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DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE REAL WORLD

Firearms Training Services
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

BIRDSHOT FOR BAD GUYS?

One of the many bits of nonsense I often encounter is the advice to use birdshot for indoor defensive shotgun applications. This is very bad advice.

As the name “birdshot” implies, these tiny shot pellets are for hunting birds. Birds are very lightly constructed, with hollow bones and little mass. Their muscular effort in furiously beating their wings is what keeps them in flight. Whenever that effort is impeded, gravity takes over. (Gravity isn’t just a good idea; it’s the law!) A few pellets of birdshot are not even what usually kills the bird. It’s the rapid deceleration trauma when it hits the ground at 55 miles per hour. All the birdshot pellets have to do is cut a tendon or a nerve trunk, or damage a flight muscle, and down the bird comes.

Individual pellets of #8 birdshot are .09” in diameter and weigh only 1.07 grains (there are 7,000 grains in a pound). Number 7½ birdshot pellets are .095” in diameter and weigh only 1.25 grains. Contrast that to a 00 Buck pellet, at .33” and 53.8 grains. A full grown dove only weighs about four and a half ounces. I weigh 220 pounds. It would take 782 doves to equal my body weight. To me, that makes it obvious that tiny birdshot would not be suitable for defending against a human attacker.

Out to approximately 6 to 8 feet (feet, not yards), a flying charge of birdshot from your typical shotgun is still tightly packed together as a single, pre-fragmented projectile. That “clump” of birdshot will make a huge entry wound and often have devastating results. The problem is, beyond that distance of 2-3 steps, the shot spreads out into a pattern of tiny individual pellets that do not have the mass or energy to penetrate enough to reach vital organs.



The photo below shows a charge of #8 birdshot fired into ballistic gelatin from three yards (nine feet) away. This was a block of bare gelatin – no clothing or other barriers involved. Notice that the main damage occurs in the first three inches of penetration, and by 4-5 inches of penetration the pellets have all stopped. The penetration would be even less with heavy clothing, an arm in the way, or any other obstruction.



One reason this bad advice lingers on is the belief that birdshot won’t penetrate walls, which is not true. Drywall offers very little resistance, and even light birdshot will go right through it and blind a person in the next room. There is no ammunition suitable for stopping an attacker that won’t go right through interior walls, regardless of ammunition type. Your best bet is to actually hit your assailant with whatever you fire at him.

That brings us to birdshot’s true value to the defensive shotgunner: PRACTICE! There is no need to shoot up expensive buckshot loads at paper targets to practice mounting and manipulating the defensive shotgun. Cheap birdshot is fine for most practice applications, and its low cost tends to encourage practice, which is the basis of all skill. Use birdshot on the range, and stoke your scattergun with buckshot for the real thing. ■

DEFENSIVE SHOTGUN

By Adam Roth, Aridus Industries



As I look to break into the firearms industry with shotgun accessories, there have been two major revelations. The first is that I need to make sure these products work, and work well in a variety of conditions. Quality classes are notorious for discovering weak points in gear. The second revelation was that if I am going to be in the industry, I better make sure I know how to use the stuff and know what I am talking about.

Naturally, I have been seeking out shotgun instruction anywhere I can get it in order to have the greatest sample size of techniques, drills, methodologies, and information as possible. Having received shotgun instruction from Chris Fry (MDTS Training) and Steve Moses, I was more

than anxious to attend class with legendary instructor Tom Givens of Rangemaster. I was awarded this opportunity on June 29th for Tom's one day Defensive Shotgun class outside of Dayton, Ohio.

The first half of the day was spent in the classroom (which was a relief because there was a LOT of rain the first half of the day). Having been through instruction before and having a decent understanding of manipulation and use, I was personally extremely interested in the classroom portion. Tom is an absolute wealth of knowledge and did not disappoint.

Like most (if not all) classes, we began with a safety brief going over the four firearms safety rules. Tom added extra

context to apply to shotguns specifically that I had never considered before. First, when inspecting a shotgun to see if it is loaded, it is natural to check the chamber and the follower/magazine tube, however Tom noted to check the lifter/elevator as well. If using a finger for inspecting in low light, it would be very easy to miss a shell on the lifter unless you know and think to specifically check it. Tom also urged us to keep our trigger fingers on the flats of the receiver to keep it high and away from the trigger. I equate this to a high "register" position on a pistol in which the trigger finger goes to the ejection port. There were a couple of times throughout the class when I noticed my trigger finger going to the curved bottom portion of the



receiver (where I typically kept it before) but noticed the finger was not "on the flat" and promptly moved it up. Definitely noteworthy if not having been through it before.

One of the major advantages to shotguns is ammunition versatility, so we spent a bit of time thoroughly discussing the various types. We received a bit of a history lesson on the origins and intent of different types of ammo and why we should select buckshot for personal defense. We also received truly interesting information about many misconceptions regarding less-lethals (which, as civilians, we should NEVER use).

Tom did a great job at verbalizing, and repeating, the main downfall of shotguns:

manipulation. It's not recoil (with a properly fitting gun and good technique, this isn't an issue). It's not capacity (as Tom explains in terms of servings, which is an OUTSTANDING explanation). It's manipulation. As such, we spent a bit of time in dry fire with manipulations.

With shotguns being as complicated as they are with many techniques, one has to pick and choose exactly what to teach and work on in a one day class, especially when the first half is dedicated to classroom work. We did many dry repetitions working from a high ready, to sights on target, finger on trigger, firing, and cycling the action robustly. Many. Many. Repetitions.

We followed this format in live fire, always reloading the number of rounds we just fired (unless instructed otherwise). I had not worked this number of repetitions from the high ready, and it felt good to get it dialed in and get comfortable with it. I will certainly be incorporating it more into my practice. During the live fire drills we all experienced first-hand that, yes, manipulations are the main downfall to shotguns. That being said, by the end of the class everyone was looking pretty smooth. We had one female shooter who stated that was essentially her first time really working with a shotgun (she wisely chose to get proper instruction early on to form good habits right off the bat). Even



with that little experience (i.e. no experience) she did a respectable job by the end of class. I was impressed. I feel part of this is because Tom did not overload us with techniques.

There's a lot that can be covered with shotguns: a wide variety of loading techniques, slug changeovers, off hand shooting, shooting from various positions, etc. Rather than receiving a little bit of instruction in a lot of areas, we received a lot of great instruction in a few areas. This is a great thing to factor in when looking at a "level 1" class.

Obviously there's a lot more that we covered that was great to learn — these were just a few of the highlights to me. Any thread I read regarding quality shotgun instruction, Tom's name is usually at the top of the list. It was my first time training with him and he really brings a very no-nonsense approach to it. It was a great trip, great class, and met some great people. I definitely look forward to training with Tom again in the future. ■

- by Adam Roth
Aridus Industries

Have Some Class

THREE-DAY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT & CERTIFICATION COURSE

Nappanee, Indiana | Sept. 11-13, 2015

This is an intensive, full three-day course (24 hours total) that is divided about equally between classroom sessions and range firing. Each student will fire approximately 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Students will act as coaches for other students, and each will be coached extensively in turn. Students also receive a 200+ page training manual, which is a valuable information and reference resource. To graduate from this course, students must pass a shooting qualification and pass a written examination. The course covers:

- ◆ Modern adult learning theory
- ◆ Preparation, delivery, and documentation of training
- ◆ Development of training aids, including power points and others
- ◆ Coaching methodologies, diagnosing & correcting shooters' errors
- ◆ Modern, effective gun-handling techniques (that work under stress)
- ◆ Proper handling/operation of a variety of handgun types
- ◆ Effective, efficient combat marksmanship techniques

This course satisfies the training requirements for the Tennessee Department of Safety to become a State Certified Handgun Instructor, the Oklahoma CLEET requirements to become an OK SDA Instructor, and for a state firearms instructor license in South Carolina by SLED. Students will need a serviceable sidearm (revolver or semiauto) of at least .38 Special or 9X19mm caliber (.38 Special, 9mm, .357 SIG, .40 S&W, .45 Auto). Sidearms must be carried in a serviceable holster (suitable for uniform duty or safe, reliable concealed carry). Holsters must be leather or kydex and worn on the belt with a covered trigger guard (AIWB is OK). Students will need at least three magazines or speed-loaders (more is better) and 1,000 rounds of good quality ammunition for the sidearm.

Eventbrite

This is not a beginner's class. The goal is to be able to effectively teach others how to successfully defend themselves and their families with handguns. ■

COMBATIVE PISTOL II (DYNAMIC MARKSMANSHIP)

Austin, Texas | Sept. 19-20, 2015

Combative Pistol II picks up right where CPI left off. Like CPI, CP2 is an intensive, two-day course conducted from 9am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday. Students will be challenged with progressively demanding drills. Topics covered in this course will include:

- ◆ Rapid presentation from concealed carry
- ◆ Effective gun handling techniques (that work under stress)
- ◆ Rapid reloading techniques
- ◆ High speed accuracy at close ranges
- ◆ Precision shooting at mid-ranges
- ◆ Movement skills
- ◆ Disability Drills
- ◆ Proper defensive mindset, and much more

Expect to fire about 1,200 rounds of ammunition. This course is designed expressly for the armed citizen who carries a concealed handgun, or the plain clothes or off-duty police officer.

Students will need a good handgun, holster, belt, and magazine pouch; at least three magazines; a ball cap and concealment garment (vest, jacket, windbreaker, etc.); eye and ear protection; and rain gear (we train rain or shine). It is a good idea to bring a second gun just like your primary, in case something breaks on your primary gun. A cooler with soft drinks, snacks, and lunch is a very good idea. ■

Eventbrite

The lead instructor for these classes will be Tom Givens, assisted by other Rangemaster-certified instructors. For more information, please visit www.eventbrite.com/o/tom-givens-6762296023.

What's your magic number?

1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10.11.12.13.14.15.16.17

Capacity for

TRUTH

The detachable magazine is the heart of a semiautomatic weapon, whether handgun or carbine. The magazine is a feeding device that holds the weapon's ammunition supply ready for use. Most defensive handguns were designed with a specific magazine capacity in mind.

First, let's define some terms. The magazine capacity for which the handgun was originally designed and intended is its "normal capacity magazine." If one designs a magazine that has those same overall dimensions but holds less ammunition than the original design, that is a "reduced capacity" magazine. For example, the Glock 17 was designed with a 17-round magazine that fits flush with the bottom of the grip frame. During the ridiculous Clinton magazine capacity restrictions, these same size magazines were limited to 10 rounds. Thus, the 17 round magazine for a Glock 17 is not a "high-capacity" magazine." It is a "normal capacity" magazine or a "standard capacity" magazine. The 10-round magazine for a Glock 17 is a "reduced capacity" magazine.

It is interesting to note that various organizations from the US Department of Justice to the Centers for Disease Control conducted extensive studies after the sunset of the ten-year magazine capacity restrictions. None of those studies found any evidence whatsoever that limiting ammunition capacity had any effect on crime. None. What such limitations do affect is your ability to adequately defend yourself in a life-and-death situation.

The purpose of higher capacity magazines is not to let you shoot more. Their purpose is to reduce the likelihood that you will have to take your pistol out of action to reload it during a fight in which a couple of

seconds can mean the difference between winning and losing. Once your pistol is empty and must be reloaded, it is out of action and cannot be fired until the reloading process is complete. Master level competitive shooters, real champions, need somewhere between 1 and 1.5 seconds to reload a semiautomatic pistol, using competition gear. A very skillful shooter working with concealment carry gear will need more like 2 to 2.5 seconds to complete a reload. Persons with less skill and practice will require even more time. In simple terms, that means that once your pistol is empty you are out of the fight for some period of seconds until you can get it reloaded. During that time, you just might lose the fight.

THE PURPOSE OF HIGHER CAPACITY MAGAZINES IS NOT TO LET YOU SHOOT MORE.

The amount of time that elapses between shots is referred to as "split time." A pretty decent shooter typically has a split time around .25 seconds from shot to shot at close distances. A very good shooter will have splits around .20 seconds. These split times represent the ability to accurately fire four or five shots per second. This means that when firing at combat speed, a five-shot handgun will only be able to stay in the fight for about one second. A 10-shot pistol gives the shooter two seconds of firing before he has to stop and reload. A 15-shot pistol has three seconds of potential fighting time before it runs out. This is the true purpose of magazines that hold more rounds. Note that there may be more than one attacker; your attacker(s) may be using cover, or moving, or both; and it often takes a fair number of shots to overcome these issues. ■



SAY WHAT????????

"By a simple, complete and unequivocal ban on large capacity magazines, all the difficulty of defining 'assault rifle' and 'semi-automatic rifles' is eliminated."

Who made this statement?

- A. Dianne Feinstein
- B. Bill Clinton
- C. John Boyd
- D. William Ruger

facebook.

Are you the chosen one?

Post the right answer to this month's pop quiz on our Facebook page, and you just might be!



In July, we took our three-day Firearms Instructor Development Course to Karl Rehn's KR Training range near Austin, TX. Despite soaring temperatures of over 100 degrees, we had an awesome class with a bunch of good folks. In addition to the locals from Texas and Oklahoma, students came from as far away as California, Montana, Nebraska, and Virginia. The next Instructor Development Course is September 11-13, 2015 in Nappanee, Indiana; and the annual Advanced Instructor Course will be October 3-4, 2015 in McLoud, Oklahoma.



We had an outstanding Combative Pistol Course in Colorado in July. Great group of students and a fabulous range facility. The next Combative Pistol course will be held in Indianapolis on September 26, 2015.



Aprill | Ayob | Bolke | Branca | Dobbs | Douglas | Farnam | Givens | Haggard | Hearne | Higginbotham | Moses | Murphy | Rehn | Sharp
any many more...

**where will you be
on 3.11.16?**

TAC·CON



Rangemaster.com/2016-Tactical-Conference

