



The Case Head

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

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**RUGER LAW ENFORCEMENT
PRODUCTS RANGE DAY**

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.

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 INFORMATION

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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Smith & Wesson Shooting Sports Center Closed

In mid-April rumors began floating around that the S&W Shooting Sports Center (SSC) was abruptly closed leaving customers and shooters high and dry.

In fact, S&W management did close the SSC and issued this statement via their website - "The Smith & Wesson Shooting Sports Center located at 299 Page Boulevard in Springfield, MA was recently closed on a temporary basis. We apologize for any inconvenience this temporary closing may cause. During the coming months, Smith & Wesson and Shooting Sports Center management teams will assess the operation to assure alignment with core business objectives which include the active support of the shooting sports industry, both nationally and on a local scale. We intend to reopen this summer as a private facility with enhancements for both members and employ-

ees. We also intend to continue to provide public access to both required and elective curriculum that teaches responsible firearm ownership. Curriculums planned include: NRA firearm safety, hunter education programs, NSSF FirstShots® as well as others including Massachusetts and Connecticut License-To-Carry (LTC) classes. We further intend to provide access to popular special events such as IDPA and Scout activities and additional programs are also under consideration."

"For the immediate future, the temporary closure will affect a number of planned events including regularly scheduled classes as well as employee and member access. Looking forward it is the intention of Smith & Wesson to re-open with a renewed purpose intent on commitment to the shooting sports industry. Inquiries please contact 1-800-331-0852 or visit us at shootingsports.smith-wesson.com.

We appreciate the patience of our employees and members while we complete our plans."

A number of reasons for the sudden suspension of operations have been speculated on including problems with a small number of unlicensed members using the range and rented firearms. One thing is for certain, there are customers and members who have gift certificates and memberships which are bought and paid for who want to know what is going on. The vague statements on the S&W website have done little to quell the rumors.

Smith & Wesson has a fantastic facility in the SSC and every effort should be made to continue its operation. We hope that the management at Smith & Wesson can sort this issue out and find a workable solution to continue operating the Shooting Sports Center.

Meeting Calendar

Jan 24, 2012
S&W Academy
(Elections)

Feb 28, 2012
Maynard Police
Department /
Mass. State Police
Ballistics Lab

Mar 27, 2012
Troy Industries,
West Springfield,
MA

Apr 24, 2012
Ruger L. E. Range
Day at Barre
Sportsman's Club

May 22, 2012
Groveland P.D.
Simunitions
Program

June 5 & 6, 2012
MPTC Instructro
Recertification at
Barre
Sportsman's Club
Instructor Recerts

June 28, 2012
TBA

July & August
No meeting

Sept 25-27
Annual Instructor
Conference
HSC

October 2007
Open

November 2007
Open

December 2007
No meeting -
Merry Christmas

Three Basic Drills To Improve Your Accuracy

By Nick Jacobellis (Reprinted from Policemag.com / Sep 30, 2011)

As a retired law enforcement officer, I can vouch for three fundamental training drills that will improve your firearms proficiency—dry firing, the ball-and-dummy technique, and the ready up drill. Let's review these three in more detail.

The purpose of dry firing is to help you develop the proper sight alignment and trigger control without burning up a supply of expensive training ammunition. Dry firing an unloaded firearm can be practiced for hours and will help you develop the most basic fundamental skills that will help you to become a proficient firearms operator.

When you dry fire any handgun you should make sure the firearm is completely unloaded, and you're in a safe place to train. Once you confirm that your handgun is unloaded, insert an unloaded magazine. It also pays to buy plastic bullets called "snap caps" that allow you to safely dry fire a firearm for long periods of time. Using plastic look-alike bullets also makes it more realistic when training to execute a combat reload.

To dry fire your pistol, find a spot or a specific target on a nearby wall, line up the sights and slowly squeeze the trigger. Learning to focus on your front sight is crucial to properly developing your marksmanship skills. You must keep your sights properly aligned on your target while you squeeze the trigger with just the right amount of backwards pressure required to discharge a round of ammunition. Train yourself to cycle the trigger without pulling the pistol off target.

Learning to rely on your front sight combined with the proper cycling of the trigger is what allows you to keep all shots fired on target. Failure to achieve proper sight alignment and trigger control is the main reason why you fail to deliver the right shot placement on a target during a qualification session as well as during authorized uses of deadly force.

To exert the right amount of trig-

ger control, it helps if you use the right part of your trigger finger to make contact with the trigger. Placing your trigger finger on the trigger of your service pistol, backup gun, or off-duty gun is model dependent in that different types of trigger systems require a different part of your finger to cycle the trigger.

Law enforcement officers who use a single-action pistol such as a 1911 should use the tip of their finger to apply backward pressure on the trigger to discharge this type of pistol. Striker-fired trigger systems such as the kind used on Glock pistols also require that you use the pad of flat skin on the tip of your trigger finger to cycle the trigger in a smooth action. The last thing you want to do is "slap" the trigger.

A double action/single action trigger such as the kind used on a Classic Series DA/SA SIG Sauer pistol requires that you use the area just behind the finger tip where the first digit or joint of your trigger finger is located. This is the same position on the trigger finger that you use to cycle the trigger on a DA revolver. The reason the positioning of the trigger finger is critical to delivering the right trigger control is because you need maximum pressure to cycle a DA revolver, a DA pistol trigger and a DAO trigger while less backward pressure is needed to cycle a striker-fired or a single-action trigger system.

If you have problems keeping your shots center mass, you're probably "pulling" your shots to the left or right by jerking the trigger to one side or the other. This doesn't mean you can't rapidly fire a striker-fired trigger or a DA/SA trigger. All it means is there's a technique involved that must be properly executed or the bullets you fire won't be delivered into the right location of your target. Moving your wrist when you pull the trigger and flinching when you react to the force of recoil are other movements that can throw your aim off and make you miss the scoring area by a few inches or

more.

To avoid what is commonly called "slapping" the trigger, you should reset the trigger for each shot. The main reason for using a trigger reset is so you can apply the smoothest follow through when you cycle a trigger on a pistol. "Too many times shooters pull the trigger and then go to a ready position in the same motion," Deputy Chris Martin, a firearms instructor with the Pinal County (Ariz.) Sheriffs Office, tells POLICE Magazine. "I tell my students they should do everything to fire another shot except pull the trigger. In other words, if the string of fire calls for three rounds, we should be ready to fire a fourth. If we as instructors can instill that mindset in our students we also avoid those shooters that focus on the target, looking to see where their bullet went."

Deputy Martin and other modern day firearms instructors are training sworn personnel to discharge their firearms with the smoothest trigger pull and ensure the shortest response time possible to facilitate the firing of follow-up shots when necessary.

When revolvers were widely used in law enforcement, firearms instructors taught sworn personnel to use a technique called "ball and dummy" to deliver accurate shot placement without flinching or reacting negatively to the force of recoil and muzzle blast. The ball-and-dummy technique requires that you load several but not all of the cylinders of your revolver before you close and lock the cylinder. When shooters anticipate recoil and flinch, their hit potential suffers. The point of this exercise is to be surprised when your revolver discharges.

Training with the ball-and-dummy technique helps you to develop the proper trigger control when shooting a revolver. When you train, it's important to use snappier .38 Special +P and .357 Magnum service ammunition.

The same concept applies to semi

3 Basic Drills (cont.)

-autos. Every time you pull the trigger, focus on your trigger control, on your breathing, your sight alignment and even on the speed in which you cycle the trigger. It's better to be a tad slow and hit what you are aiming at, rather than be the fastest shot in town and miss the target. Many LEOs will blast away when there's plenty of time left in each stage of fire during qualification. Firing too quickly can create a bad habit and foster a conditioned response that you may take with you into the field when you're forced to discharge a firearm during an authorized use of deadly force situation.

A "ready up" drill can be one of the best exercises to help you improve your proficiency with firearms. It works with handguns, patrol rifles, sub-machine guns, select fire tactical rifles and shotguns. To conduct a ready up drill, first load your pistol. Keep it holstered while you face the same target you use when you qualify.

For the drill itself, draw your pistol and fire one round as soon as your front sight covers the scoring area of

the target. You can repeat a ready up drill until your firearm is empty at which time you should execute a combat reload and return to firing one shot at a time.

A ready up drill helps you to develop faith in the use of your front sight because you pull the trigger in the split second that your front sight covers the scoring area of a man-size target. When you repeat this process over and over again, you develop confidence in relying on your front sight each and every time you go hot to engage targets.

Ready up drills can be modified to prepare you to meet different types of threats. You should have some fun when you're training, so don't be afraid to be innovative, as long as you are safe in your execution. Every time you draw your pistol, fire one more round each time before reholstering. A modified ready up drill helps you to get away from the typical firing of one or two rounds at a time. In real-life situations, you may be required to fire multiple strings of shots that involve different numbers of bullets.

To train for this situation, draw

and fire different numbers of multiple rounds. For those targets that no longer score head shots you can fire strings of different numbers of rounds of ammunition into the chest or pelvic area of a man-size target. The point of this exercise is not to develop one conditioned response every time you draw and fire a handgun. The same goes for patrol rifle and shotgun training.

The beauty of ready up drills is that you can see your progress with every shot fired because these drills should be conducted at fairly close ranges not to exceed 15 or 20 feet when engaging paper targets. Shooting at these distances enables you to see where your bullets are impacting the target so you can adjust your fire accordingly.

As a law enforcement officer, it would be irresponsible to be mediocre shot and not try to improve your firearms proficiency. The time has come for law enforcement agencies to hold sworn personnel more accountable by requiring all LEOs to do more than barely qualify with firearms they carry on and off duty.

Product Review - Noveske KX3 "Flaming Pig"

Reviewed by Todd Bailey

I recently completed a registered short barreled upper receiver for my M4 and I wanted an effective flash suppressor to minimize the effect on shooters to my left or right. The Noveske KX3 or as it is more commonly known - "The Pig" was my first choice. It's design directs the pressure wave of the muzzle blast forward away from adjacent shooters. This gives the perception of reducing the sound of the muzzle blast but it is not a suppressor.

The Pig is made of heat treated steel with a phosphate finish. It is larger than your typical A2 style flash hider but large business end gives it an intimidating look when viewed from the bad guy's point of view. The non-vented sides are marked with the Noveske logo and

flaming pig graphic. Each Pig is individually serial numbered for quality control.

I attached the Pig to my 11.5 inch barrel and found the finish to match almost exactly. In actual use, the Pig does perform as advertised. The shock and sound wave is focused forward and the shooters to my left and right were not subjected to the

usual muzzle blast. The unit easily disassembles for cleaning by removing the wire retaining clip and unscrewing the conical internal piece from the outer sleeve.

At a retail cost of \$125 there are cheaper options on the market but the quality is good and I really like the big bore look it gives the 5.56mm.



Combat Shotgun Basics by Leonard M. Breure

Operating a tactical 12-gauge with rifled slugs allows an officer to engage targets accurately at longer ranges.

In law enforcement, the shotgun is best suited for short-duration, close-range engagements. In recent years, with accessories and action jobs, the shotgun has become a tactical weapon for officers. Let's look at the weapon's value in tactical roles.

First, let's consider several basic attributes of the tactical shotgun. When loaded with shells carrying multiple projectiles, such as 00 buck, it's a short range (under 30 yards) weapon that delivers minimal penetration. When paired with rifled slugs, it becomes effective out to 100 yards and can offer substantial penetration.

A tactical shotgun also needs sights. While a short-barrel shotgun with a simple bead sight has rapidly decreasing accuracy as range increases, a properly sighted weapon with ghost ring sights offers excellent accuracy out to the ammunition's maximum range.

Ghost ring sights have been one of the substantial improvements in the past few years in modifications and accessories used to convert a plain shotgun into an advanced tactical tool.

Other trends, such as pistol-grip-only, offer nothing more than Hollywood hype and can be tactically detrimental. Lastly, there seems to be a misconception that a shotgun is just a "big pistol" and that the tactics and techniques are the same. Not the case. The shotgun is completely different not only in its design, but also its employment.

There are essentially two types of tactical shotguns. The classic police "riot" gun is usually a pump action, short-barreled weapon. These are by far the most common and most modified. The second type is the newer semi-automatic weapon. Often incorrectly called an "automatic," these self-loading, repeating firearms are more complicated and therefore more likely to malfunction.

Typically, the biggest advantage a semi-auto offers is slightly reduced

recoil. Barrel length is typically 18-28 inches. Short barrels have a slight advantage in close quarters action. Magazine capacity ranges from four rounds to as many as 10 with extended magazines added on. Remington, Mossberg, and Winchester all offer several variations on the basic concept. In my experience, an 18- or 20-inch barreled, pump shotgun with a capacity for six to eight rounds, ghost ring sights, and possibly a tactical flashlight makes the best choice.

When preparing a shotgun for tactical use, safety should be your prime consideration. Point the muzzle in a safe direction and engage the safety. If necessary, unload the weapon. Inspect the chamber and magazine. When you're satisfied that the weapon is empty, perform a basic function check. Make sure the barrel is not obstructed. Cycle the slide several times using the slide release. Make sure the slide release locks the action and that the safety works properly. Then cycle the action several times by pulling the trigger to unlock the slide as would happen when firing.

Now you'll want to load the shotgun. Again, with the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, close the bolt, disengage the safety and pull the trigger. This allows the hammer to fall on an empty chamber. Having done this, you can fill the magazine to capacity with appropriate ammunition. If you might need to switch from one type of ammunition to another, load one less round in the magazine than normal. This allows you to switch rounds by placing a shell in the magazine and cycling the slide using the slide release.

You can then quickly change from buck (loaded for close range engagements) to a slug (for longer distances) should the need arise. With the hammer down on an empty chamber, the shotgun can then be secured for later use or carried safely.

Should the need arise that you must employ your shotgun quickly; it can be ready with little effort on

your part. Remember, it's not always necessary to immediately cycle a round into the chamber. Keep in mind that with the hammer down on an empty chamber, you can do so in a fraction of a second without having to locate the slide release (usually found forward of or alongside the trigger group). If it should be necessary to fire, you can just cycle the slide and your weapon is ready.

After firing your first shot, immediately release the trigger and cycle the slide fully. In some guns, cycling the slide without releasing the trigger will allow the next round to fire without warning when the bolt returns to battery. Failure to fully cycle the slide will allow a fresh round out of the magazine without ejecting the spent round. When the bolt is brought forward, a jam often requires the gun to be disassembled to correct the issue.

Providing that you have extra rounds with you, you can effectively reload your shotgun without sacrificing instant firepower. If you maintain your grip on the stock with your strong hand, additional ammo can be fed into the magazine with the weak hand. You should always reload what you shoot as soon as practical. If you fire two rounds, then reload two rounds.

If you empty your shotgun, you can quickly reload one round by placing it directly into the ejection port. Cup the round in your left hand and roll it into the ejection port. Then immediately push the slide fully forward chambering that one round. Now you at least have one round to depend yourself with while you reload the magazine.

Use the following procedure, when the shotgun has been fired or a round has been chambered and the weapon needs to be returned to a safe condition. First, engage the safety. Then slowly pull back the bolt, exposing the chambered round so it can be removed from the chamber without letting a round out of the magazine. At this point, the remaining rounds can be taken from

Combat Shotgun (cont.)

the magazine by depressing the shell stop on the side of the loading port. The weapon can then be secured or returned to readiness for continued use.

Of all the basic shotgun skills, stance is one that contributes most to allowing rapid repeat fire. As with the pistol, balance is the primary goal, but because of the far greater recoil, the shooter must generally maintain a slightly wider stance than normal. It is also important that the majority of body weight be on the front foot with the knee slightly bent. The strong-side arm should be perpendicular to the ground, while the weak side arm should be parallel to the ground. Your head should remain erect.

The shooter should have a firm grip on both the pistol grip and the forearm but should not hold so tightly to cause fatigue or discomfort. When holding the slide (forearm) you should be careful not to twist it or the action may bind. Your strong hand should pull the stock firmly into your shoulder. A loose hold allows the shotgun to jump before it makes contact with your shoulder, which adds to the felt recoil.

In many cases, breathing may be heavy due to exertion or excitement. A conscious effort to slow down your breathing or hold your breath during firing will help. You should take a death breath, let it half out and then hold your breath briefly as you squeeze the trigger. At closer ranges, breathing isn't as important, due to the shotgun's pattern size. However, at longer ranges with slugs it is just as important as with a rifle.

On most tactical shotguns, the sights are of two basic types. The most common is the bead sight. This arrangement is simply a bead front sight with no rear sight, although some guns have a grooved receiver that helps somewhat. The second type are rifle sights, similar to those found on most rifles. These add greatly to accuracy, especially at longer ranges with slugs. Recently a new type of sight, called a ghost-ring

sight has been developed. These consist of a large aperture peep sight in the rear and a large rifle sight at the muzzle. Ghost ring sights seem to offer the best combination of speed and accuracy for the combat shotgun.

With the shotgun, trigger control is not quite as important as it is with a pistol or rifle, except at extended ranges and involving rifled slugs. A deliberate press of the trigger while proper sight picture is held will give good results.

As with a handgun or rifle, you should complete a proper follow-through upon completing your firing. While still keeping your shotgun shouldered, scan the area for other potential targets. Then return to your initial target. While keeping them covered, reload whatever rounds have been fired. When you are sure the situation has been dealt with, stand down.

The way the shotgun is held or mounted is a major factor in how well it can be controlled. In mounting the shotgun, the strong hand—the one that grasps the pistol grip and trigger—should grip the shotgun just as it would a sidearm. The weak hand is the most important for several reasons. First, the position of the hand on the slide controls how the stock comes up to the shoulder and where the cheek rests. The gun must come up to your head, so don't lower your head to the stock.

The firing positions most often used are strong-side standing and strong-side kneeling. Both of these are effective with use of cover. While it's possible that an individual may be in a position where the prone position may be all that's available, it's an awkward position from which to cycle a pump-action shotgun.

Less effective, but also widely used in the past is the old hip shooting position. If a shooter chooses to use this method he should be aware of a greater potential to miss the intended target even at close range. The tendency to miss even close targets results from most shooters firing with the weak arm bent rather

than fully extended. The 'underarm assault' position offers a much greater freedom of movement, a clear field of vision, and a greater degree of accuracy. Here, the stock is tucked into the armpit. From this position, there is more of a tendency to keep the weak arm positioned correctly. It also allows a more natural alignment of the eye with the barrel.

The tactical shotgun can be carried in any number of ways, but for our purposes two will be used. The two positions are "High Ready" and "Low Ready." In the high ready, the gun is presented muzzle up in front of the body with the tip of the barrel at eye level, pointing up and slightly away. In the low ready, the butt is up against your shoulder with the muzzle down and away. Both positions allow rapid target pick-up without swinging the muzzle across a wide area. Both use an economy of motion. Two sling care positions are also used—muzzle up and muzzle down. You should regularly practice from both positions, as a different set of movements are required for each.

For most engagements out to 125 yards, the effective range of the shotgun is determined by the way it's loaded, the quality of its sights, and the skill of the shooter. Generally, 00 buck is used up to 30 yards. (*Editors note: We train that 00 buck has a combat range of 18 yds given that the pattern opens up one inch for each yard of distance and the typical human torso is about 18 inches wide*) It will kill at far greater a distance, but the spread of the pattern could be of concern due to possible injury to bystanders.

Rifled slugs, on the other hand, can be effective out to approximately 125 yards but tend to have phenomenal penetration and can cause injury beyond the intended target.

In the great majority of cases, tactical shotguns have no choke or constriction at the muzzle. Choke forces the pellets into a smaller area as they leave the bore, causing them to stay closer together over greater distance. This makes for a smaller pattern or impact area. The lack of

Combat Shotgun (cont. from previous page)

choke allows buck-shot to spread out quicker at closer range, but becomes a handicap as the range increases. A shotgun with a tighter choke can be used effectively at a slightly greater distance with buckshot.

The old "alley sweeper" concept of an extremely wide pattern is a ballistic nightmare. On the contrary, the longer a pattern holds together, the better.

Shotgun ammunition for tactical purposes is generally limited to buckshot and rifled slugs. In most cases, 2 3/4-inch shells are used, though some guns may be chambered for 3-inch Magnums. Buckshot is available in several size pellets. For example, 00 buck has a diameter of 0.32 inches, and has

nine or 12 pellets per shell. Whereas, #4 buck shot is 0.24 inches and has approximately 23 pellets per round. Rifled slugs weigh approximately 1 ounce.

What about the idea that you should load a shotgun with one less round than the maximum. This supposedly allows rapid transition from buckshot to slugs. Theoretically, you can insert a slug into the magazine and cycle the action, ejecting the buckshot in the chamber and replacing it with a slug. Most users would have an extremely difficult time doing this under the stress generated in a life and death situation. An extremely competent operator, with years of training and practice may be able to.

Skill at arms is only one piece of the puzzle. Tactics for the successful employment of those skills are equally important. Under stress, knowledge and decision-making tend to be replaced by a "conditioned response." Training and repetition build these responses. Poor training will result in poor responses; proper training will result in proper responses. It's that simple. Typically, marksmanship isn't the main problem. Most deadly force encounters occur at "across the room" distances. And time is one of the bigger issues. Most encounters last 2-3 seconds.

Ruger Law Enforcement Range Day

At the April meeting held at the Barre Sportsman's Club, the Association hosted a range demonstration day for Ruger's law enforcement product line. Facilitating this event was Sturm Ruger and Interstate Arms.

Ruger's law enforcement product line has expanded quite a bit over the past few years and all these items were available for testing at the meeting. In the long gun category, we were able to shoot the SR556 which is the company's AR platform. This high end carbine has a number of features found only on the more expensive rifles such as piston gas system, quad rail w/ covers and flip up sights. This rifle was so popular, they ran out of 5.56mm ammo shortly after lunch.

They also brought a Mini 14, 10-22 and the new Gunsite Scout Rifle. This was extremely popular and could very well fit the bill for a department looking for a Designated Patrol Marksman rifle. With the 10 round magazine, this .308 is an ideal candidate if equipped with a low power long eye relief scope. It has the accuracy and magazine capacity to be used against barrier targets



such as automobiles and glass.

For handguns, Ruger brought several of their more popular models including the SR9, SR40, LC9, LCP and both versions of the LCR. The SR9 and SR40 have been covered extensively in the various gun publications. The LC9 was a treat to shoot. It is a great option for the officer wanting a flat off duty weapon in a major caliber which conceals well. The double action only trigger

is smooth albeit a long pull. It has real sights which can be drifted for windage and are easy to see. The best part is this is Mass. compliant.

The LCR-357 proved to be quite a handful when fed with magnum loads. While the .38 Special version was quite comparable to the S&W Airweight series, this revolver is too light to shoot .357 rounds through on a regular basis. While I'm sure it will stand up to the recoil, the

Familiarize Yourself with Firearms by Nick Jacobellis (Police Magazine Online 8/3/11)

This may surprise you — there are active law enforcement officers who have sparse knowledge about the firearms they carry. Another group of LEOs has basic knowledge of their service weapons, but aren't well versed in the subject of firearms in general. The third group — the smallest percentage of law enforcement officers — has an extensive, working knowledge of firearms including firearms that they don't carry.

Typically, law enforcement agencies with a more flexible firearms policy have a higher percentage of sworn personnel in their ranks who are more knowledgeable about firearms. Choosing firearms you wish to carry on or off duty from an authorized list often encourages LEOs to learn more about different firearms so they make the right selection.

Several years ago, the Department of Homeland Security reinstated revolver orientation training for certain federal law enforcement officers. The decision to incorporate a few hours of revolver orientation training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Georgia was made because some federal law enforce-

ment officers who were only familiar with pistols were unable to unload a revolver when one was recovered in the field.

One federal firearms instructor at FLETC told me recruits responded very positively to revolver orientation training that included being allowed to qualify with a .38 Special wheel gun. Had this training not been conducted, *entire basic training classes of at least two federal agencies that seized a decent number of firearms would have headed into the field without the ability to safely unload a revolver* (emphasis added).

There's somewhat of a stigma attached to law enforcement officers who shoot exceptionally well and are familiar with firearms. Many of us have heard the term "barrel sucker" and "gun nut" applied to LEOs who have more than a passing interest in firearms. These "barrel suckers" and "gun nuts" are usually the same people that less knowledgeable LEOs call when they recover an unfamiliar firearm in the field and are unable to unload it to make it safe.

I'm fully aware that there are all

kinds of people in the law enforcement profession. However, it should not be politically incorrect to be knowledgeable about firearms, especially when you're in a profession that requires you to carry a service handgun and possibly even a patrol rifle, tactical rifle, and shotgun. Unless you break the law or violate administrative policies, it shouldn't matter if you are personally interested in firearms. Period, end of story!

You would think from a liability standpoint employing law enforcement officers who are knowledgeable about firearms and proficient in their use would be a positive attribute, because these LEOs are more likely to give a good account of themselves in a tactical situation that may include the use of deadly force. After all, who would you want backing you up, a law enforcement officer who knows very little about firearms and can barely qualify, or a barrel-sucking gun nut who takes the time to practice on his or her own and is tactically capable in the field?

As I have mentioned in other articles, I believe we as a society

Ruger Range Day (continued from previous page)

shooter may experience Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Very much like shooting the S&W M&P340. On the other hand, the 38 Special version was a lot of fun as was the LCP .380 ACP pocket pistol which (unfortunately) isn't Mass. compliant. That said, departments can purchase it for their officers if they see the need.

The real treat of the day was the SR1911. Like the SR556, this was done right with all the bells and whistles you want on a 1911 right out of the box! Nice fit and finish plus an excellent trigger made this a

blast to shoot. I don't know if this trigger was typical of one you would receive from the factory but giving Ruger the benefit of the doubt, it was great.

In conjunction with the shoot, a \$450 gift certificate good at Interstate Arms was raffled off. Ruger's chief armorer Bob Wood drew the winning ticket which belonged to 2nd VP Todd Bailey.

Ruger has a number of firearms which are more than up to the task of law enforcement service. Thanks to Sturm Ruger, Inc. and Interstate Arms for making this event possible.



Familiarize Yourself with Firearms (cont. from Page 8)

have created some of the problems that exist by eliminating the numerical scoring of targets. I first noticed a change in the way we looked at certain training issues during the Clinton Administration. It was during this period in our history that it no longer became "politically correct" to recognize certain achievers in firearms training, because it made those who didn't perform as well feel bad that they were unable to do better.

Instead of encouraging people to improve their skills and capabilities, we began to create a society where it became acceptable for everyone to Pass or Fail but not to recognize the best for being better at performing various tasks. In my years of serving in law enforcement, I don't remember anyone being publicly ridiculed for not getting a higher firearms qualification score.

To be even more specific, when I attended the police academy and various schools and training programs at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center I never saw anyone ridiculed because they were a lousy shot or they failed to qualify with a firearm. I never understood the logic of progressive liberals who determined that recruits who didn't do as well were being psychologically traumatized by the higher achievers.

I was never a solid A student and as happy as I was to get an occasional close-to-perfect test score, I never felt belittled when I worked hard and scored in the mid to upper 80s. The truth is that I was never a big test taker. When it came to shooting, I finally found something where I excelled. But this didn't happen overnight or by chance. I was able to evolve into a very proficient rifle, pistol, shotgun, submachine gun, and machine gun operator because at an early age I was enrolled in an NRA summer firearms camp program that

taught me the fundamentals of firearms safety and marksmanship.

I grew up in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, not in a place where a kid could routinely head out into the country on a whim to go plinking with a .22. When it came to practicing with firearms I had everything going against me because I was a city kid who had to wait until the summer months to go away to camp so I could continue to hone my skills with a .22 caliber rifle. When I later went into law enforcement, I practiced on my own as often as possible. Clearly, I became a very proficient shot who earned two Top Gun awards in the U.S. Customs Service Patrol Officers School as well as in Special Agents School, and I qualified with high scores on a regular basis because I took the time to train and become a proficient marksman.

I also became knowledgeable about firearms because I read books and an endless number of magazine articles in law enforcement, military, tactical, and firearms magazines. In addition, I routinely spoke to several firearms experts and other older LEOs who were well versed in the subject of firearms and the proper tactics to use in the street. Much of what I learned was done on my own time.

The bottom line is if I can do this, so can you. While you may not be able to go back in time to learn how to become a proficient shot at an early age, you can start right now to take firearms training more seriously.

All I ask is that you not wait to qualify once a year to participate in firearms training. It doesn't take more than an hour or so every few weeks or once every two months to conduct some meaningful firearms training with 50-100 rounds of ammunition. If you're serious about improving your firearms proficiency,

ask for competent help. You'll waste ammunition and only get frustrated by the lack of improvement if you train while using bad habits. In order to truly become more proficient with firearms, I suggest you swallow your pride and ask a well respected firearms instructor if they'll give you some remedial training.

I'd also encourage you to buy a few books or CDs on this subject and take the time to read a few appropriate magazines from cover to cover, so you can begin to broaden your base of knowledge about firearms, law enforcement procedures, and tactical issues. You don't have to be a SWAT cop to be proficient with firearms.

The more you know about firearms, the more likely you are to be proficient and capable in their use. I make this claim because once you become familiar with the different makes and models of firearms that are currently in circulation, you become knowledgeable about the capabilities and the limitations of various firearms. Having this knowledge can have a significant impact on your ability to survive in the field.

Clearly, it takes plenty of motivation to make the effort to learn more about firearms and to take the time necessary to train so you can become proficient and maintain proficiency. The choice is yours to make.

In a perfect world, your employing agency would train you more often and would take the time necessary to educate you about firearms. Since we don't live in a perfect world, I'd suggest you become motivated to train more often and take the time to become more familiar with firearms on your personal time. The life you save by becoming more proficient and more knowledgeable may be your own.

Is Safety Killing Our Police Officers? By Brian Willis

This thought provoking article was picked off the web at Policetraining.net and is presented here to stimulate our member's imaginations when designing training. MLEFIAA does not advocate unsafe training in any form and as this article points out, safety is always paramount.

Let me start by saying I am a huge advocate of safety in training and it is critically important that you have safety rituals in place for conducting reality based training. We must stop killing officers in 'training accidents'. Having said that, I have come to the realization over the years that too many trainers are using 'safety' as a crutch and an excuse not to conduct realistic and potentially life saving training.

Trainers preach to officers to "never place yourself in a crossfire situation". Avoiding crossfire is sound tactical advice. What if however, the subject places the officers in a crossfire situation? Are the officers prepared to win that fight or are they going to hesitate because of training, or lack thereof? In Lakewood, Washington the subject entered the coffee shop intent on killing four officers and created a crossfire situation. In Maryland, a bank robbery suspect leaves a bank with a gun to a hostages head and is challenged by a number of armed officers. When he slips on some ice the hostage runs away and the hostage taker runs into the group of armed officers creating a crossfire situation. An officer is fighting over his weapon with a subject who is attempting to disarm and kill him. Because they are in contact range the cover officer now finds herself in a crossfire situation. In each of these situations the subject's actions created the crossfire situation. The officers did not violate their tactical training and place themselves in this position. These situations often cause officers to hesitate as they have never been trained to shoot effectively at close range or when a crossfire situation exists.

I believe the solution is simple. Make time in training to address these types of situations. Use plastic training

guns and place officers in a variety of situations like the ones above and let them work through the problem. **The solution may very well be for one or more of the officers to close the distance and shoot the subject from an inch or two away. The sad reality is that very few agencies in 2011 are teaching this tactic in the academy or at an in service level. In fact, the closest many officers ever get to a target they shoot is the 3 yard line at the range.**

Too many trainers fail to conduct training for winning fights when officers are in a crossfire situation and use safety as an excuse. Trainers fail to train officers to shoot someone from inches away and use safety as an excuse. While safety may be a valid reason for not using non lethal training ammunition in some drills it cannot be an excuse for failing to provide proper training.

Trainers use safety as the reason officers are not allowed to move on the range and then wonder why officers fail to move in a gun fight or struggle to draw their gun while they are moving. Trainers use safety as an excuse for why officers are not allowed to pick up a fully loaded magazine if they drop it on the range. As a result some officers are conditioned not to pick up that magazine on the ground that may save their life.

Trainers continually encourage officers to have 'environmental awareness' despite the reality your training programs may be doing just the opposite. During subject control tactics training the environment is often strictly controlled to ensure there is adequate room between officers. This is done for 'safety' reasons to prevent collisions during takedowns, officers tripping over each other or someone being struck with a training baton during drills.

In many combatives rooms or training areas all objects are removed from the floors so that no one trips over anything and falls or rolls an ankle. On the face of it this makes perfect sense and may be appropri-

ate during the very early stages of training where officers are just learning skills and tactics. Unfortunately, trainers often maintain this strict control throughout entire training programs.

My concern is this type of strict environmental control eliminates the need and the ability for officers to actually develop environmental awareness.

Consider placing striking bags and other obstacles on the floor early in training and force officers to be aware of their environment. As soon as possible get the officers out of the open environment into rooms with furniture and people. This will help officers to be aware of the environment while also learning to deal with subjects in realistic environments.

As officers progress through training you can take away some of the room between officers and groups. This forces the officers to be aware of their environment and the people and objects around them. You can have other people or objects in the area that may pose an additional threat to the officer. Doing so creates an environment where officers need to get their head on a swivel scanning for threats as soon as the highest priority threat is in control. By simply adding these environmental and contextual factors in an incremental manner throughout training you can develop the skill of environmental awareness in your officers.

There must always be a balance between safety in training and training appropriate skills and environmental awareness. Safety is a critical element in training. At the same time you must be aware of becoming the 'over protective parents' you accuse of coddling the younger generations.

It is time to stop using safety as an excuse. Find a way to conduct safe, effective training that truly gives officers the skills they need to win fights and go home to their families.

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