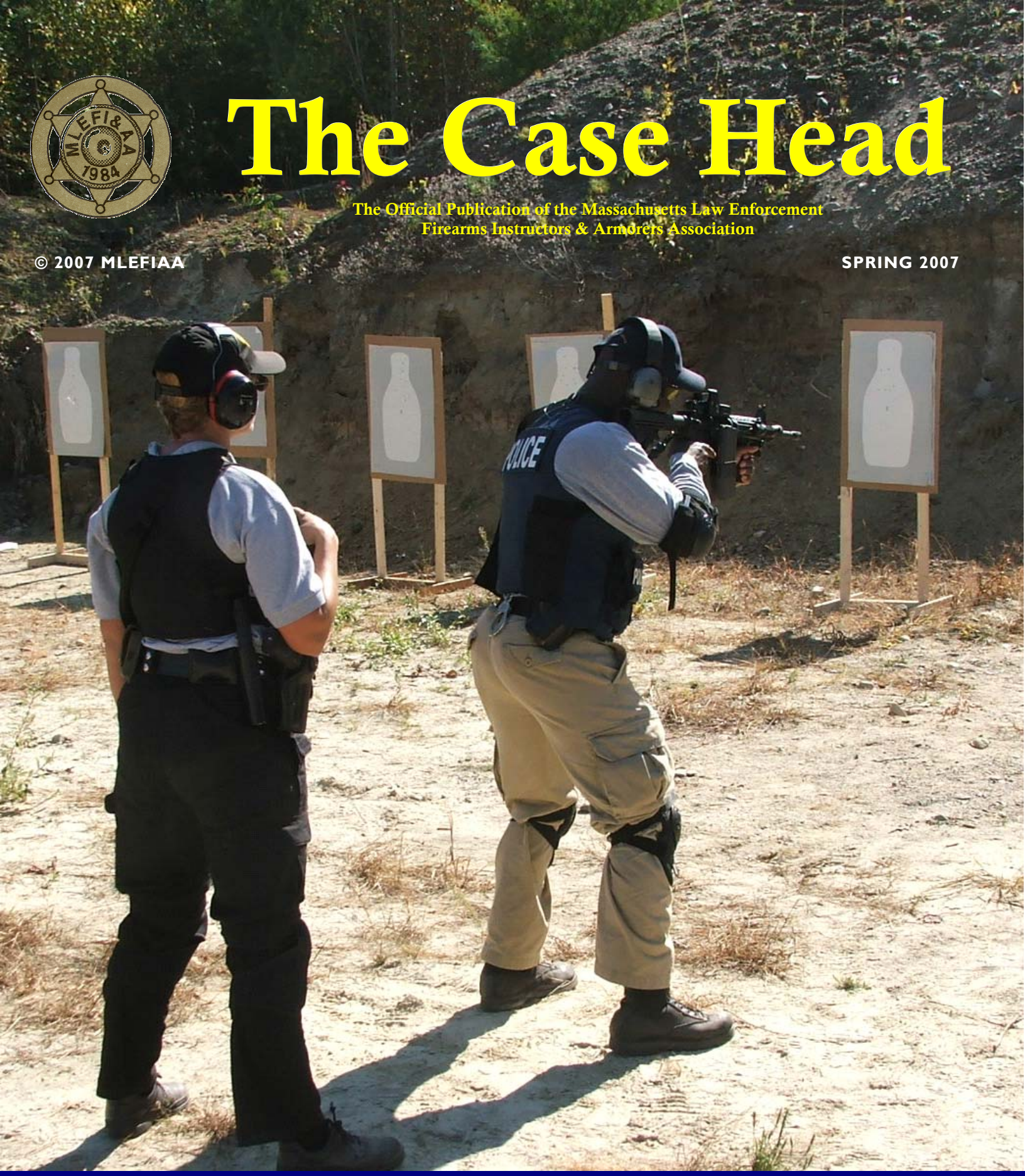
The Case Head

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Law Enforcement
Firearms Instructors & Armorers Association

SPRING 2007



2007 FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Devens Conference Center / Harvard Sportsman's Club

September 25-28, 2007

The Case Head

The official publication of the
Massachusetts Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors & Armorers Association
P.O. Box 253, Princeton, MA 01541-0253

MISSION STATEMENT

The Massachusetts Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors' & Armorers' Association was formed to promote professionalism, continuing education, improvement in training methods and techniques of the proper law enforcement use of firearms in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Association strives to promote and foster mutual cooperation between instructors. Through discussion and a common interest in law enforcement firearms training, officer survival and tactical skills, MLEFIAA hopes to keep the members at the forefront of firearms training. Through our monthly meetings and annual training conference, we provide a means for the exchange of ideas and information regarding law enforcement firearms training, training methods, educational activities and new firearms technologies.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

MLEFIAA currently has over 400 members. While mainly from Massachusetts, our membership extends internationally to countries as far away as Sweden. The Association endeavors to secure new members from the law enforcement training community who are engaged in the field of firearms training, maintenance, education or related fields. Our goal is to continuously upgrade the level of firearms training of law enforcement personnel here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Membership is offered at two levels - Active & Associate. Active membership is open to all duly sworn law enforcement officers of any local, county, state, federal or specialized law enforcement agency within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; whose official duties include the training of law enforcement personnel in the proper use of firearms; or whose duties involve the maintenance and repair of firearms for their respective agencies.

Associate membership is open to sworn law enforcement firearms instructors and armorers from agencies outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, non-sworn firearms instructors & armorers working within an agency within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and representatives of private industry who are engaged in the design, development, manufacture, or training in firearms, ammunition and other related technologies designed for law enforcement use.

Complete details can be found at our website: www.MLEFIAA.org

Articles & Letters to the Editor

Articles and letters should be no more than 1000 words in length and submitted in MS Word. Any photos should be in JPEG format. MLEFIAA encourages a healthy discussion of training issues but we require that you keep it level headed and respect opposing views. You do not have to agree, but we will not publish articles that are inflammatory or otherwise do not uphold the reputation of this Association.

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Is Your Training Addressing New Threats?

MLEFIAA member and MSP Sgt Mike Conti graciously hosted the February meeting at Logan Airport. The topic was the DHS certified course in Prevention & Response to Suicide Bombing Incidents. Some may not consider this topic relevant because they do not believe a suicide bombing incident will happen here in the USA. That would be an incorrect assumption. On Sept 11, 2001, a handful of Islamic terrorists willfully committed suicide while completing their mission. That mission was 80% successful. The twin towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were successfully targeted. Thousands were murdered in the process. A handful of brave souls on United Flight 93 were determined not to give up without a fight. As a result, the mission to hit the U.S. Capitol Building was thwarted although all were killed on the plane.

Since the content of this course is sensitive and the distribution of this publication is not controlled, we can not get into specifics but a few points can be made.

The United States has experienced a successful suicide attack. Because the attack was successful in more ways than one, it is likely we will see more. The questions are when and where. One only has to look towards the Middle East to see what we could expect. Our open society is a prime target for suicide attacks on our transportation centers, shopping malls and schools. Alarmist thinking you say? Look again towards the Middle East. Terrorist attacks in Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan continue with alarming frequency.

Watch the news. Terrorist continue to probe our border security. The extent of that activity is not widely published but it is there. We should presume that they are planning something and we must be ready.

The program looked at what defines a suicide bomber, the types of attacks, how to identify potential targets and recognizing the nine phases of the attack. We looked at our role in the collection of counter terrorism information and recognizing common attack indicators. It was clear that in order to successfully counter terrorist attacks, we will need to rethink the traditional law enforcement mind set. Many seemingly innocuous incidents may in fact be probes at our security. Perhaps the most thought provoking was the discussion emanating from how we will deal with this threat. The solution is obvious. Implementation of the solution may be difficult for some at first.

This is an excellent course and highly recommended for all law enforcement. It is extremely important to know what we face before it raises its ugly head again in this country. Thanks again to Mike Conti for coordinating this training for us.

Monthly Meeting Calendar

Jan 23, 2007
S&W Academy
(Elections)

Feb 27, 2007
Mass. State Police
Logan Airport

Mar 27, 2007
Randolph P.D.

Apr 24, 2007
Lancaster P.D.

May 22, 2007
Peabody P.D.

June 12 & 26, 2007
HSC
Instructor Recerts

July & August
No meeting
Summer Break

Sept 25-28
Annual Instructor Conference
Devens / HSC

October 2007
USPIS-Boston

November 2007
Open

December 2007
Open
E-Board Nominations

Watch your E-mail for details

Executive Board Re-Elected

In a vote of approval for the job they have done, members unanimously re-elected the incumbent Executive Board. Smith & Wesson Academy hosted the meeting at their Springfield facility. The 2007 MLEFIAA Executive Board will consist of President - Chief Bert DuVernay of the New Braintree Police Department; 1st V.P.: Lt. Ed O'Leary of Randolph P.D.; 2nd V.P.: Officer Todd Bailey of Duxbury P.D.; 3rd V.P.: Officer Bill Peterson (ret.) of the Wayland Aux. P.D.; Secretary: Officer Joe Picariello of Princeton P.D.; Treasurer: Marty Michelman ; and Master-At-Arms: Officer Bruce Klinger (ret.) of Boxford P.D.

As the first item of business, the Executive Board nominated the following people to President DuVernay to fill appointed positions within the Association: Training Co-ordinators (3): Insp. Jim Ring, Concord P.D. (ret.) (former Firearms Training Coordinator MPTC), Sgt. Mike Conti, MSP and Sgt. Bill Leanos, Gloucester P.D. (MPTC Firearms Coordinator). As Quartermaster, Sgt Dick Forrester, Boston Municipal P.D.

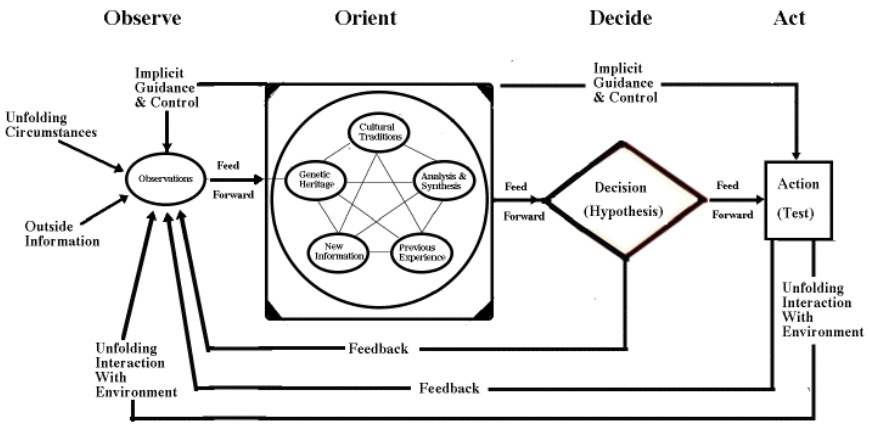
The by-laws permit the President to appoint members in good standing to these positions on the advice and consent of the Executive Board. Their terms coincide with the current Board. The Executive Board thanked the appointed members for their willingness to advance the goals of the Association. President DuVernay welcomed Bill Leanos to his new appointed position. MLEFIAA has maintained an excellent relationship with the MPTC Firearms Training Coordinator over the past several years. President DuVernay emphasized the Association's desire to continue this.

The Board also thanked Mike Conti, Jim Ring and Dick Forrester for their efforts over the years. Mike and Jim have been key players in maintaining the high quality of training run by MLEFIAA. As the Association's first Quartermaster, Dick Forrester is a huge asset. If you've been to the conference or other trainings, you have seen Dick selling MLEFIAA logo wear.

More On The Myth of Contagious Fire By Todd Bailey

In the last issue of the Case Head (Winter 2006/2007, Page 8), this publication looked at the media myth of "Contagious Fire". In that article, readers learned some elements of the print media were pushing a theory that when one officer fires his/her weapon, it causes others will follow suit out of reflex action. The media used this theory to reason why two NYPD officers would fire a total of 42 (31 and 11 respectively) rounds in a few seconds. In the last issue, we looked at some of the factors which may have led to the incident evolving as it did. In this issue, we will look closer at the underlying mechanics of a gunfight.

There is a proven theory that it takes approximately 0.25 seconds for human mind to perform a task related function. I first heard this theory expounded by Bank Miller at the SIG Arms Academy and he continues to preach "The Quarter Second Rule" at the Action Target Academy. He states that it takes a quarter of a second for us to perform each step of a task. This is supported by COL John Boyd's OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) Loop or the similar PEDA (Perceive, Evaluate, Decide, Act) concept. We find it takes the average human about a quarter of a second to process one part of the equation before moving on to the next stage. Doing the math, we can compute it takes the average person at least one second to process the threat stimulus before they can even begin to react physically. Now, add in the additional time to draw and fire the first shot and we are now close to two seconds of elapsed time



John Boyd's OODA Loop

before our first round goes down range. In that time, how much closer has a moving threat come to the officer? The closer the threat, the greater the threat will be perceived.

Bruce Siddle defines response time in his book *Sharpening the Warriors Edge* as the length of time from "the perception of the threat stimulus, to the completion of the student's response." A department that strives to provide quality training to its officers will give their officers a variety of threat stimuli to prompt the required response during training. Our memory is a critical part of this training process. We recognize certain objects as a cue to respond in a particular manner. For instance, a balled fist and threatening words should key a defensive stance, verbal warning and possibly drawing your OC or baton depending on the circumstances and department policy. Seeing a firearm or hearing gun shots should cue a different response from the officer usually including drawing the service weapon and moving towards cover while further evaluating the threat to determine if firing is required. By repeating these drills, we program the appropriate response to the stimuli. Under stress, humans will respond as they have been programmed to through their training.

An important factor that is often overlooked is the incapacitation factor of your service ammunition. There are several variables which will be different for each incident. These include caliber, bullet type, shot placement, subjects mental status and the presence of drugs or alcohol (stimulants and anesthetics) which may mask the effect of the bullet. It stands to reason that the faster a bullet

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Product Review - DECAL GRIP™

Reviewed by Todd Bailey

A drawback to many polymer framed pistols is the relatively smooth surface some have on the grip area and the inability to install aftermarket grip panels. While manufacturers have textured the surface, it generally does not provide that "sticky" grip we look for.

Decal Grip™ is a product that was developed to answer this need. Using the same principle as the skateboard tape many competitors use on their race pistols, Decal Grip™ is a rough sheet with an adhesive back cut to fit a specific handgun.

I have been using Decal Grips™ now for several years on the Glock pistols I regularly use on duty. The original Glock grip was too slick. While the factory has made improvements to enhance the hand to pistol interface, it can still use some help. I chose this product because it does not significantly add to the circumference of the grip.

The first decal grip I purchased was for my Glock and was essentially skateboard tape pre-scored to fit the specific weapon. Installation was easy and users should note the manufacturers warning about using care on placing the product. The surface temperature must be dry and 50 degrees or warmer for the adhesive to get a good bond. The manufacturer recommends degreasing with rubbing alcohol prior to installation. Use care to get the panel placed perfectly the first time because the adhesive is like contact cement. Once it touches anything, it does not want to let go. I suggest positioning the cutouts without removing the backing to get an idea of where you will want them BEFORE actually doing the installation. A little patience here will save you the aggravation of a sloppy installation job.

I found the skateboard tape type material excellent for shooting but it tore up the inside of my jacket and where it was apt to rub against my shirt when seated in the cruiser. This was done with all the subtlety of a belt sander loaded with 80 grit! Replacing shirts and jackets can get expensive so I switched to the textured rubber material they also make. Installation is identical and material has a feel very much like the neoprene grips commonly found on the market. The best part is it doesn't tear up your clothing.

The textured rubber Grip Decals™ have been in use on my Glock 22, 23 and 27 for several years now and I am generally very pleased with the results. The material provides a good grip for even sweaty hands. The panels are only 1/32" thick so they add almost no bulk to the original grip. I don't have 'ham hands' so I wasn't looking to add any bulk to the grip. If you have large hands and are looking to enlarge the grip size, look at a product like Hogue's "Hand-All".

Decal Grip™ claims their product is resilient to solvents and oils. The panels can be easily peeled off and replaced. Depending on your point of view, this is either an asset or a drawback with the product. After about two years I found the corners were beginning to peel. I attribute this to hundreds of presentations in and out of the holster and the general wear and tear the grip's outside corner takes in the course of the day. The top right corner and lower left began to peel back. This got to the stage where it was a cosmetic issue and I carefully trimmed the lifted section back. This worked for a few months but was only a temporary measure. Users should be prepared to replace sections at some point in time. When will depend on how much you go to the range and how much the grip area gets banged around while you work. If you find you do not like the product, it is easy to remove and leaves no residue.

Decal Grip™ is available for many polymer framed handguns and can be purchased from Brownell's and other gun accessory suppliers for under $10.00.

2007 Firearms Instructor Recertification

MPTC Approved - Sponsored by MLEFIAA

June 12 & 26, 2007 at the Harvard Sportsmans Club

Check www.MLEFIAA.org for registration details

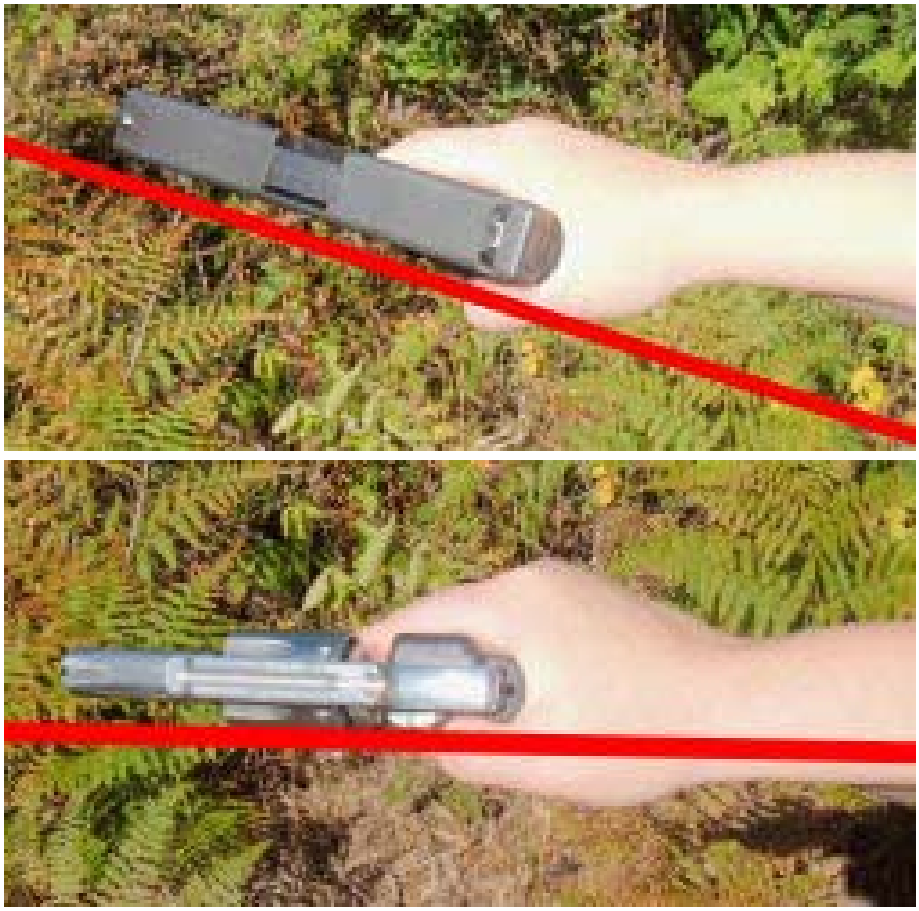
Does Your Service Pistol Fit All Your Officers? By Todd Bailey

The grip to hand fit of an officer's service pistol is very important to maximize the officer's ability to shoot well. Unfortunately, many departments adopt a "one size fits all" attitude when selecting an authorized service pistol for their troops. This can be attributed to one of several reasons: A salesman sells the department a model that offers little or no flexibility, the person selecting the new pistol is biased to a particular model allowing their personal preferences out weigh the needs of the entire department and finally a mindset in the command structure that the entire department should be standardized. All these reasons can lead to a situation where an officer is forced to carry a pistol that they will never be able to shoot well because it does not fit their hand.

Service pistol policy ranges from one gun for everyone to allowing the officer to carry their choice of weapon provided it is mechanically sound and they can qualify with it. It is perfectly understandable that a department would want some sort of standardization to their equipment but there are ways to achieve both standardization and provide almost all the officers with a handgun that fits them properly.

When you are selecting a replacement for your current service pistol, include a requirement that it must be able to fit a wide range of hand sizes. This can best be achieved by interchangeable grip inserts. Some manufacturers will claim that by offering several different "sizes" such as sub-compact, compact and service, they meet this requirement. It is not that simple. Generally speaking, the circumference of the grip on all three versions will be the same so there is really no advantage for a person with smaller hands. The key to proper fit is being able to alter the grip circumference or contour to accommodate various hand sizes. Pistols with detachable grip panels will allow some degree of modification. This is the same concept we used when we all carried the same revolver but used various aftermarket grips to make it better fit our hand.

Department policy makers should be aware that there is a legal remedy for smaller officers that are forced to qualify with an ill-fitting handgun. The legal concept of Disparate Impact and the possible monetary ramifications should be considered before you insist that an officer with small or very large hands adapt to a weapon that does not fit them. I am not an attorney and I make no claims as such but I will explain the concept as it has been explained to me.



(Top) A handgun that is too large forces the shooter to rotate the pistol to allow the index finger to properly reach the trigger. This alters the direction of recoil into the web of the hand rather than up the bones of the arm. Shooter performance will diminish rapidly with a pistol that does not fit the shooter.
(Bottom) A handgun that fits properly will line the bore axis up with the bones of the forearm. This directs the recoil through the bones which are stronger than muscle
Photos courtesy of Kathy Jackson © 2006

The proof of disparate impact is usually accomplished by statistical evidence. If the plaintiff can show that a majority of people of similar size and training can not properly shoot or qualify with a handgun of that size, it is likely the plaintiff will prevail. The 1991 case of Mary Kay BYRNE v. the City of Naperville (1991 WL 638818 (N.D. Ill.)) can illustrate this for us.

Byrne was discharged from her position as a police officer with the Naperville Police Department for failure to qualify with the standard issue department service weapon, a S&W Model 59 9mm pistol. Byrne failed to pass and qualify during firearms training at the Cook County Sheriff's Dept. Police Training Academy. Byrne brought suit in U.S. District Court on two counts. First, she claimed the police department's requirement that all officers qualify with the Model 59 has a disparate impact on women under Title VII, 42 USC § 2000e. Second, Byrne asserted the city chose the Model 59 with the intent to violate her rights protected by the 14th Amendment and is liable under 42 USC 1983.

The burden of proof in a Title VII disparate impact claim always remains with the plaintiff. Byrne needed to prove a prima facie case of discrimination in order to withstand summary judgment. Byrne brought in an expert who demonstrated that based on the general population of the U.S., 50% of the women and 10% of the men would be unable to handle the S&W M-59 on the basis of their hand size alone. A second expert stated women with small hands often have greater difficulty handling and shooting

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The Need For Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

At a recent range training an officer was reluctant to use hearing protection stating the gunfire isn't that loud outdoors and in a real gunfight, hearing protection will not be available. In this day and age, it is hard to believe that anyone would avoid wearing any kind of personal protective equipment (PPE).

I became a firm advocate of personal protective equipment many years ago after I pulled a piece of copper jacket out of my left eye. I was wearing a pair of "shooting glasses" and was standing at right angles to the target line working with a shooter when I felt something in my eye. A bullet jacket had separated when it struck the back stop and a fairly good sized piece traveled straight back to the firing line. Fortunately, most of the velocity had bled off so the fragment did not penetrate the eyeball. The piece got lodged up under the eye lid and caused quite a bit of discomfort but no permanent damage. This illustrates the need for quality eye protection with side shields. It is not enough just to have "shatter resistant" lenses. Your eye protection should meet at least ANSI Z87.1 specifications. You need the side shields because you are not always going to be facing head on towards the backstop. Replacement eyeballs are not readily available so you need to protect the ones you have.

There is a joke that you can always tell an old firearms instructor because they either are deaf as a haddock or have stereo hearing aids. When you stop and think about it, there is quite a bit of truth to this. Years ago, hearing protection was some cotton wadded up and stuffed into your ears. This was only done when you were working around really loud noises like artillery and jet engines. If it was small arms fire, we either ignored it or walked around with .38 Special brass stuck in each ear canal.

The U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) provides standards on what noise levels are hazardous and what is safe. Slicing through the scientific mumbo jumbo, sound is measured in decibels (dBA). The higher the decibel level, the greater the risk of hearing damage. OSHA has determined that sustained exposure to noise levels above 85 dBA can cause hearing damage. For comparison:

• Sitting in the woods listening to the

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Does Your Service Pistol Fit All Your Officers? (cont. from previous page)

the S&W Model 59 and 659. Based on the expert testimony, the court was satisfied Byrne had demonstrated a prima facie case of statistical disparity based on her experts testimony. The city's objection based on the fact that seven other female officers had qualified with the M-59 was rejected. It should be noted the city cited that two of the seven females had the same hand size or smaller than the plaintiff. The court stated that these figures (7) were too small to be statistically significant.

The city contended using a statistical analysis of the entire population of the United States was improper. The city claimed that statistics based on qualified applicants and employees was more meaningful and realistic. The court did not agree stating Byrnes reliance on the general population was appropriate in this case. The city then claimed that deficient or inadequate training was the reason Byrne was unable to pass the state firearms test. The court did not agree stating the city mandated the use of the M-59 for all its uniformed officers.

It should be noted that after her dismissal from the Naperville P.D., Byrne was able to pass the state firearms qualification course using a single stack 9mm semi-auto pistol. The court viewed this as credible evidence of her demonstrated proficiency with an alternate weapon.

On the second count (that the city chose the M-59 with the intent to violate her civil rights), the court could find no basis to support finding an intent to use the M-59 requirement as a basis for excluding women from the police department.

In short, the court found the city was wrong to require women to qualify with a service pistol that did not fit their hand however they (the city) did not deliberately select the M-59 to discriminate against women.

Somerville (MA) had a similar case where a female officer claimed the S&W M-59 was the cause of her failure to qualify. She brought suit against the city stating she should be allowed to qualify with an alternate weapon. In this case, she was subsequently permitted to use a smaller pistol however she failed to achieve a passing score with that weapon as well.

The FBI faced a disparate impact case in 1981 where a female agent in training claimed the service weapon she was issued was the reason she was not able to qualify. Based on the evidence presented, the Hearing Examiner found that there is a statistically significant difference in the failure rate for males and females in new agent training. The review board concurred with the Hearing Examiner's finding that the firearms training had a disparate impact on women.

Police officers come in all shapes, sizes and levels of experience today. This has presented greater challenges for the trainer. Providing our officers with the best equipment means looking beyond the material quality of the gear. We need to insure the gear is suitable for everyone. This is especially true with life saving equipment such as our service pistol. Make sure your service pistol fits. Whether it is via grip inserts, short triggers or adopting a single column magazine model, give your officers a weapon they can handle. Looking to the future, it is highly likely that the concept of disparate impact may even be used by left handed shooters. A forward thinking department will require their next pistol to be truly ambidextrous.

Please support your Association by attending meetings and recruiting new members. www.mlefiaa.org

The Need For Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (cont. from Pg. 7)

leaves rustle is about 20 dBA.
• Simple conversation is about 60 dBA.
• Lawn mower is 90 dBA and a chain saw is 105 dBA.
• A jet engine is about 130 dBA.
• Gunshots measure between about 143 to about 175 dBA depending on the caliber.

It is clear to see that we need some type of hearing protection but what works the best? Quality hearing protection will have a Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) on the package. Unfortunately there is no set standard for establishing this rating so it merely a rough figure for us to work with. The higher the NRR on the protection, the more it blocks the noise. Generally speaking, the dense foam inserts will have the highest protection. It is critical for your hearing protection to fit and be worn properly. If using ear plugs, it helps to pull up on the ear lobe when inserting them to insure they are well placed in the outer ear canal. When shooting in a confined space such as an indoor range, you are advised to wear the dense foam inserts along with properly fitting earmuffs. Your eyes and hearing are valuable senses.

Be sure your eye protection is the "wrap around" style and meets or exceeds the ANSI Z87.1 standard

Hearing protection comes in many different styles. These ear muffs by Peltor will amplify normal conversation but block gunshots. The NRR is 26 dB.

More On The Myth Of Contagious Fire (cont. from Pg. 3)

will incapacitate the threat, the fewer shots the officer will have to fire at the threat. We know from experience that even a "fatal" hit can take what seems like a lifetime in a gun fight to stop the perpetrator. The classic example is the April 1986 Miami Gunfight where Michael Platt received what the coroner called a "mortal wound" early in the gunfight yet was able to fight on for several minutes killing two FBI agents and severely wounding five more. Platt did not succumb to the wound until well after the fight ended. A hit to the Central Nervous System (CNS) is the only area that will result in a near instantaneous cessation of the threat. The brain stem and upper spinal cord are small targets and difficult to hit with a handgun especially in high stress environment of a gunfight. This is the reason why we train our officers to aim for center mass – usually the chest area on the target. Dr. Ken Newgard (Wound Ballistics Review) concludes that the quickest we can expect a torso hit to incapacitate is 4.6 seconds. Dennis M. Conner documented an experiment in the IALEFI Firearms Instructor magazine (Issue 25) where he determined a person can fire at least 15 effective shots during this 4.6 second time period. Using a Glock .40 S&W pistol at 21 feet with 180 gr. FMJ ammo and a Pro Timer, he found that the shooter was able to fire the entire 15 round magazine in 3.88 seconds which included the reaction time to the buzzer (threat). The shooter started with the weapon drawn and pointed towards the target. All 15 rounds hit the scoring area of the target. It is interesting to note the time between shots averaged 0.258 seconds further validating the "Quarter Second Rule".

Handgun rounds can not be relied on to provide "one shot stops". Even the venerable .45ACP has failed to stop with one round on may occasions. This realization has led us to develop multiple shot drills. We found that firing one round then stopping to evaluate the result generally got officers hurt. Firearms trainers began teaching officers to fire at least two rounds (double tap) before evaluating. Even this got some officers into trouble when their two rounds were not effective and the threat was able to deliver a fatal wound while the officer was evaluating their handiwork. This prompted us to respond with firing until the threat has been stopped. This protocol does not require the officer to pause their application of deadly force to conduct a threat reassessment in the middle of a gun fight. They fire until the threat goes down.

Putting all this together we can see where the officer on the street will usually begin any encounter at a disadvantage. First, they are (rightfully) not permitted to neutralize a potential deadly threat before the engagement begins. The officer is only permitted to respond to a threat. Proactive use of force is almost always found excessive. Requiring an officer to evaluate the effect of one, two or even three rounds before firing additional rounds is unnecessarily putting the officer at risk. Now we fire until the threat has ceased without counting rounds.

Looking back at our case in New York, we can see how the number of rounds fired could very well be in line with the circumstances. Police officers are trained to respond in a calculated manner to a perceived threat. The so called "experts" that purported the "Contagious Fire" theory need to go back and do their homework. Police firearms training has gone to great lengths to get away from the stereotype trigger happy officer that suffer from "buck fever". Regrettably, the media is more interested in revenue generating headlines than reporting facts. Even more regrettable is the tendency for politicians to make premature statements which taint the actions of their police officers in order to appear politically correct and appealing to the masses.

It is strongly recommended that firearms instructors take note of this and learn from it. Review your policy and training methods. Are they in line with each other? File complete training reports documenting your training methods and procedures. This will give your administration the material to support the officer's actions before they get in front of the microphones.

Some Sobering Facts Regarding Gunfights

Many of us don't get the opportunity to stay up to date on statistics compiled by the FBI and other federal agencies. Here are some sobering facts from the FBI regarding officers killed feloniously between 1992 and 2001 that may help you formulate what tasks are important to stress in your training.

There were 643 officers killed in that period of time.
448 (69.6%) with a handgun.
111 (17.2%) with a rifle.
35 (5.5%) with a shotgun.
594 (92.3%) were killed with a firearm
10 (1.55%) by a bomb.
8 (1.24%) with an edged weapon
4 (0.62%) with a "personal weapon"
27 (4.19%) by some other means
7.7% by some other means.

A greater majority of the officers were killed at close range.
296 (49.83%) at contact distance out to 5 feet
131 (22.05%) 6 – 10 feet
62 (10.43%) 11 – 20 feet
489 or 82.31% of the officers were killed within 7 yards of the assailant
51 (8.58%) 21 – 50 feet
46 (7.74%) over 50 feet

In 8 cases, the distance was not reported
The circumstances varied widely.
204 (34.4%) were arrest situations
96 (16.2%) were investigating suspicious persons
93 (15.6%) were disturbance calls
90 (15.1%) were traffic stops or pursuits
81 (13.7%) were ambushed
20 (3.4%) were handling or transporting prisoners
10 (1.7%) were dealing with mentally deranged assailants

Statistics compiled by the NYPD are similar.

Distance	# of shots fired	# of hits	% of hits
< 3 yds.	36	13	36%
3 – 7 yds.	115	17	15%
7 – 15 yds.	47	6	13%
15 – 25 yds.	22	2	1%
> 25 yds.	44	5	11%
Unknown	23	1	4%

Total Hit Ratio: 15%

46 of the 594 officers killed with a firearm were killed with their own weapon;
About 46% of the gunfights were against multiple adversaries;
About 69% of the gunfights occurred in low, dim or altered light.

Creating The Best Qualification Course For Your Department

By Todd Bailey

As many instructors know, police departments in Massachusetts are not obligated to use the MPTC Qualification Courses of Fire. There is no "standard qualification course" here in the Commonwealth that we are required, either by statute or regulation, to use. The Municipal Police Training Committee provides training to firearms instructors who then provide training to their individual departments using the standards established by their department. In some parts of the country, the state firearms instructor organizations are a key player in setting qualification course standards. This is not the case here in Massachusetts.

So, you have decided to go your own way. What are your options? The easiest way to go to the MLEFIAA Firearms Instructors Course Manual and choose any one of the many courses MLEFIAA has compiled. All are approved by the MPTC. If you decide to write a course tailored to your specific needs, here are a few items you should consider:

- What is the goal of your course?
- Is it task specific or qualification?
- How many rounds will it take to achieve your desired goal?
- Be sure to include key tactical skills.
- Scoring including scoring method and minimum passing score;
- Remedial training steps;
- Documentation of the training or qualification.

The absolute first thing you need to do is set the goal of the course of fire. Without a goal, your course of fire has no direction. If you are writing a course to train your officers to properly use their flashlights, keep it task specific. Trying to accomplish to much in training course will usually degrade the course. If the course is a general qualification, identify the critical tasks you wish to evaluate and arrange the stages to best accomplish them.

While many departments today are faced with tight budgets and firearms training is usually the first item to get cut, keep the number of rounds as high as possible. We teach muscle memory and reflexes by multiple repetitions. The more your officers shoot, the more ingrained the skill becomes. When faced with a stressful situation, experience tells us the officer will react as they were trained.

No matter what type of course, be sure to include the necessary key skills. For a general qualification course, these include but are not limited to movement, use of cover, reloading, drawing from a secured holster, verbal commands, scanning for additional threats and reholstering back to a security holster. If you are running a task specific drill, do not overload it with other techniques especially if the technique is new to your officers.

Scoring may be done as a percentage or merely pass/fail. In any case, you must establish the minimum acceptable score to be considered proficient. A strong case can be made for both methods and you will need to decide the one that is best for you. An option to consider is to gradually raise the minimum score to further challenge your people to do better. If you require 80% this year, make it 82 or 84 percent next year and so on. Some departments require 100% round accountability. This means every round must hit the target. When you consider the responsibility we have to the public, this is not a bad concept. Another option is to use a target that allows you to score higher for hits in vital areas such as the central nervous system, heart and pelvic region. A good example of this is the IALEFI Q target.

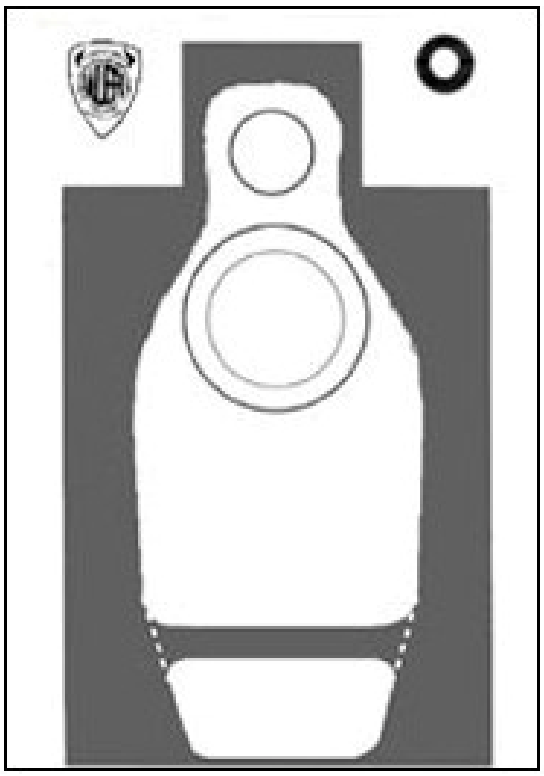
(Continued on the next page)

Creating The Best Qualification Course For Your Department

(cont. from previous page)

We should reward officers at the range for performance that may end a bad situation in the field. While not a sure guarantee, hits in those regions are generally more effective.

Finally, document all your efforts. This is more than just filing the score sheet. If you adopt the IALEFI Q or similar target, document the reasons why the previous target was not satisfactory and the reasons why you selected the new one. Have a Training Plan. This basically states what you want to accomplish, how you do it and why. This is also a good time to look at what supplies or equipment you will need. There is nothing more embarrassing for an instructor than to have all your people at the range and realize you don't have a key piece of equipment to accomplish your mission. Upon completion of the exercise, write a Training Report. This document states what you actually completed, what went right and wrong as well as measures you will take to correct the problems at the next training. It doesn't have to be long – just complete.



(LEFT) The IALEFI "Q" target is an excellent choice for the department that wants one versatile target. It is actually four targets in one. The outer grey scale silhouette is similar to the IDPA target.; an inner FBI "Q" with pelvic scoring region; two precision scoring circles denoting brain stem and heart/lung areas plus a small circle in the upper right corner for sighting in.
This gives the instructor the option of allocating a higher point score to Q or inner circles. Because the outer silhouette closely represents the size of an actual human torso, your training becomes more realistic.
The pelvic scoring area is helpful when teaching failure / body armor drills
Image courtesy of Law Enforcement Targets

MLEFIAA Training Tip

The Safariland SLS rotating hood holster system has proven to be reliable and secure. Like any piece of equipment, use over time has yielded useful pointers for the end user. Many officers position their equipment on the front side of the duty belt for various reasons. Any officer who uses a holster with the SLS hood should be sure to allow sufficient clearance in front of the holster on the duty belt to allow the hood to freely rotate. If a piece of equipment forward of the holster works its way back next to the holster, there is a possibility the movement of the hood can be interfered with. This may cause difficulty in drawing the weapon or in a worse case scenario, could prevent the weapon from being drawn. Always place a keeper either side of your holster. This will not only keep your duty equipment clear of the holster, but will provide a secure and stable anchor.

Spontaneous Discharge of a Firearm in an MR Imaging Environment

By Anton Oscar Beitia[1], Steven P. Meyers[1], Emanuel Kanal[2] and William Bartell[3]
Submitted by Chief Bert DuVernay, New Braintree P.D.

An incident recently occurred at an outpatient imaging center in western New York State, in which a firearm spontaneously discharged in a 1.5-T MR imaging environment with active shielding. To our knowledge, this is the first documented case of such an occurrence. The event confirms previously reported theoretic risks of a firearm discharging in an MR imaging environment [1]. In this report, we examine the incident in detail from the official police and ballistic reports.

An off-duty police officer went to an outpatient imaging center (not affiliated with our institution) in western New York State to have an MR imaging examination. The facility housed a 1.5-T MR unit (Signa; General Electric Medical Systems, Milwaukee, WI) with active shielding. The officer was carrying a model 1991 A-1 compact.45 caliber semiautomatic pistol (Colt's Manufacturing, Hartford, CT).

The officer notified the technologist that he was carrying the weapon before entering the MR dressing room. The technologist told the officer to take the gun with him. The technologist intended to meet the officer in the MR patient waiting area before the examination and secure the weapon in that room, where he felt it would be safe. However, the officer apparently misunderstood and took the gun into the MR suite. The technologist was entering the officer's personal data into the computer and did not see him entering the MR suite.

Once the officer was inside the MR suite, the gun was pulled from his hand as he attempted to place the gun on top of a cabinet 3 ft (0.9 m) away from the magnet bore. The gun was immediately pulled into the bore, where it struck the left side and spontaneously discharged a round into the wall of the room at the rear of the magnet. Fortunately, no one was injured. Although the gun struck the magnet bore, only minimal cosmetic damage occurred to the magnet itself. The MR unit had full functional capability immediately after the gun discharged. The weapon's thumb safety was reportedly engaged when the gun discharged.

An unsuccessful attempt to remove the gun from the magnet resulted in the gun being pulled to the right side of the magnet (Fig. 1). The decision was then made to power down the magnet to remove the gun.

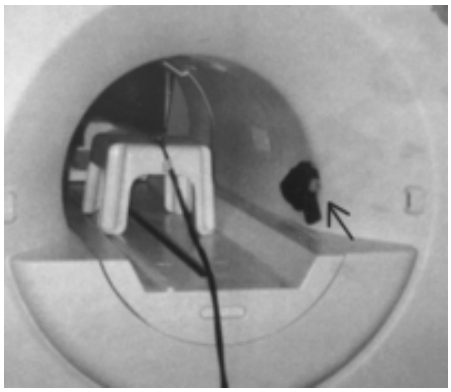


Figure 1 Arrow shows pistol stuck to side of MRI tunnel

Examination of the weapon by a ballistics laboratory concluded that the force of the magnetic field was responsible for the firearm's discharge. To understand how the gun discharged requires a brief discussion of the firing mechanics of the Colt 1991 A-1.45 caliber pistol and the weapon's safety mechanisms [2]. When the weapon is normally fired, the trigger is pulled, which releases the sear. The sear, in turn, releases the hammer. The hammer then moves forward to strike the firing pin, which moves forward to strike the primer of the chambered round.

The Colt 1991 A-1 pistol has three safety mechanisms (Fig. 2A,2B,2C,2D), including a thumb safety, grip safety, and firing pin block. The thumb safety

Figure 2A Colt Model 1991-A1 Pistol

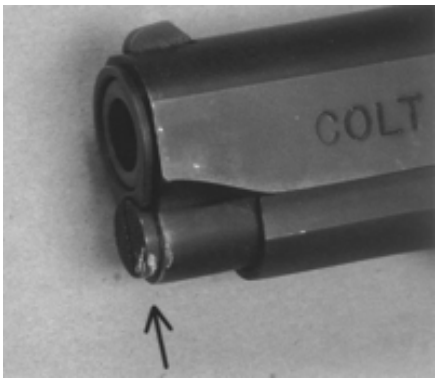


Figure 2B Arrow shows small amount of white paint where pistol impacted MRI tunnel

locks the sear in place and prevents the hammer from moving forward when the trigger is pulled. The thumb safety also locks the slide in place. The thumb safety is the weapon's only active safety mechanism; it must be turned on in order to work. The grip safety is located at the back of the gun handle and prevents the trigger from being depressed. The grip safety is a passive mechanism; it is always on unless deactivated. To deactivate it, the grip safety must be depressed at the same time the trigger is depressed; otherwise, the trigger cannot be pulled. The firing pin block is a small metal block, approximately the size of a pencil eraser, that sits in the firing pin channel and prevents the firing pin from moving forward. The firing pin block is held in place by a small spring. When the trigger is pulled, a series of levers cam the firing

(Continued on the next page)

Spontaneous Discharge of a Firearm in an MRI (cont. from Pg 10)

pin block up into its own well within the slide to allow the firing pin to move freely within its channel.

At the time the weapon discharged, it was reportedly in a cocked and locked position; that is, the hammer was cocked and the thumb safety was engaged to prevent the hammer from striking the firing pin. A live round was in the chamber. (Many people who choose this weapon for personal protection will carry it in this manner because it allows them to quickly fire the weapon if needed.)

Fig. 2C. — Gun is in cocked and locked position with hammer cocked and thumb safety turned on to prevent hammer from striking firing pin. This is condition in which gun was recovered from magnet.

When the firearm was removed from the magnet, the gun was still in a cocked and locked position. An empty cartridge was found in the chamber. The presence of an empty cartridge in the chamber is highly unusual. If the thumb safety were not engaged and the weapon fired normally by depressing the trigger, the normal backward recoil of the slide should have automatically ejected the empty cartridge, and a new live round should have automatically been chambered. As discussed earlier, the thumb safety performs two functions: it prevents the sear from releasing the hammer, thereby preventing the hammer from striking the firing pin; it also locks the slide in place, preventing retrograde motion of the slide and automatic ejection of the empty cartridge. Thus, the presence of an empty cartridge in the chamber confirms that the thumb

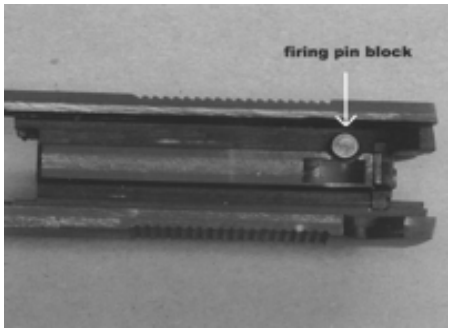


Fig. 2D. —Photographs of disassembled gun with view of slide interior from below shows firing pin block.

safety was engaged at the time the gun was fired. Given that the thumb safety was engaged when the gun discharged, it is also likely that the normal trigger and hammer mechanism of firing the gun was bypassed because the thumb safety would have also prevented release of the hammer.

The gun likely discharged as a result of the effect of the magnetic field on the firing pin block. The firing pin block was probably drawn into its uppermost position by force of the magnetic field. The firing pin block has to overcome only light pressure from a relatively small spring to release the firing pin. The pistol was likely drawn into the magnetic field so that the muzzle struck the magnet's bore first. With the firing pin allowed to move freely in its channel, the force of the impact on the muzzle end was sufficient to cause the firing pin to overcome its spring pressure and move forward to strike the primer of the chambered round.

This account explains how the weapon discharged when the thumb safety was engaged.

The presence of an empty cartridge in the chamber explains why the gun did not discharge a second time when it was moved from the left to the right side of the bore. Even if the identical forces were repeated, an empty cartridge, not a live round, was in the chamber at this time.

In this incident, the gun discharged despite the thumb safety being engaged. This has important implications in that it shows that the weapon poses a risk for discharging in an MR imaging environment even with the thumb safety engaged.

One can look at the sequence of events preceding the discharge of the weapon and see several points at which the incident could have been prevented. When the officer came in with the gun, it should have been immediately secured in a safe location, even before the officer changed for the examination. The technologist, knowing the officer had a firearm, should have instructed him that under no circumstances could he bring the weapon into the MR suite. Also, the technologist should have been monitoring the officer more closely to make sure he did not enter the MR suite with the weapon. Signs should have been posted at that site, if they were not already there, warning the public of the dangers of approaching the magnetic field of the MR imager with implants, metallic devices, or objects such as firearms.

In light of this incident, all radiologists should reexamine our own site's screening methods to ensure that steps are implemented to prevent such a situation from ever recurring.

NOTES

[1] Department of Radiology, University of Rochester Medical Center, 601 Elmwood Ave., Box 648, Rochester, NY 14642.

[2] Department of Radiology (D-132), University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, 200 Lothrop St., Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

[3] Rochester Police Department, Rochester, NY 14624.

Foot Notes

[1.] Kanal E, Shaibani A. Firearm safety in an MR imaging environment. *Radiology* **1994**;193:875 -876

[2.] Sweeney P. *Gunsmithing: pistols and revolvers*. Iola, WI: Krause, **1998**:30 -34

2006 Line of Duty Fatality Statistics

According to the Officer Down Memorial Page, Inc. website, line of duty deaths were down in 2006 from the previous year. One hundred forty two officers were killed last year versus 156 in 2005. This downward trend held across the board in most categories. Of particular interest were:

Category	2006	2005
Assault	2	none listed
Automobile accident	35	33
Gunfire	48	52
Gunfire (accidental)	3	7
Heart attack	10	17
Motorcycle accident	7	4
Stabbed	1	1
Struck by vehicle	11	11
Vehicle pursuit	3	5
Vehicular assault	16	15

Of particular interest to us as firearms instructors is the gunfire related statistics. While the downward trend is good news, the numbers are still to high. Obviously firearms related deadly force situations remain the biggest hazard an officer faces on the street. Training our officers to meet these threats with the skill, confidence and knowledge is our job.

While firearms may seem to be the biggest danger police officers face, a study of the figures shows motor vehicles are involved in more officer deaths by a ratio of 1.5 to 1. Clearly we need to be better drivers and more alert for other vehicles on the road.

www.odmp.org

Vang Comp Systems Shotgun Recoil Reduction System

By Todd Bailey

A year ago I purchased a Vang Comp barrel to upgrade my Remington 870. I had done a little research on shotgun upgrades and everything written about the Vang Comp system (VCS) was positive. For those who may be drawing a blank, Hans Vang is an Arizona based gunsmith who has designed a series of modifications to shotgun barrels to reduce recoil and improve accuracy. Mr. Vang lengthens the forcing cone, back bores the barrel and adds compensating ports. The combination of these three changes truly works and it is most dramatic when shooting 00 buckshot and full power loads.

Lengthening the forcing cone has a two fold effect. The pellets transition smoothly from the chamber into the barrel. The steeper the angle of the forcing cone, the more disruption of the pellets and more felt recoil. Think of a moving body hitting a steep angle versus a shallow angle. The pellets are eased into the smaller diameter of the barrel rather than being jammed in which improves the shot pattern. There is less chance of pellets being deformed. Deformed pellets are less likely to fly in a straight line.

Back boring the barrel is a process where the diameter of the barrel is slightly increased from the chamber towards the muzzle. In effect, this creates a choke which aids in keeping the shot pattern tight.

The final modification is the addition of compensating ports – sixty

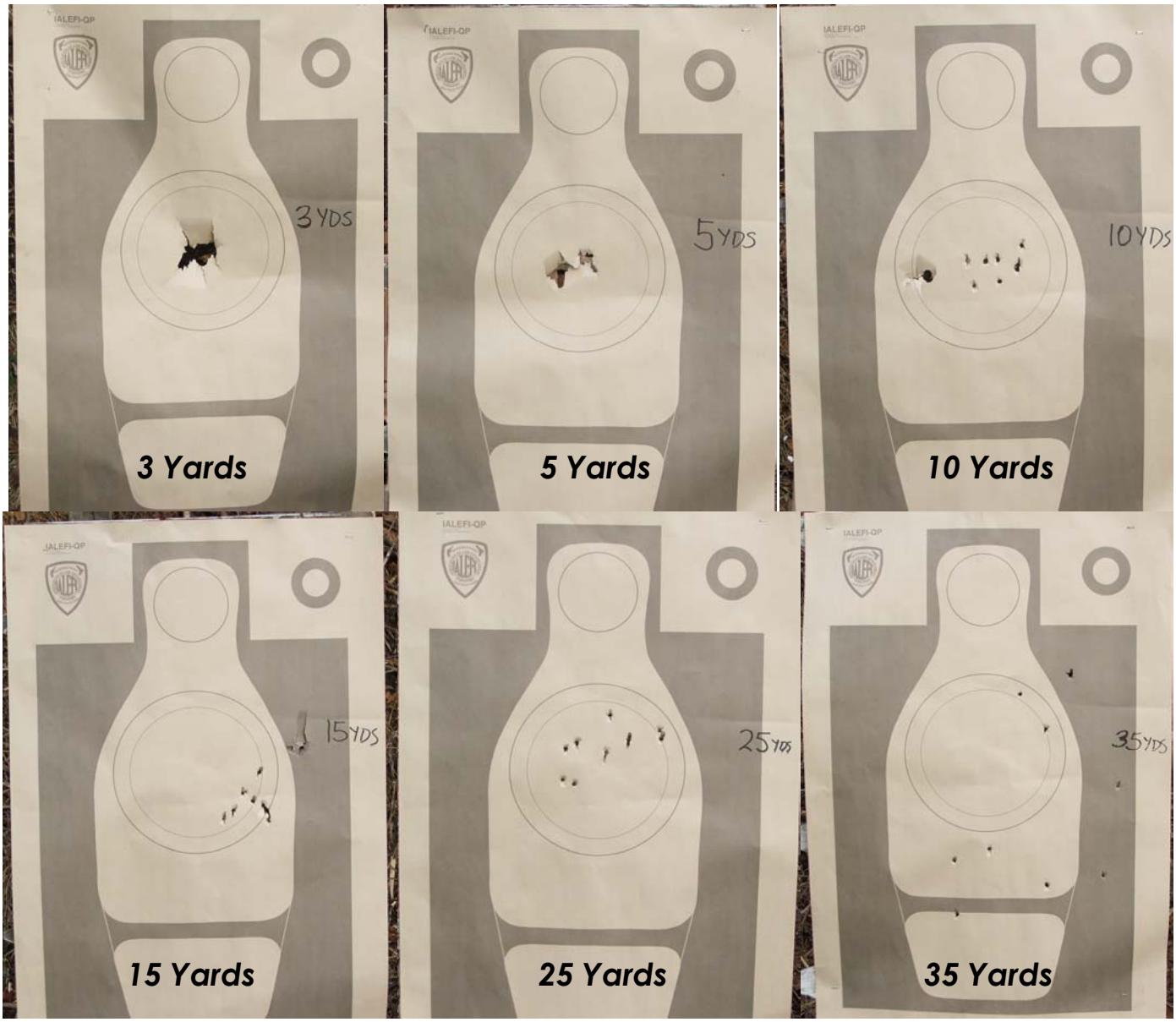
two of them. Like any compensator, these direct some of the high pressure powder gases upwards just as the shot and wad leave the barrel. This has the effect of counteracting the normal muzzle rise which yields a faster recovery and second shot on target. Vang claims it reduces the muzzle flash as well.

So, does all this gunsmith hocus pocus really work? The short answer is YES. Vang claims a recoil reduction of about 15%. I had no scientific way to measure the reduction but when conducting back to back tests with Vang Comp barrel and the factory barrel (same ammo and barrel length), I would have estimated it as more than 15%. I may be exaggerating but it felt like going from 3 inch magnums to 2-3/4 inch low recoil tactical loads. The recoil does not seem as sharp and one female officer who shot it remarked it felt more like a "push".

If your department still uses buckshot, you will see some huge

(Continued on the next page)

Vang Comp Systems (continued from Page 12)



advantages with this system. The conventional rule of thumb is 18 yards is about the maximum range for buckshot given the one inch of shot spread for every yard of distance. Given the human torso averages about 18 inches wide, 18 yards is about the furthest we can expect to get all the pellets on target under ideal circumstances.

The Vang Comp System will almost double that. The attached photos demonstrate the effectiveness of the VCS. Test ammo was Winchester's Law Enforcement (Ranger) 9 Pellet 00 Buck Shot. The differences are not dramatic in close but look at the pellet spread on the targets 15 yards and out. If the shooter's aim had been a little better on the 35 yard target, all the pellets would have hit within the "Q". For those that still carry buckshot in their patrol shotguns, this modification is a huge advantage.

Vang Comp Systems will perform this work on your Remington or Mossberg barrel for less than $250. A brand new bead sighted Remington barrel runs less than $400. Vang Comp also sells custom rifles, pistols and shotguns with these modifications.

You can find more information and more tests with similar results at the Vang Comp website:

www.vangcomp.com

Looking to buy or sell a gun?
Check out MLEFIAA's

TRADING POST

on the website

Specialty Ammunition Warning

In early January, MLEFIAA received an email sent by a member concerning ammunition which had the capability to pierce body armor. The email apparently originated from the Montgomery (TX) Sheriff's Office and stated,

"On 20 December 2006, we received a package of six .45 ACP rounds that were packaged with a label stating they will penetrate Level II body armor. We field tested the ammo on a level 2 vest. Attached is the video showing the results." "The ammo is called Mag-Safe and is produced in Olympia, Washington. These have been found locally and are appearing for sale at gun shows."

The message was signed by Joe R. Ashton, Crime Scene Investigator with the address of the Sheriff's Office.

A link to a video clip of the field test was included in the message. The video shows a vest panel being shot with the resulting rounds penetrating the ballistic panel. The ammunition used is packaged in a plain plastic bag with a simple label reading:

Mag-Safe Ammo
45ACP 92gr Kevlar Defeating
Defeats Level II soft body armor
2020fps/834fpc in 5" S&W 645
Extra Power Wolff spring kit req'd
For Law Enforcement Use

Good information is always good to have. The first thing that jumped out to us was there seemed to be no attempt to verify the info on the product other than it would penetrate Level II armor.

If you have been around guns and ammo for a while you know that this product has been around for years. Readers should understand this is not a new product that just made an appearance. Along with the Glaser Safety Slug, it was popular during the late 1980's with those who proposed a light pre-fragmented high velocity bullet was more effective than a heavier, deep penetrating round. I can remember articles in the usual gun magazines about how these would drop a charging Pit Bull in its tracks.

As anyone familiar with body armor and ballistics knows, any projectile traveling at 2000+ feet per second is going to pierce Level II body armor. Level II armor is not rated to stop a bullet in any caliber traveling at that speed. As firearms instructors, we know that all ammo within the same caliber does not perform the same.

A check of the MagSafe product line on their website does not include a 92 grain round in 45 caliber. Another anomaly is the packaging of the MagSafe ammo tested in the video does not match the packaging on the website. Both may be a result of the "law enforcement use" labeling. The video indicated MagSafe was located out of Olympia, WA. It is not. Their website indicates they are based out of Casselberry, FL.

While watching the video I noticed a few more things which were interesting. Talking with a few other experienced instructors, I found these jumped out at them as well.

First was the use of what appeared to be a 1970's vintage Second Chance ballistic vest. Ballistic panels have a shelf life - five years. DOJ testing has indicated all soft ballistic material may degrade over time. This is why DOJ and manufacturers recommend replacing your vest every five years. If 30 year old panels were used in the test, it could raise some questions as to the ballistic integrity of the panels.

The test used plywood to back up the ballistic panel. Certified body armor testing uses clay as a backing. While this probably did not affect the ultimate outcome, it does indicate the testing agency was writing their own rules.

To answer these questions, the Case Head emailed MagSafe in an attempt to get all the facts and MagSafe's comments on the video. The following is a copy of the message sent to Mr. Joe Vega who is listed as MagSafe's Production Manager:

Dear Mr. Vega,

The attached message with a video link regarding a MagSafe Ammo product was received by the Massachusetts Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors & Armorers Assn. earlier this month. Any valid information regarding ammunition that will penetrate body armor is of interest to the Association and its membership.

I checked the MagSafe website to verify this information but could not find the load (.45ACP 92 grain) listed in your product line. Additionally, the packaging shown in the video is quite different from that shown on the website. There were a few other minor discrepencies as well.

- Is this a MagSafe product?

- Is it available to the general public or Law Enforcement only?

- If LE only, what measures do you take to insure it is only sold to bona fide law enforcement end users?

If this information is valid, it will be published in the Association newsletter (The Case Head) as a service to our members (all sworn police firearms instructors or professionals in the industry). Before we publish it, I would like to verify the information given the discrepancies I mentioned. I assure you this is not a witch hunt. Any bullet traveling at 2000+ FPS will penetrate Level II body armor so this is not earth shattering news as the video seems to indicate.

MLEFIAA appreciates any information you can provide. In the event I do not hear back from you, I will presume the information contained in the email is correct and MagSafe has no comment on the content.

Thank you in advance.

No response was received from Mr. Vega so we sent the same message to their "General Information" e-mail address in early February. The result of this attempt was the same - no response. MLEFIAA can only presume the information is correct although it was presented in a less than scientific manner.

MLEFIAA 's sole interest in this is to pass along valid information to its members. We take no stand on the product or the testing used to produce the video. We need to keep in mind that just because the threat has a handgun, we are not necessarily secure in body armor. The FN 5.7 and this ammo are good examples. Be sure of your cover, don't present a stationary target to the threat and use good tactical common sense.

Members Shoot Three New Models from Smith & Wesson

Membership in the Association has many benefits as those members who attended the January meeting at Smith & Wesson can attest. Our hosts - Ernie Langdon and Tom Gordon rolled out a few of S&W's new products, some which have just been released.

Members got a chance to take a close look at the new M&P15 carbine. Using the AR-15 type rifle system, S&W has seriously entered the patrol and tactical carbine market. There version follows the very popular M4 pattern carbine and is available in three versions - Carry Handle, Flat-top and a Tactical model with a free floating, integrated rail fore end. While we did not get to shoot the rifle, a close inspection indicated excellent workmanship on a par with other popular M4 manufacturers. Rather than reinventing the wheel, S&W seems to have taken a proven design and marketed it to their advantage. It worked with the SW1911 and we have no reason to think it will not do likewise here.

Of particular interest to revolver and concealed carry types was a Performance Center upgraded Model 340PD. There are several notable differences from the standard version. The cylinder is stainless steel rather than titanium. This adds about 2 ounces to the weight but is hardly

noticeable. The author noted gas jet erosion on an early version of this model with the titanium cylinder when using 125 grain JHP .357 Magnum ammo. S&W reports that was addressed with a new heat treating process and should be history now. The stock boot grips have been replaced with Crimson Trace's integral laser grip. This system provides a reliable aiming system for all but the brightest of situations. If you are looking to carry this revolver in an ankle holster, the CT grip is a little larger than the stock boot grip. The most practical feature was the installation of an Ashley XS 24/7 tritium front sight. The large white dot jumps right out so the shooter can establish a decent sight picture which is almost unheard of with the traditional J-frame fixed sights. The tritium insert in the XS sight provides a good reference at night or in dim light conditions. It is about time the factory put some decent sights on the J-frame. All in all, this is the J-frame you have been waiting for. Light weight, good sights, capable of firing .38 Spl., .38 Spl. +P and .357 Mag ammo. There is no restriction on bullet weight either as in earlier models.

Our hosts rolled out the new M&P Compact pistol in both .40S&W and 9mm. There is also a .357 SIG version but we did not get a chance to see that one. Those departments considering the M&P now have an additional reason to opt for the new handgun from Springfield. The new model is ideal for officers such as detectives and administrators who do not require the full size duty pistol or prefer a smaller size weapon for their day to day duties. Smith & Wesson obviously looked at the success Glock has seen with their sub compact size pistols and went with a winning formula. All the features of the other M&P pistols are found on the new compact version.

We also got a chance to inspect and shoot the new .45 ACP M&P in both law enforcement and military versions. The LE version is almost identical to the current .40/9mm model with the obvious exception of the chambering and the grip is slightly deeper to accommodate the longer cartridge. The M&P 45 retains the interchangeable back straps which make it easier to fit a wide variety of officers. Left handed shooters will find the M&P pistols appealing because the magazine release button can be installed on either side. The slide stop is operable from either side as well. Magazine capacity is 10 rounds which makes it politically palatable for all 50 states (for now). Like the others, it

has a rail mount under the dust shield. In the author's opinion, the pistol shot extremely well. Recoil was slightly more than one experiences with the forty caliber version but that is to be expected considering we were shooting 230 grain hard ball. No formal testing of accuracy was performed but judging from my results and those experienced by other members, the pistol shoots right where you are aiming. The ergonomics of the M&P are great and the trigger is vastly superior to the Sigma. S&W added serrations at the front of the slide to facilitate conducting a "press check". It looks pretty good too. Accurate, comfortable to shoot and .45ACP - sounds like a winning combination.

Smith & Wesson wants to be ready for the on again, off again Department of Defense project to search for a new Combat Pistol presuming the government ever becomes serious about replacing the M9 and the puny 9mm NATO cartridge. The M&P version designed to compete in a future selection process has an ambidextrous thumb safety similar to that seen on 1911 style pistols. Unlike the 1911 safeties, it is not a two piece affair. The designers made it one piece which makes it much stronger. The frame we saw was molded in "coyote brown" which seems to be very popular with the tactical crowd and earth tone pistol aficionados these days. More info can be found on Smith & Wesson's website.

All photos courtesy of Smith & Wesson

Patrol Rifle Maintenance Tips

By Todd Bailey

The patrol rifle has replaced the pump shotgun in police cruisers with many law enforcement agencies. The AR15 (or one of the various varients of that design) and the Ruger Mini-14 account for a major percentage. Unlike the manually operated pump shotgun, the AR15 and Mini-14 rifles are gas operated. They are extremely reliable however they can not be neglected like the shotgun and still be expected to fire when needed. How many times can you remember the shotgun being used to humanely put down an injured animal and then returned to the rack with no expectation of being cleaned anytime soon?

Gas operated weapons do not like being put away dirty and then forgotten. All those carbon deposits and powder fouling that are reasonably soft immediately after shooting become like concrete after a week or so. This tends to make the action difficult to operate.

MINI-14

I remember one Mini-14 that was brought in with the action frozen shut. It took several raps with a mallet to free it up. Inspection showed the gas piston had rusted in the cylinder due to a lack of cleaning. After an extended session at the range and at least annually, thoroughly clean the gas system. Begin by insuring the rifle is unloaded. Disassemble the gas block by removing the four hex drive cap screws and separate the gas block halves from the barrel. Be careful not to loose the gas port bushing. Remove the piston from the lower half of the gas block. If you have not stayed on top of your maintenance, this may be difficult. You may have to let it soak in powder solvent overnight. Remove all fouling and cleaning solvent residue. Use a pipe cleaner to clean the gas port bushing and piston port. When clean, reassemble according to the manufacturers instructions. Evenly tighten the gas block screws.

AR-15

While the AR-15 type weapons system had its share of problems in the 60's and 70's, the current version is one of the most reliable rifles in the world. Keep the rifle clean and it will serve you well.

A recent article by Jeff Chudwin in Law & Order magazine pointed out two important problem areas that he has noted in the classes he teaches. First is the gas block assembly which is located on top of the bolt carrier. Chudwin reports seeing the two screws with attach the gas block coming loose with will cause malfunctions. These screws are staked at the factory to prevent them from backing off. If not done properly, the screws may back off over time from recoil. You can check for a problem by firmly grasping the gas block and bolt carrier. There should no movement between the two with both screws present and tight. If there is, remove the rifle from service and have your armorer remove and clean the gas block, replace it and restake the screws.

A second area of note is the bolt. Inspect it carefully for cracks around the cam pin hole as this is the thinnest area. Also check the gas rings for damage. Rings should not be bent, broken or show undo wear. Over time, they can wear and may be susceptible to damage from improper cleaning. Use a nylon bristled brush with plenty of solvent to clean this area. Stainless steel brushes are not a friend to your gas rings. Check for wear by setting the bolt carrier vertical on your bench. Place the bolt into the carrier until the gas rings make contact with the bolt carrier and let go. If the bolt falls into the carrier by its own weight, the rings are worn. If it does not move, the rings still provide a good seal. When reassembling, be sure the gaps in the rings do not line up. I recommend positioning them at about 120 degrees from each other.

What's In A Name?

By Todd Bailey

One of the most aggravating aspects of law enforcement is the way the media tends to take what we do and put their own slant on it to make the story more dramatic. Sometimes this is done for better copy and other times it is pure ignorance. We can thank the media for such misleading terms as Saturday Night Special, Assault Weapons, Semi automatic machine guns, How many times have you heard the media describing a semi automatic weapon as one that "can be fired as fast as you can pull the trigger"?

Sometimes we have only ourselves to blame for our headaches. Take for instance the current trend to implement high tech weapons into our departments in and effort to provide officers with more force options and preserve life. One of the most popular tools is the Specialty Impact Weapon.

When these tools were introduced, the were labeled "Less Lethal" or Non-Lethal" weapons. Let's look at this for a minute. What does "less lethal" really mean? Is there any such thing? I submit to you that saying "less lethal" is like saying less pregnant. There is certainly no such thing as "non-lethal". Common sense tells us that anything can kill us.

Using terms like these is an invitation to be raked over the coals by the media the first time a deployment goes wrong. We invite headlines like:

YOUTH KILLED BY NON-LETHAL WEAPON

The Boston PD saw a bad situation turn into a huge fiasco in 2004 when a college student was struck by a Pepperball round that was fired into a crowd of Red Sox fans that failed to disperse when ordered to do so by police.

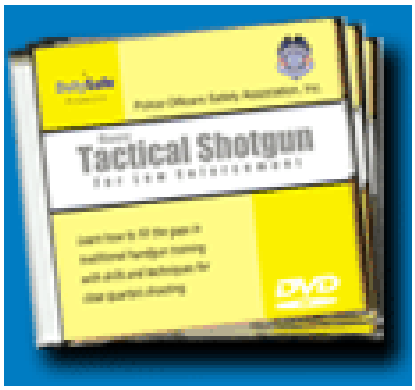
If your agency uses any of the so called "less lethal" weapon systems, you need to think hard about how you label and present this system to your officers and the public. By using terms like non-lethal, less lethal and non-deadly force, we are setting a standard we can not hope to meet 100% of the time. All force levels below deadly force are designed not to cause severe bodily injury or death under normal circumstances. Unfortunately, if the media mentions this point at all, it is buried on page 29.

In Deorle v. Rutherford (263 F. 3rd 1106), the court viewed the bean bag round terminology as a "euphemism that grossly underrates the dangerousness of the projectile, that is not some sort of hacky-sack; it is a projectile capable of inflicting serious injury or death, rather than some child's toy."

Use terms such as Specialty Impact Weapon or 12 Ga. Specialty Impact Munition which are descriptive but neutral in your policy & procedure documents and training. Get your people in the habit of referring to the tools by these names. That way, when an officer is interviewed by the local news, they will inadvertently use the wrong terminology which will be the clip that is aired on the six o'clock news.

Video Training Resources

Instructors looking for new or additional video training resources have a new source. The Police Officer's Safety Association is a not for profit organization dedicated to bringing up to date training



to all branches of law enforcement.

POSA's mission is to increase the safety and effectiveness of law enforcement officers and to enhance the security of our communities by offering free and low cost advanced education and training to LEO's. POSA's programs augment your meager training budget.

One of the more cost effective training aids that POSA offers is their training videos. Originally these DVD's were sent out free of charge. I expect the popularity of a free training video over taxed POSA's ability to produce and mail them cost effectively. Videos are now available for download on the internet at POSA's web-

site-www.posai.org/PubsDL.asp. The files are very large so high speed internet access is a must. If you do not have high speed access, there is an option to purchase the DVD's at a minimal cost of $10 each which includes shipping and handling. This is program is open to military and military contractors with proper ID.

To verify law enforcement status, POSA has partnered with PoliceOne.com which is a law enforcement only news and information web service. You must first enroll (at no charge) with PoliceOne to log on to POSA. As a side note, Police Marksman magazine has also partnered up with PoliceOne.com.

POSA offers several training DVD's which a firearms instructor may find useful. Tactical Shotgun, Knife Skills, Firearms Disarming & Retention, Close Quarters Shooting, Force on Force Shooting and The Defensive Snub Nosed Revolver are valuable additions to your training library. The DVD's run anywhere from 45 minutes to just under 2 hours.

The videos are well thought out and are a quality production. If you choose to purchase the physical DVD, your payment is considered a tax deductible donation to an IRS Section 501(c)3 organization. POSA offers other training videos and reference texts at their on line ordering site.

MLEFIAA maintains a strong presence within the Police Officer's Safety Association. The co-founder and Training Director is long time association member Ralph Mroz. POSA Advisory Board members include MLEFIAA President Bert DuVernay and member Bill Duggan.

MLEFIAA Quartermaster Official Association Logo Items

All items are available directly through the Association Quartermaster - Dick Forrester at sgtdickie@comcast.net

Upcoming Training & Events

2007
Firearms Instructor Development Conference & Training Product Exposition

September 25-28, 2007

Devens Common Conference Center
Harvard Sportsman's Club

Details will be released in the spring

2007
Firearms Instructor Re-Certification Program

Dates: June 12 & 26, 2007
Location: Harvard Sportsman's Club
Cost: FREE

MLEFIAA will run our annual instructor re-certification range dates this June. As in the past, the second date will be a Family Day. While you are recertifying in the morning, family members can attend the MSP Basic Firearms Safety Course. The Association will host the BBQ lunch for all and then you and your family members can shoot in the afternoon.

Contact MLEFIAA Secretary Joe Picariello at secretary@mlefiaa.org.

RUGER

Armorer's School
Mini-14 & PC Series Carbines

Westminster Police Department
6 South Street
Westminster, MA

May 1-3, 2007

Cost: FREE

Advanced Registration Required

Contact: Secretary@MLEFIAA.org

This class is sponsored by Ruger, MLEFIAA and the Westminster P.D.

MOSSBERG

MODEL 500/590 SHOTGUN ARMORERS CERTIFICATION

Co-hosted by
MLEFIAA & Westminster Police Dept.
Westminster P.D. Training Room
6 South Street
Westminster, MA

Monday June 18, 2007

Fee: $200 (equipment provided)

Register at www.MLEFIAA.org

The official publication of the
Massachusetts Law Enforcement Firearms
Instructors & Armorers Association
P.O. Box 253, Princeton, MA 01541-0253

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