

## **POLICE TRAINING IN GERMANY**

The art of policing doesn't change much from one country to another. When citizens commit crimes, the police respond and arrest them; and if a suspect resists arrest, force is frequently used. What changes a lot is how much force may be applied under the law and which martial arts techniques officers are permitted to use. The Federal Republic of Germany prides itself on having a modern, professional police force schooled in the latest martial arts techniques.

Germany has its own institutions for education and training of police officers, usually on 3 levels (according to internal hierarchies)

- Police School (professional training 2,5 years)
- University of Applied Sciences (6-Semester Bachelor Program)
- German University of Police Münster (4-Semester Master Program for the education of highest ranking officers)

### **Requirements to Become a Police Officer in Germany**

Police protection in Germany is the responsibility of each individual state so the requirements vary by jurisdiction. The federal government in Germany has a federal police force that handles domestic security and border protection. The Federal Border Guard, also known as Bundengrenzschutz (BGS) in German, handles domestic protection issues including illegal immigration, smuggling, trafficking, and organized crime activities.

### **Citizenship**

To become a member of the German federal police, all applicants must be a citizen of Germany according to Article 116 Basic Law. Any person who has German citizenship may apply as long as other requirements are also met. Any person who lost German citizenship between 1933 and 1945 may have it restored if they want to apply as a police officer with the Bundengrenzschutz.

### **Physical Requirements**

Joining the federal police force in Germany requires excellent physical fitness. To ensure this requirement is met, the BGS requires female candidates be no shorter than 163 cm and male candidates no shorter than 165 cm. The height maximum for the BGS is 195 cm.

All applicants are also required to undergo a physical examination by an authorized police physician to determine their physical suitability to serve. Any disability that prohibits range of motion or functional movements will disqualify candidates. All members of the BGS must not be overweight or underweight, which the BGS measures using body mass index (BMI). Applicants and officers may not have a BMI above 27.5 or below 18 kilograms to serve in the BGS.

### **Criminal History**

The German federal police require all applicants and officers to have a clean criminal record. They make no distinction between misdemeanors and felonies or sentencing and probation. Any person that has been "punished in court" is ineligible to become a member of the BGS.

### **Age**

The level of experience and training a police applicant has in Germany will determine the starting rank of each officer. Middle police executives must be no younger than 16 years old they day they were recruited and not older than 24 years old. In 2011, the age limit for middle executives will be increased to 27 years of age. Top level police executives must be no older than 31 years of age when they are recruited to join the BGS.

### **Communication**

The BGS requires applicants to have communication skills to deal with the public. This includes the ability to communicate in English as well as German.

General knowledge of any additional languages is an asset for any applicant.

### **How Germans Incorporate Martial Arts Techniques Into Their Law-Enforcement Training**

In Germany today, no specific martial art is used exclusively by the police. However, the systems that are taught are quite similar to their counterparts in America, England and Israel in that they incorporate martial arts techniques that have been determined to be best-suited to law enforcement no matter where they come from. Moves must be simple, easy to learn and within the government's use-of-force policies. Although the Federal Border Patrol and GSG9 usually set the standard on a national level, every department has its own training bureau and is free to teach what it wants.

For motivated patrol officers, the most widely studied art in Germany is jujutsu. Kali is now being introduced into some curriculums, and there's a renewed interest in Western boxing. Among the SWAT teams, wing chun kung fu, which is headed by Keith Kernspecht under the guidance of the renowned Leung Ting, is popular.

By law, police officers in Germany are required to receive two hours of defensive-tactics instruction a week while they participate in basic training.

Unlike American police academies, which conduct classes for 21 weeks to 25 weeks, German schools train their officers for two and a half years. That gives them plenty of time to master the martial arts component of the curriculum.

Once a student graduates and is assigned to a permanent duty station, he's required to undergo two hours of defensive-tactics training every month.

Unfortunately, not every station offers its personnel high-quality instruction.

Some have programs that merely go through the motions—mostly for liability reasons. Others, however, teach state-of-the-art methods that include ground tactics, knife defense, task-related physical conditioning and scenario training.

Almost all defensive-tactics courses are taught by personnel who have reached the rank of sergeant. All techniques and tactics must be approved by someone at the level of commander.

The Future of Law-Enforcement Training in Germany

In the art of policing, German officers are generally the equals of American officers. However, when it comes to defensive tactics, many Germans believe they're about five years behind the Americans. (German SWAT teams are the exception; they're at par with American teams.) In the future, it's doubtful that defensive tactics will become a top priority in Germany because the country has a lower violent-crime rate and stricter gun-control laws and because the public is still leery of giving too much power to the police. There's a concerted effort by the government to prevent the cops from becoming, as they see it, too much like "Rambo."

Unfortunately, that attitude—which, by the way, prevails throughout most of Western Europe—means that many valuable martial arts techniques and law-enforcement training methods are not being integrated into their system. Change may be in store, however.

Germany's current defensive-tactics instructors are more willing to experiment with a wider variety of martial arts and are no longer limited to judo and jujutsu. They read publications like Black Belt, buy the latest videos and attend seminars—and remain acutely aware of the need to evolve.

Список використаних джерел

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