



Tactical Talk

Volume 15, Issue 4

April 2011

"Extremism in the
defense of liberty
is no vice.

Tolerance in the
face of tyranny is
no virtue."

-- Barry Goldwater

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Annual Rangemaster/Polite Society 2011 Tactical Conference

Saturday-Sunday, May 14-15, 2011

at the United States Shooting Academy (USSA) Tulsa, Oklahoma

Registration fee is \$229.00. This includes all of the training segments, the tactical match, the side match, and the prize drawing.

The trainers present for 2010 will be returning, plus we will have some new trainers presenting topics. Trainers include Massad Ayoob, John Farnam, Mike Brown, Southnarc, Karl Rehn, Steve Moses, Tom Givens, and others. We will be expanding to take advantage of USSA's sprawling range complex, and there will be 20 instructors presenting various live-fire, hands on, and classroom training segments. This event will fill completely well in advance, so sign up now to avoid disappointment.

You MAY NOT register for this event by phone. The only way to register is to print and complete a registration form and print and complete the USSA liability waiver, and send them to Rangemaster along with payment. The forms can be downloaded from our website, www.rangemaster.com.

Mail-in registration may be accompanied by a personal or company check, a money order, or credit/debit card information. FAX registrations can be accepted with credit/debit card info. The fax number is 901-370-5699.

Mail entries to Rangemaster
2611 S. Mendenhall Rd
Memphis, TN, 38115.

Registered attendees will receive a detailed equipment list, list of trainers and their topics, and other information prior to the event date.

(Todd Green is one of the very best handgun instructors for wringing the highest level of performance from students who already have a solid grasp of fundamentals and a fairly high skill level.-- Tom Givens)

Learning Curves, by Todd Louis Green (pistol-training.com)

Two separate and almost opposite incidents recently focused my attention on learning curves as they relate to shooting:

1. a buddy (and excellent shooter) failed to show significant improvement from Day One to Day Two during a class.
2. some random doofus on a firearms forum started spouting off how *expert* he is now that he's been through a 1-day training class.

So here you have two guys on completely opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to skill and experience. Both had one day of training recently and the results were completely different. The first shooter didn't get any better at all, while the second has completely transformed overnight. Why?

Think of a 12oz drinking glass. If the glass has just one drop of water in it and I add another drop, now there is *twice as much* water. To outside observers it's still just a tiny amount, but double is double. On

the other hand, if I had 11oz of water in that glass and added a drop, *the difference would be indiscernible.*

Of course, it's overly simplistic to think of every day on the range as an identical drop of water. Some "drops" will be bigger than others. Five days of intense training at a reputable school is going to lead to more change in your technique than fifteen minutes of dry fire in your basement every day for a week. An hour on the range with a qualified coach or shooting partner can reap far greater reward than weeks and months of solo practice.

Performance tracking becomes a particularly valuable tool here. As you get better, it becomes harder to see obvious jumps in improvement. Someone with a four second draw can get it down to three seconds with a little work. But if you have a two second draw and want to knock a whole second off of that, you're looking at a lot of very serious, dedicated training. The learning curve really flattens out at the top end, and even small incremental improvements take time.

As a shooter, the trick is to understand where you are on the curve. As a beginner, don't fall into the trap of thinking that one day's worth of training has elevated you into the stratosphere. As you advance, don't let a single day's performance overshadow the long term results you are getting.

Rangemaster Classes on the Road



April 16-17, 2011 **Combative Pistol**, Florence, SC Primary Instructor, Tom Givens
Contact the local host, Richard Wright, at labradorone@bellsouth.net to register.

May 21, 2011 **Ladies Only Introduction to Handguns for Self Defense**, Primary Instructor Lynn Givens, at **KR Training, near Austin, Texas**. Contact Karl Rehn at rehn@krtraining.info to register.

May 22, 2011 **Defensive Shotgun, One Day Format**, Primary Instructor Tom Givens, at **KR Training, near Austin, Texas**. Contact Karl Rehn at rehn@krtraining.info to register.

June 11-12, 2011 **Combative Pistol** at a private range in **Culpeper, Virginia**
Primary Instructor, Tom Givens. Contact our local host, John Murphy, at john@fpftraining.com .

Oct 28-30, 2011 **Three-Day Firearms Instructor Development & Certification Course**, **Oklahoma City Gun Club, Oklahoma City, OK**. Three full days of intensive training in how to teach modern pistol skills. Accepted by Tennessee and Oklahoma for a state handgun instructor license. Primary Instructor is Tom Givens along with several staff. Call 901-370-5600 to register.



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“The Gun Is Civilization”

by Marco Kloos

Human beings only have two ways to deal with one another: reason and force. If you want me to do something for you, you have a choice of either convincing me via argument, or force me to do your bidding under threat of force. Every human interaction falls into one of those two categories, without exception. Reason or force, that's it.

In a truly moral and civilized society, people exclusively interact through persuasion. Force has no place as a valid method of social interaction, and the only thing that removes force from the menu is the personal firearm, as paradoxical as it may sound to some.

When I carry a gun, you cannot deal with me by force. You have to use reason and try to persuade me, because I have a way to negate your threat or employment of force.

The gun is the only personal weapon that puts a 100-pound woman on equal footing with a 220-pound mugger, a 75-year old retiree on equal footing with a 19-year old gang banger, and a single guy on equal footing with a carload of drunk guys with baseball bats. The gun removes the disparity in physical strength, size, or numbers between a potential attacker and a defender.

There are plenty of people who consider the gun as the source of bad force equations. These are the people who think that we'd be more civilized if all guns were removed from society, because a firearm makes it easier for a [armed] mugger to do his job. That, of course, is only true if the mugger's potential victims are mostly disarmed either by choice or by legislative fiat - it has no validity when most of a mugger's potential marks are armed.

People who argue for the banning of arms ask for automatic rule by the young, the strong, and the many, and that's the exact opposite of a civilized society. A mugger, even an armed one, can only make a successful living in a society where the state has granted him a force monopoly.

Then there's the argument that the gun makes confrontations lethal that otherwise would only result in injury. This argument is fallacious in several ways. Without guns involved, confrontations are won by the physically superior party inflicting overwhelming injury on the loser.

People who think that fists, bats, sticks, or stones don't constitute lethal force watch too much TV, where people take beatings and come out of it with a bloody lip at worst. The fact that the gun makes lethal force easier works solely in favor of the weaker defender, not the stronger attacker. If both are armed, the field is level.

The gun is the only weapon that's as lethal in the hands of an octogenarian as it is in the hands of a weight lifter. It simply wouldn't work as well as a force equalizer if it wasn't both lethal and easily employable.

When I carry a gun, I don't do so because I am looking for a fight, but because I'm looking to be left alone. The gun at my side means that I cannot be forced, only persuaded. I don't carry it because I'm afraid, but because it enables me to be unafraid. It doesn't limit the actions of those who would interact with me through reason, only the actions of those who would do so by force. It removes force from the equation... And that's why carrying a gun is a civilized act.

Massad Ayoob, MAG-20 Course

**July 30-31, 2011, Saturday-Sunday
Rangemaster, Memphis, TN**

Armed Citizens' Rules of Engagement

This is a two-day, 20-hour immersion course in rules of engagement for armed law-abiding private citizens, emphasizing legal issues, tactical issues, and aftermath management. Topics will include interacting with suspects, witnesses, responding police officers...threat recognition and mind-set...management of social and psychological aftermath after having had to use lethal force in defense of self or others...and preparing beforehand for legal repercussions and minimizing exposure to them. Situations in the home, at the place of business, or "on the street" will all be covered. Prerequisite: none.

This is a very intensive classroom course that runs from 8:00am until 6:00pm both days. The training will take place in the comfortable classrooms at Rangemaster, with modern audio/visual equipment. There are numerous hotels and restaurants literally within blocks of Rangemaster.

Optional Third Day

Handgun Skills, with Tom Givens

Monday, August 1, 2011

This is an intensive full day of live-fire range training on Rangemaster's comfortable, air conditioned indoor range. Students will fire between 350 and 400 rounds of ammunition in drills designed to enhance marksmanship ability, ingrain gunhandling skills that will hold up under duress, and reinforce sound tactical principles. Both daylight and low light firing will be conducted and the class runs from 8:00 am until 6:00 pm. This class is not suitable for beginners.

COST

Tuition for MAG-20 is \$400. The optional third day for live fire training is \$200. A deposit of \$200 will hold your space for either or both segments, with the balance due no later than 15 days prior to class date. Ammunition will be available at low cost on site.

REGISTRATION

To register, please call Rangemaster at 901-370-5600. You may register by phone with a credit or debit card, or fax your information to 901-370-5699. Registration can be made by mail with a check, to Rangemaster, 2611 S. Mendenhall Rd, Memphis, TN, 38115. Questions can be addressed to rangemaster.tom@gmail.com. See www.rangemaster.com for more details on our facilities and other training opportunities. Registered students will receive directions, hotel list, equipment list and other information near class time.

This is an excellent article providing an overview of the defensive use of the shotgun. It was written by Don Copp, a very experienced law enforcement officer and trainer in Ohio. Don's website is (<http://www.milcopp.com>). The article is used here with Milcopp Tactical's permission. Although I don't agree with Don's conclusions 100%, this is excellent food for thought.

A Look at the Defensive Shotgun; its Disadvantages, its Uses, and How We Make Them Work

By Donald Copp, MilCopp Tactical

There are many who tote the shotgun as the do-all of the firearms world. Many will tell you that the versatility of the shotgun is such that it can be an effective CQB weapon as well as a rifle when needed. Much of the shotgun myth has to do with the reality that for the longest time it was the standard firearm in the armory of many law enforcement personnel's battery, right along side the double action revolver. The shotgun was perhaps chosen because everyone owned one. In a time when firearms were the normal furniture of a household, everyone had a shotgun for pest control and small game hunting. It was a natural transition for those entering the field of law enforcement since the firearm was used by so many households training with the shotgun was negligible. Even today, when the average cadet receives as much as sixty hours of handgun training, the amount of instruction given to the shotgun is a mere eight hours in many states. The problem is that those eight hours are not effective training, nor do those who use the shotgun fully understand its limitations along with the advantages of the firearm. It is still assumed that even today, the average person knows what they need to know about the shotgun. The mythology persists with that assumption and the historical allegory only adds to the myth that it is the best firearm in the hands of someone knowledgeable and determined.



Background

Historically the shotgun holds the mythical position it does because we venerate it for the stories attached to it. One was used to good effect at the OK Corral; what they fail to stress is that the shotgun used was fired from the distance of only a few feet and both barrels were discharged into the body of Tom McLaury as he ran away. He continued to run away and died a couple blocks away from where he was shot. He did not instantly fall prostrate even with two loads of buckshot penetrating his body. As for the shotgun it was then discarded in favor of the pistol. Shotguns also rode the stage coaches of the Old West and were used by Confederate Cavalrymen. The reason held was that loaded with buckshot, you had more chances of hitting an opponent while moving, but this idea was

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never born out by concrete proof that we have been able to find. In addition, shotguns have ridden in racks of patrol cars and have been at the side of LEO's since the days the lone constable walked the beat. Because of the number of people who have used them and the long history of the firearm, there are many myths that follow this venerable weapon through its history which need to be addressed and even dispelled.

Myths

One of the first myths which we need to dismiss is the one that nearly every old timer who draws breath will tell a novice shooter looking for a defensive firearm. That myth being that **“all you need to do is rack a shotgun and it will clear a room because everyone knows what that sound is.”** In truth, in these days of political correctness not everyone knows what that sound is and while it is distinctive, there is no guarantee that it will clear a room or that it is a fight stopper. The sound of a shotgun racking is not going to make your opponent suddenly fall to their knees quaking in fear, nor will it send the vagabond running for their lives. It might be an attention getter; however, you don't know what your adversary's mental conditioning might be nor what their training is. Flashing the shotgun around like a magician's wand can lead to the same troubles faced by his apprentice; an easily remedied situation can get out of control rather quickly. The shotgun is a tool like any other and it has no magical properties.



Another myth is the “fact” that you don't have to aim. We can not say how many times we have heard this argument touted by the unknowing. A shotgun is a tool, like all tools, it must be used correctly to obtain the maximum effective application of its preferred use. You can not simply point a shotgun down a narrow hallway and fire, hoping to blast away all in the shots path. There is no such thing as a “cone of death” with a shotgun and anything in its path will not be obliterated, shredded, blown backwards or otherwise disintegrate into a mound of quivering flesh. Shot fired from a shotgun has a pattern and depending on the distance and the type of shot, there are gaps in that pattern. Like all firearms, you have to aim the weapon at the intended target in order for the shot to do the job intended.

“I like shotguns because they will do everything I want it to.” This statement is great if you are hunting upland birds or kicking the brush for rabbit. It's a bad one to make for a defensive shotgun. A shotgun is *not* a “do all” weapon. It is a do many things, but it either does a specific job well, as all firearms, or it half-asses everything, which is where people make the mistake in using a shotgun. Before one starts rolling their eyes at this, read on for the reasons we believe this about the shotgun. For now, you must accept that the shotgun, while versatile, is simply not an “everything” firearm, especially in a defensive weapon.

The final myth of the shotgun we will address; **“I can load it with slugs and use it just like my rifle.”** It is not a rifle. The shotgun can be used as a solid projectile thrower. But this is not what it was designed for. It has limited range as a slug thrower and requires a special (rifled) barrel to make a slug (preferably a sabot) travel any respectable distance with accuracy. As a standard out-of-the-box firearm, the shotgun-as-rifle is a poor substitute for the real thing.

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Disadvantages

Okay, four of the myths have been addressed. There are more, but for the defensive purposes of the argument, we'll limit the focus to just those. In order to proceed, we need to get really negative and talk about how a shotgun is a disadvantage to the defensive shooter. After all, like weight lifting, we have to tear the muscle down to build it back up.

While this next statement might fall into the myth category, we are going to address it here as a disadvantage. There are two parts to the statement and we will look at both. *Many believe that all they need to end the fight are the limited number of rounds contained within the short internal magazine of their shotgun. After all, the shotgun is so powerful that it will stop a fight with one round.* Not true, in fact, like all firearms, stopping the attack depends on the placement of the round on the target. There is no guarantee that a single round, even if of 00 buckshot, will cause enough damage to the enemy to stop their action which brought the encounter in the first place. As noted in the background section, even a double load of 00 buckshot might not be enough to keep the opponent from continuing their action. Here we must address the statement that preceded the power myth of the shotgun; the lack of the need to reload because the weapon is so powerful. In reality, the number one disadvantage of a shotgun is *the limited ammunition capacity and it is not really as powerful as people wish it to be. Most shotguns are limited to fewer rounds than a well concealed revolver.* Tactical shotguns with extended tubes partially rectify this drawback, but modern revolvers are capable of holding up to eight rounds in a less punishing package (We use the revolver as a comparison not because we recommend the revolver, but because it is a package that everyone can relate to and has myths of its own). Most shotguns straight from the factory are regulated to two rounds. Removing the plug can increase this to as many as eight, but the standard is four. Not only is the shotgun limited in ammo, it is also slow to reload—unless one spends hours a week practicing—and even then, a speed-loaded revolver is still a faster alternative in a defensive weapon.

What people fail to understand is that over an extended period of time, **a shotgun is punishing to shoot.** We have spoken with many people who like to say that they can shoot a hundred rounds in a day through their favorite birdgun. While this is fine for them and certainly increases the tolerance for the shotgun, the standard field load does not translate very well to a hundred rounds of defensive loads. A great disadvantage of the shotgun is the recoil. The standard qualification for police is about thirty rounds of full-power ammo. From experience, we can say that it is hard to get officers out to the range to qualify with this firearm because they simply do not like shooting full-power loads one right after another. Because of its recoil people do not like to train as they should with a shotgun. In order to remedy this problem, manufacturers have come out with shock absorber stocks, recoil reducers, and other gimmicks to cushion the felt recoil of the shotgun. These not only add weight to many shotguns, but they also add to cost. There have also been “reduced” loads or “tactical loads” which in reality castrates the questionable power advantage the shotgun may have within the scope of its usefulness.

Shotguns, fully loaded and tactically dressed out are heavy. A similarly set up AR15 with 30 rounds weighs less than a shotgun with seven rounds in the tube, five in a side saddle and five more in a butt stock sleeve. If you don't think that weight is a problem, carry that shotgun all day and use it in a tactical class. Weight and the distribution of that weight are paramount for an all day hump as well as a limited engagement within the confines of a defensive battle. If your firearm is a pain to use when not stressed out, the mental attitude about that same firearm will translate to its usefulness in an excited state. You will be less likely to depend and use the weapon in the intended role, foregoing the shotgun in favor of less cumbersome weapons.

Finally, many think that **the shotgun is great because anyone can use one.** The problem is that the shotgun can not be used by everyone. *Size and strength matter greatly when using a long arm like the shotgun.* Shotgun stocks are fixed for one length of pull. They are not made as a one size fits all as most believe them to be. When properly mounted, a defensive shotgun stock is too long for the average shooter. When using a pump-action shotgun—perhaps the number one shotgun recommended by anyone—the distance of the forearm to the action may be overly long for smaller shooters which can result in short stroking the weapon or simply not having enough leverage to hold the shotgun up for aiming and operation. In addition to the above mentioned failings, the manual of arms for a shotgun is intensive. To use a shotgun is not simply a matter of loading and firing—the weapon as a defensive tool needs to be employed properly as well. There are stages in a shotguns readiness and an individual who is not familiar with the operation and ways to achieve those stages can be opening themselves up to a series of catastrophic events. Swapping out rounds from buckshot to a slug if needed, and reloading the shotgun in a manner that keeps it ready for use, are skills which require knowledge and practice.

Real Use

Now that we've totally derided the shotgun as a useful tool, let's take a look at some of the things that a shotgun is good for. Admittedly, the list is not a long one in our opinion, but then as a defensive tool, the shotgun's advantages truly are as limited as the weapon itself.

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The main advantage of a shotgun is that no matter the political climate, a shotgun remains a “socially acceptable” firearm. They are not viewed (for the most part) as an evil weapon of mass destruction. In states where one can not own a standard black rifle, a shotgun is a viable alternative. Because of the years of societal familiarization with the shotgun, one can still own a shotgun and be seen as merely a sportsman, rather than a right-wing extremist bent on over-throwing the government while searching the skies for black helicopters. Having a pump action shotgun leaning in a corner is not going to send the average citizen into an apoplectic fit. Shotguns blend well into the background and are nearly invisible to the casual observer.



[Photo by R. Sid]

They are inexpensive; Good, reliable shotguns can be bought for under three hundred dollars in configurations that are suitable for defensive purposes. Sporting shotguns can be had with synthetic stocks and they can be customized to fit the role of a defensive weapon as money and need allows. Add-ons for the shotgun are fairly inexpensive when compared to the standard black rifle and its list of accessories. In addition to the cost of the weapon, the shotgun’s internal magazine precludes the need for extra magazines, thereby reducing the cost even further. Upgrades to the shotgun can be done by any qualified gunsmith and even drop-in parts can be had. Recommended and easily installed is a tactical magazine spring and follower which can be had for as little as twelve dollars. Other upgrades will depend on the owner, but this spring and follower is simple swap and a must for a defensive shotgun.

In addition to the political and social advantages and cost, what the shotgun really has going for it is at ranges inside 25 meters, a **properly aimed and fired shotgun can deliver a devastating mass of lead** which can perforate a body cavity with enough holes that the body can not keep the subject from bleeding out. Multiple holes, blood loss, and shock all play into the advantage of 00 buckshot when properly delivered with well aimed fire. Of course to achieve this advantage the key is to deliver the rounds on target, quickly, and effectively. This requires that the shooter have training and practice with the weapon on a regular basis.

While not a pure positive in some respects, a **shotgun can be loaded out with multi-purpose rounds that extend the usefulness of the firearm as a primary weapon.** We are not talking about bean bag rounds here. We recommend that you load only one load in your shotgun, the standard 00 buckshot load. While there are many types of defensive loads out there—and some of them will certainly improve not only the shot pattern and range of the load and weapon—loading your shotgun with a standard, easily found defensive load enables you to not only use the shotgun to its fullest potential as a defensive weapon, but also is easier on the pocket book, which is one of the advantages of the shotgun to begin with. However, if you live in an area which discourages the use of a combat-style rifle or a sidearm, the use of a solid projectile such as the slug, enables the defensive shotgun to be used in the double duty of a multi- purpose firearm. Some schools of thought are to have a mix of rounds in your reload and to keep them separated by the position of the load in the sidesaddle or buttstock holder. We recommend that the slug be carried on the buttstock of the weapon, apart from the reload on the sidesaddle. This keeps the rounds separated and under stress allows you to know instantly which round you are reaching for without having to put much thought into the load.

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Ammunition Selection

On the subject of ammo and its usefulness, **00 buckshot is what your defensive shotgun should be loaded with.** There are people who will tell you that birdshot is the way to go due to its lack of penetration. Those people are, quite frankly, idiots. Penetration is what reaches the vitals of the target and kills. The thing to remember about birdshot is that it is limited in size and it does not expand. The small size of bird shot means that it sheds its energy quickly and will fail to reach the vital areas needed to stop the attacker. Remember; 00 buckshot is better than birdshot for defensive purposes—birdshot is a load which no defensive instructor in their right mind would recommend if they value the life of their students. With 00 buckshot you are shooting nine (the average number) .32 caliber round balls at a target. When all those projectiles are delivered on target, the results can be dramatic. While a well known agency reportedly recommends a different buckshot load, they in fact use the standard 00 buckshot load in their issued shotguns. 00 buckshot is the best round for the shotgun, and you should pattern the shot at ten, fifteen, and twenty-five meters.

All This Being Said, Here Is An Idea Of What Your Defensive Shotgun Should Look Like.

- A dependable pump or semi-auto from a *reputable* manufacturer.

- A defensive shotgun should have a barrel length of between 18 to 22 inches. Anything longer is a detriment to the usefulness of the weapon when handling in a defensive situation. Shorter barrels require federal permission and paperwork and while they do make the weapon handy in tight spaces, they severely limit the range of the weapons delivery.

- The shotgun needs to have a magazine tube extension and spring and follower upgrade for increasing the ammunition on hand and reliability.

- It should have highly visible sights for low light shooting and be easily seen by the eye under stress. Quality sights are a must on any firearm. A shotgun is no exception; be the choice a bead sight or ghost ring additions.

- The stock should be cut to fit the shooter. Defensive tactics require a different stance from the wingshooter and the stock needs to reflect this change in positioning.

- On the stock should be a means to carry reloads—these reloads need to be slugs if the shooter determines that they wish to use the shotgun as a multi-purpose weapon—there are various types of stock carriers and the carrier needs to be affixed to the stock in some way to keep it from moving during shooting. There are also stocks that can carry reloads within the body of the stock itself. These need to be inspected regularly after shooting for breakage and spring failure.

- There should be a side saddle on the receiver and those should be 00 buckshot and positioned for ease of loading as determined by the shooter.

- You should have a white light from a *reputable* manufacturer mounted on the weapon. This can either be mounted with attachments or a replacement forearm can be purchased with the light already mounted within the forearm.

- Finally, a shotgun, like a rifle, should have a sling of some sort. A sling allows the shooter to not only move the weapon out of the way for administrative reasons, but can also be used to maintain control over the weapon in close quarters. Beyond these additions, anything else is up to the shooter.

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[Photo by Mick B.]

As with everything else we advocate, whatever you buy for the shotgun, be sure that you only buy quality parts from reputable manufacturers, be they ghost rings sights or tube extensions.

Closing

Shotguns, to our mind are not the optimal tool for defense. They are however, an option which can be utilized to great advantage by the shooter provided that the limitations of the systems are understood. Because of its acceptance by mainstream society, it can serve as an innocuous defensive firearm; they are legal in every State and even with the restrictions of local jurisdictions, the shotgun can be made an effective defensive tool. If a shotgun is chosen, pick the most compact model allowable, outfit it with simple and easily obtained additions to extend the capacity, have reloads on the weapon itself, and by all means practice the use of the shotgun as often as possible. Reload from the side saddle or buttstock each time it is used to develop the skills and memory needed to employ the reload under adverse conditions. Learn how to effectively and swiftly swap out rounds if you have to force it into a multi-purpose role as a slug thrower and know the limitations of the rounds you are using as well as the advantages that can be had. Train to clear the weapon of malfunctions and know its manual of arms. As with all of your defensive weapons, train with the shotgun at every opportunity so that when the time comes you are as prepared as one can be in the face of opposition.

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