ABSTRACT
This poster presents the results of a comprehensive review of the literature and cross-cultural comparison of law enforcement-related stress in the United States and the United Kingdom. More specifically, the occupational hazards, organization of law enforcement, the police subculture, and coping strategies utilized by law enforcement officers (LEOs) in these countries are analyzed. We then determine how culture has affected LEO stress. This analysis shows that, although U.S. officers appear more likely to have negative behavioral effects as a result of stress and avoidant coping strategies, U.K. officers are more likely to report feeling stressed but can cope more easily because of problem-focused coping strategies. This systematic comparison serves as the foundation of our policy recommendations related to stress response and preventative strategies for law enforcement.

COMPARISON OF STRESS BETWEEN POLICE AND THE GENERAL POPULATION
Compared to the general population, LEOs are more likely to experience negative mental, physical and behavioral effects as a result of their perceived stress. The table below summarizes the various problems reported by or found in LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>PTSD, Depression, &amp; Anxiety Disorders</td>
<td>PTSD, anxiety symptoms, insomnia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>Deviancy, alcoholism, aggression, &amp; violence</td>
<td>Increased use of alcohol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Higher mortality rates, coronary disease risk factors</td>
<td>Heart disease risk factors: higher blood pressure, higher cholesterol</td>
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However in the U.S., research directly measuring the perceived stress of LEOs did not find a difference in stress between LEO and the general population (Wright et al., 2011; Franke et al., 2002). On the other hand, U.K. research did not find analogous results (Juniper, White & Bellamy, 2010; Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, et al. 2005).

When comparing the effects of stress in LEOs in these two countries and their self-reports of stress, U.S. officers appear more likely to have negative behavioral effects as a result of stress, whereas the U.K. officers appear more likely to report their feelings of stress.

SOURCES OF STRESS
Occupational = stresses specific to the duties of LEOs
- e.g. constant fear of danger, primary or secondary experience of trauma
Organizational = stresses related to the bureaucratic structure of policing
- e.g. lack of influence, undermining, paperwork, meeting deadlines
Subcultural = stresses that result from the “unwritten rules” of policing
- e.g. machismo, denial of support networks, discrimination, role conflicts

The common perception was that occupational stressors had greater impact than organizational stressors. Although LEOs do find aspects of their duties stressful, they report feeling greater distress from organizational factors (Gershon et al., 2009; Morash, Haar & Kwak, 2006). A possible explanation for this finding is that LEOs are mentally and physically prepared for the occupational hazards of their job but not trained to cope with the stress stemming from organizational factors. Furthermore, organizational stressors typically stem from a militaristic and inflexible management and training system. Accordingly, subcultural stressors exacerbate occupational & organizational stressors and has helped create the militaristic structure of police agencies (Woody, 2005; Emsley, 1996; Easton, 2012).

COPING STRATEGIES
In the U.S., Gershon and colleagues (2009) measured which coping strategies LEOs utilized: cognitive/problem focused, avoidance, or negative behaviors.

In the U.K., Alexander and Walker (1994) asked LEOs how they coped with stress and found three general categories of coping strategy techniques: problem-focused, active-rational, or avoidance coping:
- Cognitive/problem focused coping = resolving/confronting stressors
- Avoidance coping = avoiding feelings or stressors (i.e. withdrawal, denial)
- Negative behaviors coping = alcoholism, deviancy, aggression
- Active-rational = emotion regulation and long-term coping (i.e. having a systematic way to solve problems, not letting your feelings bottle-up, separating home from work)*

This chart demonstrates that, although a high number of both U.S. and U.K. LEOs utilize avoidant coping strategies, the U.K. LEOs utilize more positive coping strategies. This may explain why U.K. LEOs are less likely to exhibit the negative behavioral effects of stress than their U.S. counterparts, because of their more positive coping strategies.

ROLE OF CULTURE
Views on Alcohol
In the U.K., Green (2004) found that, when comparing LEOs with PTSD to civilians with PTSD, more civilians increased their consumption of alcohol than did LEOs with PTSD. Emsley (1996) argued that, although alcohol and pub culture is a feature of the U.K. LEO’s life, it is done moderately. However, in the U.S., 20% of LEOs were found to have abused alcohol. Notably, the alcohol use of U.S. LEOs was double that of the general U.S. population (Lindsay, 2008).

Historical Reactions to Stress
Although both countries were involved in World War II, the Blitzkrieg, or the continual bombing of London by Germany, left London decimated. Despite the continuous bombing day-in and day-out, the Britons stayed in London, kept working in factories for the war effort, and would even have dance parties in the middle of the raids. The people learned how to cope with stress in a way that allowed them to continue functioning. The U.S. has not had these same experiences as a nation. During the past three centuries, the overall picture of U.S. prosperity has been positive, showing growth and recovery even during tough economic times like the Depression. U.K. LEOs have embedded in them that “Keep Calm and Carry On” mentality, the mentality of coping with stress through problem-solving methods of coping, which the U.S. LEOs may not have because of differing historical experiences.

DISCUSSION
This cross-cultural comparison of the relevant literature on LEO stress was intended to create a comprehensive picture of the different facets of a LEO’s experience of stress in the U.S. and the U.K. LEOs do experience greater stress than the general public. The stress experienced by LEOs in both countries stems from organizational stressors. Furthermore, U.S. officers are less likely to report feeling stressed and more likely to exhibit the negative behavioral effects of stress, whereas U.K. officers are more likely to report feelings of stress than to exhibit the effects. The findings of this analysis suggest that these differences are attributable to different coping strategies utilized by LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K. In the U.K., LEOs are more likely to adopt problem-focused coping strategies than LEOs in the U.S. and are less likely to adopt avoidant coping strategies. LEOs in the U.K. may adopt more positive coping strategies because of the cultural disposition towards stress stemming from the suffering they experienced during WWII.

RESEARCH AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS
Future Research Considerations
Quantitative comparison of problem-focused coping strategies between U.S. LEOs and the general public.
Research on U.K. LEO violence and alcohol consumption.
Suggested Policy Considerations
Training curricula that promotes empowerment and confidence of officers over militarism. Emphasize learning over teaching.

Change the structure and organization of police agencies to promote internal and community collaboration, as well as giving LEOs more resources.

In the U.S., policing agencies should add programs that help LEOs learn more positive coping strategies and help them deal with the ramifications of their negative coping behaviors.

REFERENCES