

Volunteers staff QRT

Officers give up personal time to be part of the high-risk Quick Response Team.

By BRENT BURKEY
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Lt. Wes Kahley apologized at times for stumbling over his words Monday morning. He was a little tired. "I've been up for 27 hours. I didn't get to bed last night."

The York City Police officer pulled the all-nighter by doing double duty as the team commander of the Quick Response Team.

The team responded late Sunday night to a standoff in the 600 block of Salem Avenue that lasted until 1 a.m. A conference at the Susan P. Byrnes Health Education Center on Monday morning to show how the team handles high-risk situations.

Kahley said it is important for the public and the media to understand what the team does when it is called out. "When you will see assault weapons and tactical gear pouring into their neighborhoods, he said.

"There are so many ways to accomplish this job. It's our job to decide what we think works best for the community," Kahley said.

Those ways include everything from a camouflaged sniper rifle to a gas-canister gun that could also be used as a tear gas similar to a bean bag. Military assault weapons filled the space in between.

Training in special tactics, including the team's chosen policy of being "slow and methodical" as opposed to "fast and aggressive" is done by Baltimore City and Baltimore County police.

And it's all on the free time of volunteers, who maintain their day jobs at local police departments. The team's equipment donations and from grants worked primarily through the York County District Attorney's Office, which supports the team.

Time on calls, however, gets subtracted from officer's personal time, which Kahley said takes a toll.

"I don't think we've worked Christmas yet, but that's coming," Kahley said.

The office, along with private citizens and public officials, were honored by the team Monday for everything they did for the team's van to purchasing equipment worth thousands of dollars.