THE STRING OF ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY PROMPTED SAN DIEGO-BASED STRATEGIC OPERATIONS TO STAGE A LIVE-ACTION TRAINING EVENT — COMPLETE WITH EXPLOSIVES, ACTORS, AND AMMUNITION.

OVER THE COURSE OF A WEEKEND, THE TRAINING SESSION TAUGHT POLICE, FIRST RESPONDERS AND MEDICAL EDUCATORS HOW TO RESPOND TO A LIVE SHOOTER IN AN ADRENALINE-CHARGED SITUATION.

STRATEGIC OPERATIONS, WHICH SITS ON THE BACK LOT OF STU SEGALL PRODUCTIONS IN KEARNY MESA, HAD NO TROUBLE INDUCING A FEAR RESPONSE OR BOOSTING ADRENALINE. THE FORMER TELEVISION STUDIO USES SPECIAL EFFECTS SUCH AS PYROTECHNICS, LIGHTING, SOUND AND FAKE EXPLOSIVES TO SET THE SCENE, AND THEN HIRE ACTORS TO SCREAM AND MOAN WHILE NURSING TRAUMATIC INJURIES.

"THE HYPER-REALISM OF OUR TRAINING COMES FROM MAKING IT TOTALLY IMMERSIVE SO THAT YOU WILLINGLY SUSPEND YOUR DISBELIEF THAT YOU’RE NOT ACTUALLY IN COMBAT," SAID KIT LAVELL, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGIC OPERATIONS.

HEALTH CARE TRAINING

STRATEGIC OPERATIONS HAS BEEN CREATING EMERGENCY RESPONSE SITUATIONS FOR 14 YEARS, SPECIALIZING IN TRAINING MILITARY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT. THIS PARTICULAR TRAINING SESSION WAS FOR THE SOCIETY FOR SIMULATION IN HEALTHCARE’S ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MEETING, WHICH TOOK PLACE EARLIER THIS YEAR AT THE SAN DIEGO CONVENTION CENTER. THE CONFERENCE TEACHES MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND EDUCATORS ABOUT NEW SIMULATION TECHNOLOGIES OR TECHNIQUES THAT MIGHT ASSIST IN IMPROVING HEALTH CARE TRAINING.

AS A PRECONFERENCE ACTIVITY, THE ATTENDEES (WHO WERE LARGELY DOCTORS, NURSES, PARAMEDIC PERSONNEL, RESEARCHERS AND EDUCATORS) GATHERED AT STRATEGIC OPERATIONS TO LEARN HOW TO DEAL WITH MULTIPLE CASUALTIES WHILE BEING Distracted BY EXPLOSIONS, PANNED EVACUANTS AND ARMED SUSPECTS.

"BY EXPERIENCING AN INCREDIBLY REALISTIC, STRESSFUL SITUATION, SUCH AS AN ACTIVE SHOOTER, LIVE-ACTION SIMULATION, RESPONDERS ARE TRAINED TO ACT EFFECTIVELY SHOULD THE UNFORTUNATE SITUATION ACTUALLY ARISE," SAID CHAD EPPS, PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY FOR SIMULATION IN HEALTHCARE.

"RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES THAT HAVING THE EXPERIENCE OF A SIMULATION BETTER PREPARES PEOPLE, VERY SIMILAR IN FACT TO PERFORMERS GOING THROUGH A REHEARSAL," EPPS SAID.

UNIFIED APPROACH

EPPS SAID THAT ATTENDEES OF THE CONFERENCE ARE EXPECTED TO REPLICATE SIMILAR SIMULATIONS FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF THEIR HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THIS IS IMPORTANT, LAVELL SAID, BECAUSE CURRENTLY ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING OCCURS IN SILOS.

"POLICE DEPARTMENTS DO THEIR OWN TRAINING SEPARATE FROM FIREFIGHTERS, WHO DO THEIR OWN TRAINING SEPARATE FROM EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS," LAVELL SAID.

"WHAT’S NEEDED IS TRAINING FOR A CONTINUUM OF CARE FROM THE POINT OF INJURY ALL THE WAY TO THE OPERATING ROOM," EPPS SAID.

EPPS ADDED THAT FIRST RESPONDERS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS NEED TO PRACTICE WORKING TOGETHER EFFICIENTLY IN THE MIDST OF HIGH STRESS SITUATIONS.

"IN REAL LIFE, YOU’VE GOTTEN ALL THE CHAOS OF MULTIPLE ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED," LAVELL SAID.

"NOBODY ACTUALLY GETS THE CHANCE TO TRAIN IN A COORDINATED AND COMPREHENSIVE FASHION LIKE THAT."