



COMMENTS BY JOHN TATE ON ARTICLE: DOES YOUR AGENCY TRAINING LEAD DIRECTLY TO OFFICER DEATHS?

John Tate

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In the last 20 years, what aspects of LE training have I found to be continually the most deficient?

Law, Effective DefTacs, and Tactical shooting.

This one line in Veit's article hit the 10X - "Drawing your weapon should be your second priority. Moving to get your body off-line is the single most important piece of mitigating action you can take."

But, question: at least in New Mexico (NM DPS & FLETC), what do we train? Answer: What we learn at quals ... stand flat-footed, draw, fire, reholster ... because quals are the only agency sponsored shooting/training that most peace officers experience. "[O]fficers [...] are not taught the importance of moving immediately when faced with a threat."

I'm now officially retired ... I've let all but one of my DPS certs expire. I'll let Firearms die in September. Many reasons, not the least being tired of pissing into the wind. I've been a marksmanship instructor since 1977 (USN, NRA, USA, and LE since 2001). While individual students will listen, agencies will not. Their list of reasons vary from sad (no \$\$) to rude ("Who the hell are you to tell us what to do?").

What's nice is seeing Buol, Veit, the Force Science folks still holding strong.

One closing comment, in 2005 at the direction of my then New Mexico Mounted Patrol chief, Randy Erwin, I put together a LEOSA class. It was originally only classroom stuff about tort law and unarmed street survival (lessons from South America). But Randy told me to put in a reactionary, tactical shooting portion. I did; and what an eye-opener! Never have you seen such horrible, deadly, mindless, even stupid actions.

The setting was a shopping center parking lot. On hearing a shot fired, the first required act was to move to cover; but officers would not necessarily go to effective cover (e.g., behind an engine block, tires, axle, etc.). One fellow even dived under a truck where an inbound high miss would drench him in gasoline, and any low misses would both ricochet into him and generate secondary projectiles (rocks, gravel, sand).

A rare shooter would neutralize the two threats (pepper poppers placed under "bad guy" targets, mixed in with a bunch of innocent pedestrians), in two shots. Many took lots of shots; a few would empty multiple 15-rd magazines. Shooters were told to reload from cover; few did this effectively (body parts were left exposed); but some shooters even left cover with near or completely empty handguns. And the number of innocents who were hit exceeded NYPD on their worst day.

I ran that class about a dozen times. The results never changed: maybe 1-in-10 was competent, and an equal number downright unsafe. But the vast majority, 8-in-10, were just overwhelmed with the combination of new activities: go to cover; if necessary, find an effective position from which to fire (clear shot to threat without endangering innocents); engage from cover; keep shooting until the threat was down; reload from cover; clear/disarm the threat; ... now the same for successive threats. That's a lot for someone who is only trained to stand "flat footed." And we wonder why cops can shoot 84 shots and hit the suspect just once.

Stay safe,

John

End.