

:WHITEPAPER:

Law Enforcement Training

Limitations

Part 2
Realism



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SUMMARY

One of the challenges facing law enforcement training organizations today is the shortage of realistic training gear and tools available. In order to be prepared for a real-world crisis that may occur at any time, law enforcement must have as realistic of a training experience as possible. If certain elements are different, officers and agents might not be fully knowledgeable in a variety of factors, all of which might affect the outcome of the situation. Realism plays a huge role in tactical training, and is essential to any fully prepared law enforcement agency.

iCOMBAT provides a realistic and safe training solution to help law enforcement train at a lower cost and save more lives.

Problem

Law enforcement officers and agents will tell you that in order to be fully prepared for dangerous situations, one must train in ways that closely resemble actual situations. Part of being fully prepared means understanding the environment, the people and their behaviors, and most importantly, the gear and tools involved. Obtaining and training with the most realistic equipment is often expensive and out of reach for some agencies to consider. Even if costs are not an issue, law enforcement training faces an extreme shortage of realistic training options.

Current training methods include paintball, virtual reality, Simunition, and others. Each comes with a limitation in regards to realism that isn't hard to point out. With paintball, special air guns are needed and are rarely, if ever, the same as a real firearm. The weight, size, bulk, and accuracy is a far cry from an actual weapon. Paintball also requires a special area or field to play in, which hardly represents the real world in which law enforcement serves. The safety equipment involved often obstructs trainee movement and can be problematic. Goggles fog up and are uncomfortable. Plus, they rarely allow the trainee to wear his other standard gear such as a helmet or radio. Another disadvantage regarding realism lies in the paintball's flight path. Paintball's seldom fly straight, and move at a speed slow enough to allow potential dodging. If the shooter breaks paint in his gun or barrel, then his accuracy is reduced to ten feet or less.

Simunition suffers from some of the same problems as paintball when talking about realism. First and foremost, a non-realistic area to train in is needed. Agencies cannot simply train anywhere, or in areas where trouble is most likely to occur. A course built for training doesn't always represent the real world. Secondly, protective gear is needed when training with Simunition. A bulky mask along with other protection inhibits the trainee and forces them to carry themselves in an uncommon way. Simple tasks such as aiming a rifle become difficult. Simunition bullet flight is also limited to a shorter range so shooting distances beyond 75 feet become a challenge. A group of officers from a Wisconsin SWAT team shared their experiences with Simunition and state the biggest detractor when training is being forced to make different decisions than you would in a real situation. Examples include shot placement on bad guys, especially when they have hostages, and also holding their guns in un-natural ways to allow aiming with a mask. (Jan 2011) This hampers your ability to train effectively.

Virtual reality and similar video based training methods are even farther removed in regards to realism. These types of training situations offer various types of gun mechanisms that all shoot at a screen. This screen and the video scenarios offered can be customized by the manufacturer but ultimately remain the same. The trainee does not get a real world experience at all. Decision making suffers as there are no "real" consequences aside from a low score. Trainee movement

is limited as well, so the physical aspect of hostile situations disappears. The environmental aspect also disappears in regards to where the trainee is. Perhaps the greatest weakness of this type of training is the human ability to learn and predict repetitive actions over time. Although dozens of scenarios might be available, a short time training with virtual reality will give the human trainee a distinct advantage. They will know how the characters on screen move, their speeds and habits, where the most effective “kill zone” is, timing, and on and on.

Solution

As noted earlier, for a law enforcement agency to obtain the most realistic training experience possible, they must consider three key points. They must train in a realistic environment, use realistic gear, and participate in realistic situations. iCOMBAT meets and exceeds all three points.

iCOMBAT allows training in any environment. The projectile-less system leaves no mess and causes no damage to any surroundings. Law enforcement training exercises can now be carried out in schools, street corners, neighborhoods, banks, and anywhere else. No matter what type of location your law enforcement agency covers, you will be prepared.

Realistic gear is a key component in law enforcement training. The iCOMBAT irM4 replicates an actual AR15/M4 commonly used by police forces and the military. Externally, the irM4 looks 95 percent the same. All standard accessories will work on the irM4 including stocks, grips, sights, and handguards. The cast aluminum and glass-filled nylon gun feels and weighs the same as the real thing, but depends on the set up. Even the standard operation of the gun remains realistic; cocking the bolt, inserting/detaching the magazine, and selecting the fire mode is all done as normal. The irVest is built around a standard full-body MOLLE vest, found in service all over the world. Law enforcement is able to attach all standard pouches and pockets to the irVest to simulate actual work loads. Finally, the SmartMag houses ammunition and the airsource. The irM4 reads the ammo remaining in the SmartMag and subtracts from that after each shot. It's entirely possible to load a 30 round magazine into your gun, fire 15 shots, eject the magazine and pass it to your partner, and let him finish the remaining 15 shots. After the 30 rounds are spent, your irM4 will no longer shoot. The SmartMag's airsource also powers the felt recoil and noise from the irM4 for an even more realistic experience.

Because the iCOMBAT system can be used anywhere, every realistic situation imagined can be trained for. Hostages, observers, terrain, etc can all be accounted for when crafting training exercises. Environment specific actions come into play and municipalities can train for situations that occur within their jurisdiction. Officers can train for shot placement, decision making, entry, armed stand-offs, and other factors.

For more information on how iCOMBAT systems can benefit your law enforcement agency, please visit www.iCOMBAT.com or call 888-950-1221.

References

Sergeant Chris Jaekl. New Berlin, WI SWAT Team. January 2011.

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