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– Sergeant Ron Davis, assistant tactical team leader,
Huntington Park, CA, police department

Huntington Park, CA, is a small, high-density city sandwiched between Los Angeles and South Central Los Angeles. Just three square miles in area, Huntington Park has a population of 65,000.

Sergeant Ron Davis has been with the Huntington Park Police Department for 15 years, and a member of the tactical team for the past eight years. He is currently the assistant commander of the tactical team, and as such, has the opportunity to introduce the team to new tools and technology.

In May 2007, then assistant chief, Paul Wadley, purchased the department’s first tactical reconnaissance robot and introduced it to Sergeant Davis and the tactical team during their monthly training session. According to Sergeant Davis, he knew right away that this would be a valuable new tool for the team.

“When we first saw the Recon Scout, we were struck by how small and quiet it was,” says Davis. “And best of all, we found out that you could throw it – over a wall, through a window or in an open entry door – and it would always land right-side up, ready to roll. You could then drive it around, and the reconnaissance video it sent back to the control unit was clear and crisp. Our minds were full of situations where we could use this technology.”

Summary

Agency Huntington Park Police Department
Huntington Park, California
Population: 65,000

Sector Police Tactical

Challenge

- Gain greater certainty about the presence and status of potentially dangerous suspects
- Obtain real-time video of un-cleared spaces as tactical teams enter an environment

Solution

- Entry team deploys a Recon Scout mobile reconnaissance robot to assist in locating suspects.

Benefits

- Robot is very small and can be carried in by hand or in a pocket or pouch
- Robot can be thrown through a window or door
- Can be driven remotely to explore an environment without putting a team in the room
- Gives entry teams greater confidence in entering and environment
- Reduces damage to property

Over the next few months, the entire tactical team became very familiar with the operation of the Recon Scout and its control unit. They used it in a variety of training scenarios and when the day came to put it to the test, they were ready to go.

“One of our first uses of the Recon Scout was on a patrol call to a domestic violence incident,” says Davis. “When the officers arrived, they were told that the suspect had recently left the house and entered a detached garage at

the rear of the property. This garage had been converted into a living area and when the officers checked the door, they found that it was locked. A window at the rear of the garage was open however, so they immediately surrounded the garage area, and two of the team members, Detectives Castelli and Navia, grabbed the Recon Scout robot. They wanted to see if the suspect was inside the structure, and whether he was armed or not, before sending in the patrol officers.”

The rest of the squad gained access to the back of the garage through a neighbor’s yard and threw the Recon Scout through the window. It landed on the floor of the garage and immediately began sending video back to the controller, which was in the hand of Detective Neil Castelli, who was positioned nearby.

We used the robot to scan the room and identify the potential hiding spaces for the suspect,” says Davis. “There was a bed and other furniture in the room along with a makeshift closet in the corner. We could see a shoe sticking out from under the bed, so the detective drove the robot directly to the bed so we could see under it. The suspect was not there. We then drove the robot around the room, looking in all the places where the suspect could potentially hide and found nothing. At this point we were fairly certain that the suspect had fled the scene, but we still needed to clear the room. We positioned the robot so we could watch the closet area, then sent in the team as we gave them updates on what the robot was seeing. At no point did we let down our guard, but we did feel much more confident about the situation before putting the officers in harm’s way. That is the greatest value of the Recon Scout – it gives you greater certainty in handling a situation. It lets you know what you’re up against.”

The Huntington Park tactical team truck now carries the Recon Scout kit on all call-outs. It is used in a variety of high-risk sit-



uations, including a recent call out regarding a parolee who was wanted for parole violations and an attempted car-jacking. Sergeant Davis received information that he was staying at a local motel.

“We had received information that the suspect had returned to the motel early in the morning and no one had seen him leave,” says Davis. “Our team attempted to contact him through the front door, but received no response. We assembled an entry team, but were reluctant to send them through the door without having more information. Using the cover of the front wall, we used our hooligan tools to break the front window and knock down the curtains that were obscuring our view. We could now see into the room, but we could not see under or behind the bed, or into the bathroom. This seemed like a perfect opportunity to use the reconnaissance capabilities of the robot, so we pulled the pin and threw it through the window.”

Over the next five minutes, Detective Castelli directed the robot around the room and under the bed. Using the Recon Scout they could see in all the spots in which the suspect could be hiding, with the exception of the inside of the bathtub. Once again, Davis positioned the robot so it could watch the bathtub area as his team made entry through the front door of the room.

“If the suspect was in the bathtub as the entry team came in, the robot would have seen him and we would have warned the entry team before he could even get out,” says Davis. “Because of the robot, we were 98% sure that he was not in the room, and that greater level of certainty makes for a safer operation and less damage to property.”

**For more information
about the Recon Scout
throwable reconnaissance
robot, please call
1-866-697-6267 or visit
ReconRobotics.com.**



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