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RANGE • MASTER

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# RANGEMASTER

DEFENSIVE TACTICS  
FOR THE REAL WORLD

## Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## I See a Pattern Here...

by Tom Givens

The shotgun is a formidable weapon at defensive engagement distances, even more so when in the hands of someone who understands the weapon and its limits and capabilities. You must learn your individual shotgun, know its ammunition preferences, and load it with ammo that maximizes its performance at the distances you reasonably expect to deploy it.

To a far greater degree than handguns or rifles, each shotgun is a unique example, with its own shooting characteristics. This is primarily because of the way shotgun barrels are made, and partly because some ammunition performs better with one type of choke or another. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) sets standards for American law enforcement equipment, from body armor to firearms. The NIJ standard for 12-gauge shotgun bores is a diameter of not less than .725" nor greater than .745". That is a HUGE disparity in the arena of small arms. Also, the degree of choke (constriction of the bore at the muzzle) varies from one manufacturer to another. Some of the modern whiz-bang buckshot loads like Federal Flite Control seem to do better out of more open chokes, while more traditional buckshot loads often do

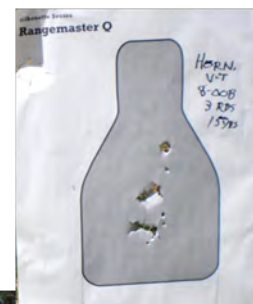
better with a small bit of choke, like Improved Modified. How will you know what your social shotgun is capable of? Get out and pattern it.

A good example is a 14" barrel, short barrel shotgun (SBS) that I own. Yes, it's registered, and I have the tax stamp. Although it has a short barrel, it has a factory fixed Modified choke. In my other 870's, Federal Flite Control buckshot with 8 pellets of 00 is my best performer. Not so much in this gun. Only shooting patterns at various distances with different loads on paper targets will tell you which load gives optimum performance in your gun.

The same applies to slugs. Slugs of different weights, or even similar slugs by different makers will often have widely disparate points of impact. In the photo here, from a recent shotgun course I taught, I attached two standard playing cards to a cardboard target and backed off 25 yards with one of my 870's. I fired two rounds of one brand of slug at one card, and two rounds of a different

brand at the other card. Same gun, same distance, fired a minute apart. As you can see, one type of slug hit the playing card with both rounds a half-inch apart, the other brand of slug hit several inches high and right. This is something you would need to know.

Don't take ammunition performance for granted, especially in the shotgun. Just because your buddy's gun performs superbly with Brand X does not mean yours will. Just because your gun is precisely zeroed with one load does not mean a different load will hit in the same place. Get to the range and check it out. ■





## The Rangemaster Firearms Instructor Development Program

# 20 YEARS LATER

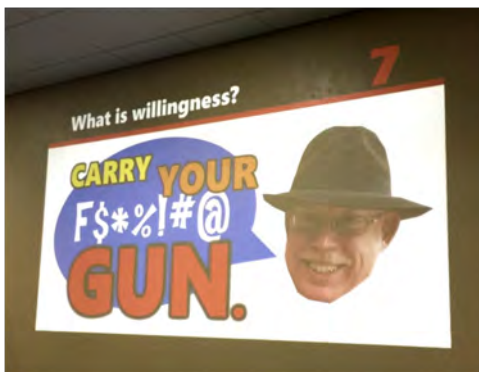


by Tom Givens

I began teaching defensive firearms skills professionally in 1975, on a part time basis. For many years, I taught at a local range owned by someone else, and I did a few interstate travel courses each year. In 1996, I decided to open a full-time training center in Memphis, with classrooms, a gunsmith shop, a hand to hand area, a 10-meter airgun range, and a 25-yard pistol range all in the same building. To keep such a place open, we had to teach a lot of classes. In a typical week, we would have two or three handgun permit classes, at least one but often two higher level classes, and an IDPA match. This went on every single week from 1996 until 2014, when we closed the range and became strictly a traveling operation.

To staff all those classes I needed educated, skillful, knowledgeable instructors. Where would I find them? I never had a shortage of people seeking a job at Rangemaster, but most were horribly unqualified. I had one guy who was really pissed at me for not hiring him. He felt that his Viet Nam experience as a helicopter door gunner and his current job as a firefighter were all the qualifications he needed. Sadly, he was not unique. Many applicants had the state required NRA Basic Pistol Instructor certification, but it was apparent they knew next to nothing.

I tried the area pool of law enforcement firearms instructors, but fared no better. Most had only their own agency's firearms training, most



only knew how to operate their agency's issued handgun and no other, and most had no idea how to teach. I realized that if I were to have competent help, I'd have to train and create it myself. Thus was born our Firearms Instructor Development Course. We taught the first instructor course in 1997, and invited several of the graduates to form the nucleus of our staff. All future Rangemaster staff instructors were recruited by observing them as they went through the instructor course, and hand picking the best performers.

That means that 2017 was the 20th anniversary year of our instructor training program. To commemorate this important milestone, we put on a 20th Anniversary Rangemaster Firearms Instructor Reunion & Conference, in November, 2017, in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Over 50 Rangemaster certified firearms instructors gathered from 16 states to network, compare notes and indulge in continuing education. The event was held all day Saturday and Sunday at the BDC Gun Room in Shawnee. BDC is a new, modern, state of the art indoor range complex near Oklahoma City, and was a perfect setting for our anniversary celebration. We had live fire training on the range both days, a bit of friendly competition to see how the instructors handled themselves under stress, and a huge amount of classroom training. There were classroom presentations by John Correia, John Murphy, John Hearne, Tiffany Johnson, Lee Weems, and

Warren Wilson, along with some input from Tom & Lynn Givens. This was a great weekend of fellowship and professional development for all concerned.

Karl Rehn wrote an excellent review of the event for his blog. See: <http://blog.krtraining.com/2017-rangemaster-instructor-conference/>. Karl also followed up with this: <http://>

[blog.krtraining.com/even-more-knowledge-from-the-rangemaster-instructor-conference/](http://blog.krtraining.com/even-more-knowledge-from-the-rangemaster-instructor-conference/).

Because this event was such a resounding success and the fact that we have so many graduates East of the Mississippi, we have decided to repeat this event at Athens, Georgia, on June 9-10, 2018. We will be using a very nice community center for classroom

space and a nearby outdoor range for the shooting sessions. Entry is strictly limited to those who have successfully completed our instructor development course anywhere since 1997. Space will be limited, and this event will fill early. To register, see our Eventbrite page: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rangemaster-certified-instructor-conferenceunion-tickets-39451499497>. ■



# NORTHWEST REGIONAL TAC CON

July 27-29, 2018 | Firearms Academy of Seattle

**W**e try to keep the Tactical Conference centrally located in the US, so that as many practitioners as possible may attend. That's why it is usually in Memphis or Little Rock or other central location. There are a number of committed students of The Art in the Pacific Northwest, which is still a really long way from Tennessee or Arkansas. To accommodate them, we will be holding a regional conference at The Firearms Academy of Seattle (FAS) in July 2018. FAS is located between Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon, and is a very nice training facility with numerous ranges and a modern classroom.

The dates are July 27-29, 2018, Friday through Sunday. This will be a smaller event than the national conference, with about 100 attendees, plus staff and trainers. We have an impressive array of trainers presenting two hour and four hour blocks of instruction, including live fire with handgun, shotgun and carbine; classroom instruction on a variety of topics; and hands-on training in empty hands skills and immediate trauma care. The trainers include Tom & Lynn Givens, Massad Ayoob, Marty Hayes, John Holschen, Lee Weems, John Hearne, John Murphy, Gabe

White, Tiffany Johnson, Karl Rehn, Cecil Burch, William Aprill, Lori Bigley, Caleb Causey, and Belle McCormack. That's a total of sixteen well respected trainers presenting instruction over three full days of training! There will also be a defensive pistol match concurrent with the training events. Advance registration is required.

**"WE'RE ALREADY HALF FULL."**

The trainers present two-hour to four-hour blocks of instruction in their area of expertise. You may attend whichever blocks you desire, and as many blocks as time allows over a three-day period. Attendance is open to adults who believe competent training is important and who wish to advance their knowledge of the defensive arts. To register, please see our Eventbrite page (click the Eventbrite logo). Don't delay, this event will fill well in advance. We're already half full. ■

**Eventbrite**™



# UPCOMING CLASSES

Sign up today at [www.eventbrite.com/o/tom-givens-6762296023](http://www.eventbrite.com/o/tom-givens-6762296023)!

## January 26-28

Firearms Instructor  
Development Course (Pistol)  
Homestead, FL

## February 3-4

Advanced Firearms Instructor  
Development  
Homestead, FL

## February 23-25

Firearms Instructor  
Development Course (Pistol)  
Okeechobee, FL

## March 16-18

Tactical Conference  
Little Rock, AR (**SOLD OUT**)

## April 7-8

Combative Pistol  
Lakeland, FL

## April 13

Defensive Shotgun  
(One-Day)  
Culpeper, VA

## April 14-15

Combative Pistol  
Culpeper, VA

## April 27-29

Firearms Instructor  
Development Course (Pistol)  
KR Training, Lincoln, TX (near Austin)

*Eventbrite*



# SAVE THE DATE



## The Rangemaster GUARANTEE

by Tom Givens

**I**t's really hard to quantify the number of bad things that did not happen because the intended victim was alert, aware, and had his mindset right. I get reports like this one quite often, and I suspect that some unknown percentage of them would have turned into violent crimes had the student not been mentally prepared. Here is a perfect example from a long-time student from Florida. Below is an excerpt from an email I received in early November.

**“**I was leaving my local grocery store walking to my car. It was about 6pm, still daylight. The woman came around the front of my car. She had a child walking with her. She had a bag with a clear plastic tube coming out of it. It reminded me of a medical device. She started to tell me a hard luck story looking for money. I said, “I can’t help you” as I started to look around for an accomplice. I found him. He was right behind me a short distance away. As soon as she noticed that I knew he was there she broke off the interview and walked away. The accomplice walked away as well. I got in my car and drove away.”

This is an absolutely typical set-up for a street robbery or car-jacking. Most people would have been completely mentally engaged with the poor female and child, and not been aware of the male until he touched them from behind their back. Recognizing the possibility and immediately checking the rear aborted what may have been a bad scene developing.

I will give you a double-your-money-back guarantee that you will win every single violent confrontation you don't get in. Accept that there are bad people out there; keep your head up and your eyes open; if you see one, immediately check behind you for another. ■



**H**errett's Gun Stocks still makes custom pistol stocks to fit your specific hand. Fast double-action work with a revolver is made much easier with a set of stocks that actually fit your hand. You send Herrett's a traced outline of your hand and they make the stocks to fit that hand precisely. In addition, their workmanship is of a caliber seldom seen in modern, mass produced items.

Here are a couple of pics of a set of their Detective stocks I received for a round-butt S&W Model 64, with four-inch heavy barrel. Walnut, hand checkered, oil finished, they fit my hand perfectly. This gun was a shooter before, it's a great wheelgun now. ■

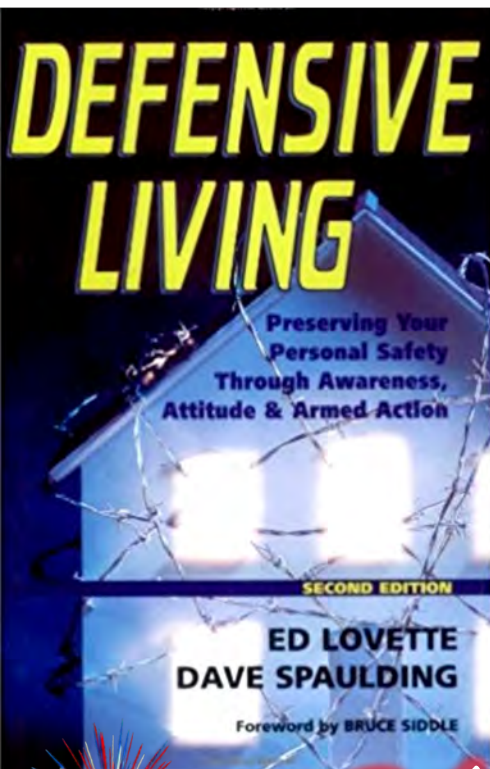
# HERRETT'S STOCKS



by Tom Givens



[www.HerrettStocks.com](http://www.HerrettStocks.com)



## Tom's Recommended Reading

Ed Lovette was a Captain in US Army Special Forces, a law enforcement officer for ten years, then retired from a career as a paramilitary operations officer with the CIA. I've known Ed for over 10 years, and he knows his stuff. Dave Spaulding retired from a 28-year career in law enforcement, which included SWAT duty and an extensive tour in narcotics. He is currently a well-respected traveling trainer.

These two men have combined a life-time of experience living and working in very dangerous places and circumstances. They have distilled this information into a small, but densely packed book that I believe everyone should read. There are 17 chapters, including topics such as: Increasing Your Awareness; Danger Signs; Willingness; Medical Self Help; and You and Your Vehicle. The information is easy to understand and there are several actual events briefly summarized to drive home key points. Available from Amazon for only \$12.90 in paperback and \$8.29 in Kindle form. Recommended! ■

# Happy New Year!



Which of the following is true about Otis McDonald, the named plaintiff in the landmark Second Amendment case, McDonald v. Chicago?

- A) He was a Democrat.
- B) He had a master's degree.
- C) He opposed hunting.
- D) We was a marine.

Got the answer? Reply to Tom's newsletter thread on the Rangemaster Facebook page. If you're the first to reply with the correct answer,

**YOU WIN!**

