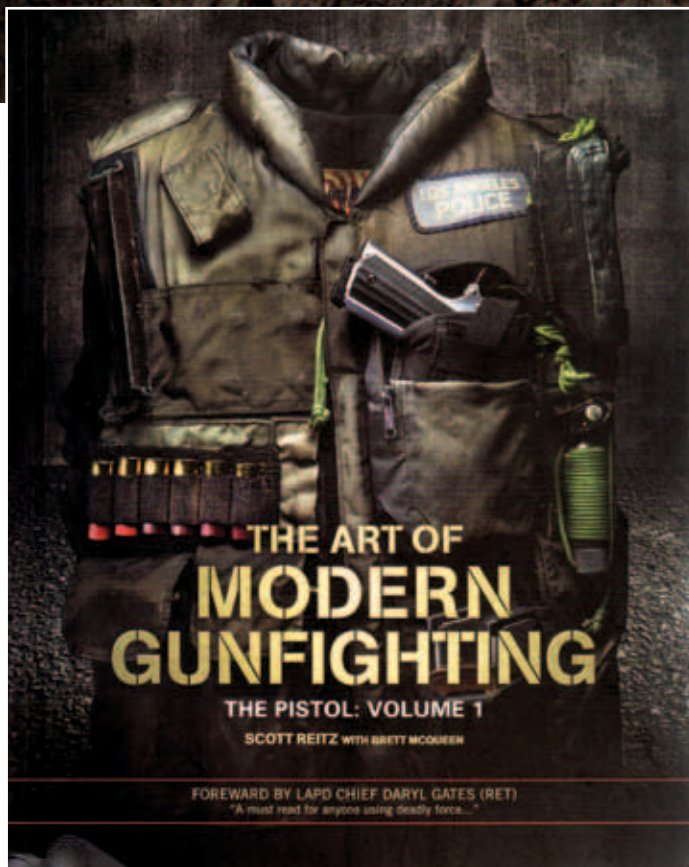


“THE ART OF MODERN GUNFIGHTING: THE PISTOL, VOLUME 1”—A BOOK FOR DEFENSIVE TACTICS

BY GEORGE RYAN



Yes, you just read that title correctly! This column is about reading a book on firearms training and tactics as part of your defensive tactics training and practice. Here's why . . .

Having experience as both a firearms and a defensive tactics instructor, it has occurred to me that law enforcement officers and agencies need to adjust their thinking about how we train in these two crucial areas. In the law enforcement training community there is a distinct line that separates defensive tactics and firearms training. Officers usually participate in either use-of-force physical

tactics (defensive tactics) or deadly force tactics (firearms) training. They do not generally train in both disciplines simultaneously.

This, of course, makes sense for several reasons. First, you need very different training facilities for each discipline. Second, training safety is, and always should be, of utmost importance. As a result, common sense safety rules have traditionally kept the training in these two disciplines very separate. Third, this segregation of firearms training and defensive tactics training has led to a situation where trainers are highly skilled in one area or the other, but often not in both.

However, real life use-of-force scenarios do not share the same distinct line that separates these disciplines in training. In the real world, physical use-of-force situations with combative suspects do turn into deadly force scenarios. Conversely, real life deadly force scenarios do turn into physical use-of-force situations. Officers have had to shoot armed suspects and then grapple with them in order to apply handcuffs and get them into custody. Defensive tactics and firearms on the street do not have defined boundary lines between them.

Since this reality does not match how we train, I'd like to offer some prudent and innovative ways to safely blend defensive tactics and firearms training in upcoming columns. Before I delve into these particulars, I would like to advocate that you begin to think in terms of this tactical cross-training by first reading Scott Reitz's "The Art of Modern Gunfighting: The Pistol, Volume 1." Why? All officers, especially defensive tactics instructors and practitioners, need to master the basics of firearms. As defensive tactics instructors, we need to be experts in firearms in order to teach all levels of use-of-force. This level of expertise makes defensive tactics instructors better assets to their departments and to the officers they teach. Also, all defensive tactics practitioners know that survival and

winning depends upon being thoroughly prepared for every scenario.

The author of this reference book, Scott Reitz, is a retired Los Angeles Police Department officer. I received extensive firearms training from Scott when I was a young police officer and also when I was a member of Metropolitan Division "B" Platoon before I joined SWAT. Let me be clear, though, that it is not my intention to help Scott sell books. Scott is already into his second printing on this volume and he certainly does not need my assistance to sell his book.

Instead, it is my full intention to let all officers know that this highly readable book can help save your life, and your career, if you are ever presented with a deadly force situation. It is also my intention to let defensive tactics practitioners know that if you had to choose one book to read in order to hone your firearms skills, this should be that book.

"The Art of Modern Gunfighting" begins with a nicely written foreword by former LAPD Chief Daryl Gates. This is followed by an introduction written by Scott with detailed debriefs on his five officer-involved shootings (OIS). I found that this section reads like a novel while also being extremely educational and insightful.

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...as defensive tactics practitioners and instructors, we should master all levels of use-of-force. This begins with mastering the basics of all of the skills that make us more complete and professional officers. Do this for yourself, your family, your partners, their families, your department and the community that you serve.

The book also includes chapters on *Laws of Deadly Force, Safety, Basics, Manipulation, Combat Mindset* and *Practice*. All readers will be especially pleased with Scott's take on combat mindset, but this section will be particularly interesting to defensive tactics practitioners since mindset is such a fundamental principle in self-defense training.

In addition, the book discusses a host of other topics such as sights, use of sights under stress, closing one eye, shooting stances, elements of marksmanship and the draw. Scott also offers a great deal of insight into the types, truths, mistakes, aftermath, and other issues related to real-life gunfighting. All of this information is

based upon his extensive training and experience in his LAPD career which included over ten years in SWAT and more than 15 years as the lead firearms instructor for Metropolitan Division. As a result, this is a book that covers all of the essential and necessary aspects of mastering the basics of deploying a pistol.

In closing, it is important to remember that as defensive tactics practitioners and instructors, we should master all levels of use-of-force. This begins with mastering the basics of all of the skills that make us more complete and professional officers. Do this for yourself, your family, your partners, their families, your department and the community that you serve.

For more information about "The Art of Modern Gunfighting: The Pistol, Volume 1," visit www.internationaltactical.com.

Best of luck in your training and Godspeed! «

About the author

Officer George Ryan has been a police officer for the Los Angeles Police Department since 1991 and has been assigned to LAPD's SWAT team since 1998. He is the NTOA's Defensive Tactics Section Chair and a member of the martial arts Masters Hall of Fame. George can be reached at gwryan3114@aol.com