
ASP EXPANDABLE BATON

After a great deal of work, research and negotiations, on the 10th May this year the first officers in the United Kingdom were successfully trained and carried the ASP expanding baton onto the streets of Weston-Super-Mare. They were shortly followed by their colleagues in Bath. Since that date a total of 200 officers have been trained on the two districts and are carrying the baton. The training programme of 6 hours is conducted over two days, utilising the day shift Ottawa overlap period, therefore causing no abstractions from core policing. It will be fair to say that the training programme was greeted with great enthusiasm and participants gave a 100% commitment. Even the '2 minute war,' although regarded with some trepidation, proved to be enjoyable and did serve as a reminder to some officers the need for personal fitness is paramount in a demanding job.

All the officers carrying out the evaluation have been asked to provide details of incidents when the baton has been deployed. The response has been very encouraging, by far the vast majority of reports relate to incidents where officers have been in violent confrontations involving knives, scaffold poles and hammers and the mere action of opening the baton in the prescribed manner has had such a psychological effect on the offender that they have immediately thrown down their weapons and have surrendered without further struggle. This reaction has more than lived up to the claims of the manufacturer.

Whilst no-one has received a full power strike, it is encouraging to note that the offenders who have

been struck have received no injuries and in the main declined even to be examined - this may go some way in overcoming the fear that the ASP baton is lethal and would cause horrendous injuries.

As to the future - the evaluation must be progressed in the same positive, steady manner as the previous research, but from the comments of officers who state that just by carrying the baton gives them the confidence to deal with situations that would have previously caused alarm and the fact that already officers have been saved from serious injury or assault by using the baton must present convincing arguments for the introduction of the baton Force-wide.

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