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Proposed Use Of Patrol Rifles In a University Setting

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**By
Dennis Rogers
University of Houston - Clear Lake
Houston, Texas
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ABSTRACT

In today's society, there is an increase in terrorism, violence, and violent crimes against people and property. These vicious crimes are being committed against people and society at the local, national, and international levels. The people who envision and then carry out these heinous acts of terrorism and violence are becoming more thoroughly armed with more sophisticated weapons and are being meticulously trained in the use of these new and improved weapons of violence. Police officers must change with the times.

The expected outcome of this research is to have the UHCL Police Department policy changed to allow patrol rifles to be carried by patrol officers.

Ballistics comparisons of the 5.56MM round to the three most common sidearm calibers (9mm, .40SW and .45 ACP) shows that the 5.56MM round has a reduced penetration depth. This invalidates the common theory that patrol rifle calibers are too powerful for use in a densely populated university setting. This research additionally indicates that patrol rifles are inherently more accurate and already in use in many patrol settings. The research conducted proves that patrol rifles can and should be a vital piece of patrol officers standard issue equipment. We, as a police department, need to increase our capability and effectiveness by adding patrol rifles to the patrol units at our university.

The normal training for patrol rifles is a basic rifle school with additional quarterly training. Equipping the patrol officers will be cost approximately \$1500.00 per officer. Patrol rifles should be a vital part of UHCL police officers obligatory equipment.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's society, there is an increase in terrorism, violence, and violent crimes against people and property. These vicious crimes are being committed against people and society at the local, national, and international levels. The people who envision and then carry out these heinous acts of terrorism and violence are becoming more thoroughly armed with more sophisticated weapons and are being meticulously trained in the use of these new and improved weapons of violence. Police officers must change with the times. One way to do this is with intensive training in the use of heavy-duty weapons such as the carbine-style patrol rifles. Due to the rise in the number of calls for armed response, in which the patrol officers are encountering heavily armed suspects, the use of the carbine-style rifle would be a sensible addition to their everyday armory. This issue of increased violence in schools and communities is intended to support the use of carbine-style patrol rifles in the University setting.

Currently, University of Houston – Clear Lake Police Department (UHCL) policy only allows officers to carry a handgun and twelve-gauge shotguns. Campus officers must be able to end violent confrontations in which the criminals might possibly be heavily armed and carrying semi-automatic rifles. As it stands, UHCL officers cannot do this safely with the current weapons approved under the current policy. If the officers of UHCL are faced with a heavily armed confrontation, they are expected to request assistance from the Houston or Pasadena Police Department's "Special Weapons and Tactics" (SWAT) teams. The reason behind contact with the two different departments is the geography of

the UHCL campus, which is located within both of the city's jurisdictions. The problem with requesting backup from one of these departments is that there will be an approximate one-hour response time before the SWAT teams arrive at the scene. If the UHCL officers were equipped with patrol rifles it would at save precious time essential to end the violent confrontation. The confrontation could then be under control prior to SWAT's arrival. This change in weaponry will improve the officer's safety along with protecting the safety of the University's population, including faculty, staff, students and visitors to our campus. This improvement would be due to a quicker reaction time from the UHCL police and would help to ensure a rapid end to any violent confrontation. A review of the current weapons policy is needed to determine if such revision is feasible based on the information provided in this paper.

Data for this research was obtained from publications, professional journals, magazines, personal interviews, and surveys. The audience intended for this research is the University of Houston – Clear Lake Chief of Police. The expected outcome of this research is to have the UHCL Police Department policy changed to allow patrol rifles to be carried by patrol officers. Once the data from this research is presented and proves that there is a need for the policy change to allow the officers to carry carbine type patrol rifles, a change of the policy can be initiated. This research can also be presented to other University officials above the Chief's office to assist in policy revision and approval.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“No, you don’t need rifles in your patrol car here at UHCL. Violent armed confrontations will never happen here. Well, we cannot maintain that mindset that UHCL is immune to violence and terrorism.” Here in 2004, violent crimes against persons and property are rising. The author will address the topics of terrorism, school shootings, university and/or college shootings, and bank robberies involving highly confrontational shootings.

The most well known act of terrorism was carried out on September 11, 2001 and occurred on United States soil. This cowardly act of terrorism happened when members of a terrorist group took control of four passenger planes by using force to gain access to the cockpits. Two of these flights flew into the Twin Towers in New York City. Heartbreakingly, thousands died in the Towers, all of the passengers in the two planes were killed, and many surrounding buildings were destroyed as well. A third plane flew into the Pentagon in Washington D.C. killing everyone in the plane and many in the building. The fourth plane was attempting to fly to another government location when a group of passengers heroically tried to re-gain control. The result was the plane came crashing down in a field in Pennsylvania with everyone aboard dying on impact. If not for the brave passengers on this flight, who knows what kind of greater tragedy might have occurred.

School shootings are becoming more prevalent in our society today. These horrific acts are all pre-meditated and involve firearms. An article entitled “A Time Line of Recent Worldwide Shootings” (“A Time Line,” 2004) detailed

numerous school shootings from February 2, 1996 to September 24, 2003 a total of thirty-seven (37) shootings have occurred in our elementary schools, intermediate schools, and high schools. Out of these thirty-seven (37) shootings ninety-eight (98) people have been killed, one hundred thirty-eight (138) people have been injured, and two (2) people have been taken hostage. This leaves a grand total of two hundred thirty-eight (238) people being directly caught in thirty-seven shootings. These numbers do not include the many people affected in school gun-fire. These people include teachers, other students, staff, parents, families and responding agency personnel, some of who are innocent bystanders that get caught in the middle.

Below is a list of the better known school shootings published in the above article ("A Time Line," 2004)

1. On Feb. 2, 1996 in Moses Lake, Washington a 14-year-old student kills two students, one (1) teacher and wounds another student as he opened fire on his algebra class.
2. On March 24, 1998 in Jonesboro, Arkansas, two (2) male students ages 13 and 11 killed four (4) students and one (1) teacher and wounded ten (10) others as they exited the middle school during a false fire alarm.
3. On May 21, 1998 in Springfield, Oregon two (2) students were killed and twenty-two (22) others were wounded in the cafeteria by a 15 year old male student. This student was arrested the previous day for carrying a gun to school. His parents were found dead at their home.

4. On April 20, 1999 in Littleton, Colorado two (2) students killed one (1) teacher, twelve (12) classmates and wounded twenty-three (23) others as they went on a shooting spree with automatic rifles at Columbine High School. The two then turned the weapons on themselves. They had intentions on killing five hundred (500) students and then blow up the school. Explosive devices were found on the school grounds.
5. On April 26, 2002 in Erfurt, Germany a nineteen year old male killed (13) teachers, two (2) students, one (1) policeman. He also wounded ten (10) people and then killed himself.
6. On April 14, 2003 in New Orleans, Louisiana one (1) student was killed and three (3) students were wounded at a high school as a result of gunfire from four teenagers that were not students. This shooting was gang related.

Shockingly, a pattern evolves from all of these shootings. First is the use of high capacity firearms. Second, they all took place at a school, such as elementary, intermediate, and high schools. And third, they were all committed by males.

Institutes of higher education are not exempt from the rampant gun violence sweeping the country. College campus shooting crimes are on the rise too. The following information will show a frightening trend at America's universities and colleges.

On December 14, 1992 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, Wayne Lo a student at Simon's Rock College of Bard went on a shooting rampage armed

with two hundred rounds of ammunition. The shooting left two (2) people dead and four (4) people injured. Lo was very open with his hate towards diverse groups (Roche, 1992). On August 1, 1966 in Austin, Texas at the University of Texas, Charles Witman fired a rifle from the top of a tower killing fifteen (15) people and wounding another thirty (30) people (Hale, 2003). On January 14, 2002, former student Peter Odighizuwa, who had recently flunked out of an exam, went on a shooting spree at the Appalachian School of Law. The rampage left three (3) students wounded, one (1) student dead and one (1) faculty member dead. The weapon he used was a .380 caliber handgun ("Appalachian School of Law," 2002). On October 28, 2002 in Tucson, Arizona, at the University of Arizona, students taking an exam were disturbed as a student, who had been barred from the exam, came into the room and began firing. As a result of the shooting two (2) professors were killed in the testing area and another faculty member was found dead in her office ("Three Professors Killed," 2002). On Sunday May 11, 2003, in Cleveland, Ohio, at the Case Western Reserve University's School of Business, a camouflage clad gunman shot and killed one (1) person while wounding another during a seven hour standoff with police. The shooter had two guns and five hundred rounds of ammunition. The shooter was also wearing a bulletproof vest. The shooter was a graduate that had recently sued an employee at the university (Withers, 2003). On February 28, 1997, in the early morning hours, two heavily armed individuals entered a north Hollywood bank. These criminals were heavily armed with fully automatic AK-47 rifles and a hundred rounds each. These two robbers were fully

clothed in body armor from head to toe. After exiting the building, they engaged the responding officers in automatic gun fire. The responding officers were firing the weapons they had in their possession, which were handguns and shotguns. The officers were so heavily outgunned by the bank robbers that they had to borrow carbine style rifles from a local gun store. This confrontation lasted an hour and a half before the first gunman was stopped by a shot to the head. The second gunman engaged officers and arriving SWAT officers for another forty-five minutes before the gunfight was ended (Parker, 1977). On November 1, 1996, the Houston Police Department created the Houston Area Bank Robbery Task Force to address the increasing number of bank robberies in the Houston Area ("Houston," 2004). In March of 1997, three men armed with carbine style rifles entered a north Houston bank and exchanged gunfire with a Houston Police Officer. The three criminals fled the scene without getting any money, but in the confusion of escape, one of the gunmen was left outside the bank by the getaway car. This gunman ran across the street and stole a truck to make his escape. During the exchange of gun fire, the officer was wounded by flying glass. Blood was found in the getaway car indicating that one of the gunmen had also been wounded (Bardwell, 1997).

In 2002, as a result of the formation of the Houston Area Bank Robbery Task Force, the Houston Police arrested a suspect thought to be involved in several bank robberies. Eleven bank robberies were cleared with the arrest of this suspect ("Bank Robbery," 2002). In July of 2003 a suspect was arrested and charged with four bank robberies in which he used a firearm in the Houston area

(Handy, 2003). These are just two examples of the high number of bank robberies committed by one person.

On May 27, 1998 police in the city of Bellaire, Texas, were responding to a hold up alarm and a vehicle pursuit ensued. The suspect stopped during the pursuit, jumped out of the car, and commenced firing at the officers with an automatic rifle. None of the officers returned fire due to heavy traffic in the area. None of the officers were injured during the shoot-out. However, the officer's patrol vehicles did sustain gun damage (Byars, 1998).

In each of these incidents, the responding police officers were armed only with a handgun and/or a shotgun. Had the officers been properly trained and equipped with carbine style rifles the confrontations could have ended quicker and without prolonged danger to the public, innocent bystanders or officers.

When faced with a hostile shooter, patrol officers must be able to take immediate action and not have to wait for better equipped SWAT teams to arrive (Hawkins, 1999). If officers are forced to wait and do nothing to apprehend the suspect(s), tragedy might occur. Due to the increase in heavily armed confrontations we must change with the times and the use of carbine style rifles is just one of the many changes needed to update the UHCL police department. There are questions to address regarding the positive and negative aspects of carrying such a weapon.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research paper is to inquire about the advantages and disadvantages of carrying a carbine style rifle. These rifles are a necessity for patrol officers in a university setting. First, this research will look at some major advantages of carrying the rifle. The main advantage is simple, better equipped and better trained officers equal less danger to faculty, staff, students, visitors, and patrol officers in the event of a violent confrontation involving heavily armed suspects. Another reason is that an officer equipped and trained with a rifle can respond and react quicker on the scene instead of having to wait for a special operations team, such as SWAT, from surrounding police agencies. Officers must be always at the ready for confrontations in today's society.

The disadvantages of patrol rifles being carried in a university setting include the increased cost to the department and university for equipment and training. The advantages of having this weapon at hand far out weigh the disadvantages of it not being available when needed. The misconception of a carbine rifle being too much firepower will also be discussed. This misconception will be proven false through ballistics and graphs illustrating and comparing pistol rounds to the patrol carbine rifle round of .223 or Nato 5.56.

The research consisted of numerous trips to libraries where a multitude of police journals, periodicals, web sites were reviewed. A phone survey was also conducted in which firearms instructors, SWAT team members, and supervisors of surrounding police agencies were contacted,. These agencies included police

departments of all types, such as university police, municipality police, and school liaison officers. Questions asked in the survey included the following.

- 1) Does your department allow patrol officers to carry patrol rifles?
- 2) What type of rifle is allowed for carry?
- 3) What kind of ammunition does your department used?
- 4) Is the rifle and additional equipment/training supplied by the department/agency or by your officers?

FINDINGS

Rifles have been an integral part of patrol officers for many years. Just in the last few years due to the rise in school violence and terrorism are the patrol rifles becoming a required piece of equipment for patrol officers. They are no longer just for special units.

This research has shown the need for rifles in a university setting due to escalating violence in school crimes and terrorism. These current trends are occurring more often, more rapidly, and are increasingly committed by suspects with high power weapons. "It is no longer unpredictable that some school somewhere is going to be assaulted by some sort of lunatic, so you better be prepared for it" (Klinger, 1999, p. 1).

To have a chance against these high-powered violent confrontations police officers and police administrators must be prepared. To combat these new trends administrators must implement new policies and training guidelines. The very first step in preparedness is to accept the reality that such an incident

may occur in any jurisdiction. Administrators must ensure that policy, training and equipment will aid their front line personnel. While many agencies do not have the resources to go out and purchase equipment and send their personnel to training, changes in policy and putting plans into effect cost nothing (Hawkins, 1999).

Law enforcement as a whole has made great strides in the development of Special Weapons and Tactics/Special Operations Teams in the last two decades. Even the smaller departments are becoming more involved with multi-regional response teams, combining resources allows for a full team to be available in the event that a situation arises (Hawkins, 1999). This still leaves a void for immediate confrontations of violent high-powered suspects. Waiting for these specialized units, such as SWAT, is not an option. This means that patrol officers themselves must have the weapons readily available and the appropriate training to immediately end these confrontations by isolating or eliminating the shooter(s). The weapon of choice is the carbine style rifle commonly known as the AR-15. The caliber most commonly used is the .223.

“The sight of a patrol rifle in the hands of a patrol cop, the citizens of a community seem to adapt quickly, especially if those rifles contribute to a safer environment for their community.”(Huntington. 1997 pg.39) Contrary to popular misconception, it (.223 caliber) does not over-penetrate in human adversaries. The tiny .223 round almost invariably remains in the miscreant, usually penetrating less than 10 inches, but causing a virtual instantaneous cessation of hostiles. Finally can a modern agency afford to have its officers sending dozens

of .32 caliber buckshot pellets careening down city streets, often fired by “officers who are intimidated by the very shotguns they hold?” (Huntington, 1997, p. 39)

The .223 rifle allows an officer to handle a situation at greater distances and be far more accurate, which greatly reduces the safety risk if it becomes necessary for an officer to fire. It has also been found that smaller officers find it much easier to handle the rifle than a shotgun, and it is more accurate pattern when shot towards an intended target 30 or 40 yards away, rather than an expanding pattern of 12 projectiles (12 gauge 00 buckshot). The .223 caliber soft nose bullet is also a very safe rifle round that has virtually no over-penetration factor and is accurate at greater distances than the 9mm round (Pilant, 1992).

The most 3 popular rounds of handgun ammunition carried by UHCL police officers are 9mm, .40 S&W and .45 ACP. The following quote reports research published in the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT) paper titled Implementing The .223 Carbine For Patrol: Benefits and Issues written by Jerry Compton (1996):

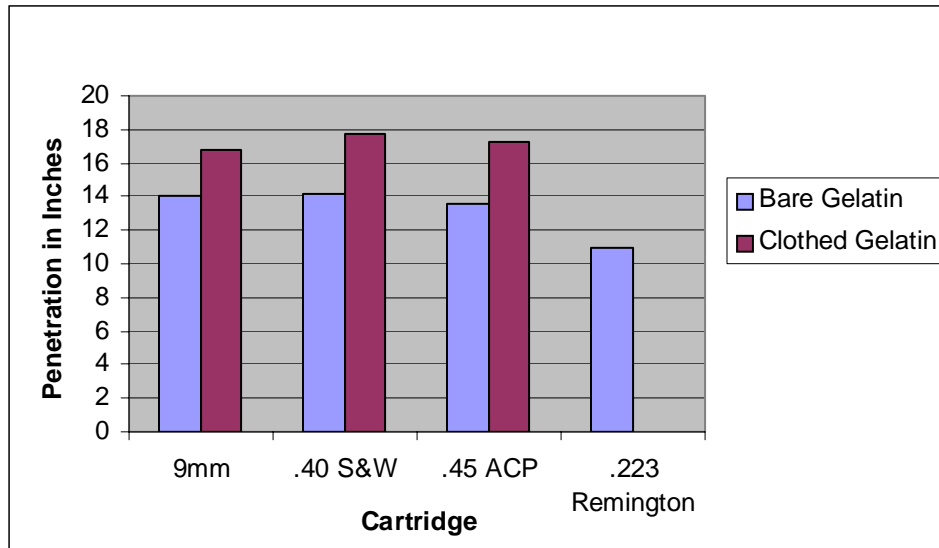
In 1994, members of the training staff at the Gunsite Center conducted penetration tests to compare the penetration characteristics of the .223 Remington cartridge with those of various handgun bullets (9mm, .40 S&W, .45ACP). Bullets were fired into test barriers representing indoor and outdoor walls. The tests were designed to mimic shots fired from inside a building, through the internal rooms, out the exterior wall, and into another similar building nearby. In these tests, the 9mm and the .40 S&W pistol bullets penetrated more walls than the .223 Remington, in either the 55-grain hollow point or the 55-grain soft point. The pistol bullets exited the exterior wall where the .223 bullets were captured in the exterior wall (Gunsite, p.61).

They offer dramatically better terminal performance than any handgun cartridge, yet they do not show over penetration in the ballistic gelatin testing. All four defeat Level IIIA ballistic body armor with little effect on the bullet's performance" (Hornady 1998).

In 10% ballistic gelatin, when shot from an AR-15 with a 16" barrel, the 223 gave the following in penetration (Hornady 1998); [40grain 5.13"] [55 grain = 8"] [60 grain = 10"] [75 grain=13.68"]

In December of 1991, penetration tests were conducted by the Mesa, Arizona Police Department's Firearms Training Unit. Three .223 Remington loadings by Federal were tested along with 9mm Winchester 147 grain hollow point. Following are penetration tests results in 10% ballistic gelatin; [.223 Federal 55 grain hollow point = 10.5"] [.223 Federal 40 grain hollow point "Blitz" = 5"] [.223 Federal 69 grain hollow point = 12"] [9mm Winchester 147 grain hollow point = 17"]. Other tests were conducted in external walls constructed for testing purposes at the Mesa Police Firing Range. The conclusion was that the 9mm has a greater potential for penetration through walls than the .223 (pg. 5-6)

Research was taken from the Firearms Tactical website which has compiled data from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) firearms testing. This information included several tests of Remington, Winchester, Federal, PMC and Speer. These tests were conducted a using a block of bare gelatin and one of clothed gelatin. The clothed test simulated rounds fired through clothes and into a human body. The bare gelatin simulated a round that was fired into a human body. The firing tests included many different types of points, different bullet grains and different bullet types such as jacketed hollow point, Talons and full metal jacketed.



The above chart shows an average tabulation of penetration from different cartridges. The 9mm was averaged from a total of 30 tests in bare gelatin and 30 tests in clothed gelatin. The .40 S&W averaged from a total of 24 tests in bare gelatin and 24 tests in clothed gelatin. The .45 ACP was averaged from a total of 22 tests in bare gelatin and 22 tests in clothed gelatin.

This research, found that in today's market the major manufactures of ammunition produce / load the .223 Remington round in more than 35 different bullet weights and types. Many studies have been done to produce the perfect round. This determination should only be obtained through evaluation of your department's needs and setting. The .223 has been proven as a suitable round for all types of patrol officers. A recent article divided the .223 rifle ammunition into three categories. They are lightweight, which contains the 40 – 52 grain bullets. These bullets have very minimal penetration of 6 to 9 inches. The second category is the medium weight, which includes the 55 to 60 grain soft

point, hollow point and full metal jacketed. These bullets penetrate approximately 9.5 to 11 inches. This particular bullet is best suited to allow for adequate penetration and less likely to penetrate through walls. The third and final category is the heavy weight, which includes the 62 to 77 grain SP, HP, and FMJ bullets. The penetration for these bullets is 10 to 18 inches. These rounds are designed specifically for long ranges up to 300 yards (Kelly 2003).

A survey was conducted of local and state colleges, universities and independent school district police departments via telephone and in person. There were seventeen colleges and universities police departments contacted along with nine independent school district police departments. The results were eye opening as to how inadequate university police departments are, as a whole, not ready for immediate response to either isolate or eliminate the shooters in a heavily armed and violent confrontation.

The survey revealed the following findings. Out of the seventeen colleges and universities, three had policies in place for the patrol officers to carry patrol rifles in their patrol units. Fourteen of them did not have the policies to allow such. Out of the fourteen, three universities have policies in the process stage to allow their officers to carry patrol rifles in their vehicles. An additional three of the fourteen universities have officers certified with access to rifles. The only problem with this situation is that the rifles are secured and not readily available. Also that only certain officers have access to the rifles.

The second part of the telephone survey then involved independent school district police departments. Out of the nine school district police

departments surveyed, seven had policies that allowed patrol units to carry patrol rifles. These nine departments were in the Houston area and close to the UHCL campus. Two more I.S.D. police departments throughout the state were found, as a result of my module 1 LEMIT class, to allow patrol officers to carry patrol rifles.

The weapon of choice, as a result of the telephone survey, was found to be the AR-15. The most popular one carried is the Bushmaster M-4 AR-15 with a 55 to 62 grain bullet. Another variation of the AR-15 weapon, such as Colt, is also carried. The survey found that the majority of departments who did not have patrol rifles in patrol units, were in fact actively trying to change their policies to allow their officers to these rifles. Departments without patrol rifles in their units and not trying to change their policies, were found to be not the norm.

CONCLUSION

The research that has been conducted proves that patrol rifles can and should be a vital piece of patrol equipment, readily available for university police officers while on patrol. With the increase in aggressive confrontations through terrorism, violence and violent crimes committed against persons and property, views and policies must change to ensure the safety of patrol officers faced with such horrific circumstances. We, as a police department, need to increase our equipment by adding patrol rifles to the patrol units at our university. Other universities and colleges would benefit from the addition of this weapon as well.

The normal training for patrol rifles is a basic rifle school with additional quarterly training. Along with this training departments are also sending their

officers to schools such as active shooter. The training continues as the officer's progress in their training by using scenarios within their departments and inter-agency cooperative training.

Within a half of a mile of UHCL campus there are several business parks, schools and government industrial businesses. Included in these are four banks and four schools. Two of the banks are within 100 yards of the University complex. Out of the schools, a high school of approximately 3600 students, border the western border of the UHCL complex. On the southeast corner NASA borders the UHCL complex for approximately one mile. Out of the research provided, these areas are becoming more of a target for terrorists to commit violent crimes against persons and property surrounding UHCL.

Hopefully a violent crime will never happen within our jurisdiction. But police officers must be prepared to either isolate or eliminate the shooters in any type of violent crime committed. Even though a violent crime may not happen on our campus, it may very well happen at one of the nearby businesses, banks or schools. As part of the patrol functions of a police officer, police officers are dispatched to calls for services, and assist as back up for the surrounding jurisdictions of Pasadena and Houston and other law enforcement agencies. Police officers also respond to calls for assistance from the law enforcement officers at the bordering high school.

Equipping the patrol officers will be cost approximately \$1500.00 per officer. This dollar amount includes the officer's basic training and basic equipment. This cost can be decreased through grants, equipment acquired

through other law enforcement agencies and officers purchasing their own equipment.

The research also shows that the rifles can exist in any environment. This includes areas in which the officers are highly visible. If the community is hesitant at first, when shown that the rifle is a vital part of patrol equipment needed for their safety, I feel they would stand behind such additional equipment.

Thus UHCL can and should add patrol rifles to officers' mandatory equipment carried with them in their patrol units. The issues of the rifles having too much power, the rounds over penetrating, the university community hesitations, and the equipments expense and training have been addressed. The compiled information and research shows that the rifles are for the safety and protection of UHCL faculty, staff, students, visitors and surrounding community families. The safety of our surrounding environment will no doubt improve with the addition of patrol equipment that allows us to quickly end heavily armed violent crimes committed against our community. This faster response time will eliminate the estimated hour wait for the response of a SWAT team. This will not eliminate the need for SWAT assistance, but will allow patrol officers to increase the safety of students, staff, faculty and visitors to our community, if UHCL officers carry these carbine style rifles into heavily armed violent situations until the SWAT teams can arrive. Patrol rifles are and can be a vital part of UHCL police officers obligatory equipment.

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