



## THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article February, 2024

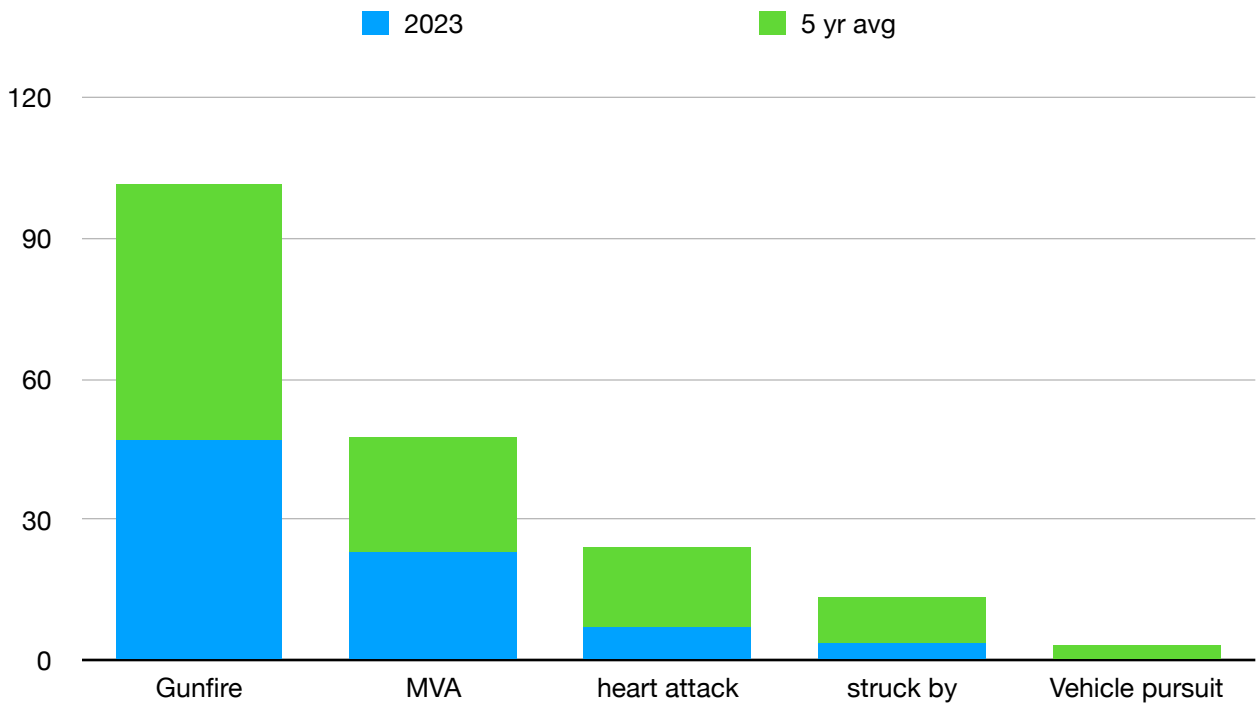
We get an A+ in 2023. Our LODD numbers were some of the the lowest in history, certainly since the creation of modern day policing with medicine, vests, and technologically motivated self defense tools. Interesting that it follows several years of record highs.

We took a closer look to see what we did different, where we went up, where we went down, where we improved, and where we just got lucky. There are some obvious answers that are specific to the times and therefore mostly beyond our control. Covid deaths took a plummet from 868 combined over the last three years to six in 2023. While 9/11 related illness continues to plague the LODD tally each year, it also is trending down. The average for the last five years was 39 and the tally in 2023, 15. This number has had a steady diving trend during the last five years from the fifties, to the forties, then into the twenties before hitting the teens last year.

This month we looked at deaths that are perhaps more in our control. Although as always here at TBFT, we want to give full credit to the criminals for their role in our deaths, we still look to the officers and what could have been done to prevent the success of our enemies. Gunfire is and likely always will be our greatest cause of death. In 2023 we lost 47 to gunfire, a 14% drop off the five year average. In motor vehicle accidents we finished 2023 with 23 deaths, an %8 drop over five years. Heart attacks came in with seven deaths. That is a %60 drop over five years. There were four struck by incidents in 2023. That is a %59 decline. The final category we would like to highlight is vehicle pursuits. Mathematically speaking, pursuits dropped %100 from a five year average of three a year to zero in 2023.

We are doing better as a profession. While the obvious declines such as COVID and 9/11 have improved our numbers significantly, we still see great improvement in areas of officer safety when we look at deaths that are possibly more in our control. The way we carry ourselves, how we perceive threats, and our responses to those threats all play a role in the deaths highlighted in this graph, even the heart attacks.

When we have a problem area in our cities or counties or states, we create special policing tactics to handle it and drive down crime. When we see results we do one of two things: We back off and return to policing as normal, or we continue to push the tactics that were successful in combating our problem. If you have ever experienced an agency that solves the problem and then stops deploying the successful tactic, you also have experienced the problem recurring again. Consistency is and always will be the key to driving down LODD numbers from year to year. We may have had a record low year and this should give us cause to celebrate our achievements after we mourn those we lost. But without repeatedly beating that drum and creating better officer safety tactics in yourself and in the officers coming up behind you in the ranks, this number will spike again. "Hard times make strong men. Strong men make easy times. Easy times make soft men and soft men make hard times." Unfortunately it's a cycle we have seen since the dawn of time and one we would love to see broken. Our profession is in hard times right now and we have strong men and women in our ranks driving us towards easier times. As we get there we need to teach rookies about hard times and the realities of letting our guard down, not taking training seriously, and sitting in arenas with 5,000 of our brethren honoring one. They need to remember what they were not there to experience. This is the only way to keep down what we have worked so hard to drive down.



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