

First Annual Tin Man

by John T. Meyer, Jr.

On November 23, 1986, the U.S. Army Armament Research Development and Engineering Center (ARDEC) SRT hosted a Tactical Team Survival Course, better known as the "Tin Man." Invitations were extended to those tactical teams that had participated in the SRT Tactical Team Seminars held at ARDEC (see Fall, 1986 issue of "The Tactical Edge").

The purpose of the Tin Man course was for tactical teams to participate in a physical endurance course which would require them to use skills associated with rescue operations.

To emphasize the "team" concept of the Tin Man, a 5-man team was required to enter. Each team had to supply the following equipment:

- 1 Stokes basket
- 1 .12 gauge shotgun
- 1 Rowboat w/oars (12'-14')
- 1 Canoe w/ oars (10'-18')
- 5 Life preservers
- 5 Rappel seats
- 5 "D" Rings
- 5 Figure 8's
- 5 Sets of gloves (leather)

All participating personnel wore their tactical uniform and boots and were required to carry a handgun.



SRT member exits window during obstacle course section. All photos by author.



Shooting clay targets at the trap range.

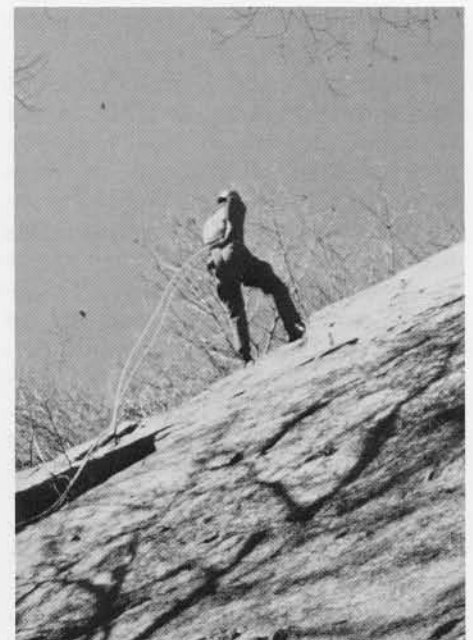
Five teams participated in the Tin Man Course: Ft. Hamilton (SRT), Somerset County Prosecutors (SERT), Gloucester County (SWAT), Fairlawn Police Department (ERT), and Ocean County Sheriff (ESU). After a safety briefing and course orientation, the teams were ready to begin.

The first leg of the course was a team carry in which four members of the team carried the fifth member in the Stokes basket. The teams were permitted to take turns in the basket over the 3/4-mile distance. At the completion of the carry, the teams faced an obstacle course which consisted of a short run on an incline toward a building. Once at the building, they were required to go through a window, through the building, and back out the other side. They then went under a crawl space, up through a hole in the floor, out a window, ran a 100-yard dash, climbed over a wall, and down two flights of stairs. This completed the obstacle course.

A 1/2-mile run to "The Mountain" was next. The mountain is a power line cut which rises 400 feet for 1/4-mile of very rocky terrain. At the mountaintop most participants took a short break. During this time, they held discussions with their team about what they were doing, questioned if they wanted to continue,

and mumbled about the creator of such a course. After a quick gulp of oxygen, the teams were off for a 1 3/4-mile jog over a hill-ridden dirt road to the trap range.

At the trap range, each team member was given one .12 gauge shotgun round and was presented one clay target within five seconds. Two minutes of penalty time were added for every target missed. There was only one shotgun per team. Each



Rappelling down the 70' sheer rock cliff.



SRT member crosses rope bridge.

team member was required to use the same shotgun. As soon as a team member on the line shot, the

next team member had five seconds to take the weapon, load and be ready for the next target. If he was

not ready, the target was presented and it was counted as a miss.

Next was a 3/4-mile jog through the woods, down a steep hill, over rough terrain to the rappel site. The rappel was set on a 70' sheer rock cliff. Each team member hooked up to the rappel line using a D-ring and Figure 8 and rappelled down. Most officers had never rappelled down a rock face since most of their training had been performed from rooftops.

From the bottom of the cliff, it was a short run to a 30' rope stretched across a stream on which each participant pulled himself across.

From there, each team ran to their respective boats and canoes and rowed the 1 1/2-mile length of Pica-tinny Lake. Once landing on shore and pulling their boats in, the teams had finally completed the Tin Man.

A barbecue followed, where officers ate, drank, rested and joked

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about their adventures of the day.

The winning time of one hour, 36 minutes was achieved by Ft. Hamilton. The "First Annual Tin Man Plaque" was presented to them as recognition of their accomplishment.

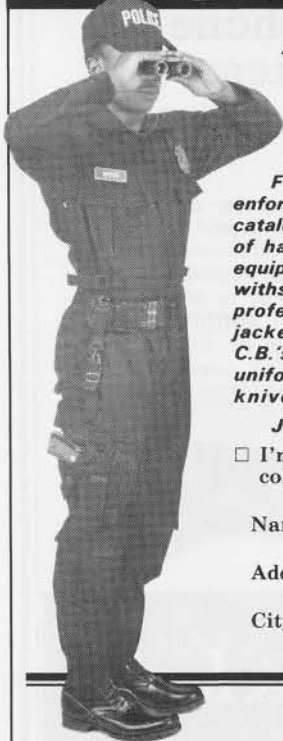
This survival course was a great success in demonstrating the effect of a strong team effort. The enthusiastic feedback from all of the teams has caused the ARDEC SRT to begin planning the "Second Annual Tin Man Contest," which will include handgun and rifle firing.

Editor's Note: Anyone interested in obtaining information concerning seminars conducted by the ARDEC SRT, or the "Tin Man" competition, should contact the author at (201) 724-3192 or 724-4275.



Team members finish 1½ mile boat/canoe rowing segment.

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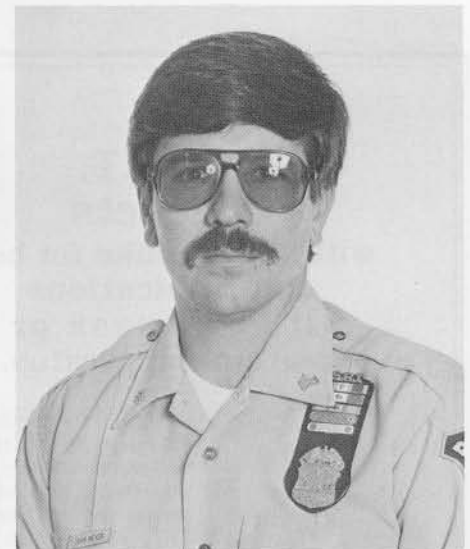
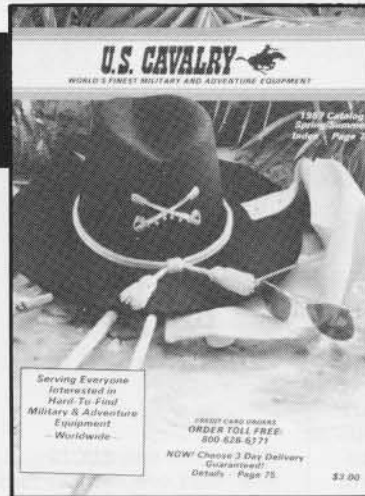
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About the Author

Lieutenant John Meyer is the Special Reaction Team Leader, Chief Firearms instructor for the Department of Defense Police at the U.S. Army Armament Development and Engineering Center, Dover, NJ.

He has attended both the Emergency Service Team course at Lackland AFB, and the Special Reaction Team Course at Ft. McClellan. In 1983, Lieutenant Meyer organized the Tactical Team Training Seminars at ARDEC. He is currently Vice President of the National Association of Tactical Teams.