

# The Militarization of Police in America: “Active Shooter Training” Now Massively Federalized

DOJ and FBI Figure Centrally in Mass Shooting Drills

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*As mass shooting events become ever more common throughout the United States, so too has their direct coordination under Department of Justice and FBI auspices.*

*Aggressively publicized by a submissive corporate news media, the continuum of such incidents over weeks, months and years is an essential socialization process for the public's unquestioning acceptance of the growing police state.*

*[Image Credit right: [Hawai'i Army Weekly](#)]*

*An under-examined facet of this broader trend is how “active shooter drills” have become massively federalized in the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre. Alongside the militarization of police under the Pentagon's 1033 Program, which provides high-powered weaponry and armored vehicles to state and local law enforcement agencies, officers are receiving military-style training funded and supervised by the US DOJ and government subcontractors.*

✖ Since 2002 “active shooter training” has been conducted by a project called ALERRT—Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training—housed at Texas State University in San Marcos. Over 60,000 police have been instructed by ALERRT-trained personnel, and over the past 12 years the entity has received over \$30 million of funding from the DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability program “VALOR”), Texas' Office of the Governor, and the Department of Homeland Security.[1]

The money for such training is merely a small portion of almost \$290 million in DOJ munificence distributed to 56 states and territories, and over 1,000 local jurisdictions in 2014 alone. “These resources are helping to spur innovation and drive evidence-based policing in countless communities,” Attorney General Eric Holder recently remarked.[2]

In March 2013 the ✖ FBI sent 100 of its agents to receive instructor training at ALERRT's Texas State headquarters. In June of that year Vice President Joe Biden recognized ALERRT “as a primary source for national law enforcement training and response to active shooter events.”[3]

[Image Credit: David Dees]

Within weeks of Biden's announcement FBI personnel fanned out across the US to conduct ALERRT-approved training to local law enforcement officers. In August 2013 drills were

taking place in seemingly every police jurisdiction throughout the US.

“Since these exercises are designed to be as realistic as possible, students, school personnel, and the broader public may be unsuspectingly caught up in the contrived terror, unable to distinguish whether the ‘actors’ alongside the accompanying gunfire and explosions are real or fake.” This essential interpretive element is left up to the relevant local, state, and federal agencies to explain, or “spin,” to the media. Inevitably the implications of federal sponsorship and/or supervision in such maneuvers goes unexamined.[4]

Since the 1960s a wealth of compelling research has established that federal law enforcement involvement in violent and controversial events such as assassinations frequently undermines the integrity of serious law enforcement work conducted by those familiar with the given community. As the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, 9/11, and the more recent Boston Marathon bombing event all but confirm, federal “response” to such mass casualty events is now a carefully-honed procedure. Add to this the allure of federal cash and the broader parameters of mass shooting events reported almost daily become even more uncertain.

Equally concerning is the fact that up until the mid-2000s the location and date of active shooter drills were a matter of public record, being noted in a freely-accessible federal registry.[5] Now with mass shooter training almost entirely outsourced to ALERRT, such statistics no longer exist. This lack of accountability gives federal agencies free reign in terms of how such events might be used.

“‘It’s not capability—it’s capacity,’” one FBI official involved in ALERRT training told the Associated Press. “‘Every police department, sheriff’s department has the ability to do interviews and to do evidence collection ... But we can bring capacity. We can bring 100 agents to a scene in a day and do hundreds of interviews, and have done that time and time again.’”[6]

With the exception of this in-depth Associated Press article, corporate news media don’t consider the massive federalization of active shooter drills an item worthy of close attention. A LexisNexis search of print news for the terms “ALERRT” and “Department of Justice” or “Federal Bureau of Investigation” between March 1, 2013 and December 22, 2014 yields just a handful of items, most of which are US government press releases.

This crucial omission in reportage serves as an oblique form of propaganda, giving the impression that every mass shooting incident is genuine, when in fact some may be the outgrowth of a drill combined with federal law enforcement and/or intelligence sleight of hand.

A seemingly endless stream of federal aid and oversight makes local, regional and state law enforcement highly dependent on the DOJ—an entity capable of deceptive and lethal maneuvers such as “Fast and Furious”—which is now increasingly looked to for such handouts.

In this manner, local and regional law enforcement are potentially compromised toward acquiescing to federally-coordinated active shooter training drills which are then presented via news media as genuine events—a situation that apparently unfolded in Newtown

Connecticut, and perhaps in numerous other locales. Without honest policing and competent, impartial journalism the public has no way of discerning reality from what amounts to military training and the manipulable artifice inherent in such exercises.

## Notes

- [1] Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training Media Information, "Boilerplate Language," <http://alerrt.org/Media>, accessed December 21, 2014.
- [2] "[Remarks by Attorney General Holder at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference](#)," US Official News (Press Release), October 27, 2014.
- [3] "ALERRT Names Primary Source for National Active Shooter Response," ALERRT (Press Release), June 18, 2013, <http://alerrt.org/Media>, accessed December 21, 2014.
- [4] James F. Tracy, "[Nationwide Post-Sandy Hook Terror Drills](#)," GlobalResearch.ca, August 23, 2013.
- [5] Personal Communication with Jason Kissner, Associate Professor of Criminology, Fresno State University, December 18, 2014.
- [6] Eric Tucker, "[FBI Works to Train Police on Mass Killing Response](#)," Associated Press, August 20, 2013.

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## About the author:

James F. Tracy was a tenured Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Florida Atlantic University from 2002 to 2016. He was fired by FAU ostensibly for violating the university's policies imposed on the free speech rights of faculty. Tracy has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the university, with trial set to begin November 27, 2017. Tracy received his PhD from University of Iowa. His work on media history, politics and culture has appeared in a wide variety of academic journals, edited volumes, and alternative news and opinion outlets. Additional information is available at MemoryHoleBlog.com, TracyLegalDefense.org, and [jamesftracy.wordpress.com](https://jamesftracy.wordpress.com).

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