

Fall 2022 Tour of NJSP Facilities

On Friday, October 21, 2022, the Rutgers University Center on Policing's (COP) Fall 2022 interns participated with members of the COP staff and Rutgers Gun Violence Research Center (GVRC) in a tour of the New Jersey Regional Operations & Intelligence Center (ROIC), as well as the New Jersey State Police (NJSP) Ballistics Center in Hamilton Township. The purpose of visiting the two facilities was to promote understanding and share conceptual knowledge relevant to gun violence reduction strategies to improve public safety. The GVRC group was led by Dr. Michael Anestis, and the tour was organized by the Center on Policing's Deputy Director Dr. Rick Fuentes (ret- Superintendent NJSP).

After a tour of the ROIC facilities, the NJSP presented some of the latest cutting-edge technologies used in the field today to pinpoint and improve response time to gun violence . These technologies included an overview of NIBIN, innovative gunshot detection systems, and surveillance techniques. The need for integrating technologies into law enforcement work today is manifold, and is an important step in ensuring reliable data collection. It can lead to improved relationships between law enforcement and the community, and also has the potential to increase inter-departmental and agency collaboration.

The afternoon session consisted of a tour of the NJSP Ballistics Center in Hamilton Township. This provided the interns with an exciting opportunity to view one of the nation's next generation forensic facilities whose work is closely aligned with that of the ROIC. The GVRC and COP participants were guided through the steps involved in crime gun processing from intake through the analysis processes by NJSP analysts.

The tour of the NJSP Ballistics Center highlighted what the interns have researched on a more academic level. This forensic complex, guided by the Crime Gun Protocol, has helped streamline ballistic and crime gun processing by effectively connecting forensic elements once slowed by physical as well as bureaucratic obstacles. Units engaging in each step of crime gun analysis are now housed only steps apart. These units, which the interns got to see in action, ranged from computer-based ballistic analysis to DNA and fingerprint analysis of bullets, casings, and guns.

The day ended in a small room that housed a massive amount of history. The walls and floors of the Reference Collection room were lined with weapon systems dating back several hundred years. The collection included everything from 19th century revolvers to 20th century rocket-propelled grenades. Exotic weapons such as cane guns, multiple-barrel pistols, and homemade shotguns made unexpected appearances. The museum-like room also serves a practical purpose in addition to providing a stunning view into history. The acquisition of the diverse weapon systems provides the opportunity for officers to be trained in the safe handling of diverse weapons they may come across in the field.

The tours and presentations provided at both the ROIC and NJSP Ballistic Center were not only exciting, but important in clarifying how two intricate yet efficient systems function. The two facilities truly complement one another. The forensic evidence that is obtained via the streamlined processes at the NJSP Ballistic Center has its value optimized by the ability of the ROIC to analyze and manage a vast array of state and nationwide intelligence, including forensic information.

The interns thank the Center on Policing and the New Jersey State Police for this unforgettable opportunity.