

GPD sergeant's trauma first-aid kits save lives

Officers used the kits on victims of a recent shooting spree.

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Editor's note: This is part of a weekly series profiling the extra efforts of area law enforcement and public safety officers to serve their community.

When Clifford L. Miller Jr. went on a shooting spree in Gainesville on Oct. 4, he killed his father and himself, and wounded five others.

But the number of deaths could have been higher were it not for trauma first-aid kits that officers now have in their cars and are trained to use — an initiative of Gainesville Police Sgt. Dan Stout.



Aaron Daye/staff photographer
Sgt. Dan Stout of the Gainesville Police Department wraps a military bandage around the knee of Tactical Ted, a lifelike test dummy used to demonstrate how to treat a wounded individual, at the Santa Fe College Police Academy on Monday.

Officers with GPD, the University Police Department and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office have the kits. Stout said they have been used 20 times since 2008 and have been successful in 18 of those cases.

"Our kits were used multiple times on several of the (Miller) victims. At one of the scenes, our officers get there, get the trauma kits out and begin working on the guy. They said they need EMS and were told that all EMS units are tied up," Stout said. "For 12 minutes, had these guys not had the trauma kits, those guys would have gotten nothing and assuredly would have died."

Stout, a Marine Corps veteran, said Marines had kits and training for treating traumatic injuries to themselves or others.

But when Stout joined GPD, he found that the only equipment were basic first-aid kits with bandages, alcohol swabs, bee sting materials and an eye-wash bottle — nothing that would save anybody's life.

Stout launched his effort to get trauma kits after going on a call involving an injured man. Stout was unable to help him before an ambulance arrived because he didn't have the equipment.

"After that, I wanted to equip and train our people to be able to do more than we were doing," he said.

Stout got in touch with medics from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to learn what sort of battlefield-proven equipment would be best for a kit.

He settled on tourniquets that can be self-applied or used on someone else; Celox, a powder that helps clot blood at a wound; a military trauma bandage designed for speedy application; and an Asherman Chest Seal, a dressing specifically designed to work on sucking chest wounds, in which air is mixing with blood.

Stout, who is also a paramedic, trained the officers from the three agencies. The kits and the training have proven so valuable that Stout is now being called by police agencies across the country to help them set up trauma kit programs.

Among the presentations Stout has given was one in October at the International Chiefs of Police Association in Orlando to 60 doctors.

“Now I’m getting calls from Canada, North Carolina, Texas,” Stout said. “It’s definitely branching out and taking off. These kits make a real difference in people’s lives.”

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