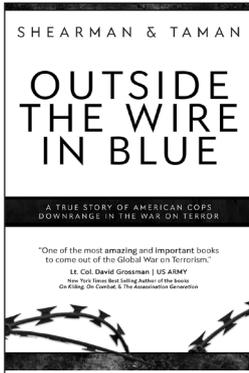


# Book Review



## **Outside the Wire in Blue: A True Story of American Cops Downrange in the Wars on Terror** *by David R. Shearman and James Taman*

TitleTown Publishing. Green Bay, WI, 2018, 426 pp.

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*Outside the Wire in Blue: A True Story of American Cops Downrange in the Wars on Terror* tells the relatively unknown stories of U.S. civilian police officers who deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan under the DoD Law Enforcement Professional Program (LEP-P). David Shearman and James Taman, both law enforcement officers who took part in the program, have done an admirable job rescuing the stories and lessons learned of those who served with them in the LEP-P. The authors acknowledge early on in the book that LEP-P operated in relative obscurity, quoting the General in charge of the program that “the LEP program is a very unique but little-known effort. Even the people behind the scenes are not quite sure about what you guys bring to the fight and the sacrifices you are making for your country.”<sup>1</sup> With this book, the authors give an important historical account of the LEP-P from its origins in 2006, while providing a fitting tribute to the sacrifices they and their comrades made by volunteering to deploy to the wars.

Although written in a chronological format from a highly personal perspective, *Outside the Wire in Blue* manages to make itself more than just another war diary. The book contains some broader lessons that transcend the day-to-day challenges faced by civilian police working with the military in a war zone. The authors’ purpose in writing the book was to tell the stories of a number of individual civilian police officers who volunteered for LEP-P. They also wrote the book to help their fellow American citizens better understand the overall character and professionalism of U.S. police officers, and to preserve some lessons-learned for future law enforcement professionals.<sup>2</sup> They succeed admirably in all of these objectives.

The authors explain why DoD found that the law enforcement skills and practical street-wise experience that civilian U.S. police officers brought to the fight proved so important to helping soldiers counter the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Civilian police may not have a place on a conventional battlefield, but “in the wars of the street and alley, the back-room plot, and the operation of a criminal enterprise, against these they are irreplaceable and invaluable, both as force multipliers and as actors in their own right.”<sup>3</sup> For example, the authors discuss the daily challenges

of setting up Investigative and Surveillance Teams (ISU)—undercover teams of 15 Afghan police officers augmented with two embedded LEP advisors—throughout Afghanistan. The addition of “professional police officers, married with both military staff and host national police, produced results all out of proportion to expectations.”<sup>4</sup> Embedding just a small number of civilian police with a host national force helped make the insurgent “tangible, visible, time and place predictable.”<sup>5</sup>

Shearman and Taman’s stories also highlight some important lessons of interagency cooperation. As explained in the CGSC Foundation’s 2018 publication, *A Practitioner’s Handbook for Interagency Leadership*, leaders operating in the complex interagency arena wrestle with a host of unique challenges as they transition from the familiar routines of their home organizations to an environment where there are “few hierarchies, rules, or standard operating procedures.”<sup>6</sup> These challenges include overlapping responsibilities and authorities that spur competition and hinder interagency operations. Organizations also do not easily change the way they are used to operating to accommodate other partners. Civilian police methods epitomize the challenges of working out a practical day-to-day interagency approach, for “they are generally a deviation from the basic unit orientation, a change in operating strategy.”<sup>7</sup> *Outside the Wire in Blue* provides vivid real-world examples of these types of challenges, and emphasizes the importance of cultivating a broad interagency perspective. Much has been invested over the past several decades toward promoting interagency cooperation and a whole of government approach. By telling the story of LEP-P and the police officers who served in its ranks, *Outside the Wire in Blue* contributes toward preserving some of those important and hard-won lessons. **IAJ**

## NOTES

1 David R. Shearman and James Taman, *Outside the Wire in Blue: A True Story of American Cops Downrange in the Wars on Terror* (Green Bay, WI: TitleTown Publishing, 2018), 69.

2 Ibid., 402.

3 Ibid., 397.

4 Ibid., 396.

5 Ibid.

6 William J. Davis, with Janet K. Benini and Michael S. Choe. Ed by Roderick M. Cox. *A Practitioner’s Handbook for Interagency Leadership* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CGSC Foundations Press, 2018), 1.

7 *Outside the Wire in Blue*, 393.