

# THE PEACH OFFICER

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New baton at DNR

# DNR adopts ASP baton

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By Roger D. Garrison

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources is upgrading its law enforcement services through advanced training in defensive tactics. One of the objectives is to certify each of Georgia's conservation law enforcement officers in the use of an intermediate weapon in an effort to make a complete line of force options available to its law enforcement personnel.

In an attempt to fill this void, the department has selected one of the most highly advanced intermediate weapons available to law enforcement today, the Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP) tactical baton. The department feels the ASP baton will be most suited for conservation law enforcement, based upon tactical performance, control potential, injury reduction, psychological deterrents, instructor certification, training availability, ease of implementation and cost.

Combined with a progressive training program, the ASP tactical baton affords a complete system of force options to officers.

## Civil liability

Large civil liability court settlements

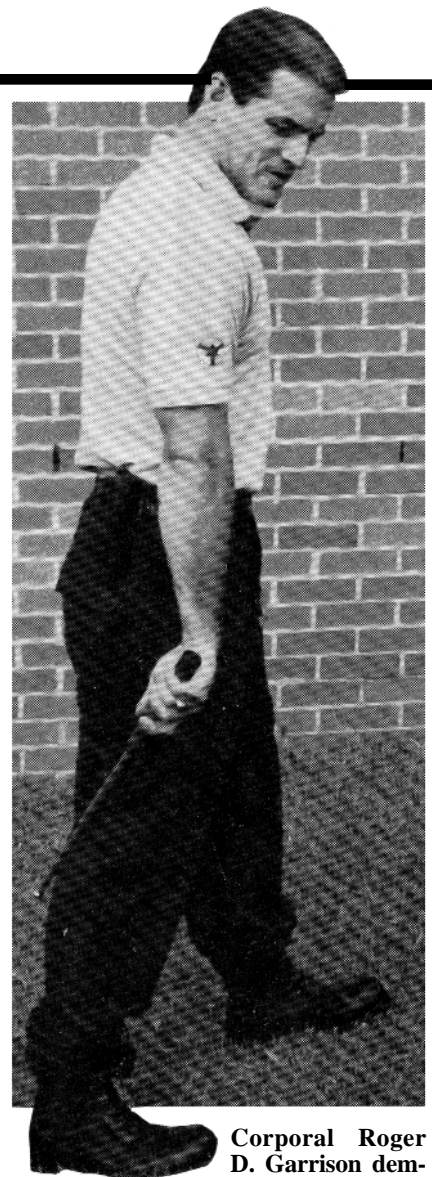
and the reluctance of insurance agencies to provide liability coverage have forced police administrators to closely examine departmental policies and procedures as they relate to training.

Vicarious liability has brought attention to all areas, but because of the inherent problems in the use of force, this area has proven to be one of the most costly when mistakes are made. As a result of these considerations, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources recently reviewed its training in the use of force.

Once the department certified members of the training staff as defensive tactics instructors, a review of the department's use of force policy was started. This review revealed that both ends of the force continuum appeared to be adequately fulfilled.

The lowest level of force is covered well in the "Ranger and the Public" instructional section, and the semi-annual training with firearms under various conditions gives the ranger sufficient training at the highest level. However, the gap between empty hand control and the use of deadly force was an issue that had to be addressed.

A look at other modernized police agencies revealed that almost all have a



**Corporal Roger D. Garrison demonstrates the ready position, holding the baton in the weapon hand just behind the strong leg. The baton may be open or closed.**

## Photographs by Captain Ralph Sheppard



complete line of force options available to the officer, including an intermediate weapon. So the search for an intermediate weapon to complete the ranger's force options was initiated.

At first this appeared to be a task for which there was no quick or easy answer. But just as quickly as the search started, the department discovered the perfect intermediate weapon--the Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP) tactical baton. It seemed to fill all the unique needs inherent to conservation law enforcement.

The ASP tactical baton meets three major criteria for any effective intermediate control device. First, it works in the field. The consensus of studies conducted by a diverse group of law enforcement organizations is that the baton is the most dynamic and operationally effective impact weapon available to law enforcement personnel today.

Second, the ASP baton can be readily implemented. The training program is applicable to all officers regardless of their age, sex, size or skill level. The training program is based on three simple techniques, which can be taught to a level of competency in a short amount of time. In addition, Armament Systems and Procedures offers a complete

**Greg Varnadoe holds the target for a straight strike in open mode.**

line of instructor training.

Finally, the baton was designed to be the most court-defensible intermediate control device available.

Everything about the weapon----its unprecedented psychological deterrence, a design that has no sharp edges or knurling, the balance of the baton, and its hollow tubular construction----minimizes the likelihood for injury while increasing control potential.

The ASP tactical baton was designed to be a light, fast and maneuverable impact weapon. As a result, the balance of the weapon tends to transmit fluid shock waves without the impairing crushing injuries that are often associated with heavier impact weapons. To assure that the baton is used to its maximum potential, Armament Systems and Procedures offers an extensive training program.

ASP instructor certification is conducted without charge to law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. From the design of the weapon, through the training program and the defense of the officer in court, the ASP tactical baton gives the Georgia Department of Natural Resources a complete

line of force options.

### **Design criteria**

The ASP expandable baton is American made

from the highest quality aerospace alloys and ordinance synthetics. Virtually every component of the baton has undergone extensive research and development efforts and has brought pioneering technology to the field of impact weapons. The baton is non-reflective and its finish is rust-resistant.

The handle is made of a patented foam vinyl that is attractive and exceptionally tough, while providing a firm, durable gripping surface. There are no sharp edges on the baton to abrade clothing. Batons are available with chrome or black penetrate shafts. Grips are produced with either a foam or textured metal surface. The baton locks into place with the flick of a wrist. Units may be closed by tapping the tip on a hard surface.

The ASP tactical baton has been called one of the most tactically advanced impact weapons in existence. The premium materials, exceptional workmanship and flawless function of the baton is set apart from all others in quality, durability and performance. ASP batons are the only impact weapons that meet the rigid requirements established by federal law en-





**The baton is fully open and locked in place.**

forcement agencies.

The primary advantage of the expandable baton is its ease of carrying. An officer can carry the expandable baton when other, longer batons are impractical or left in the patrol car. Since the baton is readily carried on the belt, the officer doesn't have to make a conscious decision to take the baton on each call. The compact size of the baton provides the opportunity for intermediate force that has long been missing from many police agencies.

From the non-uniform standpoint, the expandable baton is very easily concealed. As a result, it is compatible for the undercover officer as well as other non-uniformed personnel. The weapon provides a low-profile image without compromising tactical effectiveness.

The ASP baton has numerous advantages. It offers more controlled shock with less physical injury potential due to the lighter design of the baton and the smaller striking tip. Its low-profile nature provides for positive public perception, which is especially important in conservation law enforcement.

In addition, no baton in the world is effective if it is left in the patrol unit when needed. The ASP baton is easily carried on the equipment belt on every call. The extended baton provides an unparalleled psychological deterrent effect similar to the "racking" of a pump-action shotgun. This noise and psycho-

logical effect will often defuse the confrontation prior to actual use of the baton.

Its lighter weight and balance are well suited for today's police officer, enabling the officer to strike with more control and to gain control without permanently damaging the assailant. The baton can be used in the closed mode for a low-profile control tool, then instantly extended for use as an intermediate-impact weapon.

This is the first impact weapon that is practical for investigators, undercover officers, administrative and tactical personnel. ASP's extensive instructor certification program is available to all law enforcement agencies. Finally, ASP makes available some of the nation's most experienced, federal court-qualified "use of force" experts for agency defense. This defense is available for all use-of-force litigation, not just cases involving the ASP tactical baton.

### **Control v. damage**

A recent study conducted by the Japanese Secret Service concluded that expandable batons are better for controlling subjects than any other form of impact weapons. Expandable batons produce increased fluid shock waves due to their hollow construction. At the same time expandable batons are less likely to inflict permanent tissue damage.

The potential for greater control combined with reduced injury is one of the major benefits of the expandable baton concept. Impact weapons have a striking capability directly proportionate to their weight. As a result, the heavier the baton, the slower the striking potential. The lighter the baton, the faster the striking potential.

Expandable batons have not only fast striking ability, but also extremely fast recovery time. Because of their diverse ability, they are extremely effective defensive weapons. When striking a target's motor points and nerve centers, the baton provides greater potential for controlling an aggressive assailant.

Unfortunately, because the expandable batons are tooled out of metal, they draw analogies with metal pipes or flashlights. The truth is, the expandable baton differs greatly from these items in many ways; the design, intent and actual use are completely different.

Metal flashlights are designed to produce light. They have sharp edges, knurled handles and very limited reach. They are filled with heavy batteries and are slow in striking. Simply put, they were never intended to be an impact weapon and shouldn't be used as one. Recovery after the strike is also reduced because of their weight. As a result, flashlights have a greater propensity for damage with a reduced propensity for control.

Expandable batons are designed for striking. Modern tactical impact weapons do not have knurling or sharp edges that are objectionable in other products. These batons are balanced for striking as well as providing an extended reach. They have a fast delivery with a quicker recovery for multiple strikes. They provide greater propensity for control with a low propensity for injury. They provide greater fluid shock with less tissue damage.

There is little question that an expandable impact weapon has the greatest psychological advantage of impact weapons on the market today. Balanced with the psychological deterrent is the rapid striking potential and counter-strike capability, which can't be matched by any other weapon. Expandable batons provide the advantage of short length for better concealment, while also offering extended reach with relatively little effort.

The weapon may be used in either a collapsed, low-profile mode or extended to a higher-profile mode. They are the only type of weapons that change so quickly from low-to dramatic high-profile.

## Basic certification

Basic certification for the ASP tactical baton was developed to teach law enforcement personnel the fundamentals of using it in an operational setting. The program relies primarily on instructional techniques. ASP tactical baton techniques are taught using a four-part progressive format designed so all participants gain competency during training sessions. Each of the four segments is structured to set a deliberate pace of instruction so each participant leaves the course confident in the use of the baton.

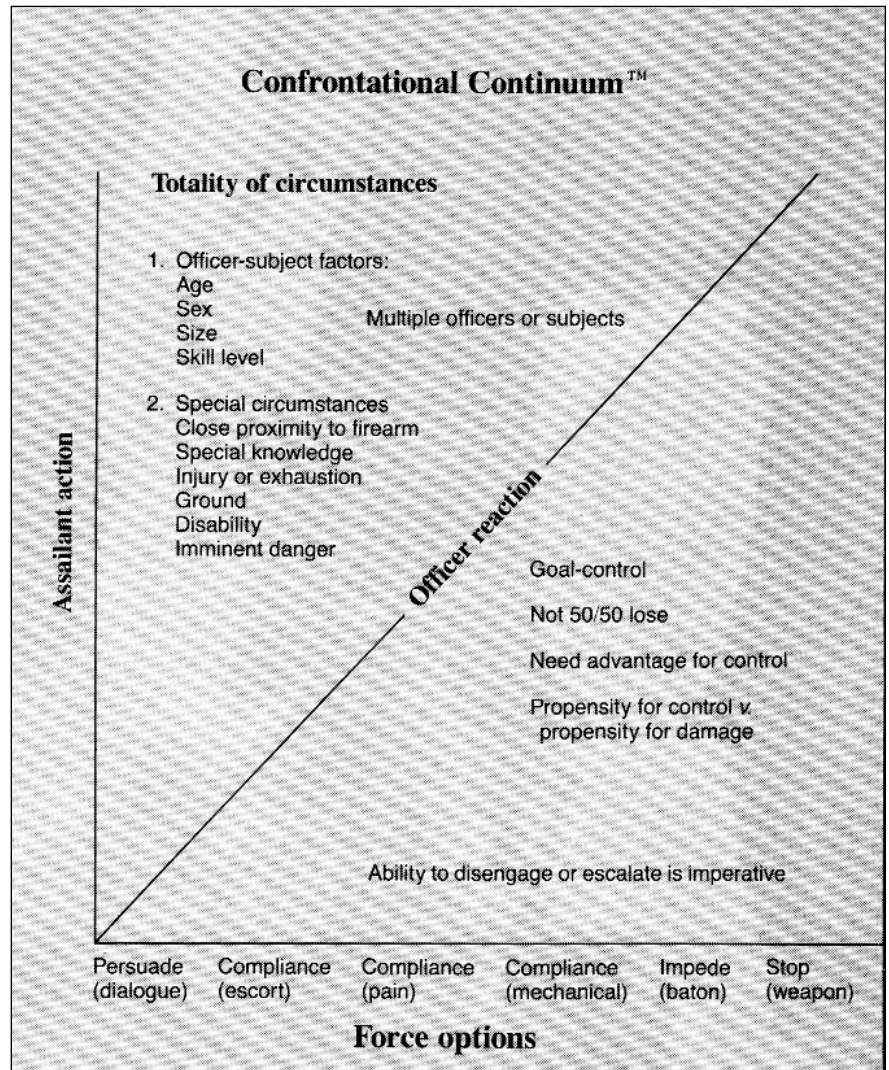
The first segment of the course breaks the different techniques into separate steps of movement. Each step is presented in a 1-2-3 sequence, to slowly introduce the student to each technique. The second segment allows the student to combine all steps of movement to complete a whole system of movement, but the emphasis is still on form, not speed or power in delivery.

The next segment combines all previous parts, and now speed and power are added for the student to experience the dynamics of the baton. The fourth and final step in the process is simulation. This segment provides a realistic, job-related, dynamic use of the baton under stressful conditions.

## The force continuum

The ability to legally use force in an arrest situation distinguishes the police officer from the rest of society. Because of this responsibility, the use of force by police often comes under close scrutiny both by the courts and especially the public. In an attempt to define appropriate circumstances for the use of force, the use of force continuum was developed.

This continuum gives the law enforcement administrator a feasible means of evaluating force usage. The continuum also gives the officer in the field a means of determining what level of force to use and a means of justifying one's action through documentation. This force continuum is a very important part of the ASP certification course.



The officer must clearly understand the circumstances that justify the use of an intermediate weapon as well as circumstances that do not support use of the baton. The horizontal force option line provides the officer with a series of responses available for use by the officer when confronting a subject. The most basic and the most desired defensive option available to the officer is dialogue, that is, simply being able to persuade the subject into compliance through communication.

The ability to "talk" someone into compliance avoids the dangers inherent to a physical confrontation in which the officer may be injured. It can't be over-emphasized that this is the most preferable defensive tactic.

If the officer is unable to achieve the goal of maintaining control of the person through dialogue, the next lowest level of force will require some type of

escort technique. Grabbing the subject by the arm is another low level of force that, combined with continued dialogue, may be sufficient to gain control. The officer is reminded to approach from a sound tactical position. The potential for injury to the officer increases as the reactionary gap is closed or reduced.

When the use of an escort technique fails or is not appropriate for the situation, the next force option is a pain compliance technique. One of the simplest such techniques is the traditional wrist lock. When used, the subject should clearly realize that the officer is accelerating the use of force. Continued communication is essential throughout the encounter in order to let the subject know what is expected of him. It gives the offender many things to analyze at one time and can provide witness support in subsequent criminal



**Corporal Garrison demonstrates the reaction-side strike with Corporal Greg Varnadoe as the opponent. The baton is in the open mode.**

proceedings.

Once this technique is no longer effective, the officer must resort to some type of mechanical contact. A punch, kick or some type of stunning technique becomes appropriate when pain compliance is not effective in gaining control of the subject. When mechanical control is administered, the officer's movements must be dynamic and accompanied by a follow-through technique that ends with the subject being completely stabilized.

If those techniques prove inappropriate or ineffective, the next level of force would be the use of an impact weapon. Again, it can't be overemphasized that the officer must continue to attempt dialogue throughout the confrontation. It is also very important that the officer realize the need to handcuff after the

slightest physical confrontation. Handcuffing will greatly reduce the likelihood of continued or renewed attack on the officer.

The vertical subject action line represents the offender's action during a confrontation. This line determines the officer's defensive responses. The officer reaction line bisects the subject action line and the force option line, linking officer reaction to increased offender action. As the resistance offered by the offender increases, officer response must increase accordingly in order to allow the officer to maintain control.

The officer's action in any confrontation are affected by the totality of circumstances surrounding the situation. Such officer/subject factors as age, sex, size and skill level of both the

officer and the subject must be considered when evaluating force options. Physical size or a difference in gender between the individuals involved may require varying amounts of force to attain control of the subject. It is also reasonable for a single officer to use more force when controlling more than one offender at a time.

Special circumstances may allow the officer to increase the level of force. A subject's close proximity to a weapon poses a threat to the officer that must be addressed immediately. An officer who has been injured or is near exhaustion would also be justified in escalating the use of force to control a confrontation.

## **Force evaluations**

The goal of the police officer in any confrontation is to control the subject. The officer must understand that this is not a 50/50 balance. The officer must stay one step ahead of the offender on the continuum to maintain control. The officer must win every encounter, not 50 percent.

Each technique the officer employs in a confrontation should be evaluated on its potential for control as compared to its likelihood for damage. The choice should be to avoid techniques that result in damage in favor of techniques that result in a high degree of control.

When evaluating these techniques, consideration should always be given to officer safety. The officer should always have the ability to instantly disengage or escalate response to a confrontation. Techniques that tie the officer to the subject should be rejected. Techniques that do not afford the ability to escalate force in response to a threat are unacceptable.





## Operational information

Proper body mechanics form the foundation of all ASP techniques. The ability for the officer to use the basic principles of body mechanics greatly increases the potential for control for the officer in a confrontation.

Four components create the pyramid concept of defensive maneuvers. The first component is a wide base, achieved by standing with feet apart at shoulder width. This stance provides good lateral balance, which isn't present with feet close together. The next component is a deep base, achieved by placing the feet one step apart, the reaction leg forward and weapon leg slightly back. When the deep base is combined with a wide base, the body is balanced from all sides.

To further improve one's balance, lower the center of gravity by bending the knees slightly. The weight of the body should now rest equally on both feet without tension in the ankles or knees. The final component is keeping the head over the center of gravity, thus keeping the weight balanced over the entire base.

It is very important that the officer not tense the muscles in any of these positions. Tense muscles cannot perform the dynamic movement that is vital to using the ASP baton. While maintaining the pyramid concept of body mechanics, the officer must relax to put the four principles into action.

Only when a strike is delivered does tension

become a component of the ASP techniques. This tension after dynamic movement will create trauma and generate fluid shock waves to control the assailant.

## Training terminology

To ensure the safety of participants and the instructor, both must share common training terminology.

**Strong hand** Often called the "weapon hand," the hand used to draw and fire the firearm, regardless of which hand is used. The strong hand is used to execute ASP strikes.

**Reaction hand** The hand opposite the strong hand. The reaction hand is used to maintain distance and to redirect an assailant.

**Strong leg** Sometimes called the "weapon leg," it is the firearm side of the body. This side of the body is referred to as the strong side.

**Reaction leg** The leg opposite the strong leg of the body is referred to as the reaction side.

**Closed mode** When the ASP baton is fully closed within the handle of the weapon.

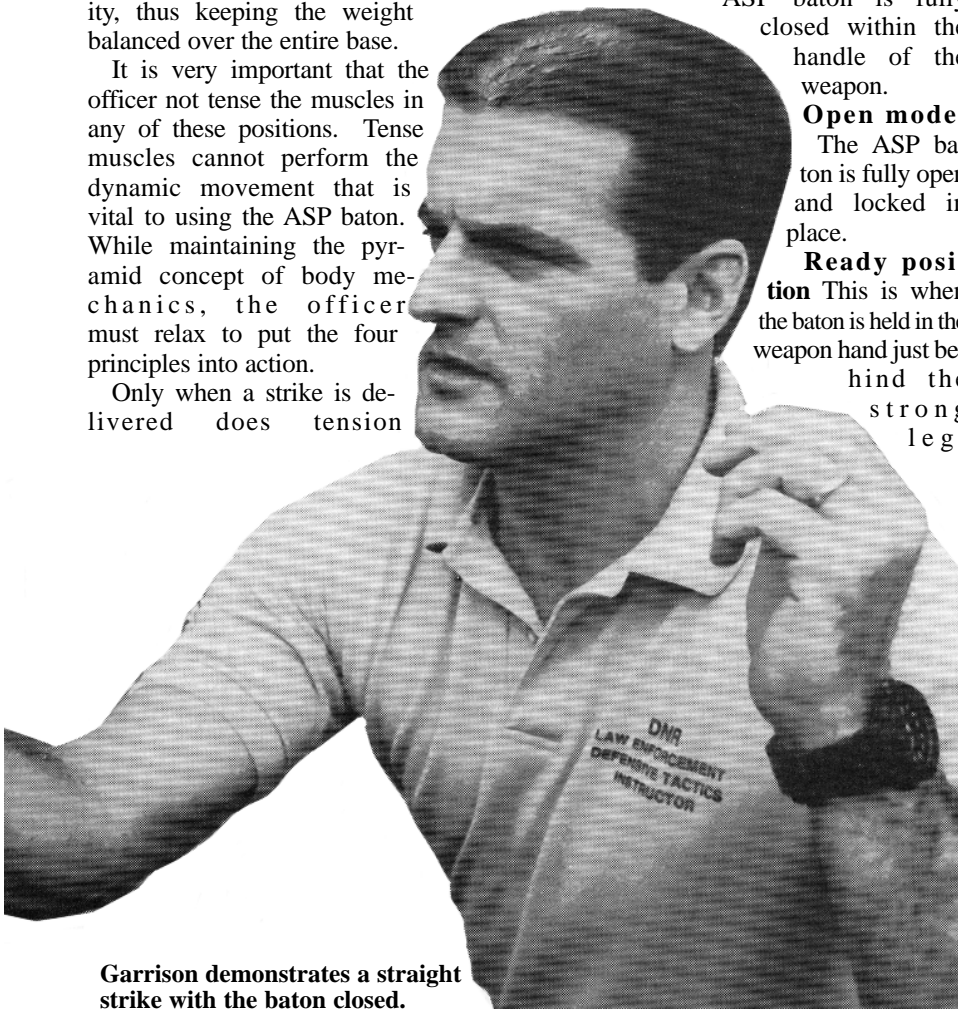
### Open mode

The ASP baton is fully open and locked in place.

**Ready position** This is when the baton is held in the weapon hand just behind the strong leg.



The interview stance with the baton in the closed mode.



Garrison demonstrates a straight strike with the baton closed.

The reaction hand is up. The baton may be open or closed.

**Loaded position** The baton is held in the strong hand at the point of the shoulder. The reaction hand is up. The baton may be open or closed.

**ASP strikes** There are three basic ASP baton strikes: the strong-side strike, reaction-side strike and the straight strike. Each strike is performed with the weapon hand from either a ready or loaded position. The reaction hand redirects, creates distance and supplies power through hip rotation. All strikes may be executed from the open or closed mode. The ASP technique sequence chart diagrams the basic

strikes.

### Conclusion

I believe that the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has taken a bold step forward. Its decision to include an intermediate weapon in its force options for the conservation ranger was not easy. No department likes the thought of addressing a "forced encounter," but they do occur and are occurring more frequently each year. Ignoring the problem will not make it go away or make it any easier to deal with after the fact.

The approach is to be proactive rather than reactive. This is addressed through a progressive training program that gives the ranger every possible option before the use of deadly force.

Through proper training, the ranger is capable of making an educated decision as to what level of force is necessary to control the situation. This educated decision is much less likely to bring harm to the ranger or to the offender. Regardless of what some people would like to think, conservation law enforcement is real police work. Statistically, the conservation ranger is more likely to be fatally assaulted than any other police officer. The potential for injury is present and must be addressed.

The ASP baton has been tested in the field and proved effective. The training provided by Armament Systems and Procedures is excellent. The basic certification course can be taught to a level of competency to any officer in a relatively short period of time.

Basic ASP certification consists of three simple techniques the officer is able to retain in a confrontational setting. The baton was designed to be the most court-defensible control device on the market today. The design has no sharp edges and the balance is such that it minimizes the likelihood for injury while increasing the likelihood for control.

The officer needs not decide whether to take the baton on a call. It's always there. Because of its low profile, it is perfect for conservation law enforcement. It would be best to never have to use the ASP baton, but when the situation warrants, the ranger is prepared to meet the situation in a confident manner. ■



Another view of the straight strike with closed baton.

## Questions frequently asked about the ASP baton

**Q** Isn't the ASP tactical baton an exotic weapon?

**A** While the martial arts community has a number of cheap expandable batons available, such products differ dramatically from the ASP tactical baton. The major agencies of the federal government, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Army, do not issue exotic weapons to their personnel. Yet, these agencies do issue the ASP tactical baton.

**Q** Is the ASP baton safe?

**A** A study conducted by the Japanese Metropolitan Police Department revealed that hollow tubular weapons provide greater control with less tissue damage than any other impact instruments. A neurological study of the reduced injury potential of the ASP baton is currently being conducted.

**Q** What are the advantages of an ASP tactical baton over side handle or straight baton?

**A** The ASP tactical baton is always carried. The finest baton on the market is of little value if left in the car.

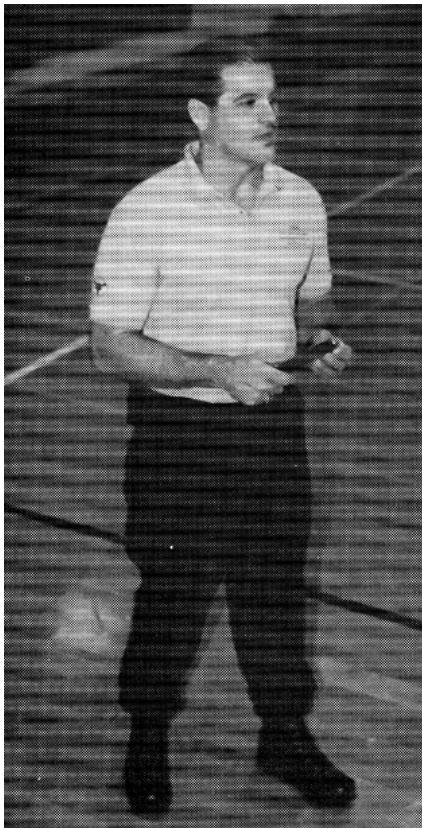


## About the author

Roger Garrison is from Ball Ground in Cherokee County. He holds an associate degree in criminal justice from Reinhardt College and is currently attending North Georgia College in Dahlonega. He has been in law enforcement for 11 years, the last seven with DNR's Law Enforcement Section in Cherokee County. He was promoted to corporal in 1989. Garrison is a POST-certified defensive tactics instructor and lead defensive tactics instructor for the DNR. He is married to Shelia Jones of Ball Ground and they have one son, Wesley.

Garrison presented the paper from which this article was taken at the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Convention in Richmond, Virginia.

In addition to material provided by Armament Systems and Procedures, this article cited *The Tactical Edge—Surviving High-Risk Patrol* by Charles Remsberg (Caliber Press, 1986), and from *Pressure Point Control Tactics Management Systems-Defensive Tactics Instructor Curriculum* by Bruce K. Siddle (PPCT Inc., 1986.)



**Roger D. Garrison**



**The ASP baton is part of the equipment worn on water patrol by Corporal Roger D. Garrison of the Department of Natural Resources.**

In addition, the ASP has a far greater psychological effect than either the side handle or straight baton. A field study by the Illinois State Police demonstrated that this psychological impact often defuses a confrontation before it occurs.

The training program for the ASP baton is more comprehensive than other available programs. In addition to providing more extensive court defense, the ASP baton is more defensible. It provides greater control with less tissue damage. The baton can generate greater fluid shock waves and allows the officer to recover faster than is possible with more traditional batons.

**Q** Who are the primary users of the ASP tactical baton?

**A** Initially, agencies find the plain-clothes personnel, especially investigators, like the ASP tactical baton. Tactical team members also account for a large segment of purchases. Some officers use the ASP as a backup to their duty baton. In recent years the baton has been adopted as a primary weapon by a number of agencies including county and state patrol organizations whose officers must frequently enter and leave their cars. Such officers find traditional batons cumbersome. Security organizations that want to maintain a low profile are also large-volume purchasers of the baton.

**Q** What if my department will not allow the expandable baton?

**A** As with semi-automatic pistols, some agencies are slower than others to respond to progressive movements in modern policing. However, there is a significant liability problem inherent in any agency that does not provide intermediate force for its officers. This applies to plain-clothes investigators and tactical team members, as well as uniformed personnel.

**Q** What kind of certification is available for the ASP tactical baton?

**A** There are three levels of ASP certification. ASP basic certification is provided for law enforcement officers. ASP instructor certification is designed to train instructors for police agencies. ASP trainer certification is available for individuals who will, in turn, train instructors in various law enforcement agencies.

Both ASP instructor certification and ASP trainer certification are provided by Armament Systems and Procedures at no charge. Participation in an instructor or

trainer program is scheduled through an authorized ASP dealer or ASP regional account manager.

**Q** Where is training in the baton available?

**A** Armament Systems and Procedures, as a service to the law enforcement community, offers semi-monthly instructor certification programs at no charge. In addition, the corporation has a list of individuals who conduct contract training with the baton on a regular basis.

**Q** If an officer in our jurisdiction wants to be trained, what do we do?

**A** Contact the nearest ASP dealer, who can arrange for an officer to attend a ASP instructor certification program. Regional account managers can also handle applications for individuals to participate in a program.

**Q** What is the liability impact of the ASP Baton?

**A** A recent study by the nation's foremost law enforcement legal organization referred to the expandable batons indicating that they are "currently issued to members of the Secret Service and U.S. Capitol Police. Japanese experience indicates that the weapon is more effective than the wooden baton and causes less bodily harm."

**Q** If our agency gets sued, will ASP defend us?

**A** Armament Systems and Procedures will provide expert witness support and will assist any law enforcement organization that is sued. Extensive litigation experience is available to assist in the defense of officers or agencies. In addition, ASP defense is not contingent upon purchase of an ASP product and is not restricted to a group of specific techniques that are sanctioned by Armament Systems.

**Q** Why is the ASP baton the best baton on the market?

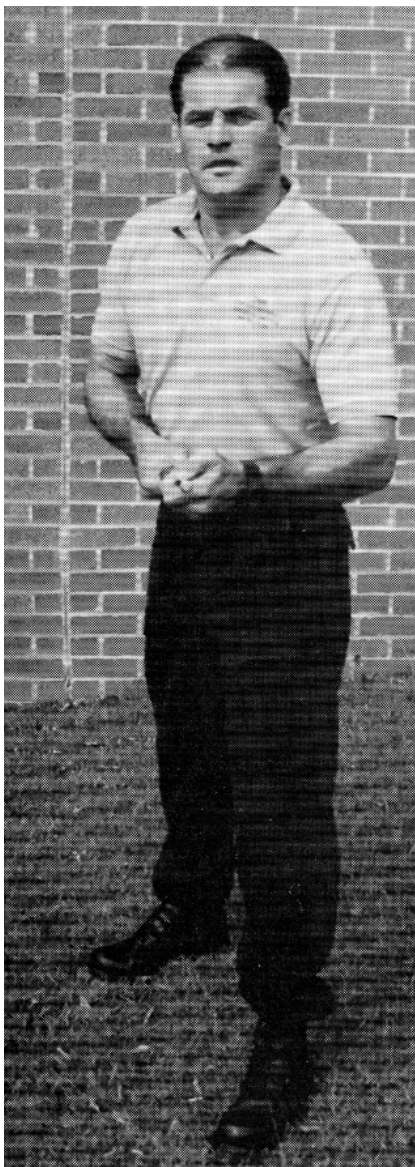
**A** An extensive study conducted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police, as well as evaluations done by federal law enforcement agencies including the United States Capitol Police, have demonstrated that the ASP baton meets the seven basic criteria of less lethal weapons better than any other product on the market.

**Q** Why are so many organizations switching to the ASP tactical baton?

- A**
1. The baton is carried and not left in the car.
  2. The ASP tactical baton is tactically superior to other batons; it works on the street.
  3. The weapon is easier to defend in court due to its low-profile image, high psychological deterrence, high potential for control and low potential for tissue damage. ■

# ASP targets

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Corporal Garrison demonstrates the straight strike.



A reaction-side strike with the baton in open mode.

**By Roger D. Garrison**

There are three principle target areas for the ASP baton. All techniques are designed to deliver one or more strikes to the knee, abdomen or elbow.

These areas were selected as target areas because of their physiological vulnerability. Strikes to the abdomen generate fluid shock waves, while strikes to the knees and elbows disable an assailant's "delivery system."

**It can't be overemphasized that the face, head or neck are not target areas. Do not strike the face, head or neck.** Strikes to these areas may pro-

duce fatal injuries and may not be effective at immediately terminating resistance.

However, strikes to the target areas have a high potential for control and a low potential for fatal injury. These are forgiving targets. If the offender moves or a strike misses, surrounding targets also have high potential for control and low potential for damage.

## **Strong side strike**

A strong side strike is delivered from the weapon side of the body. The strike is delivered at a 45-degree downward



angle, targeting the knee or elbow. The strong-side strike may be delivered from the ready or the loaded positions.

### **Reaction side strike**

The second ASP strike is delivered from the reaction side of the body. The strike is executed at a 45-degree downward angle, targeting the knee or elbow. The reaction-side strike may be executed as part of a "cross draw" or may be used as a follow-through after a strong side strike.

### **Straight Strike**

The straight strike is delivered to an assailant's abdomen from the ready or loaded position. The striking surface of the baton is the tip. The straight strike is designed to create distance and to deal with a sudden attack at close range. ■



**Opponent Corporal Greg Varnadoe takes a strong-side strike from Corporal Roger D. Garrison. The baton is in the open mode. (Photographs by Captain Ralph Sheppard.)**