



Tactical Talk

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"You need to train hard to prevail, not just survive. Even then if you can't prevail you should do everything you can to survive, and if you can't survive you need to take the m----- with you. Don't put your family through his murder trial."

—Dr Alexis Artwohl

"There are no victims, only volunteers. You volunteer by looking uncertain and afraid. You volunteer by being, as grass-eaters invariably are, unprepared to confront the hazards of life. " —Jeff Cooper

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In the wake of the tragic, horrific slaughter of innocent school children in Connecticut, there has been a renewed cry for more gun control laws. This stems from the natural need to "do something" when a tragedy of this proportion occurs. I agree we need to do something, but the "something" I want is a bit different. The "Gun Free Schools Act of 1995" made it a federal crime to possess a firearm on any school property. Many states enacted similar legislation at the state level, as the federal act required them to do so or lose certain federal funding. Thus, it has been a crime to go onto school property anywhere in the US while in possession of a gun for the past 17 years. Has that helped?

For the purposes of this discussion, I will define a "mass school shooting" as one in which three or more people were killed. I have found 14 such incidents in the United States between 1997 and the Newtown, CT, incident of December. That is an average of less than one per year. ALL OF THESE OCCURRED AFTER THE ENACTMENT OF THE GUN FREE SCHOOLS ACT OF 1995! Let me emphasize that—every one of these mass school shootings in the US occurred AFTER it became illegal to possess a gun on school grounds. Why?

The answer should be obvious. By making schools a "gun free zone", you automatically disarm all law abiding citizens at those locations. This is tantamount to placing a sign on the front of the building inviting criminals and mentally deranged persons to come shoot up the place. "Come on in. We're all unarmed, by law. We won't interfere with your mayhem." Disgusting.....

I, for instance, have a state issued handgun carry permit. I am certified by the NRA as a Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor and I have been certified by the FBI as a police firearms instructor. I am certified by two states to train and certify new firearms instructors for those states. I have held a law enforcement officer commission. I travel all over the US teaching defensive firearms use. Yet, by law, I would commit a felony by stepping onto school grounds while wearing my sidearm. Despite this, someone who, for whatever reason, wants to shoot up a school can walk right in. If he is willing to murder six year olds in cold blood, he certainly won't be deterred by a law against bringing a gun onto the campus. Duh..... To think otherwise is so naïve as to be a form of mental illness. *(continued on page 3)*



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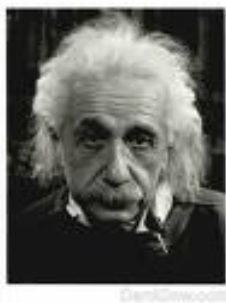
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I think it is truly ironic that in the first mass school shooting I could find after the Gun Free School Act's enactment, occurring in 1997, the mayhem was stopped when the Assistant Principal got a handgun from his car and confronted the gunman, who surrendered to him. Thank God the Assistant Principal had an ILLEGAL gun that day.

A few weeks ago, there was an attempted mass shooting at a mall in Oregon. The demented shooter had a high capacity semiautomatic rifle, but he only managed to kill two people and wound one other before killing himself. Why was the body count so low, given that this was obviously a copy-cat version of the Aurora, CO, shootings? The answer is simple. Because Nick Meli, age 22, was at the mall there with his wife and child. Nick has a concealed carry permit and was wearing a handgun concealed on his person. When the suspect began shooting, Nick drew his gun and verbally challenged the gunman. Meli held his fire because of innocent people in the background (excellent judgment under stress), but his actions caused the gunman to break off the attack, run into a nearby service corridor and kill himself, ending the spree. Of course, the lamestream media will not tell you about Nick. They would prefer a higher body count rather than tell you a legally armed citizen saved the day. Here are a few instances that two minutes of internet research brought to light. In each case, a legally armed private citizen saved lives by being there and by being armed.

1. In Pearl, Mississippi in 1997, 16-year-old Luke Woodham stabbed and bludgeoned to death his mother at home, then killed two students and injured seven at his high school. As he was on his way to another school building, he was stopped by Assistant Principal Joel Myrick, who had gone out to get a handgun from his car. Having that gun was illegal, but it saved lives.
2. In Edinboro, Pennsylvania in 1996, 14-year-old Andrew Wurst shot and killed a teacher at a school dance, and shot and injured several other students. He had just left the dance hall, carrying his gun when he was confronted by the dance hall owner James Strand, who lived next door and kept a shotgun at home.
3. In Winnemucca, Nevada in 2008, Ernesto Villagomez killed two people and wounded two others in a bar filled with three hundred people. He was then shot and killed by a patron who was carrying a gun (and had a concealed carry license).
4. In Colorado Springs in 2007, Matthew Murray killed four people at a church. He was then shot several times by Jeanne Assam, a church member, volunteer security guard, and former police officer (she had been dismissed by a police department 10 years before, and to my knowledge hadn't worked as a police officer since).

So, I do want some legislative action. I want "gun free zones" abolished, at least for legally armed citizens with government issued licenses to carry. This is real "common sense" gun legislation.



Quotes to Ponder

"The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing" --Albert Einstein

Little Things by Rangemaster Instructor, Craig Harper

"Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things, I am tempted to think there are no little things." It's one of those quotes that can really cause you to think. It comes from Tennessee native and legendary advertising executive Bruce Barton who, among many other things, created the Betty Crocker character and is credited for naming General Motors. I stumbled across that quote the other day and it caused me to think about "little things" things that the Rangemaster instructor staff frequently sees.

Many times, these "little things" are simple but delayed actions, with "I'll take care of it later" thinking. Sometimes they are false economy; not wanting to spend a few moments or a few dollars for easy-to-accomplish maintenance or a part. As Barton said, these little things can have tremendous consequences particularly when you consider self-defense.

Here's a short list of "little things" we see on a regular basis:

- ◆ **Worn out magazine springs:** During a Level I class, a student-owned pistol failed to operate reliably, with a stoppage once or twice with every reload. The pistol appeared to be properly maintained; clean and lubricated. This pistol was several years old and, according to the owner, had been fired quite a bit. The student was asked if he had ever changed the magazine spring; he had not. After swapping his magazine for one of ours, the pistol operated without problem. Magazine springs do compress and need to be changed to assure proper operation. Annual spring changes for carry magazines are recommended. It's common for people to overlook the condition of their magazines and concentrate on the condition of the firearm. Regardless of how well-maintained the firearm is, it's likely to malfunction without magazines that are free of damage and have springs of proper tension.
- ◆ **Worn out recoil springs:** In a similar scenario to the one above, a Level I student with a 1911-type pistol experienced repeated stoppages. This time it was the recoil spring that was far past its service life. When we changed the spring, the old one was noticeably shorter than the proper length due to compression. With a new recoil spring, the pistol ran without problem. Service life of recoil springs is dependent on the type of gun and the number of firing cycles. While owners should check with the manufacturer of the pistol and/or the spring for specifics, a reasonable rule-of-thumb is to change them annually.
- ◆ **Outdated ammunition:** A student arrived at an upper-level class with a sufficient supply of practice ammunition but first, he was going to shoot his carry ammo; ammunition he had had in his magazines for over 3 years. On the first shot of the first drill, and using his carry ammo, he got a loud "click" when he expected an even louder "bang;" the ammunition would not fire. Modern ammo can be stored under proper conditions for very long periods of time without any degradation. However, carry ammunition should be changed every 6-months. The act of carrying ammunition and its daily exposure to moisture, temperature changes and handling (loading and reloading magazines when practicing) can degrade the ammo and, quite possibly, cause it to fail when you need it most. Shoot up your carry ammo every six months and you will always have fresh ammo to bet your life on. You will also get a chance to practice with the same load you carry without buying service ammo just to shoot.
- ◆ **Lack of inspection:** A student was shooting inconsistently and we couldn't determine the cause. Grip, trigger control and sight alignment all looked good and the student was fairly experienced. Finally, an instructor noticed that his rear sight was loose; so loose you could move it with your thumb and forefinger. The sight moved just about every time he shot hence the inconsistent shot pattern. A quick inspection at the time of cleaning could have easily identified and rectified the problem.
- ◆ **Unfamiliar equipment:** I watched an upper-level student struggle to present his weapon from the holster on command. He kept missing the grips causing him to "hunt" for the gun. He had pur-

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chased the holster just the day before class and had yet to develop the muscle memory to automatically find his pistol. While participating in a class is a good time to learn new equipment, he had worn his gun to class in the new holster. So, had he needed it prior to class, he may not have been able to get the pistol into action. Knowing your equipment is essential.

- ◆ **Dirty guns:** Over the years, our instructors have preformed thousands of “emergency” gun cleanings and lubrications so that a student-owned gun could be used in a class. These were the same guns that students had in their home or were carried on the street for self-defense and they were essentially non-functional. There is a really simple timeline for cleaning carry guns: after every time you shoot and periodically – every 4 to 6 weeks - even if it hasn’t been shot.

These “little things” took place in a training environment so the only consequences were little more than losing a competition or a bit of embarrassment. But the consequences of overlooking them could have been tremendous in a violent criminal encounter. It does make you think; there are no little things.

Pssst! Bob, it's not the gun.

by Rangemaster Instructor,
Craig Harper

Shortly after Jovan Belcher of the Kansas City Chiefs killed the mother of his child and then himself, TV sportscaster Bob Costas used this tragic event to rant about gun control. Costas' point was – as it always is with these people – that if there were no guns, particularly handguns, Belcher and his girlfriend would not be dead today.

Within 2-weeks of the Belcher incident, Dallas Cowboy Josh Brent killed a teammate while driving drunk and has been charged with Intoxicated Manslaughter. I am waiting for – I don't think I missed it – Costas to rant about banning cars. After all - if Costas were to use the same logic he used in the Belcher case, if there were no cars, there would not have been a death. Or maybe Costas will rant about banning just certain types of cars; a Mercedes was the culprit in the Brent incident. Obviously, this particular make of automobile is dangerous.

Costas and all the others who want to blame firearms for these tragedies always overlook the most obvious: it is the behavior of the individual that caused the problem. Belcher murdered his girlfriend. He didn't need a gun. He could have strangled, bludgeoned, or stabbed her. The gun didn't do it; Belcher did. Keep in mind, in what was probably the most famous case of our age, O.J. Simpson did not use a gun to murder his wife and her friend.

There is a clue here. If the instrument of violence is a gun – particularly a handgun – then it's the gun's fault. That is total nonsense. It's like blaming Brent's car for the death of his team mate. The person committing the act is the responsible party, not the instrument. And always associated with these events is a behavioral pattern by the perpetrator; a past history of violence, substance abuse, and/or a thought pattern that is outside the norms of society.

Whether the person who commits these acts of violence is an athlete or a street thug, the focus needs to be on real cause of the violence. Guns are not causing these acts. People are.

Inspection and Care of Self Defense Ammunition

Ammunition made in the US is of very high quality. American manufacturers, however, turn out tens of millions of rounds of ammunition each day. Any product that is made by the millions per day will suffer from defective, out of spec, or damaged specimens and these will find their way into the boxes shipped to your local dealer. Since you literally bet your life on your self defense ammo, it would be wise to inspect it and care for it properly.

Handguns, both revolvers and semi-automatic pistols, rely completely on quality, in spec ammunition to function. Here are just a few of the things we see go wrong frequently:

High Primer- the primer should be seated just below flush in the base of the cartridge. A “high primer” is one that protrudes above the base of the cartridge. In revolvers this can bind against the breech face, preventing rotation of the cylinder. In autos, this can keep the cartridge from sliding up under the extractor, and keep the slide from going into battery.

Inverted Primer- Occasionally we find a cartridge in which the primer was inserted backward. Obviously, that cartridge won't fire.

Damaged Rim- The extractor must grab the rim of the cartridge and pull it out of the chamber so it can be ejected. The rim should be uniform, and have no bends, tears, or burrs.

Damaged Case- The case may have a big dent in it, or the case mouth may have been caught by the bullet's base when the bullet was seated in the case, tearing the case mouth. These will often go into a magazine, but not feed into the pistol's chamber, causing a stoppage.

Bullets- We see bullets inserted backwards in the case (they won't feed), or loose in the case, or pushed back too deeply into the case. Bad ju-ju.

We see a lot of ammo fired every year and we see these deficiencies in every brand and type of handgun ammunition. Before you trust your life to ammunition, inspect it carefully for the problems described above. I suggest the following for ammo you will actually be carrying:

Visually inspect the primers carefully. Be sure every case has a primer, that the primer is seated fully, and the primer is not dented or damaged.

Visually, and by feel, check the rim for damage or burrs.

Visually check the case, especially the case mouth.

Visually check the bullets, then with only finger pressure make sure they are not loose in the case. You should not be able to move the bullet at all with your fingers.

One final step many knowledgeable shooters take is to remove the barrel from the semi-auto pistol and use it as a gauge for the cartridges. Holding the barrel pointed down, drop a round into the chamber. It should go all the way in



The cartridge on the left has bullet jacket material overlapping the mouth of the cartridge case. This round would go into a magazine just fine, but would not chamber in your pistol. The round on the right is a factory loaded cartridge with the bullet seated backwards. Always check ammo you will be carrying for self defense.

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easily and stop with the base of the case even with the barrel hood. Invert the barrel over a towel. The cartridge should fall out easily. You will have confidence that cartridges that have been subjected to this test will feed smoothly in your gun.

In addition to checking your defensive ammo, you must take care of it. This branches two ways: ammo you have on hand, for instance in your home; and ammo you are actually carrying in your gun or in spare magazines. Let's look at them separately.

You should have a reserve supply of 100-200 rounds, at least, of your chosen defensive load at home. This should be kept in the factory boxes it comes in. The dividers or trays in those boxes help protect the individual cartridges, and identification of the ammo is easier in its original box.

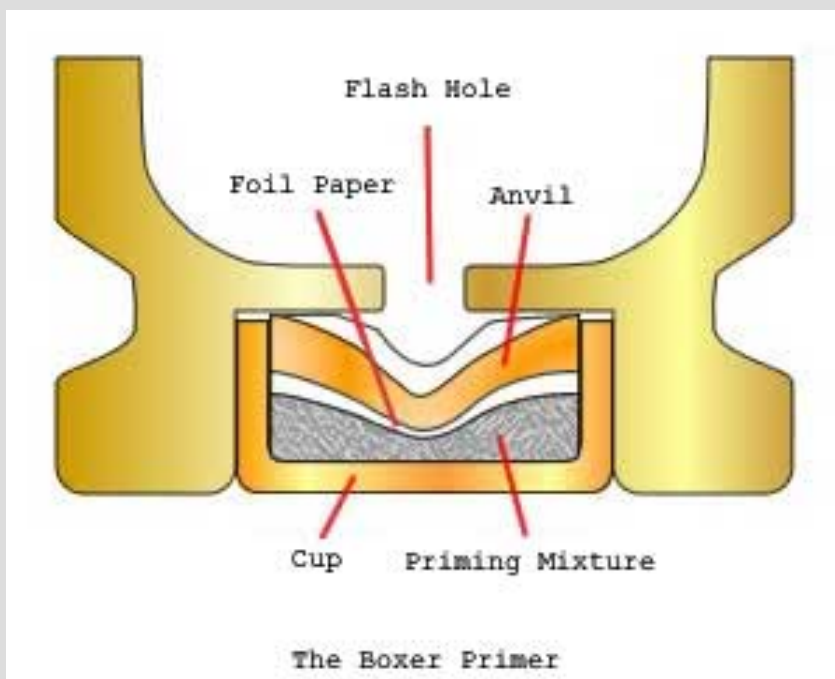
These should be kept inside your home, not in the garage or a detached storage shed. In those environments, the temperature and humidity vary too much. In a closet inside your home, the ammo will last indefinitely. If you want to ensure long term viability, keep the ammo in metal GI ammo cans with a couple of packets of silica gel dessicant inside. Ammo stored inside your home in this manner is good for 50 years or more.

Once you start carrying ammo, its service life starts counting down rather quickly. Ammo carried on your person is subjected to temperature and humidity swings, gun oils and solvents, and wear from being loaded and unloaded. Ammo that is actually carried should be shot up in practice and replaced in no more than six months. Going longer than that is just begging for trouble. Ammo routinely carried is susceptible to two major issues, which are potentially disastrous.

First, American ammo is loaded with Boxer primers. These primers consist of a metal cup, and anvil, a pellet of priming compound, and a sealant. The primer pellet is trapped between the cup and anvil, so that when the firing pin or striker hits the cup, the pellet is crushed between the cup and anvil, igniting the cartridge. Every time you chamber a cartridge in a semiautomatic firearm, the primer is subjected to impact by the breech face. Repeated strikes over time can cause the primer pellet to crumble. If it does, there is nothing between the cup and anvil to explode when the firing pin or striker hits, thus a misfired round. If you chamber the same round twice, I urge you to remove it from carry status and put it with your practice ammo for the next range trip.

The other problem with loading/unloading is wear and tear on the bullet. When a round feeds up the ramp and into the barrel, the bullet takes a pretty solid impact. Doing this repeatedly can push the bullet back too deeply in its case. This compresses the powder charge and can result in dangerously high pressures (kaboom!).

Check your carry ammo before loading your gun or spare magazines with it, then replace the ammo every six months and you will prevent a lot of potentially serious problems down the road.



The primer contains a pellet of explosive, that is detonated by the impact of the firing pin. This pellet must be intact for the primer to fire.

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Gear We Like!



a great job of supporting and anchoring my holster and magazine pouches, all in great comfort.

Mike's belts are actually cut to a specific waist size (36", 40", etc) rather than a generic small, medium and large. This allows the user to select a belt that has sufficient room for adjustment, without an excessive amount of "tail" left over. The material is very heavy duty and well stitched, and made in the US. The ingenious glass-filled nylon buckle is super light-weight, secures the belt very well, and doesn't pinch when you bend over. The belt allows the user a very wide range of adjustment for tightness without having to locate specific holes like a conventional belt does. Mike's belts are available in black, light green or brown and are less expensive than most of the other belts of this type, running less than \$40.00! We will be keeping these in stock at Rangemaster, or we'll order any color/size combination you desire.

Mike Benedict is an old friend of ours, a highly skilled shooter, and someone who actually carries a gun on a daily basis. His experiences as both a daily carrier and a high level IDPA shooter influenced his designs of kydex holsters that he manufactures and sells, doing business as Talon Tactical.

Recently, Mike began offering his version of the very popular "rigger's belt", as worn by many, many shooters, trainers and competitive types. Galco, Wilderness Products, 5.11 and several other makers offer these belts in various designs and materials. I have tried several over the years, and kept finding myself putting them away and going back to a double-thickness leather belt to support all my daily carry gear. A few months ago Mike sent me one of his new belts, and it has become my favorite daily wear belt. Mine is in the 1.5" width and does

