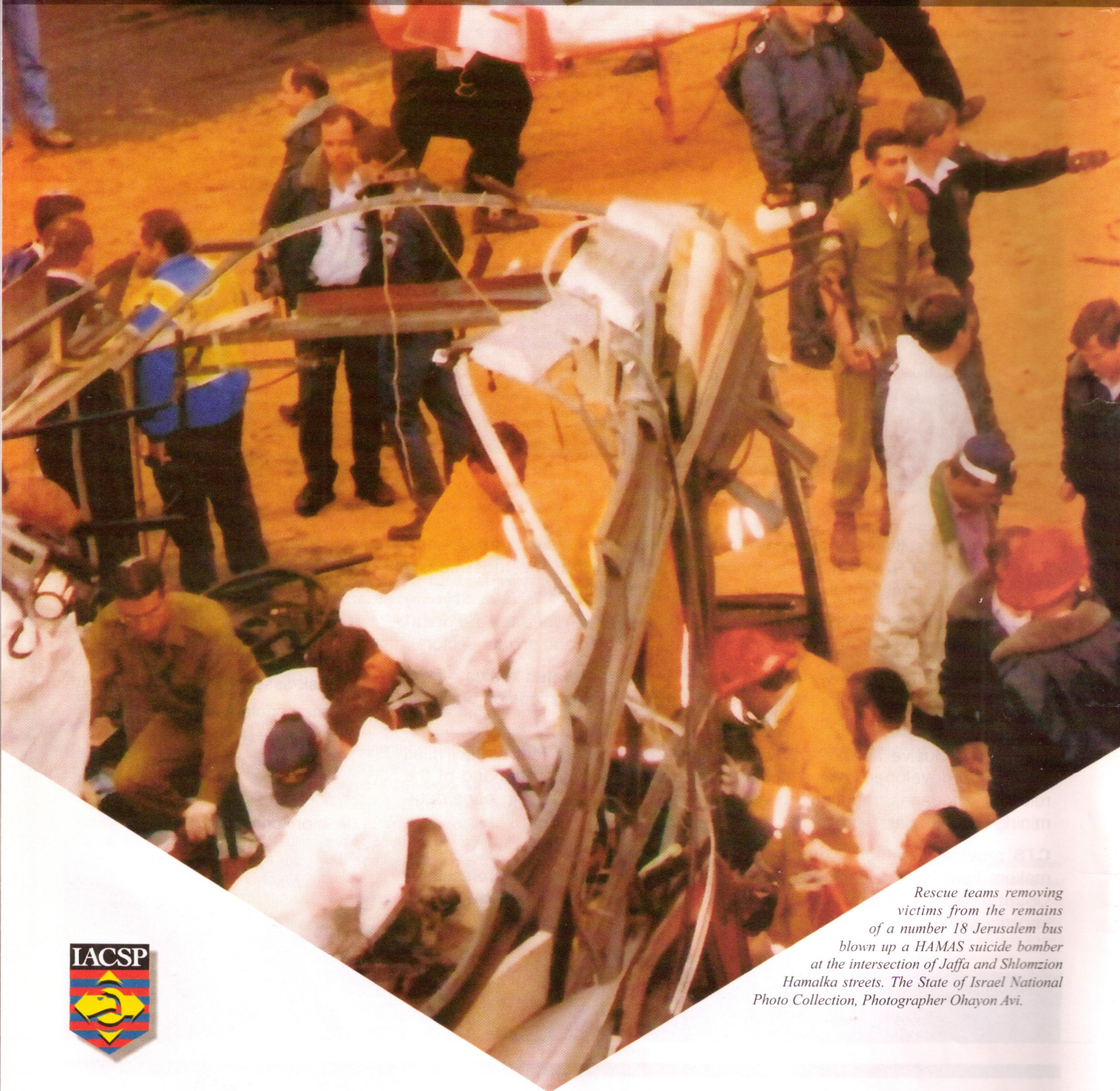


Israeli Combat Point Shooting

by Jim Weiss and Mickey Davis



Rescue teams removing victims from the remains of a number 18 Jerusalem bus blown up a HAMAS suicide bomber at the intersection of Jaffa and Shlomzion Hamalka streets. The State of Israel National Photo Collection, Photographer Ohayon Avi.



The greatest threat a country like Israel faces is the hooded terrorist or the stealthy bomb setter, especially in urban areas (this is also true for America's forces in Afghanistan and Iraq). The police and military response must be fast, efficient, and professional. Because of the experience Israeli forces have had with terrorist violence, other countries are studying their techniques. One methodology especially studied is Israeli Combat Point Shooting or ICPS.

History and Development of ICPS

ISI-Team (International Security Instructors) is a tactical training and counter-terror consulting firm comprised of professional operatives. It specializes in Israeli Combat Point Shooting training for executives, bodyguards, police and military units worldwide. Albert Timen, owner of ISI-Team (www.isi-team.com), was consulted for this article. Timen is a former Elite unit member of the Israeli Defense Forces, a veteran of Israeli Special Forces, and a firearms instructor specializing in Israeli Instinctive Shooting, with more than 20 years experience.

Israeli Combat Point Shooting began with a Jewish American named David Beckerman, who trained special operations in the US Army and fought in Europe during World War II. Beckerman immigrated to Israel during the post war years and soon became a developer of small arms warfare, especially handguns, for the military and government agencies of Israel.

The combat point shooting method itself was developed by Eric A. Sykes and William E. Fairbairn of the British Colonial Police Service (Shanghai's Municipal Police, at the time one of the most crime-ridden beats in the world). Their methods were studied, taught, and refined by Col. Rex Applegate US Army/OSS.

The Israeli government in the 1960s adapted these methods. After the first airline high jacking by terrorists and the implementation of the Air Marshal program in 1968, the Israeli government appointed Beckerman – the father of ICPS -- to spearhead the training of this program.

Instinctive and Point Shooting

One of the firearms point shooting training techniques being taught to a number of American police officers is Combat Instinctive Shooting developed by Col. Applegate; another is Israeli Combat Point Shooting.

Why is point shooting being taught at all? When a combatant such as a police officer encounters a sudden,

life-threatening situation -- also referred to as a survival stress event -- the sympathetic nervous system is automatically engaged. When this happens, various psycho-physiological effects take place, and fine motor skills are lost.

According to researcher Bruce Siddle, in this stressful situation the majority of combatants will not focus on or even see their front weapon sight. Siddle's research, *Sharpening the Warrior's Edge*, validates combat point shooting as taught by Col. Applegate. While Siddle's scientific research and additional papers are based on Applegate's style of instinctive shooting, the results of this research could perhaps be applied to Israeli selective/combat point shooting, validating the Israeli techniques. This would be like comparing two different types of apples rather than apples and oranges.

Israeli Point Shooting

The purpose of Israeli Combat Point Shooting is to enable a shooter to quickly and effectively to defend his or her life or the life of an innocent person, not to be more accurate or compete with oth-

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There are variations of Israeli Combat Point Shooting, ICPS, such as standing, kneeling, and shooting utilizing cover, as well as shooting with a handgun and adaptations using a subgun or carbine.

er marksmen. ICPS techniques employ the human body's inherent instincts and reflexes. Shooters use a natural pointing reflex combined with specific methods for maximum accuracy and safety. This is training to win in life-threatening situations, where the reaction time is a fraction of a second.

In this regard, the most important aspect of ICPS is that the shooter must rapidly overcome being fearful, slow, or frozen. Instead, the shooter must immediately switch to a combat mind set that relies on fast, intuitive instincts, and training-acquired tactical concepts. There are variations of ICPS such as standing, kneeling, and shooting utilizing cover, as well as shooting with a handgun and adaptations using a subgun or carbine.

In general, a police officer, soldier, or government agent must wait until the bad guy or terrorist makes an overt act, yet it is common for such aggressive acts to come without warning. This puts the police officer in a reactionary mode and at the disadvantage of being a second or two behind the criminal.

ICPS teaches the skills needed to overcome this time lag with speed and accuracy in an armed

encounter and win in a gunfight. Aggressiveness and decisiveness increase the speed of the reaction. Once again, mind set and training come into play.

The main ICPS principles for handgun combat are:

- At extremely close range, one-hand shooting is faster than two-hand shooting.
- The closer the shooter is to the target, the faster the shooting; the further away the target, the slower the shooting. This is referred to as balancing speed with accuracy.
- Placement of the trigger finger and placement of grip is maintained. (According to the

- When shooting, the shooter is static; movement is accomplished when not firing as the shooter moves quickly from point to point.
- The shooter shoots until the target is neutralized.

The Standing Horse Stance

A person's body reacts instinctively when engaged in the direction of a threatening situation. The threatened person lowers his or her body posture and raises the hands toward the mid-upper body area in order to protect or defend against the threat. This is a reaction to the brain's interpretation of any threat that can be frontally visualized.

In utilizing the standing horse stance, a shooter merges his natural body reflex into a firm and steady shooting platform, ready for the next move which is to draw the handgun and point it at the threat.

The standing horse stance has a very distinctive look. In this body posture the shooter slides his legs about shoulder width apart and bends his knees slightly, but does not allow the buttocks to go lower than knee level, almost a horse jockey stance. This lowers the entire body silhouette as well as the shooter's center of gravity, providing a solid posture that keeps the shooter steady while he or she focuses on engaging the threat up to ten meters away. Shoulders are squared with the threat for effective shot placement. Straight and locked elbows are pointed to the center mass of the threat for recoil reduction. Both eyes are open and focused on the target from

start to finish, and the shooter uses peripheral vision to overcome tunnel vision and spot possible threats and obstacles.

The Israeli standing horse stance is much wider than the isosceles stance taught by American combat point shooting instructors. With the isosceles stance, the shooter stands with feet parallel and pointed toward the target, knees straight, the entire body upright, and the head slightly forward. The arms are raised and point straight at the target, and the gun is positioned directly to the front. This produces a triangular shape which gives the stance its name.

According to Timen, the isosceles stance works well only when recoil control is not an issue and the shooter does not need to make rapid follow-up shots. If the shooter is practicing for self-defense or dynamic combat applications, he will probably want to use the standing horse stance as a shooting platform.

Drawing, Chambering and Shooting Differences

In point shooting, the Israeli styles of chambering a round and combat reloading are different from those taught to American police and our military or governmental operatives.

American point shooting methods advocate mainly using the front sight, aligning the sights when possible. The handgun is held at eye level or from the hip, depending on the shooter's distance from the target or his opponent. Very little movement is used and reloading is usually done at chest or belt level with the eyes on the target.

For Israeli-style drawing, chambering and shooting: (1) Enter to a ready standing horse stance, with back straight, and the feet parallel, (2) While the handgun is still holstered, grip it firmly, index finger outside

the holster, thumb between the gun and the shooter's body. The supportive hand is up, parallel to the ground and creating an "L" shape (3) Draw the handgun, while rotating it 90 degrees parallel to the ground. In right-handed shooting, the upper side of the slide (sights) faces to the left while the supportive hand grips the back of the slide, thumb on the upper part, and two fingers under the slide. Both elbows are up. While holding the slide, push forward only with

the shooting hand, rotating the gun and bringing the sights up. (4) Extend your arm(s), point and shoot. Do not lock elbows.



An Israeli Border Policeman frisking an Arab youth before his entering into the Temple Mount. The State of Israel National Photo Collection.

FBI, when they analyzed the problem of poor shooting they discovered that 95 percent of the time bad shots are made due to poor trigger control; it is that important).

- The shooter's body is a platform visually covering 180 degrees; he is able to move dynamical toward the threat by instinctively pivoting his or her body and hence covering 360 degrees of combat space.

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The training guideline for Israeli Combat Point Shooting is to secure one continuous move based upon the shooter's natural instincts, and constantly retrain until it becomes second nature. As practice progresses, the move is quickened to reach maximum speed while maintaining accurate shot placement.



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In Two-Hand Shooting, after chambering a round or drawing, the supportive hand joins and grips the handgun, the threat is identified, and the gun fired. There are also proper ICPS grip methods for one-hand and two-hand grips, both advocating the full 360 wrap-around handgun grip.

left side. In a second one-hand shooting technique for the supportive hand, that arm and hand are held extended out so as to push bystanders out of the way.

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- In using ICPS, the head is up so that the shooter can see what is happening around him or her. The arm(s) are straight, using the body's natural ability to point. From less than 15 yards, no sights are used.
- When reloading, the gun is held directly in front of the face with the muzzle pointing straight up toward the sky. This is done so that the

shooter can keep his peripheral vision down range and watch the bad guy if he moves around, and still be able to see his gun to reload.

Israeli Combat Point Shooting

The training guideline for Israeli Combat Point Shooting is to secure one continuous move based upon the shooter's natural instincts, and constantly retrain until it becomes second nature. As practice progresses, the move is quickened to reach maximum speed while maintaining accurate shot placement. ICPS techniques involve intuitive movements that everyone will do automatically when involved in a gunfight. These techniques of stance and natural pointing are the foundation of the Israeli Combat Point Shooting System and are time tested, battle proven, realistic techniques that have worked day in and day out in Israel.

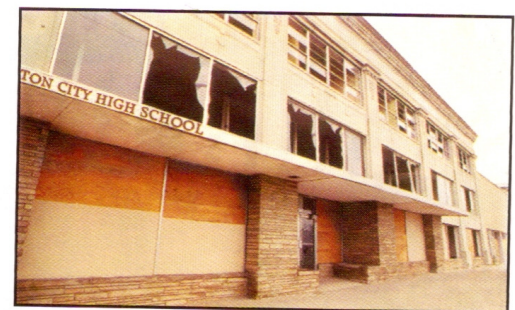


When utilizing the principles of ICPS handgun shooting, two techniques are used:

- In One-Hand Shooting, the supportive hand should hit your chest, rest on the thigh or be sent 45 degrees to the

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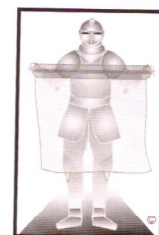


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