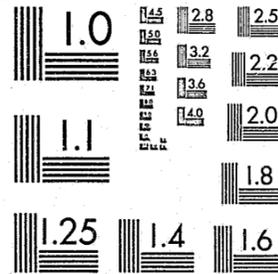


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Washington, D. C. 20531

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FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN

APRIL 1984

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FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN

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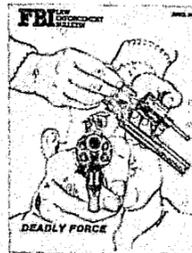
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The Cover:
The use of deadly force is one of the most important issues facing the law enforcement profession today.

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20535**

William H. Webster, Director

The Attorney General has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of the Department of Justice. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget through June 6, 1988.

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Director's Message

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

Perhaps no subject in the world of law enforcement is more charged with emotion than is the use of deadly force. No police officer authorized to carry a side arm wants to use it against another human being. The hard reality is that under some circumstances the use of deadly force is necessary and is a part of a law enforcement officer's responsibility. Drawing that difficult line successfully is a combination of clearly defined policy, training, and discipline.

This issue of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin is devoted to this single subject, deadly force. It is, ultimately, the most important issue facing the profession, for no court can correct a deadly mistake once it has been made.

The current status of the law on deadly force and how it developed from the English common law are considered in the Legal Digest. This area of law is in a state of flux, as the courts consider various issues, including the adequacy of firearms training and the supervision of their use.

An article by Professor Shenkman of the University of Florida explains how one Florida department approached this issue and the author makes several cogent points. He notes that a "department's policy concerning the use of deadly force" must be clearly understood by all and personnel must be provided with the skill to carry out the department's policy.

Professor Shenkman, like the Federal Bureau of Investigation, argues for police firearms advanced training with service ammunition. Wadcutters should be restricted to beginning firearms training. In author Shenkman's words, "We should not allow officers with marginal firearms ability to have the power of life or death."

The Firearms Training Unit at the FBI Academy has outlined the current FBI firearms training program in an article in this issue. Adoption of the Weaver stance in 1981, additional

judgmental/reactive shooting training, and adoption of the double tap (two quick shots) to increase the stopping power of the service round without the added recoil of the magnum are recent changes in FBI training. These could be, or have been, adopted by police departments with the assistance of the more than 900 FBI firearms instructors around the country.

An article from Alaska shows that a pistol competition by the State troopers with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was inspired by the RCMP to foster informal liaison at the working level of both organizations, a side benefit of this increased firearms training. A Champaign, Ill., police sergeant suggests some guidelines for the selection of countersnipers within special weapons and tactics units.

Ideas for improving firearms training, for the protection of your citizens and officers, are readily available from a myriad of competent authorities—the police administrator needs to consider the department's policies and practices and then choose, but choose he must.

I think it is regrettable that as this issue goes to press, there is still no nonlethal alternative weapon available to police officers on the street which will permit them to stop a fleeing suspect without running the risk of causing his death in less than life-threatening situations. Surely a Nation that can put a man on the moon can provide this additional weaponry to police officers. Our citizens are entitled to this alternative choice and so are we.

William H. Webster
Director
April 1, 1984

"We should not allow officers with marginal firearms ability to have the power of life or death."

training purposes but is not valid when certifying that an officer is qualified with his duty weapon. As a department, we are culpable if we do not do everything reasonably within our power to ascertain the level of proficiency that each individual officer possesses in judgment and technical proficiency in the use of deadly force.

A department should evaluate its firearms training and evaluation procedures on a regular basis. Its firearms training program must adequately prepare its people to perform at a level that is acceptable to the agency and the community it serves. A police department cannot make a better investment of its time, energy, and resources.

Conclusion

The merits of a shooting policy that allows the officer to fire his weapon only in defense of himself or another has been much debated. However, the issue of the relative ineffectiveness of the police officer in carrying out his duty has been ignored far too long. The degree of apathy that exists regarding this issue is inexcusable. The police cannot be held accountable for most of the causation factors proffered by criminologists, such as poverty, unemployment, racism, etc. Nor is it in the purview of the police to have much of an impact on other facets of a criminal justice system that does not convict often enough, does not require long enough sentences, and which so often allows obviously unrehabilitated felons back on the street. The police, however, are responsible and should be responsible for the implementation of their own policies and the carrying out of those policies. Budgetary and manpower limitations notwithstanding, it

is incumbent upon the police to be as efficient and effective as possible concerning those matters in the criminal justice system that are within their purview. Included among these elements certainly should be training and supervision of their personnel. Any policy is only as good as the individuals who are charged with the implementation and the enforcement of that policy. A police department's policy concerning the use of deadly force must be among its highest priorities. The policy should be clearly written and well understood by all involved personnel. Personnel must not only understand the policy but must also be provided with the necessary knowledge, skill, and insight to enable them to carry out that policy effectively. Nationally, police departments have been woefully lacking insofar as providing the quality and quantity of training necessary to carry out the dictates of use of deadly force policies.

For instance, the vast majority of police agencies do not require night firing as part of their training programs. Only a very small percentage of departments use electronic or similar targets to provide a program of shoot-don't-shoot multiple selection of targets and moving targets.

In addition, a majority of departments require firearms qualification only twice a year. Worse yet, only 20 percent of police departments train with service-type ammunition and 25 percent fire their qualification courses with regular service-type ammunition.¹

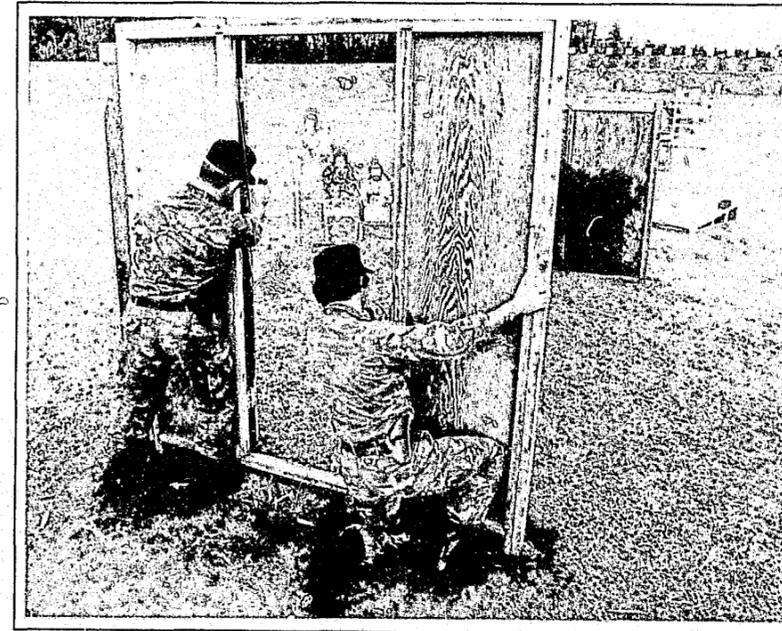
These are not issues that can be taken lightly when one considers that police officers miss their intended target between 75 and 90 percent of the time, not only failing to accomplish their basic intention of stopping the attacking felon but also placing innocent bystanders in grave jeopardy. It is simply a question of whether a community is willing to accept this level of performance on a matter of such great consequence. If there is a genuine commitment in the direction of improving the effectiveness and safety of the use of firearms by police departments, there are procedures and training processes which could greatly aid in the accomplishment of this goal. **FBI**

Footnote
Charles R. Skillen and Mason Williams, *American Police Handgun Training* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1977), pp. 108-127.

An Update on **FBI FIREARMS TRAINING**

By
WILLIAM F. VANDERPOOL

*Special Agent
Firearms Training Unit
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Quantico, Va.*



Instructors demonstrate obstacle training course.

The FBI has made many contributions to law enforcement in the firearms training field. In order to assist the entire law enforcement profession, the Firearms Training Unit (FTU) at the FBI Academy recognizes the need

to update and improve its training programs continually. This article describes some of the changes and innovations in techniques and equipment recently incorporated into the FBI firearms training program.

“. . . the Weaver [position] was found to be much more accurate in first and subsequent shots and allowed extremely fast shooting, even with full-service ammunition.”

Weaver Stance

For many years, the FBI taught such shooting positions as the 7-yard hip, natural point, and point shoulder. In 1980, instructors of the FTU began taking a closer look at the classic 7-yard hip shooting position. This position was designed for use on an adversary at close range when circumstances did not allow time for the Agent or officer to bring his gun to eye level for a proper sight picture for deliberate, accurate shots. The instructors noted the position was neither as quick nor as accurate as originally believed. For the position to be effective, the target needed to be on approximately the same level as the shooter and at a distance not exceeding 7 yards. Both Agents and police officers firing from this position tended to be very deliberate on the first shot to ensure a hit. Even so, a high rate of first and second round misses was noted, particularly if the shooter had not fired the position in some time. Many shooters simply brought the gun to eye level when accuracy was paramount.

In mid-1980, the FTU was approached by a former FBI Agent who is a leading competitive shooter in the International Practical Shooters Confederation (IPSC) matches. These matches are a form of competition involving the practical aspects of survival shooting, including realistic times and fast reloading, using full-power handguns and less formalized shooting positions than the FBI had been using. FTU staff members noticed many aspects of IPSC shooting had direct application to law enforcement

firearms training and spent considerable time learning from the former Agent IPSC techniques applicable to FBI training.

One technique demonstrated was the Weaver position, which requires the shooter to use two hands and bring the weapon to eye level. Unlike the isosceles triangle position of the old FBI point shoulder shooting, the Weaver technique requires the shooter to drop his strong foot and shoulder back, allowing the gun hand and arm to remain in a straight line. Together with a reinforced hand position and unlocked elbow to control recoil, this allows the shooter to fire a first shot at least as fast and usually faster than the old hip shooting position. More important, the Weaver was found to be much more accurate in first and subsequent shots and allowed extremely fast shooting, even with full-service ammunition.

An indepth study was conducted by FTU staff members who fired both the traditional and the radically new (at least to the FBI) Weaver positions against an electric stopwatch. The staff found they could fire faster and more accurately in almost every instance when using the Weaver position. The Weaver stance was then introduced to FBI Agents attending in-service classes at the Academy. The Agents were shown the technique, allowed some initial practice, and then required to fire using that position in place of the 7-yard hip shooting, natural point, and point shoulder positions. No appreciable change was made in barricade shooting, as the Bureau's position was virtually identical to the Weaver. A vast majority of experienced Agents introduced to the Weaver preferred it over the more traditional positions.

New Agent trainees were then instructed in the Weaver stance after they had passed qualification under the old techniques. The consensus of New Agent trainees was, "Why didn't you show this to us earlier?" The technique of dropping the strong foot back was reinforced by defensive tactics techniques taught by the Physical Training Unit. The defensive or interview stance used in the gym requires the strong foot and shoulder back, as in the Weaver.

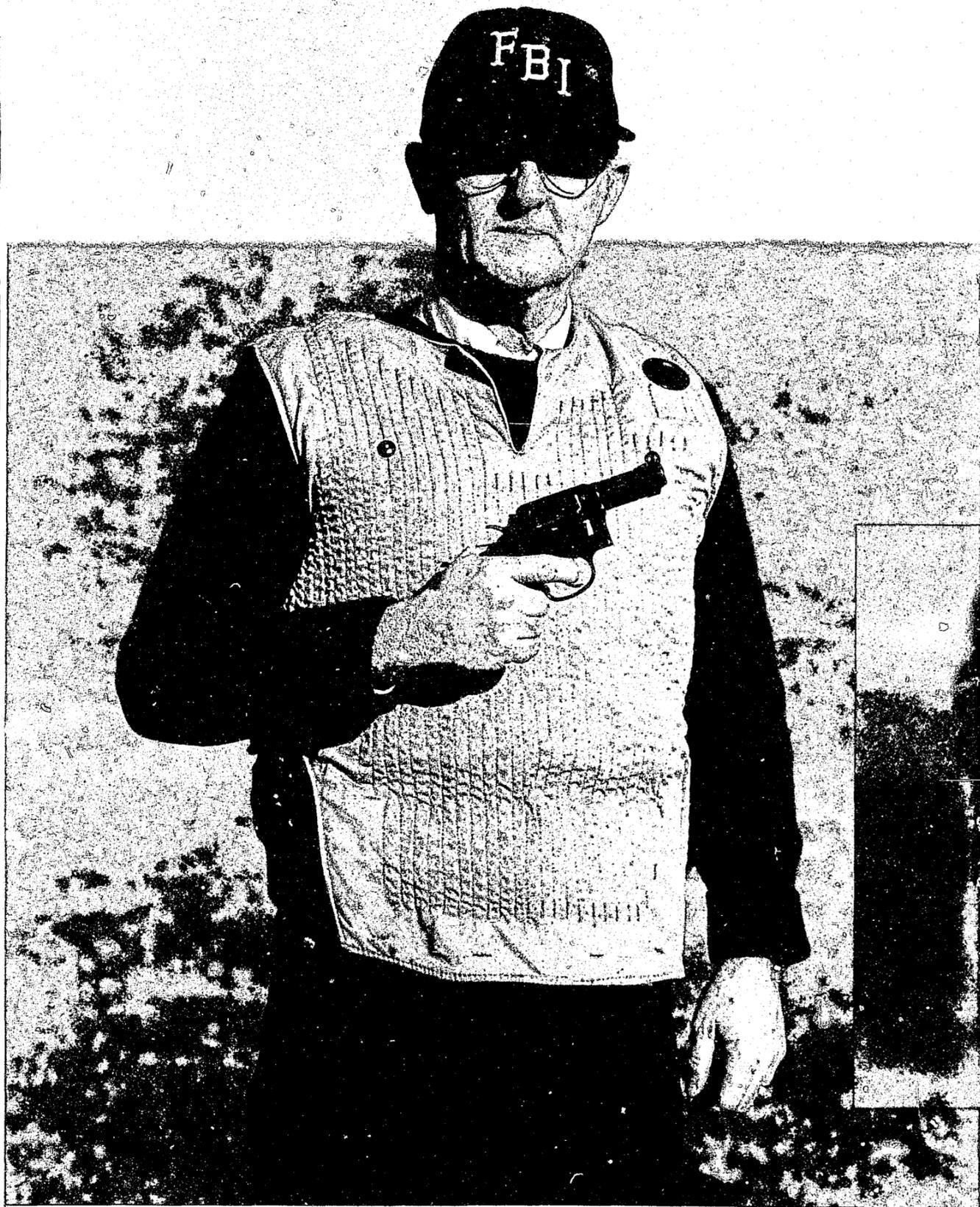
In mid-1981, the FBI officially adopted the Weaver position to replace the 7-yard hip shooting, natural point, and point shoulder positions. In order to incorporate this style throughout the Bureau, principal firearms instructors representing all 59 FBI field offices attended a 1-week retraining session at the FBI Academy. In addition, the Instructional Technology Services Unit, together with the FTU staff, produced a video tape called "Keys to Survival," which described and demonstrated the Weaver method. Copies of this tape were sent to each field office for Agent training and local police schools.

Other New Positions

The firearms staff recognized the continued need for one-handed shooting in arrest and combat situations, but realized its application was critical at much closer distances than the 7 yards previously used. FBI statistics indicate the largest single group of

The author demonstrates the Weaver position.





police officers killed in the United States is at a distance of 0-5 feet from the subject, with the vast majority of officer killings occurring at less than 7 yards distance between subject and officer.¹ Therefore, the distances at which a subject is being interviewed or arrested are critical with regard to officer safety.

The FTU staff researched various techniques, and the combat hip shooting position adopted was similar to the shooting technique used and demonstrated by a retired U.S. Border Patrol officer well known in shooting circles. This technique involves draw-

ing the weapon, and as the barrel clears the holster, pivoting the weapon and firing with the gun wrist at or very close to the hip. This allows for fast shooting and weapon retention, as the gun is out of the opponent's reach.

Since the previously mentioned statistics of shootings were so overwhelming at close ranges, a 50-round training course was developed, using the new hip shooting position at distances from 1-3 yards.

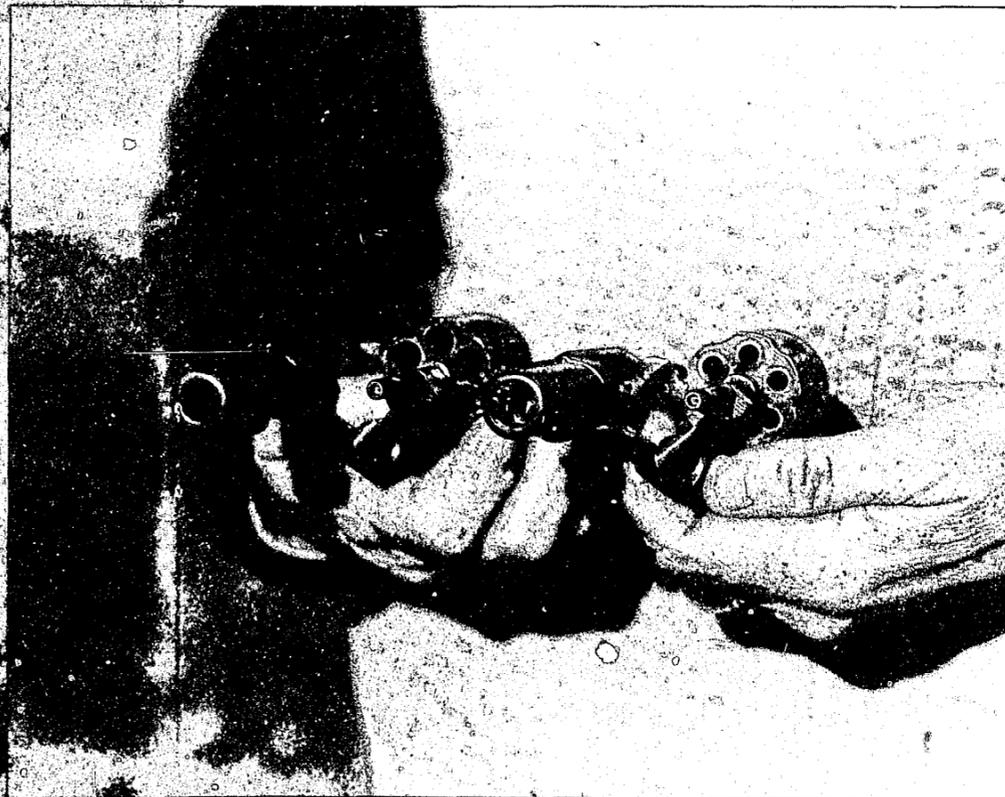
The FTU staff also took a closer look at the traditional prone position, where the shooter would lie down in a

straight line facing the target. The shooter was thus exposed to ricocheted fire from pavements and other surfaces and given little cover. In addition, lying in this position forced the shooter to raise his head at an uncomfortable angle to view the target, causing constriction in the neck area, limiting blood flow to the head, and blurring the shooter's vision. The shooter had to lower his head periodically to relax his neck and clear his vision. Therefore, the rollover prone position used by many IPSC shooters has been adopted by the FBI. In this position, the shooter rolls to his strong side with his body diagonal to the target, allowing more opportunity to take cover during firing.

Innovative Techniques, Facilities, and Equipment

The FTU recognizes several precepts in firearms training:

- 1) An officer, in the stress of a fire fight, reacts as trained on the range.
- 2) The training afforded the officer must reflect what is most likely to be encountered on the streets. To this end, a careful review of statistical data concerning gunfights is mandatory. One excellent example often analyzed is the New York City Police Department study covering 10 years and more than 6,000 firearms incidents.²
- 3) A firearms program is limited less by budget than by imagination.



Far left: Instructor with laser vest and revolver. Laser-equipped revolver is identical to issued sidearm.



A close study of shooting reports by FBI Agents and other law enforcement officers revealed weaknesses in training that needed to be corrected. Following are some methods the FTU has employed to make these corrections.

Hot Line Concept

One critical requirement in a fire fight is the need to keep track of rounds fired and then to reload automatically. And yet, in past training, all

reloading on the line was done under command. The FBI has adopted the hot line concept for many of its courses and training to correct this situation. This concept requires an initial command to load, and all subsequent loading is done by the shooter without command. When the shooter fires a given number of rounds and still has rounds remaining in his weapon, he will go to a "combat ready" position, dropping the weapon just below eye level, while covering the target for a

count of three before reholstering. When the shooter's weapon is empty, reloading must be immediate and without command. Occasional commands to "top off" are given so that the student has the opportunity to learn to reload a partially empty weapon.

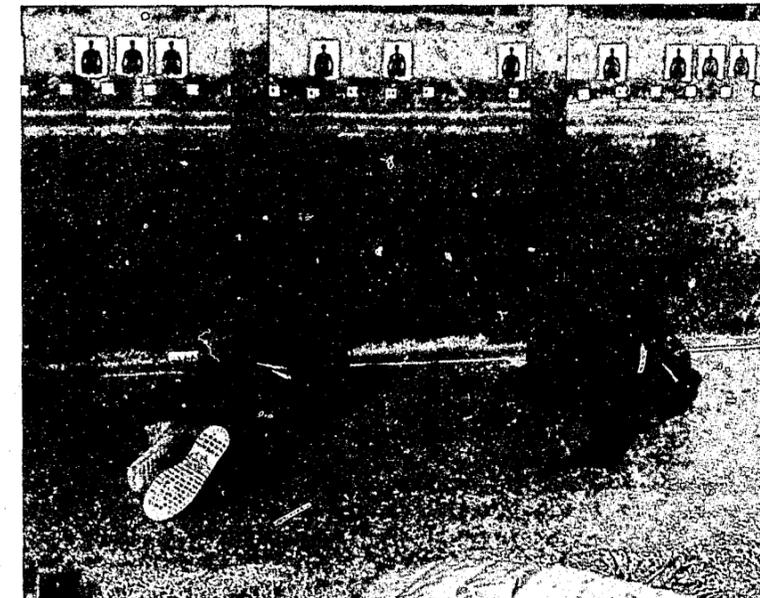
Judgmental/Reactive Shooting

Judgmental and reactive shooting are strongly emphasized in Agent training, particularly after initial qualification. The use of "good guy/bad guy" target faces, shorter shooting time limits, and reloading under stress have been increased.

During 1984, the FTU will begin implementation of a video computer-controlled judgmental shooting system. In this system, a scenario is displayed on a video screen, requiring the trainee to react both verbally and physically. Student performance is recorded on video tape for playback and evaluation. The computer printout reflects time of the trainee's reactions and compares that time with all other students who have previously faced that particular judgmental problem.

Double Tap

A law enforcement officer should be trained to shoot until the target goes down. There have been instances where an officer or Agent has fired at a subject and started to reholster before realizing the opponent was not incapacitated and was still a threat. This reflected previous range training where the shooter rushed to reholster in anticipation of the next



firing signal. The hot line concept of remaining at combat ready position while watching the target helps correct this situation. In addition, an increased use of double tap (two quick shots) has been incorporated into many of the FBI training courses. This double tap effectively increased the so-called stopping power of the service round without the added recoil, penetration, and recovery time of the magnum.

Increased Use of Service Ammunition

Most initial training is accomplished using .38 wadcutter ammunition. In order to simulate street situations more closely, once they have qualified, new Agent trainees are now shooting more rounds of service ammunition. This affords them experience with the added recoil and muzzle blast of the ammunition.

Rollover prone position allows for concealment and easier sight acquisition.

Pepper Poppers

Another technique adopted from IPSC competition is the use of metal reactive targets for some advanced courses. These include steel headplates and "pepper popper" targets so the shooter actually sees his target fall.

The pepper popper, a miniature man-shaped target, can be adjusted ballistically to the service ammunition used. This adjustment can be made to require a double tap, or simulating an opponent wearing body armor, a head shot to knock it over.



Left: Agent trainees demonstrate hip, natural point, point shoulder, and Weaver positions.

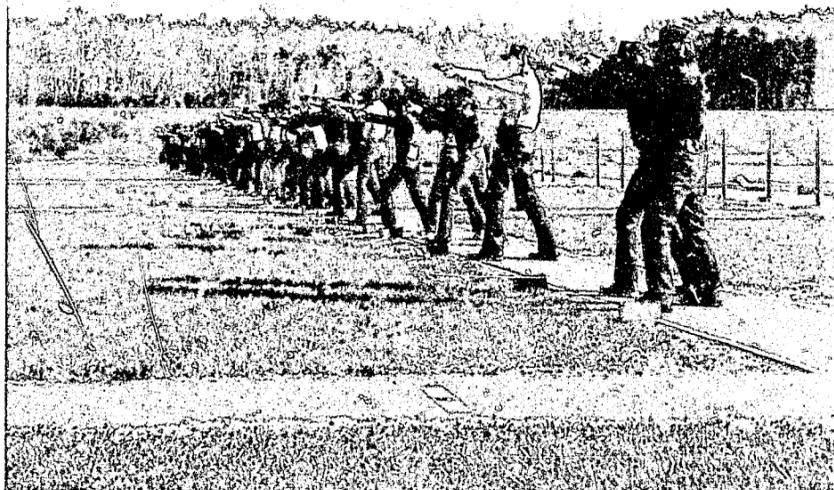
Additional safety requirements are necessary for these targets, including a minimum 10-yard standoff and use of eye protection.

Obstacle Stamina Course

Pepper poppers and headplate targets are portable and can be moved to vary shooting courses to keep training challenging. New targets have been added to the Bureau's obstacle stamina course, requiring the shooter to drop his target(s) before proceeding to the next station. This course, located on the rifle deck at the FBI Academy, combines an obstacle course with firing situations. Obstacles include doors, windows, rooftops, hurdles, and a 7-foot wall. Each two-man team of shooters is required to coordinate its firing, reloading, and movements for concealment and safety. The various obstacles also are a good test of the officer's equipment, particularly holsters and bullet pouches, as the physical activity will reveal any weaknesses in equipment.

Laser Equipment

To make advanced training as realistic as possible, the Bureau has adopted a laser-equipped revolver firing blanks. The "targets" are instructors or other Agents wearing laser-sensitive vests. The laser system provides an opportunity for training not available in conventional target systems. Scenarios can be changed readily so students are not forewarned of situations. The use of blanks provides the noise and reloading requirements necessary for realism.



Weaver position allows some latitude for personal preference.

"In order to accomplish its mission of training FBI Agents and local law enforcement officers in the firearms field . . . the FTU attempts to keep abreast of the latest equipment and techniques that might help the FBI and the law enforcement community it serves."



Hogan's Alley

Some scenarios are enacted on Hogan's Alley, a three-dimensional complex used for door entry, room clearing, and arrest techniques. Under continuing development, this city street of storefronts, rooms, and an alley will eventually be equipped with furniture, lighting, and appropriate sound effects for realism and added stress.

Other arrest problems have been moved off the range complex to more functional areas of the Academy. Support employees assigned to the garage or power plant have become accustomed to performing their duties in the midst of arrests or gunfights and cheerfully act as sources of information or unwitting bystanders in the exercises.

New Ranges

Two ranges have been added at Quantico recently to increase the training potential. The combat shooting house is constructed of tires stacked to represent the exterior and interior walls of a building. These tires are filled with sand and will absorb most service rounds, allowing live fire against popup targets. This facility is used only for advanced inservice training and by the FBI SWAT teams. In addition, the 1,000-yard unknown distance rifle range is in the final stage of completion for use by our SWAT snipers.

To support the new training methods, changes in equipment have also been made. The Bureau's hip holster has been modified by slotting the front and covering the trigger guard to allow a faster and safer draw in close combat situations.

The Bureau previously issued a dump pouch to all Agents. It was noticed that under stressful situations, the Agent would often drop the rounds on the ground during reloading, even after considerable practice with it. New Agents now receive a loading pouch holding six rounds in pairs. They are taught to load their revolver two rounds at a time, which has cut loading time by approximately 40 percent. After initial qualification, the New Agents are also issued a speed loader and holder to complement, not replace, the bullet pouch. All loading in the advanced courses is required to be from the pouch or speed loader so the Agent will instinctively go to those sources under stress.

Conclusion

In order to accomplish its mission of training FBI Agents and local law enforcement officers in the firearms field, the FTU staff continues to attend firearms-related trade shows and shooting events and visit other law enforcement firearms training facilities. While formal research is limited due to heavy training schedules, the FTU attempts to keep abreast of the latest equipment and techniques that might help the FBI and the law enforcement community it serves.

FBI

Footnotes

- ¹ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, *Law Enforcement Officers Killed*, 1981.
- ² *New York City Police Department Analysis of Police Combat Situations*, N.Y.C.P.D., 1980.

END