



FORCE-ON-FORCE

THOUGHTS & CONSIDERATIONS (PART 1)

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Let me start out by saying that Force-on-Force training (FoF) as beneficial as it can be, is not a substitute for all other types of training.

However, Force-on-Force training is the pinnacle, or the top of the proverbial pyramid when it comes to training methodologies. It is supported by other foundational training building blocks associated with close quarter, armed encounters.

FoF can be a highly dynamic, multifaceted, interactive simulation that can be tailored and graduated to meet many of mission requirements of any given unit. Not too shabby!

In this context, a basic question was posed to me:

Is Force-on-Force (FoF) training beneficial or does it inculcate unnecessary fear into officers and negatively impact current entry techniques, thereby dismantling proven or "good" tactics?

In other words, when pressure tested, some of the tactics advocated do not stand the litmus test of return-fire simulations. So therefore, it the training methodology itself that must be attacked. Rather than adjust for what the simulations are shouting from the rooftops, some are calling for the simulations to cease!

As a sub question, but often asked:

Is the pain that comes with FoF training a negative influence and should it be eliminated as an element of FoF training?

In other words, pad up and protect all participants to the point they never actually feel incoming projectiles touch the body/mind. Trainees no longer must contend with any sort of negative discomfort as result of lack of tactics, lack of skill, or lack of improper decision-making. -At this point, what is the point?

On the second question, to put it mildly, efforts to remove all pain from training is less than optimal.

A "pain penalty" should remain a part of this type of training or participants will be robbed of a critical component of the training process that brings success under duress; that would be a critically needed activation of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS).

Read: "The Gift of Pain" by Philip Yancey

The environment is ultimately relatively safe, but the participant at the core level is experiencing enough fidelity that we have come to call this type of training "Reality Based Training". In other words, it's close enough to be beneficial, but not dangerous enough to seriously injure if properly managed.

The SNS is that part of the human reaction system that responds to fear of pain, injury or death, or the actual experience of pain and injury. It's the autopilot of the body that causes a normal person to quickly remove a hand from a heated surface before the conscious mind has taken the time to fully evaluate what is actually happening. The SNS is wonderful and much needed, hardwired network that offers immediate protection from a variety of damaging inputs.



There are quite a few circumstances that the SNS must be brought to heel to accomplish specific tasking. For instance, a “normal” reaction to fire is immediately recoil from it, get distance.



Yet firefighters have learned to override the strong desire to recoil from this mortal danger.

They have learned through proper training (simulation), experience and the leveraging of the appropriate equipment, that they can function and prevail in exceptionally hostile environments.

The SNS will be in full force operation during an actual armed encounter.

***As the fire fighter has learned,
so can the gunfighter.***

Another easy to relate to example is learned to manage a vehicle during a loss of traction situation.

Without training (simulation) and experience, if you lose traction during a cornering situation, the initial fears (SNS kicking in) of loss of control immediately manifest themselves by grabbing the steering wheel harder, holding the brake pedal down harder and fixating on what you make actually collide with. None of these fear-based reaction, however “normal” they are, will probably result in hitting exactly what you don’t want to collide with.

However, after a few loss of control encounters in a graduated simulation/training, your fears will be replaced with skill-based knowledge and experience.

The gripping effects of the SNS are no longer debilitating as caged in the background.



Therefore it follows that learning to experience and then mitigate some of the detrimental effects of the SNS as it relates to gunfighting would be most beneficial. After all there are no rollbars and seatbelts in a gunfight..

So, how does the mitigation process work?

Precept upon Precept

One understanding leads to another.

This eventually enables the individual operator and/or team to function at the highest levels of skill possible.

Maximum performance is predicated on the chaining together if you will of individual skills and understandings in unique ways.

If the precursory skills and understandings are not there as a foundation, subjecting an individual or team to larger and more complex situations will prove problematic and counterproductive.



Goal: Successful application of skill and understanding in the ever-changing, fluid dynamic of compressed time frame conflict.

An abbreviated example of a graduated skill/understanding matrix might look like this:

1. One must understand the basic precepts of law, polices, procedures, codes, rules of engagement, the proper use of force, communication, and mental survival skills.
2. One must understand the applicability of less lethal tools, which implies the skill to deploy them in a timely and effective manner.
3. One must know how issued firearms function in terms of assembly, disassembly. One must now how to maintain and store these firearms.
4. One must know how to properly handle, load and unload a firearm in a static range environment while engaging stationary targets.
5. One must learn how to shoot from a variety of positions in a static range environment. (Standing, Kneeling, Prone, Singe Handed left and right, Two-handed, stationary, and Moving in any direction). Targets stationary and moving. Add no-shoot decisions with or without virtual reality simulators.
6. One must know how to engage multiple targets while on the move in a static range environment. Targets stationary and moving.
7. Move the whole matrix into reduced light
8. Add teammates into the equation, immediately opening Pandora's Box in terms of the variety of tactical employment options.
9. Move the entire matrix into an unknown environment (Shoot-Houses).
10. Begin the FoF Process

Objectives & Styles

There are 2 basic styles of FoF training, *drilling and scenarios*. Drills are essentially smaller components of the entire dynamic of an armed encounter. Drills can easily be repeated over and over to gain insights into the larger whole. Well-designed drills inculcate particular skills that need to be “on autopilot” during a compressed time frame encounter. They allow the operator to experiment and test the limits of any given approach. Most static range firing is some subset of the total encounter, a drill.

Scenarios on the other hand are much larger subsets of the entire encounter. Scenarios require careful planning, additional resources (human, location, and equipment) and are generally more time-consuming. Scenarios focus in on the integration of mind-set, tactics, physical capabilities, rules of engagement, communication skills, and equipment. They also provide an excellent platform for experimentation and refinement of tactics on multiple levels.

Embedded in this entire process, one should be exposed to the tactical employment concepts adopted by the facilitating agency. Proper use of cover, concealment, movement, when to advance or retreat, how to leverage the power of friendly forces and so on.

All FoF drilling and all FoF scenarios are not real armed encounters, obviously. They always fall short in some way, shape, or fashion. However they can be extremely valuable facsimiles of the dynamic if they are well designed and well-orchestrated. They can provide a solid platform for self-analysis. Individuals within the drills or simulations must have open their minds to the possibility of improvement. Without this self-imposed willingness to learn, the benefits of the encounters are negligible or in some cases outright harmful.

Therefore, it is imperative that this mental framework be carefully addressed and cultivated prior to conducting any type of FoF training. Individual ego is a powerful force in both the positive and negative directions; it must be tamed. Videotape review is crucial.



Ask Yourself these Questions:

- Is quality simulation a good tool to increase offensive and defensive capabilities, improve judgment while under duress, reduce friendly fire incidents, and improve communication within deployed elements?
- Does simulation reduce the amount total rounds fired in an actual situation?
- Does simulation increase accuracy on target while under duress?
- Does simulation improve an individual's overall situational awareness? Situational awareness being defined as the ability to collect, collate, and store data in a fluid, dynamic and stressful environment; retrieve that data and accurately predict future events based on that data in a compressed time frame. Situational awareness is the antithesis of target fixation and problems this phenomenon brings.
- Does simulation teach the operators to "sort out" and operate within the chaos associated with conflict?
- Does simulation expose the operator to the benefits of utilizing chaos or pressure to their advantage?
- Does simulation teach operators the value and benefit of remaining relatively calm?
- Does simulation encourage and cultivate adaptive learning, a critical skill in armed encounters? See: Addendum
- Does advanced simulation reveal naturally occurring human tendencies not readily observable with other, less stressful training methodologies?
- Does advanced simulation reveal critical errors in one's fundamental assumptions, strategies, and tactical procedures not readily observable with other, less stressful training methodologies?
- Does repeated exposure to advanced simulation reduce previously identified critical errors, given the same circumstances previously encountered?
- Does simulation allow leadership to test and evaluate new tactical concepts and techniques in an environment where mistakes will not prove deadly?
- Does well-run simulation encourage honest and direct dialog among trainers, team leadership, team members, and individual students?
- Does simulation teach teams the somewhat intangible concept of "flow", giving them efficiency, adaptability, and effectiveness?
- Does simulation meet the training standard of "adequate for the tasking required?"
- Has any other unit or fighting force ever used simulation to their benefit and did it provide tangible, positive results in a non-permissive environment; that is combat?

After 30 years of hands-on participation with Federal, State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies both here and abroad, along with military units (both regular and special forces), I can categorically state the preceding questions can be answered in the affirmative.

Can one successfully argue that avoiding realistic simulation and simply exposing forces to hostile suspects and subsequent fire (in the case of law enforcement, embedded within a friendly backdrop of the civilian population), as a "training" methodology is an optimum model, I would emphatically say no.

Human Performance

Stepping outside of the realm of law enforcement/military close quarter encounters, try to name one human activity that involves gross and complex motor skills, judgment, penalty for failure (injury, loss of life, punitive and/or financial damages), which could not be improved upon with the development of realistic simulations that allow for progressive learning and experimentation?

Astronauts, airline pilots, fighter pilots (Red/Black Flag, Top Gun), Top Fuel Drag Racers (starting light simulators), skydivers (vertical wind tunnels), freestyle ski jumpers (foam pits), submission fighters (sparring) immediately come to mind as those who reap great benefits from high fidelity simulation.

What are the typical objections to and during FoF training (gunfight simulation) and who is objecting?

It's just a game....

It can be if the training is not administered properly. Facilitators must guard against this tendency. It is not a game of tag or capture the flag. It should be a set of carefully crafted drills and scenarios that mimic the elements of the encounters your audience expects to face.

It's not real....

The alternative is; make it real. Introduce actual firearms....The folly of this logic should be apparent. However the training should be constructed so as to bring up the stress levels so that participants can readily associate what they are doing with reality. (Reality in terms of timing, angles, distance, suspect behaviors, and the unpredictability of non-compliant threats)

Well, I was taught....

That's great. Move on, reevaluate, improve, alter, adjust. The simulation itself should teach you something, forget about what the facilitator is saying. The fact that you now have several rounds in your brain bucket should tell you something! I frequently tell people, "I am not here to reinforce what you already know, I am here to challenge it and expose you to new alternatives that just may prove useful when you need it most".

The equipment is not accurate enough, if I had a real gun....(Woulda, Shoulda, Coulda)

Today's training equipment has evolved to the point that room sized combat can be replicated with a high degree of accuracy. Keep in mind most firearms encounters take place at distances inside of 20 feet. A large percentage of these take place with 10 feet. Relatively accurate shots can be made out to distances of 25 yards or more with proper FoF equipment.

Participants in this type of training must understand and appreciate that if they got hit with these "inaccurate" training weapons, they most certainly would have been hit with actual rounds. One of the first things you need to learn in a gunfight, it how to avoid getting hit in the first place.

Their guns are more accurate than ours...

This excuse is generally rooted in ego and focus on external hardware as opposed to the internal mental software.

I have been accused of having a more accurate gun simply because I had anodized my training weapon a different color than the "student" weapons. I had to abandon this training weapon because the tendency by new participants in simulation training to exclusively look at my weapon as the primary reason for their demise in the drill/scenario was so prevalent.

He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else. - Benjamin Franklin

They are "winning" because they practice all the time....)

This can be a true statement. It does not however negate the benefits of participating in this type of training.

It really should have the opposite effect. One should be encouraged to know, that if one can practice and practice correctly, "winning" on a regular basis should be the natural outcome. The general idea in a gunfight is to win.

Imagine yourself in the United States Navy's Top Gun Fighter Pilot school. As part of the course, you were initially required to dogfight the school's "top" instructors. Your first day was a day to remember. You were a God up there. You easily won each and every encounter. However, the day you were not so fortunate. The exact opposite occurred, you could not score any "kills". In fact, at every turn you were defeated and could not determine why. You climbed out of your aircraft puzzled, frustrated and annoyed. The next day you got your share of victories, they got theirs. The cycle repeated itself throughout the following weeks of training. Winning, losing, split decisions.

As you stepped back and looked at the big picture, you realized the U.S. Navy had a great facility. Yes they had great state of the art simulators and after action debriefing capabilities. Yes they had well-qualified instructors in terms of certificates and operational experience. But something was troubling you inside.

It came to you. You realized that the careful study of aerial fighter tactics and all that means made no difference whatsoever in any given encounter. All that took place up there was a constant random sequencing of events and skill had little or nothing to do with the eventual outcomes. It was pure luck, always luck, all about luck....Then you woke up from your dream...

Dedicated qualitative study coupled with good combat simulation makes a profound difference in the actual outcomes of combat.

"The more I practice, the luckier I get..." - Arnold Palmer, Golfing Great

I hope my point is understood. The entire reason for establishing good simulation training in the first place is to carve pathways to success for the student. They should be getting the benefit of training staff's knowledge and experience. If the training staff cannot do what they say, they lack credibility, and it becomes an impediment to the trainee.



Recalling a training program that I was managing for the United States Navy Security Forces. This multifaceted program was established on the West Coast. After several years, East Coast Type Commanders decided to follow in kind and establish similar programs.

We sent out our curriculums to the appropriate training commands. After several months I started receiving phone calls from the managers of these commands basically complaining that the objectives and final testing requirements were too stringent, unrealistic. They were getting an unacceptable rate of failure. Nearly 80% of the students exposed to the training were failing!

I was a data nut, and I had kept statistics on student performance/scores on a database for years. I could tell any given student where they fell out on any given course of fire, with any given weapon at any given point in the training. The final practical we developed was difficult, no doubt. It involved running, clearing malfunctions introduced prior to the run, multiple targets, no-shoot decisions, multi-position shooting, two-hand, single-hand and weak side shooting with several weapons encompassed with time and stringent safety constraints. Our student success rate was in the 95th percentile.

I finally was asked to fly out to the East Coast. The first thing I noticed was that none of the instructors were "doing" anything but talking in front of the students for fear of "looking bad". The students had no role models to emulate. They needed to know that it could be done in real time, not in theory. Human beings are funny this way.

For the longest time a sub-4-minute mile considered a barrier. It was "impossible". Then after it was achieved, the resistance to this previously impenetrable barrier was minimal in the sense that many entered into the new zone (sub-4-minute) with relative ease.

I find this phenomenon quite interesting. It is rooted in fear. Fear is a powerful limiter and unwarranted fears can inhibit/destroy necessary function. One trip fixed all that with respect to this particular course of instruction. The first class with the new rules of the road (instructors will tell and will do) resulted in every student successfully completing the required courses of stress fire. I simply pushed the existing staff to do what was already inside them. No magic there.

Part of being an instructor is failing in front of the students. They need to see what you are going to do in this circumstance as well.

How do you react? Did you blame the equipment? Blame the course of fire? Blame the sun angle or wind direction?

What corrective measures did you take for the next run? They need to see this as these skills are going to have to applied in a chaotic, non-permissive situation where adaptations must occur when things do not go as originally planned.



If the staff that facilitates the training/simulation cannot do as they are saying, they are simply not as effective in leading others down the road to success in the future.

On the other hand, simulation training should not be a “feast” for the staff. Students should not be placed in situations that are not solvable simply so the staff can have “its day in the sun”. This does breed high levels of frustration and anger and is counterproductive.

None these objectives when carefully considered and analyzed in terms of logic and basic assumptions do not weigh in heavily enough to offset the benefits previously articulated.

This brings us back to the original question:

Is Force-on-Force (FoF) training beneficial or does it inculcate unnecessary fear into officers and negatively impact current entry techniques thereby dismantling proven or “good” tactics?

First of all, is there any statistical data or practical experiences indicating the FoF training instills fear into a significant percentage of those that have participated in this type of training? I have countless feedback communications from law enforcement officers and military personnel operating on combat theatres indicating very strongly that this concern is completely unwarranted. I have noted that the generally the loudest opponents to quality FoF training are those that fit into one of the following categories:

1. Ones who have never actually participated in a well-designed FoF program and are strongly resistant to change.
2. Ones who have participated in a program and did not personally perform as expected. Therefore they transferred hostility associated with the lack of personal performance onto the program itself or the program facilitators.

People in the first category I dismiss out of hand as a non-credible source in terms of the benefits/liabilities associated with FoF training if they flatly refuse to explore the possibilities.

Those in category number two I am still interested in winning over if possible.

For example I have seen this on many occasions:

Team leader A brings a team into a FoF scenario and his or her team does not accomplish the mission anywhere near as planned. One of two things is true. The scenario was in fact fundamentally flawed in terms of construction, or two the team should stop and identify a performance deficiency within themselves and train accordingly.

The backdrop to this is that this team has successfully executed numerous warrants over an extended period of time. This powerful influence is often misidentified as operational proficiency in all areas. It can cloud rational judgment and severely decrease the capacity to make quantum leaps in performance.

Now faced with some degree of failure, the natural conclusions center around anything but reality. It can be extraordinarily difficult to embrace and contemplate “weakness” in an environment where only the strong survive. In this culture mistakes are shunned and covered, not admitted and analyzed. It is far easier to blame others, an age-old human trait. It is even easier to simply not expose yourself to the possibility of failure again.

Tactical Logic

When one solution can be repeatedly revealed to be not as efficient as another, (I.E, this tactic, the one we have been using does not seem to be working as well as this new one I have been exposed to) and the drill or scenario gets negatively criticized as a result, I for one am perplexed.

I have elected to "listen" to what is happening in terms of the pragmatic and unbending logic of the situation presented.

1. I had a gun that shot projectiles and so did my opponent(s)
2. I took incoming rounds and would have probably been severely injured or died doing "A" 5 times in a row
3. I did not take incoming rounds and the opponent did doing "B" times row in a row
4. I choose B next time
5. To do B next time, I will train accordingly
6. I will look for the possibility of "C's" existence

If "A" was tactic or technique was learned from _____ (you fill in the blank), be willing to at least entertain the idea that constant exposure to the pressures of reality-based simulation might reveal a minor or major flaw in its applicability to your current mission.

FoF Training will Teach and Refine Proper Movement

(How to Maneuver)

An overlooked aspect of FoF training is the skill set it naturally brings to the participants in terms of how to tread the ground. Incoming rounds teach and they teach best through moderate pain. Without some type of pain penalty, you also lose an extremely important aspect of "pinging" on the Sympathetic Nervous System which is activated through one of 3 things: Fear of Death, Fear of Injury, or Fear of Pain.

The first two are not acceptable levels of training within the general population of Law Enforcement. The third however should be. Note I did not say damage. I said pain.

Pain is a wonderfully fast and powerful teacher. It inculcates proper movement like no other stimulus. Retention is far reaching.

If you leave pain out of the equation all of the time, you are not venturing anywhere near the mental zone required during an actual confrontation. Yes you are still training, just not at the optimal levels.

Listening to a use of force lecture is useful training, but it will not help you in the moment when you see a barrel 6" from your face held by a determined opponent. You will need a different type of knowledge now. A knowledge only gained from a willingness to expose yourself to a reasonable level of pain once in a while.

Suiting up all participants in FoF training where they have no possibility of paying for their mistakes is really disservice to them. Simply watch how somebody moves when using a Virtual Reality Simulator when faced with an armed opponent. Now watch them when actual projectiles slam into their body.

For years I have conducted FoF training in which people do the same thing when faced with a gun that shoots projectiles that cause pain. They duck, they run, they flinch, they turn their backs; all responses that have potentially deadly consequences.

Through videotape analysis, folks first see the folly of this and understand that it does them no good whatsoever. Once the conscious mind understands that this behavior needs to be changed, trainees immediately attempt to overcome it in the next drilling sessions. The positive alternations in movement, responses and return fire capability is significant from Monday to Friday. They don't look or act like the same people ever again. It is backed up by many emails that I receive from officers that eventually get into a gunfight and prevail. (See: Addendum)

Yes it is true, X percentage of the training population will complain about this aspect of the training (pain). The larger question looms. Are you going to continue to allow these types of individuals to jeopardize the safety of those officers more willing to train? See my article on this tendency: <http://www.progressivecombat.com/pdfs/Who-is-Training-Whom.pdf>

Back to Movement

Name any confrontational activity that does not involve movement? Or let me put it this way. If one opponent can move and the other cannot, who is more likely to win most of confrontations?

Human beings are DESIGNED TO MOVE! We love to move. Consider:

- Air to Air Combat
- Armor Battles
- Knife Fights
- Fist Fights
- Sport Applications of Marital Arts

On and On....but all of a sudden when we are talking about gunfights...lets teach everybody to "Hold their ground", "Get a good solid stance" and slam that into their consciousness at every turn. Stand against what, incoming 9mm or 7.62mm? This concept does not seem like jive with reality from my limited viewpoint.

Once you have that reasonably mastered simply shooting your weapons from all possible positions (stationary and moving), you have covered 10-15% of the skill set. The majority of fight is imbedded within the phases prior to simply pulling a lever on a weapon system.



When I was in SEAL Team land warfare training, it was put to me like this from a seasoned Viet Nam veteran, NavSpecWar point man:

“When those bullets are in the air they the Fu*\$@g king”.

I never forgot that.

The basic creed of small unit tactics is to get your opponent's head down and in stationary position....gun them down from there.



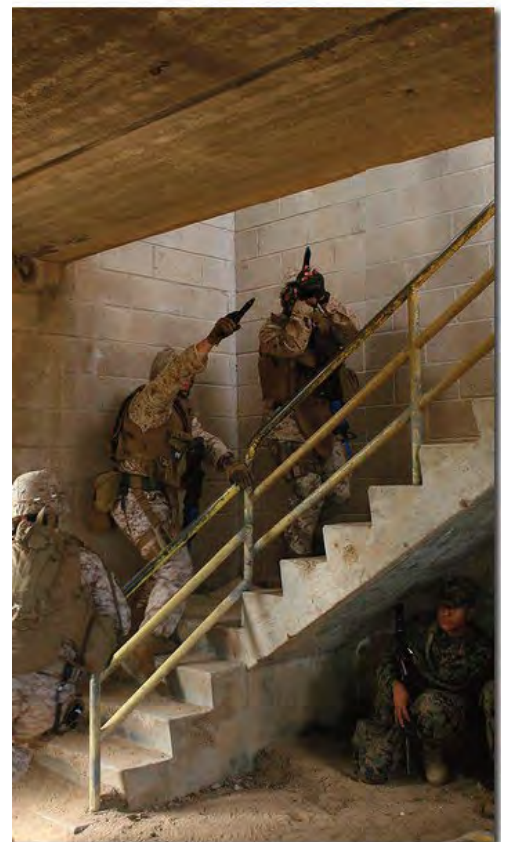
Even as a sniper, I was taught, fire one, maybe two; get the heck out of there. We are talking about 600 meter + engagements.

The downside to lateral movement is that you actually have to practice moving with your weapons and on the terrain, you plan to engage on.

Is it easier to hit a target while I am stationary?...of course it is.
Does my picture perfect accuracy diminish?...of course it does.
Is it harder for my opponent to hit me?...of course it is.

It is a balancing act. In general terms, the closer I am to my opponent, the more radical my movement in terms of vertical and horizontal displacement should appear.

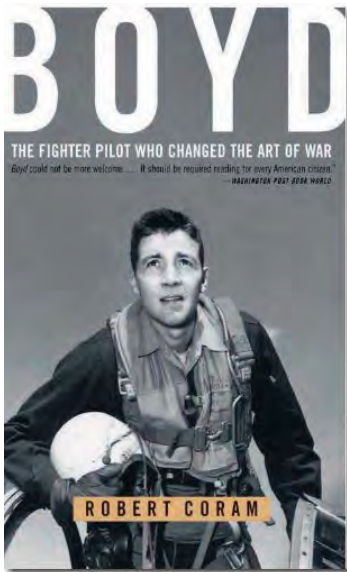
If possible, I will disappear in front of them. If the threat is further away, the less radical I can move in relation to him or her. If the target is 50 meters away, and I have a handgun, I will not be moving while making that shot. I may just be moving to get to a better position. If I elect to shoot, it will be from a stationary position given my skill with a handgun. On the other hand, if the target is 3' away, I will move IN, PAST and BEHIND the opponent as my prime directive. I am forcing my opponent to reel and relock the target visually. By then, I will have hit and moved, and repeated as necessary.



What I am addressing in most handgun fights is a confrontation that will more than likely take place at 20' or less, usually less. My mind is to flank, flank and flank some more. Shoot what I have, then move again. If the opponent has already produced a weapon and is incoming, the best initial thing you can do is move. If you have inculcated the response to grab a weapon first, you may find yourself six feet under before you can counter with your weapon. Gunfighting should not be viewed as a take it up the middle for the "Gipper" type of activity as typically presented on square ranges. As soon as you are dealing with more than one opponent, it becomes exponentially more important to leverage proper movement.

Whether you are moving or electing not to move, you should be thinking maneuver warfare.

This maneuvering component is only really learned and experienced at the training level through FoF.



Col. John Boyd whose forward thinking brought us the F15, F16, and A10, the OODA cycle. His theories had tremendous and direct impact on the tactical deployment of U.S. forces in Desert Storm and the War with Iraq. Dick Chaney was a disciple if you will of John Boyd. Boyd was despised by the status quo, he ran over skeptics, shook loose the cobwebs off many military commanders' minds, and was admired by those who were really listening.

USMC General Grey small booklet FMFM1 on the power of maneuver warfare recalibrated the entire USMC. He was directly influenced by USAF pilot John Boyd and his theories of combat.

Here's a quote from the book:

"If the aim of maneuver warfare is to shatter the enemy's cohesion, the immediate object toward that end is to create a situation in which he cannot function. By our actions, we seek to pose menacing dilemmas in which events happen unexpectedly and faster than the enemy can keep up with them. The enemy must be made to see his situation as deteriorating but deteriorating at an ever-increasing rate. The goal is panic and paralysis, an enemy who has lost the ability to resist."

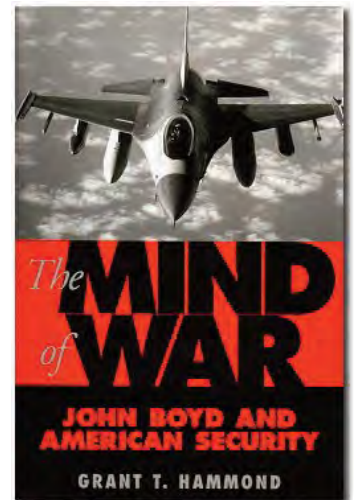
The Mind of War – John Boyd and American Security

By Grant T. Hammond

Page 134 para 1-2

"Several key points must be emphasized. Fire at all levels by artillery, mortars, and machine guns was exploited to hold the adversary's attention and pin him down. Such fire, together with gas and smoke (as well as fog and mist), was designed to capture the adversary's attention, force heads down, and dramatically obscure view, thereby cloaking the infiltrators' movements. The dispersed and irregular and changing terrain features as they pushed forward. Taken together, these factors (captured attention, obscured view, and indistinct character of the advance) denied the adversary the opportunity to gain an accurate picture of what was happening, or in this sense, "taking place". The infiltration teams suddenly appeared to loom out of nowhere to blow through, around, and behind the disoriented defenders."

"The essence of these tactics was to cloud or distort the signature of the attacking forces. They sought to improve mobility and avoid enemy fire while focusing the effort on penetrating, shattering, enveloping, and mopping up disconnected and isolated troops, and debris of the adversary's forces."



Page 149 para 2

"The idea is to smash the blitz by turning its own techniques against itself. The inconspicuous, stealthy use of fast tempo, fluidity of action, and cohesion of the counter blitz combat teams is the key. They form, redirect, then halt the enemy's advance. This places the adversary on the defensive, not the offensive, halts his advance, and at least locally destroys the adversary's capacity to resist. In this military Ju jitsu, one uses the adversary's own momentum and offensive intent to one's defensive advantage. One employs his own techniques of fast pace, infiltration, penetration, and flanking movements to defeat him. The key is rapid OODA loop cycles to permit one to respond quickly to the unfolding tactical circumstances."

Page 147 para 2

Blitz-Guerrilla Themes

"...The second lesson is to shape the adversary's perceptions and the pace of his reactions to events. One exploits ambiguity and deception, so the adversary doesn't really know what is going on and utilizes superior mobility and sudden violence to control the pace of events."

"If the aim of maneuver warfare is to shatter the enemy's cohesion, the immediate object toward that end is to create a situation in which he cannot function. By our actions, we seek to pose menacing dilemmas in which events happen unexpectedly and faster than the enemy can keep up with them. The enemy must be made to see his situation as deteriorating but deteriorating at an ever-increasing rate. The ultimate goal is panic and paralysis, an enemy who has lost the ability to resist."

Specifically, the patterns of conflict and the OODA cycle brief are evident here.

Page 160 para 2-4

"The implication of the overall message, as Boyd called it, is this:

The ability to operate at a faster tempo or rhythm than an adversary enables one to fold the adversary back inside himself so that he can neither appreciate nor keep with what is going on. He will become disoriented and confused which suggests that unless such menacing pressure is relieved, the adversary will experience various combinations of uncertainty, doubt, confusion, self-deception, indecision, fear, panic, discouragement, despair, etc., which will further

- Disorient or twist his mental images and impressions of what is happening; thereby
- Disrupt his mental and physical maneuvers for dealing with such a menace, thereby
- Overload his mental and physical capacity to adapt or endure; thereby
- Collapse his ability to carry on.

By combing insights and experiences, by looking at other disciplines and activities and connecting them, one can create new strategies for coping with the world and one's adversaries. Doing so allows one to develop repertoires of competition, ways to contend with multiple adversaries in different contexts. In doing so, one develops a fingerspitzengefühl ("finger-tip feel") for folding adversaries back inside themselves, morally, mentally, and physically, so that they can neither appreciate nor cope with what is happening.

Thus, the artful manipulation of isolation and interaction is the key to successful strategy."

Summary

You never can determine, when and where you will end up in an armed encounter, therefore you need to study movement in relationship to moving opponents not stationary targets that do not shoot back.

Good tactics will easily stand the test of FOF training. Bad ones will not. If you have gotten to the mental state of constant "protectionism", that is you spend most of your time defending your crumbling theories you are in a dangerous place.

If you are getting repeatedly hit in vital areas with training weapons that have a smaller performance/engagement envelope than actual weapons, then you need to make some adjustments. The first goal in a gunfight is not to get shot.

My destination as an individual or a team leader is efficiency obtained through understanding and skill. I seek to eliminate the unnecessary baggage I have picked up and only travel with the most useful mental and physical tools possible.

The Bad News

There are two notable negative influences on FOF training that will impact the participants overall perception of the training as well as the bottom-line effectiveness of the training itself.

One has already been brought up and that is one's personal ego. Again, this topic must be addressed in a way that allows the participants to understand the overall goals of the simulation. The trainer must address in a real way the criticality of the participant's genuine desire to look at new concepts/possibilities. Without the internal desire to create a positive learning environment on the part of both parties the training session is doomed to overall failure. Facilitators must be serving the students not preaching from the mountain on high.

Eliminating all friction is not the overall goal. Friction will come, believe me. The encounters themselves will provide many heated moments that need to be skillfully addressed by the facilitator of the training. A good facilitator will keep things on track. It is an art learned over time.

A good facilitator should be able to step into any drill or scenario and practically demonstrate in real time the principles and techniques he or she is espousing. If that cannot be done, there is a large credibility gap that is sometime difficult for the trainee to jump. Don't just tell them how to it, show them in space and time.

The second factor is simply poor planning or sloppy/inappropriate construction of drills and scenarios. Effects range from bad training to death if proper safety protocols are not observed because of ignorance or negligence. Document your safety procedures. Maintain training records to cover yourself administratively on many fronts. Attending a presentation of a Simunition F/X Supervisor's Course and implementing their suggestions can assist you in eliminating some these problems.

Although I have personally deviated from some of their framework in terms of style (not safety), the overall principle remains in tact. Carefully consider what you are introducing into your drills and scenarios. Ensure that you can repeat the processes you establish by documenting what you are trying to achieve and the means to get there.

Maintain constant real-world feedback with operational personnel to constantly improve your FOF program for the benefit of those you serve.

Respectfully,

Ken J. Good
Progressive Combat Solutions, LLC

Addendum

"Force under Pressure – How Cops Live and Why they Die"

Lawrence N. Blum, Ph.D

Lantern Books

Chapter 2 - Contributions or Compromise to Officer Safety

Page 40, Para 2

"The proficiency of the officer in managing rapidly changing, chaotic, or unanticipated incidents will require that officers develop adaptive expertise.

Page 40-41, Para 5

Adaptive expertise entails a deep comprehension of the conceptual nature of the problems the officer encounters, e.g., understanding the dynamics and differing profiles of assaultive behavior. Skills must be developed in an organized by flexible structure. That is, the officer must continue cognitive activity in the face of emergency conditions to enable him or her to register the level of threat encountered as well as any changes in the circumstance.

Page 41, Para 1

Thereafter (after guided practice), variability, ambiguity, and inconsistencies need to be inserted into the task to force the trainee to stretch his or her learning to a level of competence that permits them to rapidly respond to difficult or unanticipated events. The adaptive growth process occurs when the learning material presented is just beyond the trainee's level of competence. Solving the problems presented in the training then requires the trainee to "stretch" his or her ability and adapt his or her knowledge to new information and skills.

Page 41-42, Para 3

A danger inherent in limiting training methods to procedure training is that the habits developed by experienced officers are used as a mental model from which the officer generates his or her expectations regarding the encounter. * Mental models that apply past habits are likely to impede the officer's ability to correctly integrate the currently relevant information necessary to maintain officer safety within unusual tactical encounters.

Training must, therefore, provide a conceptual model that assists the officer in understanding of both how and why things work. Accurate models improve performance of complex tasks, and, conversely, inaccurate models decrease task performance.

Tactical encounters contain highly stressful conditions that have been shown to alter how the officers apply the skills and concepts they have learned in training.

Therefore, exposing trainees to stressful conditions while they are practicing in event-based training will enhance the likelihood that officers react decisively and accurately during a stressful event. Training efforts that are performed under low stress conditions will not likely be replicated by officers, actions in the field.

The introduction of vague, conflicting, or imminent information at rapid rates during a tactical encounter will increase officers' mental workload. Training must replicate these conditions so that the tasks of information retrieval, appraisal of the threat conditions, and decision-making can be properly performed under real stress conditions. This will require that training inoculate officers with pre-exposed to the above elements to prevent overload, misperception, or inappropriate decision-making. These must be performed under a stressful, but not overwhelming workload.

Testimonials

(I have many, but these typify the responses)

My name is Steve Mescan and I took you Team Tactics Course in May of 1999. I am a SWAT Team member from the city of Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. I would like to take minute to express one of my experiences.

I was returning to the station in a quite area of the city, at approximately three in the morning. The front of Zone 6 station is almost all glass and not bullet proof. While walking into the station, two gunmen in a vehicle, one with a 9 mm, and the other with a .45 cal, opened fire on me and three other officers. The first round missed my head by inches and then I was struck in the foot once by a 9mm and then with shrapnel from a .45 caliber.

As the gunfire erupted, I found myself, even though I had been shot, on my shooting platform, working the angle, and rather than running from the threat putting them under duress. Though I did not fire a shot, because my backdrop was full of residential houses, the suspects who were caught stated they saw me point my gun out towards them, which caused them to flee. In all 29 shots were fired at the station.

I credit the training I received from you and your cadre as to the reason this incident didn't turn out worse. First, I realized the back lighting situation and immediately told another officer to turn the lights off. I began to move at the suspects to acquire a sight picture while doing so I caught myself "breathing up" and controlling my adrenaline. I knew I was shot, but because of the type of training and duress that I was put under during those three days at Team Tactics, made 29 rounds feel like a walk in the park. I believe that the training I received helped me not react so quickly, that I simply reacted with emotion and began to "spray and pray" out the front of the station house.

Instead, I was able to remain disciplined and turn the tides of the encounter. I would like to thank you and your staff for the training I received. It may have saved my life and the lives of others. I can say, as a trainer, that the Team Tactics Course was the best course I have been to in my seven-year career.

Keep up the good work and if there is anything I can do for you guys please don't hesitate to ask! I Hope to train with you again in the future!!

Steve Mescan

Pittsburgh SWAT

I am a Lieutenant in the Morris County Sheriff's Office, NJ currently on loan to another agency for a Task Force. I've been a member and Team Leader on our County Tactical Team "SERT", since 1988. As a member of the SERT, I've been on calls where shots were fired at my team, have gone against suspects armed with knives, have taken a suspect into custody who was intent on blowing up his house and neighborhood and many, many more.

Over the years I've received training from many Local, State and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies as well as other companies. None compared to the Low Light Instructors Course put on by your staff that I just completed.

I not only learned valuable tactics for using light and dark to my advantage in tactical situations, but I also learned some Defensive Tactics that actually work. The tactics learned were proven in my mind during an exercise where you close your eyes and defend your handgun against attackers, one after another. I felt comfortable and confident and the tactics we were taught.

As for the Low Light Tactical training, the scenarios we went through taught me that a lot of the training I've received over the years has been flawed. Using Simunition and Paintball, I learned that if my team members continue to use the tactics we were taught up until I attended this course; someone is going to be seriously injured or worse.

I Highly recommend this training to every Tactical Team Member or Patrol Officer. You'll work hard, but it's worth it. During the first few days I considered calling it quits. I wasn't ready for the Defensive Tactics training and figured it would be just like the half dozen other courses I've been through. By the end of the week, I was exhausted but glad I stuck around. I've never met more dedicated Instructors during my 17+ years on the job. Thank you and feel free to post my thoughts.

Sincerely, Lieutenant James K. O'Brien

Last night (9/24/03) I was dispatched to a disturbance male vs. female in a small town. The call came in at 2108 hrs and the town cop responded while I was enroute. Upon arrival, the town officer (part-time/retired) met me and informed me that the male subject had assaulted his wife and fled into a cornfield, which was about 20 yards from eastside of the house. I also was told that he carried a knife and had been drinking throughout the day.

The officer stuck close to the house because it was DARK and the male was large. I had dealt with the subject in the past and knew him to be a problem. With flashlight in hand and pistol in other, I set off to the back yard in search mode as I was taught in "Officers prevailing in Low Light" While clearing the immediate area I couldn't help but think about the Omaha officer that had lost his life in a similar situation. It became very apparent how vital this training really is.

I also have a wife and two children that need me very much alive. I went back to the house to talk to the victim and two other deputies arrived that had been through the low light training. Another deputy and I went back out and did another scan of the area. I could see my partner strobing his light just like I was doing and covering my cross as I was his. Coincidentally the town officer asked me what I was doing the first time. We went back to the residence finished up with the victim and left. I went a couple of blocks north of the residence to a very dark drive. I shut all my lights off and just scanned and listened. There was one streetlight a block away creating some very dark shadows and streaks of yellow light.

Soon I heard someone trampling through the corn and a figure matching the description of the subject appeared from the field next to a home. I waited for him to get closer then powered him up with my M3. He was startled and tried blocking the light with his hands. He was ordered to the ground and did so under protest. Once on the ground I triangulated his body using PCR placed him in cuffs and radioed the other deputies in the area, never once looking at the subject. I could only think multiple opponents, multiple opponents. Everything went textbook, if there is such a thing. Had I done things differently could it have gone bad, maybe, maybe not? What I pride myself on is that the bad guy never was presented with an opportunity to go offensive successfully and that is because of the valuable skills YOU have taught me.

I thank you and does my family.

Your Friend Always

Chris