

# AS REAL AS IT GETS:

## THE T2 INTERACTIVE TACTICAL TRAINING SYSTEM



**(Top):** *Special patrol police officers in Rotterdam hone their sidearm skills on the T2 range.*

**(Opposite, top):** *The T2 range system at the Frankfurt Polizei headquarters.*

**(Opposite, bottom):** *Swiss SWAT cops use a series of props to enhance the effectiveness of the live-fire interactive system.*

It's the reality of tactical police work: the onset of Murphy's Law. Responding to reports of a man with explosives, elements of a SWAT team arrive at a dilapidated tenement to investigate the foreboding call. The officers knock on the door and are greeted by a man who is visibly agitated and speaking in some south-west Asian language that neither officer understands. The man holds something wrapped in a blanket close to his chest as the officers plead with him to show them his hands, but instead he barks angrily back in what to the SWAT officers is menacing gibberish and then he fumbles hurriedly inside the blanket. "He's got a bomb," one of the officers screams before proceeding to fire two .40 rounds from his MP5 into the man's chest and head. Yet as the man stumbles to the ground dead, a small baby emerges from the blanket.

If the scenario was real, the tragic killing of an unarmed man and his baby would have been a headline-grabbing piece of media fodder that would have resulted in political fallout, endless

legal battles and severe emotional and professional repercussions to the officer who, using his academy and street-acquired training and experience, made a ballistic decision that just happened to be the wrong one. After all, tactical work—be it a rookie cop making a car stop or elite military counterterrorist operators storming a hijacked aircraft—is defined by split-second decision-making where the wrong answer can invariably result in a dead hostage, a dead cop or political fallout that could stain departments and governments for a long time. The dead father and child, however, were nothing more than images on a digital film, *very realistic* role players projected onto a screen in front of a bullet-trap, part of a revolutionary new training system called T2. The T2 system enables police officers, SWAT cops, federal agents, soldiers and commandos to hone their shooting skills, and most importantly instincts, with interactive digital video, while firing their issued weapons loaded with issued ammunition. Other than actually walking a beat or kicking down a

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door with Tangos on the other side, T2 is as close to the real deal as a tactical professional can get without having to worry about rounds being fired back at them.

T2 is actually an upgraded and highly-modified version of a German-produced interactive system used by many of the top counterterrorist units in Europe—from Germany's GSG9 to Austrian teams to elements of NATO's Special Operations Command. For European use, the system had to provide a real-film interactive solution. European mandates prohibit the use of tactical training on animated scenarios; "on the streets you aren't shooting at cartoons," commented a German SEK officer in Rostock, "so why would you want to qualify on the range and sharpen your mind and instincts by shooting at cartoon images on the range?"

T2 was brought to North America—and the rest of the world—by American Defense Systems, Inc. (ADSI) of Hicksville, New York. Best known for the design and manufacture of opaque and transparent armor systems for DoD and law enforcement, ADSI realized that the T2 system followed a corporate philosophy that whatever the company produced or sold, the product or design had to ultimately play a part in protecting the lives of soldiers and policemen. "From the armored crew pro-



tection kits we've produced for U.S. military vehicles serving in Iraq and Afghanistan to our glass panels used to protect heads of state, we have always wanted to be innovators in protecting those soldiers and homeland security personnel who lay their lives on the line every day," boasted ADSI CEO and President Tony Piscitelli. "T2 is an extension of that philosophy and an enormous expansion on it. T2 is designed to redraw the teaching process by which

soldiers and cops learn not only how to shoot, but how to think with their trigger fingers in an endless library of training scenarios that, with frightening realism, replicate the dangers that can be encountered anywhere—from the streets of New York City to Haditha."

The T2 system consists of three primary components—the patented shoot screen and bullet-trap that allows shooters to fire anything from .22 to a .308 ammunition at



**A German SEK officer trains his sidearm on a series of tactical scenarios.**

**(Filmstrip): European tactical units train on the T2 system.**

scenarios broadcast from a control room; an infrared sensor that determines where the fired shot actually hit; and state-of-the-art user-friendly software that allows the end-user to effortlessly produce their own real-life scenarios according to each specific agency's needs and requirements. "A police department doesn't have to wait months for a film company to come in and supply it with training films," explained Curtis Taufman, ADSI's Vice-President of Engineering and the T2 Project Manager. "There is no lengthy turnaround time needed before scenarios can be incorporated into training schedules. All a department needs really is a \$2,000 camera, a USB cable and the vision to put their tactical needs into their own agency-unique interactive training films. The software is easy and it is designed specifically for people who have never edited a video in their lives. The ease of use enables training officers to produce filmed scenarios by nightfall to react to an incident that happened that morning. For example, if a transit police agency endures a difficult shooting on a subway train in the morning, then officers can be training on that same scenario, with their own weapons, on the range that evening."

And added benefit of the software is its ability to maintain a log of a shooter's progression that can not only be used to review a soldier or

peace officer's firearms proficiency but can also be used by departments as legal support in case of lawsuits. "Too many officers are more concerned about being sued than being killed in the line of duty," Piscitelli added. "We can provide departments with an unimpeachable digital record that shows the shooting scores of [the] officer questioned about his tactics or skills. Such records are of great importance to departments wanting to know how well their personnel are prepared for the job at hand as well as proving that they were indeed prepared."

The T2 ranges can be as compact as a mobile systems built into forty-four foot containers that can be ferried from location to location on the back of a semi-trailer to standard in-house designs that can be built into new or existing police stations or military bases to elaborate multiplex training facilities that could encompass an endless interlocking series of modular ranges connected to one another by master controls that could allow Special Forces teams to coordinate live-fire training on multiple scenarios in preparation of an actual mission. "This is far more evolved than any kill house could ever be," commented a federal agent reviewing the T2 for his agency. "Shooting at paper targets inside an inner-tube can only bring an operator so far. The operator, after the third or thirtieth



time through the ringer will know what to hit and where it'll be. There's no room for intelligent improvement."

T2 is an environmentally friendly system. Outside air is drawn in by a large air handling unit and blown across the range in a non-turbulent laminar flow. This air collects the burnt powder and the lead particulate as it travels down range. The air is then picked-up by an equally large exhaust system both at the screen and in the bullet trap area. The air is forced through a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter which is electronically monitored for efficiency and then exhausted to the outside as hospital grade

clean air. A revolutionary steel bullet trap design efficiently breaks the bullet into smaller fragments and collects them in its self-contained collection bin where the fragments can easily be reclaimed for abatement. All interior surfaces are designed both to absorb sound and to be easy to clean with the use of a special HEPA equipped vacuum.

In Europe, in units that have set the bar for excellence and who are considered the top tier in the international community, T2 is as much a part of their kit as is the MP5s they carry into harm's way. Entire departments train on the system in a ballistic progression of skill and

advancement. "We have rookies, young men and women in the academy who may have never fired a weapon before and learn how to qualify with their weapon on the system," claimed a training officer in Lubeck, Germany, "and we have advanced operators, some of the best SWAT cops in the country, who perfect their senses and push the envelope all using the same system. Sure they use different interactive videos and training scenarios, but the concept is uniform throughout their lives here in the department. It makes them better police officers and it helps keep people—themselves included—alive!" ■

# PERFORMANCE BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

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