



## **When Cops Go To War (When police work turns to combat)**

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There will be police managers and administrators that will say police do not get into combat situations in the conventional sense that soldiers do. I would submit that had they been in the SLA shootout, FBI shootout in Miami, at WACO, or in the North Hollywood bank robbery shootout they might have a different outlook on this. In my humble opinion police officers may find themselves in combat without warning and with too few exceptions without the proper training.

Its true that IEDs, roadside bombs, rockets and RPGs have not currently been employed against American police (hopefully that will remain the protocol) But when your behind your vehicle or whatever cover you have found and subjects are firing at you with automatic weapons to the point you cannot move, raise your head, or return fire without being hit, the use of the above weapons is a moot point, **“you are in combat”** There is a myriad of training courses for SWAT on what to do against armed terrorists with military training and equipment, but the police unit that will most probably meet and engage them first is patrol division and in my assessment they are woefully under trained and in most cases under equipped for this meeting engagement.

If the fight starts as a result of a traffic stop at two AM in the morning I feel we will lose the officer (s) making the stop. This will most likely in most jurisdictions bring other backup officers that may be able to contain the subject vehicle, or engage in a high speed chase ALA the NORCO bank robbery (See LETN, or NTOA for info) with the superior firepower and weaponry being on the side of the bad guys.

Several things may happen here if its real terrorists or any group of local militant right wing types that decide to fight. The worst case for the future of other police officers is that they might get away by virtue of shooting up all pursuing police vehicles initially available. The other worst case situation is pursuing patrol units may disable the vehicle or trap it in a confined place and have to take on a group of military equipped people before SWAT arrives with the firepower and team work to get it done with less loss in personnel and vehicles. A few suggestions here for patrol, these suggestions are easier given than applied in most cases.

- Call for assistance, a lot of it.
- Maintain standoff distance and contain.
- Get scoped rifles or duty long guns into the fight immediately.
- Use natural cover, not your vehicles.
- Fight as a team the best you can or have to.

- No one moves unless covered by someone else with a weapon that can do the job at the ranges required.
- Do not waste ammunition, if they have fire superiority let them have it stay behind cover, wait your chance.
- Time is on your side they know it and may charge you or attempt a breakout from containment be ready, stay vigilant.
- Settle down, combat breath, make every shot count. If you do not have a shot don't take one, you have very little ammunition for a sustained open air gunfight.
- If you have brought a handgun to a machinegun fight your best weapon is your brain, relax and use it. You being dead will not resolve the situation any quicker.

Patrol officers need to start attending tactical classes in how to survive in an open air or barricade combat situation. SWAT will be there as quickly as possible but patrol may have to hang on to the situation during the most intense and critical phase of it. If you have not trained for it you must remember one thing has held true for combat throughout history "You can always hold back or operate below your best abilities, but if untrained in techniques you cannot upgrade in technique. Once you are at your maximum ability you have nowhere to go if more is needed" Patrol needs to train in team combat, weapons employment, and tactics in terrain not of their choosing while dealing with superior firepower.

There are schools that can teach these needed techniques, there are within the police community many officers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan and may be able to assist in training their departments. The clocks ticking, the time to prepare is before an incident, it's impossible during.

Steve Mattoon  
Director of Training  
National Security Associates  
{Stay Safe As You Can}

