

60 Training with the movies:

By D. K. Bridgen

My first encounter with Ralph Mroz was between 10 and 15 years ago. We write for the same magazine, and I bumped into him at a SHOT Show somewhere. I had read and enjoyed his articles of course (Yes, we read other's writings!), and discovered Ralph was just as interesting in person. Ralph, who is a part-time LEO, and his partner David Kenik, have a special interest in defensive tactics, whether they involve empty hands, improvised weapons, knives, or firearms. And they take them seriously.

As you might expect, these two have definite opinions about which tactics work best; but, as with any serious student of defensive craft, they never stop revising and refining them. To pass on some of their expertise in the firearms field to the widest crowd, Mroz and Kenik have developed a three DVD series called "Armed Response."

While I have to say no one can ever reach their maximum potential just by watching these, or any other videos, for that matter, the "Armed Response" series can provide a really good springboard from which to start – assuming one actually makes the effort to practice the ideas and techniques presented in "Armed Response." There is a lot of good information in these DVDs, akin to the lecture portion of training, minus the live body standing right in front of you. Ralph's delivery and the way the material is organized make all three videos quite watchable.

The "Armed Response" videos are not intended to be watched all in one evening like the four "Die Hard" movies! Watch the first and the second (which has drills) and go to the range for a number of practice sessions. Then watch the third, and go back to the second video for a refresher on the drills, and head back out to bust more caps!

The first video, "Fundamentals of Defensive Shooting," covers just that, fundamentals, and a few topics not quite so basic. This DVD is not so fundamental that a complete novice with no idea where the bullet exits can watch it and skip a weekend trip to the range with his brother-in-law! However, if you've passed that point, this video is good to go. In about 150 minutes, Ralph takes you through a multitude of topics including: gun safety on the street, operating and reloading revolvers and pistols, belt and alternate carry options, drawing, and one-handed manipulations/shooting.

In my opinion, the next video to watch should be "Dynamic Drills for Defensive Shooting" (and then again after the last video). If you are early in your handgun growth, don't bother with the force-on-force materials at this point, concentrate on the pertinent stuff – and there is plenty of that.

In fact, there are in the neighborhood of 30 drills. Precision shooting, speed shooting, shooting on the move, use of cover, positions drills, and moving targets are a few. In fact – again depending on your level of expertise – this might be a good place to stop and devote a lot of range time. Some of the others (one-handed drills, shooting on the move, back-up weapons, CQB, shooting from a vehicle, etc.) really should be left until an appropriate skill level is developed.

The final video, "Tactics and Techniques for Defensive Shooting," takes the skills one has

developed so far and applies them in the real world. Several of the areas, in my order of priorities, are: assault cues and reactionary distance, avoidance and de-escalation, gun fighting survival priorities, CQB shooting, use of cover and multiple adversaries. There are plenty more, such as the "Defenses" (in your home, car, public places, and of a third party). All well thought out and presented.

Now go back and watch "Dynamic Drills for Defensive Shooting" again, perhaps adding a few more drills. For sure repeat those you worked on earlier!

Depending on your level of expertise, there is a lot on each DVD to chew on in just one sitting, which makes the ease of manipulating a DVD a plus. And no matter what your level, there are jewels worth spending the time, both refreshers and new material.

I especially appreciated the section on running safe and useful force-on-force simulation training. Unfortunately, with the prevalence of Airsoft guns, it sometimes seem that anyone who can buy one is a force-on-force "expert." The potential for injury or death is, of course, the most serious consequence from a cavalier approach; but allowing force-on-force to degrade into a game of "cops and robbers" is quite bothersome to me.

Bottom line on the "Armed Response" videos is: Buy them! They are worth the money, and certainly worth the time spent watching them – and then watching them again.

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