

In This Issue

- ▶ NORTHWEST REGIONAL TACTICAL CONFERENCE 1
- ▶ WHAT IS YOUR TRAINING PRIORITY? 2
- ▶ UPCOMING CLASSES 3
- ▶ LESSONS LEARNED (AND RE-LEARNED)..... 4
- ▶ POP QUIZ! 6

MARCH 2018

RANGE • MASTER

Volume 22 • Issue 3

RANGEMASTER

DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE **REAL** WORLD

Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

We try to keep the Tactical Conference centrally located in the US, so as many practitioners as possible may attend. That's why it is usually in Memphis, Little Rock, or another central location. There are a number of committed students of The Art in the Pacific Northwest, which is still a very 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. We have an impressive array of classes, 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. Trainers for this three-day event include Tom & Lynn Givens, Massad Ayoob, Marty Hayes, John Holschen, Lee Weems, John Hearne, John Murphy, Gabe White, and many more.

The trainers will present two-hour and four-hour blocks of instruction in their areas of expertise. You may attend whichever blocks you choose and as many blocks as time allows

www.Rangemaster.com

over the weekend. There will also be a defensive pistol match running concurrently with the training sessions.

Attendance is open to adults who believe competent training is important and who wish to advance their knowledge of the defensive arts.

Advance registration is required. We expect this event to sell out well in advance (we're already half full). Don't miss out. Visit the Rangemaster Eventbrite page to register today! ■

Eventbrite

NORTHWEST REGIONAL TAC CON

July 27-29, 2018 | Onalaska, WA



William Aprill
Massad Ayoob

Lori Bigley

Cecil Burch

Caleb Causey

Lynn Givens

Tom Givens

Marty Hayes

John Hearne

John Holschen

Tiffany Johnson

Belle McCormack

John Murphy

Karl Rehn

Lee Weems

Gabe White

And More!



what is your TRAINING



by Tom Givens

When setting up our own training and practice program, we are all faced with trying to determine how to prioritize the various skills we could work to improve. Which skills should have priority? Which skills are more secondary? It is my belief that when many shooters and a lot of trainers look at this issue, they tend to be guided by the wrong information.

In this country, law enforcement officers are involved in lots of shooting incidents that are well documented. The FBI has been gathering and collating information on these incidents since the 1930s, and each year they put out a report referred to as LEOKA. That is the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted report. Each year in the US,

citizen. The majority of shootings involving police patrol personnel generally fall into one of three categories. The first is traffic stops. Often an officer stopped the car for a minor traffic violation without knowing the occupant is a dangerous and wanted felon. The second general area is bar enforcement. Officers go into seedy bars to enforce liquor laws, drug laws, gambling laws, and prostitution laws; to break up fights; and to look for parole violators. The third dangerous area consists of responding to domestic violence calls.

found a number of recurring themes. I prefer to structure my personal practice and what I teach to private citizens on these issues that I see coming up over and over again in private citizen self-defense shootings.

Before getting into my own students' experiences, I'd like to touch on two law enforcement agencies whose experiences pretty much mirror those of the private citizen. The first is the FBI. The FBI's special agents are required by policy to keep their weapons concealed when they're in



somewhere between 75 and 100 police officers are killed feloniously in the line of duty. The LEOKA report has a brief summary of each incident in which a police officer was killed in the previous year. For many, this serves as the basis for setting up their firearms training program.

I have a couple of problems with this approach. First, we're studying the officers who, to put it bluntly, lost the fight. Second, the vast majority of these officers were working uniform patrol. The duties of a uniformed police patrol officer lead them to be involved in many, many dangerous incidents that frankly have nothing to do with the life of the typical private

The cops go into the trailers, apartments, and houses of people who are already drunk and fighting. As you can see, these three types of activity carry significant risk of being involved in violence. However, they have no crossover to the typical private citizen.

The problem is, this is about the only place most people know to look for information on gunfights. Although the information is not terribly relevant to the law-abiding citizen, it's all they have access to. I have done a lot of research over the past several years trying to find out exactly what is commonly involved in private citizen self-defense incidents, and I have

business clothing and outside of their office. Thus, when out in public they are dressed like private citizens and carry concealed handguns. FBI agents do not make traffic stops, they don't do bar enforcement, and they don't answer domestic violence calls. It surprises a lot of people to find out that around half of all FBI agents involved in shootings occur because an attacker does not realize they are law enforcement and tries to hold them up or carjack them. Therefore, their incidents closely reflect those of the private citizen carrying a concealed handgun. From 1989 to 1994, FBI agents were involved in an average of 20 to 30 shootings per year. Here is how the data from those shootings

TRAINING

PRIORITY

Cont'd

broke down: 92% occurred at a distance of 6 to 10 feet; and the average number rounds fired was 3.2. You will notice a striking similarity between these figures and those involving my private citizen students.

The Drug Enforcement Administration's agents also get into a lot of plain clothes shootings because of the nature of undercover narcotics work. In 2007, the DEA had 44 defensive shootings. The average distance involved was 14.6 feet, and the average number of shots fired was five.

Over the past 20 or so years, 66 non-military students of mine (that I know about) have been involved in defensive gunplay against criminals. These are *the ones that I know of*, who have reported back to the school or that I learned of through law enforcement contacts. Of those 66 incidents, the record is 63 wins, zero losses, three forfeits. Of the 63 students who were armed at the time of their encounter, all of them won, and only three were injured. We have, unfortunately, had three students that I know of who lost their encounter and died. All three were killed in separate street robberies, and all three were unarmed at the time of the incident (hence the term "forfeit"). **It's hard to win a gunfight if you didn't bring your gun!** Since 63 out of 63 students who were armed won their fights, we must be doing something right. So, let's look at some of the circumstances and conditions involving those fights, see how they compare to the FBI and DEA experience, and see if this information can help us structure our training programs correctly.

First, the single most common type of crime resulting in defensive gun use seems to be some form of armed robbery. Whether someone is robbing your business, sticking you up on the parking lot, trying to take your car at gunpoint, or it's an armed home invasion these are all simply variations of armed robbery. There are lots of common misconceptions about armed robbery. For one thing, armed robberies do not normally start at arm's length. The whole purpose of the robber's gun or knife is to terrorize the victim into compliance from a safe distance. Once the victim is compliant, the robber moves in to take the wallet, purse, car keys, bank bag, or whatever he's after. In our context, confrontational distances are the same as conversational distances. In our culture, we speak to people (especially strangers) from two or three steps away initially. Armed robberies often begin at similar distances.

2018 Upcoming Classes from Rangemaster

Don't miss out on Rangemaster courses in your area. We hope to see you in class!



April 7-8
Combative Pistol
Lakeland, FL

April 13
Defensive Shotgun
Culpeper, VA

April 14-15
Combative Pistol
Culpeper, VA

April 27-29
Instructor Development
Course (Pistol)
Bastrop, TX

May 4-6
Defensive Shotgun
Instructor Development
Course
Franklin, TN

May 18
Defensive Shotgun
Okeechobee, FL

May 19
Combative Pistol
Okeechobee, FL

May 26-27
Intensive Pistol
Florence, SC

June 9-10
Rangemaster Instructor
Reunion & Conference
Athens, GA

June 28-30
Instructor Development
Course (Pistol)
Xenia, OH

July 14-15
Combative Pistol
Gap, PA

July 27-29
Northwest Regional
Tactical Conference
Onalaska, WA



Another common misconception is that bad guys beam down from the Mothership and suddenly appear next to you. Of course, this is nonsense. An awful lot of victims will try earnestly to convince you of this. "Jeez, it all happened so fast! He materialized right next to me! I never saw him!" I wish I had a hundred dollars for every time I've heard that exact quote from a surviving violent crime victim. What they are admitting is that they were walking along with their head completely up their butt, totally unaware of their surroundings, and oblivious to the people and activities around them. They were walking through the parking lot texting or yakking on a cell phone or were otherwise distracted and preoccupied and completely failed to see obvious warning signs all around them. We stress this to our students and encourage them to get their head up, open their eyes, and pay attention to their environment. This is the key to dealing with the problem before it is right on top of you. As the old proverb goes, "To the blind, all things are sudden."

With that background information in mind, let's look at the 60+ incidents involving our students. First let's look at the distances involved. Only two incidents occurred at contact distance. In one of those cases,

"Jeez, it all happened so fast!
He materialized right next to me! I never saw him!"

physical contact between the attacker and the defender was deliberate. In the other, that contact was purely accidental. This goes back to what I said about initiating conversations from outside of contact distance and of the advantage of being aware of your surroundings and being able to challenge someone before they are within arm's reach.

Distances beyond seven yards were only involved in 4.5% of the incidents. Keep in mind, though, that



I've been a serious shooter since the 1960s. While shooting in various forms of competition, carrying a gun for a living, and training others over a span of over 50 years, I find that every now and then I am presented with a life lesson that I have been exposed to previously but had faded from my consciousness over time. Some of these could have had disastrous results if they had occurred at the wrong time. Fortunately, the ones I'll mention here took place in an environment where no real harm resulted.

In the first, I was at the local indoor range working some drills with a new Glock 19 that had been worked over for me at Boresight Solutions. This gun is a real shooter, and I enjoy shooting it. I had reached a total of about 2,200 rounds through it when

new extractor and the problem was fixed.

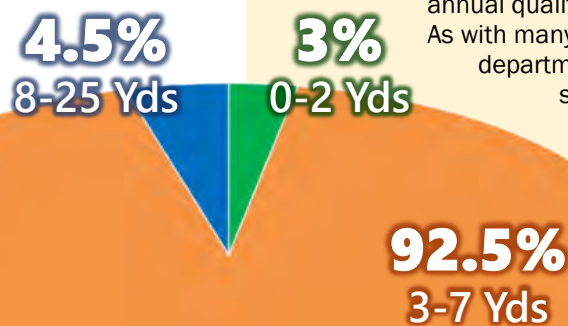
The problem is, that fix would not have been available during a fight! There are a few important lessons here. First, this reinforces my habit of having two identical specimens of any gun I actually carry. In this case, the gun that broke was my practice gun. My normal routine is to train and practice with one of the pair and carry the other, rarely shooting the carry gun. Thus, the carry gun does not accumulate wear and tear and is less likely to break when I really need it. Second, a broken extractor in only 2,200 rounds is not normal, but it did happen. It could just as easily have happened when I needed the gun for real. This reinforces my practice of carrying a BUG. I don't carry a back-up gun in case of a need to reload or a minor malfunction, but I carry it in case of an actual part failure, as in this case. If your primary gun breaks at a bad time, your back-up gun might be really important.

the extractor suddenly went bad. (This is not a reflection on Boresight. Nothing they did to the gun had anything to do with extraction.) It began by tossing the brass back in my face, something it had not done previously. After a few more shots, I started getting a failure to eject (stovepipe malfunction) every few shots. After five or six stovepipes, I took the gun to the range's gunsmith for examination. The extractor was missing a small piece of the claw, which had broken off. He stuck in a

Students often say things like, "I have decided to carry this gun, and have bought one. What gun should I buy next?" My answer is to buy another one just like it, and get into the habit of training/practicing with one and carrying its twin.

The next lesson also involved this Glock 19. The only range close to my home is a small indoor range. On this particular range, the longest shot is 10 yards. This is where I had usually fired this gun before the extractor failure. I then got a chance to go to a

that's about one incident in every 20. We have had private citizen students forced to fire in defense of themselves or a family member at distances of 15, 17, and 22 yards. Thus, our practice regimen should include some shooting beyond seven yards. As I was debriefing the student involved in the shooting at 22 yards, he said to me, "You know, when I had to hit that guy all the way across the street it never occurred to me that I was a statistical exception. I just had to deal with it." Truer words were never spoken. You may be the individual faced with that somewhat rare longer distance shot, so you should be prepared for it.



Engagement Distances

63 Defensive Incidents with Armed Rangemaster Students

The rest of the shootings, 92.5% of them, occurred at between three yards and seven yards, with over 80% occurring between three and five yards. The typical American sedan is 16 feet long, so one car length is about five yards. It would be safe to say then that the majority of private citizen self-defense shootings occur between a couple of steps away and the length of a typical car. Based on that, we do the majority of our training and practice in that three- to five-yard range.

Our shooting incidents typically involve a small number of shots (three or four rounds). However, we have had a few shootings that required more rounds. I can recall students' shootings involving eight, 11, and 12 rounds. None of our students have had to reload during a fight, although I can think of three who went to slide lock. Fortunately, no further firing was

steel shooting event in the next county, on an outdoor range. To my surprise, when I shot it at 25 yards I found that the point of impact was 3-4 inches below my point of aim. I went home and fixed this by installing a shorter front sight. The lesson: always check your zero at 25 yards. At 10 yards, the difference in point of aim (POA) and point of impact (POI) may not be obvious, but at 25 yards it sure is. Don't assume because it hits where you aim at five, seven, or ten yards that it will be just as accurate at 25 or 30 yards.

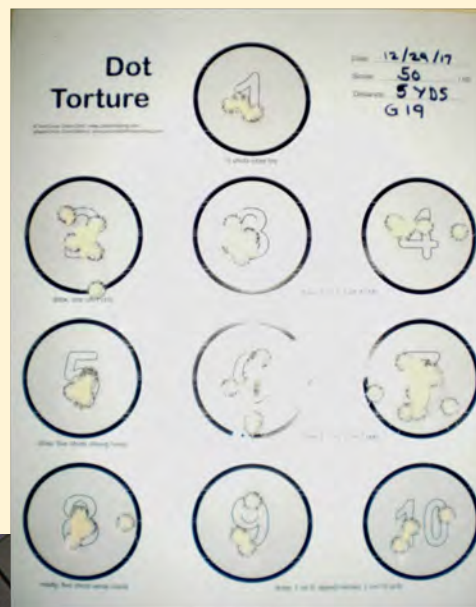
The final lesson did not involve me, but it still made an impression. A group of police officers were recently at their range to shoot their semi-annual qualification course.

As with many agencies, this department's policy is to shoot the ammo the officers had been

carrying and issue them fresh duty ammunition after the qualification session. This way, they are never carrying the same ammunition on duty for more than six months (a really good practice to emulate). For one officer, on his very first stage, the round in his chamber (the one that had been in his chamber on the street for six months) was a squib. The bullet was pushed out of the case and stuck in the chamber. A

simple tap/rack got rid of the empty case, but the stuck bullet prevented the next round from chambering. There is no immediate action fix for this. The officer had to lock open the slide, put a brass rod down the barrel from the front, and use a mallet to pound out the stuck bullet. Doing this while under fire would be a bit problematic. The lesson: again, this is a prime reason for a BUG. If the only gun you have is rendered inoperable, you have an inefficient paperweight in your hands. If you have a second gun, you can rock on. This squib would have been the first round this officer attempted to fire if he needed that gun to save his life on duty.

At present, we have the finest guns and ammunition that have ever existed. Always remember, though, that the guns are mechanical devices, built by people. Mechanical devices wear, and they break. Tens of millions of rounds of ammunition are made in this country every single day. Some will not be up to specifications. One of those out-of-spec rounds may be in the chamber of your carry blaster. Be prepared to deal with these issues if they arise. ■



necessary at that point. In our training, we heavily stress firing with two hands at eye level. We only shoot with one hand if we only have one hand available. As a result, the vast majority of our students' shootings have involved two-handed, eye-level shooting; and as a result the hit ratio is running around 95%.

No student has used nor felt the need for a flashlight in any of our shootings. This is another topic on which there is much misunderstanding among the shooting population.

There is an often-quoted statistic that says 80% of pistol fights occur in the dark. This is nonsense. A more accurate statement would be that 80% of pistol fights occur during *the hours of darkness*. For statistical purposes, the hours of darkness are from 6 PM until 6 AM. Obviously in much of the country it is not dark during that entire period. Moreover, criminal encounters do not occur in a vacuum. There is no more reason for a bad guy to be in the dark than there is for you to be in the dark. Just because it's 3 AM on the Stop 'n' Rob parking lot does not mean it's dark. In fact, with modern commercial lighting I have actually seen my sights more clearly late at night on one of these parking lots than in the afternoon on an overcast day. Law enforcement officers often have to go into very dark places to search out hiding suspects. That is completely

different than a robber approaching a private citizen on a lighted parking lot at night. Again, it's matter of context.

To summarize, our students' experiences and those of the FBI and DEA are similar. The shootings involve a defender in civilian clothing with a concealed handgun. Most of the FBI's shootings occurred at six to ten feet; the DEA averages 14.6 feet; and the vast majority of Rangemaster alums' encounters were at nine to 15 feet (three to five yards). Typically, the number of shots fired is fairly low, but there are numerous exceptions. Shootings at 15 to 25 yards occur far less frequently but often enough to be of concern. With this in mind, **I believe that private citizens should prioritize the following skills: (1) the draw, (2) close-range quick accuracy, (3) mid-range accuracy, (4) reloading, and (5) movement.**

Other skills such as malfunction remedies, alternate shooting positions (kneeling, etc.), the use of cover, and flashlight-assisted shooting techniques could be useful to pursue once the basics are mastered. Early in your training, however, I would strongly recommend staying focused on these five core skills first. I think the best approach is to model our training to match what we see occurring over and over again in the field, rather than hoping what happens in the real world mirrors what we like to do on the range. ■

YOUR TRAINING PRIORITY

- 1 The Draw**
Fast, efficient, reliable presentation of the handgun from concealment
- 2 Close-Range Accuracy**
The ability to accurately place several quick shots into an anatomically important area of the target at a distance of three to five yards
- 3 Mid-Range Accuracy**
The ability to place an anatomically important hit in a reasonable amount of time beyond seven yards out to at least 25 yards
- 4 Reloading**
The ability to reload the handgun quickly and efficiently, especially if it holds less than 10 rounds
- 5 Movement**
The ability to rapidly move off the line of force (side-step) without hindering the presentation of the pistol from concealment.



POP QUIZ

Do you know who said the quote below?
Be the first to post the answer on Tom's newsletter thread on the Rangemaster Facebook page, and this month's crown of awesomeness will be all yours!

Who said it?

"To disarm the people is the best and most effectual way to enslave them."

- A. George Mason
- B. John Browning
- C. Thomas Jefferson
- D. Martin Luther King