



## **APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER**

### **DRILL OF THE MONTH**

Throughout 2026 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/> .

### **Miami Shoot-Out**

April 11, 2026 will mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the infamous shoot-out in Miami, FL, involving a squad of FBI Special Agents and two hard-core bank robbers. To commemorate this historic event, this month's drill will seek to approximate some of the conditions encountered by the agents during the fight. The names on the drills reflect the name of the agent who had to do something very similar at some point in the fight.

Need 2 RFTS-Q5 or IDPA targets. Score the 8" circle in the chest or the head ring as 5 points. All other hits on the silhouette count as 2 points.

**McNeil Drill-** Start at 3 yards, gun in hand at Low Ready. On signal, fire 1 head shot on one target, and 1 head shot on the other target. Time limit is 2.5 seconds Do this drill 3 times.

**Mireles Drill-** Start at 7 yards, gun in hand, **all** dominant hand only. Fire 2 rds at 1 target, chest. Take 2 steps forward. Fire 2 rds at the other target, chest. Take 2 steps forward. Fire 1 rd at one target's head and 1 rd at the other target's head, all in 10 seconds.

**Hanlon Drill-** Start at 10 yards, holstered. On signal draw, drop to kneeling and fire 2 shots on one target and 2 shots on the other target. All to the chest. Time limit is 6 seconds

**Risner Drill-** Start at 25 yards, holstered. On signal, draw and fire 4 rds in 10 seconds, all to the chest on one target.

20 rounds total 100 points possible

## **April 11, 1986 A true watershed event.**

April 11th will be the 40th anniversary of the famous FBI shoot-out in Miami, Florida. This event pitted nine FBI agents against two heavily armed, skillful, and extremely dedicated hold-up men. When the gun battle was over, both Bad Guys were dead, but so were two FBI Special Agents, plus another five wounded. This was a watershed event, leading to the change-over from revolvers to semi-automatic pistols in American law enforcement; to the modern high performance ammunition we have today; and a host of training and

doctrinal changes. One of the surviving agents, who killed both the suspects, was Ed Mireles. Ed has written a first person account of the fight and I strongly recommend his book if you are serious about winning violent, bloody confrontations with criminals. Reading the words of the man who actually did the deed is far better than a report done by someone else long after the fact. Available from Amazon for about \$20.00, or on Kindle even cheaper.



## Justifiable Homicides in the US

Here is some interesting data from the FBI on justifiable homicides in the US from 2015-2024.

During that ten year period, police officers committed 1,936 justifiable homicides of criminals. In the same period, private citizens accounted for 2,776 justifiable homicides. In order for the incident to be ruled a justifiable homicide, the defender had to be in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury and was not charged with any crime as a result of the incident. So, had those citizens not been armed, that's almost 3,000 people who could have been crippled or killed by their attackers.

[https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/resources/reports/Justifiable\\_Homicide\\_2015-2024.pdf](https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/resources/reports/Justifiable_Homicide_2015-2024.pdf)

## SNUB ASSESSMENT DRILL (SAD)

The acronym SAD is appropriate for this drill, as that is how many who try it end up. This drill was originally devised by ace trainer Greg Ellifritz. I added the hit factor scoring to give us a more detailed assessment of snubby shooting skill. This course is meant to be shot with a 5 or 6 shot revolver with barrel length not to exceed 2.5 inches. If you carry such a revolver as a BUG or an NPE sidearm, you need to have a measure of your skill with it.

Target is a B-8, B-8 repair center, FBI-IP1 bullseye, or the bullseye on an LTT-1 target. Only the 8, 9, 10 and X rings count for score. Use an electronic timer and record the time for each string. The entire drill is fired at 5 yards.

Start with the gun in hand, in the non-dominant hand only. On signal fire 2 rounds using the non-dominant hand only.

Next, start with the gun in the dominant hand. Fire 3 rounds using the dominant hand only.

Then, start with the gun in both hands, at the ready. On signal fire 5 rounds, using both hands.

Score the target. Maximum possible is 100 points.

Total the time recorded for each of the three strings. Divide the total points by the total time, which will give you a number called the "index". Multiply the index by 8 for a final score. Par score is 100, so your goal is a score above 100.

Examples: 90 points in 9.8 seconds, index =  $9.18 \times 8 = 73.5$

95 points in 8.1 seconds, index =  $11.7 \times 8 = 93.8$

100 points in 8.0 seconds, index =  $12.5 \times 8 = 100$



## Enhanced Coaching Skills, New Class Offered

This is a continuing education course for certified instructors. Its focus is on coaching individual shooters. Topics include adult learning characteristics, shooter diagnostics, shooting with deliberate speed, and more. Participants will have the opportunity to shoot the Rangemaster Pistol Master test for a coin.

Enrollment is **restricted** to Rangemaster Certified Instructors and law enforcement firearms instructors who have completed a state or federal firearms instructor course.

The lead instructor for this course is Lee Weems. Lee completed a graduate program in Workforce and Adult Education in addition to numerous other degrees. He earned the Distinguished Weapons Expert rating from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) and is a multi-division Master class shooter in IDPA. He is a certified firearms instructor by Handgun Combatives, the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, the FBI, and FLETC, and he has Master Firearms Instructor certifications from Rangemaster and the Georgia Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors. A detailed summary of his qualifications and training can be found at <https://firstpersonsafety.com/>

The course will be conducted at the fabulous indoor Georgia Gun Club in Buford, GA (Atlanta area). This is a very nice, modern indoor training facility. See the link below to register.

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/695c201b0a9f0d8f4db9f74b>



Doing some work with your non-dominant hand helps improve your overall shooting skill. Don't neglect this skill set.

## **A Better Cardboard Target**

There are four die-cut cardboard targets that are useful in our discipline. They are the IDPA, the USPSA/IPSC, the PCSL and the ShootSteel. (shootsteel.com)

The main advantage of the ShootSteel target is the presence of a neck and a human shaped head. The other three have no neck and a 6” square head. I like the ShootSteel target, but I made some modifications that you can easily do at home and made a much better target.

I cut inward under the shoulders and tapered the torso down to an 11” wide waist, from 18 inches wide at the shoulders. I used my printer to print an 8” circle on brown craft paper (from Amazon) and to print a face with a more realistic ocular window. I cut off the bottom 2 inches of the target. In the pics you can clearly see how the resulting target is more the size/shape of an actual human adversary, and your shots are inside the 8” vital zone or they are not. I score the resulting target 2/1 on a 50 round course for a possible score of 100.



## Your Next Pistol?

Fairly often, a student will come to me and say, “I just bought this Acme Weapons 9mm and I really like it. I plan to carry it. What gun should I buy next?” To me, it would seem that the answer is obvious: buy a second Acme Weapons 9mm just like the one you have.

Guns are machines, subject to wear and tear and parts breakage. You really should not be shooting your carry gun much at all. What I always do is set up two absolutely identical guns. I train/practice with one and carry the other. That way, practice with my training gun transfers directly to the carry gun, without putting wear on the carry gun. Consider the parts that have broken during my use of a pistol in a class over the years:

1911- slide stop broke- gun out of action

1911- thumb safety broke-gun out of action

1911- barrel link broke- gun out of action

Glock- striker broke- gun out of action

Glock- slide lock spring broke- gun out of action

Glock- extractor hook sheared off- gun out of action

S&W revolver- firing pin broke- gun out of action

S&W revolver- frame hammer pin sheared off- gun out of action, etc, etc.

A few years ago I took a practically new Glock 19 to a class. It had around 2,000 rounds through it. On the first day of class the extractor hook sheared off.

So, two or three times each year I shoot the carry gun to use up the ammo I have been carrying. I then clean and inspect the gun, lube it up, and load it with fresh carry ammo. That is the only time that gun gets shot. Since it has very few rounds through it and it has been recently maintained and has fresh ammo, I am willing to bet my life on it.



## Books by Jim Shanahan

Jim retired from the US Army, where he served operationally and as a trainer. He then did a good bit of post-retirement government contracting work. He is now a full time private sector trainer and researcher. He is a Grand Master in USPSA competition and a Master in several IDPA divisions. He is a Rangemaster certified Professional Pistolcraft Instructor and a friend.

Jim has written a series of 5 books, intended as a set covering different aspects of armed self defense. The titles are:

Deliberate Responder, 1 in 100

On-Demand Performance

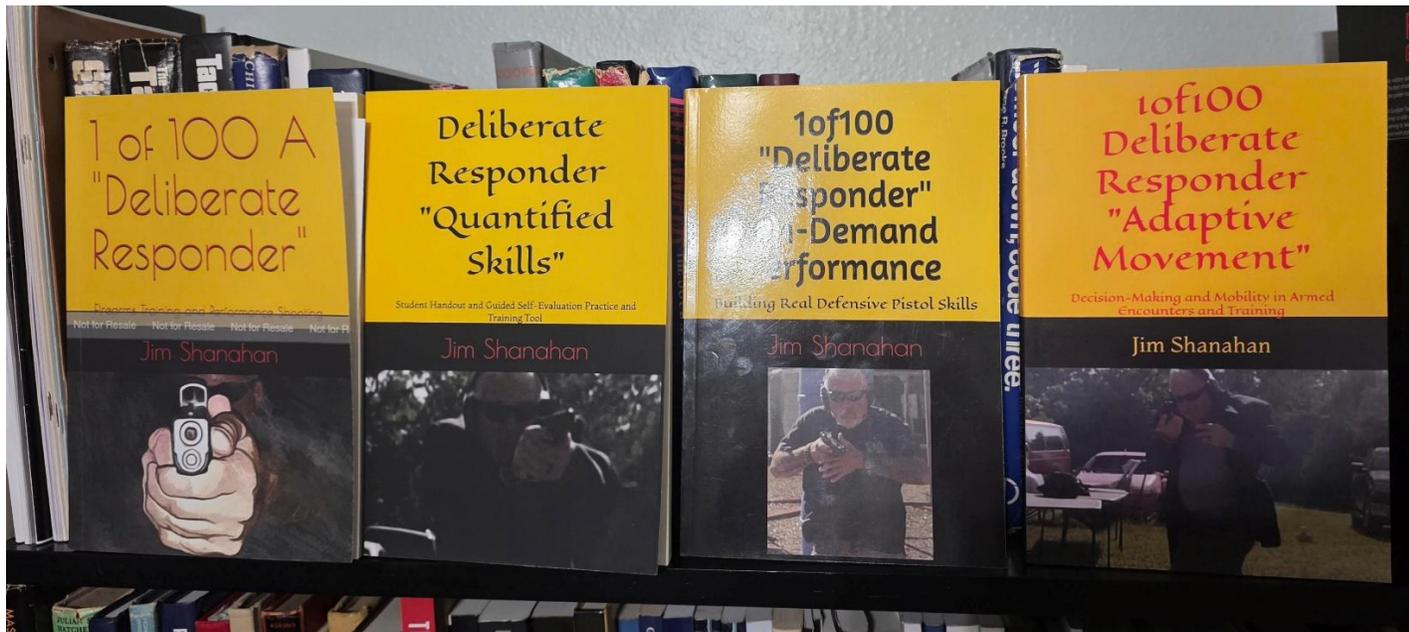
Quantified Skills

Adaptive Movement, and

Situational Awareness.

All are good, solid, easy to understand material. If you will only buy one, I suggest On-Demand Performance.

All are available from Amazon for \$19.95 each or around \$13 on Kindle. Just enter Jim Shanahan Books in the Amazon search bar. Highly recommended!



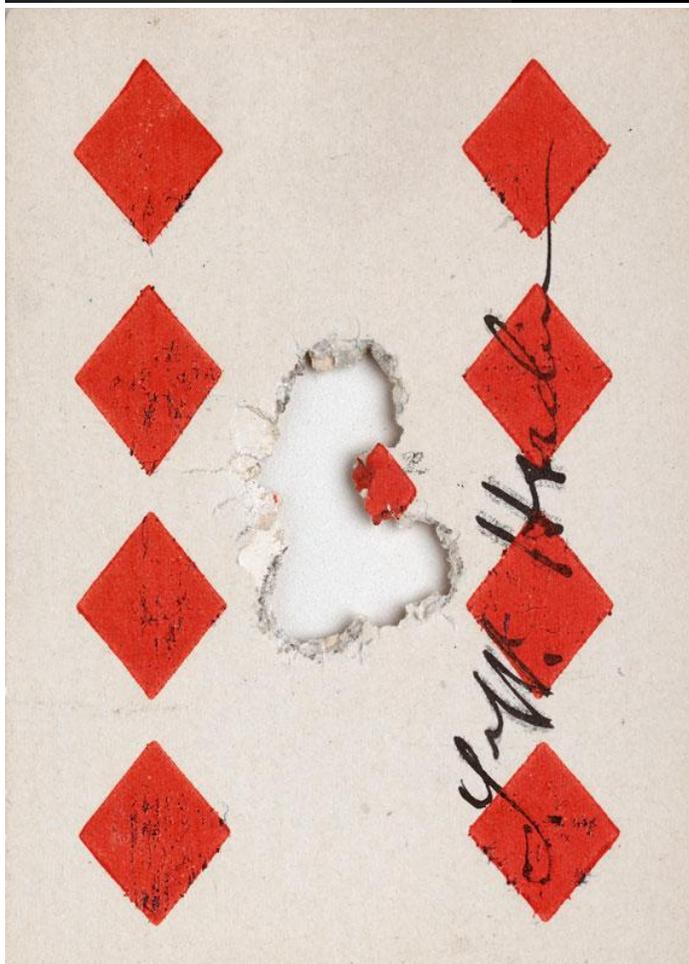
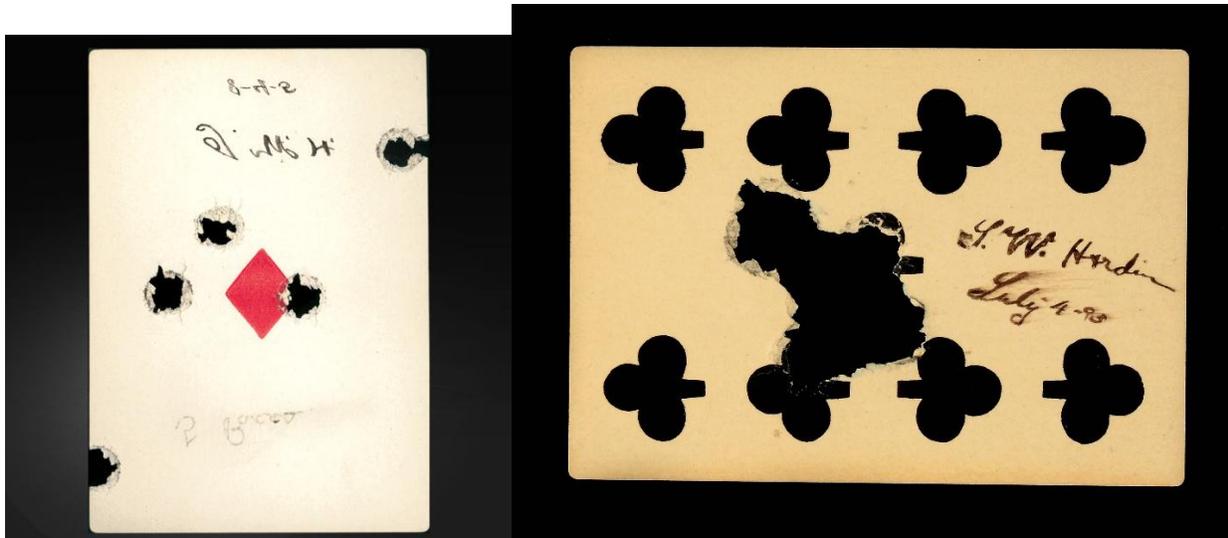
## Old West Card Drill? Origins?

Folks ask me about the origins of the card drill I use in class. If you are not familiar, I place a playing card, vertically oriented, at 5 yards. In the basic instructor course, students shoot it from The Ready. The goal is 5 rounds inside the card in 5 seconds or less. In the advanced instructor course we do the same thing, except drawing from concealment.

The idea for this drill came from a very similar practice on the Western Frontier in the late 1800's. Commercial silhouette targets did not exist then, and the very first police academies were not in existence until the turn of the century, with the first few appearing between 1900 and 1920.

On the frontier, if someone wanted to know if you were competent with a gun, someone would tack a playing card to a fencepost or tree trunk and you would let fly with 5 rounds, from 5 paces. If all hit, you were a "fair hand" with a pistol.

In his waning years, prolific gunfighter John Wesley Hardin shot these and signed them for souvenirs. He would then sell the card to an admirer for a few dollars, for drinking money. Here are pics of three such cards, authenticated as having been shot by Hardin.



Yes, the top left pic is reversed. Look closely and you see Hardin's signature and the notation, 5 paces.

## How Many DGU's Per Year?

How often do private citizens carrying concealed weapons use guns to defend themselves against a dangerous criminal? Defensive gun uses (DGU's) are hard to quantify, for a number of reasons. The article linked below estimated 60,000 to 120,000 times a year. Bear in mind that only 100,000 works out to 274 times per day. That's a lot. Carry your gun.

<https://protectwithbear.com/blogs/news/crimes-stopped-by-concealed-carry-statistics>

## Class Review, Advanced Instructor Course

I do not normally share student feedback, but this one was so well written I couldn't resist. The writer is a retired doctor who spent a lot of time training other physicians. He has had a fair bit of professional training in self defense.

Review of Tom Givens' Rangemaster Advanced Instructor Development Course

I came to take Tom Givens' Instructor Development Course on the strong personal recommendation of Massad Ayoob. I was quite favorably impressed, so I decided to take his Advanced course in the same series, partially to become a more effective instructor,

but more so to improve my personal skills. I was not disappointed.

Each of the two days was packed with material that evidenced Tom's longstanding scholarship of the science of self-defense with a firearm. He marshals historical events and current statistics to explain the practical logic behind each of his teaching points. He does everything with purpose and for well-articulated reasons. Nothing he teaches is based on trendy theories (unless they are backed by statistics or extensive experience) or just "because that's the way it's always been done."

Tom is a keen observer of the smallest details that together create reproducible accuracy and speed, including the small differences in technique that apply at different shooting distances. His coaching was always directly on point and immediately applicable, typically with prompt, demonstrable improvement in the shooter's performance.

In addition to helping shooters understand how to improve their mechanics, he is also highly effective in explaining why such skills are needed by anyone who wants to take control of their personal safety and protect family and friends. He provides innumerable pithy talking points that one can use to convince others of these practical and moral imperatives.

I have long said that anyone who seeks to carry a concealed firearm should take, at a minimum, Massad Ayoob's MAG-40 course, which offers a strong foundation in the legal and ethical foundations of self-defense as well as covering the mechanical fundamentals of gun safety and combat marksmanship. I also found Mas' higher-level courses valuable and engaging. For the serious student of armed self-defense, now I must add Tom

Givens' Instructor Development series to my list of Very Highly Recommended Courses.

To be certain, these Rangemaster Instructor Development courses are only for motivated individuals who already have a solid grasp of basic and safe pistol operation from a concealed holster. Even the "basic" Instructor Development Course should not be considered by shooters who have not already comfortably passed at least two competent courses taught at the intermediate and advanced practitioner levels.

While the course was "fun" in many ways, it is not an edutainment weekend of pretending to become an "operator" or Navy Seal. It is an information-dense learning exercise addressing the reality of personal security as we conduct normal life activities within the scope of "polite society".

To get full value, it is important to spend time practicing before and after each course. I did a fair amount of range practice before each of Tom's courses; but my two local ranges do not permit shooting from the draw. So, my draw-to-first-shot practice was limited to dry fire at home. I did some of this; but, I wish I had done more.

Another benefit of these courses that Tom emphasizes is the use of competition and performance in front of your peers to provide some degree of "stress inoculation" against the stress that arises in a real-life self-defense situation and which will significantly degrade your performance when it counts most. "Over-learning" by numerous, successful repetitions of the defensive response also helps to create the neural pathways that "automate" useful actions, freeing the mind to focus on other relevant concerns and greatly reducing the risk of panic that can occur when the conscious mind becomes overwhelmed.

Tom Givens can be a stern taskmaster when that is called for (such as regarding range safety); but, he also possesses a fine wit, using dry humor to emphasize key points, such as how “convenient” it is to have one’s pistol appear suddenly in one’s hand when confronted with an impending violent attack...something that only happens with thousands of repetitions drawing the gun.

The pistolcraft content alone is well worth the tuition, but Tom also gives a graduate level education with situationally appropriate examples of how to employ adult learning techniques to improve your effectiveness as a teacher of others. Tom well understands how to appropriately stress and reward students—and he explains how to do this for your own students.

The many exercises Tom has compiled were interesting and high-value in quantifying the shooter’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to specific skills. A catalog of his exercises and skill tests is worthy of its own review. And Tom supplies each student with a concise booklet that covers many of these.

Greater skill leads to greater confidence which leads to lower risk of panic. Rudyard Kipling wrote a famous line about the merits of keeping one’s head when all about are losing theirs and much of what Tom teaches is in direct aid of keeping your head in a lethal situation.

In summary, Tom Givens’ Advanced Instructor Development Course is well worth the time and tuition. It is a veritable goldmine of nuggets a shooter can use for self-improvement and for teaching others. I will be looking to take his Master Instructor Development Course (MIDC) as soon as my schedule matches his geographically convenient course offerings.

Unfortunately, the MIDC offered in March at Tall Palms Ranch Range, less than 70 miles from my house, is already fully booked and, besides, it would be a too-tight fit for my other upcoming commitments, leaving me too little time to absorb and practice what I just learned. I will just have to look forward to 2027.

Jeff Sourbeer (retired MD)

## **UPCOMING TRAINING EVENTS**

April 10 **One Day Shotgun** Xenia, OH

(Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eaec6f02127913e33f5ea>

April 11-12 **Adv Instructor Xenia**, OH (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb089f02127913e341fb6>

April 18-19 **Enhanced Coaching** (Lee Weems)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/695c201b0a9f0d8f4db9f74b>

April 18-19 **Advanced SGN Instructor** Apache, NC

(Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/68b1eb178ceed808a24b8df>

May 8-10 **Professional Pistolcraft Instructor**, Boondocks Training Academy, MS (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb26cf02127913e344008>

