

BOOK REVIEW

Monique A. Ryser,¹ M.D.

A Review of *Schusswaffen und Schusswirkungen I*

REFERENCE: Sellier, K., *Schusswaffen und Schusswirkungen I*. 2nd ed., Verlag, Lubeck, 1981.

This is the second edition of this book about firearms and the effects of firearms. It is divided in three main chapters: (1) ballistics, weapons, and ammunition; (2) medical consideration of firearms; and (3) criminalistic consideration of firearms. A fourth chapter includes tables and formulas relevant to the subject.

In the first chapter, the external ballistic is described in extensive detail with consideration of the different factors affecting the trajectory, such as different types of ammunition, different media through which the missile may travel, effects of the wind, and ricochet on different surfaces. The chapter then continues with a description of available firearms mentioning the differences between American and European calibers. Other related implements are described such as cattle stunning devices, nailguns, harpoons, and sling shots. A description of available ammunition then follows, again mentioning European and American products, as well as blanks and tear gas cartridges.

The chapter more particularly concerned with the medical aspects of firearms opens with a discussion of wound ballistics, which is clearly and thoroughly described. The elements of entrance and exit wounds are explained and documented by slow motion photographs. Most of the medical aspects of firearms injuries are those that are found in standard forensic pathology texts. There is an interesting discussion of the depth of penetration of different missiles through various human organs as well as their then remaining velocity and wounding power. As throughout the book, there is an attempt to reduce all discussion to mathematical formulas, which on occasion may prove useful.

The third chapter is brief and covers the standard information to be derived by the examination of spent bullets and cartridges. This chapter also covers assorted subjects such as the effects of various missiles on different windshields, the acoustics of gunshot wounds, and the effects of silencers. There is a somewhat lengthier discussion of the problems presented during reconstruction of shooting incidents and this includes determination of distance, position of the victim and of the assailant, examination of hands for powder residue, and problems particular to shotgun injuries.

After a small chapter of tables and formulas, there follows an extensive list of references which is very logically organized and includes an index of references by specific subject.

This book has been written with much care and contains a large amount of information which however is readily available in the forensic science literature most often referred to in this country.

¹Department of Health, Office of the Medical Examiner, 44 Medical Dr., Salt Lake City, UT 84113.