

Testing & Evaluation

I started my evaluation by testing the gun's accuracy with various ammo styles. This is a defensive firearm, so I chose ammo I knew would be a good choice based on testing and street results. I also measured the velocity of each load from the short, compact barrel, because I thought this would be interesting to readers. (See *HK .45 Accuracy* on p. 10.)

Note: Accuracy was tested by resting the HK .45C on a Hornady Delta Rest and shooting five rounds at 25 yards. The group was measured from the center of the two widest hits. Muzzle velocity was measured by shooting five rounds across the screens of a Shooting Chrony chronograph placed eight feet from the muzzle. I've listed an average of the five rounds.

I had no malfunctions at all with the test gun. It fed everything I put through it and was a real pleasure to shoot. I see the HK .45C as a great compromise between a plainclothes and uniform duty gun for an agency that wants to issue a pistol for both operations. It's a well made pistol that's both durable and easy to maintain. **LOM**

DAVE SPAULDING is a 28-year law-enforcement veteran, retiring at the rank of lieutenant. He currently works for a federal security contractor. He's worked in all facets of law enforcement—corrections, communications, patrol, evidence collection, investigations, undercover operations, training and SWAT—and has authored more than 800 articles for various firearm and law enforcement periodicals. He is also the author of the best-selling books *Defensive Living* and *Handgun Combatives*.

HK .45 COMPACT

C

PROS

- Fits the requirements of a concealed or police service pistol;
- Comes equipped with bright Luminova sight; and
- Durable and easy to maintain.

D

CONS

- The push-down lever magazine release is not as ergonomic as the traditional push-in button.

CONTACT INFO

Heckler & Koch
7661 Commerce Lane
Trussville, AL 35173
Tel. 205/655-8299
www.hk-usa.com



PHOTO COURTESY: WCPR

Intensive program offers help for first responders suffering from post traumatic stress

BY JANE JERRARD

PROFESSIONAL HELP IS AVAILABLE

for law enforcement personnel who are having trouble functioning because of on-the-job stress. Even those who haven't been helped by counseling may find relief through the West Coast Post-trauma Retreat (WCPR) program, a five-day retreat for current and retired first responders who need help coping with work-related stress, including post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). WCPR is one of only two residential treatment facilities of its kind in the world. The other program is the On-Site Academy in Massachusetts, with which WCPR is affiliated.

NEWS

A Very Intense Program

Participants stay at WCPR's facility, located in a rural area of west Marin County, about 45 minutes from San Francisco, and take part in highly structured activities, including education, group and individual clinical work and peer support—all provided by volunteer first responders, many of whom have been through the program themselves.

"At any given retreat, we'll have six clients," says Joel Fay, PsyD, president of WCPR's board of directors.

Located in Marin County, West Coast Post-trauma Retreat (WCPR) program is one of two residential treatment facilities of its kind in the world. An affiliated program is located in Massachusetts.

"Sometimes, we'll take seven, but then it's harder to get the work done."

Volunteers staff the facility. "We have two clinicians and a chaplain who stay all week, along with six or seven peers," explains Fay, a police officer and psychologist who volunteers at the programs. "Then other clinicians, chaplains and peers will come in and out all week as they're needed. So generally, there are three volunteers for every client."

Fay says WCPR keeps the ratio high on purpose. "It's a very intense program, and we want to make sure that each client can connect with at least one peer," he says. First responder peers are used throughout the week to normalize each participant's behavior and symptoms, provide hope and encourage recovery.

Those Who Need Help

Of the more than 100 first responders treated at the WCPR to date, 60 percent were law enforcement, 21 percent were either fire or EMS, and the remainder of the attendees →→



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worked in corrections, the military and other civil services. Psychologists and other clinicians often refer participants to the program. Others are encouraged by their spouse to sign up or are referred by a former attendee.

Not all participants have been diagnosed with PTSD, but most are experiencing distress symptoms, such as depression, difficulty sleeping, excess alcohol use, anxiety, isolation and/or exhaustion. Most have difficulties functioning at work and/or at home as a result of their involvement in one or more critical incidents. Others are unable to function at all and are at high risk for suicide.

Police officers and other first responders who are uncertain if the WCPR is for them can call Dr. Mark Kamena at 415/717-3447 for a telephone interview.

Nitty-Gritty Details

Each retreat lasts five days. The WCPR programs scheduled for the remainder of 2008 will be held on the following dates:

- Sept. 7–12
- Oct. 19–24
- Nov. 30–Dec. 5

“We’re holding about 60 sessions a year right now, and we’re increasing that to keep up with demand,” Fay says.

The fee for the program is \$2,250, which includes room and board, a 90-day follow-up plan, education, one-on-one sessions with a clinician and group sessions with peers. The entire fee goes to WCPR’s costs, including renting the facility, insurance and food.

The good news is attendees rarely pay out of their own pockets. “Workers’ compensation seems to pick up the fee most of the time,” Fay says. “But lots of fire departments and police departments will pay for it. They call it training and pay out of their training budget. We’ll write letters for people recommending the program and help them use these resources—but we also offer scholarships as needed.”

If you’re interested in attending a WCPR program or know a colleague who might benefit, it’s easy to find out more. “Anybody can call us, and we’ll return your call,” Fay promises. “Call 415/721-9789. We’ll hook you up with someone who’s been through the program—someone similar to you. And we’re glad to talk about expenses and individual needs.”

For more information on the programs offered by WCPR, visit www.wcpr2001.org.

LOM

JANE JERRARD is a freelance writer who covers public safety topics.

ANTI-LOCK BRAKES

What they do, & how you use them

ORIGINALLY INVENTED FOR AIR-CRAFT in the 1920s, anti-lock brakes are a mainstay on the modern police car. An incredible piece of safety technology, anti-

DRIVE TO SURVIVE lock brakes permit drivers to slow a vehicle at the optimum rate without skidding. Here are some tips on how to use them.

First, determine if your car has anti-lock brakes. If it does, you should know how they work prior to an emergency situation. Go to a parking lot or a training facility, accelerate to 30 mph and press your brakes hard to get the anti-lock brakes to engage.

Generally, you’ll feel a pulsating or vibration in the brake pedal when your vehicle’s anti-lock brake system (ABS) is engaged.

Drivers should engage their brakes when the vehicle is traveling in a straight line. ABS will enable the tires to remain rolling to avoid skidding. Once the weight transfer of hard braking stabilizes, you can turn the car out of the direction of the obstacle without lifting your foot off the brake.

Over time, continued hard use of the brakes can cause overheating, otherwise known as “brake fade.” This can happen in long pursuits or emergency runs. Braking should be controlled and constant to avoid brake fade. Anti-lock brakes will not prevent every skid. Tires have limits on the amount of force they can exert on the road, and every curve has a critical speed the driver should not exceed. ABS is a great safety feature, but can’t prevent tragedy if you’re reckless. It can never make up for poor judgment or bad techniques. Stay safe, and always drive to survive.

LOM

TRAVIS YATES is a captain with the Tulsa (Okla.) Police Department and heads up the department’s precision-driving unit. His Web site, www.policedriving.com, is dedicated to EVOC. He’s also the recipient of the 2008 Law Officer of the Year Award.

Raising Money at High Elevations

ONE “GRADUATE” OF THE WCPR decided she wanted to help raise funds for scholarships, and came up with the idea of Climbers for First Responders. This intrepid team of mountain climbers plans to scale Mt. Kilimanjaro this summer to raise awareness of PTSD among first responders, and to raise money for the WCPR and other organizations.

“It’s kind of like a walk-a-thon, except they’re climbing a 19,000’ mountain,” Fay says. “Right now they’re trying to get sponsors and raise funds through donations.” The climbers enlisted some sponsors and solicited individual donations. For more information on Climbers for First Responders, or to give a donation, visit www.climb4first.org.

