Active Countermeasures For Tactical Teams

by John T. Meyer, Jr.

When a tactical team enters a building, it usually depends on surprise, tactics and speed to curtail a situation immediately. When a team makes entry on a high risk warrant or a drug raid, they are prepared to use deadly force. In most cases, they will gain control of an area before the suspect can react and verbal commands are usually obeyed.

Other times, a suspect may not have time to place the team members in imminent danger but is *not* complying with verbal commands, therefore actively resisting.

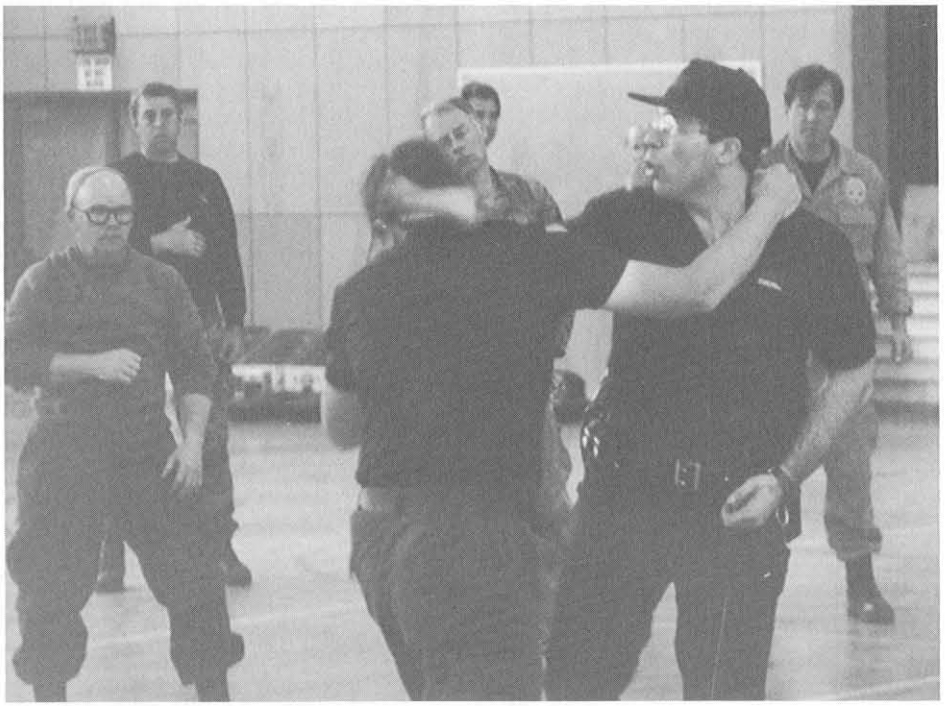
Teams have approached these types of situations in varying ways, from trying to use basic defensive tactics learned in training, to physically overwhelming the suspect. In these situations, both officer and suspect can be injured unnecessarily.

Continuing to search for safer tactics to solve this problem, I recently attended an Active Countermeasures Course instructed by Gary Klugiewicz, who is employed by the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department as a Sergeant and Defensive Tactics Coordinator.

Gary Klugiewicz is recognized as one of the nation's leading control systems analysts specializing in the use of force. Gary has spent over ten years as a line officer, supervisor, and finally a control systems designer. He serves as a defensive tactics consultant for numerous police and correctional agencies throughout the United States.

Larry Hahn enthusiastically assisted in the instruction of the course. He is employed by the Waterloo, Iowa, Police Department, and is a member of the ACMi Systems National Training Staff.

I cannot begin to cover all of the subjects that were addressed in this course. Therefore, I am going to provide an overview of the Active Countermeasures Course and its advantages for tactical teams.



Gary Klugiewicz demonstrating proper takedown technique. (Photos courtesy the author.)

Gary begins the course by pointing out that his techniques originate from knockdown Karate, although neither the basic program nor the instructor certification class requires prior martial arts training. He provides an overview of the four components of Defensive Tactics Training: theory, psycho-motor skill development, techniques and simulation.

1. The *theory* behind the Active Countermeasures course is that of most defensive tactics courses: CONTROL. He emphasizes that control is not a 50/50 proposition, and the officer must ALWAYS maintain the position of advantage.
2. *Psycho-motor skills* training concentrates on body mechanics, such as balance, endurance, flexibility, focus, speed, strength and simplicity. The Fluid Shockwave Theory is introduced and further explored in the simulations. These are the components of power development.
3. *Techniques* that are covered include blocks, hand strikes, leg strikes and combinations with safe general target areas. Gary has a good building block approach to this training. The program was taught first by watching a demonstration, then listening to the explanation, then each repeated the movement, by the numbers, slow for form, then full speed and power.
4. The *simulation* component is broken into three levels: low, middle and high. During the first level of

simulation, low level, we were shown how to increase our power by doing some simple drills, such as twisting our hips, step and drag stepping and raising and lowering our center. With the use of training bags and feedback from our partners, we were able to understand when we were doing the techniques correctly. During this phase, we were taught about fluid shockwaves . . . which is allowing for the transfer of force from the unarmed striking technique to the target area. Once understood, this is the key to understanding the theory behind Active Countermeasures.

The middle level simulation is relative positioning drills, which is applying the techniques learned in the low level simulation to actual situations in which one is placed in a variety of defensive positions.

The high level simulation tests the officer to see if he/she can make the mental and psychological transitions from the classroom to the real world. Both the demonstrator and the officer don protective equipment. With a safety officer close by, trainees are engaged in several close quarter situations, such as lying on their back in a stairway, being pinned in a closed in area (such as a bathroom) and being assaulted while making entry.

This is where it all comes together — being placed in a situation where we had to immediately overcome active resistance and gain the position of advantage and maintain it. You automatically know what to do. It's intense and quick.

As Gary explains in his opening lecture, "The principles of defensive tactics are . . . it has to be rapid, intense, specific and the officer must be competent."

This is not your typical DT class. This is something you *know* will work, not, "I hope it works." In a short period of time, any officer, no matter what age, sex, size or skill level, can become very effective with Active Countermeasures.

The proper application of "dynamic entry" tactics may lead to a situation where "deadly force" is no longer appropriate. What happens when an officer encounters a situation where deadly force is no longer appropriate but the subject refuses to comply with verbal commands? ACMi Systems does it all . . . it's fast and easy to learn, it flows with the principles of dynamic entry, and it gives the individual many more options to choose from in an immediate threat situation.

Students clad in protective gear are briefed prior to simulation training.

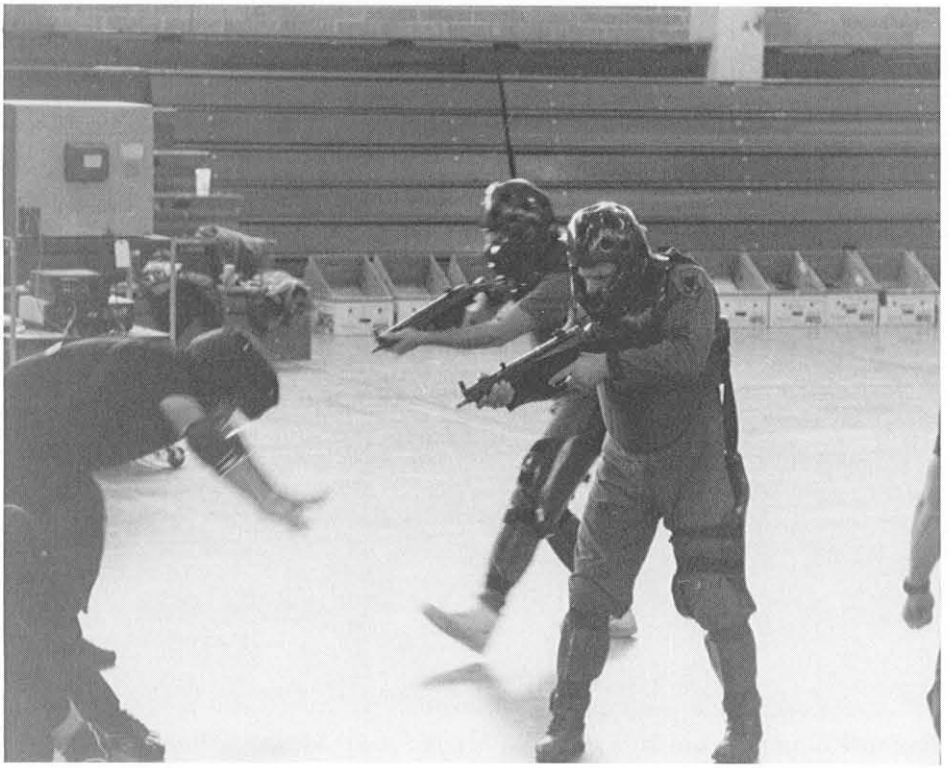
Students do not just go through the moves, they are met with resistance.

To quote Gary, "This training provides the 'missing link' between violent resistance and control that has traditionally been missing from law enforcement training."

At the same time, all parties involved will be safer, i.e., you, your fellow team members, and even the subject, who will be unable to continue resisting.

For any program on tactics to work, it has to be strong, simple and

continued on page 26



Students participating in high level simulation with weapons.

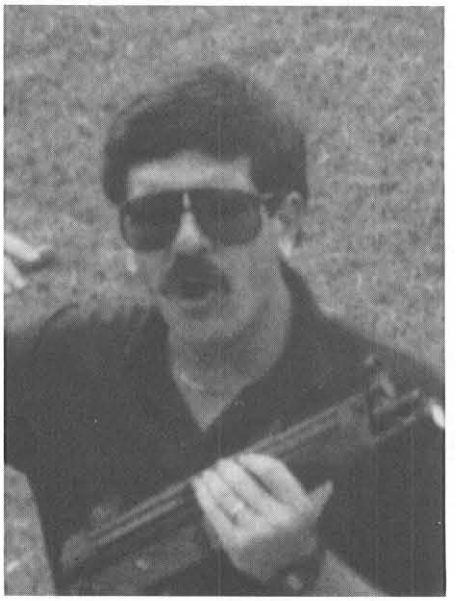
Active Countermeasures

continued from page 25

effective. The officer has to believe and have confidence in the system. From individual law enforcement officers to tactical teams . . . I cannot recommend a better course for increasing one's level of confidence and ability to control high risk, close quarter confrontations. *A+ on all levels!*

Needless to say, I was very impressed with the Active Countermeasures Course and look forward to my own continued involvement with Gary's progressive training program. The Milwaukee Sheriff's Department's Tactical Team and the HK International Training Division have been working with Sergeant Klugiewicz on the application of Active Countermeasures to their Tactical Team Training Programs.

For further information, contact: ACMi Systems, Active Countermeasures Instructional Systems, 4011 S. 90th St., Greenfield, WI 53228, (414) 327-1120, Gary T. Klugiewicz, Director.



About the Author

John Meyer is presently an instructor for the Training Division of Heckler & Koch, Inc., Sterling, Virginia. His duties include teaching existing Firearms and Tactics Courses and developing a new series of Tactical Team Training Courses. His responsibilities are to raise the skill level of tactical teams, provide firearms instructors with advanced techniques for weapons training, and improve officer survival.

Prior to joining the H&K staff, John was a Lieutenant for the Department of Defense Police, serving as Team Leader on the Special Reaction team, chief firearms instructor and principal instructor of SRT and police courses of instruction.

He is a member of the International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors, serving on the Board of Directors.