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## Police Science Book Reviews

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188 (1958). Comparisons of the velocities of pellets fired from rifled and smooth bore air guns with the velocities of various .22 caliber cartridges indicated that both classes are in the same velocity range. Air pellet velocities are reported from 2152 to 5052 feet per second. (JDN)

Fires and Fingerprints—R. L. Jolly. *International Criminal Police Review*, No. 119: 173-5 (1958). Experiments conducted by the author revealed that fingerprints could be developed on glass by dusting after the specimen had been exposed to a fire at 500°C. (JDN)

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## POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

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Edited by

Richard L. Holcomb\*

**BASIC POLICE REPORT WRITING.** By *Allen Z. Gammage*. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Ill. 1961, Pp. 313, Illus. 52. \$10.00

Every few years a book appears that is so well written, organized, and complete that it will undoubtedly become a standard in the law enforcement field. This is such a book.

The author is supervisor of law enforcement training at Sacramento State College, California, holds the Ph.D. degree, and has worked as a police officer. He used all of these abilities to write this book, and the results are the first book on police report writing that can be recommended without reservation.

While good reports are essential to any police operation, they are difficult to write. Most police officers do not do a very good job. You can see from their reports that they may have done a sound job of investigation, but when you try to find exactly what they did, you may have difficulty going. Even the officer who wrote the report may have trouble when he refers to it six months later.

The author starts out with a brief introduction covering the purposes and types of police reports, emphasizing their importance, then gives the values and principles in police reporting. The next section deals with the mechanics of report writing and covers the selection and use of words, spelling, capitalization and numbers, abbreviations, sentence structure, punctuation, paragraph construction, and editing and criticizing the report. This is not easy material to learn. A single reading will not do it; it must be studied, and there must be

practice. This material is just about what you would get in a good course in basic writing, but the difference is that all of it is aimed directly at the police officer. The illustrations are on police matters, the spelling lists are the sorts of words that appear in police reports. A careful and thorough study of this section will result in not only better report writing, but better writing of all sorts.

In this section on mechanics the author does much to streamline writing. He encourages getting away from such terms as "of the order of magnitude" and "along the lines of" and substituting simple, but better understood terms like "about" or "like." As a matter of fact, this section makes interesting reading because of the many examples given in how to say something better and more briefly. (It also makes you worry about just how good a job of writing you are doing and how many stuffy or unnecessary words you may be using).

The next section covers police reporting operations. This is a little difficult to do for practices vary from one department to another, but here again an excellent job has been done; and the essentials of the various types of records, starting with field note taking and through the specialized reports, is covered as well as it can be. There are many suggestions as to what information is needed and how it can best be recorded. There are a number of helpful examples and the various illustrations add greatly to this section. While it might be necessary to modify parts of this section to make it most effective in a specific department, the principles are all there.

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The appendix contains a brief review of the

elements of grammar, uniform classification of crimes, and a good section on description of property.

Here is a book that can be recommended to any law enforcement officer no matter what his experience has been. No department is any better than its reports, and this is the first book that is of real value in helping the individual officer to come up to a high standard in report writing.

RICHARD L. HOLCOMB

COMBAT SHOOTING FOR POLICE. By *Paul B. Weston*. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Ill. 1960. Pp. 194, Illus. 84. \$7.50.

There has been a great deal written on firearms for police, but this is the first book that has covered the entire area from the selection of a weapon, through practical methods of learning how to shoot, on to reloading. The only criticism is that I would like to have had the author expand on some of his very interesting ideas.

One of the most apparent things about this book is that the author has been unusually objective. Many writers in this field appear to be selling a certain way of doing something or a certain type of gun or holster. Inspector Weston has discussed just about everything in the field and in so doing has pretty well kept his personal views out of the text. This is not easy for a man who knows as much about guns as he does because I am sure that he has some very definite ideas. Instead of pushing just one way of doing it, or one piece of equipment, he has discussed the various possibilities in some detail, giving the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Chapter headings include Combat Effectiveness; Defensive Directed Fire; "Gimme Your Gun, Copper" (practical defense psychology); Grip . . . Sights . . . Aim . . . Squeeze; Aimed Fire; Two Stage Double Action Shooting; Service Revolvers and Off Duty Guns; Holsters: Reloading; and Planned Practice. There is no index although this would be useful since this book will often be used as a reference.

Two chapters are of particular interest—Defensive Directed Fire and Two Stage Double Action Shooting. The first of these gives an unusually well illustrated explanation of the hip shooting crouch and a good discussion of other methods of what the author calls "room-sized shooting." This is the sort of shooting that a police officer will be doing most often in an emer-

gency, but very little has been written on these methods. The chapter on two stage double action shooting is most interesting since this is a method that appears from time to time but is just now being developed to its full potential. In this method (and it takes practice) the shooter in the first stage pulls the trigger to cock the gun and in the second stage applies the slight additional pull to fire it. The advantages are that the position of the grip and position of the trigger finger remains constant. The major disadvantage seems to be that it does take a lot of practice to develop this skill.

I am sure that British police officers who discover that we have an entire book devoted to combat shooting for police will be amused, but I am sure that every officer in this country will realize that this publication can give him a great deal of sound information on how to deal with our less than peace loving citizens. It is unfortunate that our police must be armed, but if they were not, they would not last long. If they are to be armed they should develop the skills and select the weapons on the basis of the excellent advice that Inspector Weston has given here. Even if you are not a police officer, this is a very interesting book for anyone interested in firearms.

RICHARD L. HOLCOMB

TYPISCHE UNFALLURSACHEN IM DEUTSCHEN STRASSENVERKEHR — VERKEHRSGEFAEHRDUNGEN IM AMERIKANISCHEN STRAF-UND STRAF-PROZESSRECHT (Typical Causes in German Road Traffic), Vol III. By *Ernst Meyer, Ernst Jacobi, Ernst C. Stiefel*. Publication of Kuratorium "Wir und Die Strasse," Bad Godesberg, 1961. Pp. 295.

This volume follows two which we have previously reviewed (51 J. Crim. L., C. & P.S. 675). Here the three authors present a textual summary of the statistical studies on the causes of traffic accidents in Germany, and proceed to some well reasoned conclusions and proposals, resting on their American comparative studies as well. It derives to the credit of the American traffic law system that so many of our institutions are deemed feasible for introduction in Germany, not the least of which is the summary procedure subject to due process guarantees. We are intrigued by the authors' insistence on development of the human element, with a saving of the penal sanc-

tion for the recalcitrant who cannot be reached in any other way.

In the concluding chapter, Dr. Stiefel has a superb discussion of the due process guarantees of American traffic court procedures, in which he proves himself well acquainted with our literature, and indeed, improves over most of it, for there is no such comprehensive and well rounded discussion in English as that which Dr. Stiefel has prepared in German. The volume includes an appendix of forms and an excellent bibliography.

GERHARD O. W. MUELLER

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**POLICE OPERATIONS.** By *John P. Kenney* and *John B. Williams*, Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Ill. 1960. Pp. 266, \$7.50

This is a difficult book to evaluate. The preface says that this is an operational manual and later on the authors suggest that with proper supplements this can be made into a complete operational manual. The idea being that the Department buy one of these books for each man and then give him additional loose-leaf material filling in the gaps and explaining local policies, laws or procedures that are not covered or do not agree with this book. I think that such a plan is entirely impractical. Many of the procedures follow California law,

they are arranged in no particular order, and while there is an index, it would be difficult to find just what you want. They are certainly far from complete and often general in character.

A good share of the book is taken up with these procedures (180 out of 260 pages). The rest is some rather good, but too brief material on organization, administration, setting policies, etc. The appendix includes a summary of federal law enforcement agencies and a section on repossessions, two things that just do not seem to fit in at all.

On the other hand, if you want a series of four hundred police problems with suggested solutions to use as a basis of classroom discussion, this is a pretty good book. The problems are mostly practical police situations, and the solutions reflect sound police thinking. Some of the problems are: "A woman complains that her boy friend borrowed her car a week ago and she hasn't seen him since. She wants to make a stolen car report". "A mother complains that her sixteen year old daughter stays out late at night and she wants the police to make her stay at home". Sound familiar?

I am not at all sure that this book does what it says it is supposed to. On the other hand, there is a lot of useful and practical material of value in training schools for all levels of command.

RICHARD L. HOLCOMB