidence to support this claim, it should be noted that the paramilitary style has been in existence for a number of years and there are far greater numbers of graduates of the paramilitary academy than a COP academy, who have attained leadership positions. The author submits the COP philosophy should not be totally disregarded, as it has its place in a post-academy training environment. A second alternative to the paramilitary system is based on law enforcement certification through a college system. The author contends that inherent problems arise in that graduates have displayed difficulties with character and ethics. Their adaptation to the law enforcement hierarchy environment has also been at issue. The paramilitary environment is significant as it “brings order and structure to the police profession” (Gundy, 2007).

In 1959, Donald Kirkpatrick wrote a series of articles for the American Society for Training and Development wherein he described four levels for evaluation. Out of that, he and James Kirkpatrick morphed those ideas in the book *Evaluating Training Programs-the Four Levels*, now in its third edition. The authors assert that performance improvement cannot be attained if we just train. There needs to be some other follow-up and reinforcement of sustainable results.

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick describe the four levels of evaluation as: *Reaction, Learning, Behavior, and Results*. *Reaction* refers to the way a participant reacts to the training program. Simply stated, the training has to have a positive effect on the participant if the program is to continue and grow. *Learning* is defined as the degree to which one changes their attitudes, advance their knowledge, or increase their skill level as a result of the program. The authors note that no learning can occur if one or more of these things are not present. *Behavior* is described as a change in ones behavior as a result of the program. *Reaction* and *Learning* must be evaluated prior to *Behavior*. “A change in behavior occurs under the four conditions:

1. The person must desire to change
2. The person must know what to do and how to do it
3. The person must work in the right climate
4. The person must be rewarded for changing (Kirkpatrick 23).

The right climate refers to the participant's supervisor. The five supervisory climates are Preventing, Discouraging, Neutral, Encouraging, and Requiring. Each of these supervisory attitudes describes the buy-in to the training by that supervisor. Preventing describes the supervisor who does not want their employee to use their new training at all. The training may be in conflict with the supervisor style of management or leadership. The term Discouraging means that the supervisor's behavior does not model the things learned in the program and this negative modeling or lack of model discourages the participant from implementing their new behaviors. The third condition is Neutral. The Neutral supervisor ignores the fact that the participant has attended the training at all. The supervisor has no opinion one way or another, as long as the job gets done. The Encouraging supervisor inspires the employee to put their new skills or knowledge into action and even can assist the employee in making that happen. The Requiring supervisor knows what the employee has learned and ensures the employee puts it into action.

In the Preventing and Discouraging climate, there is little doubt the newfound skills will be put to use after the participant receives the training. If the supervisor is Neutral, then the success of the implementation will depend on the person's desire to change, the person's ability to know what to do and how to do it, and the rewards the employee will receive (either intrinsic or extrinsic). If the supervisor is Encouraging or Requiring, the success depends on the person's desire to change and their know-how.

The success or *Results* of a training program may not be measured in financial terms. The results of training such as leadership and communication can only be measured in outcomes where desirable behaviors can be seen. These behaviors may include morale or improved quality of work life (Kirkpatrick Page 26).

These four guidelines give the evaluator a true measuring stick of how to evaluate the success or shortcoming of any training program. The four-level approach is basic and fundamental and its application can prove a program's effectiveness.

## **Method**

The purpose of this research is to determine if the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Sheriff's Orientation Training is an effective process wherein graduates of the program continue to maintain the high levels of discipline and commitment that were taught to them in the program. In order to draw any conclusions to these inquiries, the views of sworn HCSO law enforcement employees were obtained through three survey instruments. Specifically, a total of 251 respondents who successfully completed the program were selected to make up the sample for the first survey. Those selected deputies answered a survey questionnaire structured in Likert format that was developed and distributed to them through the agency's computer Intranet system. Likewise, a second survey instrument was distributed in the same manner to 79 Field Training Officers (FTOs) identified using human resource information obtained through the agency. A third survey was distributed to 244 supervisors using the same aforementioned procedure. The supervisor sample was comprised of sworn law enforcement employees who hold the rank of Corporal, Sergeant, and Lieutenant. Data gathered from this research instrument was then computed for interpretation.

The survey response rate was:

- 76% for SOT Graduates (190 responses/251 deployed)
- 57% for FTOs (45 responses/79 deployed)
- 50% for Supervisors (123 responses/244 deployed)

The information gathered assessed the attitudes of the participants and the stakeholders in the program. While reflecting the advantages and disadvantages of the program, the surveys showed the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions in relation to the survey participant's position within the organization.

## Results

### Graduate Survey

The SOT graduates who responded were predominantly male (84.95%) between the ages of 26-30 (45.99%) and members of SOT class numbers 4-16 (55%). This particular class identifier question was grouped according to three Division Commanders of each class. Since a healthy workforce reduces Workers Compensation insurance claims and reduces sick time usage, physical condition and its maintenance is stressed during the entire program. Several questions regarding physical fitness, appearance, discipline and job preparation were asked of the graduates. For example, Q4 asks "The physical training I received at SOT has encouraged me to say in good physical condition today." Graduates concurred by responding-strongly agreed (36.51%) or agreed (47.62%). In addition, graduates continue to exercise two to four days per week (59.26%) and five to seven days per week (31.75%) (Q5). Graduates also were positive in their responses that the military-style discipline has benefited them with their relationships with co-workers, supervisors and members of the public (Q6); as well as their confidence level (Q7) and if the program provided them with the building blocks necessary to be successful in their job (Q8). However, Question (Q9) asks, "In my opinion, non-SOT graduates support the mission and ideals of the SOT program" has a response rate of 188 and was skipped by 2 respondents. The respondents' responded in the following ways:

- 3.19% strongly agreed
- 11.7% agreed
- 39.36% were neutral
- 40.43% disagreed
- 5.32% strongly disagreed.

### Field Training Officer Survey

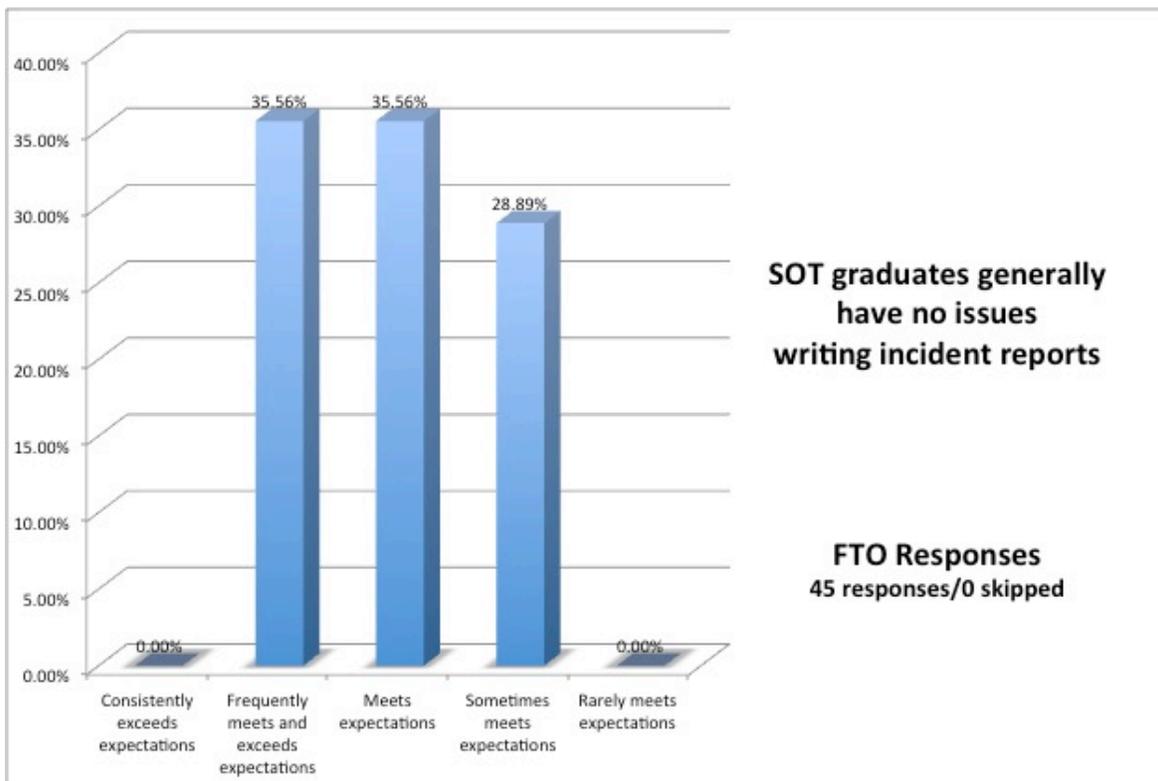
The majority of the FTOs who responded had been in that position for 2-5 years (43.18%) and have trained a close majority of 3-10 (43.18%) or 10-20 (36.36%) (*Note-a review of this question (Q2) reveals a flaw in the survey question. The uniformity of the*

number of graduates trained (1-5, 6-10, etc.) would have been more beneficial in the analysis of the data.) Also, more than half (53.3%) of the FTOs responded they have not trained non-SOT graduates. This finding is directly related to the fact the majority of the FTOs have only been in that position since the program was developed. Since the program has existed six years, it would have been beneficial to query the number of FTOs who are also SOT graduates.

FTOs were in line with graduates in the positive responses that the military-style discipline has benefited them with their relationships with co-workers, supervisors and members of the public (Q5), but either agreed or were neutral in their response to Q6: "In general, SOT graduates are confident when confronted with unfamiliar situations". Results showed no FTOs strongly agreed, 53.33% agreed, 33.33% were neutral, 11.11% disagreed, and 2.22% strongly disagreed.

FTO questionnaire Q4 makes the statement "SOT Graduates generally have no issues writing incident reports." While none of the respondents replied, "consistently exceeds expectations" or "rarely meets expectations", the remaining answers were within 7 percentage points of each other:

- Frequently meets and exceeds expectations 35.56%
- Meets expectations 35.56%
- Sometimes meets expectations 28.89%



## Supervisors Survey

The supervisors who responded to the survey have been agency employees for 16-20 years and have an average of 6-10 years of supervisory experience. They have supervised an average of 3-10 graduates (*Note-a review of this question (Q3) reveals a flaw in the survey question. The uniformity of the number of graduates supervised (1-5, 6-10, etc.) would have been more beneficial in the analysis of the data.*) The survey responses show the majority of supervisors have a positive opinion of the program and the graduates. Their attitudes and opinions are slightly different than the FTOs in that the supervisors had a slightly higher opinion of SOT graduates' report writing abilities:

- Consistently exceeds expectations 3.96%
- Frequently meets and exceeds expectations 40.59%
- Meets expectations 43.56%
- Sometimes meets expectations 10.89%

The remainder of the survey solidified the supervisors' positive opinions of the graduates as well as the program itself. In general, supervisors have more time with the agency in-grade and have different perspectives on the operation and outcomes of the mission of the agency. Their longevity in the agency possibly lends support to their positive opinion as shown in question 14: "Q14 Compared to non-SOT recruits, SOT recruits are better prepared for the FTO program." The generally positive responses (*Note-22 survey participants skipped this item. A review of this question reveals a flaw in the survey question. This question was in the supervisor survey, and appears to be an FTO- related question. There is a possibility a supervisor has never served as an FTO and cannot answer the question. A more appropriate response option dealing with supervisor would have been more beneficial in the analysis of the data.*) The supervisor response were recorded as follows:

- 25.74% strongly agreed
- 36.63% agreed
- 22.77% were neutral
- 7.92% disagreed
- 1.98% strongly disagreed
- 4.95% have never trained a SOT recruit.

The survey results were positive and helped reinforce the agency's goal of providing a relevant, meaningful, and sustainable program that not only benefits the agency members, but the community as well. The survey outcome allows the organization to continue to refine the program as it evolves, because the program has proved to be a benefit to the stakeholders in the program. As the program has developed, the survey results demonstrate the program has been accepted and supported by the key personnel who have a meaningful investment in the program and its success.

## Discussion

### Background of HCSO Training

When tasked with starting a new training program, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Major (now Colonel) James Previtiera was faced with a monumental task. It was May 2007, and he was given an assignment to develop and implement a new training camp to commence in July 2007. Working quickly, Major Previtiera contacted some of the more prominent police agencies in the United States to include the New Jersey State Police and the Los Angeles Police Department. Major Previtiera, the Training Division Commander, took different aspects of different training programs and formulated the agency's own; the program that became known as SOT (Previtera, 2013). This boot camp style program (Gundy 2007) evolved over time into what it is today.

At the Sheriff's Office, the Recruitment and Screening Section recruits and processes deputy sheriff applications for both law enforcement and detention services. The application process starts off with a pre-screen questionnaire to ensure the candidate can meet the stringent hiring guidelines set forth by the agency. To become a Law Enforcement Deputy with the agency, an applicant must be a United States Citizen at least 21 years of age, with 60 semester hours from an accredited college/university or three years of U.S. Military service. Applicants are also expected to have a clean driving record, as well as be tobacco-free for six months prior to application, and have no tattoos that would be visible while wearing a long sleeve uniform shirt. Finally, applicants must not have used any illegal drugs within 36 months of making application or after the age of 30. Once an applicant passes this electronic, pre-screen questionnaire, the applicant participates in a Physical Abilities Assessment (PAA). The PAA has minimum scores for sit-ups: 25 in one minute; pushups: 25 in one minute; vertical leap of 14 inches; 1.5 mile run in 14:30, and a 300-yard run: in 69 seconds (HCSO web site.)

Once passing these basic filters, applicants complete a comprehensive electronic application to include a writing sample. The background investigator reviews the application at which time the applicant submits to a polygraph examination, an Oral Review Board, and completes a ride along with a deputy on patrol. A written summary of the patrol ride along is submitted as well. After satisfactorily completing these steps, the candidate's application is presented to a command staff review board for selection for employment. Approximately 5% of all applicants from the many who apply for each SOT class are given a conditional offer of employment. If the applicant then passes a second subsequent polygraph test, psychological battery, and a physical exam, they are accepted into the program.

After attending the two week "boot camp", these new employees (now called Cadets) attend the 31-week (770-hour) Law Enforcement Basic Recruit Training Program offered by Hillsborough Community College's Criminal Justice Institute. Upon completion of the program, the cadets attend a 10-week post-academy HCSO agency-specific training (Module Training), during which time they sit for the state law enforcement certification examination. Once all requirements and standards are met, the cadets are sworn in by the Sheriff and assigned to a patrol district for field training.

## Evaluation

The use of the survey to measure the attitudes of the graduates, FTOs, and supervisors is taken into account to make a determination if the program is a success or not. To measure training, there needs to be a set point to measure the new employees' attitudes and knowledge level prior to the start of training. At this point in time, there is no measure of knowledge or attitude prior to the start of the program (Kirkpatrick 2005). The only benchmark that is recorded is the aforementioned Physical Abilities Assessment that is recorded at the beginning of SOT and at the conclusion of SOT. With a rigorous physical fitness regimen, there is usually an improvement in physical performance from each assessment.

In applying the Kirkpatrick model of the four levels of evaluation (*Reaction, Learning, Behavior, and Results*) the program can be partially evaluated using the data collected from the surveys. In *Reaction*, the surveys show that the training has a positive effect on the graduates based on their responses being positive. The graduate responses were positive when asked about improving their sense of responsibility in their job, and if the program is an effective part of new recruit training. FTOs cite that SOT graduates are more confident when confronted with unfamiliar situations and act responsibly in their job. Supervisor responses mirror the same attitudes as the FTOs (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2007).

In *Learning*, the graduate, FTO, and supervisor survey responses support this as well. The graduates have changed their attitudes, advanced their knowledge, and increased their skill level as a result of the program (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2007).

The third level in Kirkpatrick's model is *Behavior*. All three surveys show a change in behavior in knowledge, discipline, and commitment. *Behavior* also includes the learner (graduate) must work in the right climate. Based on the graduate and supervisor survey responses, there is a majority of graduates who feel they are supported by FTOs (pseudo-supervisors) and supervisors. Supervisor responses also show a majority of the supervisors support the SOT program and the graduates in their job (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2007).

The success or *Results* of the program can be seen in several positive graduate responses to include their attitude that training is an on-going process and that they feel they, and the SOT program, are supported in their job. Desirable behaviors can be seen by each surveyed group in graduates' appearance, interaction with supervisors, report writing, and continued support of the SOT mission (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2007).

A continued evaluation of training occurs at the agency by using the San Jose Model of field training as well as scheduled meetings attended by the Training Division staff and the Patrol District FTO Lieutenants. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the successes and areas of development of the graduates in field training. Quality assurance of training is ensured by thorough discussion of the challenges faced by the new deputies who are continuing in their training. These meetings also provide accountability for the Training Division to improve the quality of the training provided in the SOT process.

## Survey Opinions

The survey results demonstrate the program has a positive impact on the graduates. The positive responses regarding physical fitness, appearance, discipline, and job preparation show that the program is supported by the opinions of the graduates. This is in line with the research conducted by Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce (2009). Unfortunately, SOT graduates have the opinion that non-SOT graduates tend to not support the mission and ideals of the SOT program. The negative response to this question reveals an area of growth, communication, and further study for both clarity of the problem and its remedy.

The survey showed 53.33% of the FTOs responded they have never trained a non-SOT graduate; which leads to the indication that that percentage may be SOT graduates. A supportive fact, in this researcher's opinion, is stated in the FTO response in question 15, wherein the FTOs are asked to give a response to "The SOT program is (an) effective process in the training of new recruits". None strongly disagreed and 9% disagreed with the statement. Further, 43.18% agreed and 27.27% strongly agreed (70.45% total) with the statement.

As at many agencies, report writing is an area of concern for the new deputies' assimilation into the agency. This response supports the agency's desire to produce deputies that have a basic ability to communicate in written form. FTOs seemed satisfied with the level of report writing by the graduates as is evidenced in the positive FTO responses in Question 4-"SOT graduates generally have no issues writing incident reports". Based on this researcher's personal experience, the Field Training Officer instructs, reviews, and approves the trainee's reports prior to submission for supervisory review and approval. The FTOs' opinions of report writing are probably based on the frequency of reports that are returned to the trainee for correction. The final product is refined and submitted to the supervisor for approval.

When asked about a comparison of SOT graduates versus non-SOT graduates and their preparation for the FTO program (Q14. Compared to non-SOT recruits, SOT recruits are better prepared for the FTO program), the FTOs responses showed there was no overwhelming difference in the agreement or disagreement with the statement. This shows, in their opinion, the program is indeed an effective process for training (also supported by Violanti (1993). This holds true in the FTOs positive responses to supporting the objectives of the program and their likelihood to recommend a person to apply for employment as a deputy for the agency (Q16, Q17).

Supervisors' opinions were generally supportive of the program. They overwhelmingly agreed that SOT graduates are in good physical shape (78.22%) and generally agreed that the military discipline benefited the graduates in their relationships with co-workers, supervisors, and members of the public. In the supervisors' opinion, SOT graduates were also proficient with technology. Supervisors also generally agreed that graduates had job knowledge competency, acted responsibly, and wanted to learn and improve. Most important, supervisors agreed the SOT program was an effective process in training new recruits and supported the objectives of the program, as well as recommend someone to apply for the agency.



## Recommendations

Since the only evaluation or research of attitudes toward SOT was conducted internally by the agency in 2010 (see Literature Review), this researcher's surveys can be used as a baseline for further study or a longitudinal study conducted either by class completion or at regular intervals in a post-FTO environment. As time progresses and the graduates' progress to FTO and supervisor positions, the mission and success of the SOT program will be solidified. While at the present time there is not 100% buy-in by all members of the agency, there is the likelihood that the program will never receive total support. In order to further communicate and demystify some of the unknowns held by HCSO employees, the Training Division provides an overview of the program to newly promoted supervisors; as well as having FTOs participate for three weeks in the last phase of Module training. This provides the FTOs an opportunity to observe the graduates in a training environment as well as participate in their training.

Not being a SOT graduate and never having trained a SOT graduate, this researcher had one year of exposure to the program while serving as a Patrol District FTO Lieutenant. During that time this researcher made observations and formed opinions that may or may not have been founded in fact. Having spent the past two years as the Training Division Lieutenant, the researcher was able to participate and observe the SOT program in- depth and at all levels. Based on the survey results and this researcher's own practical experience, the program should remain intact but should continue to seek improvements and refinement as needed. While no program is perfect, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office has a committed staff who are always willing to put forth great effort to provide the best training available, as well as seek continued improvement to ensure the safety and development of its participants for the future.

Lt Jim Bradford has been a deputy with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office since 1989 and is currently a Lieutenant assigned to the Training Division. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of South Florida and is a graduate of the Tampa Police Academy. Lt Bradford has held a variety of assignments to include patrol and street crimes. He has also held various detective assignments in the following areas: burglary, robbery, homicide, and intelligence. He has held supervisory positions in both patrol and detective units for the past eight years. He was on the transition team to bring child protective investigations from the Department of Children and Families to the Sheriff's Office. He was also part of the supervisory team that implemented the Intelligence Led Policing concept at the district patrol level-a concept that has seen double digit drops in crime rates in Hillsborough County. Currently, Lt. Bradford is also the vice-chairman of the Hillsborough County Training Consortium as well as the vice-chairman of the Region 9 Training Consortium.

## References

- Chappell, A. T., & Lanza-Kaduce, L. (2009). Police academy socialization: Understanding the lessons learned in a paramilitary-bureaucratic organization. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 39(2), 187-214. doi: 10.1177/0891241609342230
- Gundy, J. (2007, June). Paramilitary training in police academies. *Law and Order*, 55(6), 22-24, 27-30. Retrieved from [http://www.hendonpub.com/resources/article\\_archive/results/details?id=3163](http://www.hendonpub.com/resources/article_archive/results/details?id=3163)
- Hillsborough community atlas*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.hillsborough.communityatlas.usf.edu/demographics/default.asp?ID=1205799057&level=mncplty>
- Kirkpatrick, D. L., & Kirkpatrick, J. D. (2007). *Evaluating training programs, The four levels*. (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Murillo, A. Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Training Division. (2010). *Training module/fto improvement research*
- Previtera, J. D. (2013, July 9). Interview by J.M. Bradford.
- Violanti, J. M. (1993). What does high stress police training teach recruits? An analysis of coping. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 21(4), 411-417.

## Appendix A

### Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Sheriff's Orientation Training Graduate Survey

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Training Division is conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Sheriff's Orientation Training (SOT) program based in part on the survey responses of its graduates. For the purpose of this survey, the term SOT includes the first two weeks spent at the Walter C. Heinrich Practical Training Site, the Basic Law Enforcement Academy at Hillsborough Community College, and the post-academy Module training. All answers are kept confidential.

Q1. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

Q2. Age

- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- Over 40

Q3. I was a member of SOT class number \_\_\_\_\_.

- 1-3
- 4-16
- 17-21

Q4. The physical training I received at SOT has encouraged me to stay in good physical condition today.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q5. In a typical week, how many days do you exercise?

- I don't regularly exercise
- Once a week
- 2 to 4 days a week
- 5 to 7 days a week

Q6. The military type discipline that was instilled in me has benefited me in my relationships with\_\_\_\_\_ . Each of the three items were rated separately.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

- co-workers
- supervisors
- the public

Q7. I am more self-confident after the completion of SOT than I was before I started the program.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Q8. The SOT program provided me with the building blocks necessary to be successful in my job.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Q9. In my opinion, non-SOT graduates support the mission and ideals of the SOT program.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Q10. My appearance in uniform (including footwear) today is to the standards that were set for me in SOT.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Q11. The SOT program improved my sense of responsibility in my job.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q12. The SOT program is an effective part of the new recruit training process.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q13. The objectives of the SOT program are supported by the agency's objectives.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q14. I consider training an on-going process to continue in my development as a deputy sheriff.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q15. Knowing what the SOT program entails, how likely are you to recommend someone to apply for the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neutral
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your input will shape the future of training in the agency!

## Appendix B

### Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Field Training Officer Survey

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Training Division is conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Sheriff's Orientation Training (SOT) program based in part on the survey responses of the Field Training Officers (FTO). For the purpose of this survey, the term SOT describes those law enforcement deputies who have completed training that includes the two week training at the Walter C. Heinrich Practical Training Site, the Basic Law Enforcement Academy at Hillsborough Community College, and the post-academy Module training. All answers are kept confidential.

Q1. I have been a Field Training Officer for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

- 0-1 year
- 2-5 years
- more than 5 years

Q2. I have trained \_\_\_\_\_ graduates of the SOT program.

- 1-3
- 3-10
- 10-20
- more than 20

Q3. I have trained \_\_\_\_\_ non-SOT recruits.

- none
- 1-3
- 3-10
- 10-20
- more than 20

Q4. In my opinion, SOT graduates are in good physical condition when they start the field training program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q5. In my opinion, the military type discipline that was instilled in SOT graduates has benefited them in their relationships with. Each of the three items were rated separately.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

- co-workers
- supervisors
- the public

Q6. In general, SOT graduates are self-confident when confronted with unfamiliar situations.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Q7. In my opinion, SOT graduates support the mission and ideals of the agency.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Q8. SOT graduates consistently arrive for their shift with. Each of the three items were rated separately.

Consistently exceeds expectations  
Frequently meets and exceeds expectations  
Meets expectations  
Sometimes meets expectations  
Rarely meets expectation

- a clean uniform
- polished shoes
- their car washed

Q9. SOT graduates generally have no issues writing incident reports.

Consistently exceeds expectations  
Frequently meets and exceeds expectations  
Meets expectations  
Sometimes meets expectations  
Rarely meets expectations

Q10. SOT graduates have the ability to master new technology (Versedex, SMARTCOP, etc) with \_\_\_\_\_.

- no assistance from others
- minimal assistance from others
- assistance from others
- more than average assistance from others
- total assistance from others

Q11. SOT graduates act responsibly in their job.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q12. In my opinion, SOT graduates possess knowledge to perform job competently

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q13. In my opinion, SOT graduates strive to learn and improve.

- Consistently exceeds expectations
- Frequently meets and exceeds expectations
- Meets expectations
- Sometimes meets expectations
- Rarely meets expectations

Q14. Compared to non-SOT recruits, SOT recruits are better prepared for the FTO program

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I have never trained a non-SOT recruit

Q15. The SOT program is effective process in the training of the new recruits.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q16. I support the objectives of the SOT program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q17. Knowing what the SOT program entails, how likely are you to recommend someone to apply for the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neutral
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your input will shape the future of training in the agency!

## Appendix C

### Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Supervisor Survey

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Training Division is conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Sheriff's Orientation Training (SOT) program based in part on the survey responses of supervisors. For the purpose of this survey, the term SOT describes those law enforcement deputies who have completed training that includes the two week training at the Walter C. Heinrich Practical Training Site, the Basic Law Enforcement Academy at Hillsborough Community College, and the post-academy Module training. All answers are kept confidential.

Q1. I have been employed for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- more than 25 years

Q2. I have been a supervisor for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- more than 20 years

Q3. Over my supervisory career, I have supervised \_\_\_\_\_ graduates of the SOT program.

- None
- 1-3
- 3-10
- 10-20
- more than 20

Q4. In my opinion, SOT graduates are in good physical condition when they start the field training program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q5. In my opinion, the military type discipline that was instilled in SOT graduates has benefited them in their relationships with. Each of the three items were rated separately.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

- co-workers
- supervisors
- the public

Q6. In general, SOT graduates are self-confident when confronted with unfamiliar situations.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Q7. In my opinion, SOT graduates support the mission and ideals of the agency.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Q8. SOT graduates consistently arrive for their shift with. Each of the three items were rated separately.

Consistently exceeds expectations  
Frequently meets and exceeds expectations  
Meets expectations  
Sometimes meets expectations  
Rarely meets expectation

- a clean uniform
- polished shoes
- their car washed

Q9. SOT graduates generally have no issues writing incident reports.

Consistently exceeds expectations  
Frequently meets and exceeds expectations  
Meets expectations  
Sometimes meets expectations  
Rarely meets expectations

Q10. SOT graduates have the ability to master new technology (Versedex, SMARTCOP, etc) with \_\_\_\_\_.

- no assistance from others
- minimal assistance from others
- assistance from others
- more than average assistance from others
- total assistance from others

Q11. SOT graduates act responsibly in their job.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q12. In my opinion, SOT graduates possess knowledge to perform job competently

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q13. In my opinion, SOT graduates strive to learn and improve.

- Consistently exceeds expectations
- Frequently meets and exceeds expectations
- Meets expectations
- Sometimes meets expectations
- Rarely meets expectations

Q14. Compared to non-SOT recruits, SOT recruits are better prepared for the FTO program

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I have never trained a non-SOT recruit

Q15. The SOT program is effective process in the training of the new recruits.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q16. I support the objectives of the SOT program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q17. Knowing what the SOT program entails, how likely are you to recommend someone to apply for the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neutral
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your input will shape the future of training in the agency!