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## CALIFORNIA RANGEMASTERS ASSOCIATION

1317 N. San Fernando Blvd. #211  
Burbank, California 91504

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# THE Rangemaster

October 2001

The official publication of the California Rangemasters Association

*The purpose of the California Rangemasters Association is to promote Peace Officer Firearms Training. Further, to conduct research into:*

1. Safety Equipment
2. Law Enforcement Firearms
3. Ammunition
4. The psychological well-being of officers involved in shooting.
5. Developing and promoting new survival shooting techniques.
6. Evaluation of officer involved shootings.
7. To promote the exchange of ideas, training techniques and materials.
8. To emphasize the legal and moral aspects of firearms training.
9. To promote and improve social interaction and welfare among members of the Association.
10. To promote the research and study of Less-Lethal Extended Range Impact Munitions.

*To join, please mail completed membership application (on page 7) and your check for \$35.00 to:*

CALIFORNIA RANGEMASTERS ASSOCIATION  
1317 N. San Fernando Blvd. #211  
Burbank, California 91504

*For additional information contact CRA President Larry J. Nichols at (818) 238-3320.*

## Exotic Weapons Training Day

The first of CRA's new quarterly training sessions takes place on Saturday, October 13, from 1000 to 1400 hours.

This training session will focus on Exotic Weapons, and will be presented by Larry Wolff from L.A.W. Enforcement Sales.

Location for this event will be the Burbank Police Range, 2244 Wildwood Cyn. Road in Burbank.

Tuition is completely free for CRA members and \$20.00 for non-members.

Don't miss this great opportunity to familiarize yourself with some weapons you definitely don't see every day!

See FYI on page two for future training sessions planned for CRA members.



# NEW! CRA SPONSORED COMPETITION SHOOTS

As an Association, we are in favor of starting up our own CRA Sponsored Police Matches. Initially there will be at least three venues available throughout Southern California: Burbank P.D., Santa Paula P.D. and Mike Dalton's range in Piru.

General rules for all venues would apply to such things as the philosophy of the matches, as well as equipment requirements. CRA members who would like to be on the "Philosophy and Rules" committee should contact Larry Nichols at (818) 238-3320.



## Executive Board

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## VANG COMP TACTICAL SHOTGUN INSTRUCTOR COURSE

December 3-7, 2001

This course will present technical material and operational techniques for Vang Comp Tactical Shotguns in drills and shooting exercises. This course is designed for Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors.

Instructors: Larry Nichols, Burbank P.D.,  
Dave Manning, Santa Paula P.D.

Hosted by the Santa Clara County Sheriff,  
San Jose, CA.

Tuition: \$500 payable to "Vang Comp Systems". Application with tuition must be submitted no later than October 31, 2001.

Application available at [www.tacfire.com](http://www.tacfire.com)

**For more information, contact  
Dave Manning at 805-652-1345 or  
e-mail: [dave@tacfire.com](mailto:dave@tacfire.com)**

## F.Y.I.

### TACTICAL FIREARMS TRAINING INSTITUTE (TACFIRE)

#### ASP Tactical Baton Certification

October 26  
Tacfire Classroom  
Tuition: \$125

#### Advanced Tactical Shotgun Course

October 28  
Ventura Shooting Range  
Tuition: \$150

#### Advanced Tactical Handgun Course

November 4  
Ventura Shooting Range  
Tuition: \$150

For registration and information on these three courses, call Tacfire at 1-888-TACFIRE or [www.tacfire.com](http://www.tacfire.com)

### POLICE TRAINING CONSULTANTS, INC.

#### Tactical Pistol Course

November 5-7  
San Bernadino County Sheriff's  
Training Facility  
Tuition: \$300

#### Tactical Shotgun Course

November 8-9  
San Bernadino County Sheriff's  
Training Facility  
Tuition: \$200

For registration and information on these three courses, call PTC at 541-549-1090

### CRA QUARTERLY TRAINING SESSION

#### Building Clearing Techniques (Part 1)

Tom Roesselli & Tim Landrus  
January 12, 2002  
Burbank Police Range  
1000 to 1400 hours  
Members free, Non-members \$20.00

### JOHN FARNAM PATROL RIFLE CLASS

January 19-20, 2002  
Burbank Police Range  
Tuition: \$200 - Law Enforcement  
\$300 - civilian CRA members

### NRA INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT COURSE

Patrol Rifle Instructor  
February 4-8, 2002  
Burbank Police Range  
0730 to 1800 hours  
Tuition: \$400

# JOIN THE CALIFORNIA RANGEMASTERS ASSOCIATION



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Mail To: California Rangemasters Association  
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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Please print

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PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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Mailing Address: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ N.R.A. Member: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Member # \_\_\_\_\_

**Endorsement of Applicant's Direct Firearms Supervisor:** I know the applicant to be professionally engaged in firearms instruction (active) or know him/her to be a law abiding citizen who has knowledge that would benefit firearms training (associate), and recommend him/her for membership in the California Rangemasters Association.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Please print

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Classification Requested: Active \_\_\_\_\_ Associate \_\_\_\_\_ Honorary \_\_\_\_\_

Attach List of Experience, Certificates held and Specialties: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: \$35.00 (first year) \$30.00 Annual (due January 1st. each following year)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

### CRA office use only

Accepted \_\_\_\_\_ Rejected \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Dues Collected \_\_\_\_\_ Authorized By \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out, cut out and return to the California Rangemasters Association



Continued from page 3

with glass in them for each officer to practice from is not an easy task. However, teaching the officer what to expect when shooting through automobile glass and how to draw and fire from a seated position is not. A slide or video tape presentation of the instructor drawing and shooting through the glass while seated in a car will illustrate the effects of bullets penetrating automobile glass. The author was videotaped shooting from a unit and then had the tape edited in real time, slow motion, and frame by frame. It was necessary to use several cameras to achieve the desired angles and visual effects.

Teaching the officer to draw from a seated position without letting the muzzle cross any portion of his/her body can be accomplished with a chair. The techniques of accessing, withdrawing and presenting the pistol are uncomplicated and can be performed on any range. The techniques described below should be practiced with empty handguns until the officers are confident in their ability to draw and not cross any portion of their bodies with the muzzle. The drawing techniques will start with the officer seated in a car (chair) with the door closed, both hands on the steering wheel and the seat belt secured.

### Access, Withdraw & Present While Seated

#### Drawing to the Front -Right or Left Handed Officer:

The officer should use the support hand (non-gun hand) and steering wheel to pull his/her body forward, simultaneously pushing the dominant (gun side) knee towards the support side. This movement will get the gun-butt away from the seat back and move the dominant leg away from the muzzle.

At the same time the dominant (gun) hand will access, withdraw and present the pistol to the target. A two handed shooting grip should be used with both hands joining and gripping the pistol as it clears the steering wheel. Push the pistol fully forward as you push your body back into the seat for stability. Fire at least two rounds through the windshield with the second bullet going through the hole created by the first bullet.

#### Right Handed Driver Drawing to the Passenger's Side:

This technique will prevent the officer from crossing any part of his or her body with the muzzle. The officer should use the support hand and steering wheel to pull their body forward, simultaneously pushing the dominant leg towards the support side. Again, this movement will get the gun-butt away from the seat back and move the dominant leg away from the muzzle.

At the same time the dominant hand will access and withdraw the pistol straight up to the target with the dominant hand only firing at least two rounds. With the multitude of electronic equipment installed in patrol cars today, pivoting in the seat to fully face the passenger side is impossible, forcing the officer to fire one handed.

#### Right Handed Driver Drawing to the Driver's Side:

Drawing from the dominant side to the support side places the officer at a greater risk of crossing his or her lower body with the muzzle. The natural tendency is to move the pistol directly towards the target crossing the lower body with the muzzle.

Considerable caution must be taken by the officer to prevent this from occurring. The officers should use the support hand and steering wheel to pull their bodies forward, simultaneously pushing the dominant leg towards the support side for the reasons stated above. The dominant hand will access and withdraw the pistol forward and up to the steering wheel then swing the pistol across the steering wheel joining the support hand for a two handed firing grip.

To prevent the muzzle from hitting the side glass the pistol must be held four to six inches in front of the face at eye level. With a two handed shooting grip lean towards the passenger side and fire two well aimed shots. The muzzle blast will force most of the shattered glass away from the shooter.

#### Left Handed Driver Drawing to the Passenger's Side:

The left handed officer has a slight advantage when firing from a seated position inside a vehicle. They will be able to use a two handed grip no matter which direction the target is engaged. The officer should use the support hand and steering wheel to pull their body forward, simultaneously pushing the dominant knee towards the support side. The dominant hand will access and withdraw the pistol forward and up to the steering wheel, then swing the pistol across the steering wheel joining the support hand for a two handed grip. The officer's upper body will pivot at the shoulders allowing the officer chest to face the target while firing two well aimed shots.

#### Left Handed Driver Drawing to the Driver's Side:

It will be necessary for the left handed officer to transfer the pistol to the support hand when drawing towards the driver's side. This technique will also work for a right handed officer seated on the passenger's side of a vehicle drawing towards the passenger side.


The officer will use the support hand to pull his or her body forward, simultaneously pushing the dominant knee towards the support side. The dominant hand will access and withdraw the pistol forward and up towards the steering wheel. The officer must then transfer the pistol to the support hand establishing a two handed grip. To prevent the muzzle from hitting the side glass, the pistol will be held about four to six inches in front of the face at eye level.

With a two handed shooting grip, lean towards the passenger side and fire two well aimed shots. The muzzle blast will force most of the shattered glass away from the shooter. When a right handed officer is riding on the passenger's side he or she will perform the same technique by drawing with the dominant hand, then transferring the pistol to the support hand establishing a two handed grip, leaning towards the driver's side to prevent the muzzle from hitting the side glass.

Again, the pistol will be held at a position of four to six inches in front of the face at eye level, firing two well aimed shots with the muzzle blast forcing most of the shattered glass away from the officer.

The ability to draw while seated in a vehicle without shooting oneself, and the knowledge necessary to successfully engage threats through automobile glass are of prime importance.

Shooting through any barrier will cause most people to hesitate. As we know, hesitation can get officers killed. If they can see through it and identify a threat, they can shoot through it.



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# BUSH-WHACKED, DRY-GULCHED, AMBUSHED, WAYLAI!

by Larry J. Nichols

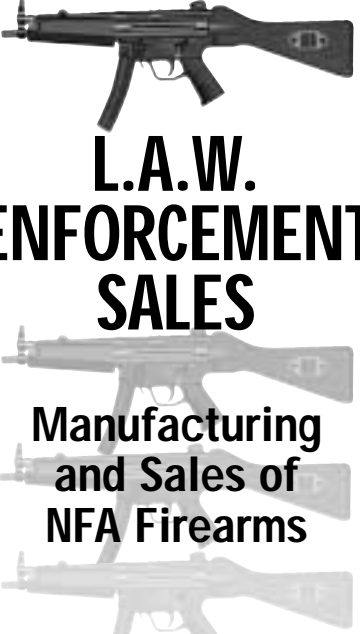
**B**ush-whacked, dry-gulched, ambushed, waylaid, whatever you want to call it, law enforcement officers are being attacked and killed while seated in their patrol vehicles.

Assaults on police officers have increased at a rate of twenty-one percent annually. According to the web site [www.odmp.org](http://www.odmp.org), one hundred and five police deaths occurred between January and September 2000, with several of the engagements being centered on police vehicles.

There are essentially two types of ambushes befalling police officers, carefully planned and spur-of-the-moment. Fortunately, carefully planned ambushes on police officers are rare. Having been involved in the planning and execution of ambushes in Viet Nam, I can attest to the fact that the likelihood of surviving one is slim to none.

The unplanned ambush can be sudden and deadly with little if any forewarning. Officers have been shot and killed while seated in their patrol unit writing a report or doing other required paperwork. A marked patrol car or a uniformed officer can become a target at any time and anywhere. Officers have been attacked in their vehicles while waiting in line at a fast-food drive through or by simply driving down the street on routine patrol. Marked patrol cars very often become nothing more than bullet magnets, i.e., North Hollywood, requiring police officers to think tactically whenever on duty.

A police officer should never drive a marked police car without wearing soft body armor. As accommodating as it may be, taking a marked car to the range or anywhere else while in civilian clothing without wearing soft body armor is a dangerous habit. Soft body armor has saved approximately 2,400 lives, and can only save yours if you're wearing it.



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Tactical thinking simply means being prepared to evade a critical incident and defend your life with deadly force should it become necessary. As simple as that sounds, thinking tactically requires advanced tactical training.

Being attacked in or near a vehicle presents several uncommon problems. The officer may not know where the fire is coming from, who is involved, weapon type, any possible escape routes, available cover, or have the time to sort it all out. The worst thing an officer can do in an ambush situation is hesitate and do nothing. If at all possible, either drive or back out of the attack area, stay low and use the bulk of the unit for cover. Patrol units can provide protection or become a trap, depend-

ing on the officer's training. The car's engine block, body, firewall and doors can provide protection against incoming fire.

For my personal knowledge, and to either prove or refute conventional information, I have shot into and from inside several cars with handguns, rifles and shotguns. The knowledge I accumulated from this live-fire testing proved invaluable when training officers how to successfully engage targets when firing into and from inside automobiles. The side glass provides little if any protection, and when hit by bullets will burst into hundreds of small flying sharp-edged projectiles unless the glass has been tinted. Aftermarket tinted glass will not burst when hit with bullets, it will stay in one piece and spider web, making it impossible to see through, and any additional hits will simply leave another hole.

There is very little, if any, bullet deformation, deflection or velocity loss when shooting through rear windows or side glass at ninety degrees. The front windshields of automobiles are made of safety glass and are extremely destructive to small-arms projectiles. When penetrating safety glass, small-arms projectiles cause very little damage, leaving a small hole and a few cracks around the hole. Bullet jackets will routinely separate from the core when fired into automobile safety glass and either deflect up or down.

Caliber and/or velocity had little bearing on the end result when fired through automobile safety glass. The slope of the windshield will deflect bullets up when firing from inside the unit, and will deflect them down when firing into a car. The only bullets that always defeat safety glass and stay in one piece without jacket core separation are bonded bullets.

The windshield will also cause a substantial loss in velocity along with bullet deformation, deflection and jacket separation. I have never seen jacket separation occur with bonded pistol or rifle bullets, but they do deflect and deform when penetrating safety glass. The amount of bullet deflection and velocity loss is substantial at a very close range. When fired into or from inside a car bullets will deflect from four to eight inches at a distance of approximately eight feet. When firing from inside the unit through the windshield, aim low, as the bullet will be deflected up approximately eight inches after penetration. While testing for the amount of bullet deflection I also discovered a substantial loss of velocity when penetrating safety glass. The first round would not knock over a steel target that was calibrated to fall down with a centered hit from my forty caliber duty pistol. The reaction steel target was placed at the front bumper of the test unit facing the driver's seat. I found it necessary to fire two rounds through the same hole to knock the test target over. Selecting a different spot of the windshield to fire through resulted in the same first round failure to knock over the test target.

When firing into a car through the windshield at an identified threat aim high, as the bullet will be deflected down roughly four inches between the windshield and the target. Again, it is necessary to fire at least two rounds through the same hole for maximum effect.

### The Shooting Decision

If shooting from inside a vehicle becomes necessary, there are several factors that the officer must consider. The construction and angle of the windshield; bullet deflection after penetration; shattering glass; point of aim for effective hits; velocity loss and accessing the secured sidearm are just a few that the officer must deal with immediately. The muzzle blast will force the shattered glass away from the shooter, reducing the possibility of being injured from flying glass.

Using the car for cover and evasion are skills that officers must be taught, and then allowed to practice. Acquiring enough unserviceable vehicles

Continued on page 6

# Understanding Remedial Firearms Training

by Tim Landrus – Division Rangemaster, Department of Motor Vehicles  
Investigations and Audits Division

As firearms instructors, we have an obligation to ensure that our investigators receive the highest level of firearms training possible. Often times there are minimum standards established that the investigator must meet to pass the course. What happens when the investigator fails to meet these standards? Hopefully this article will answer some of your questions.

## PREVENTING THE PROBLEM

The best way to prevent the need for remedial training is to recognize problems and deal with them. Firearms training is generally held 4 times a year. During these training sessions, be on the lookout for little problems that may grow into big problems. Make sure that the shooters are using the proper fundamentals such as stance, grip, trigger manipulation etc. If you see a problem, deal with it right away, in a positive manner. This very well might preclude the need for remedial training.

## WHEN REMEDIATION IS REQUIRED

As firearms instructors, our goal is to provide the highest level of firearms training possible to ensure that each investigator meets the minimum training standard for the particular course being fired. An investigator's failure to achieve this standard could have a negative impact on their career as an investigator and the Department may lose a valuable asset. As instructors, we have an affirmative duty to give all investigators every chance to succeed.

Most often, remedial training takes place with brand new investigators with minimal firearms experience and in the Specialized Basic Academy. It can and has been required for experienced investigators. This may be a result of just having a bad day, a change in the firearms training course or a combination of factors. Regardless of the reason, we have to deal with it in a positive and aggressive manner.

Remedial training should be given as soon as possible after the problem is discovered, preferably the same day. The investigator is in a training state of mind and you are already at the range. The obvious benefit to this is that after the training, the investigator passes the firearms training course and goes back to duty. Failure to qualify on the training day may preclude the investiga-

tor from carrying their pistol on duty until they are remediated and pass the course. This will likely have a negative emotional impact on the investigator and may prevent them from doing their normal duties. Caution must be exercised to ensure that the remedial training is meaningful and meets the investigator's needs. Outside factors such as investigator fatigue, unacceptable outside temperature or lateness of the hour may make giving the training the same day impractical. If this is the case, the training should be scheduled as soon as possible.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Accurate firearms firing requires a combination of complex factors including STANCE, GRIP, SIGHT ALIGNMENT, SIGHT PICTURE, TRIGGER MANIPULATION AND RECOIL MANAGEMENT. As instructors, we must be able to evaluate all of these factors to identify problem areas that need our attention.

It has been my experience both as a rangemaster with DMV and as an instructor at Golden West College, that the majority of shooter problems result from poor trigger manipulation. That is to say that the shooter slaps the trigger. Proper trigger manipulation can lessen the impact of poor sight alignment, sight picture, stance etc. On the other hand, the shooter can practice good sight alignment, sight picture, grip stance etc. but practice poor trigger manipulation causing the shooter to score poorly.

Learning proper trigger manipulation and trigger reset first requires practice with dummy rounds. After making sure that the pistol (and magazines if required) are completely empty, have the shooter point the pistol in a safe direction utilizing proper grip, stance etc. Have the shooter pull the trigger through double action and hold the trigger to the rear. The instructor then cocks the pistol into single action mode. Instruct to shooter to slowly let the trigger forward until they hear and feel the trigger reset on the sear. This is all the farther forward that the trigger should be allowed to travel. Have the shooter pull the trigger and continue this process until the shooter continuously demonstrates proper trigger reset. This exercise is then repeated on the range doing

slow fire with live rounds until the shooter demonstrates proper trigger manipulation 100% of the time.

Having mastered trigger manipulation, you will find that more often than not, the shooter will be able to pass any firearms training course.

While trigger manipulation is important, lets not forget the other basics. All of these must work together for the shooter to fire accurately 100% of the time.

A word about sight picture and sight alignment. When you see that the shooter is shooting a group to the left for right handed shooters and to the right for left handed shooters, the shooter may be sighting with the wrong eye. The majority of right handed shooters are right eye dominant and left handed shooters are left eye dominant. Using the improper eye to sight the pistol can result in groups to the left or right on the target.

Correcting this problem may be difficult but not impossible. I will discuss the corrective steps for right handed shooters. The same apply to left handed shooters only to the opposite eye. It may be a simple matter to remind the shooter to shoot with the proper eye by having them close the other eye. This will take some effort on the part of the shooter but it is doable. Drastic cases may require the instructor to cover the left eye thereby requiring the shooter to sight and fire with the appropriate eye.

Correction of the observed deficiencies requires repetition so that the shooter develops muscle memory. Continued reinforcement is required so that the shooter develops the proper shooting techniques.

## PROPER DOCUMENTATION IS CRITICAL

A critical part of remedial firearms training is documentation. The documentation process actually is a 3 part process.

The first part is your observation as to the deficiencies causing the shooter to have problems. This is where the diagnosis becomes important. Statements such as "SHOOTING TO THE LEFT" or "POOR GROUPS" are not sufficient. In order for the lay person to understand what the problem is, you need to first state what the problem is and then the causes for the problem. An example might be "THE MAJORITY OF THE SHOOTERS ROUNDS ARE HITTING LOW RIGHT ON THE TARGET. I SAW THAT THE SHOOTER IS JERKING THE TRIGGER AND NOT RESETTING IT PROPERLY. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT THE SHOOTER IS FAILING TO MAINTAIN A GOOD GRIP ON THE PISTOL WHILE FIRING". This clearly states what is happening and the probable cause(s).

It is important that these observations be reviewed with the shooter so that they understand what the problem is and what they are doing incorrectly.

The second part is the designing of a remediation plan to address the deficiencies. In most cases, this program will consist of only one or two exercises to correct a problem. Only in those rare cir-

cumstances will a total orientation course be required to correct deficiencies.

This program is then reviewed with the shooter so that they understand what is going to happen. Be sure to explain each exercise to the shooter and how the exercise will help correct a specific deficiency. This goes a long way in establishing the "WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU" attitude.

After the remedial training is completed, the third part is recording specifically what was done and the results of the training. Again detail is important. Statements such as "TRAINING GIVEN, SHOOTER QUALIFIED" are not sufficient. Take the time to explain in detail what was done. The following should be included:

- \* Date and Time of Training
- \* Weather Conditions
- \* Number of Rounds Fired
- \* Distances Fired From
- \* Shooting Positions Used
- \* Training Given

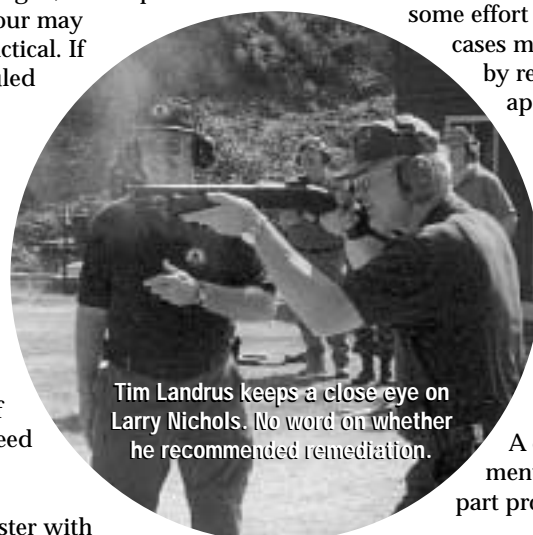
While this may seem like overkill at the time, it may be important down the road. In the event that the shooter is involved in a shooting, their shooting records will certainly be examined.

Having this type of information available will make the Departments training program more defensible as well as the actions of the investigator. It clearly demonstrates that the Department and instructors take the training seriously and endeavor to provide the best training possible.

Remember the old adage "IF ITS NOT WRITTEN DOWN, IT DIDN'T HAPPEN". It will be extremely difficult for the instructor to remember what he or she did two or three years down the road if the shooting results in litigation.

## CONCLUSION

Remedial training is never an experience that firearms instructors look forward to. Proper handling of the remedial firearms training process will make it a positive experience for the shooter, the firearms instructor and the Department.



Tim Landrus keeps a close eye on Larry Nichols. No word on whether he recommended remediation.

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