



PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND CONSULTING

Counter-Terrorism Tactics for Law Enforcement

Columbine was a seminal event in law enforcement. While there had been other mass-shootings in the country, the nature of the assault on the students and faculty at Columbine High School would force a change in the decision-making process of law enforcement officers. It was no longer appropriate to contain a suspect, call a tactical team and wait. What the shooters at Columbine (and other similar attacks) clearly demonstrated is that they would continue to kill until forced to stop.

A new wave of "Active Shooter" tactics and training were developed across the country. The tactics would stress speed by first responders. In some cases it required new equipment consisting of rifle or carbine, helmet, and ballistic vest. In most cases it required a new skill set for the "average" patrol officer. Patrol officers would likely be the first on the scene and most active shooter protocols would call for a hasty breach and assault.

Instead of waiting to have a completed and fully rehearsed assault plan, first responders would literally move to the sound of the guns in an attempt to halt or neutralize the threat as quickly as possible. Victims would be by-passed in order to halt the shooter as quickly as possible.

The recent Fort Hood shooting depicts a successful application of modern active shooter protocol. Officer Kimberly Munley and her partner responded to the incident within three minutes. Witnesses report that Officer Munley moved aggressively toward the shooter and engaged him with her pistol. The shooter turned to face her and began returning fire. During the exchange, Munley was hit in both legs and the wrist but stayed in the fight, striking her assailant twice more in the upper torso bringing him down. Without her swift interdiction, the shootings would certainly have continued for some time and the number of victims would have climbed.

As active shooter training continues to mature, more and more trainers are advocating single officer entry in order to halt the attack as quickly as possible. Advocates for this technique cite numerous past active shooter situations during which the attacker quickly surrendered or committed suicide when confronted by law enforcement. While the data used is certainly correct, I disagree with the conclusions reached. Developing tactics which rely on your assailant to quickly surrender are frighteningly incomplete. There is an inherent flaw in developing highly refined and narrowed tactics which presupposes the will to fight of your enemy.

While the criminal profile of active shooters continues to be refined, the profile of terrorist attacks continues to expand. The next evolution of terrorism took place in

Mumbai in 2008. The Jedburgh Research Initiative recently completed a comprehensive study of the incident and published a reconstruction of the attack, available for download [here](#). While the lessons learned from Mumbai are numerous and far reaching, there are obvious implications for active shooter protocol.

The Mumbai attack changed the profile of the active shooter. These determined terrorists were not afraid to confront police, even well-trained and well-equipped national counter-terrorism forces. Of the 104 killed in the Mumbai attack, 18 were police officers. Would you ask the same "average" patrol officer to confront a pair of terrorists armed with military rifles, grenades and explosives? Alone?

If not, what is the decision point to alter tactics from a "traditional" active shooter scenario to a "terrorist" active shooter situation? Will you divide and diffuse limited training resources by conducting separate training sessions to deal with both possibilities?

What's needed are fundamental principle-based tactics. Don't waste your time teaching someone *what* to think. Focus instead on teaching *how* to think. Patrol officers will be bombarded with conflicting pieces of information about the threat, location, and intentions. Their senses will be assaulted by the sights, sounds, and smells of modern urban combat. Tactics that are appropriate for Mumbai-style attackers will work for any active shooter situation.

The Jedburgh Advanced Urban Combat Course was developed in cooperation with a Federal law enforcement agency to teach initiative-based urban combat skills. Graduates will have the necessary skills to confront and overcome a terrorist threat. If your active shooter training assumes that the attacker is just waiting to quit, you need to re-evaluate the lessons learned from recent terrorist incidents.

Law enforcement officers will have to refine urban combat skills to deal with an ever-evolving terrorist threat. Any two officers from any shift need the skills to assault any building, day or night.

Don't train on what you want. Train on what you need. Jedburgh Corp has developed the most comprehensive firearms training available anywhere. It was built on the vast personal combat experience of some of the most elite special operators in the country. Contact us at info@Jedburgh-USA.com to provide feedback on the blog, or discuss your training needs. Also, feel free to post your comments.

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