

## **UNCOVERED: THE MYTH OF COVER FROM YOUR SQUAD CAR**

### **GENERAL**

I recently conducted a pilot course entitled “**Advanced Patrol Officer Combat Tactics Instructor Course.**” My intent was to develop and push the envelope on live fire active shooter tactics for the patrol officer. I see aggressive tactics as stagnating or being lost to perceived liability and to trainers who fail to push and evolve.

The course was broken down into days or modules and day one consisted of range fire and barricade work. Day two involved vehicle bailout and movement drills along with Felony Hot Stop assault procedures involving a limited amount of officers. Day three consisted of CQB techniques for both two and four person teams. Day four put the training together and live fire movement to the breach point and hallway techniques were practiced. We also conducted live fire officer recovery drills.

It was day two that open some eyes. I began with a demonstration where I tape an IPSC target forward of the drivers door, half exposed. I then began to ricochet bullets into the kill zone of the target off the hood and off the windshield. Jaws dropped. Comments were made that this is where we have been trained to fight from for years.

### **VEHICLE AS A WEAPON:**

Officers should keep in mind that a vehicle can be used as a weapon should the need arise. A 3000 pound bullet can do a great deal of damage. Keep this in mind should the situation dictate.

### **VEHICLE AS A SHIELD OR A COFFIN:**



Vehicles can provide adequate cover if used correctly. The above picture is a ricochet from a Glock 30 .45 acp from about 7 yards. The left hand indicates the impact point on the hood and the string the angle of take off and impact on the target.



The above picture shows multiple impact points from both hood strikes and from the windshield.



I suggest not crowding cover and allowing the take off angle of the bullet to work in your favor. We found that three good steps to the rear gave enough angle to protect you in the kneeling position.



The above shot was delivered with a standard 16" M4 .223 .55 grain ball round. The hood absorbed much of the round, but a great deal kept going and penetrated center mass of the first target and through two 1 x 4" target stakes.



The above shot was from the front of the vehicle bouncing the .45 ACP 230 grain ball round off the hood, through the passenger compartment and into the target.



We also fired into the side of the vehicle, starting a take off angle on the rear door.



We fired another shot, this time with additional targets for distance effect. The third was missed and is about two steps back.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Crowding cover can have deadly consequences. Our tests were not scientific, but did show consistent take-off angles from the hood sideways, from the “V”, front on and from the side of the car. By simply taking a few steps off your cover, you minimized the risk of taking a ricochet. Something to think about the next time you decide to use your vehicle as cover

### **About the Author**

Paul R. Howe is a 20 year veteran and former Special Operations soldier and instructor. Paul currently owns Combat Shooting and Tactics (CSAT) where he consults with, trains and evaluates law enforcement and government agencies in technical and tactical techniques throughout the special operations spectrum. See [www.combatshootingandtactics.com](http://www.combatshootingandtactics.com) for details.