



## RAISING THE BAR IN THE NORTHEAST: HUDSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS-S.O.G.

By ALEXANDER ROSARIO III

On October 10, 2008, Hudson County Department of Corrections Special Operations Group became the first Tier-1 SOG team in the state of New Jersey. This accomplishment can be attributed to the hard work and dedication of it's members, as well as our Commander( Lt. Jason Dembowski) and Director (Oscar Aviles). It was their decision to bring in Senior Team Leader Joseph Garcia from US Corrections-Special Operations Group (US C-SOG) to conduct the specialized training. As a result, we are now one of the best Special Operations Groups in the country. The operations matrix of this unit is run like a military special operations unit with the highest level of discipline, morale, team unity and professionalism. The unit is comprised of many specialists including weapons specialist, less lethal specialist, defensive tactics instructors and combat quarter masters. HCDOC-SOG members are all certified in advanced hostage rescue, close quarter combat, high-risk inmate transport, high risk security patrol, building recovery, lethal and less-lethal operations, advanced breaching techniques and new conventional cell extractions. All of our members are also certified tactical instructors as well.

The HCDOC-SOG unit is capable of handling everything from low inmate intensity conflict (LUC) all the way to class 3 high intensity inmate conflict (HIIC), and the team trains in the way it was originally trained - at very unconventional times and hours. HCDOC-SOG is considered one of the most progressive Corrections Special Operations (CSO) units in the country, we have worked with the United Kingdom's HMPS-NTRG and Berk's County Prison, as well as,

Immigration Customs Enforcement Homeland Security. Lead by Commander and Lieutenant Jason Dembowski, this unit has developed a specialized set of corrections special operations (CSO) skids that are making waves within the New York and New Jersey regions, as well as, across the world. This unit was initiated as an effort to increase both officer and inmate safety.

This unit is supported by experience leaders.

The chain of command is as follows:

Commander Lt. Jason Dembowski  
Executive Officer (XO) E.Castillo  
Team Leader (TL) D. Singh  
Team Leader (TL) A. Rosario III  
Assisted Team Leader (ATL) C. Smith  
Assisted Team Leader (ATL) D.Yorker  
Master Operator M. Ripp  
Master Operator C. D'Andrea  
Master Operator A. Santiago  
Master Operator E. Agosto  
Master Operator B. Wilks  
Master Operator C. Estevez  
Operator T.Jackson

The Hudson County Special Operations Group has performed many successful operations, including a multi-agency operation for the Macy's July 4th Celebration near the waterfront in the Hudson County area, several high-risk transport operations throughout the state, and numerous cell extractions inside our facility. HCDOC-SOG unit attended the MOCK PRISON RIOT '09, in West Virginia, where we joined the US C-SOG, Berks County Prison SOG and together we put on an unconventional, explosive breaching demo that wowed the crowd of over

500 attendees. We are expected to have a good showing this year as well. In September '09 we also were asked to participate in "Hero's Day"<sup>1</sup> held at the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City where we performed a demonstration for the large crowd. HCDOC-SOG was invited to join forces and be a part of the Hudson County Rapid Deployment Force, which is a mobile and well trained cadre of law enforcement officers who may be called on to protect against threats of and respond to acts of terrorism and technological/natural or chemical disasters that may arise in the state. The HCDOC-SOG was also recognized as "Team of the Month" in Operator Magazine's Inaugural Issue.

Since this unit's inception, violence inside the facility has dropped substantially, and both officer and inmate safety has reached a new level. We would like to thank our Director, Oscar Aviles for his continuous efforts and support which allows us to continuously "make a difference" every day. As the first Tier 1 SOG team in the state of New Jersey we strive to be the best and provided the highest level of integrity. We are in the business of saving lives, and here at Hudson County we strive to lead the way in corrections. As our motto states -ONE TEAM-ONE FIGHT.

