

# Code 11



by Steve Algya

I'm sitting at the dinner table talking to my family about their day and mine. We've just finished dinner and now we're deciding on what to do the rest of the evening. I go outside to water the lawn when suddenly my wife runs from the house. "Steve! You've got a SWAT call-out," she says.

Walking into the house, I can hear my pager, "Beep! Beep! Beep... Code 11! Code 11! All units, Code 11!"

While dialing the Communications Center, you can already start to feel the adrenalin coursing through your veins. You wonder what's this one all about. "Hello, this is 10-E-2. What's up?"

The sergeant relays that a 5150 with a rifle is firing shots into the neighborhood. No one has been shot and the guy refuses to come out.

After getting the location of the Command Post and the safe avenue of approach, I hang up the phone and get dressed. I say good-bye to my wife and kids and I can see that the cause of my adrenalin "rush" also affects them. From their actions and reactions, I can see they are proud of what I do, yet concerned at the same time.

"What kind of a rifle does he have, Dad?" my son asks.

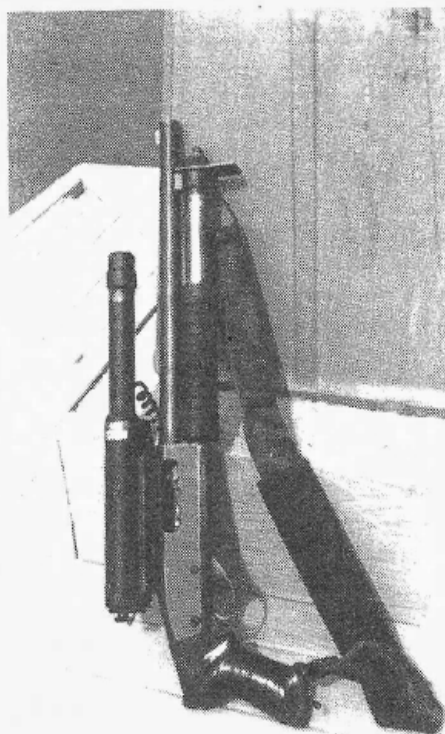
"Wear your vest, Daddy," my little girl cautions.

"Be careful, honey!" says my wife as I drive away.

Where did all this traffic come from? It's amazing to me, and I'm sure you've all experienced this, that as soon as you turn on your overheads and siren, your marked green and white suddenly becomes invisible to some of the motorists in our county. After flashing your high beams a couple of times, the motorist in front of you finally returns to reality and moves over.

Man with a rifle! I wonder what happened to make this guy flip out and start shooting up the neighborhood? What calibre of rifle does he have? How much experience does he have with weapons? Questions and more questions; some get answered and some never do.

Arriving at the Command Post, you can see some of the other S.E.D. deputies in va-



**More new gear: A laser-sighted 870 shotgun.**

rious stages of dress and undress. "What's going on?" someone asks.

"Haven't heard anything new," somebody answers.

Suddenly the evening quiet is broken by the sound of a shot from a large calibre rifle. Immediately you hear a stressed voice on the radio, "Shot fired! Shot fired from the residence! I think he's shooting at me! I'm changing my position for better cover!"

Better cover? You know there's not a lot of cover from rifle fire. Well, that changes the situation. If the guy is shooting at a uniformed deputy, then when and if the time comes to make entry, he'll probably go the hard way. Another shot of adrenalin...

Just as you're wondering if they've sent the scouts out yet, the sergeant calls and tells you to take someone and scout the house. Minutes feel like hours as you crawl into position to see the residence. Every movement you make, even your breathing, sounds to you like the whole world can hear you. You know it's just the effect that the tense situa-

tion has on your hearing. The sergeant calls for your E.T.A. back to the Command Post. "Ten minutes," you respond.

Arriving back at the Command Post, you finish your scouting report. "Any good sniper positions? Yeah, right up here! How about cover for the inner perimeter? Good cover and concealment over here and marginal cover over there," you respond, pointing at the drawing on the chalkboard.

By this time the whole team has arrived and one of the sergeants begins the briefing. His briefing is interrupted by more shots. You find out the guy is an avid hunter and has numerous weapons and plenty of ammunition. Our mission at this point is to relieve the patrol deputies and secure an inner perimeter.

It's been three hours since the perimeter has been set. Looks like this is going to be a long one! The remaining S.E.D. deputies are standing around the bus talking to pass the time. The hostage negotiators are trying in vain to communicate with the guy in the house. Two shots have been heard since the perimeter went out. A couple of the entry



**Tom Snowden shows the portable cover: A ballistic shield.**



**This crossbow is used to silently neutralize car tires and deliver lines. Yet another piece of gear to learn to operate. From left, Tom Snowden and Derek Clark.**

team deputies and the sergeant are discussing the entry plan of the residence.

The deputies, getting cold on the perimeter, are wondering what is going on and why is it taking so long. The lieutenant asks if we have an entry plan, as the feeling at the patrol Command Post is leaning toward making entry after deploying gas. Learning this, six of us are selected to make entry when and if the mission is given.

After locating an identical home, the entry team begins walking through the entry plan. Since this guy has rifles, we elect to wear the hard-body armor when entry is made. We continue to fine tune the plan, throwing in as many "what ifs" as we can think of. We return to the bus to wait for the mission.

After another hour of waiting, with continued silence from inside the residence, command staff gives the mission to deploy gas. After figuring the amount of gas needed to provide adequate concentration inside the house, the team advises us that they are in position.

The order is given to "mask up" and, after a couple of minutes more, the order to "deploy gas."

The silence of the night is broken by the reports of shotguns launching gas projectiles into the residence.

Just as you're wondering if the guy is going to come out, you hear another shot ring out from the residence. Does he have a gas mask? Or did he end his battle with life? You ask yourself questions that will only be answered after entry is made into the house.

The sergeant then advises us that the mission is to arrest the suspect. While walking

toward the house and getting into position, you feel your elevated heart rate as you mentally picture your assignment. "Entry team, go when ready!" is heard in your radio ear-piece. We tap-up to signal each other we're ready.

Simultaneously the door is forced open and you are rushing through the rooms, clearing them as you go. Living room and kitchen clear, bath and bedroom, too. As you rush into the last room, one of your questions is answered. He did not have a gas mask; the man took his own life. "Code 4 in the house—one 11-44," is broadcast to the bus.

We release the scene to patrol and return to the bus to begin our de-briefing. We critique the call-out from the Code 11 to the final Code 4. Mistakes and good points are all discussed.

After the de-briefing, I return to my car and put all my equipment back into the trunk. During the drive home, I reflect on the events of the night. A feeling of relief and a sense of accomplishment fill the car.

I arrive home, kiss my son and daughter, and go into my bedroom. As I kiss my wife, she is awakened and asks, sleepily, how it went.

"Fine," I say, "no problems."

I place my pager in its charger and get into bed, still wide awake, hoping it will not take too long for the adrenalin to let me sleep... this time.