

# TACTICAL MAGAZINE MILSIM

Spring 2009

## Hollywood Shootout

Training and Mindset versus Superior Firepower

## Ultimate Training Munitions

The future of force-on-force training

## Tubular Assault Course

Tactical Counter Terrorism

Training on a 727

## OH SH!T TRAINING

Learn defensive fighting within 5 feet

## Storming Vegas: Reviewed

The story of one man taking Vegas for millions by force



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## SIT REP

### When is being safe dangerous?

Safety is a double-edged sword in a simulated environment. With too little safety, unnecessary injuries occur. With too much, we learn bad habits that could get us killed in real life.

Whether we develop simulations for training, or for professional mil-sim (Pro-Sim) tournaments, the creation of safely realistic simulations is crucial.

There are many ways to develop scenarios within a simulation. An overcompensating focus on safety can hinder the realism of the scenarios. As well, being too safe may put you and your team in real-world danger. It's important to find the right balance of safety and realism. The limitations of your resources—and your simulation equipment—must match your training environment.

Unrealistic scenarios offer a distinct potential for us to accidentally form unsafe habits. For example, operating in a large area, where visual targets are out of range of our simulation weapons—yet well within range of their real counterparts—can become a major safety concern. This situation destroys the illusion of realism. It also promotes bad habits that may prove disastrous in the real world.

How would we develop a safely realistic scenario in this case? We might limit the visual acquisition of an enemy force to within the limits of our simulated weapons. In today's climate, an average real world force-on-force encounter is not going to occur within the same ranges as UTM, Simmunications, airsoft, or paintball.

Safety is a useful subliminal teaching tool. It can help maintain realism in a simulation. An appropriate level of pain, for example, is a good reminder not to repeat a mistake. Occasionally, we find shoot houses set up with all-foam simulated chairs, bookcases, and lamps. Though they are fun to

play with, their lack of hard surfaces may adversely affect your team's performance. The lack of pain, when team members impact these surfaces, may make players too aggressive—and less controlled in their actions.

Using actual furniture in the scenarios will keep realism high. It will allow pain to either reinforce our skills or make us rethink them. Training simulations require a certain mitigated level of risk or danger for us to develop successful skills.

A realistic simulation also requires uncomfortable environments. This strongly affects our ability to safely shoot, move, communicate, and sustain. We rely heavily on our vision. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce challenges.

Low-light conditions, smoke, flashing lights and other visual distractions are important elements in our scenarios. To safely increase levels of stress—and realism—consider the appropriate use of uncomfortable, loud, and abruptly changing sounds. Pyrotechnics, radio station recordings in different languages and blank firing weapons are strong choices.

We also rely on our sense of smell in dangerous situations. Experiment with strong or unusual scents to augment a safely realistic simulation.

The ultimate goals of a simulation are to safely experiment, practice and test our skills, equipment, and abilities in realistic environment. If well developed, a scenario provides a seamless integration of a safely realistic simulation, rather than two contradicting terms. Such simulations are more interesting—and valuable—in our quest for effective training.

-Stone Wolf Out!

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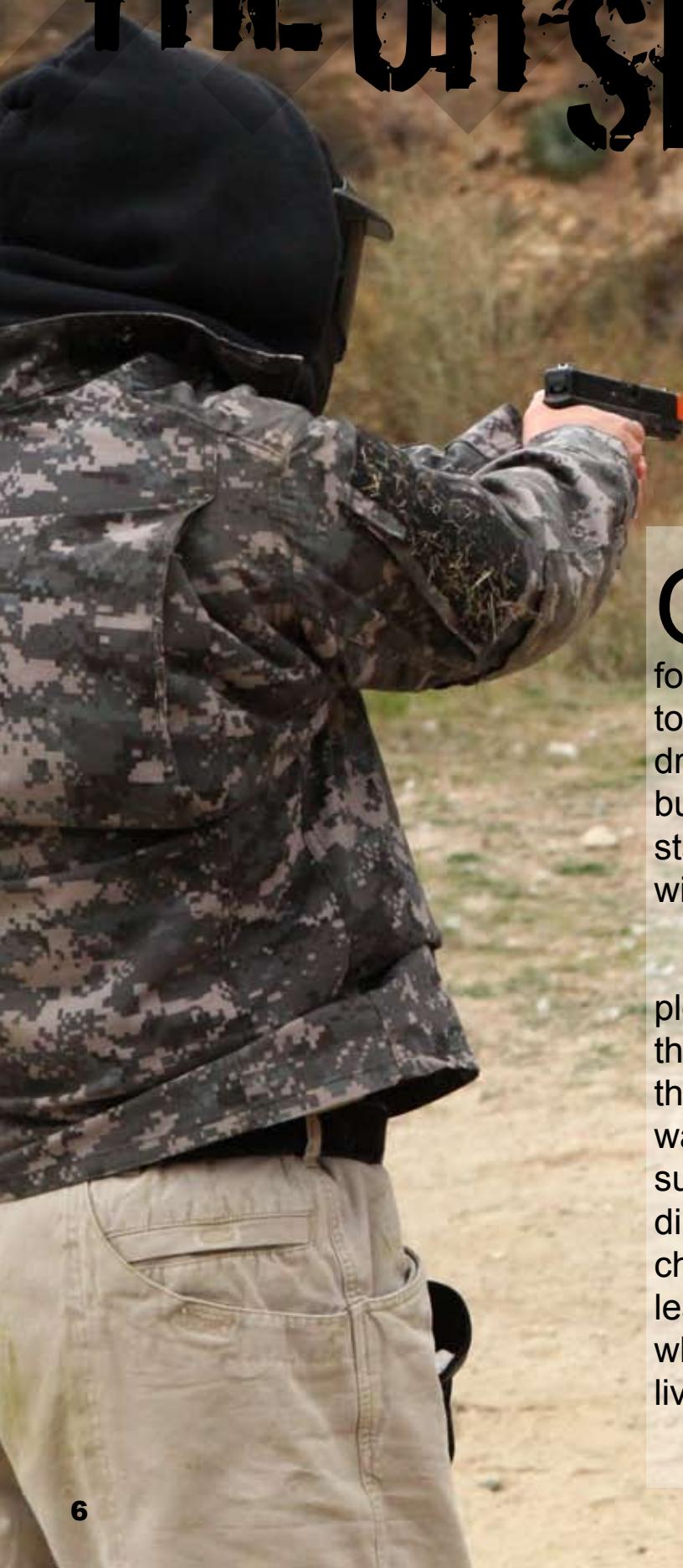
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# THE OH-SHIT GLASS

BY MARK ANDERSON



**O**n December 7, 1991, Officer Gabe Suarez was getting ready to stop for dinner when he got a call to respond to a holdup at a nearby store. Weapon drawn, he rounded the corner of the building—and was met by the suspect, standing approximately five feet away, with a pistol aimed at his head.

Officer Suarez immediately exploded out of the line of fire, away from the building. He returned fire and killed the suspect. Later, he examined the wall behind him, where he first met the suspect. It contained five bullet holes—directly in line with where his head and chest would have been. Gabe Suarez learned firsthand that exploding off what is now called the “X” could save lives.



Welcome to the real world of 0-to-5 feet gun fighting—or, as Gabe nicknames it, “The Oh Shit Class.”

This might be a tough title to market, but we at TacSim like it.

I had the privilege of attending his class. I finished the course feeling as if I'd just lost a bar fight. The knowledge I acquired was worth every bruise. What drew me to this course was the fact that Gabe utilized airsoft technology to help train his students during force-on-force exercises. I was curious to see how effective Gabe's strategy would be.

I have always been a firm believer that the equipment you

use to train matters less than how effectively the equipment is used. Gabe Suarez is a testament to this theory. His addition of airsoft technology to his training, in 2002, has helped him develop and/or test techniques while maintaining a devout Ockham's Razor approach, which shaves away any unnecessary movements.

Gabe's use of airsoft brought me to the course. My motivations quickly changed as I faced a loaded airsoft gun, aimed at my head from 10 feet away. “Try not to get shot,” I was told.

“Easier said than done,” I thought.



By following Gabe's advice, I was able to explode off the “X,” by using what is called a Pekiti takeoff, and avoid that first shot every time. The “X” is your initial standing point during an attack. This drill showed us that it is crucial to know when to “change the picture.”

## ***“Try not to get shot,” I was told.***

When an attacker has the position of advantage, they take a mental picture of the scene. As the target, you are part of that picture. If you hesitate to take your own mental picture, your attacker will always be one step ahead of you.

If you launch off the “X,” you can change your attacker’s mental picture. Thus, you buy yourself the time—usually a few seconds—necessary to gain the upper hand.

The next time you run an errand, count the number of people that come within five feet of you. Quickly classify them into three categories: friend, enemy, or unknown.

Your friends aren’t going to rough you up, and you’re already on alert if you see your known enemies. But what of the unknown?

They could be anywhere: your enemy’s friends, a thug looking for an easy target, or someone having a really bad day.

In some situations, things happen so fast—and so unexpectedly—that even Gabe would have little advice for you. Situational awareness is important—but we don't always get all the intel until it is too late. Every day, we find ourselves within close proximity of someone we don't know.

Back in the early '80s, Sgt. Tueller developed a drill

## ***Easier said than done, “I thought.***

which showed that it only took 1.5 seconds for an attacker with a knife to travel approximately 21 feet. That's about the same time it takes someone to draw and fire two rounds into a target.

While this is a great place to start your training, we don't always have the advantage of recognizing a threat at such a distance. As Gabe puts it, in a sarcastic tone of voice, "No one is going to raise his knife and say: 'Hey you! I'm going to attack you because my Kung Fu is better than yours, and then start running at you from far away'."



In such a scenario, you will likely sense that something isn't quite right—while you look for a way to avoid the situation without appearing like a lion's appetizer.

Suppose that option is no longer available. Imagine you're five feet from a stranger, looking for a way out, when you're attacked. This is where Gabe's class gets its colorful nickname.

For those with a martial arts background, the first option would be to go to open hands and fight. The problem here is that, with our martial arts hat on, we don't think about using our pistol.

If you feel the pistol is all the "martial arts" you need, try pulling out your REDGUN while

someone you know slashes at you with a PRACTICE knife from a five-foot distance in your home. Imagine this person is a stranger, with a real knife, lunging at you at night on a wet sidewalk.

A lack of sufficient training, to bridge the gap between martial arts and range shooting, will severely reduce your ability to survive this encounter. This is where gun fighting comes in. It must be a simple, workable system. You must be able to explode instantly off the "X," redirect a knife or pistol (if distance permits) and move around your attacker, while accessing your concealed weapon. This system must be practiced.

"Caveman Karate," as Gabe puts it, is a set of foundational techniques from different martial arts. Among them is a modified Hubud Lubud from the Filipino martial arts.

Gabe has modified this move. He works the first two soft blocks into a quick habit reaction—like a flinch. Another developed "flinch" involves a quick jerk back, to avoid a low thrust or sweep from the knife. This is done in a manner that maintains



your forward balance while your hand helps intercept the block.

This intercept may just be a quick reactionary slap—or it may end up as a catch or trap. It depends on where your hand ends up. The key is to learn to your options, and to practice them dynamically, over and over. Don't focus on using a certain defense. Just react to whatever you get after your initial "flinch." By developing these flinches, you can maintain a dynamic approach that's so easy even a caveman could do it.

Gabe Suarez considers himself a combat instructor, not a firearms instructor. Gabe has been training in fighting since he was 10 years old. His first training was in Kyokushinkai karate. He then

branched off to other systems. He has trained with several notable knife instructors. Gabe has respect for what the knife can do.

He thinks that the gun culture's fear of knives is as silly as the leftist's fear of guns. As he sees it, the knife is just another tool. The fight will be whatever it will be. To prevail in that fight, the fighter must be flexible. He must adapt to what he cannot control or change. He must also use whatever tools are on hand.

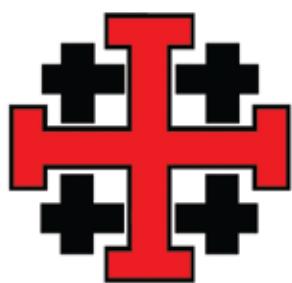
Gabe advocates physical conditioning, skills in hand-to-hand fighting, knives, and, of course, firearms. His end goal: to be as complete a warrior as possible.

*"Standing and delivering shots at cardboard-backed paper targets doesn't give one a realistic view of "the fight". This class, as do many of the Suarez International classes, shows the student what it is like to contend with a non-compliant opponent at bad-breath distances."*

*~Richard Coplin, Suarez Staff Instructor*



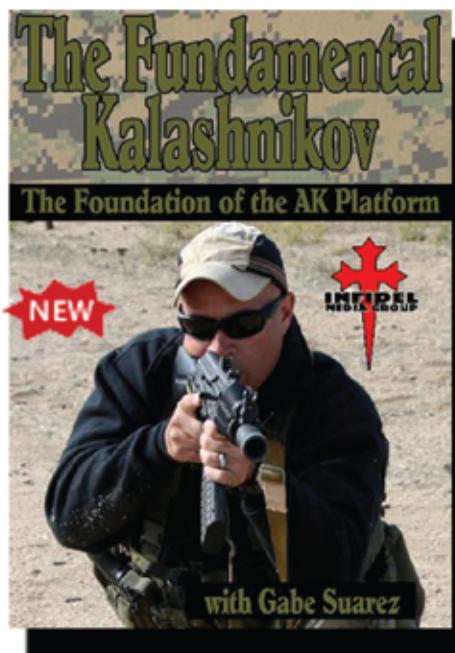
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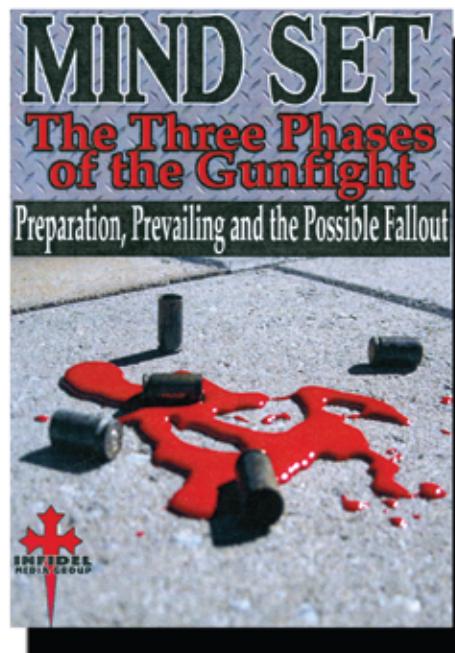
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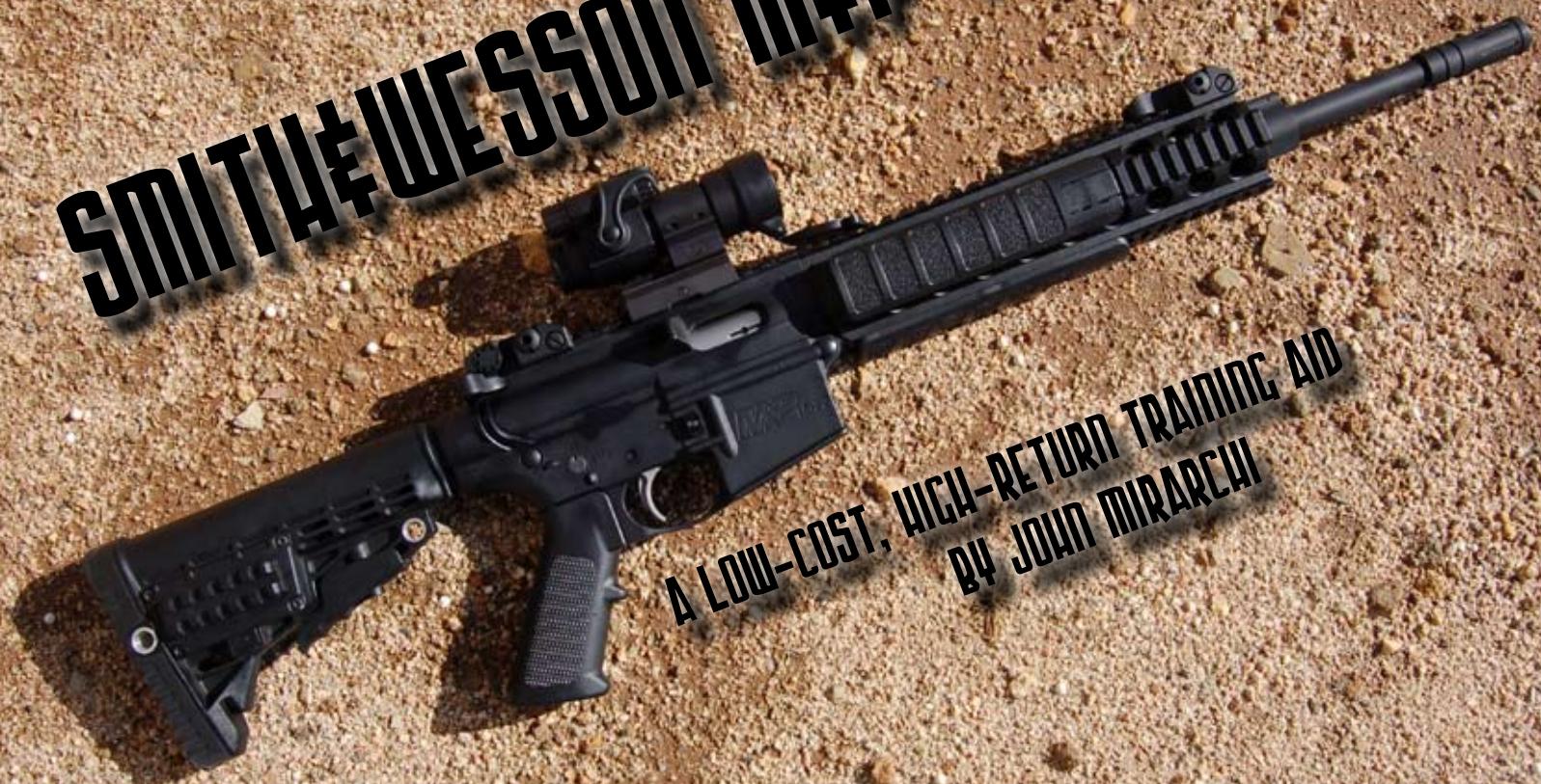
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# SMITH & WESSON M&P 15-22

## A LOW-COST, HIGH-RETURN TRAINING AID BY JOHN MIRARCHI



**W**hat a year it's been in the world of firearms sales! As most know, the elections of late '08 have supercharged an already brisk market for AR-style rifles and ammunition. Prices doubled—or even tripled—practically overnight.

This trend raised the cost of equipment and training supplies almost out of range for many shooters. I faced cutbacks of 50% to my training schedule.

I searched for a low-cost, high-return alternative that would provide quality time on the range. Smith & Wesson's new M&P 15-22 rifle seemed to be the answer.

The M&P 15-22 is a .22 cal rimfire rifle con-

structed from high strength polymers. It features a 16-inch match grade barrel, full-length rail interface, functional charging handles and a bolt catch. It comes with a 10 or 25-round magazine, depending on state laws. As well, it uses a standard AR-15 trigger group, pistol grip, 6 position CAR butt stock, magazine release, and removable front and rear sights.

The M&P 15-22's use of many standard AR-15 components sets it apart from the competition. Its ability to accept AR-15 aftermarket triggers, grips, b.u.i.s., and butt stocks gives it the edge in cost-effectiveness. This gives it greater flexibility and a longer useful life as a training aid. In my experience, the AR aftermarket changes fashion faster than the pages of Vogue magazine.

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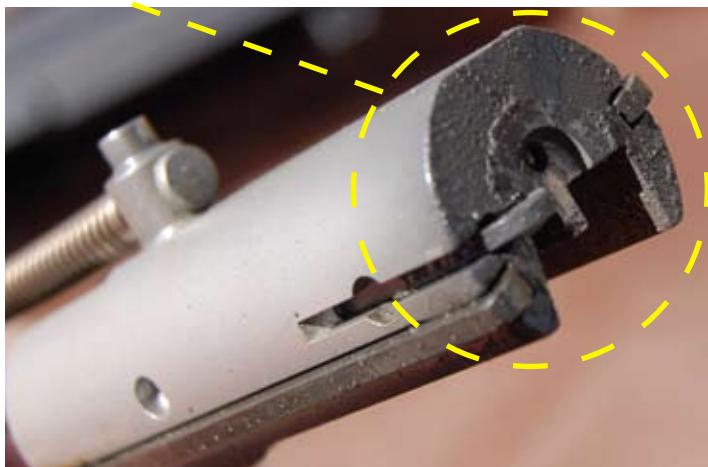
I was sold. I purchased the M&P 15-22 and promptly took it to the range with 1,200 rounds of 40gr CCI .22 cal rimfire ammunition for a day of testing.

At the range, I replaced the sights that came with the gun for a set of Troy b.u.i.s. I then zeroed the gun at 25 yards. It took about 20 rounds to zero the rifle to my liking. Now it was ready to be put to the test.

I put the M&P 15-22 through multiple strings of fire from five to 100 yards. I had several **feeding malfunctions**, as shown in the photo below. These, I quickly discovered, were caused by improper magazine loading. I learned not to overlap the rims of the cartridges.



Once I solved this problem, the M&P 15-22 ran flawlessly through the remaining ammunition. It became sluggish around the 500-round mark and needed to be re-oiled. The blow back action causes the gun to become quickly **fouled with carbon**.



Finally, I tested the gun for a general grouping at 100 yards with 30 rounds fired, using iron sights, and from a kneeling position. The results were **impressive**.

Two weeks later, I returned to the range for a second day with the M&P 15-22. This time I brought a variety of 22 long rifle ammunition: CCI, Federal, and Winchester (ranging from 36gr. to 40gr. Fmj) and hollow point.

I had made changes to the gun, to evaluate its ability to be configured to an individual shooter's needs by using "off-the-shelf" AR-15 parts and accessories. I replaced the trigger group with a stainless steel set from Timberwolf Tactical. I also changed out the springs with a set from JP Enterprises. This improved the trigger pull from stock of around 7 1/2 lbs. to a crisp 4 lbs.

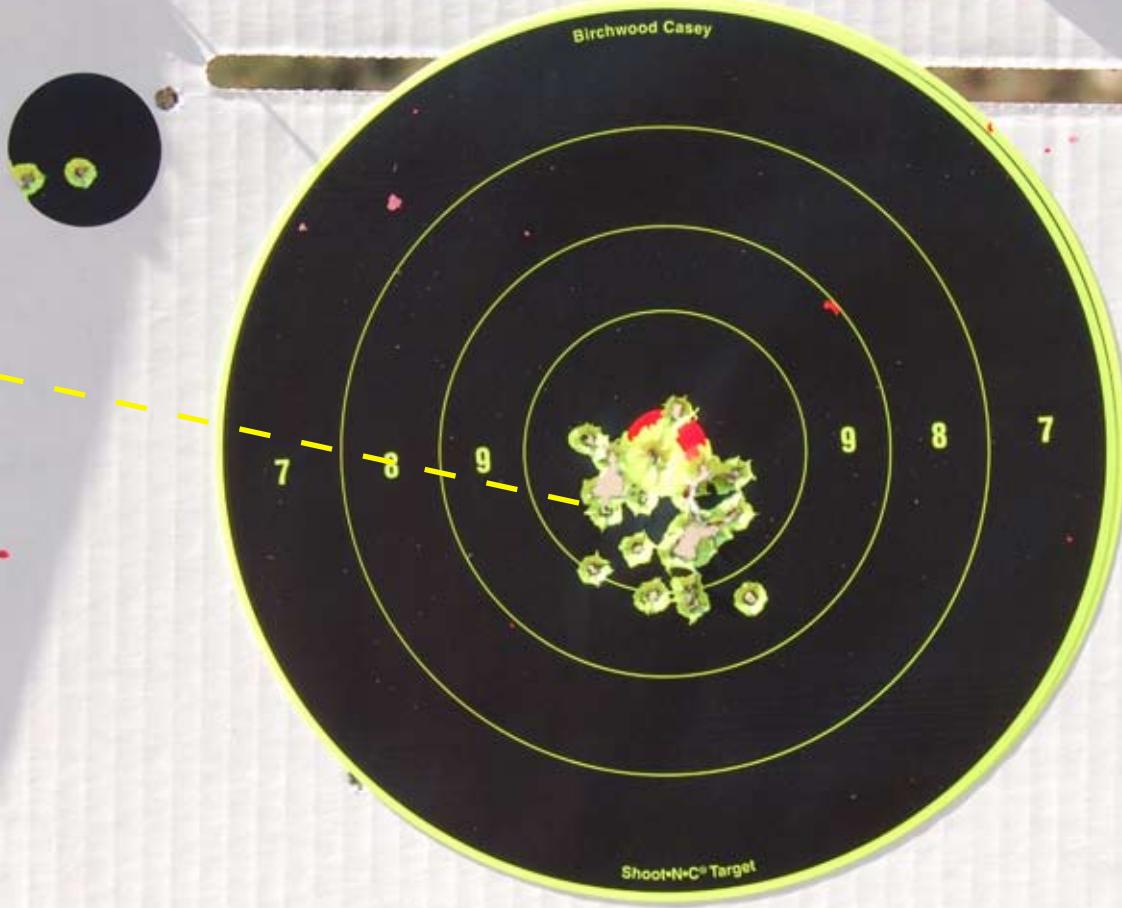
Next, I replaced the magazine release with a Norgen Ambi-Catch, and added a set of TangoDown rail covers, a Ruger Mini-14 A2 style flash hider and a Command Arms stock. I topped it off with a red dot sight.

I sighted in the red dot at 25 yards. This, once again, took no more than 20 rounds. Once sighted in, the second day started. I engaged targets from 10 - 75 yards in rapid succession and in string-after-string.

No malfunctions of any kind occurred during the first group of several hundred rounds. There were four malfunctions in the next 100 rounds. Two were failure to extract; two others were "stove pipes."

These all occurred with the Winchester ammunition. I believe the failures were not the fault of the ammunition, but due to a buildup of carbon fouling in the receiver. I did not clean the gun after the first range day. I wanted to see how long it could function without cleaning. After a quick wipe-down of the feed ramp, bolt face, and a re-oiling, the remaining 200 rounds of Winchester ammunition fired flawlessly.

My last test of the M&P 15-22 was to shoot it in extreme positions, while using very light hand



support. By then, the rifle had fired over 2000 rounds. I was sure it would fail. The M&P15-22 had only one superficial cleaning and minimal oiling. I held the rifle on its side, ejection port up, and fired through 150 rounds. I then held it inverted and fired an additional 150 rounds. No malfunctions occurred in either position.

#### Final notes:

I was at first skeptical of the M&P15-22. I had doubts about using a .22 cal rimfire rifle as a supplement to reduce training costs. At the end of my evaluation, I was pleased with its performance. It handled well and performed all the tasks I set before it—from AR-15 parts interchangeability to close-in move-and-shoot drills, and engagements out to 100 yards.

The changes I made to the M&P 15-22 enabled it to mimic the configuration I run on my primary AR. I estimate that the use of the M&P15-22 enables retention of up to 85% of the muscle memory gained during practice with my primary AR.

The M&P15-22's down sides?

**Carbon fouling:** It should to be cleaned after 500 rounds or it becomes sluggish due to carbon fouling.

**Weight:** it is a little on the light side—around 6 lbs kitted out. Its magazines are a bit longer than the standard GI magazines.

**The charging handle:** The handle only comes back about half as far as on a AR-15.

**Recoil:** it has minimal recoil to manage.

The average price of the M&P 15-22, with four magazines, is around \$560. Add to this the cost of 2,400 rounds of .22cal ammunition at \$75. This represents a savings of almost \$200, compared to the \$800 cost of the same number of rounds of quality 5.56/.223 ammunition.

I recommend the M&P 15-22 to the individual or law enforcement personal looking to reduce costs and maintain quality of training. However, I caution you not to use it as your sole training aid.

# 21st Tactical



Training has come a long way in past twenty to thirty years. With buzz words like realistic training and stress inoculation training, there is a lot of talk these days about what the best method of training is and how it should be done. However, at the end of the day, training still requires a few key components: Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), able and willing students, a location in which to train, and equipment. Over the years I have worked with many companies that have offered various forms of training, such as Simunitions, Paintball, and now days, Airsoft.

Having worked with and trained several thousand individuals from all facets of Law Enforcement and Military, I found a company that has risen to the top through a lot of hard work and sacrifice. This company is 21st Tactical, also known as 21st Century Tactical or 21st Airsoft. Either

way, the customer service and the training support that they offer is second to none.

21st Tactical first came on the scene in early 2000 at an ILEETA (International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association) conference with a product called Airsoft. At first glance, the airsoft weapons they looked like real weapons; they had magazines that looked real and other than the orange tip, I thought they were real. Being uneducated at the time, I looked at what they had to offer and was more amused by the product than anything else. I talked to the guys at 21st Tactical, grabbed a business card, and filed it away like most of us do at trade shows. We continued to use our Simunitions and to train the way we had been taught without much change to our training curriculum for the rest of the year.

The following year I signed up for an Innovative Low Light course offered at ILEETA with Andy Anderson and Tony Gregory, supported by 21st Tactical. I have to say it was the best course I have ever taken. As with all courses in the past, we all expected to go to a range and lose about an hour in transit each way. When we showed up for the course in Chicago and found out it was being held in a hotel conference room, we all figured it was going to be a long day of Powerpoint and rubber ducks. Boy, were we all wrong! We walked in to find a table full of weapons, eye pro, about a million white BBs on a table, a full firing line with backstops, targets, red, blue, and white lights, and flashlights by the tenfold. These guys had built a full range in a hotel room. Andy and Tony presented the material and within one hour we were off shooting (training) in a hotel. We all spent the rest of the day firing rounds and receiving

blocks of instruction on Low Light Shooting Techniques. For me and for many others, this was the day that 21st Tactical and Airsoft came on the scene as a viable training product.

Since that time, I have worked with 21st Tactical on numerous occasions and have crossed paths with them at National Police Week in D.C. working with Ty Weaver of Blackhawk, seen them at Red Man 101 courses with Gary Klugowitz, worked with them at Dave Young's courses, and listened to Ken Murray speak about them. I have worked with 21st Tactical for over six years now and was fortunate enough to be at the very first class they taught. Since that time, I have watched 21st Tactical grow into a professional training company that has taken Airsoft from a toy to a viable professional training tool. I also watched 21st Tactical make a decision back in 2006 to only sell its products to Military, Law Enforcement and Armed Professionals.

Today 21st Tactical offers some of the most advanced training you will find and they do most of it using Airsoft. I have seen their videos showing Low Light Engagement, Active Shooter, CQB, and vehicle stops all using Airsoft. The truly remarkable thing about 21st Tactical is their willingness to work with the customer. You provide them with a training outline and they are happy to share scenarios and their experience with you on how to make your training more realistic for your officers or soldiers. At times I found myself a few weapons short and the guys have either rented or lent me what I needed to complete our training, and they have even offered to assist us in our training by being role players or assistant instructors.

When I first got involved with 21st Tactical, my agency did not have enough money in the budget to purchase all the needed Airsoft equipment, so the guys at 21st Tactical put together a complete package with 4 other agencies in my area, and as a group we pooled our funds and were able to purchase all the necessary equipment that we all needed. Now we all work together sharing the Airsoft equipment, which has allowed us to work closer with our neighboring agencies, which in turn has built a stronger bond between all of us. The guys at 21st Tactical made all of this possible.

***"The need for training will never go away; the need for realistic training is always present. In a time of economic troubles, Airsoft is a realistic tool that provides cost-effective results and 21st Tactical is the company that can make it happen for you, your agency, and your unit."***

A couple of years ago 21st Tactical moved its HQ to Fort Bragg, N.C. and I have had the opportunity to visit their facilities several times over the past two years. Today they offer more tactical gear than any other store I have ever been in and their selection of Law Enforcement grade Airsoft training weapons is second to none. To facilitate the training that they offer, they have recently developed their own line of Airsoft marking rounds, IED and RPG simulators, and many other items that add to the realistic training that we all seek for our officers, soldiers, and agents. Today 21st Tactical offers training support in 6 countries, with over 42 adjunct instructors and commonly puts on training missions at Fort Bragg with over 40 role players.





## Ultimate Training Munitions™ Wave of the future for Force-on-Force Training?

By Paul Pawela

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### Recent News Headline: Spike in Number of Cops Killed in Line of Duty

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A police officer is gunned down in his patrol car in Penn Hills, Pa., while waiting for back up. Near Seattle, four officers starting their day at a coffee shop are ambushed by an ex-con with a handgun. Another four officers are shot to death in Oakland, California after a traffic stop gone awry.

The number of police officers killed in the line of duty increased 24 percent from 2008. By December, 2009, 47 police officers had died nationwide; this number does not include the many police officers who have been involved in gun battles.

All one has to do is look at the current headlines in today's newspapers to recognize that if there was ever a time in modern history where the good guys needed realistic Force-on-Force training, not only to be proficient to save the lives of those they are sworn to protect, but to better protect themselves so they can go home safely to their loved ones, it is now.

The Force Science Research Cen-

ter supports the need for Force-on-Force training by stating, "Winners, it is revealed, tend to anticipate an emerging threat sooner, shoot to stop faster and more accurately, and make fewer errors in judgment because of the unique way in which they watch a potential attacker's body as a deadly confrontation unfolds."

Anyone who is remotely associated with any type of simulated Force-on-Force training owes a great deal to the pioneers who founded modern day marking cartridges, inventors David Luxton and co-founder Ken Murray. Together they developed FX® marking cartridges that with the addition of special bolts and barrels, military and law enforcement can use their regular weapons and get as close to real gun fighting training as possible, a form of training which later would be known as Simulations. And the rest, as they say is history.

Anyone who is doing Force-on-Force training and has not read Ken Murray's definitive, classic book on the subject, *Training at the Speed of Life* ([www.kmarmiger.net](http://www.kmarmiger.net)), should have their head examined.

For a long time Simulations was king of the hill in the training world and seemed to have cornered the market with no real competitor in sight, but to use a well-known cliché: that was then this is now.

There is a new competitor in town that goes by the name Ultimate Training Munitions (UTM™) and it just might have what it takes to knock the reigning king off the proverbial mountain top.

I had the pleasure of meeting Dan Kinkel of Kilo 10 ([www.kilo10.com](http://www.kilo10.com)) whose company is one of the main suppliers of UTM™ products. He is also one of the foremost trainers on the subject and unlike many product peddlers, Dan Kinkel is not just a man who talks the talk; he does in fact walk the walk as he is a recently retired Special Forces Sergeant Major with multiple combat tours. Dan knows full well the importance of training people who go

into harm's way, as previously mentioned, as realistically as possible. He is a been there, done that kind of guy but, as someone who's been around the block once or twice myself, I was a bit skeptical of the newest and latest product scheme.

Up for the challenge, Dan put his money where his mouth was and invited me to the mother of all testing grounds, the International Florida SWAT Round-up held in Orlando, Florida. The SWAT Round-up is not the place to try to BS anyone. I have seen many a vendor's feelings hurt and careers crushed due to the fact people would say their product could do this or that only to find out it couldn't, and once negative press gets out about a product, well, game over.

Any time anyone even talks about Force-on-Force training, the number one consideration, FIRST AND FOREMOST is it has to be safe, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. The UTM™ Instructor Certification Course workbook states that it provides the world's safest Training Ammunition Management System. Well, that got my attention because everyone knows how many fatalities have happened when shooting marking rounds out of real guns.

So what makes UTM™ so safe? All UTM™ Pistol Conversion Kits incorporate a standard fail-safe to prevent the firing of a standard live round. This is done by ensuring that the converted UTM™ training barrel has insufficient head space for a standard "LIVE" round to fit in the UTM™ Conversion barrel.

Since the conversion kit chamber is shorter, and a different size than the standard chamber, it uses a chamber that is specific to the UTM™ ammo. This makes it impossible for the weapon to chamber a live round.

The training barrels are easy to identify because they are clearly marked by a blue stamp that is visible to both trainer and students that they have a training barrel in their duty weapon.

**"Up for the challenge, Dan put his money where his mouth was and invited me to the mother of all testing grounds, the International Florida SWAT Round-up held in Orlando, Florida."**

Since the military and now law enforcement are using the M-4 platform, the UTM™ bolt works in the same fashion. By simply removing the live bolt and installing the UTM™ training bolt, it too becomes fail-safe due to the fact the UTM™ bolt has a 3mm offset firing pin position so that it cannot detonate live center fire ammunition.

An additional safety measure is that the dust cover will not close while the UTM™ training bolt is in place in the M-4 platform. This helps the student and the instructor once again identify on the firing line that everyone has a clear view that a training bolt is in use and not a live one.

OK, so it passed the first hurdle that it is safe, but does it work without malfunctioning and just how accurate are the marking rounds?

Both are good questions and I am glad you asked, let's answer the last question first, shall we?

At 25 yards with a regular M-4 platform with a standard EO Tech® Tactical Sight, I the mere mortal average shooter that I am, was able to make head shots on the silhouette targets all day long. The Shooting Gods at the SWAT Round-up, like Tom Cambel from Team Safariland, and Dave Sevigny, Jessie Abbate, and Randi Rogers from Team Glock, were doing what they do best, putting holes in smaller holes, making it look so easy. Don't worry about Jessie and Randi being women either; most men wish to the Creator they could shoot as well as them.

With handguns, the results were the same; the round it went where you lined up the sight of the weapon being used.

Now let's see, UTM™ passed the safety test. Check. The accuracy test? Check. How about one of the most important tests, the reliability factor?

Out of several thousand rounds from the M-4 and both handguns used, one Glock and one Beretta, none were cleaned; there were ZERO malfunctions. Before you Doubting Thomases starting crying foul or say Dan Kinkel's guns were specially modified for UTM™ ammo, sorry but they were real weapons. However, since I thought this question might come up, I grabbed Rob Dearden, Director of Law Enforcement Training of Ruger® Firearms and had him bring Ruger's newest M4 rifle to try out with UTM™. Rob took his bolt out put UTM's in and it shot like the Rolls Royce gun, that is, with zero malfunctions.

UTM™ reliable? Check.

So what else makes UTM™ different from others? The shells have two primers, a forward and rear primer, for separated energy, which means no powder, which translates into no accidental deaths like what happen to Bruce Lee's son, Brandon, who was killed during the filming of the movie *The Crow*, when a blank was able to push a squib round that was stuck in the barrel of the gun. The powder from the blank alone proved to be powerful enough to push the stuck bullet and fatally wound and kill Brandon Lee.



The marking wax is cosmetic wax and does not leave that much a mess, which is a big plus and the aluminum casings are not harmful or toxic to the environment, so that will help keep Green Peace at peace.

UTM™ offers four different rounds: (1) Man Marking Round, (2) Silent Blank Rounds, (3) Battlefield Blank Rounds, and (4) Target Bullet Rounds.

You are probably wondering what the difference is between Silent Blank Rounds and Battlefield rounds. Silent blank rounds are good for a variety of reasons, the biggest reason I see is to practice handgun retention drills. In fact, TLM ([www.fcsafehouse.com](http://www.fcsafehouse.com)) Chief Instructor, Jeff Moldovan, who not only has one of the best handgun disarm systems in the country, but has served as both stuntman and fight choreographer for major motion pictures is going to use UTM™ Blanks in future movies.

The Battlefield Blanks can be used with your duty weapons to increase realism

by adding noise and increasing stress which are good for training. The weapon functions normally, complete with recoil without the use of a blank adapter and guess what, it works with MILES gear as we tested it out at CUBIC ([www.cubic.com](http://www.cubic.com)) who supplies the government with some 70 percent of its MILES gear, so there is none of this "you missed me" child's play.

Of course the Target Bullet Round is for COB live fire training where you can set up a range using ¾-inch plywood.

When it all comes down to it, it all depends on the bean count administrators if they are going to buy the product or not for training. Well good news here on two counts, UTM™ is pretty cost-effective in two ways. One, the UTM™ marking cartridges are about half of the cost of their competitors and two, UTM™ does not require all the padded gear that normally goes with marking rounds. UTM™ sells their own ESS face Goggle and frames, UTM™ full coverage face mask for head protection, and Gauntlet Gloves.

UTM™ also advises that you wear two layers of loose fitting clothing and inside as well as outside groin guards.

On a fun note, I will not lie to you that you will not feel the UTM™ Man Marking round; it has a little sting to it and the UTM™ is going at 375 feet per second which is still less than the other guys whose round goes at 650 feet per second. However, when Ms. Randi Rogers of Team Glock, who stands some five feet nothing, insisted on being shot with the UTM™ Man Marker round, we called out all the macho SWAT cops who refused to be shot for demonstration (SWAT sissies). Of course it humiliated them that a woman did it and well, that was all the public peer pressure any of those guys could take. Needless to say, we acquired a lot more willing volunteers after that.

On a serious note, if someone tells you they cannot afford to supply you with UTM™ equipment, remind them of today's news headlines and tell them The Operators of today cannot afford not to.

The poster features a large, ornate gold letter 'V' in the center, with the word 'OKLAHOMA INVASION' written across it in a stylized font. Red blood splatters are scattered around the 'V'. In the top left corner is the Kastway Airsoft logo, which includes a stylized soldier icon and the text 'Kastway AIRSOFT'. In the top right corner, there is a photograph of two people in tactical gear, one holding a rifle. Below the main title, the text '1ST & 2ND MAY, 2010' is displayed. At the bottom, it says 'CLAYMORE-FROSTY PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS OKLAHOMA INVASION V' and 'IN ASSOCIATION WITH DDAY ADVENTURE PARK, MILSIMEVENT.COM'. It also lists 'PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY CLAYMORE & FROSTY' and 'CO-DIRECTED BY U.N. ADMINS' and 'DIRECTOR OF GRAPHICS RAVEN'. The bottom right corner features the text 'SPONSORED BY KASTWAYAIRSOFT.COM'.

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# STORMING LAS VEGAS:

**How a Cuban-Born, Soviet-Trained Commando Took Down the Strip to the Tune of Five World-Class Hotels, Three Armored Cars, and \$3 Million Dollars**

by John Huddy  
reviewed by Don Roff

"Bullets whine through the 108-degree heat under the blazing sun in rapid succession—7.62 rounds from an AK-47. The bullets zip at a deadly velocity of 2,100 feet per second. There are two shooters—men wearing black fatigue trousers, black boots, black sweatshirts, black hoods, black baseball batting gloves, and black ski masks. The well-trained men leapfrog from one position to another along the bullet-ravaged street, moving with deadly purpose."



This could be a special operations mission in the street of some Middle Eastern country. But it isn't. It's Las Vegas Boulevard at 10:04 in the morning, June 28, 1999. One of the men, the leader, Jose Vigoa, is trained in special warfare and has spent his time in one of the world's bloodiest campaigns. But right now, he just wants cash—10 million dollars' worth inside the Brinks armored car that he and his partner hijack, a getaway car waiting.

"You will be fat and happy the rest of your lives," Vigoa told his men the day before this particular robbery. "Our children will go to the best schools, we will drive German-made sports cars with giant motors, and we will have houses all over the world."

This scenario was one of many that the mastermind Vigoa pulled off, starting on September 20, 1998. This was a time when well-armed criminals ran amok in the streets of Las Vegas. The local police force could do little but watch and wait for the next Vigoa heist.

### The Man with the Criminal Plans

Jose Manuel Vigoa Perez was born December 24, 1959 in the barrio of Cayaguazal, located in the village of Caimito del Guayabal, ten miles southwest of Havana. Vigoa had a short childhood. Many boys his age (13) were uprooted from their easygoing, simple life in Cuba.

Vigoa was recruited and sent to the Soviet Union to join the elite Spetsnaz force fighting in Angola and Afghanistan. It was there

that he would be molded into an elite commando. He received extensive training in surveillance and the use of automatic weapons.

After his tour with the Soviet forces, Vigoa fled Cuba during the Mariel boatlift—a mass exodus of Cubans who fled Cuba's Mariel Harbor for the United States between April 15 and October 31, 1980.

Soon after his US arrival, Vigoa moved to Las Vegas. There, he tried unsuccessfully to support his family through work at casinos. Vegas was a town full of booze, prostitution, and illicit drugs. Vigoa soon found the profitable niche of making cocaine deliveries. Eventually, Vigoa was caught—but not before he tried to run over two FBI agents during a high-speed vehicle pursuit. The drug trafficking charges, along with the assault on the agents, saw him sentenced to 19 years in prison.

Vigoa tried to go straight after his release from prison. The odds were against him. In Huddy's book, the Cuban reports that all too often his parole officer would routinely show up at his job brandishing Vigoa's criminal record. "In my world, you are either the hunter or the prey, and I am the hunter. Vegas was my prey. I tell my crew: Vegas makes it, Vigoa takes it."

Soon after that, Vigoa made profitable use of the skills he acquired in Angola and Afghanistan. He returned to a life of crime—on a much larger scale!

He conducted a detailed, methodical surveillance of the Las Vegas

Brinks trucks. After careful preparation, on September 20, 1998, Vigoa struck Vegas. In a series of armed robberies, including hits on five Strip casinos within 16 months, Vigoa was determined to take revenge on what he perceived as the city's corrupt power structure.

The Las Vegas police force—"The Stupids" as Vigoa liked to call them—was unprepared. The city was a haven for police officers looking to put in time before moving to a major metropolitan force. As well, Vegas at this time tried to revamp into a family-friendly destination.

You can imagine the impact Vigoa's crime spree had on the lackadaisical police standards of the city. Vigoa's robberies were less like the work of a thief than of an urban guerrilla, taking his war to the tawdry wealth of corporate Vegas.

Spetsnaz-style training.

### Training

Vigoa put his team through their paces. In target practice, each gunman switched back and forth from handguns to rifles and automatic weapons. They practiced fire and maneuvering, as they leapfrogged from one position to another. They ran in short, choppy steps before falling to one knee and then into the prone position—firing their weapons throughout the exercise. The gang also learned about suppressing fire.

Vigoa also established his Rules:

1. No talking during a job, except when "freezing" the victim (ordering him to stop and drop his weapon). Absolute silence was required among unit members.

2. Plan A; Disarm guards. Plan B: Kill them without

*"You will be fat and happy the rest of your lives," Vigoa told his men the day before this particular robbery. "Our children will go to the best schools, we will drive German-made sports cars with giant motors, and we will have houses all over the world."*

Vigoa enlisted a band of fellow Cubans as his crew. They weren't up to the standards and training that Vigoa had received in Afghanistan. On the armed gang's first heist, the getaway driver left the car in drive while they executed the robbery. Vigoa noticed the car rolling down the street without its driver as they were about to grab the cash. He was forced to abort the mission.

After that, Vigoa decided to take his team out to the desert for some

hesitation if they resist.

3. Vigoa, and Vigoa alone, gave the orders the orders when to retire to the getaway car.

4. The second getaway vehicle (technically known as the first lay-off car) was within running distance of the job. Armored car drivers were taught to use their truck as a battering ram, and could damage the first car at the crime scene.

5. A minimum of three lay-off cars per job. These vehicles, plus the first getaway car—the one whose license plate

number everybody writes down with great excitement—make a total of four cars per job.

6. Speed is essential—one minute and out.

7. No lay-off cars to be stored in casino lots, because security has been writing down plate numbers. Use apartment lots.

8. Chaos is key. (No modus operandi. This is war. Predictability gets you killed.)

9. Leave nothing behind.

10. Ski masks and dark clothing. Always wear gloves. Leave the masks on until we reach the third getaway car.

### Commando Techniques

In later robberies, with better training, the gang used classic commando doctrines: clandestine insertion; brief, violent combat; rapid disengagement; swift, deceptive withdrawal.

The cops soon realized they faced criminals with exceptional battlefield intelligence, modern-day firepower, and sophisticated small-unit tactics. Marine and army veterans in the Las Vegas police force recognized the Special Forces guerilla warfare tactics.

### Weapons

Vigoa used an arsenal of weapons—one Smith & Wesson .38, one Smith & Wesson .40 semiautomatic, one Ruger 9 mm P-85, one Glock .45, one Ruger .357 revolver, one AK-47 assault rifle, two Norinco MAK 90s (a Chinese version of the AK-47), and two Russian-made VEPR .308-caliber sniper rifles.

In Huddy's book, Vigoa justifies his actions by saying, "I didn't enjoy killing or crime, but if that's how I could take my family out of poverty, then that's what I would do."

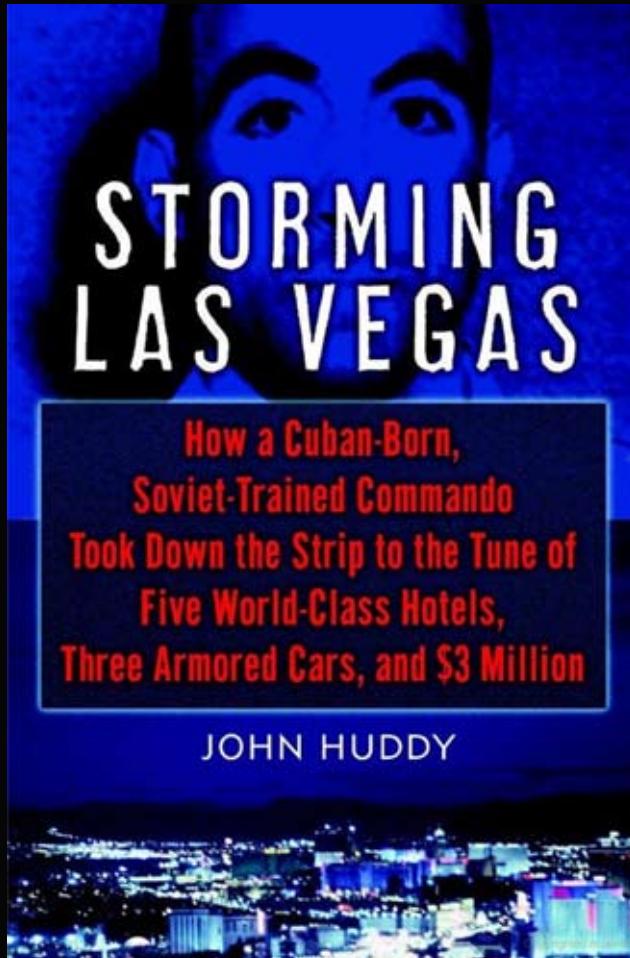
### More Robberies

In the 16 months of robberies, Vigoa and crew hit the gravy train of Vegas hotels—the MGM, the Desert Inn, the New York/New York, the Mandalay Bay, and the Bellagio. Millions of dollars were stolen. In addition, Vigoa bugged Brinks' trucks and established patterns in their deliveries and pickups. He patiently built detailed plans that exploited any weaknesses he found.

Cautious and well prepared, Vigoa even went so far as to steal 11 cars from a rental car lot so that he could always have three getaway vehicles close to whatever location he was hitting. This gave him and his crew the ability to swap vehicles to throw the police off.

Vigoa pulled off most robberies without firing a shot. He believed that no security guard would risk their life to defend somebody else's money. He was wrong. A Henderson, Nevada shopping mall robbery left two Brinks employees, Gary Dean Prestige and Richard Sosa, gunned down under the blazing sun by Vigoa's AK-47.

### Crime and Punishment



As cautious and calculating as Vigoa was, he was not without his share of sloppy errors. His biggest mistake came when he robbed the Bellagio wearing the flimsy disguise of sunglasses and a baseball cap. The Bellagio, which had high-tech security, managed to get extremely detailed shots of Vigoa. His image ended up being broadcast for four days on Vegas television and finally resulted in a 100 mph car chase through the city.

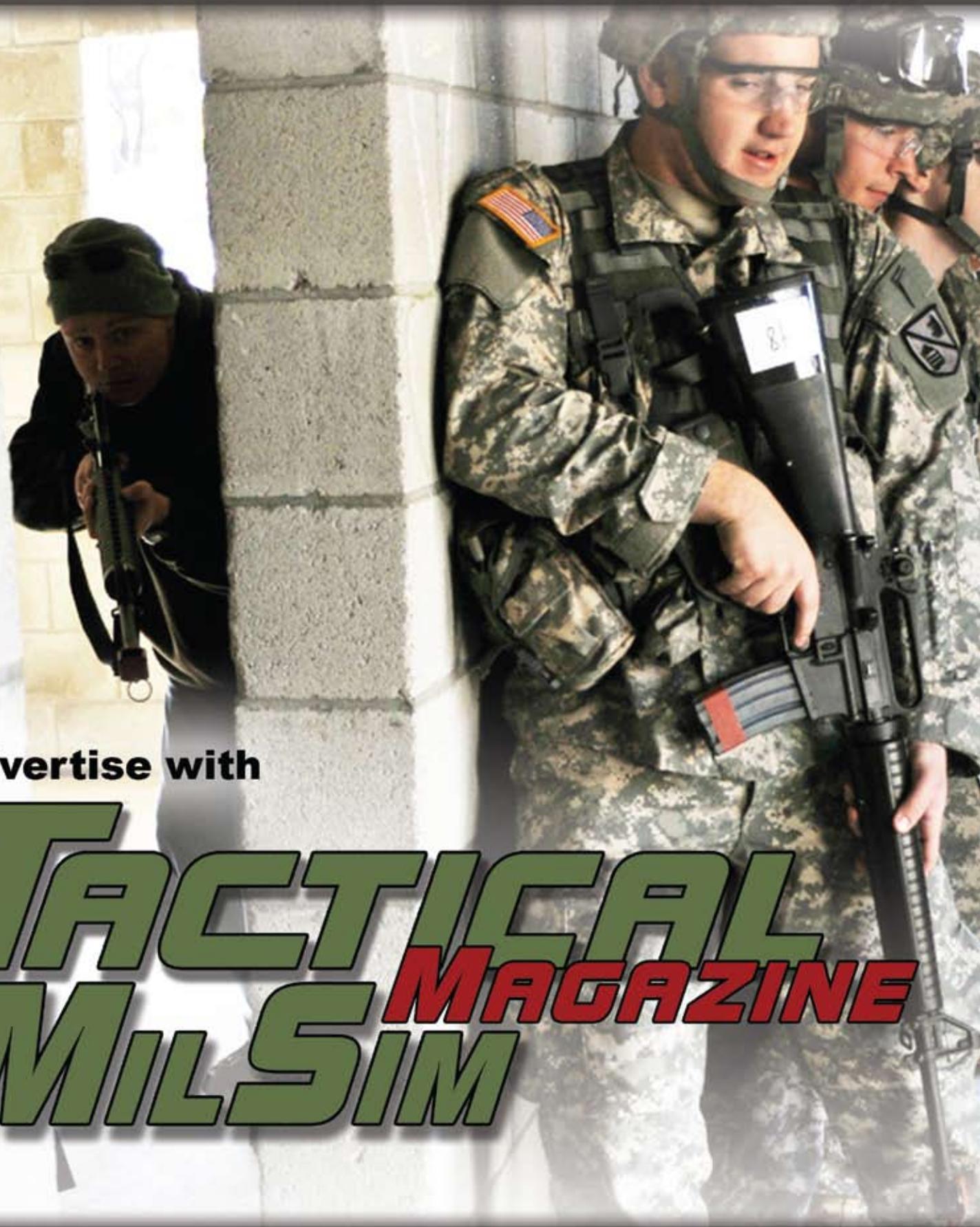
Lt. John Alamshaw, a 23-year veteran in charge of robbery detectives, was not as "stupid" as Vigoa would have liked or hoped. For Alamshaw, the Cuban's crime spree was a personal affront. Alamshaw risked life and badge to bring Vigoa to justice.

Vigoa's capture, arrest, and sentencing, left him facing more than 500 years in prison with no possibility of parole. "When I couldn't get a decent job, when I couldn't provide for my wife and three daughters, I resorted to the only training I had—leading men in combat," Vigoa would later admit.

Although Vigoa will never walk the streets of Vegas again, he did set a dangerous precedent. Huddy ends *Storming Las Vegas* by saying that Vigoa may well represent the criminal masterminds of the future, "trained either by the West or the East, by the insurgents or the occupiers, and they are coming our way."

John Huddy's book is a relatively fast and entertaining read. I recommend picking it up from your favorite library or bookseller. It is also available in an e-book or audio version.

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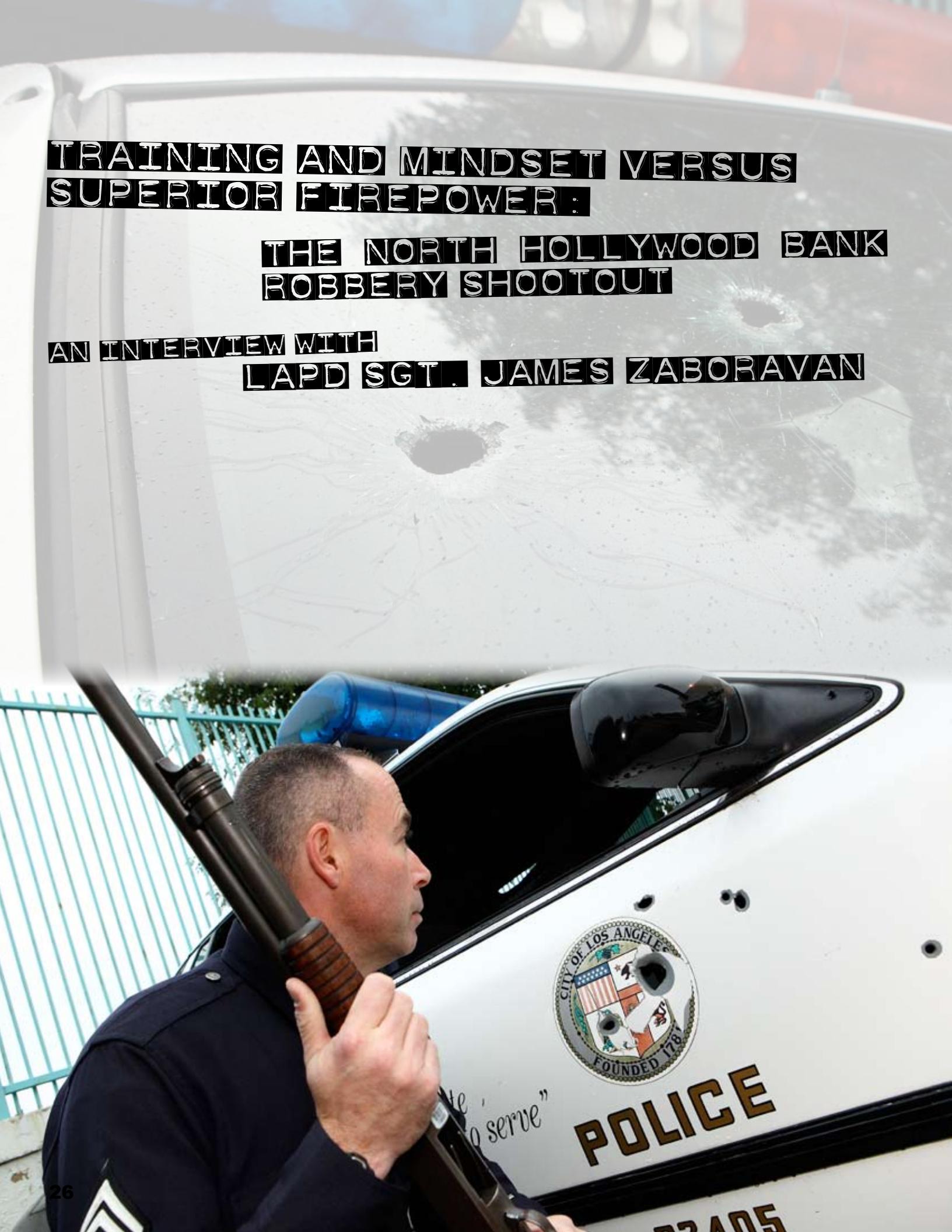
# **TACTICAL MILSIM MAGAZINE**

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# **TRAINING AND MINDSET VERSUS SUPERIOR FIREPOWER:**

## **THE NORTH HOLLYWOOD BANK ROBBERY SHOOTOUT**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH  
LAPD SGT. JAMES ZABORAVAN**



It is about 0900 hours. Two men sit in a dirty white sedan. Clad in black clothing, they wear custom made body armor that covers them from neck to toe. Faces masked with black balaclavas, each man is armed with an AK-47 assault rifle with a hundred round drum, and a pistol. The two men have back up primary weapons, a fully automatic M16 and a .308 caliber HK 91. They have about 3000 rounds of ammunition.

These men are ready. They have trained with their weapons and conducted reconnaissance. They have taken powerful narcotics to relax their nerves and dull the pain of incoming rounds. They have a maximum time on target of eight minutes and are prepared for any contingency.

These men are not in a foreign land, waiting to launch a terrorist attack on a military stronghold. These men are actually sitting in the parking lot of a Bank of America in North Hollywood, California. The date: February 28th, 1997. Their names: Larry Phillips Jr. and Emil Matasareanu. They are about to unleash their arsenal of weapons on anyone that gets in their way as they rob the bank and attempt to escape.

Alert Los Angeles Police officers, on routine patrol, spotted Phillips and Matasareanu as they entered the bank, armed with AK-47s. The patrol officers called in backup, surrounded the bank, and ordered the two men to drop their weapons. Phillips and Matasareanu had no intention of giving up. Instead they attempted to kill dozens of police officers and civilians.

The responding LAPD officers literally formed a thin blue line to protect the citizens of Los Angeles from two murderous psychopaths. The responding officers were outgunned. Several were hit and sustained serious injuries. Despite these disadvantages, they held the line and stopped the suspects. These LAPD officers were able to win this gunfight through bravery, good training, and the warrior mindset.

One of these first responders was rookie Officer James Zaborovan. James, who is now a Sergeant with the

LAPD's Gang Enforcement Detail, was hit and seriously wounded that day. Despite his wounds, he continued to fight and protect not only citizens, but his fellow officers. Tactical MILSIM magazine recently had the honor of speaking with Sgt. Zaboran about this historical police shootout.

"On February 28th, 1997, I was a probationary police officer in North Hollywood Division assigned to day watch. I had graduated the academy two months and eight days prior to this incident. So, besides being a rookie, I was just out of the academy. I was working with my training officer, Stewart Guy," James said.

James and Stewart were en route to an unrelated call when they heard another officer put out a crime broadcast over the police radio, "Possible 211 (robbery) in progress at the Bank of America on Laurel Canyon." It was Officer Loren Farell, also working patrol that morning in North Hollywood Division. Seconds later, Officer Farell broadcasted: "Officer needs help, shots fired at the Bank of America on Laurel Canyon!"

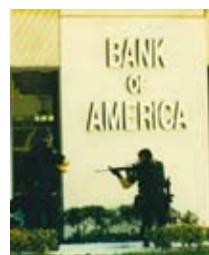
James and Stewart sped towards the Bank of America with lights and sirens. James readied the shotgun. They arrived and parked on the west side of the bank in a strip mall, near a kiosk. The kiosk was right off of the sidewalk across the street from the bank. Standing behind it were two plainclothes LAPD detectives, William Krulak and Tracy Angeles. The officers were in the area and responded to assist. Neither Krulak nor Angeles wore body armor, and James observed this. "I just noticed it, put it in the back of my mind, and moved on," James said.

By this time, the shooting from inside the bank stopped; all was quiet. James would later learn that the initial gunfire was Phillips, shooting open locks on the interior doors of the bank. James would also learn that the suspects were wearing body armor.

James related an interesting fact about the suspects' infamous armor. Matasernau and Phillips were covered from head to toe in soft body armor. Phillips painstakingly sewed together pieces of different vests, and made a "suit of armor" that covered him from neck to toe. The purpose of Phillips' suit was not just to protect him from police bullets. "Phillips' job, upon entering the bank, was to shoot the locks out of the bullet resistant door with his AK-47, in order to get to the vault area," James stated. When Phillips shot the door, fragments would spray back at him. The "suit of armor" would protect him from this, and also from police rounds.

Matasernau and Phillips had a "standard operating procedure" of staying in the bank no longer than eight minutes. This time, the suspects' greed would cause them to violate their own rule. They expected to find about \$800,000 in cash in the vault. They only got \$300,000. They remained in the bank an extra six minutes, trying to get more cash from the ATM machine. This allowed the LAPD to set a stronger containment around the bank.

Phillips was the first to walk out of the bank, on the north side. James remembered the scene vividly. "He's walking northbound when he looks up into the intersection of Laurel Canyon and Archwood and sees Sgt. Dean Haynes and his police car, blocking traffic at the intersection, and three



"Alert Los Angeles Police officers, on routine patrol, spotted Phillips and Matasareanu as they entered the bank, armed with AK-47s."

civilians," James said. "Phillips then raises his AK-47 and in full auto mode, fires at Sgt. Haynes, his car, and the civilians. Sgt. Haynes is hit and so are two of the three civilians."

James was positioned on the west side of the bank, behind the kiosk with the detectives, and had an angle on Phillips. "I raised up the shotgun...I had his whole back, and I fired two, 00 buckshot rounds into his back. Our tac-load holds nine pellets each. I later found out afterwards, from the autopsy, [that] I had hit him with about nine pellets, eight of which lodged into his body armor, and one actually hit him in the tail bone, but all it really did was piss him off," James recalled.

James also remembered specific details about the shots he took on Phillips. "My sight picture was his whole shoulder and back area...and I opened up both eyes at the last second to make sure I had a good background. Just coming out of the academy you have that muscle memory."

But James' solid hit did nothing to faze Phillips. "He just spun around and opened up on us with his AK. We all dived to the asphalt behind the kiosk. I remembered that the detectives did not have any body armor on, and I crawled up on top of them, and I was hit. My body was hit twice. I took a round that went in my hip, and it exited out my butt cheek, and one sliced across my back, just below the vest, leaving a seven inch wound."

In true cop fashion, James jokes about being wounded in the rear end, "The L.A. Times reported that I was 'shot in the buttocks' so I've been Forrest Gump ever since." James was actually hit two more times. One round

hit his flashlight; the other struck both his handcuff cases.

At this point in the shootout, James was hit and seriously wounded. He was pinned down behind the kiosk. He and the other officers were sprayed with bullet fragments and debris. The AK rounds punched through the kiosk. The suspect seemed to have an unlimited supply of ammunition. James had hit the suspect with 00 buck and the suspect was still shooting.

James remembered his academy training. "We had a detective, Rich Householder, come in to the academy. When he was a patrol officer, he and his partner stopped two robbery suspects. One of the suspects exited the car and they got into a shooting. Rich was hit right away, and was knocked down to the ground. As he went down to the ground, Rich thought, 'I'm gonna

get up off this ground, and I'm gonna fight.' Rich stood up, returned fire and killed the suspect."

Detective Householder was shot three times. He told James' academy class that he was not going to lay there and die. He was going to get up and not only survive, but win the gunfight. Householder's words echoed in James' mind. James was not going to lay there and die—he was going to fight.

But James and his fellow officers were seriously outgunned, and now they had wounded. If they stayed behind the kiosk, they were all going to get shot and die on this dirty street in North Hollywood. They had to make a move. They split up into two "buddy teams" of sorts; James and Krulak and Angeles and Guy.

James and Krulak made several bounds to vehicles behind them for better cover. With each vehicle they moved to, Phillips followed them with his automatic weapon fire. "Every car we move behind, he just destroys. It was almost like the movies; you're getting hit with pieces of the vehicle, radiator fluid, and glass is flying everywhere," James said. "At about the third car, detective Krulak gets hit in the upper ankle area and he falls to



**"At this point in the shoot-out, James was hit and seriously wounded."**





the ground." Krulak stood up, and they made another break for better cover. A dentist office was behind them, with a glass door. James took the lead, and decided that he was going to charge right through the glass. There was no time to stop, or they would most likely get shot trying to open the door.

"At a full sprint, with the shotgun out in front of me, I jumped through the dentist's glass doors. Jumping through the glass, I didn't get cut. Talking later with Angeles and Guy who saw us running and jump through the doors, Phillips was shooting at us, and rounds were actually sparking on the ground by our feet. I think that some of the bullets that missed us actually hit the door, and kind of broke the glass as I jumped through."

James and Krulak entered the dentist's office. They ran upstairs and were met by Dr. Montez, who had watched the shootout from the upstairs window. Dr. Montez treated James' wounds. Detective Krulak received the shotgun from James, and covered the stairwell, in case the suspect tried to follow them into the office. "[Krulak] was able to keep that tactical mindset, so that if we have to re-engage we're going to be ready."

James and Krulak were eventually extracted from the area, and given medical treatment. James fully recovered from his injuries, but required surgery to remove a bullet lodged in his hip.

Suspect Matasareanu eventually walked out of the bank, and tried to escape in his vehicle, a white Chevy Celebrity, which had all of its tires shot out by police. Matasareanu drove a short distance from the bank, through a residential neighborhood, and attempted to carjack a better working vehicle. Along the way, Matasareanu encountered Officer Conrad Torres.

The policeman had already been wounded in the neck earlier by Phillips, during the initial engagement, when Sgt. Haynes was hit. Torres engaged Matasareanu with his pistol. Torres and Matasareanu had a running gun battle, as Matasareanu drove down the street firing full auto bursts from his AK through the window at Torres. Matasar-

Officer Torres, along with other nearby officers, hit Phillips several times. One police round actually knocked the pistol out of Phillips' hand. Phillips picked the pistol up and shot himself. An LAPD officer's round simultaneously hit Phillips and severed his spine. This killed him instantly. Officer Torres, still maintaining his warrior mindset, conducted an ammo check. He had one round left.

Meanwhile, as Matasareanu attempted to get in another vehicle, he was confronted by three elite LAPD SWAT officers. They arrived in a patrol car. Matasareanu hid behind his vehicle. He sprayed a full auto M16 blindly at them. SWAT officers exited their car and shot underneath the vehicles with their M16s. They struck Matasareanu in his legs, causing him to finally surrender. Matasareanu later died from his wounds.

James, and the other LAPD officers involved in this shootout, survived

**"Phillips continued to shoot it out with other police at the bank. He attempted to escape on foot after Matasareanu drove away."**



eau continued on and drove away.

Phillips continued to shoot it out with other police at the bank. He attempted to escape on foot after Matasareanu drove away. Phillips walked down the street; now he, too, encountered Officer Torres. Torres, who had just survived a 9mm handgun versus full auto AK-47 gun battle with Matasareanu, did not hesitate.

Outgunned again, Torres raised his 9mm Beretta pistol and engaged Phillips, who was also armed with an AK-47. Phillips had a weapons malfunction with his rifle and switched to a 9mm pistol. Now the men had even odds.

and won, due to training and mindset. "We do have very good training," James said. "That's one thing I can put up against any other department, probably in the world, is our training. Our instructors do an outstanding job...they have been there and done that."

LAPD has extensive firearms and tactical training—both in the academy and throughout an officer's career. "You go over it so many times, in the academy or at the firing range... it builds the muscle memory. Officer Conrad Torres and dozens of other officers did outstanding work that day. It was because of that training and the muscle memory, that they had that proficiency. Everyone knew they were



outgunned that day, but they relied on their training and experience to prevail, and ultimately did," James said.

It is this type of training that also helps build the "warrior mindset" to keep fighting, no matter what, even if you are hit. With the warrior mindset you know you will survive and win. This mindset is shared amongst police officers and military personnel; it is almost a religion for those who willingly go into harm's way.

Another aspect of proper mindset, for any warrior, is preparation. Several responding officers ran out of ammunition. "You can't go out there with just a revolver and eighteen bullets anymore, you need to have a bailout bag, and an extra magazine on your belt...a lot of people changed their mindset after that," James said. In law

enforcement lingo, a bailout bag contains extra ammunition, trauma dressings, energy bars and water. This supply is ready for an officer to grab out of his patrol vehicle during an emergency situation.

LAPD, and the rest of the law enforcement community, learned the importance of the tactical rifle for day to day police operations. Anyone who has heard James' story can likely imagine how quickly the North Hollywood shootout would have ended if James had an AR-15 when he took that first shot on Phillips. If responding officers had AR-15s, Matasareanu would have never made it out of the parking lot.

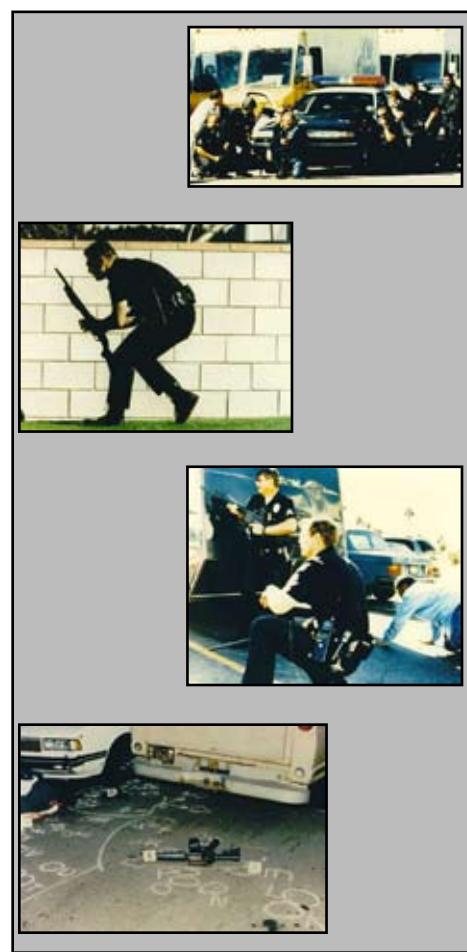
Almost immediately after North Hollywood, the LAPD and other agencies across the nation issued AR-15 type rifles to patrol personnel. Today

you will most likely find a patrol rifle in every police patrol vehicle.

James also stressed the importance of being physically fit. Being in top physical condition helped James to keep fighting, despite serious wounds. His physical condition also helped him to recover fully from his injuries.

The success of LAPD's training program is clearly evidenced in James' performance during the North Hollywood shootout. He was a rookie officer—with less than three months on the street. He was involved in one of the most violent shoot-outs in American police history. But he decisively engaged the threat without hesitation, placed accurate fire on the suspect, and had the presence of mind and bravery to shield his fellow officers who did not wear body armor.

All of the involved officers of the North Hollywood shootout serve as great examples of the effectiveness of good tactical training, the warrior mindset, and the bravery and dedication of the American cop.





# SWAT

SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) is an acronym commonly used for specialized teams of law enforcement officers. SWAT teams are tasked with resolving certain high risk situations that are beyond the capability of regular patrol personnel, through tactical intervention. This includes armed barricaded subjects, high risk warrant service, and hostage rescue. Different law enforcement agencies use various acronyms to name their teams. For example, the Los Angeles Police Department's unit is actually called SWAT, while the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department's unit is called SEB (Special Enforcement Bureau.)





SWAT teams use various tactical building entry / room clearing techniques. These tactics are often very similar to techniques used by military forces, but are often modified for the law enforcement mission. Each team will have their own “style” of clearing rooms.





The versatile, time tested 12 gauge shotgun platform is still widely used by SWAT teams. Here a SWAT officer fires a Bennelli M3 12-gauge semi-automatic shotgun.



# GEAR



Whatever the name, all SWAT teams use a variety of firearms, less than lethal weapons, armor systems, and gear to accomplish these missions. Pictured here is the typical load out carried by an individual SWAT operator:

## GEAR DESCRIPTION:

### Protective Gear:

- Safariland TAC 6 Level IIIA tactical vest with front and back SAPI plates
- MACH Level IIIA helmet, with USGI helmet band with operator's name and blood type
- Oakley fan Goggles and Blackhawk Nomex balaclava.
- Oakley Protective gloves and Alta knee pads.
- MSA Millennium gas mask with CBRN filter

### Communications:

- TCI Solider System headset with noise canceling for weapons fire / explosives, but with amplification for ambient sound, and built in radio communications.

### Weapons:

- Primary Weapon: Colt M16 Commando 5.56mm rifle with 11.5 inch barrel, select fire. This rifle is outfitted with an Eotech 553 holographic sight and Surefire M900 lighting system.

-Secondary Weapon: Glock 21 with Surfice X200 LED light attachment.

### Ammunition:

- Rifle: Winchester 5.56mm Standard NATO SS109 / M855 ball
- Pistol: Winchester .45 Ranger 230 grain hollow point.

### Less Lethal:

- DEF-TEC 25 Light Sound Diversionary Device (commonly called flashbangs).
- X26 TASER (not pictured)

### Gear:

- Blackhawk Thigh rig which holds extra .223 mags and flashbangs.
- Maxpedition PolyPoly dump pouch (attached to back of vest)
- Safariland 6004 pistol holster.

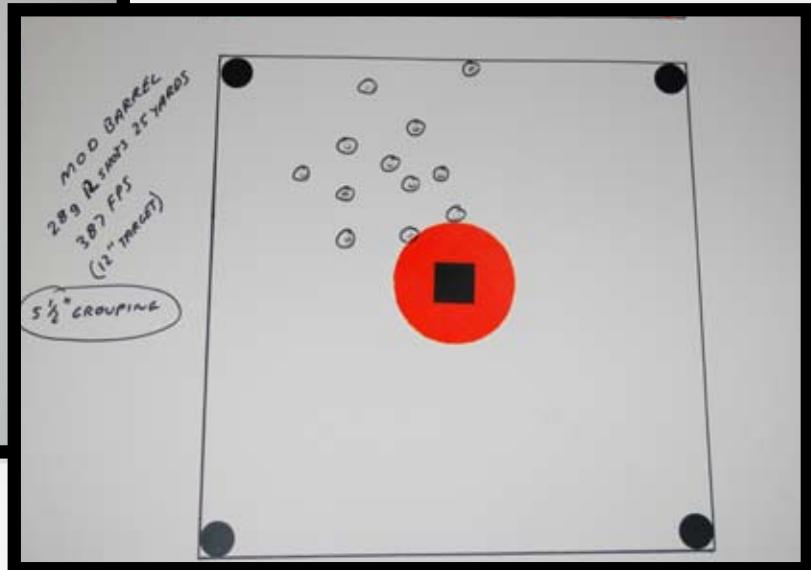
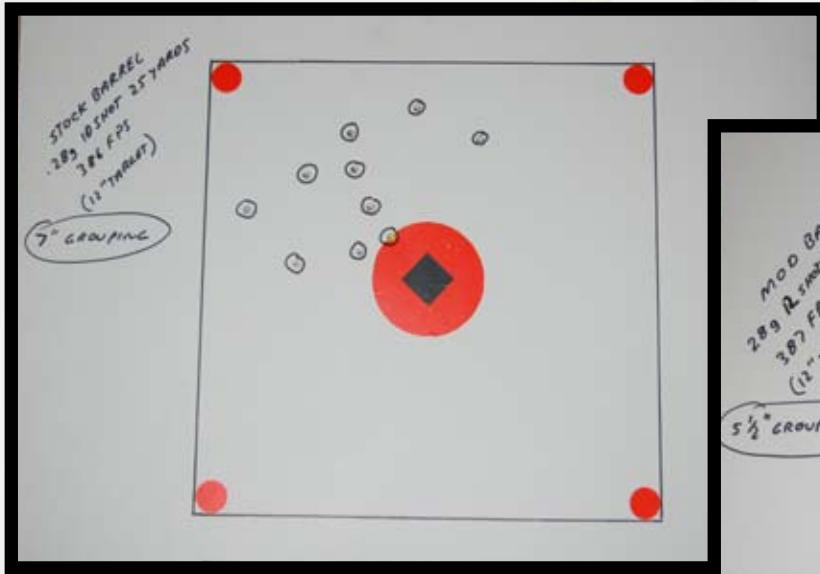
### Uniform:

- OD green UnderArmor T-shirt
- 5.11 TDUs
- Oakley SI Assault Boots



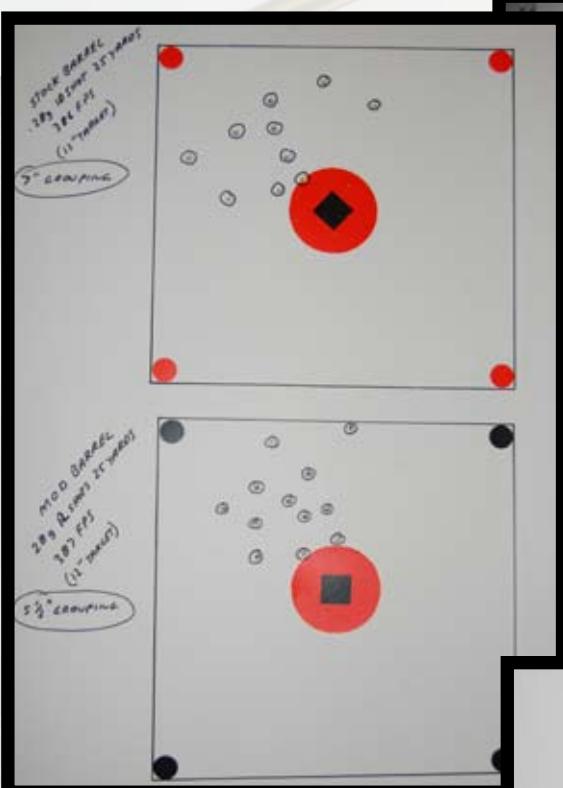


Many SWAT teams are using the M16 family of rifles, including this M16 Commando, a shortened version of the military M4 carbine. Many police agencies have found that the M16's .223 cartridge is very well suited for law enforcement applications.



# Barrel Harmonics:

The simple technique to help your stock-barreled airsoft gun perform at its best



Article & Photos  
by John Mirarchi

The other day I was at a local airsoft event where I overheard two players discussing their new airsoft guns. One of the players was upset because his new gun was not as accurate as his friend's, even though they were from the same manufacturer, were shooting the same BBs, and had similar FPS ratings.

I've heard this same comment many times throughout the years. The vast majority of players chalk it up to the need for an upgraded barrel. Let's take a moment, step back, and ask why accuracy rates differ between airsoft guns from the same manufacturer. Furthermore, why do some manufacturers have better accuracy rates than others?

First, one must understand that airsoft and accuracy are not two words that go hand in hand, just like musket and accuracy do not. An airsoft gun has more in common with the musket of old than it does with a modern rifle; don't let its looks fool you. Like the musket, airsoft guns are smooth bore, which means they have no rifling to impart a spin to the projectile. Like a musket ball, airsoft BBs fly an erratic path through the air. Musket balls were made heavier and larger in size in an effort to gain accuracy and range. Likewise, there has been an increase in BB weights and sizes to gain accuracy and range.

Therefore, knowing the airsoft gun has the basics in common with the musket, how do we make it perform more like a modern rifle? And how do we do this without spending handfuls of money on fancy barrels with names like Crazy Bull, God of Fire, or Deep Burning? There are two simple things we must consider. First, we must consider what's known in the real world of

firearms as barrel harmonics or barrel vibration. The second consideration is projectile-to-barrel fit, which we will further discuss in the next issue of Tactical Airsoft MilSim Magazine.

What is barrel harmonics/vibration? In the simplest of terms, harmonics/vibration is a very slight upward, downward, and side-to-side movement of the barrel occurring when a gun is fired (not to be confused with recoil, which is different). It can cause projectiles to leave the barrel with an inconsistent flight path from shot-to-shot. This is why we see free floating and heavy barrels on sniper weapons and many other modern firearms. The addition of the free floating or heavy barrel reduces the harmonics which in turn enables projectiles to be far more consistent in their flight path from shot-to-shot.

Airsoft guns, by their nature, have horrid barrel harmonics. This is caused by many factors, not least of which is very poor outer-to-inner barrel fit on most models. The following is an easy, cost-effective way to reduce harmonics caused by the movement between the outer and inner barrel due to poor fit.

The test gun I'm using is a G&P M4 with a one piece outer barrel and stock inner barrel. The gun has been in service for two years as a loaner and has a good track record for reliability.

I started off by shooting a control target with no modifications to the gun. The target was set at 25 yards and I shot from a bench rest using TSD .28g BBs at an average fps of 386. As you can see in photo #1, the gun shot a decent grouping as I expected from a stock barrel. But can it do better with the stock barrel?

I removed the upper receiver and disassembled the outer and inner barrels. Next, I placed the two barrels about 90% back together and measured the movement side-to-side and up-and-down. The movement measured approximately 1/16 of an inch in all directions. Now to make the two barrels fit tighter and remove the play between them, I applied a strip of non-conducting tape the entire length of the inner barrel. It is important to apply it to the entire length of the inner barrel as shown in red. Once this was done, I placed the inner barrel back into the outer barrel in the same position as before and measured the difference. The movement was now less than 1/32 of an inch in all directions, which means the barrels are now almost 50% tighter than before.

Then I reassembled the gun, making sure to torque the barrel nut to a minimum of 40 lbs. The gun was then test fired as before from a bench rest at 25 yards, using ammunition from the same batch of .28g TSD BBs. The fps was also rechecked and showed an average fps of 387. There has been a marked improvement in the shot groupings.

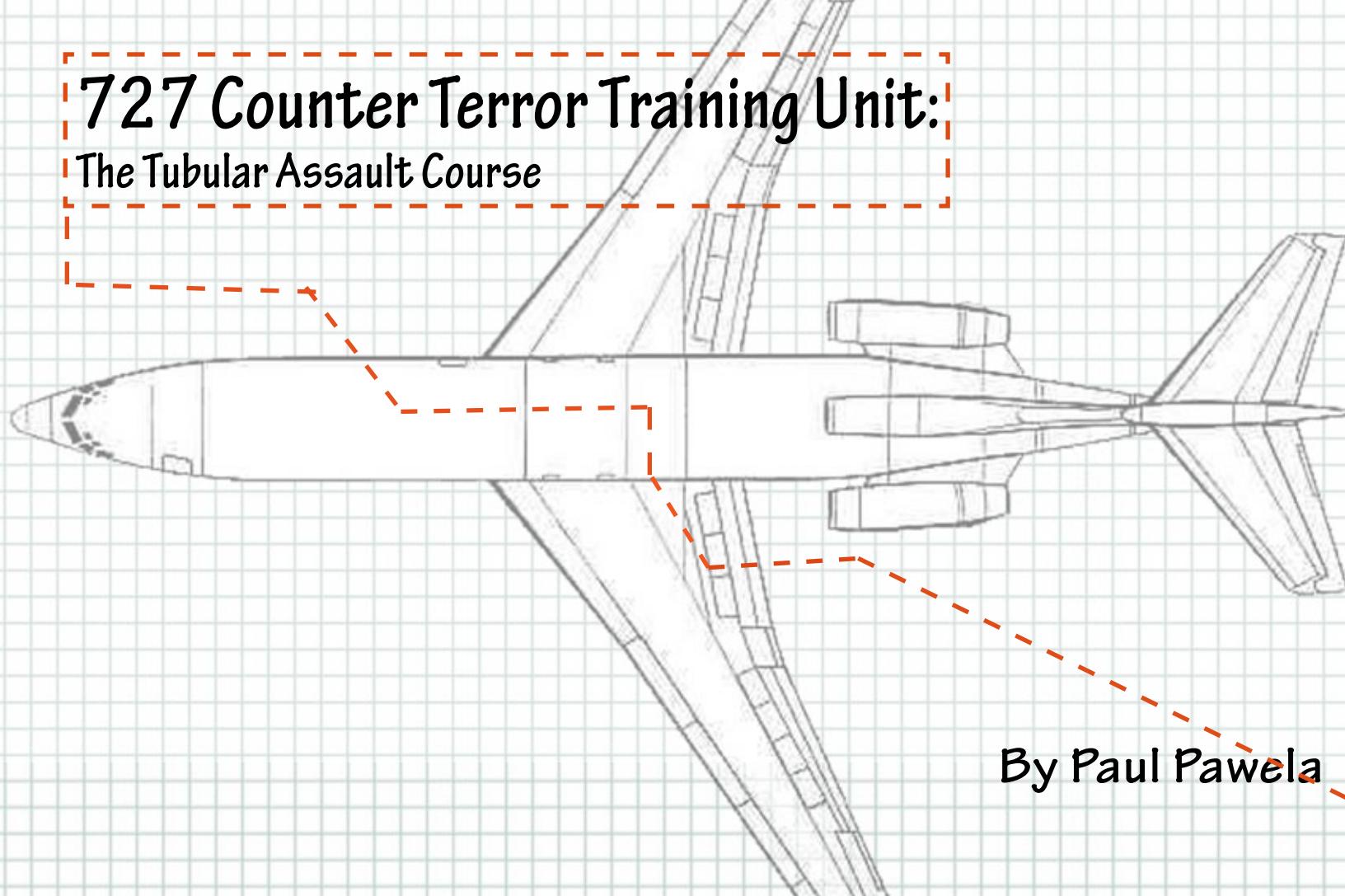
By using a simple technique on a stock inner barrel, I was able to save money and improve the grouping of the test gun. Does this mean it will work on every gun? No, but if done correctly, it will help many airsoft guns with stock inner barrels perform at their best.

*\*Note: The author recommends the use of .28g BBs in airsoft guns with an fps of around 400 when chronographed with a baseline .20g BB to see the best results from this technique. The test gun used in this article has an average fps of 410 with .20g BBs.*

# 727 Counter Terror Training Unit:

The Tubular Assault Course

By Paul Pawela





Our congressional representatives and senators, who no longer want to support the war on terrorism, have publicly announced that there is no way the United States can win this current war.

Fortunately, the brave men and women in the Armed Forces, as well as our elite law enforcement officers, do not share the same opinions as our elected officials. Those brave warriors fight our enemies every day.

Our dedicated warriors don't know the words can't, surrender, quit or retreat. They know the threat is real and what is at stake. That is why they are prepared, mentally and physically, to win at all costs.

Apparently, our politicians have completely forgotten what happened on September 11, 2001—when 19 terrorists affiliated with Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda declared a fatwa on the United States. They have forgotten United Airlines Flight 175 and Ameri-

can Airlines Flight 11—the planes that crashed into the World Trade Center.

What about American Flight 77 that crashed into the Pentagon? What of Flight 93, whose heroic passengers tried to retake the aircraft from the terrorists? That flight crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, instead of Washington D.C. or New York. Those brave civilians saved countless lives while they sacrificed their own.

2,973 Americans lost their lives that day. The brave men and women who heroically serve in the military and law enforcement have not forgotten. We have not had an attack on our soil since that day. Many terrorist plots have been thwarted, thanks to the dedicated professionals who keep us safe.

One group of law enforcement officers has vowed to do everything possible to prevent other American aircraft from being hijacked. The 727-

Counter Terror Training Unit at Columbus State Community College began in June 2006, with the arrival of a Boeing 727-100, which was donated to the college by FedEx, through the support of the College Development Foundation.

The unit's founders had done initial planning for the group over the previous two years. Professor Jeffrey Gruber (Columbus State Community College Aviation Maintenance Program), Professor Scot Wagner (Police Academy Commander at Columbus State Community College in the Justice and Safety Department), Development Foundation Director Matt Kelly, Columbus Police Department SWAT Team Sergeant John Groom and Columbus Police Department Officer Tim Halbakken were among those who created the training unit.

After the plane's arrival, a training team was recruited. Sponsors and supporting agencies were contacted. The Ohio Highway Patrol was the



first law enforcement agency to sign on with an official agreement. They provide instructors and equipment to conduct the Advanced Tubular Assault Class.

Law enforcement officials in Columbus, Ohio have aided the unit. The police SWAT team commander provides them with equipment, logistics, and additional support where needed. The Fire Department's bomb squad lends their expertise in explosives. The Buckeye Sheriff's Association provides marketing and support throughout Ohio—and beyond.

Is such a unit necessary—or even legal? The jurisdiction to retake an American aircraft from a hijacker is the responsibility of the FBI and their HRT (Hostage Rescue Team) unit.

Even the FBI cannot be in several places at the same time. This is especially true when dealing with multiple hijackings—as was the case on 9/11.

Law enforcement received heavy criticism after the shooting at Columbine. Officers on the scene waited for SWAT to arrive, instead of becoming active shooters. The same logic

applies if a plane is hijacked and an HRT team cannot get there on time.

## Philosophy

Richard Marcinko, founder of the Navy's elite counter terrorist units SEAL Team 6 and Red Cell, once said that any project requires five logical stages in order to succeed. These stages are planning, training, operations, maintenance and, in his words, “building on what you achieved.”

Scott Wagner obviously heeded Marcinko's words. He and his staff put together a flawless first course. Over 20 seasoned law enforcement officers from around the country came to the first 727 Counter Terror Training Unit Advanced Tubular Assault Course. This course comprised taking back aircraft, busses, and trains.

## History

The students of the 727 CTTU course received an informative briefing on the history of hijackings and aircraft assault by an anonymous Federal agent with a personal history of hijack prevention. The mission to take back any hijacked vehicle is deadly serious. Like any other such mission, it can fail or succeed.

Everyone in that first class learned of Egypt's Force 777 disaster of November 1985. The unit tried to do an explosive entry. Almost 20 hostages died in the blast. The assault team then threw in smoke grenades. This obscured their natural vision and created pandemonium. Force 777 snipers killed additional hostages who were attempting to flee from the aircraft. Fifty-seven hostages were killed that day. This mission has become a textbook case of what not to do.

In contrast, in December, 1994, four Islamic terrorists hijacked an Air France. The highly trained French counter terrorist unit, GIGN, received authorization to assault the aircraft.

GIGN's assault force consisted of 40 men. Fifteen members stormed the aircraft by using a mobile stairway positioned by the right front door of the plane. GIGN snipers spotted all terrorists in the cockpit. An attempt was made to throw a flash bang through the window. It bounced off an exploded in the runway.

The terrorists then threw a grenade at the GIGN team. The assault force tried to make entry. The mobile stairway separated from the breacher—and the rest of the assault team—after it



was pushed back. The GIGN operators successfully entered the aircraft. After a gun, the four terrorists were killed. Thirteen passengers, three crewmembers, and nine GIGN operators were injured.

## Weapons systems:

Other classes held that day included command and negotiation methodologies, sniper considerations, Islamic culture, bus assault overview, passenger train overview, defensive tactics and entry and assault practice of large and small aircraft.

Other classes examined the equipment used by the assaulters. First up was an M-16 clinic class. The M-4 has clearly taken over the market for operators performing CQB missions from the MP 5. The M-4's add on accessories make the weapon bulky and unwieldy.

M-16 sought to correct those issues. All M-16 Viper upper receivers have a Lother-Walter Premium Match stainless barrel. The M-16 Viper has an eight-inch premium bull barrel which offers 43% more mass than off the shelf 7.5 pistol barrels. They also have an increased bore life and can sustain full auto fire.

The M-16 clinic also makes uppers that are 10.35 inches in length, and accurate to 400 yards. Their 14.65 barrel is accurate to 500 yards.

Since there is no documented law enforcement rifle shot longer than 185 yards, the M-16 Vipers are a boon to anti-terrorist units. They are in heavy use by elite federal law enforcement and military special operations units in fighting the war on terror.

The M-16 Viper successfully shoots 55 to 77 grain FMG, Ball, Soft Point, TAP, Hollow Point and Frangible ammo. I fired one of these weapons,



and was surprised as its almost total lack of recoil. The Viper has no muzzle flip. This is important when shooting in a tube.

The M-4 is the weapon of choice for "long cover" in a CQB situation—especially those aircraft, trains or buses. Naturally, M-4s were also studied in the class. A variety of M-4s included models from Colt, Bushmasters and DPMS. All performed flawlessly, with no recorded malfunctions on the range.

M-4 accessories demonstrated in class ranged from optics by EO Techs and Aim Points to Surefire and Pentagon mount light systems. All are valuable and useful accessories for the M-4.

The sniper's role is critical in a hostage rescue mission. The sniper must gather information and relay it to the command post. He provides overwatch, initiates the assault and provides cover after the assault takes place.

The sniper rifle is one of the most important tools in the hostage rescue arsenal. 727 CTTU spared no expense to have some of the best sniper

rifles in the world available for their students to test fire.

These LOSOK rifles are custom-built by Mark Lammer. LOSOK offers top-quality Mauser-based custom rifles at very affordable prices. Mark guarantees accuracy to shoot one inch groups out to 100 yards. Lammer lives by the motto "one shot, one kill"—hence his company name of LOSOK.

Also represented were sniper rifles manufactured by G.A. Precision. They have been building rifles around the Remington 700 BDL for years. G.A. Precision barrels are among the finest custom-made models in the business, which includes Mike Rock, Schneider and Broughton. G.A.'s bolt guns are designed for  $\frac{1}{2}$  MOA accuracy.

Accuracy International's rifles were onsite to test fire. Many law enforcement officers consider their products the Rolls Royce of sniper rifles. They are billed as the world's most effective sniper rifles. They incorporate performance features used in Olympic and International target shooting, but honed to a military platform for operational work.

## Equipment

Most operators present had either Streamlight or Surefire flashlights mounted to the rail of their pistols. Some of the operators had Crimson Trace Lasers on their guns. One of the top shooters in the class had the XS sight system mounted to his Glock.

As an old salt who has lived and died by the Wilson 1911, I was thrilled to see a 1911 in the hands of one of the CTTU instructors.

The tactical gear was plentiful. Point Blank, Eagle, Tag, BlackHawk and 5.11 were well represented.

### Use of MilSims:

Having top-quality equipment is great. If operators do not train enough with this equipment, the result can be disastrous. In order to succeed, the rescue assault must use realistic scenarios. 727 CTTU had the bases covered with plane, train and bus scenarios.

Force-on-force is also important. Although many consider the use of real ammunition a must in force-on-force, that school of thought is now challenged.

What do elite CT Units like The British SAS, The US Navy SEAL Team Six and the FBI HRT have in common? Each are highly trained CT teams. Yet they have all had causalities in live fire training exercises as well.

The National Tactical Officers Association, the governing body for national, state and local SRT and SWAT teams, has documented over 30 cases of tactical officers being shot and killed using real guns with real ammo in tactical training.

In his article, "Why Are We Killing Ourselves: A look at accidental shootings of police officers by police officers," police officer Stuart A. Mey-



The standard round for counter sniper work is generally .308 caliber. Many different types of ammo were there to test. Students had a chance to fire their favorite rifle at panes of aircraft window glass provided by 727 CTTU.

To my surprise, all .308 rounds penetrated the aircraft glass. Due to the glass' thickness, I thought we might experience some bullet deflection, a la Good Guys incident.

However, a shooter needs a "plan B" for longer shots through heavier materials. The finest weapon for this task is the .50 caliber Barrett Model M82A1.

Its maker, Ronnie Barrett, donated this .50 caliber model to the class. It was the gun everyone wanted to shoot—myself included. No one in the class passed up this rare opportunity.

Optics for the sniper guns varied from Leupold, Schmidt and Bender to US Optics.

The real down-and-dirty work of CQB belongs to the handgun. It can make or break a successful mission. The class had a variety of handguns: SIG 220 in .45 caliber, Berettas, and one CZ 75. Most of the class used Glocks in various calibers. The Glock's standard trigger pull made it a strong favorite for these shooters.

ers states:

"SWAT officers and range personal are even more prone to accidental discharges because of the frequency that results from their weapons handling, training and operational requirements."

The 727 CTTU consists of tactical team members and trainers. Safety comes first to them. All members are aware of the benefits of using MilSims gear. A variety of MilSims gear (Air-Soft Arms, AirSoft Smith and System A Engineering) was featured at the class.

The force-on-force training was intense, realistic and—most importantly—safe. Mistakes in simulated training need to be painful but not le-

thal. The use of MilSims helps keep accidents from becoming fatal.

### Summary:

The training course of the 727 Counter Terror Training Unit is one of the best classes I have attended. Is there truly a need for this type of training?

Today, as I finished this article, the Associated Press reported that Islamic extremists with al-Qaida ideology were thwarted and arrested in Saudi Arabia.

Never forget 9/11. The military and law enforcement will not. They proudly stand at the ready to protect and defend you and your families.

**For more information, visit these websites:**

[www.cscc.edu/cttu](http://www.cscc.edu/cttu)

[www.m16clinic.com](http://www.m16clinic.com)

[www.gaprecision](http://www.gaprecision)

[www.lo sokcutoarms.com](http://www.lo sokcutoarms.com)

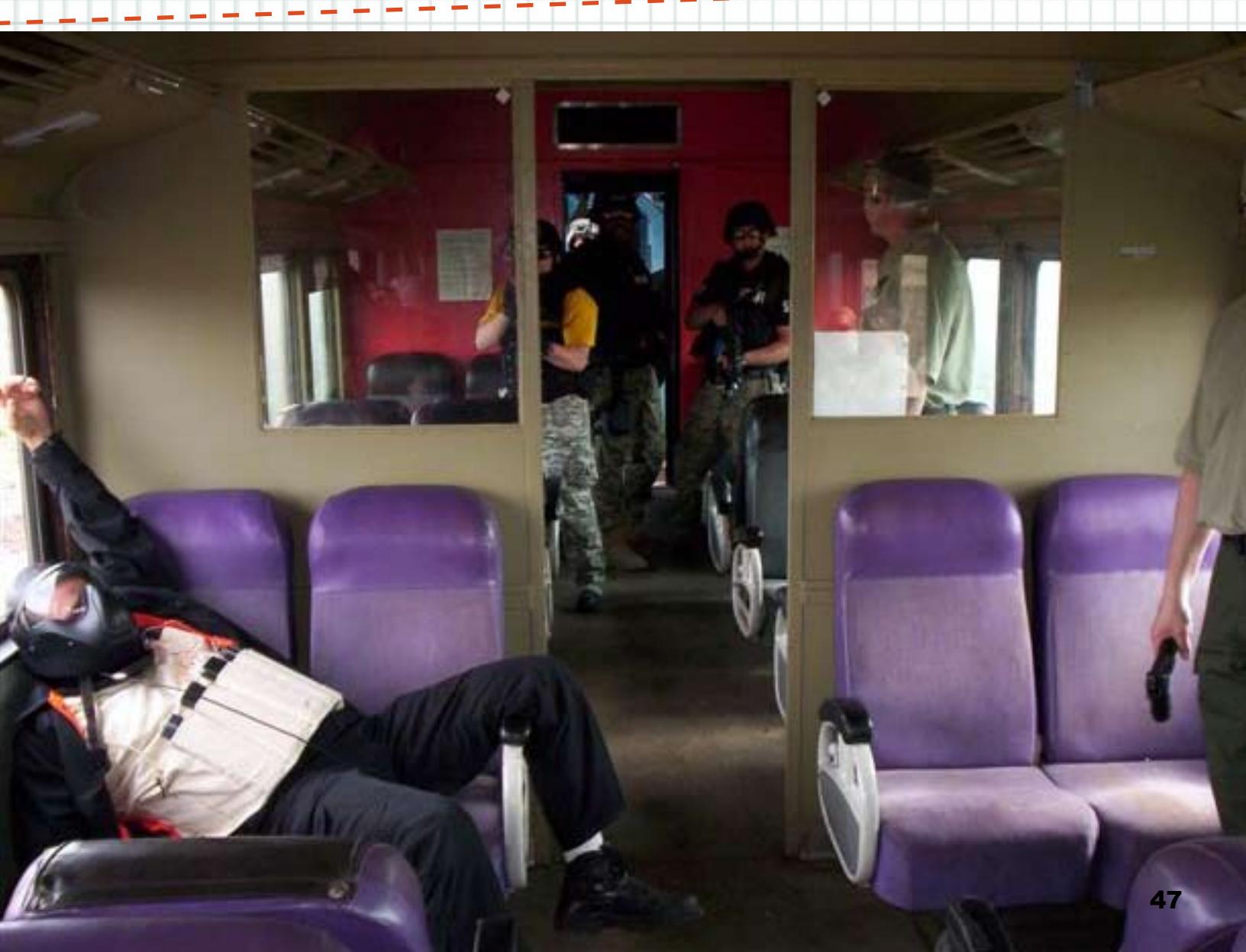
[www.accuracyinternational.com](http://www.accuracyinternational.com)

[www.barretttrifles.com](http://www.barretttrifles.com)

[www.glock.com](http://www.glock.com)

[www.blackhawk.com](http://www.blackhawk.com)

[www.511tactical.com](http://www.511tactical.com)





# GHK's AKS-74UN

BY GARY BOUSCH

The gun comes in a plain brown cardboard box, with a GHK logo sticker on the lid. Inside, a folded cardboard cutout "tray" houses the gun, speed loader, magazine, and user manual.

Our packing insert arrived ripped. Thus, the AK was loose in the box. While I saw no major damage to the gun, it certainly should have been better supported for transport. (To be fair, I have seen other packaging styles for this exact same GHK model, so the manufacturer might already have addressed this issue.)

The user manual included covers the basic operation of the weapon, and is full of helpful visual material.

## ACCESSORIES:

This is a bare-bones gas gun. It has no real accessories to mention, other than the magazine loader.

## APPEARANCE:

This is GHK Airsoft's first replica. I was pleased with the overall first impression of the AKS-74UN. Its full-metal body is based on the tried and tested Boyi/Kalash AKS74S body. This

allows it to be fully compatible with similar AEG AK internals, if the user so chooses. These future replacement/upgrade parts include the hop-up unit, barrel, wood furniture, etc.

Because it has no motor, it uses a piston grip interchangeable with that of the real firearm version. I believe it was a wise choice to use a preexisting shell, as there was no point to "reinvent the wheel" with this release. The model offers many possibilities to customize its look, due to the many compatible variations already on the market.

This gun weighs slightly over six pounds. It has a nice, solid feel to its construction. The side-folding stock locks into both open and closed positions firmly, just like its AEG counterpart. The real wood furniture on our test gun was smooth and blemish-free.

The metal receiver has a consistent deep black finish like other Boyi AKs I've encountered. The magazine holds 50 rounds. Though housed in a plastic shell, it's very heavy. It feels much like a real AK magazine fully loaded with 5.45 x 39 ammunition. Carrying this AKS-74UN and extra magazines in military simulation will definitely

feel realistic enough for even the most hardcore enthusiasts.

## FEATURES:

The AKS-74UN uses the newly developed internal RA-Tech blowback system. This is, basically, a drop-in kit for the Boyi/Kalash series of AK airsoft guns. The bolt assembly, guide rod, and spring are all made of sturdy metal. They have a nice, fluid movement. While this replica doesn't recoil as far backwards as the real thing, its action is crisp and responsive—when it decides to work.

## INTERNAL:

Remember those problems that I mentioned in the first part of this review? This is the part where they return to tarnish the overall impression of what could have been an outstanding gas replica, but instead turns out to be a bit of a hassle for the price. Please understand that I can only review the products sent to us as-is, with little to no knowledge of other reviews at the time of publication. As with any review from any source, my scope as a reviewer is limited to the one product at hand, and might not reflect upon the product line as a whole. With that being said, let's get on to the bashing.

When this gun did shoot, it seemed to perform well, with a loud muzzle report and satisfying recoil action. This good impression proved short-lived.

Soon after I loaded the magazine and switched the selector lever







from "safety" to "full auto," a major performance issue reared its ugly head. The selector lever was so loose that it refused to stay in position. Thus, I could not fire the AK. While it wasn't difficult to tighten the switch, it gave me a bad impression. With less than 10 rounds fired thus far, the AKS-74UN needed a significant repair.

I emptied the rest of the magazine on semi-auto, and then chronographed the results, which appear below. I now felt more confident with the design. I refilled the magazine with more .20g bbs and topped off the gas, and prepared to unleash a full-auto burst into the target.

#### CLACK-CLACK-CLACK-CLACK-CLACK-STOP.

I racked the bolt... NOTHING.

The problem seemed to be internal. I removed the receiver cover, recoil spring, rubber buffer, and, finally, the bolt carrier assembly. I soon found the problem.

The "o" ring on the piston had slipped off and jammed the cylinder, ceasing the ability to fire. After I seat-

ed the ring properly, I finished out the magazine, but the solution was short-lived. The same problem occurred very quickly after the second magazine.

I fixed the issue again, and fired four more magazines without incident. The gun's "o" ring appears to be an extremely fallible part. It is attached flimsily.

I removed the "o" ring and it fired without issue. It appears that the "o" ring provides a cushion between the hop-up and the bolt, but it does not appear to be an effective method.

#### OVERALL IMPRESSION:

GHK Airsoft is a newcomer to manufacturing. I think they have a very cool product. Based on this sample, I don't see them as quite-ready-for-prime-time.

I feel the price is a bit steep. Had I purchased this new, I would have been severely disappointed with its overall performance. I sincerely hope this piece was a lemon, and that others fare better.

The shots I did fire had the most impressive recoil and "shake" of any gas long gun I've shot so far!

It's truly a fun gun to shoot. Its design is very promising. With a little polish, and a greater attention to detail, this model could be exceptional.

This rifle was provided by our friends at Spartan Imports. Visit their website at [www.spartanimports.com](http://www.spartanimports.com) and find a retailer near you.

#### STATS:

Gas Blowback Semi/Full Auto/Safe Firing modes Length (Open): 735mm Length (Closed): 498mm Full Metal Body Real Wood Furniture Metal Bolt Carrier Gas Magazine (50 Rounds) Weight 3kg Power: 350fps (gas dependent) Adjustable Hop Up Realistic Field Stripping

#### FPS READINGS:

- 1 .20 - 385
- 2 .20 - 368
- 3 .20 - 376
- 4 .20 - 389
- 5 .20 - 385
- 6 .20 - 385
- 7 .20 - 389
- 8 .20 - 381

AVERAGE FPS  
= 385.25

RATE OF FIRE (Rounds Per Second)  
= 14.3

Average Price:  
\$320.00



# Bin Laden:



## Still the Prize

By Dalton Fury

*Dalton Fury, a pseudonym, retired from the US Army after twenty years of service. Fifteen of those years were spent with some of the finest Special Operations Forces in existence. He is the author of the New York Times bestseller KILL BIN LADEN: A Delta Force Commander's Account of the Hunt for the World's Most Wanted Man (St. Martin's Press, 2008)*

**N**early a year has passed since gray-headed George W. Bush boarded a Marine helicopter for his final departure from the White House lawn. He must have felt tremendous relief. Besides the waving departure party, which included the new President, Barack Hussein Obama, and the First Lady, Bush left behind numerous unresolved issues and unfinished business. Issues so important that they practically assured a Democrat would assume the highest office in the nation.

From day one, President Obama had little choice but to spread his attention around. From the weakened economy, to inadequate health care, to the precarious success in Iraq, he came in knowing he had his hands full. One nagging issue back then that has become a severe hind end wound presently is the on-going war against al Qaeda and the volatile situation along the Afghanistan and Pakistan border.

By the time George Bush left office, America's game plan to eliminate Usama Bin Laden had become clumsy, flatfooted, and begged for strategic innovation. President Obama knew right away that he needed fresh ideas and that the situation required his focused attention. Obama's recent decision, first spoken in front of scores of West Point cadets on December 1, 2009 to send another 30,000 troops to General McChrystal's foreign legion has silenced his conservative critics somewhat. The Obama administration has certainly displayed the political agility and the backbone of a superpower.

Unfortunately, a few sentences later in the same address, Obama let our enemies know that we were fast losing the stomach for this fight. If the fact that Obama never mentioned the word victory, or that he didn't inspire the Corps of Cadets with words like kill the enemy, take the hill, or even WIN, the announcement that American troops will be leaving Afghanistan in time to vote from home in his reelection bid in 2012 was loud and clear to bin Laden and the Taliban.

This will be the second batch of troops Obama has ordered to Afghanistan in under a year as the now forgotten troops in Iraq do their best to maintain a delicate balancing act with fewer troops and resources. With the most recent decision to send 30,000 additional US troops to Afghanistan, the push to focus the war on securing the Afghan population and accelerating the increase in Afghan National Security Forces has taken center stage.

It is clear now that Obama plans to use his own playbook to manage the war. But it is debatable whether or not this will work as there is zero precedence of outsider success in Afghanistan. Just ask the British. Or ask someone in Moscow. If you've spent time in those lawless and unforgiving lands, it is no surprise why nobody is looking for cheap real estate in the area.

So far though, Obama appears to have retained Bush's playbook for military action inside the ungoverned areas of western Pakistan, where just about everyone surmises the likes of bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and ghost-like Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar remain hidden.

Within a week of Bush's historical departure, several kinetic air strikes from high-flying unarmed drones eliminated a half dozen or so Islamic extremists—and, according to the local people in the area, also killed numerous innocent civilians. Most recently, in early December 2009, a Hellfire missile launched from a Predator took care of another senior al-Qaeda operations planner. It was reportedly another one of those expendable and easy to locate—relative to bin Laden and Zawahiri - al-Qaeda #3s.

These tactics used to be dealt by Bush, but Obama has raised the bet. Along with the additional troops for Afghanistan, more Predator drones are in the deal for Pakistan. Although drone attacks continue to inflame the local population, who blame the Paki-

stani government for their weak-kneed efforts to curtail the strikes, many Muslims wonder whether or not they misunderstood Obama's campaign trail rhetoric. Regardless of Obama's January 2009 comments to CBS anchorwoman Katie Couric that capturing or killing bin Laden wasn't that important, in this case it is obvious that actions speak louder than words. General McChrystal certainly thinks so.

Just a few days after Obama left the grounds of the general's alma mater, McChrystal testified in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee and told the world, "I believe he [bin Laden] is an iconic figure at this point whose survival emboldens al-Qaeda as a franchise organization across the world." And very McChrystal-like he finished his comments with, "I don't think we can defeat him until he is captured or killed."

Considering these comments, it should be no surprise that Obama didn't tell America that we will WIN in Afghanistan. If we don't kill or capture bin Laden before we bring everyone home, the only folks using the "W" word will be al-Qaeda. We have been at this for eight years; to help solve the problem with bin Laden in the next 18 months, we need some fresh ideas.

Well before the recent population-centric Obama strategy was announced, the administration truly sought to reframe and focus the parameters of the war on al Qaeda alone. Rest assured this playbook hasn't been closed completely, just pushed a little to the darker back pages. And hopefully the new playbook focuses on bin Laden's mind as much as his body.

It is time to attack bin Laden's status as the leader of the global jihad. The US tried the obvious "dead or alive" route, and then shifted to ignoring him. Now it is time to strip him of his credibility in the Muslim world. Just ask the fighters he left behind in Tora Bora about the guy. They'll tell ya!

The US spent more time, energy, and money on digging up dirt on the Presidential candidates in 2008 and quickly putting out short psychotronic video clips than we do on targeting bin Laden's character. We need to Youtube the world with credibility spiders and integrity viruses that stick the bin Laden voodoo doll. We need to drop his head toward the bottom of the Islamic totem pole. Bin Laden and Zawahiri release video and audio tapes that are broadcast worldwide. The US should respond in kind.

Obama should communicate three innovative themes with Presidential campaign-like effort. America should saturate the Internet with pop-ups and the battlefields with leaflets bearing these themes.

#1. Bin Laden is a coward and a hypocrite—at the Battle of Tora Bora he ran away and left his fighters behind to die. He ordered the women and children to arm themselves and do the fighting for him. He consistently coaxes young Muslims, under the promise of martyrdom, to strap on explosive belts or drive vehicle bombs that kill innocent Muslims. Yet bin Laden had a chance to martyr himself at Tora Bora and he chose to run away. Bin Laden is human and has no desire to reach the afterlife sooner than anybody else. Bin Laden does not care about Islam as a whole. It bothers him no more to kill innocent Muslims than it does Westerners.

#2. Publically demote bin Laden—reset the High Value Target list and brand bin Laden as al Qaeda HVT #3. This is what happens when the proclaimed leader remains secluded while his subordinate lieutenants are forced to communicate, lead, and manage the day to day operations of al Qaeda—leadership imperatives that are targetable. Insult bin Laden by publically promoting the current #3 (whoever it is these days) to HVT #1 and place a \$50 million dollar reward on his head. Publically remove the \$25 million dollar reward on bin Laden's head. Tell the Mus-

lim world that Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the dead al Qaeda in Iraq leader, was more like the Prophet Muhammad than bin Laden could ever hope to be because he walked the walk, led from the front, and inspired fighters from the fox-hole.

#3. Force bin Laden to prove he is alive and relevant—promote the idea that the US considers him dead until he can prove otherwise. Force him to defend his reputation. Pierce the inner chamber of his conscience. Any action bin Laden takes (or any close associates take), from physically moving, to taping an audio or video tape, makes him vulnerable and potentially targetable. Publicly warn all the peace-loving Muslims inside the North West Frontier Province that the Hellfire missiles are aimed at bin Laden and his senior lieutenants and harboring them places them at risk as well.

President Obama doesn't have much time to turn things around. Already in the first year of Obama's four year term, he faces the same dilemma as Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev faced in the late 1980's. How long do we stay in Afghanistan? How do we get out? Moreover, the unfinished national expectation to eliminate bin Laden before we leave now haunts him. It comes with the job description. If Obama doesn't get it right, he faces the possibility of being the first serving US President faced with the dubious task of defining victory on two separate battlefields with neither ending in climactic and obvious victory. If things hold in Iraq, then he can thank Bush for the first one. But winning Afghanistan is now President Obama's alone. There is a reason for all the gray hair. Former President George W. Bush never said it would be easy.





# CHRONICLES OF MAD MAX

**Are you ready  
for the fight?**

**By MSG (Ret.) “Mad Max” Mullen**

This installment of “The Chronicles of the Mad Max” is dedicated to the brave men and women who make up our country’s law enforcement agencies on the federal, state, and local levels. United States law enforcement, like our military, is the best trained, professional, and equipped law enforcement agency/department in the world. At times underappreciated and underfunded; however, regardless of these shortcomings they are still without a doubt the best at what they do at keeping our cities and streets safe.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency, and The U.S. Marshals, as well as our local and state law enforcement, are facing a well-trained, sophisticated enemy threat. Today’s criminal is a lot more heavily armed,

with an array of automatic weapons and weapons systems normally found only on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq. They have been known to employ military tactics and show no fear of dying for their cause by taking the fight to our brave law enforcement officers. The threat comes in many forms: home-grown terrorists, radical Islamic Jihadists, Mexican drug cartel hit men, MI13 street thugs, gang bangers, or one of the many wacko separatist groups operating within our borders. Today’s criminal may come with a military background, terrorist training from overseas, or skills honed on the streets and in the prison system. Let’s look at a few examples of these threats facing our law enforcement.

On April 11, 1986, in Miami, Florida, a fierce gun battle was waged between eight FBI agents and two heavily

armed gunmen with military training. One of the gunmen, William Russell Matix, was former Military Police (MP) with an extensive knowledge in police procedures and protocol. His accomplice, Michael Platt, served in the Special Forces (SF) and had a background in light heavy weapons training, infantry tactics, and detailed planning. These men took the lives of two federal agents, Gerald Dove and Benjamin Grogan, and severely wounded five other agents in a shootout that would have made the gun fight at the OK Corral look like a backyard pickup game of Cowboys and Indians. In the end, the two gunmen were taken out under a hail of gun fire; however, the fact is that these men, with their combined knowledge of MP and SF training, conducted, rehearsed, route selected, used surveillance, and honed their fire and maneuver skills. With these skills,

along with superior fire power, they were able to inflict a lot of carnage.

Then we have the infamous Jose Vigoa who is chronicled in the book Storming Las Vegas by John Huddy. Vigoa was Cuban born and came to the United States in the early '80s during the Mariel boat lift. For two years, he went on a violent rampage of high profile casino and armored car robberies up and down the Las Vegas strip before his crime spree came to an end. This man was a Soviet-trained Russian Spetsnaz commando and a veteran of the Angola and the Soviet-Afghan wars. He put his prior Special Operations training to use by conducting extensive surveillance, detailed map studies, sketches, and practiced action on the OBJ through numerous dry runs.

Along our southern border a full-scale war (oops, my bad, I mean "police action;" we must be politically correct.) is taking place against the Mexican drug cartel in Texas, Arizona, and Atlanta, Georgia. The Mexican drug cartel has been known to heavily recruit Mexican Army and Mexican Army Special Forces soldiers to conduct kidnappings, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and assignations within our borders. They come with their A-game using heavy fire power like the Barrett .50 caliber sniper rifles, M4/203s, Light Anti-tank Weapons (LAWs), AK47s, and a host of other fully automatic assault rifles. A majority of these weapons are stolen from the Mexican Army armories and the pipeline of automatic AK47s from Colombia, Nicaragua, Chile, and Cuba keeps them well equipped.

*"Tactical Milsim Magazine is dedicated to bringing you the latest in cutting edge technologies in MilSim and real steel training."*

Last but not least, we have Larry Eugene Phillips, Jr. and Emil Matasareanu, who on February 28, 1997, held the nation spellbound in what became known as the "North Hollywood Shootout" that

played out live on national TV. Armed with an assortment of illegally modified automatic weapons and wearing body armor, Phillips and Matasareanu took on the LAPD and LA SWAT team in a botched robbery that ended in a hail of automatic weapons fire.

What do all these gunmen have in common? They employed automatic weapons, and in some cases, possessed some military training. In addition, they conducted detailed planning by rehearsing actions on the OBJ prior to executing their plans. Which brings me to my point: there are a number of tactical training schools and live fire weapons training centers that provide excellent training for our law enforcement agencies. I am a firm believer in training that encompasses Force-on-Force and scenario-based training. Milsim (airsoft) training is one of many training applications you can use to conduct realistic and safe Force-on Force training. Along with well-trained role players, this can add that "human factor" and real time feedback that a pop-up target cannot give you. I remember watching an old Bruce Lee movie in which one of the opponents Lee was going to fight was showing off by breaking boards. Bruce simply stated, "Boards don't hit back." By using Milsim role players, you will have the capability to engage a thinking Opposing Force (OPFOR) that will fire and maneuver on you, testing your skills and making you think on your feet.

I have participated in a number of large scale MilSim events in the past and have had the opportunity to meet and fight against some really hardcore

outstanding teams. Now let me explain, these are not your typical backyard pickup game airsoft teams. Some of these teams are made of all law enforcement, U.S. Marshalls, DEA, and SWAT team

members. When I asked some of the members why they participate in Milsim, their answer was simple: it helps them build team cohesion, it affords the opportunity to try new tactics against different levels of experienced Milsim teams, and it enables them to work and refine their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Around the Fort Bragg Area, there are teams made up of Special Operations Operators who take MilSim to the next level. I have even run across a team of Marines out of Camp Lejeune that fought with me and really kicked tail. Then you have Pro MilSim civilian teams like the Regiment, Team Strikers, Green Mountain Rangers, TSOG, Stingers, Aces and Eights, and the Hatchet Force, which are comprised of a mixture of civilian and prior service members. These teams are well-trained and will give any active duty or law enforcement a run for their money in a Force-on-Force scenario based training exercise.

Tactical Milsim Magazine is dedicated to bringing you the latest in cutting edge technologies in MilSim and real steel training. In future issues we are going to cover the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) and the Simunition FX Force-on-Force System FX marking cartridge projectile which is filled with a detergent-based, water-soluble colored marking compound. We will also review SESAMS (Special Effect Small Arms Marking System) which is currently being used by the Marine Corps. With MilSim (airsoft) you get a cost-effective training system that is within the budget of law enforcement departments and can easily adapt all the standard accessories found on real weapons such as tactical lights, aiming points, and lasers. I have also seen MilSim (airsoft) weapons with real weapon components and rail systems attached.

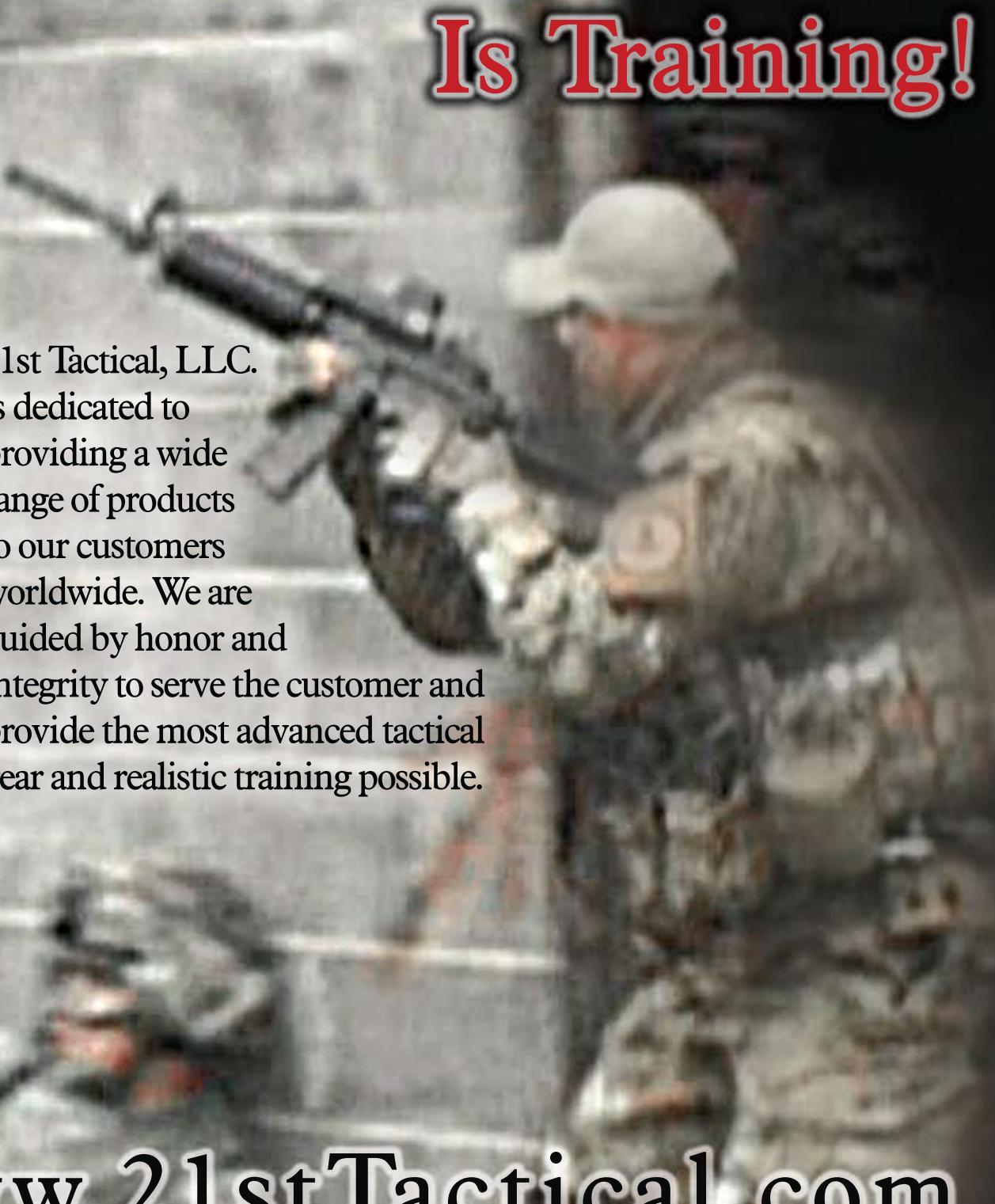
Until next time...this is the Mad Max, "Roger out!" Rangers Lead the Way!



# Right Now

## Your Enemy

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