

# Police study new pistol technique

## Reality-based method more accurate under fire

By Steve Whipple  
Eagle-Tribune Writer

ANDOVER — Andover police officer Lee Britton can tell you that only 2 percent of police officers have to draw their guns in a life-threatening situation.

And although he has never been in such a showdown, he'll snatch any opportunity to improve his chances of survival should it ever happen.

Officer Britton was one of 40 law enforcement officials who attended a special seminar earlier this week at the Ramada Rolling Green where they learned about the point-shooting technique.

While traditional training calls for police to use a pistol's front sights, relying on skills that were taught at the firing range, point-shooting relies on the body's natural tendency to point the weapon at a threat and shoot without using the sights.

In point-shooting, the officer crouches slightly and raises the pistol, with either a one- or a two-handed grip, firing when it is at eye level.

"They're trying to give us an alternative to what we are taught," said Officer Britton. "It's not to replace anything. It'll be something to help you

### ANDOVER

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Massachusetts State Trooper Michael E. Conti

survive a lethal attack."

Officer Britton was joined by Sgt. William MacKenzie also of the Andover Police Department and other attendees from all over the Northeast.

According to Massachusetts State Trooper Michael E. Conti, who directed one of the seminars, "We're trying to make some real-world training available to the front-line troops in the departments.

"A lot of the training is not as reality-based as it should be," he added.

Trooper Conti — an instructor of firearms and tactical operations who wrote "In the Line of Fire: A Working Cop's Guide to Pistolcraft" — said he believes that point-shooting is a better method than the traditional two-hand "Weaver stance."

The Weaver stance results in a national average of only 14-17 percent of police hits at close range, he said.

"It's based more on the reality that you're facing an armed adversary, as compared to what has been taught the last 20 years when you're trained to be a better marksman with a target," he said.

Another speaker was former police officer and shooting instructor William E. Burroughs, who said that the the point-shooting technique "was intended to be so simple that a person who went to the firing range just once a year would learn it immediately."

This report was prepared by Steve Whipple. If you have questions, comments or material to add on this subject, please feel free to contact him by phone at 685-1000, by mail at Box 100, Lawrence, MA 01842, or by e-mail at [swhipple@eagletribune.com](mailto:swhipple@eagletribune.com).