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RANGEMASTER

DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE REAL WORLD

Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

One of the most often repeated bits of nonsense I run into is the advice to use birdshot in your defensive shotgun for indoor applications. This is very poor 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, as their muscular effort in furiously beating their wings is what keeps them in flight. Gravity isn’t just a good idea; it’s the law! Whenever a bird is unable to strongly and rapidly beat its wings, gravity takes over and the bird plummets to Earth. 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 35 miles per hour! All the 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 ounces. I weigh 225 pounds. It would take 900 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.

for the birds

by
Tom Givens

Out to approximately six to eight feet (feet, not yards) a flying charge of birdshot from your typical shotgun is still tightly packed together as a single, pre-fragmented projectile (see photo). Whether it’s six or eight feet will depend on the degree of choke your particular barrel has. That “clump” of birdshot will make a huge entry wound and often have devastating results. The problem is, beyond that distance of two to three 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.

On the following page is a photo of a person shot at a measured six feet with birdshot, from a case I worked on. The entry wound is 2.5” in diameter, and as you can see, the recipient is quite dead. Had he been just a few steps further away, however, the result would have been far less life threatening. As the other photo shows, by the time birdshot has

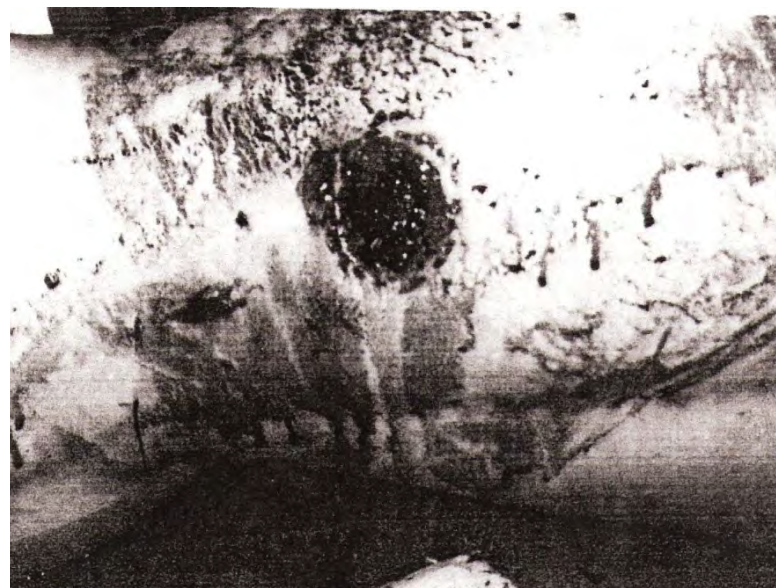
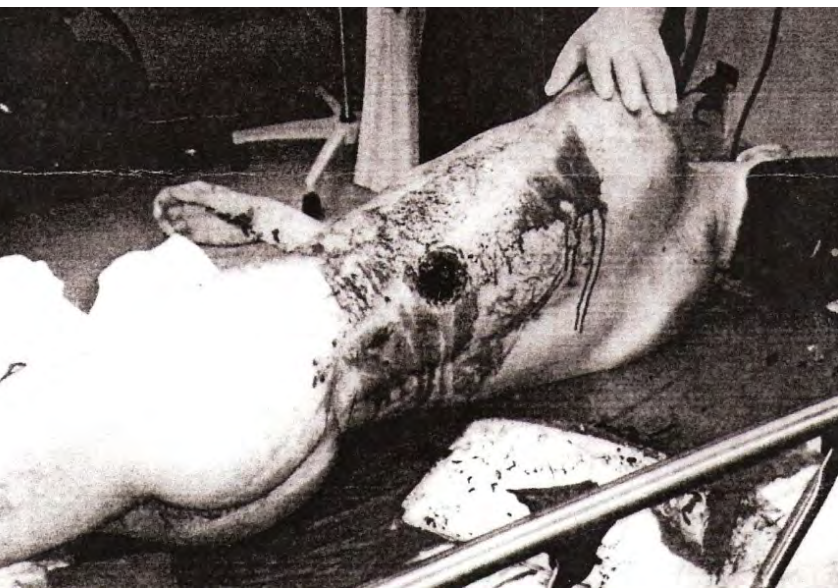
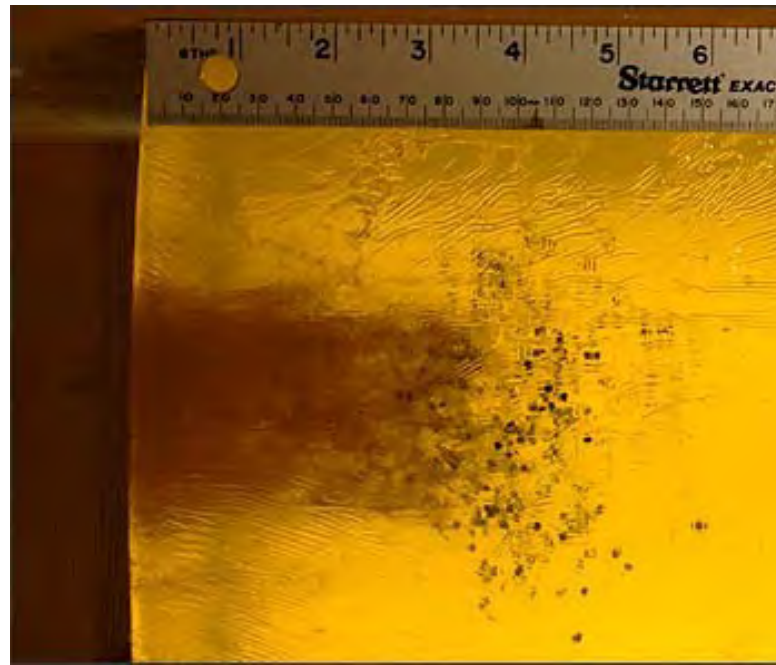
traveled the length of a car, the clump of shot has broken apart and spread out into a cloud of tiny, fly-weight pellets that are not capable of the same type of damage.

The next page also shows a photo of a charge of #8 birdshot fired into a block of ballistic gelatin at a distance of three yards (nine feet). 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 four to five

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. Unfortunately, this 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, which is PRACTICE! There is no need to shoot up expensive premium buckshot loads at paper targets to practice mounting and manipulating the defensive shotgun. Cheap birdshot is fine for most of this practice, and its low cost tends to encourage practice, which is the basis of all skill. Use a lot of birdshot on the range, and stoke your scattergun with buckshot for the real thing. ■

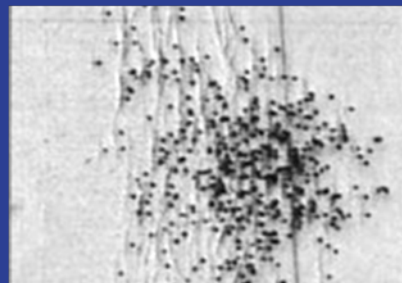
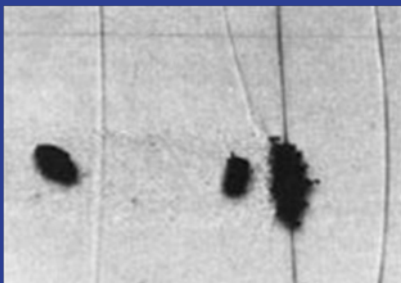


6 feet

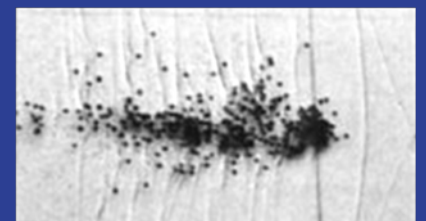
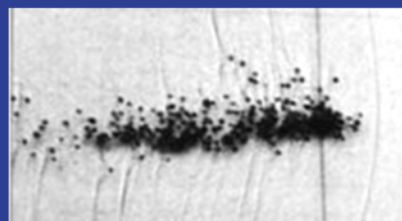
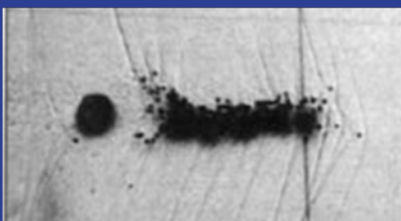
14 feet

18 feet

Cylinder
Choke



Full
Choke



TAC CON

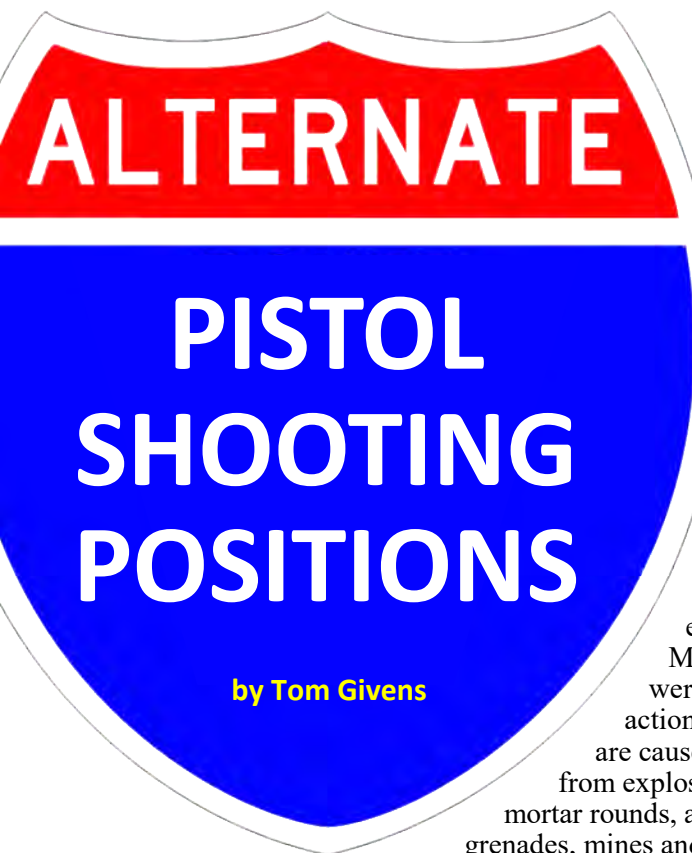
2018

The 20th Anniversary. Epic.

The 20th annual Tactical Conference will be held from March 16-18, 2018 at the Direct Action Resource Center (DARC) in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Registration is now open. Don't miss out.

rangemaster.com/2018-tactical-conference



In the typical US self defense shooting, all shooting is done from a standing position. There is usually no time to move to cover, assume a lower position, or do anything but get on the sights and start making hits. As with all things, however, there are exceptions that we need to be prepared to deal with.

From 1935 until the early 2000's, the FBI's Practical Pistol Course and its NRA police competition cousin included firing from prone. This was a hold-over from early training at Quantico by Marine shooting instructors, who were primarily riflemen. In military action the vast majority of casualties are caused by flying shrapnel and debris from explosive ordnance. Artillery shells, mortar rounds, aerial bombs, RPG rockets, grenades, mines and IED's account for almost all

serious casualties. Thus, in the military on first contact everyone goes prone, if possible. The closer you are to the ground, the less likely you are to be struck by flying debris. Fortunately, we are not so worried about explosive ordnance here in the US—we're worried about bullets fired directly at us at close range.

In our world of close range self defense, prone has a lot of drawbacks. It is slow to get into and out of, it greatly restricts our mobility, and restricts our vision. On hard even surfaces like concrete and asphalt, common in urban areas, it makes us vulnerable to rounds hitting in front of us and skipping into us. Unless combined with very low cover, prone is probably not a great idea in the close range urban environment.

The original PPC also included shooting from sitting, but again this is an attempt to adapt rifle training to

pistol use. It is used sometimes in hunting, but has very little applicability to defensive shooting.

In our world, the alternate position most often used will be some form of kneeling. The various kneeling positions have several advantages: they are quick to get into and out of; they offer enhanced stability; they lower your profile, making you a smaller target; they offer better visibility than prone; and they conform well to cover that is too short to use from a standing position (engine compartment of your car, concrete planters, fire hydrants, jersey barriers, retaining walls, etc.). Also, they can make you harder for an assailant to spot initially, as most people scan visually at eye level. This last one applies when the opposition is not targeting you yet, as in an active shooter event where you are present. A kneeling position can also be used to direct fire upward, reducing risk to people immediately behind your target, again as in an active shooter event in a crowd.

There are three basic variations of the Kneeling Position. These are: Braced Kneeling, Double Kneeling; and Speed Kneeling. Each has its place.

Braced Kneeling is an adaptation of the rifleman's position, and offers enhanced stability for more accuracy,

IF done correctly. To assume a proper Braced Kneeling Position, the shooter must step forward and across to a line extending forward from the gun side foot. The shooter sits on the gun side heel, bracing the flat back of the support arm elbow on the flat portion of the knee. Upper body geometry stays pretty much the same as in Standing, so the gun is the same distance from the face, resulting in the same sight picture.

Double Kneeling is assumed by rocking the shoulders back as the gun is drawn, to prevent crashing the knees into the ground too hard. As the gun is drawn, drop to both knees, sit on both feet, with your butt on your heels. From the belt up, body geometry is exactly like when using a Standing Position. You can lean out slightly from either side of low cover, like a large concrete planter, and deliver accurate fire with minimal exposure.

Speed Kneeling offers no real accuracy enhancement, but lowers your profile quickly. You can get into/out of it very quickly. Just step forward with the support side foot and drop to one knee. From the belt up it's just like Standing.

The photos show these positions being used properly. Find the ones that work best for you and give them a bit of practice from time to time. ■



NEGLIGENT DISCHARGE

by Greg Ellifritz
Active Response Training
(reprinted with permission)

Read this article from the *Daily Mail* (February 11, 2016): "Rookie NYPD cop is found guilty... after he 'accidentally' shot dead an unarmed father..." A New York police officer just got convicted of both manslaughter and official misconduct after an accidental shooting that occurred on his SECOND DAY of patrol. For all my cop friends and those who want to be cops. Study this case.

Here's the deal. I don't know ANY academies ANYWHERE in the country that turn out competent gunfighters upon graduation. I was the best shooter in my academy class, but looking back, I didn't know SHIT about shooting when I graduated the police academy. I took the initiative to seek out quality professional firearms training on my own time and my own dime. Most cops will never do that. Consequently, most cops NEVER become truly competent shooters. Those who do will learn the skills on their own DESPITE their police training, not BECAUSE of it. Police firearms training is universally abysmal (with a few very small exceptions).



Rookie NYPD cop is found guilty of manslaughter after he 'accidentally' shot dead an unarmed father in a darkened stairwell

- Jurors delivered their verdict on Thursday during the trial of Peter Liang
- Liang, 28, was convicted of manslaughter and official misconduct for fatally shooting unarmed Akai Gurley last November
- He was patrolling stairwell with his gun drawn when he fired and a bullet



It doesn't surprise me that this cop screwed up and shot someone. It actually surprises me that it doesn't happen more often. The problem we are seeing now is that society is far less tolerant of such "accidents" and is willing to hold officers accountable for their actions. Where previously, police departments would pay big money to settle a civil suit and the officer would not be criminally charged, now we are seeing a change. Courts are holding officers criminally responsible for their actions (as they should).

So, all of us cops are put in a trick bag. We are held to a professional standard, but our agencies will not provide the training necessary to live up to that standard. This won't end well for anyone, especially the officer on the street just trying to do a good job.

There are three choices that you have:

- 1) Ignore the problem. Bury your heads in the sand and hope such a tragedy doesn't happen to you.
- 2) Demand quality training (which will never happen) and leave the profession when you don't get it.
- 3) Seek out competent instructors on your own time and learn the skills you need to adequately function with a gun in your hand.

Most officers will choose option number one. More and more of those will end up in jail or fired if they depend on the "training" their agencies provide. The smart officers will choose option number two and leave the profession. The deck is stacked against them and they realize it. If they have other options, they will exercise them. That leaves the dumb officers and the ones without other job prospects to protect us all from the criminals. Society loses. A few officers will choose option three, become competent with their firearms and not have any problems. But this choice takes time, effort, and money. It will be a very small number of officers who will pursue it.

My advice for the police officers reading this? Get out of the profession if you have a chance. This job is becoming exponentially more difficult and will continue to do so in the future.

If you do choose to continue on as a cop, you MUST choose option three. You don't recognize it, but your agency does not have your best interests in mind. The training they provide will not keep you out of jail. You have to seek out training on your own or there's a chance that you will end up in handcuffs like this NYPD officer.

If any of you non-cops are still reading, what do you think cases like this portend for the armed citizen? You don't get a pass. If courts are willing to convict on duty police officers for accidental shootings, what do you think they'll do to a person with a CCW permit? Yes, expect more prosecutions if you screw up.

Look at it this way. Police firearms training is certainly inadequate, but it is generally TEN TIMES longer than the average CCW class. Most police academies dedicate somewhere between 60 and 80 hours to firearms training. If cops with 80+ hours of training are screwing up, why do you think you will be fine with your four to eight hour CCW class? You need more training too. Seek it out. I don't want to see any of my readers behind bars. ■

New Book

Tom's
Pick

Holloway's Raiders: A History of the Dallas Police Department's Deadly Shotgun Squads, by Captain E. R. Walt. If you are interested in what American law enforcement was like in the 1960s, this book will give you a great deal of insight. It also will deeply reinforce your faith in the 12 gauge shotgun as a rapid rehabilitation device! It's available from Amazon in paperback and Kindle versions. Highly recommended! ■

HOLLOWAY'S RAIDERS

A History of the Dallas Police Department's
Deadly Shotgun Squads



Upcoming Classes

Rangemaster has lots of great summer classes coming up soon. Please visit our Eventbrite page to register today!

May 6-7

Combative Pistol
Jackson, MS

May 26-28

Instructor Development Course (Pistol)
Culpepper, VA

May 19-21

Dynamic Marksmanship
w/Vehicle Defense Module
Athens, GA

June 16-18

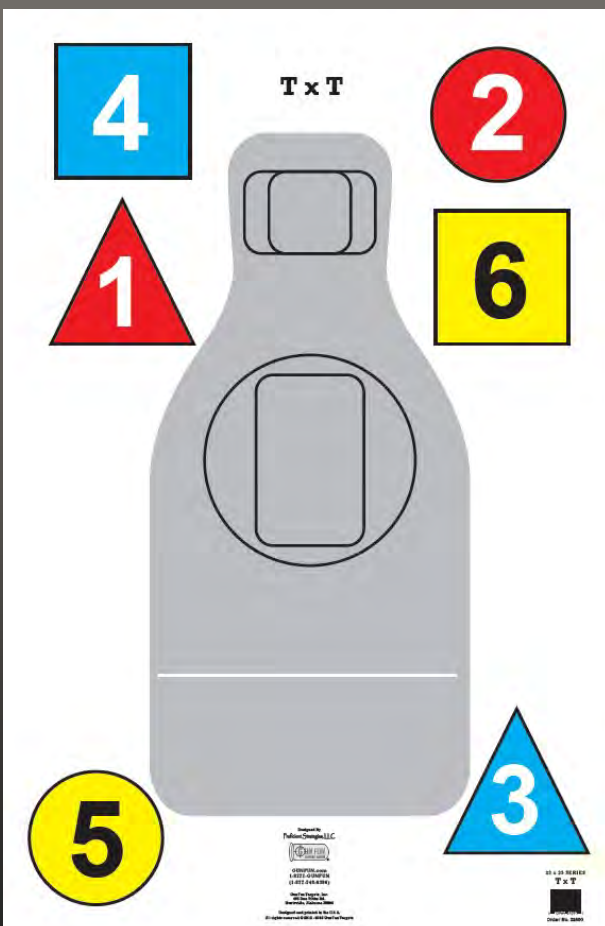
Instructor Development
Course (Pistol)
Seattle, WA

June 24-25

Combative Pistol
Everett, WA

THE T_xT TARGET

By Tom Givens



Our friend, colleague, and all around good guy Lee Weems designed the TxT Target to allow the use of one target for a variety of drills and teaching points. Pictured to the left is the current version, now available from Gun Fun Targets.

This one target covers a myriad of purposes, including:

- You have the basic FBI Q-target silhouette, for shooting the FBI pistol qualification or other courses based on the Q target.
- The 3" square in the head, the 8" circle in the chest and the belt line make the target acceptable for the Rangemaster Instructor Qualification Course.
- The 3"X5" head zone and the 8" circle make the target suitable for the late Todd Green's FAST drill.
- The smaller box within the 8" chest circle is for more advanced training.
- The colored and numbered shapes were designed for Rangemaster's Casino Drill or for command drills.

The targets are printed on heavy paper and hold up well. The price includes free shipping, so the cost is on par with other target companies' silhouette targets. See www.gunfun.com for ordering information.

By the way, the TxT name represents Lee's hat tip to me (Tom) and Todd Green. Todd and I designed some of the drills this target is intended for. ■

TAC-CON-17 *is in the books!*

Rangemaster would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2017 Tactical Conference, which took place last month at the Direct Action Resource Center in North Little Rock, AR. We really appreciate you investing your time and money to train with us, and we know that without you Tac-Con would not be possible. The 2017 Conference was a huge success, and we expect an even better Conference in 2018 when we celebrate the 20th anniversary of Tac-Con. Hope to see you there!



POP QUIZ

Which of the following metro areas has never hosted the Rangemaster Tactical Conference?

- A. Tulsa
- B. Little Rock
- C. Dallas
- D. Memphis

The first person to post the right answer on the Rangemaster Facebook page will be this month's

WINNER!

