

Motorcops.com Training Article

Preparation

By Captain Jim Polan

Years ago long before our time there were individuals who wore armor, carried a shield and various weapons. Those men joined a team and agreed to protect the kingdom at any costs. They took an oath, prepared for battle and were willing to give the ultimate sacrifice. Those men are now gone.

But those same warriors exist today and they are the men and women of American Law Enforcement the modern day warrior. You wear armor, carry a shield or star on your uniform and train with various weapons to protect the kingdom which is now called a community. From the first day you wore the uniform and took the oath of office you knew that there were people who would want to hurt or kill you but you accepted that challenge. The only question that remains, are you truly prepared for battle?

Preparation not only exists to protect the community but yourself and most important your family. You will be replaced at work but never at home.

A simple preparation question that I use on a continual basis while instructing various courses I now ask you. When you go home at night do you draw your firearm? I usually receive approximately 10 % who acknowledge they do. For whatever the reason; family security or practice it must happen. You may work all day or even a few days and never draw your firearm and if that's true you failed to practice. During a deadly force encounter without hesitation you must break leather to survive. You may never get a second chance to draw for the first time prepare so it works the first time.

World-class athletes prepare for game day. They practice their plays and maintain a high level of physical fitness. Some say those athletes prepare for battle but there is a tremendous difference between the athlete and the modern day warrior. The athlete only loses a game the warrior may lose life.

During a "fight or flight" situation the body reacts with the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS), which can and will create many distractions and blocks your ability to function. Vision and hearing are affected, the heart begins to race, blood pressure rises and you may lose fine motor skills. Those fine motors skills are too valuable to lose and one quick example would be the failure to focus on the front sight and squeeze the trigger.

Survival performance consists of three important functions:

- 1) Sensory Perception - during a low light building search you sense and realize that a shadow has just crossed the T-intersection in front of you. SNS begins!

Motorcops.com Training Article

2) Cognitive Thought Process - now that you have sensed a potential problem you must now have the ability to reason and provide an answer for your response

3) Motor Response - you have sensed a problem, thought of a response and now it's time to react.

The problem is that if you're not prepared, SNS will win and your response may have an increase of up to four times than without stress and you could be harmed. Practice and Prepare!

A recent study on SNS revealed that training is the key to effective survival response and to be effective the activity must be challenging, realistic followed by a strong review.

HOW DO WE PREPARE?

You and I must prepare by following the "Art of Law Enforcement" the industry standard on what works and what doesn't. Read magazines that will have a direct impact on your pursuit of safety, subscribe to the various police web sites that are available and provide daily articles on training and news that occurs around the country.

Most important is that we must learn from the past to prepare for today. When a warrior is injured or gives the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty lets learn from it, don't hide it and be afraid to talk about it. Embrace it use the positive and learn from mistakes.

If the errors of the fallen warrior save lives of many more LEO's, then that very well may be the purpose of their life. Learn from it.

The errors of these LEO's can be shared with new recruits to prepare them for the real world and more important remind the veterans who are complacent about the true dangers. This year Law Enforcement in America is under attack. We must follow and learn why. As of this writing and according to the National Memorial Officer Down informational page law enforcement has lost 158 LEO's

Training is the key to preparation and that training must be dynamic and realistic conducted on a repetitive basis for muscle memory. The muscle memory is so important that your reaction is instinctive without hesitation. Remember during a SNS reaction your skill level is diminished and your reaction time may be increased four times.

The training must provide you with an experience that you won't forget using role players, in a relevant training area using some type of marking cartridges for force on force. Basic fundamental training is required. Remember being advanced is mastering the basics and there are only a few if any who have mastered the basics.

Motorcops.com Training Article

SWAT teams train on a continual basis yet each week the same basic skills are practiced with firearms and tactical movements to master the basics.

Whether it's a local, county, state or federal enforcement agency the same complaint is usually heard, "We never get any training". Years ago the traditional thought of training was that the agency was responsible to provide you with the tools and knowledge however in today's world, training belongs to you.

Has your agency ever had you draw your firearm from the holster with your weak hand? Practiced one handed strong and weak draw, one handed shooting, one handed reloads and one handed malfunction clearing.

If so, great, though how frequent? If not, have you taken it upon yourself? Either way it's your responsibility to prepare and go home every night.

If your agency is not going to provide you with the training that you need to survive, to ensure that you go home every night to your family, then you must invest in training on your own.

Most families have made personal financial investments for the future, whether it's college tuition fund, deferred compensation or an additional 401K, but what if your future comes to an abrupt stop because you didn't invest in your ability, skill and knowledge.

Most LEO's won't invest in a pistol or rifle course if individually they were financially responsible. Most LEO's won't purchase a couple boxes of ammunition and go to the range and practice if they're not on the clock.

I observe the same errors while on the range; a slow draw, terrible trigger control, poor reloads and horrific malfunction clearing. You can practice these drills at home with minimal cost by purchasing dummy rounds for your pistol. But of course the most important issue is to ensure that your firearm and magazines are empty (checked twice) and all ammunition is stored in another location. With this minor investment you can practice the majority of basic fundamental firearm skills.

PRACTICAL TRAINING VS MENTAL VISUALIZATION

If for some reason you are unable to conduct scenario based training with vehicle stops, building clearing or other related tasks you can still conduct valid training.

Mental visualization is a true training method. Once you learn the proper way of performing a task and you had the opportunity to practice, you then can continue with the rehearsal.

Motorcops.com Training Article

Training your mind to complete a specific task will reduce the surprise in the heat of battle.

Paul "Bear" Bryant once said: "The will to win compares little with the will to prepare to win"

The question remains, are you prepared?

BIO:

Jim Polan is a 27 year veteran of law enforcement and a Captain with the Broward Sheriff's Office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.