

PATROL RIFLE THEORY

The Patrol Rifle Theory is easily summed up by the opening paragraphs of the Kent Police Department's AR-15 training document:

“I. PHILOSOPHY OF USE

The Kent Police Department is issuing the Colt AR-15 .223 Rem semi-automatic carbine to its trained police officers in an effort to better protect those officers and the citizens of Kent during deadly threat encounters. This firearm is more effective in stopping the deadly actions of a dangerous person as it is more accurate and 2-3 times more powerful than any handgun carried by Kent PD officers. **While more powerful, this firearm is safer to use within the community as it presents less danger to bystanders from over-penetrating or ricocheting projectiles than do the standard issue handgun or the traditional 12 gauge shotgun.**

With the aforementioned in mind, while the focus of Kent PD's training will center on the safe handling and accurate firing of the Colt .223 carbine, the philosophy of use will indicate that this firearm **should be the primary tool** chosen to end a deadly force encounter whenever possible. It is understood that dangerous situations can spring upon officers without warning at any time, but when officers **do** have the advantage of advanced warning/information, they should arm themselves with the most effective firearm to deal with that deadly threat. While the use of the AR-15 carbine will allow KPD officers to be effective to distances beyond 100yds, the majority of this training will deal with close range encounters covering distances of 25yds or less.”

Patrol Rifle Definition: A lightweight, compact rifle or carbine, chambered in an intermediate caliber (.223, .30 Carbine, 7.62x39, .30 WCF, ETC.). Patrol rifles are generally fed from a detachable box magazine, but other systems are acceptable.

If by looking at the past we can prepare for the future, then the below listed information should be of interest to us. This information comes from direct or personal interviews and/or from actual case history.

Let us start with something simple: Apply the basic firearms safety rules. Watch out for your partner. In a great number of fights some casualties are from friendly fire. Friendly fire is not friendly! Watch your muzzle and be sure of your target!

The patrol rifle can and should be deployed in any armed confrontation where time allows. The ranges of gunfights have increased, due largely to better tactics on the part of the police. The distance from curb to porch, in most suburban neighborhoods, can be twenty-five (25) yards or more; this is dangerously pushing the capabilities of most pistol shooters.

Although overplayed by the media, there are actually very few incidents where criminals are armed with sophisticated rifles. However, when they are the result can be spectacular and tragic. The Miami shootout, the Los Angeles bank robbery, the Norco robbery, and the shootings of two New Hampshire Troopers were all done with rifles.

The use of the rifle in short and mid-range environments is generally overlooked or deleted in many training programs. Over the last few years, with increased emphasis on realistic ranges based on facts that **most rifle fights take place inside what are normally considered handgun ranges**, the WSCJTC training format advocates the use of the patrol rifle. Virtually all police patrol rifle shots are fired from 75 yards or less although a notable local exception was the Ricky Lee Thorp Incident where a Bonney Lake PD officer dropped a homicidal meth-head with a single shot at 142yds from his iron-sighted AR-15. Long range precision shooting is not the normal role of the patrol rifle; one or two rounds fired within a short time at close range is its usual role. The .223Rem. is an extremely effective round within its limits and a single round quickly delivered to the torso of your opponent will end most fights quicker than one from a handgun. Please, at every opportunity, SHOOT AND HIT the biggest part of the target that is available.

PRO's OF RIFLE USE:

- Power of Cartridge (a pistol-caliber carbine is still a pistol!)
- Effective Terminal Ballistics
- Magazine Capacity (for reduced manipulation)
- Improved Sight Radius
- Officer can manage a threat at greater distances

CON's OF RIFLE USE:

- Ergonomics - Is It User Friendly?
- Leading with muzzle - Tactical Applications
- Weapon Retention - System Length

EMPHASIS ON:

- A stable but mobile firing platform.
- Establishing fire superiority.
- Clearing stoppages and/or transition
- Manipulation of equipment "eyes off."
- Use the rifle within the handgun envelope.**



Using the rifle within the handgun envelope: If we examine the above photo we note that the visual plane (the officer's eyes) and the end of the weapon's muzzles are just about the same for the rifle and the handgun at full extension. This should somewhat dispel the myth that the patrol rifle is too BIG, or too LONG to be used effectively in relatively close quarters.



Here is the same concept demonstrated in the confines of a building search

RIFLE vs. SHOTGUN:

Tests on standard 870 police shotguns showed unacceptable pellet dispersion at an average of seventeen (17) yards; figure fifteen (15) yards as the effective range when loaded with normal buckshot ammunition; some specialized buckshot may extend a reasonable pellet pattern out to 35yds. Fifteen yards is also a long shot for most pistol shooters. Add in weight, excessive recoil, and limited magazine capacity and the shotgun's appeal becomes limited. The vast majority of police-issued shotguns are pump-action which are a very reliable design, unfortunately the human operator can cause malfunctions by failing to operate it properly while under stress. Buckshot and most slug load are not capable of penetrating most soft body armor that is being used by more and more by today's criminals. Conversely, the .223 rifle has little recoil, weighs less, and has greater magazine capacity (for less manipulation). It is easily accurate at 100 yards and it's ammunition easily penetrates soft body armor. In most tactical applications, the rifle is the weapon of choice.

CONVENTIONAL RIFLES AND USE:

1. Individually carried and serviced. Accessories like the tactical sling and spare ammo specific for each officer
2. Shoulder Fired – much greater accuracy
3. One Shot, One Hit concept – With a much more effective cartridge than any handgun, there is a real likelihood of ending the confrontation with one shot. One concept that has been found to have universal acceptance is “**the fewer rounds that need to be fired the better it is for all concerned**”. (Good guys, bad guys, judges, lawyers, chiefs, bystanders, and uninvolved or uninformed citizens all agree).

THE PROBLEMS YOU ARE LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER:

Ranges - Short, close, within 21 feet.

Time Frame - Short; 2-3 seconds / Long; Miami, Waco (learn good position shooting)

Target - Frontal or angular and moving.

Target Condition -

Mental state of mind (drugs) - Physical (Armor) (Body Type)