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NOVEMBER 2016

RANGE • MASTER

Volume 20 • Issue 11

RANGEMASTER

DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE REAL WORLD

Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Shooting skill, particularly with a handgun, is perishable. Competent initial training has to be followed by regular sustainment training to have any hope of solid performance under high stress. Let's look at a couple of examples from the police training world. Yes, I understand not everyone is a cop, but police agencies track these things and the information is available to us.

In Los Angeles, on the other hand, officers must shoot every other month. Their qualification course uses a smaller target and has reasonable time limits, which are strictly enforced by turning targets that disappear when the time limit expires. The department as a whole has about a 55% hit ratio. The Metro Division, which gets even more focus on firearms training, has an 85% hit ratio. Coincidence?

this circle with three rounds. We have two shooters complete this task. Both shooters place all three hits inside the "vital zone", so they are equal, right? Good enough?

The difference is that Shooter A got hits in 1.8 seconds while Shooter B took 3.5 seconds. Shooter A is clearly a better shooter. If Shooter B is serious about self defense, he will strive to

TRAIN LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT

by Tom Givens

The New York City Police Department has its officers fire 50 rounds of ammunition, twice a year, for a grand total of 100 rounds per year. Part of their qualification course is not even timed. Their silhouette target is huge, with a greatly oversized scoring zone.

Every year, their hit ratio runs about 10% to 20% in the field. In one year, they fired 1,293 shots on the streets of New York to hit 64 suspects and 11 innocent bystanders. That's a pretty dismal performance.

Notice two of the key components of relevant training. Without an accuracy standard, we don't know if we are hitting well enough. Without a time standard, we don't know if we are hitting soon enough. This sets us up for failure.

Let's say, just for the sake of discussion, that we have a silhouette target that has an eight-inch circle in the upper chest to simulate the vital zone of an attacker, and this target is at five yards, a typical civilian engagement distance. The task at hand is to draw from concealment and hit

become better, which in this case, means faster, so that he has a realistic chance of getting his hits in a defensive shooting incident before he is hit, himself.

Without a reasonable target (in this case the eight-inch circle) and without a time measurement (stopwatch/timer), there is no way to assess skill, measure progress, or diagnose and address deficiencies. The adult teaching model is Explain, Demonstrate, Practice, and Test. Without testing, there is no measure of learning, and you are only engaging in ballistic masturbation. It

may make you feel better in the short term, but you aren't accomplishing anything. Therefore, when we train or practice, we have to test, to see where we are, where we need to go, and how close we are to getting there.

Scored courses or drills serve many important functions and are critical to development as a defensive shooter. Here are some of the reasons they are important.

1 We need an objective view of the student's skill, not a subjective view. The target and timer don't lie.

2 We can compare the student's performance to a historical standard, set by measuring the performance of a number of students before him. Thus, we know if we need to remediate or if we can move forward.

3 We can precisely quantify and track progress, essential to skill building.

4 We can instill the timing issues necessary for shooting at the right cadence as target size/distance varies.

5 We can get the student accustomed to working under stress.

6 We can help the student build confidence. Not measuring skill leads to false confidence.

Students always think they are doing better than they are. Actually scoring, and incorporating both accuracy and speed in the scoring, shows true skill level, and allows real confidence.

7 Training and practice build skill. Skill builds confidence.

Confidence leads to coolness. Coolness prevents panic. This is what wins fights.

In the extreme stress of a real life shooting incident, skill degrades. However, the more skill one has, the less skill one tends to lose (see #7 above). The less skill one has, the more skill one tends to lose under duress. This is why "good enough" is not good enough. Also, the Mother of retention of any physical skill under duress is

structured repetition. To have a higher skill level, one has to practice more (structured repetition). I have debriefed a number of people after shootings, and not one of them has ever said to me, "When the bullets starting coming my way, I wished I hadn't trained as hard."

As an example, one of our students, who we will call John, has taken several classes with us, including our Instructor Development Course. In that course, students are held to high accuracy and speed standards, and those who do not make the required scores do not get certificates. This January, John was forced to shoot a man under highly stressful circumstances, including total surprise. John fired four rounds and got four upper torso hits, ending the threat to him and his family. That's the goal of training. ■

by
Tom
Givens

*Highly
Recommended!*



**BORESIGHT
SOLUTIONS**

Ben Simonson at Boresight Solutions Group is an artist when it comes to modifying the Glock handgun to better suit the individual owner/user. Several years ago he built a Glock 35 for me, and it has been my every day carry piece since I got it back from him. He did a grip reduction and stipple job on it that make the pistol fit my hand perfectly, as well as look sharp and professional.

Recently, I had Ben build me a Duty Series Glock 19. I'll wear this handgun when dressed in a suit, as it is a bit

more compact than my G35. The G19 is the single most common handgun in my training classes, so I need one to demo with, anyway.

Boresight developed The Duty Series as a standard package that Ben's staff could turn out as a production item, eliminating the long wait times more individualized custom work often entails. The package includes everything you need in a self-defense handgun, plus some cosmetic upgrades that just look cool.

The subtle reshaping of the grip frame, combined with Boresight's stippling pattern, make for a very secure yet comfortable gripping surface. This pistol feels rock solid in the hand and does not move at all during firing. Boresight installed an after-market Apex trigger that feels good, breaks cleanly, has a fast, positive reset, and is an appropriate weight for a carry gun. This pistol was shipped with Trijicon HD night sights, which I am still evaluating. The overall fit and finish of the piece is just outstanding.

Check out <https://bsgduty.com/details/> for details on this package and other Boresight packages and options. They also work on other polymer frame handguns, including the SIG P320. I have handled a couple of Boresight's 320's and they feel fantastic in the hand. Highly recommended! ■

by Tom Givens

Gun Policy Updates

The Second Amendment Foundation and the Citizens' Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms combine forces each year to host the Gun Rights Policy Conference. This marks the 31st year for this event, which has been held all over the US. This year it was held in Tampa, and Lynn and I, along with Tiffany Johnson, attended.

There were updates from numerous state level and national organizations that are fighting for our gun and self-defense rights, as well as legal updates from some of the attorneys who have won such important victories as the Heller and McDonald decisions. It's also a chance to visit with friends and network with like minded people from our community.

One outgrowth of this event was an invitation for Tiffany to speak before the First Committee of the United Nations, at UN Headquarters in New York City. In October, Tiffany flew to NYC and gave her address to this body, which is considering global attempts to limit private citizens' access to firearms. This is a never-ending battle against those who would disarm us; and bright, young, articulate people like Tiffany are the key to swaying those who are not committed enemies. Attagirl, Tiffany!

In discussions with various state level politicians at the conference, it became apparent that there is a huge dichotomy between state and local politicians on the one hand and those at the national level on the other. Missouri just became the 12th state to allow "constitutional carry." That is, any non-felon adult can legally carry concealed without a permit. That's almost a quarter of the states in the US that now allow concealed carry with no permit or other legal requirements. Other states have loosened requirements for permits, done away with some prohibited areas, and made other strides to improve their citizens' ability to defend themselves. On the other hand, at the Federal level, all we hear is restrictions, loopholes, "Assault Weapon" bans, magazine capacity restrictions, etc.

It is obvious that at the Federal level, politicians have become an aristocracy. Many believe they know what's best for the ignorant peons, who have to be protected from their own misguided notions of liberty and personal rights. The national election this year is absolutely crucial to preserving your right to self-defense. If the Clintons regain power, the Assault Weapon Ban from the last Clinton White House will be nothing compared to the restrictions we will face. More critical is the fact that the next President will appoint at least one and possibly as many as three Supreme Court Justices, which could undo all the progress made in the past few years. Vote carefully. ■



The Texas Ranger Museum

by Tom Givens

I spent almost the entire month of September and the first ten days of October in various locations in Texas. During that time, we taught six courses in three cities. On a rare down day, I went to Waco to visit the Texas Ranger Museum, something I do whenever I'm near Waco.

This museum is completely dedicated to the Texas Rangers, and covers their entire history. A lot of legendary Rangers are featured in separate exhibits, along with more general exhibits covering various phases of Ranger history and lore. If you are interested in the history of law enforcement in the US, or the history of gunfighting, I recommend a stop there.

—Tom



Serpa Holster Advisory

Students still show up now and then for class with SERPA trigger-finger-release holsters. Although we do not outright ban them, I would really like to see serious students of the Art abandon this very poorly thought out design. After conducting a formal study, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center issued an advisory memo warning about the dangers inherent in this flawed design. Click below to read the study and its findings. ■

Serpa Study URL: https://www.fletc.gov/sites/default/files/imported_files/reference/public-information/freedom-of-information-act-foia/reading-room/training-information/holisterStudy.pdf



You should train here.

The Tactical Conference is sold out! If you hadn't registered, you'll have to wait for 2018. However, this February, we're conducting two courses at a very nice range complex in Homestead, FL — just south of Miami. First is our Three-Day Firearms Instructor Development Course (focused on handguns), and then our Three-Day Defensive Shotgun Instructor Development Course will be at the same range the following weekend. This is a perfect opportunity to combine a family outing with some intensive training. South Florida has lots to offer, and the weather will be perfect for training this time of year. Please visit our website or our Eventbrite page to learn more or sign up (links below).

Firearms Instructor Development Course

February 3-5, 2017
Homestead, FL

Defensive Shotgun Instructor Development Course

February 10-12, 2017
Homestead, FL

Eventbrite

**BEWARE
OF THE
LONE**

WOLF

by
Tom
Givens

Recently, ISIS and other Islamist groups have been urging followers to take up whatever weapon they can obtain and carry out daily attacks in the US, as have become common in Israel and other areas abroad. We have seen several of these here in the past few months, and the tempo will only increase. ISIS, for instance, has specifically called for attacks in schools, churches, shopping malls, beaches, and other locations. Basically, anywhere people gather could be the next attack site. The recent mall attack in St. Cloud, Minnesota, is sadly typical. A lone jihadist, armed with a knife, was able to stab eight people before he was shot to death by the only armed citizen who was present.

In viewing surveillance videos from this attack, one aspect really stands out. People can be seen running and screaming, but a couple of store employees just watch them run by, and one actually stands in the door of the store trying to see what the commotion is all about. He is soon stabbed multiple times by the jihadist, who was following the people running away from him.

With the current issues of active shooters and stabbers, whether jihadist or mental case, the key to your safety may be a willingness to assume the worst and react immediately whenever you hear or see people behaving in a frightened or panic driven manner. In many active shooter events, a number of victims died because they were frozen in place in disbelief. "I can't believe this is happening!" This denial loop keeps you from taking effective action soon enough, or at all. Here are some common comments from survivors, who lived by sheer luck:

"I thought the gunfire was distant hammering." This was stated by a number of survivors at Virginia Tech. Guys, hammering that loud during school hours or office hours is highly unlikely. You should know what gunfire sounds like, and react to it immediately.

"I thought it was a car backfiring." Dude... Even if it made sense for a car to be running inside a mall, American automobiles haven't had carburetors in decades. This is really stretching to keep from admitting it's gunfire.

"I never thought it would happen here." The Macy's department store in St. Cloud, MN, is probably statistically the least likely place in the US to have to shoot someone. Unfortunately, for one man recently, the odds were 100%. You must simply accept the fact that ANY PLACE people are present carries a risk of inter-personal violence, whether by a jihadist or a garden variety criminal. When violence occurs, don't try desperately to rationalize it away, deal with it. ■



Notes on Kneeling

By Tom Givens



Braced Kneel



Double Kneel



Speed Kneel

In defensive handgun shooting, we often find ourselves standing up and shooting, at fairly close range, in a big hurry. There are times, however, that a lowered firing position could be advantageous. In these cases, it is usually some form of kneeling position that winds up being used.

A kneeling position can accomplish one or more important tasks, depending upon the circumstances. Shooting from kneeling may:

- Lower your silhouette, simply making you a smaller target;
- Help you conform to low cover, like the engine compartment of a parked car or a large concrete planter;
- Give you more stability, especially if you have been running or are otherwise physically exerted; or
- Help you affectively engage an active killer who has not seen you yet. He may not notice a person below eye level, where people tend to scan.

There are basically three variations of the kneeling position: braced kneeling, double kneeling and speed kneeling. They are performed differently and serve slightly different functions.

Braced kneeling is a variation of the rifle shooting position. It offers enhanced stability, IF done correctly.

To assume the position, as you draw the handgun, step forward and across with the support side foot. You want to draw an imaginary line from your dominant side foot to your target, and step across on to that line as you drop. Sit down on your gun side heel. Place the flat back of the support side elbow on the flat back of the support side knee. Keep the gun extended away from your face, just as you would in a standing position. A proper braced kneeling position offers good visibility, most people can get into and out of it faster than prone, and it is even more stable than standing .

Double kneeling involves rocking the shoulders back as you draw, and dropping on to both knees. Sit down on your heels. From the waist up, it is just like standing. You rock your shoulders back as you draw to reduce the impact on your knees when they hit the ground. In this position, you can lean out around either side of low cover and stay well behind the cover.

Speed kneeling involves just stepping forward with the support side foot and dropping to one knee. It offers no enhanced stability, just a lower profile. It is the fastest kneeling position to assume or quit.

The photos show Lynn demonstrating these various techniques. Try them and find one that works for your body style and level of fitness. ■

When she was at the United Nations, Tiffany snapped this photo of "Non-Violence," the famous sculpture of the revolver with a knotted barrel...

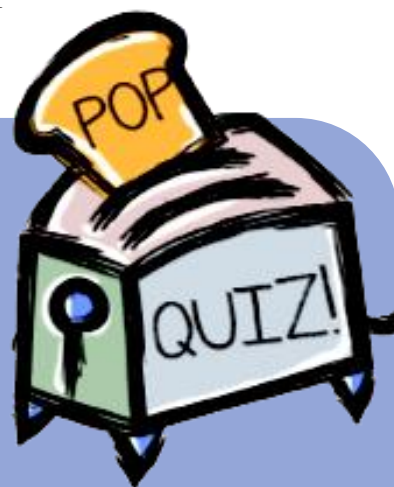


Which of the following statements is true about this sculpture?

- A. It's a replica of the gun used to kill John Lennon.
- B. There are thirty copies of the sculpture around the world.
- C. It was a gift to the UN from Sweden.
- D. The sculptor is a member of the NRA.

You know the drill! Post the right answer on the Rangemaster Facebook page before anyone else does, and you'll be this month's **WINNER!!!**

Extra credit goes to the person who comes up with the best caption for the "Knotted Gun" photo...



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