

# Reporter cries fowl

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POSTED July 5, 2009 6:05 p.m.



Of all the words a girl could holler when getting shot, "turkey" isn't the first that comes to mind.

Also unexpected was the small bruise that lived on my thigh for about a week afterward. It served as a reminder that actually being shot by a bullet is, at best, an undesirable experience.

During a recent visit to the Georgia State Patrol post here, I had an opportunity to check out a firearms training simulator.

Troopers use the simulator to hone their decision-making skills in the event of a possible gunfight.

Various scenarios are played out on a large video screen and officers must decide if the actors in the video pose a threat.



It's hard to explain the scenarios without giving too much away. In one situation, the trainee has pulled over an angry motorist.

The driver gets out of his truck and marches threateningly toward the trooper before pulling something from his back pocket.

In another scenario, a man in a confined space holds another man at gunpoint.

In situations where weapons are involved, Sgt. Dan Stephens with the state patrol explained,

authorities must consider the offender's ability and opportunity to cause harm, as well as the jeopardy of the situation.

The training is as close to the real thing as possible.

Stephens first had to demonstrate how to hold and fire a fake Glock. The gun shoots airmunition, which is basically air pellets. Apparently, it helps to have strong wrists.

He also explained what to do if the gun jams. This lesson itself probably could've taken hours, but time was of the essence.

There was too much excitement about what was ahead.

From the control booth, the instructor can aim a cannon mounted on top of the video screen. The cannon is used whenever an actor in the video has a gun and the instructor, like Stephens, feels it's necessary to remind the officer that getting shot is a possibility.

The cannon fires small Teflon balls at about 120 feet per second. They aren't real bullets, but they make a good point.

Having successfully completed the first scenario, I was feeling a little more sure of my gun-wielding skills. The next lesson was a reality check.

Hiding behind a barricade, I drew the gun from its holster and took aim at a vehicle on the side of a road.

Having no idea how many people were inside or if they were armed, the situation was a little nerve-racking.

A man jumped out of the front seat and began firing what looked like an AK-47. Something stung my leg.

The hit was both surprising and infuriating. "TURKEY!"

The response was not quite as Dirty Harriet as one would hope.

Perhaps it was a result of my Southern upbringing or the desire to maintain professionalism. I've since thought of about 100 other things that I've hollered at men in the past.

In true scorned woman fury I fired three rounds and hit, well, nothing. The shooter and two other suspects got away.

Looking back, I've determined it's probably best to leave the gunplay to the professionals.

Lesson learned.