

In This Issue

- ▶ POINT SHOOTING
VS. SIGHTED FIRE 1
- ▶ UPCOMING RANGEMASTER
CLASSES 3
- ▶ TAC-CON-18 4
- ▶ THREAT ASSESSMENT
FOR THE ARMED CITIZEN..... 4
- ▶ POP QUIZ! 5

JULY 2017

RANGE • MASTER

Volume 21 • Issue 7

RANGEMASTER

DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE **REAL** WORLD

Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



POINT SHOOTING

-VS-

SIGHTED FIRE

by
Tom Givens



Copyrighted material. Reprinted with
permission from S.W.A.T. Magazine.
www.swatmag.com

Among those who train in the defensive use of the handgun several debates have raged on for years. These include the “9mm vs .45” arguments, the “revolver vs autopistol” debate, and the “point shooting vs sighted fire” disagreement. In debates on any subject, one side often resorts to what is known as an “appeal to authority”, especially if they don’t have any factual basis for their argument. An “appeal to authority” typically goes like this, “My side is right, because (insert name here) said so, or that’s the way he did it.” One of the most commonly used

appeals to authority among point shooting proponents is that “William Fairbairn used point shooting and taught it to his men in Shanghai in the 1920’s and 1930’s, and during WWII taught it to American OSS operatives.” All that is true. One needs to know a bit more about the back story, however, to understand why Fairbairn used this method and why his reasons are no longer valid.

First, perhaps a bit of history will help put matters into the proper perspective, so here goes. Shanghai is a port city on the coast of China. At the turn of the 20th century, European powers forced the government of China to give them control over certain ports, including Shanghai, where the Europeans built modern enclaves for their personnel, who oversaw vast trade empires with the Chinese. In addition to legitimate trade, these ports became centers for the opium trade and human trafficking. In 1936, Shanghai was one of the largest cities in the world, with a total population in excess of 3 million. Of those, only about 35,000 were European, but they controlled the city and lived in a modern settlement with race track, schools, and all the cultural amenities they desired. To keep order and protect the Europeans (mostly British, French and German), the Shanghai Municipal Police were organized and run by the British. During the period of the 1920s and 1930s, there was a great deal of criminal violence, fueled by opium gangs and other smugglers, gangs that



CONTAINS NEW FOREWORD ABOUT E.A. SYKES

SHOOTING TO LIVE

W.E.
Fairbairn
&
E.A. Sykes



Copyrighted Material

specialized in prostitution and gambling, communist party organizers, and regular criminal thugs. These groups were in constant combat with the members of the Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP).

William E. Fairbairn joined the Royal Marines Light Infantry in 1901. A few years later he joined the Shanghai Municipal Police, where he eventually rose to the rank of Assistant Commissioner. For many years during the period of the 1920s and 1930s, he was in charge of all firearms training for the SMP, and also routinely went on dangerous raids and other operations. This resulted in his personal involvement in literally scores of gunfights during his career. Working with his associate, Eric Sykes, they devised a hand to hand system known as "Defendu," as well as a firearms training program for all SMP personnel. As World War Two loomed in the immediate future, both Fairbairn and Sykes left Shanghai and returned to England. For the duration of the war, Sykes remained in England, teaching British Commandoes and members of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), the British equivalent of our OSS. Fairbairn was sent here to train US and Canadian Commando forces and operatives from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forebear of the modern CIA.

Together, Fairbairn and Sykes wrote a book called *Shooting to Live*, first published in 1942. Paladin Press now offers a re-print of this excellent book, and it should be in the library of every history conscious gunman. One of Fairbairn's students in the OSS was Colonel Rex Applegate, who wrote extensively about Fairbairn's methods, and was largely responsible for propagating Fairbairn's teachings in the United States. Usually, if a point shooting proponent uses an appeal to authority, he will be referencing either Fairbairn, or Applegate.

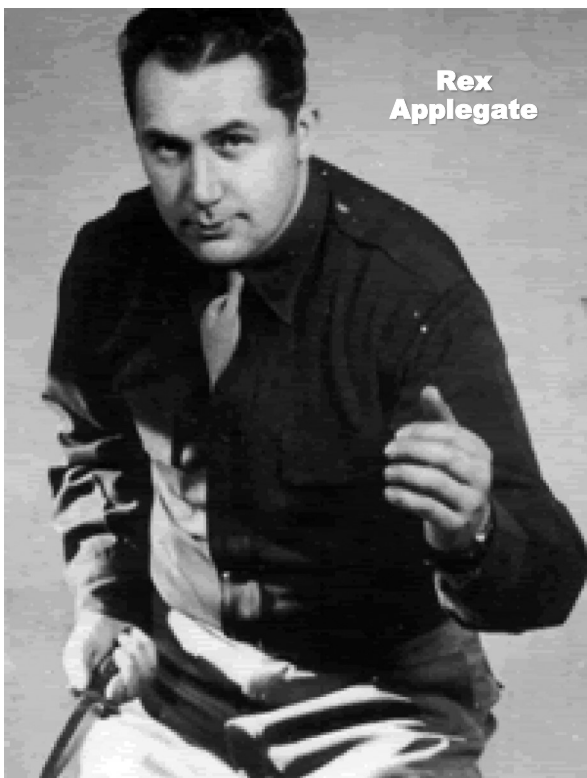
When one delves a bit deeper into Fairbairn's experience in Shanghai, including reading *Shooting to Live* with a bit more critical eye, a number of disturbing tidbits of information emerge. First, Fairbairn had a very large force of officers who were unfamiliar with handguns when they joined the SMP and for whom he had an extremely limited amount of time and ammunition for training. Initial training was very brief, and by today's standards completely and utterly inadequate. After initial training, each officer was allotted 36 rounds of ammunition per year for training and requalification, a pitiful amount by any modern standard. Initial recruit training was conducted at 2 yards and 4 yards, and the "qualification" standard was 50% or more hits anywhere on a life-size silhouette target! Not too impressive.

So, how did this training regimen work on the mean streets of Shanghai? During the period 1929 through 1938, SMP officers fired a total of 3,329 pistol rounds in actual engagements with criminals. These 3,329 rounds accounted for 159 suspects killed and an additional 149 suspects wounded. Thus, the SMP officers fired 10.8 rounds for every criminal casualty they produced. The completely untrained Chinese bandits, during the exact same period, fired 789 rounds at SMP officers, resulting in 19 officers killed and an additional 67 officers wounded. Thus, the thugs fired 9.2 rounds for every casualty produced. So, the officers trained in Fairbairn's point shooting methods were actually less effective than their untrained criminal foes.

This begs the question, "Why did Fairbairn persist with such an ineffective technique?" I believe the answer is quite simple, and can be readily illustrated. The SMP issued all sidearms used by its officers, and because they had both European (mostly British) officers and smaller statured Oriental officers, they issued two types of handguns. European officers got Colt 1911's in .45 and the Oriental officers, who were much smaller, were issued Colt 1908 Pocket Autos in .380. All of these handguns were made by Colt in the 1920's and early 1930's. Fairbairn



Shanghai Municipal Police, Search Party, 1930



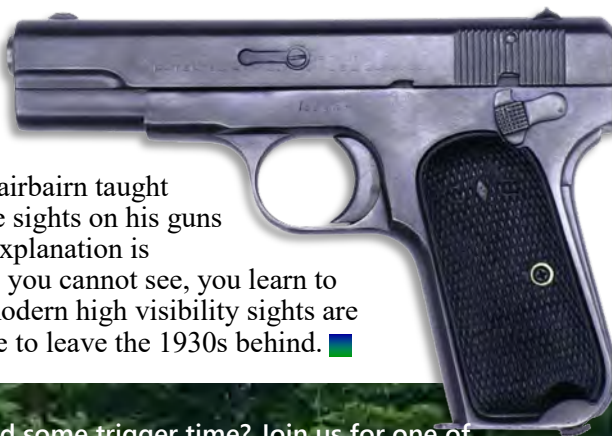
Rex
Applegate



did not personally care much for the .380 Colts, but he thought they were the best he could do for Oriental men with hands far too small to operate a 1911 well.

I happen to have one of the SMP's documented 1911 pistols, SMP number 233. (I have a letter from Colt attesting that this pistol was delivered to the SMP by the Colt factory.) This is a commercial Colt Government Model, manufactured in 1927. It has the "Shanghai Municipal Police" roll mark on the frame, and the Number 233 mark on the frame, slide and barrel. This is a "transitional model" 1911, with some features of the 1911 and some of the 1911-A1. The changes from 1911 to 1911-A1 configuration started in 1927, but many guns built in the next couple of years were assembled from parts on hand at the factory, and these transitional models are seen from time to time. I also have a Colt 1908 Pocket Model like the ones issued by the SMP, although this one did not belong to them. Both pistols have sights that are abysmal from a shooting point of view. The front sight is tiny- low and very narrow. The rear sight has a very small notch, on both the 1911 and 1908 pistols. These sights are all but impossible to see in anything other than perfect lighting, and it is very difficult to line them up at any kind of speed.

Contrast the sights on the 1911 and the 1908 with those on my current carry handgun, a Glock 35 (pictured to the left). Fairbairn taught point shooting because the sights on his guns were useless. No further explanation is needed. If you have sights you cannot see, you learn to point the gun. Now that modern high visibility sights are industry standard, it's time to leave the 1930s behind. ■



Upcoming Classes

Need some trigger time? Join us for one of Rangemaster's upcoming classes! Visit our Eventbrite page for details or to register.

Eventbrite

August 5-6

Combative Pistol
Morristown, MN

August 26-27

Advanced Firearms
Instructor Course
Culpeper, VA

September 9-10

Combative Pistol
New Orleans, LA

Sep 29 - Oct 1

Firearms Instructor
Development Course
Franklin, TN

August 19-20

Paul-E-Palooza - Garrettsville, OH
(proceeds benefitting Paul Gomez's children)
www.paulepalooza.com

September 8

Defensive Shotgun
New Orleans, LA

September 15-17

Defensive Shotgun
Instructor Course
Austin, TX



www.rangemaster.com



Page 3

TAC CON 2018

RANGE • MASTER



The next Rangemaster Tactical Conference will be conducted on March 16-18, 2018, Friday through Sunday. This event will be the 20th anniversary of the conference and we have several special items planned for this huge celebration.

We have partnered with the Direct Action Resource Center (DARC) just outside Little Rock, Arkansas, for this major event. DARC is a huge training complex with a 30+ year history of training military Spec Ops and police SWAT personnel. There are multiple ranges, shoot-houses and other features that will make this a unique training event. There are many hotels nearby in Little Rock and North Little Rock and the Little Rock Airport is nearby.

All of the usual trainers will be presenting various topics, along with several new faces. Trainers presenting blocks of instruction will include Massad Ayoob, John Farnam, Craig "Southnarc" Douglas, Tom & Lynn Givens, Wayne Dobbs, Chris Fry, Claude Werner, Tatiana Whitlock, Steve Moses, Karl Rehn, William Aprill, Spencer Keepers, Kevin Davis, and many more. We will have live-fire training with

handgun, shotgun and carbine, plus knife work, empty hands skills, medical training, and much more. We will also have the Polite Society Defensive Pistol Match running concurrently with the training.

The entry fee is only \$349.00 for three days packed full of valuable training, plus entry to the match. You can register on-line with a credit card. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tactical-conference-2018-tickets-33492433771>.

If you wish to avoid the small credit card processing fee, you can register by mail with a check. Mail to Rangemaster, 1808 James L Redman Parkway, Suite 226, Plant City, FL, 33563. **Please note that registration fees are non-refundable (sorry, no exceptions).**

Be sure to register early to avoid disappointment. The 2017 event was in March, but was sold out by late October, five months in advance. We had to turn away dozens of participants who waited too late to register. Space is strictly limited, and once we're full, that's it. ■

Eventbrite

THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR THE ARMED CITIZEN

by Tom Givens

I often hear the term "threat assessment" thrown around by people in discussions about firearms or training. Unfortunately, this is often used as nothing more than an excuse to not carry adequate equipment or to train less. For many people, there are three fallacies involved in any discussion of threat assessment, so let's examine those issues.

First, you need to recognize that in the field of personal security, your "perceived" threat level and your "actual" threat level may not be the

same. For instance, let's say you live in the upscale part of a suburb with a historically low crime rate. You stay home at night, you don't do drugs, and you work in a nice office in a secure building. Your "perceived" threat level is very low. This may well lead you to conclude there is no need to actually carry a gun daily or to devote a couple of weekends to defensive training.

However, on the way to work tomorrow morning, while parking your car, two career criminals decide that they need your car to get out of the

area, and they are willing to kill you to get it. Your actual threat level on that day is quite high, but you are working on the assumption made in your threat assessment. Or, another scenario—you are in your secure office building when a co-worker is fired. He believes, correctly or incorrectly, that you are responsible for the loss of his job, his pension, his health care and so forth. He decides to kill you on his way out of the building. As I write this, less than 24 hours ago, a federal ICE agent got into a dispute with his supervisor and shot the supervisor several times.

The agent was then killed by a third ICE agent in the office. This occurred in a “secure” federal office building. Again, the perceived threat and the actual threat didn’t match.

The problem is that a life threatening event which calls for immediate gunfire to save your life or the life of a loved one may be a low probability event, but the negative impact of losing is so high that we cannot afford to be wrong. The odds of your needing your handgun to stay alive might be one in four, or one in four hundred, or one in four thousand, but if you are the one who needs it today, you’ll need it very badly! I have over sixty private citizen students who have had to use a handgun to save their own life or the life of a loved one. All of them won their fights, and only three were injured. I do, however, know of three students of mine who were killed in street robberies. All three were executed for the contents of their pockets in separate incidents. None were armed at the time of their death. Their threat assessments told them that they had no need to be armed on those days, they were wrong, and now they are dead. Remind yourself periodically, “It’s not the odds; it’s the stakes!”

A related misconception is that “since I have a low probability of needing a gun today, I’ll just carry this little gun.” I have investigated or studied literally thousands of shootings over the last four decades, including over sixty cases involving my own students. I can assure you, in a life threatening crisis you will be zero per cent involved, or you will be one hundred per cent involved. You will never be forty per cent involved in a gunfight! Either your life is in grave danger or it is not. If it is, you will be very glad that you bothered to wear a mid-size to full-size pistol and at least one reload for it. If you carry that gear religiously, every day for thirty years and you never have to use it, that’s great. If, on the other hand, you fail to carry it just one day and you or a loved one are killed or crippled as a result, that’s pretty bad.

The final misconception is that we can eliminate risk. That is simply not possible. “Life is a sexually transmitted disease that is invariably fatal.” (My favorite quote from Jeff Cooper.) What we can do is manage our risks. From a personal safety standpoint, we can do this fairly simply by following these guidelines:

1 Follow Farnam’s Dictum: Don’t go to stupid places, hang out with stupid people, or do stupid things.

2 Have a security professional look over your home and make the changes he suggests involving better deadbolt locks, window locks, lighting, and alarm system.

3 Learn to pay more attention to your surroundings when in public. Look for anything that is out of place. Watch people you don’t know whenever they are nearby. Ask yourself two questions, “Who is around me?” and “What are they doing?”

4 Get some reality based self defense shooting training. If you want to do a “man camp” five day rifle course, that’s fine. They are great fun. Mark that on your vacation budget, though, and set aside the time for training with a daily carry sidearm.

5 Accept the fact that to have control over your life and to properly manage your risks, you need to actually carry your defensive gear, every day. The gun in the safe at home simply won’t help you on the grocery store parking lot. ■

Happy Independence Day from Tom & Lynn



POP QUIZ

Which of the following words does **not** appear anywhere in the final text of the Declaration of Independence?

- A) Arms
- B) Free
- C) Declaration
- D) Independence

Be the first to post the right answer on the Rangemaster Facebook page, and YOU will be this month’s **WINNER!**

