



Tactical Talk

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"Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government's purposes are beneficent... The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning but without understanding."

-- Supreme Court
Justice Louis
Brandeis

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The Three C's by Tom Givens

I recently saw an interview with Bill Murphy, a senior instructor at Gunsite. He said the purpose of professional firearms training was the Three C's: Competence, Confidence, and Control. According to Murphy, Competence begets Confidence. Confidence allows you to stay in control of yourself, and the situation. Sage advice.

Competence: It's really hard to imagine how anyone could argue for less competence in a life saving skill. The defensive use of a firearm has vast, far reaching implications. You may not need a defensive firearm more than once or twice in your entire lifetime, but the need will be extremely severe. Your life, the lives of loved ones, and the lives of innocent third parties may literally hinge upon your competence. Your actions will be reviewed long after the fact by both civil and criminal authorities, and poor performance on your part may ruin the rest of your life, assuming you survived the encounter. There is simply no excuse for being incompetent with a firearm, if you're going to carry one for self defense.

Murphy touched on the other, often overlooked aspect of competence. As you train and practice you build skill. As you build skill, you also build confidence.

Confidence: This is an essential characteristic of successful warriors. If your team gets on the bus thinking, "We're going to get our butts kicked tonight", guess what. You sure are! You lost that game before you ever set foot on the playing field. Confidence in one's skills allows the mind to remain calm and assess tactical options. This avoids panic and translates into efficient motion and good hits. You must be able to keep your wits about you in a crisis, and this is far easier if your own mind knows you have the physical skills to deal with the situation. Note that this is NOT bravado, but a calm assurance that you have the skills needed to win.

Control: Ninety percent of gunfighting is mental. If you can control yourself, you can control the situation. This is made infinitely easier if your physical skills (gunhandling/marksmanship) have been ingrained through hard work to a reflexive level. This frees the mind to work on the other issues, like keeping watch on their hands, being aware of nearby cover or escape routes, where are bystanders/family members, etc. You cannot keep up with these variables and think about how to run your gear at the same time. Confidence in your gear and your skills give you control. Competence/Confidence/Control



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“I didn’t say it was your fault, I said I’m going to blame you.”

From our dear friend and colleague, John Farnam

In a number of southeastern states in the late 1800s, a "poll-tax" was imposed upon the general electorate, for all State and federal elections. Anyone wishing to exercise his right to vote could, of course, do so by showing up at the polling place on election day. But, this poll-tax (ten dollars) had to be collected before a ballot was issued to the voter.

In those days, ten dollars was a lot of money, and the law effectively prevented impoverished farm workers, mostly black, from participating in elections. That was, of course, the well-known, but never articulated, purpose for the law!

The inherent unfairness of poll taxes was gradually acknowledged, and most were voluntarily eliminated by embarrassed state legislatures during the first half of the Twentieth Century. However, it was not until 1964 that the 24th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, which permanently disallowed poll taxes.

In paraphrase, the Amendment says that Constitutionally-guaranteed, individual rights, like the right to vote, cannot be, in effect, regulated out of existence. Individual rights may not be subtly eradicated by putting them out of reach of average citizens, nor minorities thereof. Government cannot insist that we citizens have a right, but then cynically make the exercise of that right impossible.

Unfortunately, this is also the real, seldom articulated, intent of gun laws. And, it is nothing new. A quotation from the 1941 *Watson vs. Stone* Case in FL:

"The statute was never intended to be applied to the white population, and in practice, has never been so applied. . . The Act (Florida's arbitrary handgun-licensing system, which provided for handgun licenses to be issued at the whim of local officials) was passed for the purpose of disarming negro laborers and to thereby reduce the number of unlawful homicides . . . and to give white citizens in sparsely-settled areas a better feeling of security. There has never been any effort to enforce this statute upon white people, because it has been generally conceded to be in contravention of the Constitution and non-enforceable, if ever contested."

In 1911, the equally infamous "Sullivan Law" in NY, passed by politicians of Irish descent (who had themselves been subjected to terrible prejudice, but were now in power) in an indiscreet attempt to prevent newly-arriving Italian and Polish immigrants from exercising their right, as Americans, to own guns!

Ambitious, amoral politicians have thus occasionally encouraged political supporters to intimidate, lord it over, even rob and murder their political opponents, and use restrictive gun laws to facilitate the scam. In proper context, they are little more than fascist liars and con-men. In fact, Hitler used this strategy against Jews and others who refused to vote for him. Such violent crimes are, of course, subsequently excused as "grievance-based," and the door to the progressive tyranny is flung open!

Accordingly, the spirit of the 24th amendment needs to be applied to all proposed regulations of guns, ammunition, and places to shoot. As Americans, we have the individual right to own and use guns, or we don't! Burdensome taxes, endless fees, toxic inconveniences, and incomprehensible, labyrinthian regulations that, in effect, make the free exercise of that right, or any right, impossible are tantamount to a "poll-tax" and are thus clearly unconstitutional.

"Laws that forbid the carrying of arms...disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes...Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent murders"

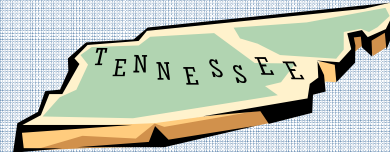
--Thomas Jefferson, quoting Cesare Beccaria

John Farnam

There are some bills pending in the Tennessee General Assembly that we would really like to see passed. If you will go to www.legislature.state.tn.us you will see a link to Contact My Legislator. There is helpful information on how to contact your state representatives, and to ensure that your message gets through. There is also a link to help you identify your state representatives and state senators, and get their e-mail and snail mail addresses, and their phone numbers.

Please take a few minutes to contact these legislators. With the new make-up of the state legislature, this is the best chance we have had in years of getting favorable legislation passed.

Currently pending bills which need your support.



SB0084

Carrying handgun in building where alcohol is served. Allows person with handgun carry permit who is not consuming alcohol to carry handgun in establishment that serves alcohol or beer and derives 60 percent or more of its gross annual revenue from food sales, except if establishment has posted notice prohibiting weapons. Adds to persons for whom the department shall suspend or revoke handgun carry permit: person convicted of Class A misdemeanor of possessing a firearm where alcohol is served. (S: Stanley) (The Commercial Appeal, Memphis Flyer, and other opponents will call this the "Guns in Bars Bill". Notice it is NOT about bars, but about restaurants.)

SB 0172

HB 0221

Confidentiality of handgun carry permit applications. Makes confidential information pertaining to handgun carry permits relative to public inspection or publication. Authorizes law enforcement agencies to access such information for investigating or prosecuting purposes. Specifies that publication of such information by anyone other than the permit holder is a Class A misdemeanor punishable by fine only. (S: Ketron; H: Bass)

House Status: Introduced 2/9/2009

SB 0262

Handgun permit holder allowed to carry gun in parks. Authorizes anyone with handgun carry permit to possess firearm in local, state, or federal parks in TN or in a refuge, public hunting area, wildlife management area, or on national forest land in TN. Declares that no state or local government entity may prohibit anyone with a handgun carry permit from possessing a firearm in any public park in TN. (S: Jackson)

Handguns for Women

by Tom Givens

No, this is not an offer to trade. It is a discussion of selecting the right handgun for a woman, for self defense issues. Gun shop clerks, well meaning husbands, and other uninformed people cause an awful lot of problems related to this topic, so let's try to clear up some common misconceptions.



First, since I'm not a woman, you might ask what would I know about this? Fair enough. Here's some background. I have been teaching firearms use since the early 1970's, and my students have always included women. In 1981 I wrote the first book that I am aware of that deals specifically with the subject of women and handguns, *Survival Shooting for Women*. For the past thirteen years, I have been a full time trainer at Rangemaster. We train almost 2500 students a year, and over 40% of them are female. That's about 1,000 women a year, year after year. No other private firearms school in the US trains more women. In addition, my wife, Lynn, is an accomplished shooter, and an NRA and state certified handgun instructor, and she provides me with educated feedback. So do several other female state certified instructors on our staff. The commentary offered here is based on close observation on the range of literally thousands of women learning to shoot handguns for self defense.

Myth #1- There are handguns for men, and handguns for women. Baloney! There is nothing gender specific about handguns. Fitting a handgun to an individual is a matter of body size, and more importantly, hand size, not gender. There are men with small hands, and women with long fingers.

Myth #2- Women should have revolvers, because they are simpler. (The revolver, or the woman?) Bull. Every woman that comes to Rangemaster to train drives here in a car. Just to get here in a car, they have to work the following controls on the automobile:

Ignition switch

Seat belt

Steering wheel

Gear shift

Accelerator pedal

Brake pedal

Turn signal.

In addition to the seven controls listed above, she often has to operate the windshield wipers and headlights (nine controls now), plus the radio and often, the cell phone--this,

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while maneuvering in traffic, with other deadly vehicles whizzing past constantly.

The most complex semiautomatic pistol around will have maybe three or four controls to master: the trigger, the magazine release, the slide latch, and a safety or de-cocker. Many designs don't have the safety or de-cocker, so they only have three controls: trigger, magazine release, slide latch. So, if your lady can drive a car, she sure as heck can operate an autopistol.

The revolver, on the other hand, requires more dexterity to load or reload, and requires a heavier trigger pull, since the act of pulling the trigger has to rotate the cylinder in addition to cocking and firing the weapon. The revolver holds a third of the ammunition held in a high capacity auto, making the need to reload far more likely, while again making the reload far slower and more fumble prone. The revolver is also thicker, because of the width of the cylinder, making it harder to conceal on a woman's smaller body.

Myth #3- The small frame .38 snub is perfect for women. What crap! As mentioned above, the revolver holds far less ammo—in the case of a j-frame Smith & Wesson you only get five shots. In the real world, some shots may be misses or peripheral hits. More than 5 chances would be really good! In addition, it often takes several hits to stop a determined attacker, and the short barreled .38 is not particularly potent, aggravating this problem further. There is a 50/50 chance of multiple assailants in armed robberies, home invasions, and similar crimes. If faced with two or three attackers, those five shots are going to be gone VERY quickly, leaving you suffering from Ammunition Deficit Disorder, a potentially fatal disease.

Add to this the fact that most small frame snubbies have very small, hard to see sights, and fight stopping hits become harder to achieve. The small frame guns have harder trigger pulls, because the trigger mechanism has less mechanical advantage than that of a larger framed revolver. All of this makes the small .38 revolver much harder to shoot well than any sort of compact or medium size auto. I consider the small .38 an excellent back-up gun for the experienced gun person, not the primary gun for a relatively new shooter.

Myth #4- A tiny .380 auto would be perfect for "the little lady". Wrong. There are a number of problems with this. First, the .380 cartridge is not effective enough for self defense. Almost all .380's are "blow-back" actions, not "locked breech" designs like handguns chambered for more powerful cartridges. In addition, the overall cartridge length limits bullet weight to the 80 grain to 100 grain range, which does not provide enough mass for reliable penetration. Most small .380's are very hard to shoot well, hold too few rounds, and many are cheaply made junk.

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The Glock 26 is a good choice for many women. This lady's hand is filled by the stock of the G26, with a place for all her fingers.

For very small hands, it may be best to stay with a pistol with a single column magazine. This allows a very slim grip. The Kahr line are excellent examples, with a width of only 9/10ths of an inch. The P9 is a good choice, for even very small hands. These are very light, compact pistols, but they fire full power 9mm ammunition and hold eight shots. The fairly new Walther PPS is also extremely slim and flat, and may be a good choice for small hands. The old favorite 1911 works well with slim stock panels, if the student is willing to put in the training time to master the 1911's quirks. The Springfield Armory EMP was designed as a sub-compact 9mm 1911, and is easy to shoot and to conceal.

For average to large female hands there are a number of excellent choices. One of the most commonly encountered guns among our more experienced female students is the Glock 19 in 9mm. Glock considers this gun to be a compact model, with a 4" barrel and a 15 round magazine (three times the capacity of a small frame revolver). Glocks have only three controls to master: the trigger, the magazine release, and the slide latch. They offer a consistent trigger pull for every shot, and they are reliable and easy to maintain. Another popular choice is the Smith & Wesson M&P Compact. This is very similar in overall size to the G19, but the S&W has interchangeable grip inserts. This allows fitting the grip to the individual. With the small grip insert in place, most women find the M&P Compact to be very comfortable and shootable. Both of these guns are also available in .40 S&W, as the Glock 23 and the M&P Compact .40. If you prefer the Glock, but the grip frame is a little large for you, a number of gunsmiths specialize in grip reductions. The pistol's grip can be slimmed and re-contoured to provide a very comfortable grip for even small hands.

Myth #5- Women can't handle recoil. Wrong. Very few women read gun magazines, therefore, recoil is not an issue with them. We don't make a big deal of it in training, and it just isn't an issue. My wife has a number of handguns, but her favorite for shooting is a 1911 in .45. Learning to grip the gun correctly pretty much eliminates this issue, IF the handgun fits her hand correctly.

So, based on all this, what do we recommend? Again, it depends on overall body size and hand size more than anything else.

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This is a Lightweight Commander in 9mm, customized by master gunsmith Jim Garthwaite of Pennsylvania.

The Lightweight Commander, seen from above. Notice that the female shooter is able to get a proper grip on the gun, wrist bones and forearm bones behind the frame, and still have clearance so the trigger finger does not push against the pistol's frame. This is a gun that fits her properly.

Very few men can successfully buy clothing for their wives, and the same holds true for pistol purchases. The best bet is to have the woman come in for some training, first. After a basic class in handgun use, she can then get with a staff member to look over several different handguns, and see how her hand interfaces with the pistol's grip, trigger reach, and overall size. She can then make an intelligent choice for herself. She will be happier, and as a result, so will you!

