

VINCIBLE – Removing the “IN” in “US”

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I have taught law enforcement officers all across the nation since serving as an adjunct instructor for ALERRT (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training) since 2004. Unfortunately, training deficiencies are prolific, regardless of what state is being taught. For example, in July I was teaching a group of officers in far West Texas. I asked them: if you are receiving fire, what is your first priority of work? The answer was discouraging: seek cover. In spite of trainers' best efforts to teach the ABC's of Cover (Accurate return fire; Body armor; and Cover), officers still believe they should seek cover first when being fired upon. They have not even considered the notion of firing upon the suspect and making him/her seek cover, if not eliminating the threat altogether. A paradigm shift must occur, so a question is begged: how can Texas law enforcement officers lead the nation by making icons such as ABC's of Cover, SIM (Security, Immediate Action, Medical), and 540 cultural? Can Texas stop leading the nation in Line of Duty Deaths and injuries by driving responsibly, wearing our seat belts (which State law requires anyways), and remaining functionally fit?

The answer is YES, and the answer can be found in VINCIBLE and BEST PRACTICES. As police administrators, we must engage police culture if we are going to change officers' behaviors. The notion of removing the “IN” from US is a word play on removing IN from INVINCIBLE. Our officers are taught from the academy that they must go home at the end of their shift. They must win at all costs; they are invincible, when in reality, they are hugely vulnerable. They grow up in our organizations unaware of their own behaviors that are contributing to line of duty deaths and injuries. Adding to that vulnerability is our own unwillingness to truly examine line of duty deaths and injuries and ask tough questions about how they could have been prevented. We do not want to “dishonor” the fallen or injured peace officer. And so the cycle continues...

And then there is the training issue. We send officers to high value training, now believing that they are fully trained. However, all training has a shelf life! We as administrators think they are trained, and that they know policy and state laws, precisely because they attended our in-service classes or were sent to a school. This is called checking a “box”. We seldom think about how perishable those skills / knowledge really are. Our officers are required to be expert generalists, but when called upon, to be strategic surgeons who can remedy whatever ill society throws at them. This is an impossible predicament.

The Officer Safety Committee of the Texas Police Chiefs Association has said enough! We must act now to safeguard lives, including those lives who we have sworn to protect. VINCIBLE is the

vehicle that has been chosen to carry us forward. It is here to stay, and in the coming years, it will become cultural across Texas with your active support.

VINCIBLE will continue to invade police briefings all across Texas weekly. An intentional effort to reach the larger cities (Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, San Antonio, and others) is already underway. These agencies have well vetted policies, and their officers are well trained, but it has been proven that training precepts expire and must be reinforced constantly. VINCIBLE will push this message, while also pushing the 5 Cornerstones (hence the Roman numeral V). The fifth cornerstone 540 was recently added to reflect the tactical proficiencies that will be taught, along with the need to increase officer resiliency and professionalism. Each week's lesson plans are fully reviewed and edited by police chiefs; two attorneys; a medical doctor; a psychologist; and TML Intergovernmental Risk Pool analysts. The final work products will challenge the status quo, with one simple goal: save lives and reduce injuries. Example: you respond to a call of shots fired at a retail store. When you enter, you scan dozens of persons for any armed subjects. What do you look at first? Most officers will immediately respond with "Hands". That is not the correct answer, and unless we change our answers, off-duty officers who respond to violence will remain unsafe from first responders. (Correct answer, by the way: whole person; then hands; then waistband; then immediate area; then demeanor – otherwise known as a Quick Scan Technique.)

VINCIBLE's next of kin will always be the BEST PRACTICES program offered by the TPCA Foundation. If agencies will adopt solid policies that reflect best practices, risks to all involved will go down. We must all agree that it is no longer acceptable for any agency, regardless of size, not to have a policy on emergency driving, use of force, selection of personnel, and de-escalation, to name a few. A new website will soon be launched, leaving no Chief without sample policies.

Additionally, VINCIBLE will work on marketing, making the word as recognizable as other law enforcement "tools of the trade". Challenge coins have been created and will soon be available to purchase; PVC patches with Velcro are already done and ready to add to body armor, bags, seats, or wherever Velcro will attach; and stickers for those same YETI cups have already been created and delivered, complete with the Thin Blue Line. Below are some of the marketing items that will be rolled out with VINCIBLE'S upcoming website: www.VINCIBLE.org (to be released in 2017).

We owe it to the men and women we lead to ensure that we are not just the "box checkers" when it comes to properly training and preparing them. They owe it to their loved ones just as much as we owe it to them. By invading this false INVINCIBLE culture through the weekly VINCIBLE roll call trainings, we can actually take an active role in reducing line of duty deaths and injuries. We are asking for your commitment, and it is an easy commitment to make. Invade the culture within your agency with the VINCIBLE message, roll call trainings and overall attitude of safety. As Chiefs, we must take an active role to set the tone in our agencies – We are not INVINCIBLE.

VINCIBLE

SPEED SEATBELT ARMOR STAY FIT



