



# Tactical Talk

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**"It's not the will to win that matters - everyone has that. It's the will to prepare to win that matters."**

**-- Paul "Bear" Bryant**

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## R.I.P. Paul E. Gomez

Our good friend and colleague, Paul Gomez, passed away in June due to complications from diabetes, just shy of his 41<sup>st</sup> birthday. Paul was a walking encyclopedia of everything related to defensive shooting and training. A voracious reader and perpetual student, Paul knew about the existence, development, and proper application of just about any technique or piece of equipment. An early proponent of the AK family of weapons and of basic trauma care training for citizens, Paul's work was often copied without credit. He was content to help push forward the state of the art, without much regard for personal fame or fortune. Paul was a regular presenter at just about every Rangemaster Tactical Conference and several NTI's, and was a good man and a true friend. He will be sorely missed.

Paul left behind three young children who will need an education. A number of his good friends will be putting on a memorial training event, the Paul-E-Palooza in Garrettsville, Ohio, at Raven Concealment Systems' range facility there. Thirty well known trainers, including Southnarc, Rob Pincus, Tom Givens and many more will be conducting classroom, hands on, and live fire training all weekend. Cost is only \$200 (a steal!) and 100% of the proceeds go to a trust fund set up for Paul's children.

### PAUL-E-PALOOZA 2012

**A Memorial Training Conference To Benefit the Children of Our Great Friend, Paul E. Gomez**

**Saturday and Sunday, August 18-19, 2012  
8:00am to 5:15 pm daily  
Raven Concealment Systems Range  
Garrettsville, OH**

Please direct all inquiries to [paul.e.palooza@gmail.com](mailto:paul.e.palooza@gmail.com)

Faculty of Trainers

Honoring Paul's memory and status in the community, an unprecedented cast of instructors will be donating training time to the cause, including:

Craig Douglas (aka "Southnarc")--Rob Pincus--Cecil Burch--Tom Givens  
Andy Stanford--Dr. Keith Brown--Dr. Sherman House--Greg Ellifritz--Aaron Little  
Paul Sharp--Larry Lindemann--Steve Fisher  
Michael DeBethencourt--Bobby Mac--Jeremy Decker--Jeffrey Bloovman  
Chris Fry--Spencer Keepers--Taylor Mock--Tom Fineis--Michael Goerlich  
Claude Werner--Shane Gosa--John Hearne  
William Aprill--Caleb Causey--Morgan Atwood--Chuck Haggard  
Shay VanVlymen--Jay Hinton



## Quote of the Decade

This quote was translated into English from an article appearing in the Czech Republic as published in the Prager Zeitung of 28 April 2011.

***"The danger to America is not Barack Obama but a citizenry capable of entrusting an inexperienced man like him with the Presidency. It will be far easier to limit and undo the follies of an Obama presidency than to restore the necessary common sense and good judgment to a depraved electorate willing to have such a man for their president. The problem is much deeper and far more serious than Mr. Obama, who is a mere symptom of what ails America . Blaming the prince of the fools should not blind anyone to the vast confederacy of fools that made him their prince. The Republic can survive a Barack Obama. It is less likely to survive a multitude of Idiots such as those who made him their president ."***

We normally steer clear of politics in this newsletter, but this Fall's national election is possibly the most important election in our lifetime. The recent U.S. Supreme Court victories for individual gun rights were won by a margin of one vote. If Obama is re-elected, he will replace at least two current Supreme Court Justices who will be in their 80's during his second term. If that happens, you can kiss your gun rights good-bye.

## "Guns in Bars" Two Years Old



The state law that allows Handgun Carry Permit Holders to wear their sidearms into establishments that serve alcohol was erroneously tagged the "Guns in Bars" bill by the anti-gun media. Predictably, the media forecast blood running in the streets and all sorts of mayhem if this law were passed. It was passed, and became law on July 1, 2010.

Just as predictably, the law has now been in effect for over two full years, and NONE of the predicted bloodshed has occurred. In fact, there have been zero problems. The only bar shootings in the state have been committed by people ILLEGALLY carrying guns without a permit (criminals).





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	DVD: “Concealed Carry for Self Defense”	<b>\$19.95</b>	
	DVD: “Defensive Shotgun”	<b>\$19.95</b>	
Subtotal			
Shipping (\$3.00 per DVD, \$4.00 per Book)			
Order Total			

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Credit Card Information	
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We have a lot of Rangemaster special events between now and Thanksgiving. Here are details on some of them.

**Firearms Instructor Development Course, Three-Day**

**3-5 August, Friday-Sunday,**

**At Rangemaster, Memphis, 9am-6pm all 3 days. \$479, need 1,000 rounds. All work on our air conditioned indoor range and classroom. Accepted by Tennessee Department of Safety for state license as a State Certified Handgun Instructor for permit classes.**

**Paul Gomez Memorial Conference, Aug 18-19, Sat-Sun**

**Garrettsville, Ohio (near Cleveland), 8am-6pm both days**

**\$200 Paul passed away and left three children behind who will need an education. Thirty trainers, including Southnarc, Tom Givens, and many more are donating their time for this live fire and hands on training event. 100% of the proceeds go to a trust fund set up for Paul's kids. Contact [paul.e.palooza@gmail.com](mailto:paul.e.palooza@gmail.com) or send check and information to Paul-E-Palooza, c/o WTA, 5721 Magazine St, Unit 180, New Orleans, LA, 70115. Please help support this important event.**

**Combative Pistol Sept 15-16 Wichita, KS**

**At The Bullet Stop, indoor range, Sat-Sun, 9am-6pm,  
\$400,1,000 rounds contact The Bullet Stop, 316-945-3331**

**Firearms Instructor Development Course, Three Day 21-23 Sept , Friday through Sunday, 9am-6pm all 3 days, \$479, 1000 rds at Practical Shooting, in McCloud, Oklahoma  
This course is accepted by OK CLEET for a license as an SDA instructor.**

**Defensive Shotgun Course, One Day, Sept 28, Friday  
9am-6pm, East Texas Rifle & Pistol Club, Longview, Texas  
\$200 Need a suitable pump or semi-auto shotgun, 125 rounds birdshot, 50 rounds buckshot, 15 slugs, contact James Sterling, [sterlingranch@suddenlink.net](mailto:sterlingranch@suddenlink.net)**



**Dynamic Marksmanship Course (Combative Pistol II)**

**Sept 29-30, Sat-Sun, 9am-6pm, at the East Texas Rifle & Pistol Club, Longview, Texas , 1200 rounds \$400 This is an intensive skills course. Students should be prior graduates of Combative Pistol 1 or equivalent from a reputable school prior to this class. This is not for beginners. Contact James Sterling,  
[sterlingranch@suddenlink.net](mailto:sterlingranch@suddenlink.net)**

**Firearms Instructor Development Course Oct 5-7, 3 days**

**Fri-Sun, 9am-6pm all 3 days, \$479, 1000 rounds**

**Americus, Georgia (south of Atlanta)**

**Contact Dennis Raines or Shane Gosa, [americustraining@yahoo.com](mailto:americustraining@yahoo.com)**

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**Combined Skills Course, Oct 12-14, Friday evening, plus 8am-6pm Sat and Sun, private range, Chandler, Oklahoma**

**\$425, 800 rounds Tom Givens, Steve Moses and Dr. Troy Miller, MD** This is an intensive course covering shooting, tactics, and emergency trauma first aid. Students rotate through the segments with the different instructors and get an incredibly full weekend of training. Contact Steve Moses, [steve\\_moses@msn.com](mailto:steve_moses@msn.com)

**Combative Pistol, Oct 20-21 Rogers, Arkansas**

**Sat-Sun, \$400, 1000 rds, 9am-6pm both days**  
**Contact Nighthawk Training Academy, Jon Hodoway,**  
**479-225-7592 479-631-1321**

**Dynamic Marksmanship, Oct 27-28 South River Gun Club, near Atlanta, GA. Sat-Sun, 9am-6pm, \$400, 1200 rounds**

**Contact Robert E. Wilson, Jr, P.O. Box 3494, McDonough, GA, 30253**

**Dynamic Marksmanship, Nov 3-4 Weatherford, Texas**

**Sat-Sun, 9am-6pm, \$425, 1200 rounds** This is an intensive skills course. Students should be prior graduates of Combative Pistol 1 or equivalent from a reputable school prior to this class. This is not for beginners. Contact Steve Moses, [steve\\_moses@msn.com](mailto:steve_moses@msn.com)

## Handgun Production by US Manufacturers

The BATFE publishes an annual report on the number of firearms made by American manufacturers each year. It takes a while to compile the information, so the figures for 2010 just came out. Here are the production figures for the biggest producers.

<u>Maker</u>	<u>Pistols</u>	<u>Revolvers</u>
Ruger	473,479	192,475
Smith & Wesson	352,969	228,814
SIG	266,316	
Beretta	132,387	
Kimber	85,991	
Springfield	16,105	

*This interview appeared in the July Armed Citizens Legal Defense Network Journal. It is reprinted here with permission.*

# Armed Defense Skill Priorities

## An Interview with Tom Givens

*by Gila Hayes*

*Network Advisory Board member Tom Givens is rightfully among the top firearms trainers in the nation and his classes in Memphis, TN could not be needed more by the residents of one of America's most violent metropolitan areas. Givens spent 25 years in law enforcement and specialized security work, with duties ranging from investigations to street patrol to training, then in 1996, became owner/operator of Rangemaster in Memphis ([www.rangemaster.com](http://www.rangemaster.com)).*

*As an instructor, Givens may well hold the record for most private citizen students involved in self-defense incidents. It is testament to the efficacy of his training that a very high percentage prevailed, many telling Givens their story afterwards, from which he has fine-tuned his training to give others the benefit of hard experience.*

*Givens periodically teaches instructor development programs and at the end of one such event, we had the opportunity to interview him. We'll switch now to Q&A format, in hopes of preserving some of the tone and humor of this outstanding instructor.*

**eJournal:** What do you think are the top three skill deficits or shooter errors you see in practitioners of defensive pistol craft? What are the cures or solutions?

**Givens:** I would say there is one major error in three different areas. Most people commit one of these basic errors in the area of mindset or mental preparation, in equipment and in skills. Not everybody does all three, some people do one, some people do the other, and some people do the third.

The first one is mindset. Even people who carry a gun spend a great deal of time trying to convince themselves that violent crime will never happen to them. I think that is the biggest mistake that people make. It's not just an assumption, but almost a religious fervor when they say, "I don't work in bad neighborhoods, I don't do drugs, I don't go out late at night, and I don't do this and I don't do that, and so this will never happen to me!"

"It will never happen to me" is probably the most dangerous phrase you could ever utter!



*Above: Givens is an engaging public speaker, mixing large quantities of information with a seasoning of humor.*

It sets your mind up for frozen-up inaction when it does actually come, because you spent so much time, so much mental energy, trying to convince yourself that it won't happen. When it does then you are stuck in a denial loop where you can do absolutely nothing about it in the time frame that is allotted.

Now, violent crime happens very quickly and there is not a lot of time to stand around and try to get past "I can't believe this is actually happening to me" and then actually get moving. In the time it takes to say "I can't believe this is happening to me" you've just wasted a second and a half of your response time and then you do not have a whole lot of time left. These things do not go on for minutes; they are over in seconds for the most part, so you have got to start moving.

When you watch surveillance camera video of assaults, they happen very quickly. The person is there, and BOOM! They do what they want to do. Their goal is to get to you, get what they want from you, and get away from you, without getting caught or injured.

For a long time, my job involved talking to crime victims, interviewing them, trying to figure out what happened, so we could find who did it.



*Above: Givens shown conducting an instructor development course at The Firearms Academy of Seattle, Inc. recently.*

I'd go to the hospital and talk to people who had been seriously injured by bad guys and I would always ask them all the standard questions: what did the guy look like, and did they see a weapon, did they see a partner, did they see a vehicle and in what direction did they leave? I would always make a point to ask them what was the last thing that went through your mind before the lights went out, and it was typically, "I couldn't believe this was actually happening to me," or "Why would somebody want to hurt me?" I would submit to you that those are not very useful things to dwell on while somebody is trying to kill you or cripple you.

Let's look at them separately: "I can't believe this is happening to me." Well, why the hell not? It happens to somebody every few minutes in the U.S. Go to the F.B.I.'s website and from it link to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=3>). They believe that there are about 5½ million violent crimes a year in the United States. 5½ million is one for every 55 people.

So instead of "I can't believe this is happening to me," your mental response has to be, "Well, now it is my turn." That is a completely different response!

We can't get back the time we waste thinking, "I can't believe this is happening to me." In a fight, time is your most precious commodity. When people lose fights, it is not because they run out of ammo; it is because they run out of time. You run out of time doing what John Farnam calls "dithering," standing there in that denial loop of "I can't believe this is happening to me."

The first step is almost like a revival meeting, you have got to open up and internalize and accept that yes, this can happen to me. It happens to somebody every few minutes; it happens to one out of every 55 people in the country every stinkin' year, so why wouldn't it happen to me? Of course, it could happen to me, so I need to be mentally prepared as well as physically prepared to deal with it.

I've been chosen twice to be an armed robbery victim myself. It didn't work out for them either time, because instead of saying, "I can't believe this is happening to me," I said, "I need to do something about this!" That's a completely different mindset.

The other half of that is asking, "Why would someone want to hurt me?" Well, who cares? What difference does that make? We

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can dissect motivation later at our leisure. Right now, the only salient point is that this dude's trying to hurt you and you've got to stop him. Instead of, "Why would this guy want to hurt me," the simple declarative statement is, "This guy is trying to hurt me. I have got to make him stop."

So those are the mental issues. The biggest, most often committed mistake I see is that lack of understanding and that lack of acceptance that you may well have to use that firearm in self defense.

**eJournal:** Let's talk about solutions. How can training help people resolve the mental errors?

**Givens:** I think instructors have to point out the actual realities rather than just say, "You know, there are bad guys out there."

All you have to do is go to the Bureau of Justice Statistics or the Uniform Crime Reporting system and look to see what actually happens. Look at the crime tallies for your own area, break it down by population and see what the actual threat level is.

In my city, you have about a one in eighty chance of being the victim of an aggravated assault this year alone. There are 7,500 of those, a couple thousand rapes, and five or six thousand armed robberies, so when you break it all down, you have a one in twenty chance of being involved in a violent crime this year in my city; about one in fifty in the country as a whole.

Instead of it being some arcane, theoretical issue, it is real. This is going to happen to you tonight; this is going to happen to you tomorrow and you don't have any way of knowing that in advance. Most people are blissfully unaware of that. Most people are what I call willfully ignorant. They not only don't know, they don't want to know and so they make no attempt to find out. One of our jobs as instructors is to make them understand.

**eJournal:** On the range do you teach drills designed to prevent the paralysis of disbelief?

**Givens:** We start fairly early on with graphic targets that are actual, photographic representations of human beings pointing a deadly weapon at you. I think that's important. You carry a gun to defend yourself against human beings, so you need to shoot some targets that look like actual human beings and I don't mean a black silhouette like a B-27, I mean a photographic representation that looks like a person with evil intent, with opposing will, pointing a weapon at you.

I think if we shoot those enough it helps internalize that we carry a gun to shoot people with, which is a big step for a lot of people. A lot of people who carry a gun, frankly have not considered that they may have to shoot someone with it. The time to sort that out is not while the dude tries to kill you.

**eJournal:** You mentioned three areas of concern. What is the next one?

**Givens:** Equipment. People are just absolutely convinced that they have to have some microscopic pistol to carry it concealed. We both know that is baloney.

Right now, you and I are driving along in your car on our way to conduct business in town. You've got a Commander-sized 1911 on; I've got a Glock 35 on. I'll give you a \$100 bill if anyone in the business even looks at either one of us. 99% of the people in today's society don't even notice that you are on the same planet with them, much less look you over carefully for bumps and bulges! And what's everybody got on their waistlines now? PDAs, phones, Blackberries, iPads. I see people all the time with multiple devices hung on their belt.

**eJournal:** Have we become too paranoid about being "made" while carrying concealed handguns?

**Givens:** Entirely so! I travel all over the country as you

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*Above: Givens giving an instructor development student feedback after a shooting drill.*

know—I'm 2,400 miles from home right now—I've been wearing one or two guns every stinking day for the past 42 years and I've never been questioned about it, because I keep it concealed, it's my own business. I get on with life! During that whole time frame, it has been a full-sized 1911 or a 4-inch K-frame revolver or a Glock 35, and it just simply isn't a problem.

When people first start carrying a gun, they feel like they have a neon sign hanging around their neck, "Hey, look at me! I've got a gun!" That's because you know it's there, not because anybody else knows it is there.

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Let me give you a perfect example of this: Very few children are born wearing shoes; they typically don't have any. When they reach toddlerhood, their parents go to the store and try to find something they think the child will be comfortable in. Then they go home and they stick them on the child, and what does the child immediately do? Screams! Throws a fit, has a tantrum, and kicks them off. The responsible adult puts them back on and repeats the process a number of times. Gradually the tantrums become less intense and eventually after a couple of weeks the child leaves them on. Now, as an adult, you go through your daily routine and you don't stop now and then, look down and say,

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"Holy Crap! I've got shoes on!" You just wear them all day; you don't think about them.

Well, when you first put that pistol on, it's a novel stimulus, just like the shoes on that baby. It is a novel stimulus, which is the one thing human beings hate worse than anything else, so you think it is uncomfortable, it's big, it's bulky, and it's in the way! Waaah! Get it off! And then some responsible adult has to make you put it back on and then you wear it for a few weeks, and then it is just like your shoes. You don't stop in the middle of the day and say, "Geez! I've got a gun on," you just wear it all day like your shoes. I think for most people, they don't actually make enough of an effort to carry a decent gun on a routine basis to get past the novel stimulus. Concealment is really not so much an issue of gun size as it is of proper holster selection.

I think the place where most people who carry a micro gun screw up is that they think the primary purpose of my pistol is to be comfortable and concealed. No, the primary purpose of your pistol is to fight for your life in a sudden, unforeseen crisis. So, when that crisis presents itself, that little, bitty gun is hard to grab in a hurry, it is hard to handle correctly, it's hard to hit anything with, it doesn't hold many bullets, and when you hit somebody with it, it doesn't hurt much. It's not the optimum thing to fight with. If a fight starts, I want the biggest gun I can get with the most bullets I can get in it and the biggest bullets I can stuff in it.

I've been to a lot of shootings over the years and seen a lot of people hit with small caliber guns who are standing there talking to me while we wait for the paramedics. Not a good idea, really.

An acquaintance of mine shot a guy twice in the chest with a .380 whereupon the guy gutted him with a Buck knife, drove himself to the hospital and the doctor told me he said, "I think I've been shot." Well, if your assailant THINKS he's been shot, you didn't do it right.

I think carrying a small, inadequate pistol may be better than nothing, but I'm not really sure about that. You might be better to just take off running instead of shooting somebody with a thoroughly inadequate gun.

**eJournal:** If we consider ourselves armed, but the gun is seriously inadequate, we may act with unfounded confidence.

**Givens:** I think unfounded confidence is a good way to put it. That's not something I'd like to bet my life on. What do I need a gun for? Have that introspective conversation that few people ever have: "Why am I putting this gun on today? Because I might have to shoot somebody today."

That's why you're putting it on. If you don't recognize the possibility of having to shoot somebody today, then why on earth are you carrying a gun?

**eJournal:** That acknowledgement will bring many people up short, because we are so passive, or some might say peace loving.

**Givens:** No, the problem is in trying to be politically correct. If I get a bunch of newbies in for a permit class, I'll ask them, "Why do you want to carry a gun?" I'll get a bunch of euphemistic answers. One will say self defense, one will say personal security, and another will say family safety. Those are all euphemisms. You carry a gun because you might have to shoot somebody. You really need to think about that and internalize it.

We don't say that flippantly. We don't go around arbitrarily shooting people. You shoot people under very narrow, specific circumstances in which they pose an immediate, and otherwise unavoidable deadly threat to you or somebody for whom you are responsible.

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But think about that, if you reach for a pistol only because there is a deadly threat to you or somebody you love, you better have a pistol you can fix it with. I've interviewed an awful lot of people after gun fights and I've never had anybody say to me, "You know, when the bullets started coming back this way, I wished I had a smaller, less powerful pistol with less ammo in it."

One of the things we do in training is reintroduce the reality of why we carry a gun, and to put a sense of urgency into it. Maybe you'll never need it, but if you do need it, you are going to need it horribly and maybe it is going to be your life at stake.

I saw a tagline the other day on an Internet forum that I thought was just incredibly bright. It said, "It's not the odds. It's the stakes." And boy, there's a lot of wisdom in that statement.

We don't carry the gun because of the odds we're going to need it today. We carry it because the stakes are our own life or the life of a loved one. That is what we are literally betting. So if you go out unarmed or you go out

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inadequately armed, you are betting your life, you are betting your children's lives, you are betting your spouse's life. I am not willing to bet the lives of the people I love on some tiny, little pocket rocket.

**eJournal:** And that is the bottom line. Now, you mentioned a third failing. Shall we move on to that?

**Givens:** The third one is, "I don't need professional training." Not too long ago, I was out to dinner with a bunch of other instructors. We had two instructors in from Gunsite who were visiting, two instructors from a military organization that does pretty good shooting, two from a local law enforcement agency and my wife and myself. We were all sitting around talking and the topic came up, "What sound just really terrifies you? What sound makes shivers go down your body and makes you just wish you could run away?" Unanimously, our decision about what was really frightening to us was the phrase, "Hell, I grew up around guns."

For us professional instructors, the one thing that strikes terror into our hearts is to hear Bubba say, "Well, hell, I grew up around guns. I don't need no training."

Unfortunately, that is awfully damned common. People think, "Daddy taught me to shoot a pistol when I was eleven. What on earth could you teach me?"



*Above: At a recent instructor development class, Givens gives the fire command with his whistle.*

**eJournal:** Well, let's answer their question. I'll play Bubba. "What on earth could you teach me?"

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**Givens:** Well, I could teach you the rules of engagement so that you don't go to prison over stupid things. That might be a good start.

I could teach you how to correctly manipulate your pistol. I could teach you how to reload it if it runs out and fix it if it malfunctions. That would be useful.

I could teach you how to direct bullets from point A to point B and hit what you intend to hit instead of a family member. That could be somewhat useful.

I could teach you to quickly and reliably hit smaller or partially obscured targets, rather than a huge B-27 silhouette standing still in the open. That would be useful. I could go on and think of other things that I bet Daddy didn't teach you to do when you were eleven.

**eJournal:** Still, there are an awful lot of Americans who have guns but haven't pursued formal training.

**Givens:** The person that thinks he knows everything there is to know about this is going to be in for some real shocks if he gets into the wrong fight.

Another mistake people make is looking at the "average" fight. Average doesn't really mean squat, because to have an average you have to have numbers above and numbers below, and usually the average doesn't give you any kind of an adequate representation. To give you an example, look at a DVD that I made that goes over ten shootings that our students have been involved in. We've had 60 students involved in armed confrontations with criminals, so a few years ago we pulled out ten of those cases which are just a broad, representative cross-section and made a professionally-produced DVD. It is a detailed debrief on ten private citizens' self-defense shootings that are a representative cross sampling of what actually happens to people.

In one shooting, which was kind of unusual circumstances, one of our students actually had to shoot a man 22 yards away who was firing at the student and some children around our student. He had to shoot from the middle of his own yard to the sidewalk on the far side of the street and hit this guy. He fired one shot hitting and stopping the threat at a measured 22 yards. That's kind of an exceptional shooting, but they do happen.

In another instance, our student fired eleven rounds into a suspect less than the length of his car away. The suspect was standing at the door of the car and our student was standing at the back bumper. He fired eleven rounds, all eleven of which hit the suspect and fixed that particular problem.

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If you average those two fights out, it was six shots at eleven yards—nowhere near the reality of either fight—which is exactly the problem with averages. Averages don't represent what actually happened at all, so one of the things we try to get people to do is not train to a mythical average.

Train to the typical fight, which is a completely different thing. A typical fight is that which happens most often. That is an assailant at somewhere around three, four or five steps where you have a real time pressure, because any one-eyed, three-fingered jackass can hit you at three, four or five steps if you let them get off enough shots. The idea is to be able to produce your weapon quickly, and get immediate, first-round hits reliably, and that is something most people can't do without training.

**eJournal:** Of course, defensive firearm training is a lot more than quick draw!

**Givens:** Actually, training falls into two categories. You need initial training in order to learn how to correctly present the gun from the holster, safely, efficiently and quickly. Safely means without shooting yourself or somebody else in the process of getting the gun out. Quickly, of course, means in a small amount of time and efficiently means into a firing platform where you can actually get hits with those first, few shots.

Since these fights happen typically at close range in a very small amount of time, we really need to get hits with those first

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rounds, and the next couple of rounds after that and that is a skill that has to be acquired and has to be taught to you.

Rapid, accurate shooting, the ability to reload the gun if it runs out, the ability to fix malfunctions if it malfunctions—the gun is more likely to malfunction in a fight than in a plinking environment 'cause you may not be standing straight upright on a nice clean range with a nice, clean pistol, so you need to know how to fix those things—those are some of the things we address in initial training.

But you also need to have sustainment training. Shooting is a perishable skill and if you don't practice, you're not going to be able to maintain any skill level, and if you practice, errors creep in over time and you get sloppy with techniques, so refresher training is important from that perspective.

Let's take driving a car. Even though they drive a car every day, most people don't drive a car terribly well, because they weren't trained correctly and they don't get sustainment training on it, but they get by with it because they drive a car on a daily basis. Very few people shoot on a daily basis.

To use that car analogy, let's say that you don't know how to drive a car. Somebody spends eight hours—and that's all, eight hours—teaching you how to drive a car, and then you never drive that car again for months or years, but you've got the keys hanging there on the wall by the door. The theory is that if there is a sudden, life-threatening crisis that only you can fix, grab

those keys, jump in the car and drive off at 100 miles an hour. Somebody who didn't know how to drive, only had eight hours of driving training, and hasn't driven in the last two or three years, is going to have a really hard time doing that.

It is the same with a gun. You take eight hours of training with a pistol, you learn the basic manipulations, and then you don't handle the gun, you don't shoot, you don't practice, you don't get your sustainment training, and two or three years down the pike you need that gun RIGHT NOW!

In the next couple of seconds, you are either going to live or die. If you really expect to pull that off, I'd suggest that you might be a little optimistic.

So that's exactly where we are at with the handgun. We've got to get initial training so we can do things correctly, and then have sustainment training so we continue to do things correctly and we know how to do things without having to stop, review and refresh during a fight. There is not going to be time to do that. You have to be able to pick up the gun and go now, so initial training and sustainment training are critically important.

I suggest people that are serious take a basic-level class from somebody about once a year. As a professional instructor who has been doing this literally for decades, I try to take at least one class a year from somebody else so I can see how they do things and refresh my own skills.

Basic skills are what win fights. People always want to take advanced classes. As my friend John Farnam says, people always show up asking when do we get to jump out of the flaming helicopters? Typically, these people can't perform the most simple, elementary manipulations with their guns but they want to play.

I would much rather that you get the basics down.

*[Continued...]*

Basics executed well and on demand is what it's all about. The typical gunfight doesn't require a lot of advanced skill. It requires the skill of getting the gun out right now and getting reliable hits right now under a great deal of pressure. Those are basic skills, but they are really what it's all about.

People who just buy a gun and put it in the sock drawer and think, "Well, now I'm safe because I've got a gun," really have not thought the problem through. Jeff Cooper once said you are no more a musician because you bought a piano, than you are a gunman because you bought a gun. There is a great deal of truth to that. You can't buy personal safety. You have to earn it.

*(Continued on page 15)*

*(Continued from page 14)*

You have to put in the time, put in the effort and learn how to actually take back control of your life.

That is essentially what we are talking about. We are talking about taking control of your own life. I can decide what people do and don't do to me. That is something that I insist on being able to do. It baffles me that some people are willing to live at the whim of other people. I don't carry a gun so I can enforce my will on others; I carry a gun so other people can't impose their will on me. There is a huge difference.

**eJournal:** We've covered a lot of ground in this conversation but have run out of time. Do you have any closing thoughts for Network members?

**Givens:** Take training seriously. Remember, it can happen to you. If you accept and internalize that one thing, you'll probably be OK.

**eJournal:** Well, that gives us an awful lot to think about and get to work on. Thank you for taking the time to share your knowledge and experience with us. I really appreciate it.

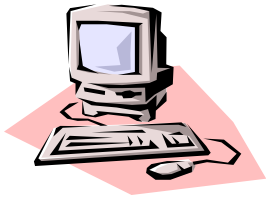


*Above [L-R]: Network President Marty Hayes with Lynn and Tom Givens at the end of a long week of training. Hayes participated in Givens' instructor development class and provided the rest of the photographs used in this article.*

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## Introduction to Handguns

This is a one-evening, four hour class, which is conducted on a week night from 6pm to 10pm. This course is suitable for those who are completely unfamiliar with handguns and want to learn about them, OR for more experienced shooters who want to be able to fire 10 different handguns side by side for comparison shopping purposes. ALL handguns, ammunition, and everything else will be supplied by Rangemaster.

There is a classroom session, where we go over handgun safety, mechanical operation, and the basics of shooting technique. On the range, under the direct supervision of experienced instructors, students will fire several shots from each of ten different handgun makes and models. A list of handguns we will shoot follows.

Tuition is \$69.00, which includes all ammunition. Advance registration is required. Call 901-370-5600 to register.

**August 9, 2012**  
**Thursday, 6pm-10pm**

**November 1, 2012**  
**Thursday, 6pm-10pm**

### ***Introduction to Handguns, Gun List:***

- S&W M&P full size 9mm
- S&W M&P Compact 9mm
- Glock 19, compact 9mm
- Glock 22, full size .40 caliber
- Springfield Armory, mid-size XD 9mm
- Kahr T-9, mid-size 9mm
- Kimber TLE 1911, .45 caliber
- S&W Model 37, Airweight .38 Special
- S&W Model 60, 3" barrel j-frame .38 Special
- S&W Model 19, medium frame .357 Magnum