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## **MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER**

### **DRILL OF THE MONTH**

Throughout 2023 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/> .

## **Fast, but Accurate**

For this month's DOTM, you will need to make your own target, which is easy. Take an 8 ½" X 11" piece of typing paper, preferably some color other than white. In it, draw a 5" circle in the upper half of the sheet. The 5" circle represents the heart and the major plumbing attached to it. The rest of the sheet represents the chest, from collarbone to diaphragm, between the nipples. For scoring, anything inside the 5" circle counts as 10 points, anything outside the circle but in the sheet of paper count as 5 points. Anything outside the sheet of paper is a miss, no points.

This will be scored on Hit Factor Scoring. Record the time for each string. Total the points on target. Total the elapsed time. Divide points by time for a score. Your goal is to make a

score equal to the Par Score, or higher. This is to be shot from concealment, cold.

5 yards Draw and fire 5 rounds.

5 yards Start at Ready, gun in dominant hand only. Using dominant hand only fire 3 rounds.

5 yards Start at Ready, gun in support hand. Using support hand only fire 2 rounds.

7 yards Start at Ready, both hands, only 3 rounds in the gun. Fire 3 rounds, conduct an empty gun reload, and fire 3 more rounds.

10 yards Start at Ready, both hands. Fire 4 rounds.

200 points possible. Par Score = 8 Goal is 8 or higher.



**I recently shot this drill cold, target shown above. My final score was 10.2 . See if you can beat that.**

## **Firearms Instructor Courses—Why?**

**In a recent online discussion, Craig Douglas posed the question, “Why do you want to take an instructor course? Is it to check a box, pad a resume, or increase your skills as a trainer?” (slightly paraphrased). That was a good question, and it got me to thinking about why I teach and encourage participation in instructor development courses. There are actually several reasons why I think they are important, whether you plan to train others or not. First, some background.**

**Rangemaster has four levels of instructor development courses, with each building on the skills and knowledge gained in the previous course. If one takes all four courses, that amounts to 11 full days of training, or about 99 hours. Roughly half that time is spent in the classroom and the other half on the range.**

**The first benefit of taking this type of training is building one’s own skills as a shooter. I firmly believe that trainers should be able to shoot very well, and should be able to demonstrate anything they tell their students that they should be able to do. In the first instructor course, we go over the technical side of shooting, with a focus on the “Why ?” as well as the “How ?”. In addition, all shooting is done with a coach, one on one. This helps identify and correct any deficiencies in technique. Graduates of our program shoot very well.**

**The second is learning to coach. Again, using the information about technique, our instructor candidates learn**

**to observe and identify their students' errors, devise a way to correct the error, and communicate that to the student. In all levels of our instructor development classes the students get coached extensively and spend a good bit of time learning to coach others.**



**One area I find personally important, is the almost total lack of “institutional memory” the tactical/defensive training community has. In the 1920’s and 1930’s, for instance, there were numerous highly experienced gunfighters who studied both shooting and the mental aspects of fighting, and who wrote books about their experiences. They pre-date Instagram and YouTube, so most modern practitioners have never heard of them. Pierce Brooks wrote a book in 1975,**

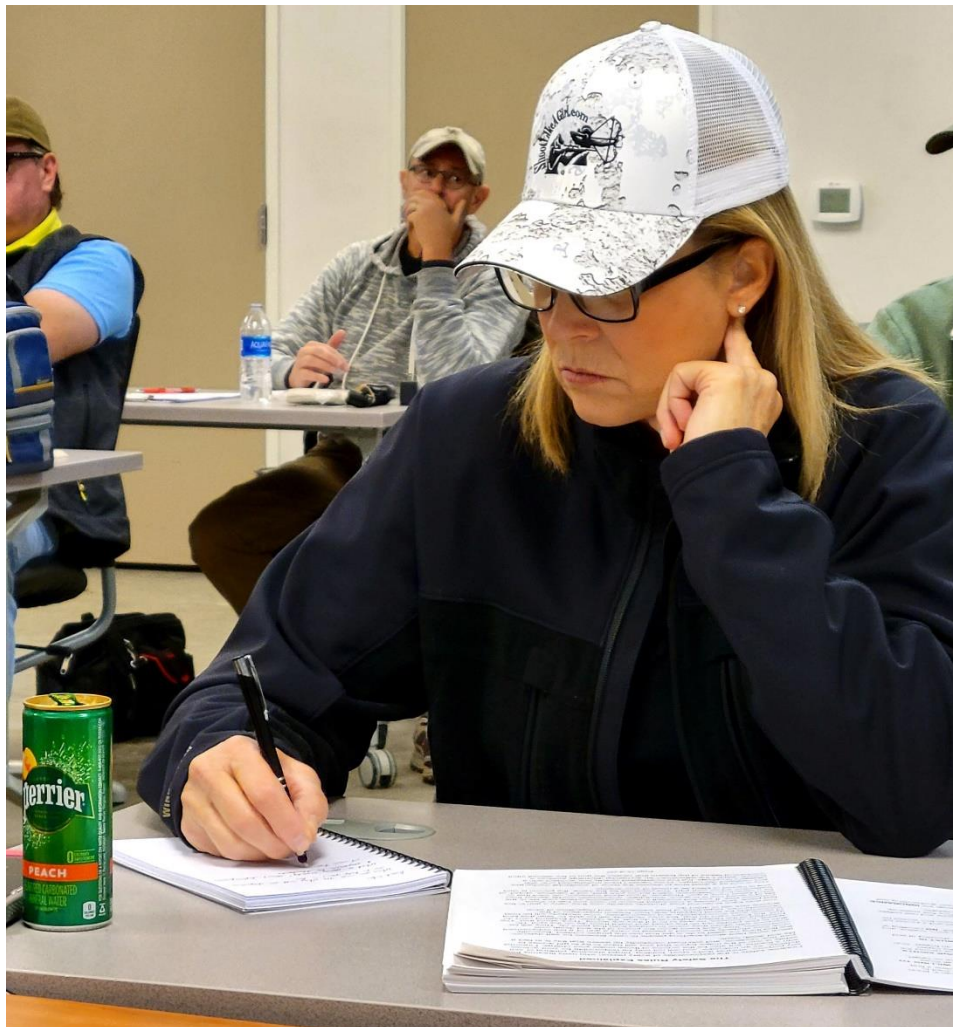
**Officer Down, Code Three** . This was an excellent book about the common errors gun-toters commit that cause them to lose a fight for their life. Sadly, we see the same errors committed every day, 48 years later.

The next subject area is how to run a line with students who are strangers. As a trainer, you don't know their capabilities or limitations yet, and there are inherent risks involved in live-fire firearms training. The trainer has to be familiar with everything from managing multiple relays, and range safety procedures, to selecting relevant targets, and designing drills and courses of fire that build good habits. Designing visual aids, from printed hand-outs, to manuals, to Power Point presentations are all skills the trainer must possess, along with an understanding of how human adults learn and retain physical skills. None of these topics are covered in a "shooting" class.



**A competent defensive skills trainer must not only know how to teach the physical manipulation of firearms. That is actually not the most important aspect of defensive training. Students come to us now with a lifetime of cultural indoctrination as victims, and as trainers we have to find ways to fix that.**

**This is why we refer to our courses in this realm as “instructor development courses”. That development is a life-long process, that requires a commitment to continual learning, skill building, and adaptation as new equipment, new skills, and new knowledge about human performance becomes available to us.**



There used to be a trainers organization called ASLET, the American Society of Law Enforcement Trainers. Their motto was “Qui Docet, Discet”, Latin for “Who teaches, learns.” The best way to master a subject is to learn to teach it. Whether you plan to train others or not, I recommend instructor development as a path to mastery.



# Teaching The First Shots: Handgun

By Tim Kelly



## **First shots: Explaining fear response.**

New shooters almost always flinch, startle, or otherwise exude tension after that first “bang.” We call that the fear response. One of the best ways to mitigate the anxiety is to identify the fear response early and normalize it among students. Knowing what to expect can minimize their stress and embarrassment when they feel it firsthand.

Discuss the steps that will occur after the shot is fired in detail, and ensure the students understand the safety precautions relevant to each portion.

## **Components to consider**

- Loud bang — Use quality hearing protection to dampen the scare factor of the sound, as well as to protect your hearing.



- Muzzle flash — Wear eye protection to minimize the physical and psychological sensations.
- Muzzle rise — The gun will not fly out of your hand.
- Hot Brass — Avoid low-cut shirts and open-toed shoes to prevent skin contact. Wear billed cap to deflect any casings headed for your face.

Ultimately, you want to get across to the student that whatever their initial response is, they **MUST keep the gun pointed in the direction of the target and remove their finger from the trigger.**

As for the trainer, you must expect something to happen after a student fires their first shots. Don't get caught off guard. Position yourself on the dominant side of the student and just behind them with your hands ready in case you need to physically control them. Allow some room. Speak confidently without an intimidating tone. Reassure them that they are in a controlled environment. Be ready.

### **After the first shot**

Some people's fear response manifests as a subtle flinch. Some may drop the gun. Some may freeze with their finger still pulling the trigger back and "white knuckling" the grip. Some may turn to ask you how they did, forgetting the gun is still in their hand. As a trainer, you must have a ready response for any scenario. Your priorities are:

- First, keep their firearm pointed in the direction of their target.
- Second, ensure they remove their finger from the trigger.

After you have observed the student handling those two important safety rules on their own with consistency, you may begin directing more of your focus on the result: marksmanship.

As the student begins to acclimate to the first few shots fired, you may still see a few snippets of the fear response from time to time. The occasional flinch or tightening of the dominant hand are the most common. But, sometimes you may catch them closing their eyes right before the gun goes off or even turning their head away. Address those issues delicately. Identify the issue with the student, and have the student take a few deep breaths and try again.

### **Marksmanship: The ability to shoot accurately**

Most any Basic Pistol class that I have ever attended lists at least six fundamentals of marksmanship: grip, stance, aiming, trigger control, breath control, and follow-through. Each one of these fundamentals are explained in detail, demonstrated, and then maybe some practical application in between. I am not discounting this approach, but sharing a different tactic we often use for training fundamentals during private sessions at the Apache range.

### **Simplify the skill**

After discussing all the essential constituents of range safety, emergency procedures, firearms handling and safety rules, we then move on to the essentials of pistol marksmanship. That is A LOT for the student to take in and retain. So, why not just focus on what is the most important? The two most important marksmanship fundamentals are trigger control and aiming. If the student understands aiming and can press the trigger without disrupting the sight alignment, they will perform well in terms of accuracy.

**Accuracy: The quality or state of being correct or precise.**

**Precision: The quality, condition, or fact of being exact and accurate.**

Now let's break this down a step further. If marksmanship is the ability to shoot accurately, then what does it mean to shoot precisely?

- Target: 8.5"x11" standard sheet of paper with a 3"x5" index card in the center
- Distance: 5 yards
- 10 shots were fired. 6 were in the index card and 4 were on the standard sheet of paper. How well did this student perform?

The answer is 100% accuracy and 60% precision. If the student missed the standard sheet of paper (the target), then it would deduct from the accuracy percentage. If the student had more hits inside of the index card (the refined target), then we would add to the percentage for precision. You can also use a standard B-8 or B-8 repair center for this considering the black for the refined target and the tan for the standard of accuracy.

Why are these two measurements so important? The student needs to understand that accuracy can be tuned to precision by developing the skills of trigger press and aiming. The trainer can use this to adjust the level of competency in the subject. Create or close distance, adjust target sizes, and begin stacking more fundamental skills to facilitate the marksmanship learning process.

For example, if the student demonstrates a high level of accuracy, you may want to begin adjusting their grip, stance and follow-through. These will help students achieve more consistent growth and set them up for success for future skillsets.

At Apache, we have found that the more early emphasis we place on the concept of "Press trigger, don't disrupt sights," the more efficient the learning process becomes. It also allows the student to process their fear response without becoming overwhelmed

with instruction. In the end, it makes the learning process more enjoyable and less stressful.

## **CHOOSING CARRY AMMO?**

I recently transitioned from carrying a Glock 17 to carrying a S&W M&P 2.0 aluminum frame pistol. In my Glock I carried Federal 124 grain +P HST, as it shot the best in my Glocks and has an excellent street record.

I am well aware that the same ammo fired in different makes of pistol will often give different performance. For this reason, I tried several factory self defense loads in my M&P's once they were broken in a bit and I had become accustomed to shooting them.

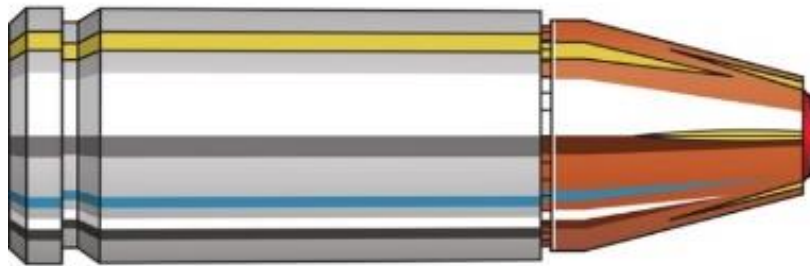
I tried the HST load mentioned, plus Barnes all copper hollow points in 115 and 124 grain, and Hornady Critical Duty 135 grain +P. I settled on the Hornady load after a bit of side by side comparison. In my guns, the Critical Duty load was very accurate and shot right to the sights at 20 yards. Standing, no support, with iron sights, I fired 5 rounds to a 3X5 index card at 20 yards. Four bullet holes were clustered well within the center of the card, with the 5<sup>th</sup> round a half inch outside the card. That was a called flyer, completely my fault. (The wind came up, the sun got in my eyes, etc, etc). That is great accuracy for duty ammunition.

Note-This is Critical Duty, NOT Critical Defense, and is the +P version. Below is a link to Hornady gelatin testing of this load. This is also the FBI's current issue duty load.

I encourage you to try different loads in your gun. Terminal performance is important, but so is hitting to point of aim and good accuracy.

## Heavy Clothing test

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-infospace-mapquest&ei=UTF-8&hsimp=yhs-mapquest&hspart=infospace&param1=azg0m0jb6po0oz7lrq4ogr6o&p=ballistic+test+hornady+9mm+135+grain+Critical+Duty+%2BP&type=ud-c-us--s-p-rci2f2zy--exp-none--subid-jbnhidj4#id=17&vid=de80850da676b7842f1f2a8e1410eb62&action=view>



## UPCOMING TRAINING EVENTS

**Cohutta Pines, Cisco, GA May 27-28 Combative Pistol  
(Aqil Qadir)**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/combative-pistol-course-tickets-473639447337?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

**Tuttle, OK                    May 19-21    Instructor, pistol**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-292016277547>

**Yale, VA                        June 2-4, 2023    Instructor, pistol**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-168313735915>

**Kalamazoo, MI                June 9-11, 2023    Instructor, pistol**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-166702173689>

**Jackson, MS (Boondocks) June 10-11    Combative Pistol  
(Aqil Qadir)**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/combative-pistol-tickets-473092130297?aff=ebsoporgprofile>

**Springfield, MO              June 23-25    Instructor, pistol**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-215417699137>

**Slidell, LA    June 24-25    Combative Pistol (Aqil Qadir)**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/combative-pistol-skills-tickets-465457324387>

**Yadkinville, NC July 15-16 Advanced Instructor Course**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/advanced-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-349893329367>

**Buford, GA July 21-23 Master Instructor**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/master-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-275274422207> **sold out**

**White Hall, AR Aug 12-13 Instr Reunion/Conference**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-instructor-reunionconference-tickets-450527238097>

**McLoud, OK Aug 18-20 Defensive Shotgun Instructor**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-defensive-shotgun-instructor-development-course-tickets-291814323497>



