
FIELD TESTS

A Series of Evaluations

THE ASP EXPANDABLE BATON

By NEAL FORTIN

Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP) is best known for their ASP pistol, a chopped and redesigned Smith & Wesson M39. The ASP pistol became a favorite of intelligence agencies and had a reputation as "unseen in the best places." Its fame spread wider than its actual use, partly because it was too innovative when introduced over 20 years ago. It affected future pistol design and probably led to Smith & Wesson producing the model 469 fifteen years later.

Armament Systems and Procedures also designed and manufactures expandable "Tactical Batons." While less well known than the ASP pistol, these batons are of far more interest to general law enforcement officers.

The ASP baton is well thought out and designed. The tubing is a special alloy with a Rockwell hardness of 55C (similar to that of knife steel). There are no knurling or sharp edges to either abrade clothing or injure a suspect. The grip is textured, vinyl foam that has similarities to Pachmayr grips, and it provides a truly superior handle.

The obvious use of the ASP collapsible baton is in plainclothes work. When I entered plainclothes, I felt naked without my baton. The ASP provides us an impact weapon that is easy to carry and conceal in plainclothes.

The ASP batons also provide a very low profile. Modern baton techniques are quite humane, but segments of the public still view

the baton negatively as a club or bludgeon. The ASP can improve officers' public-image profile. Court officers, security personnel, and others with high public profiles should really appreciate this asset.

The ASP is opened with a sharp flick of the wrist. The sharp metallic clack upon presentation is best described as akin to the sound of racking a shotgun. Very often, the loud "clack," is sufficient to de-escalate a combatant's hostilities. This has proven itself on the streets as a very effective psychological deterrent.



This loud clack also provides a clear-cut display of the escalation on the force continuum, and this could offer a legal advantage. The dramatic shift from low profile to high profile clearly highlights the combatant's opportunity to cease hostility. This, along with the ASP's lightness, making it less prone to inflicting serious injury, should promote defense of its use. In addition, ASP will provide, if needed, expert witnesses to defend the use of their batons.

Other advantages of the ASP include the fact that unopened, the baton serves for kubotan and yawara techniques. It is also compact enough that tactical officers can easily carry it on their assault

vest, where no impact weapon was carried before.

Not many officers carry back-up impact weapons. Flashlights, or anything else available, are the usual back-ups. These have legal and practical disadvantages. I occasionally carried a flat sap as a back-up when I was in uniform. Its only advantage was that the slapper fit easily in my slash pocket and was fairly concealed. Saps, however, are strictly close-range weapons, and they have a heavy stigma associated with their use. The ASP is a superior back-up.

ASP offers a complete training program with training batons and pads, training materials, and certification. Their scabbards are of top-quality leather and display excellent workmanship. The ASP tactical baton is a well thought out system. Armament Systems and Procedures and Dr. Kevin Parsons, the designer, did their homework.

The ASP baton offers advantages in public image, ease of carry, ease of concealment, psychological deterrence, and liability. Several federal and municipal agencies use the ASP collapsible baton. Others could do well to look into it, especially plainclothes officers but also as optional equipment for uniformed and tactical officers.

Manufacturer
**Armament Systems and
Procedures, INC**
Box 1794
Appleton, WI 54912
(920) 735-6242