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“Supervest”

To anybody closely involved with the testing and development of body armour, it is very clear that the demonstration testing of body armour conducted and propagated by Mr Clark Rosslie from “Safecase” and “The Crime Stop Shop”, is seriously flawed. This is obviously being done to try and sell their own products by blatantly discrediting the opposition’s products. It has always been the belief of BPT that, in cases where somebody tries to discredit the opposition’s products in order to sell their own, this is usually an indication that the product cannot sell on its own merits.

Please note the following aspects in the video and sales literature:-

- No velocities are measured. As it is very easy to hand-load ammunition, it is very easy to manipulate testing by using different bullet velocities against different products.
- The specific bullets used in every case is not clear and it is very possible that apples are being compared to pears
- The dummy used as backing with the thin clay layer is totally out of specification and does not even closely resemble the working of a human body behind body armour. There is a National Specification governing this matter, which is being flagrantly disregarded. This dummy will swing results in favour of steel plates.
- They obviously do not know how to measure trauma as they quote so called “Zero trauma”, which is totally wrong and misleading.
- The ceramic plates were in all probability severely damaged on purpose before the test, most probably out of view of the camera and onlookers.
- The effect of breaking of ceramic plates is totally exaggerated. After 1 shot the ceramic tile inside the plates are totally broken, but the plates still provide multi-shot protection to the required specifications, which requires 2 – 5 additional shots to be stopped, depending on the relevant specification.
- The bullet stopping capabilities of the plates are not quoted together with their weight. This is very important, as the major drawback of steel-based plates is their weight.
- A deliberate effort is made to mislead the viewers and readers regarding protection levels. The level III and level IV referred to are Mr Rosslie’s own levels and are not in line with the SABS, NIJ, SAPS and any other International specification. His level IV is an even lower level than the South African official SANS1658:2005 level III

Special, S A Mix. This is the protection level most relevant in South Africa and is used by the S A Police and Defence Forces. In fact, Mr Rosslien's very heavy level IV plates just barely stops R-4 attacks, which is now by far the most common rifle threat in South Africa.

- In the case of plates being used together with soft armour "Kevlar" packs, the plate and soft armour together stops the bullets. It is totally acceptable that bullets may penetrate the plate, as long as what penetrated the plate is then damaged and decelerated enough to be stopped on the soft armour. A hole through the plate is in this case not an indication of a failure.
- Comfort and weight is not demonstrated, and where it is, this is most probably done with low level plates in the jackets. A jacket with 2 x falsely called "level IV" plates, (Basic requirement for rifle attack in South Africa) is extremely heavy and uncomfortable.
- Shooting with a so-called "Elephant Gun" is very misleading. This bullet is not defined and could be anything. As these bullets are generally hand loaded, it could be any bullet travelling at any speed.

We believe that users should take note of these discrepancies and consider all their options. It is possible that the so-called "Supervest", which is actually old technology in a new cover, is the ideal solution for many users, but then this decision should be taken with all the correct facts as background. What also makes this matter so serious is that some users (including the SAPS officers) are being totally misled into doubting the effectiveness of their existing jackets. They might then not act according to their training and tasks and lives could be lost. Users could also be misled into buying something which might not be as suited to their requirements as what they are led to believe.

The SAPS and other Government agencies do a lot of development and testing before writing specifications for jackets. All of these Government agencies also use the National Standard SANS1658:2005 as their ballistic guideline and specify handgun protection as level II and rifle protection as Level III S A Mix, according to this specification. Weight, sizes and comfort is obviously also considered as very important and specified. All tenders for acquisition for Government bullet resistant vests are open to all bidders. If Mr Rosslien's jackets are so good, why has he never received any of these orders? The problems are probably their very heavy weight and low comfort.

There is a wide variety of bullet resistant jackets and plates available on the South African market. The materials used range from special steels to ceramics to special polymers and special fibres. The specific choice of material used depend on the user's requirements regarding aspects such as weight, comfort, protection level, multi-shot requirements, price, ruggedness, availability and size. BPT offers a wide range of plates ranging from stand-alone steel-based plates to the most advanced composite plates. BPT is in fact one of the largest

suppliers of steel plates in South Africa, but it must be stressed that these plates are only supplied in cases where the users specifically acknowledge that they are aware of the disadvantages of steel-based plates and that the wearable weight plates will probably not provide protection against 5,56mm Ball bullets fired from R-4 rifles.

One of BPT's products is a ceramic based plate which can be dropped from a 3 story building and still provide fantastic multi-shot protection against 7,62 x 51 Ball (R1), 7,62 x 39 Ball (AK-47) and 5,56 x 45 (R4/R5) bullets, all at a weight of less than 2kg for a 250 x 300mm plate. The prices for this plate types are higher though. Anything is possible, depending on the client's requirements.

As a bad example, we are also not aware of anybody in the world currently buying bullet resistant jackets for elephants. If you think you might get shot with an elephant gun, fine, specify this and it can be provided, but it is much more important to specify protection against all of the most commonly occurring rifle threats in South Africa, being the AK-47, R4 and R5 rifles.

It is so that there are some dealers in the industry falsely presenting themselves as the manufacturers of bullet resistant. As these products are quite standard, any stable manufacturer should be able to supply standard jackets from stock without requiring deposits. The false claimants can often be identified through the fact that they require deposits to be placed to procure standard jackets and/or components from the actual real manufacturers and assembling the parts for selling. Mostly these jackets are then presented under a fancy name to create the impression that they are something special or new. This mostly leads to the buyer paying unnecessarily high prices for goods which are generally available elsewhere at lower prices. There is nothing wrong with the concept of dealers adding mark-ups to cover costs and make some profits, but it should be clear to the buyers that they are paying for a service delivered by a dealer and not led to believe that the prices are so high because that is the actual manufacturing cost of the jackets. We are also aware of buyers who have paid deposits on steel-plate jackets late in 2009, but that the supplier was then liquidated from under them. That same supplier is now still doing the same business under a different company name. We really hope that they are not again requesting deposits. Do not step into the same hole.

If after reading this, there are any more technical questions or assistance required in clarifying the mess caused by these misleading press reports, sales literature and video, please contact us.