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## **AUGUST 2020 NEWSLETTER**

### **DRILL OF THE MONTH**

Throughout 2020 we will be running a Drill of the Month in each edition of the newsletter. The goal is help motivate folks to get to the range and actually shoot their defensive weapons, and to have some fun in the process. Each month we'll post a drill or a short course of fire. You are encouraged to go to the range, shoot the drill, and then post your thoughts and a photo of your target on the Rangemaster Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rangemaster/> .

#### **Dave Spaulding's Fade Back Drill**

Dave Spaulding conducts training as Handgun Combatives (<https://www.handguncombatives.com/> ) . Here is a deceptively simple drill Dave uses in his classes to stress pure accuracy, knowledge of your handgun's zero, and visual patience. Target is a 3X5 card, oriented vertically. Shooter will fire 3 rounds at this target, with no time limit. The goal is to take just enough time to get 100% hits. Shooter will fire 3 rds from 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, and 25 yards, for a total of 18 rounds. The goal is all 18 hits on the card.

To derive maximum value from this drill, the shooter should strive to take no longer than really necessary to get the hits at each distance. As the distance increases, the shooter will need to adjust his timing accordingly.

## “Qualification Course” of the Old West, by Tom Givens

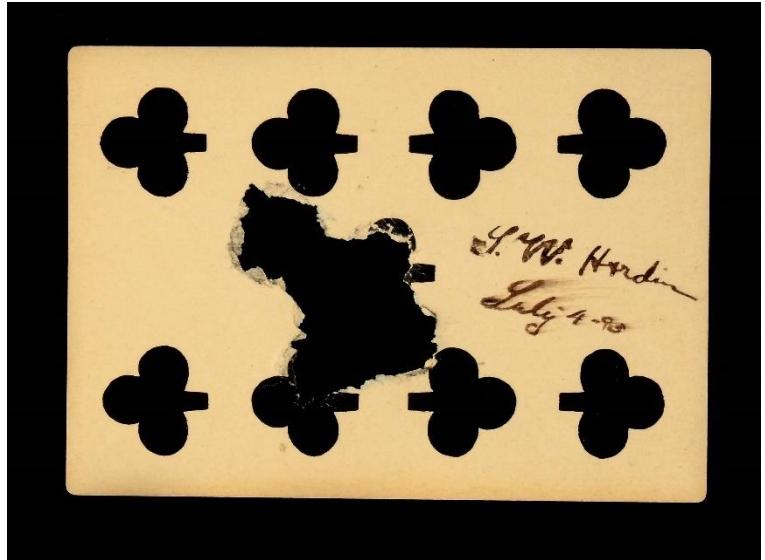
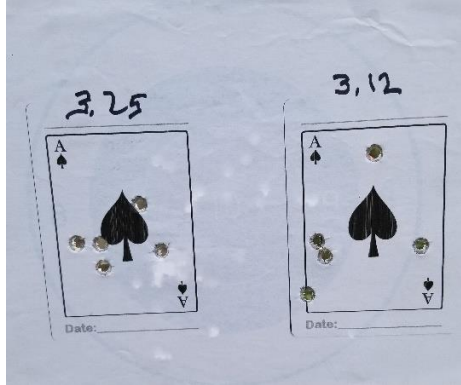
In the days of the Old West, lawmen were not hired and sent off to an academy to learn their trade. They were hired based on their perceived ability to do the job, at that moment. To test skill with the handgun, there was a pretty widely known drill that was often used to establish that a man, lawman or not, was or was not competent with a handgun.

Playing cards on the frontier were a bit larger than those of today. “Poker” cards of today measure 2.5” by 3.5”, but in the Old West playing cards were much closer to the size of a modern 3” X 5” index card. To see if someone could shoot, a playing card would be tacked to a tree trunk or fence post. The shooter would back off five paces, and let fly with five shots. If all five rounds hit the card, the shooter was considered to be “a fair hand” with a pistol.

In his later years, John Wesley Hardin, one of the deadliest gunmen of his day, made his drinking money by shooting these cards, autographing them, and selling them for a few dollars. Here are photographs of three of Hardin’s such cards. One has “5 paces” clearly written on it. As you can see, he got his five hits. The other two cards sport one hole groups.

As a modern take-off on this drill, I designed a target with a 3” X 5” Ace of Spades card. Since we have so much better modern equipment, I added a time component. All five shots have to be fired in less than five seconds. So, it’s 5 shots, at 5 yards, in 5 seconds. Depending on your skill level, this can be shot from the Ready, or from the holster. When a student achieves this in class, I sign the card and give it to the student as a souvenir.

I recently shot this a couple of times with my Boresight Solutions Glock 17, from a concealed draw. My times were 3.25 seconds and 3.12 seconds, clean. Of course, you can just use a 3X5 index card. Give it a try.



## **The First “Assault Rifle” ?**

The Winchester Model 1907 .351 SLR was produced from 1906 until 1958, a very long production run. The “SLR” was the abbreviation for Self Loading Rifle, “self loading” being the term used at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for a semiautomatic firearm. Please note that this semi-automatic, magazine fed rifle entered production 114 years ago!

The Model 1907 has the distinction of being the first semiautomatic rifle to be used in warfare. At the onset of World War I, the French military and the Russian government bought quantities of these rifles and millions of rounds of ammunition for them. Just prior to WWI, the US military bought some for use by aviators in General Pershing’s punitive expeditions in Mexico, in pursuit of Pancho Villa. The US guns had 10 round detachable magazines, while the French guns used 15 and 20 round magazines, with the guns converted to full-auto, making them the first true Assault Rifles.

The .351 was very popular in the US with lawmen, particularly the FBI, the Border Patrol, and Texas Rangers, who used them in great numbers, especially in the Southwest. The Memphis Police Department’s Emergency Squad, a fore-runner of SWAT, carried .351’s in their cars into the 1970’s. Model 1907 .351’s figured prominently in several of the historic police shoot-outs of the 1930’s Gangster Era and served that purpose very well.

The .351 cartridge is a straight case, rimless round designed specifically for the semiautomatic carbine. In factory loadings, it launched a .35 caliber 180 grain bullet at around 1900 feet per second, in either soft point or full metal jacket configuration. The Model 1907 weighs 8 pounds, so recoil is mild and fast follow up shots are easy. The 10 round single column magazines are flat and compact, making carrying spares easy. I have an ’07 built in the 1930’s and it shoots and handles very well. The photograph shows a .30 Carbine round and a .351 SLR round side by side. Within 100 yards, the .351 is quite adequate for deer, hogs, and black bears, and has an enviable reputation as a fight ender.

This semiautomatic, magazine fed center-fire rifle has been around for 114 years. Isn’t it odd that magazine fed semiautomatic rifles are suddenly the

bane of gun-grabbers' existence and the focus of so much legislative angst?





# **Low Light Skills for Civilians**

by Tom Givens

It was a dark and stormy night... Sorry, but I've always wanted to open something with that line. Let's look at a favorite topic of internet discussions, flashlight techniques and skills for the civilian defender. First, let's get this bit out of the way: when I use the word "civilian", I am referring to a person who is not in the military and not a sworn peace officer, but is an individual acting in his own self defense. This would be a completely different discussion if we were discussing police officers, who routinely go into dark places to ferret out bad people.

"80% of gunfights occur in the dark." I've heard and read this nonsense a number of times over the years, and it is a prime example of not knowing enough about a topic to understand the statistics. A more accurate statement would be, "80% of gunfights occur during the hours of darkness." For statistical purposes, the hours of darkness are 6:00pm until 6:00am. It should be obvious that during this time frame for much of the year there are several hours that still have full daylight. The most active period for violent crime is 6:00pm to midnight (US Department of Justice), and in the Summer half of that time frame has daylight in my part of the world.

The other issue is that violent crime does not occur in a vacuum. In over 60 shootings involving students of mine, not one used a flashlight, and not one indicated during the debriefing that a flashlight would have been of any value to them. This is because violent criminals don't stand in the darkness, feeling about for a victim! Most violent crime occurs away from the home, on the parking lots of convenience stores, grocery stores, restaurants, service stations and other public places. These are not dark. In fact, anywhere in the US, these places tend to be very well lighted. I have had my gun out on a 7-11 parking lot at 3:00am and was able to see the sights better than on an overcast day at 3:00pm. The time of day is totally irrelevant, all that matters is the amount of ambient light. In the modern urban environment, adequate lighting is just not a real problem.

In our students' experience, about 90% of the incidents occurred away from home, as noted previously. This leaves about 10% in the home. A bit of forethought here can greatly reduce the need for a flashlight, although the home is one environment where one could be a real asset in certain limited

circumstances. In my home, the exterior doors are steel, in steel frames, with good deadbolts. I have and use an alarm system. My bedroom is on the second floor, and there is a switch there to turn on the lights for downstairs. On both floors, there are multiple lamps on timers, and they are set to be on all night, every night. These simple precautions mean it is very unlikely I would need a flashlight or weapon mounted light in my home. I keep a powerful hand-held flashlight in my nightstand, next to my home defense handgun, but barring an intrusion during an electrical power failure, it will probably never be used.

Since I mentioned a weapon mounted light (WML), let's look at that issue more closely. It's fashionable right now to insist that every defensive handgun should sport a WML. I disagree. First, the hardest problem I struggle with as a self defense trainer is to get people to actually carry their emergency life-saving equipment on a routine, daily, habitual basis. That is really the only way you're going to have that equipment available when a sudden, unforeseen life threatening crisis erupts. (The key words are sudden and unforeseen!) I have a great idea- let's make the EDC pistol bigger, heavier and clumsier and require a bulkier holster for it. That will make carrying it easier, and therefore, more likely. NOT! The second issue is, we're talking about private citizens. A private citizen simply cannot point a handgun at people or objects he is not justified in engaging. This is why my own home defense gun has a detached hand-held light next to it, rather than a WML on it. Pointing your handgun at a shadowy figure and manipulating whatever activation switch the light has, under extreme duress, is a recipe for disaster. Much better to have the pistol in a muzzle averted ready position, and use a hand held light to identify or assess that unknown person.

In any sub-section of the entire self defense discipline, the word "context" is all important. Think about the likely scenarios for civilian use of a defensive handgun. An armed robbery or car-jacking at a service station, convenience store parking lot, or similar venue is your most likely threat. Take the training resources (time, ammunition, money) you would spend on lights and their use, and put those resources into skills which are far more likely to be used.

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# **Point Shooting vs Sighted Fire, a Historical Perspective**

By Tom Givens

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Among those who train in the defensive use of the handgun several debates have raged on for years. These include the "9mm vs .45" arguments, the "revolver vs autopistol" debate, and the "point shooting vs sighted fire" disagreement. In debates on any subject, one side often resorts to what is known as an "appeal to authority", especially if they don't have any factual basis for their argument. An "appeal to authority" typically goes like this, "My side is right, because (insert name here) said so, or that's the way he did it". One of the most commonly used appeals to authority among point shooting proponents is that "William Fairbairn used point shooting and taught it to his men in Shanghai in the 1920's and 1930's, and during WWII taught it to American OSS operatives". All that is true. One needs to know a bit more about the back story, however, to understand why Fairbairn used this method and why his reasons are no longer valid.

First, perhaps a bit of history will help put matters into the proper perspective, so here goes. Shanghai is a port city on the coast of China. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, European powers forced the government of China to give them control over certain ports, including Shanghai, where the Europeans built modern enclaves for their personnel, who oversaw vast trade empires with the Chinese. In addition to legitimate trade, these ports became centers for the opium trade and human trafficking. In 1936, Shanghai was one of the largest cities in the world, with a total population in excess of 3 million. Of those, only about 35,000 were European, but they controlled the city and lived in a modern settlement with race track, schools, and all the cultural amenities they desired. To keep order and



protect the Europeans (mostly British, French and German) the Shanghai Municipal Police were organized and run by the British. During the period of the 1920's and 1930's, there was a great deal of criminal violence, fueled by opium gangs and other smugglers, gangs that specialized in prostitution and gambling, communist party organizers, and regular criminal thugs. These groups were in constant combat with the members of the Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP).

William E. Fairbairn joined the Royal Marines Light Infantry in 1901. A few years later he joined the Shanghai Municipal Police, where he eventually rose to the rank of Assistant Commissioner. For many years during the period of the 1920's and 1930's, he was in charge of all firearms training for the SMP, and also routinely went on dangerous raids and other operations. This resulted in his personal involvement in literally scores of gunfights during his career. Working with his associate, Eric Sykes, they devised a hand to hand system known as "Defendu", as well as a firearms training program for all SMP personnel. As World War Two loomed in the immediate future, both Fairbairn and Sykes left Shanghai and returned to England. For the duration of the war, Sykes remained in England, teaching British Commandoes and members of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), the British equivalent of our OSS. Fairbairn was sent here to train US and Canadian Commando forces and operatives from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forebear of the modern CIA.

Together, Fairbairn and Sykes wrote a book called Shooting to Live , first published in 1942. Paladin Press offered a re-print of this excellent book, and it should be in the library of every history conscious gunman. One of Fairbairn's students in the OSS was Colonel Rex Applegate, who wrote extensively about Fairbairn's methods, and was largely responsible for propagating Fairbairn's teachings in the United States. Usually, if a point shooting proponent uses an appeal to authority, he will be referencing either Fairbairn, or Applegate, or both.

When one delves a bit deeper into Fairbairn's experience in Shanghai, including reading Shooting to Live with a bit more critical eye, a number of disturbing tidbits of information emerge. First, Fairbairn had a very large force of officers who were unfamiliar with handguns when they joined the SMP and for whom he had an extremely limited amount of time and ammunition for training. Initial training was very brief, and by today's standards completely and utterly inadequate. After initial training, each officer was allotted 36 rounds of ammunition per year for training and requalification, a pitiful amount by any modern standard. Initial recruit training was conducted at 2 yards and 4 yards, and the "qualification" standard was 50% or more hits *anywhere on a life-size silhouette target!* Not too impressive.

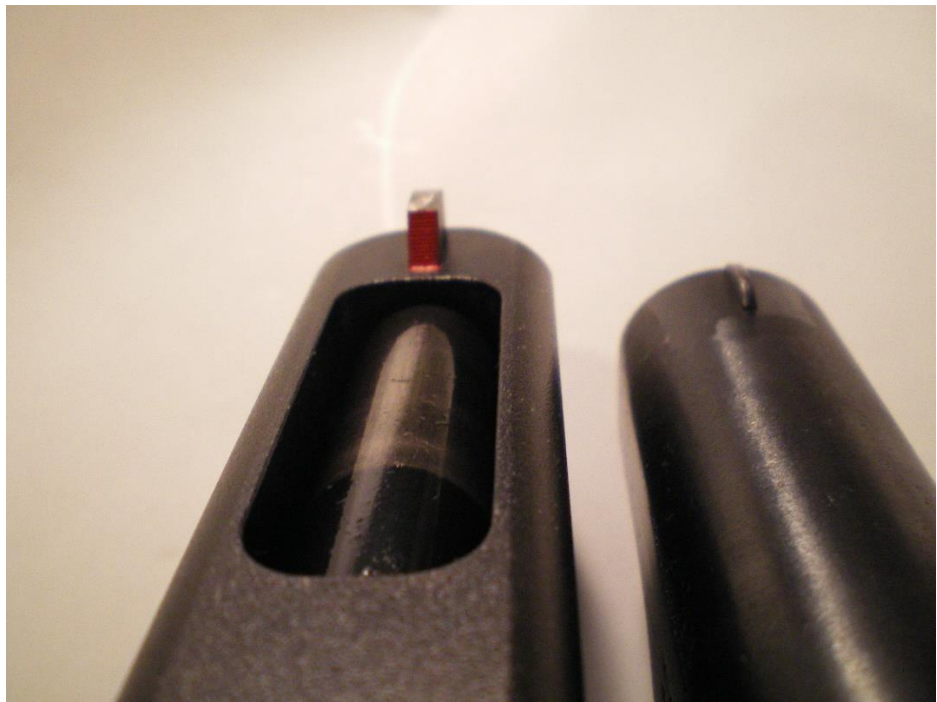
So, how did this training regimen work on the mean streets of Shanghai? During the period 1929 through 1938, SMP officers fired a total of 3,329 pistol rounds in actual engagements with criminals. These 3,329 rounds accounted for 159 suspects killed and an additional 149 suspects wounded. Thus, the SMP officers fired 10.8 rounds for every criminal casualty they produced. The completely untrained Chinese bandits, during the exact same period, fired 789 rounds at SMP officers, resulting in 19 officers killed and an additional 67 officers wounded. Thus, the thugs fired 9.2 rounds for every casualty produced. So, the officers trained in Fairbairn's point shooting methods were actually less effective than their untrained criminal foes.

This begs the question, "Why did Fairbairn persist with such an ineffective technique?" I believe the answer is quite simple, and can be readily illustrated. The SMP issued all sidearms used by its officers, and because they had both European (mostly British) officers and smaller statured Asian officers (mostly Chinese), they issued two types of handguns. European officers got Colt 1911's in .45 and the Asian officers, who were much smaller, were issued Colt 1908 Pocket Autos in .380. All of these handguns were made by Colt in the 1920's and early 1930's. Fairbairn did not personally care much for the .380 Colts, but he thought they were the best

he could do for Asian men with hands far too small to operate a 1911 well. As an aside, there was also a contingent of Sikh traffic police officers, who were armed with Webley revolvers in .455 caliber. Why? Who knows.

I happen to have one of the SMP's 1911 pistols, SMP number 233. This is a commercial Colt Government Model, manufactured in 1928. It has the "Shanghai Municipal Police" roll mark on the frame, and the Number 233 mark on the frame, slide and barrel. I have a letter from the Colt factory attesting that this gun was one in a shipment of fifty 1911's to the Shanghai Municipal Police in 1928. This is a "transitional model" 1911, with some features of the 1911 and some of the 1911-A1. The changes from 1911 to 1911-A1 configuration started in 1927 but many guns built in the next couple of years were assembled from parts on hand at the factory, and these transitional models are seen from time to time. I also have a Colt 1908 Pocket Model like the ones issued by the SMP, although this one did not belong to them. Both pistols have sights that are abysmal from a shooting point of view. The front sight is tiny- low and very narrow. The rear sight has a very small notch, on both the 1911 and 1908 pistols. These sights are all but impossible to see in anything other than perfect lighting, and it is very difficult to line them up at any kind of speed.

Contrast the sights on the 1911 and the 1908 with those on one of my current carry handguns, a Glock 34. Fairbairn taught point shooting *because the sights on his guns were useless*. No further explanation is needed. If you have sights you cannot see, you learn to point the gun. Now that modern high visibility sights are industry standard, it's time to leave the 1930's behind.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

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**Aug 14-16 Firearms Instructor Development, Brookville, OH**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-ohio-tickets-57759312659>

**Aug 21-23 Firearms Instructor Development, Pittsburgh, PA**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-62048361319>

**Aug 29-30 Advanced Pistol Instructor, South Dakota**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/advanced-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-71321794407>

**Sept 11-13 Firearms Instructor Development, Martinsville, IN  
(Indianapolis)**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-69908800103>

