

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Spec Ops Officer Was Saved By Helmet After Suspects Opened Fire During 'Operation Cool Out', VIPD Says

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Ernice Gilbert **October 07, 2019**



Weapons confiscated during Operation Cool Out (Ernice Gilbert, VIC)

ST. CROIX -- Gunmen opened fire at special operations officers during "Operation Cool Out" over the weekend. During the shooting, a bullet struck the protective headgear of one of the officers, the V.I.P.D. said during a press conference today.

The officer was treated at the Juan F. Luis Hospital for his injury, said Captain Sydney Elsko, who was part of the operation. He said the officer was safe and in good spirits. "We're doing everything we can to keep that officer safe as we will all of our officers," Mr.

Elsko said. The Consortium [reported on the incident](#) Monday morning.



From Left to Right: Attorney General Denise George, Police Captain Sydney Elsko, VIPD Commissioner Trevor Velinor, VIPD Public Information Glen Dratte, VI Dept. of Justice Director of Investigations Leonardo Carrion, Chief of Detectives Naomi Joseph and former Police Chief William Harvey (William Harvey was removed from the acting chief position and Deputy Chief Herman Lynch was named acting chief for the St. Croix District on Monday afternoon, according to Mr. Dratte (Photo Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)

Operation Cool Out was initiated following the [July shooting incident at the Cool Out Bar](#) in Peter's Rest that left two men injured. After a thorough investigative process, police were able to secure 7 search warrants and 4 arrest warrants, which were executed during the operation in the wee hours of Saturday morning.



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"Consequently, three of the four individuals were arrested," said V.I.P.D. Commissioner Trevor Velinor. "In addition we arrested six additional individuals who were associated" with the July shooting, the commissioner said. The officers also confiscated five firearms along with an extended magazine clip and a ballistic vest.

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The commissioner also provided details on the incident that saw gunfire being directed at the spec ops officers. "While these officers were going to one of these locations to execute a search warrant, they were shot upon. The officers demonstrated great tact and the ability to show restraint. They did not fire back because they did not have sight alignment. They did not see the individual actually pull the trigger, but they were shot upon. That's very concerning," Mr. Velinor said.

He later added, "Normally people adhere when law enforcement officers say police or search warrant. They recognize that police are there to do a job. The normal person does not shoot at police. I take it personal when a member of our community is shooting at police executing warrants. Hence these individuals must absolutely hold the brunt and be held accountable."

Operation Cool Out was part of a broader strategy called the VI Crime Initiative. "Our goal literally is to bring public safety back to our territory by addressing the small things and also pursuing individuals who have demonstrated violence upon our community," said the commissioner.