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SHOOT UNTIL THE THREAT STOPS

Does that really mean shoot until you eventually hit the target?

This mindset has been ingrained into LEO's for decades. It starts at the academy and lives throughout a career during in-service training. In my opinion, it has resulted in confusion about what it means and is a considerable factor behind our professions incredibly high miss rate during officer involved shootings.

This opinion is based upon 30+ years of learning and teaching pistol, patrol rifle, and sniper schools here at Center Mass and other organizations. More specifically, it is based upon my observation of officer performance during scenario-based training using our live fire simulator over the last 20+ years. Not to mention, the performance we see in many of the bodycam and in-car videos of officer involved shootings where it appears a volume of fire is more important than hitting what we are shooting at with our first round(s).

Toward the end of the above-mentioned schools' students attend the interactive level of training using our live-fire simulator. To this point, the Center Mass mantra of "you can't miss fast enough" has been pounded into the students heads all week long. In addition, they have had a period of instruction on the engagement of the moving human opponent. They do not miss static targets during stressful dynamic drills on the flat range. The phenonium we are talking about starts when the first life-sized live fire scenario starts. It's not uncommon for me to watch in amazement as the same officers who performed so well and so disciplined during dynamic drills on the flat range often revert to blasting a half dozen or more rounds as fast as they can press the trigger on a life-sized moving opponent at 6 yards for pistol and 15 yards with the patrol rifle. Many miss the opponent with most, if not all rounds fired. My question to them is, "what happened to you can't miss fast enough?" And the standard response is, "I fired until the threat stopped." (Note: Our simulator stops on the report of the firearm).

To me, that repeated response suggests three things. First, it is very difficult to change a mindset that's been in place for years in a 5-day school. Second, that missing is acceptable in training and therefore in a gunfight, so long as you eventually hit your target. Third, that most in our profession are unaware that this problem exists.

For the record, I love the mindset of shooting until the threat stops, so long as it doesn't infer missing is acceptable, and right now, that's what many LEO's believe it means. As a profession, we must recognize this as a problem and work collectively to correct this confusion. That starts at the academy and should continue during every in-service training session.

Every time we miss, we cause downrange hazards for our partners, innocent citizens, damage property, and we give the bad guy more time to do bad things to us or others.

I hope this article will at least cause some conversations and that it might inspire improvement.

We can't miss fast enough.

Respectfully,
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