



Tactical Talk

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*“My candle burns at both ends
It shall not last the night
But oh my foes
And ahhh my friends
It makes a lovely light.”*

Edna St Vincent Millay

Inside this issue:

<i>Tactical Conference Update</i>	2
<i>April Special Events</i>	2
<i>Order Form</i>	3
<i>Givens Article</i>	4
<i>Rethinking Firearms Training</i>	6
<i>Conference Pictures</i>	12
<i>How to Contact Us</i>	12

Workplace Violence



Violence in America is an every day issue, and no one is immune. According to the National Association of Security Professionals (NASP) the total number of reported homicides in the US is about 15,500 per year, but adjusted for unreported cases, the total is thought to be about double that figure. The same goes for other crimes, which are often grossly under-reported for a number of reasons. Reported Assaults, for instance, were 7,560,000 last year, but the actual total is estimated at 37,800,000!

Violence in the workplace mirrors the situation in the country as a whole. OSHA reports 1,000 workplace homicides per year, but that does not include a huge number committed at businesses too small to come under OSHA reporting guidelines. OSHA reports 51,000 sexual assaults in the workplace per year, but again those not coming under OSHA are thought to number as high as 500,000 incidents per year. More Americans are murdered at work than die from any other on the job cause.

Some of the factors that increase the risk of violence in the workplace include exchanging money with the public; working alone or in isolated areas; providing services and care; and working in retail sales. That pretty well sums up darn near everyone’s job!

What can you do to reduce your risks?

1. Accept that violence can occur anywhere, any time there are people present. You are not “safe” just because you’re at work.
2. Take outbursts, erratic behavior, or threats by co-workers seriously. Report such activity to security or HR and insist on follow up.
3. Wear your gear. When someone is shooting up your office, the sidearm at home in the sock drawer will not be of much use to you.

On Feb 24-26, 2012, we conducted the 14th annual Tactical Conference at Rangemaster. We had 135 attendees from literally all over the US, from as far away as Washington state, Florida, New York, and all points in between. The Polite Society match was shot by 109 participants, including 8 ladies and 15 lawmen. The match used reactive targets that look just like real people and only fall to upper center chest hits, and the entire match was shot in low light.

Overall Champion was John Richardson, High Lady went to Anita Hopkins, and John Hearne took the High Lawman award. In addition, there were classes going on all weekend, in three separate training areas, featuring 19 well known trainers. Trainers included John Farnam, Claude Werner, Paul Gomez, Dr. Martin Topper, Southnarc, Dr. Glenn Meyer, Karl Rehn, Steve Moses, Rob Pincus, Skip Gochenour, Jim Higginbotham, Chuck Haggard, Spencer Keepers, William Aprill, John Hearne, Gary Greco, Leslie Buck, Doc K (active duty SF medic) and Tom Givens. Next year's event is scheduled for 1-3 March 2013, at Rangemaster, in Memphis. Don't miss this premiere training event. (see *Event Pictures*—pg 12)

April Special Events

Combined Skills Course

Weatherford, Texas: April 13-15

Three-Day Firearms Instructor Development & Certification Course

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania:
April 20-22

Armed Movement in Structures (AMIS)

Southnarc, Memphis: April 28-29





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Threat Assessment for the Armed Citizen

by Tom Givens

I often hear the term “threat assessment” thrown around by people in discussions about firearms or training. Unfortunately, this is often used as nothing more than an excuse to not carry adequate equipment or to train less. For many people, there are three fallacies involved in any discussion of threat assessment, so let’s examine those issues.

First, you need to recognize that in the field of personal security, your “perceived” threat level and your “actual” threat level may not be the same. For instance, let’s say you live in the upscale part of a suburb with a historically low crime rate. You stay home at night, you don’t do drugs, and you work in a nice office in a secure building. Your “perceived” threat level is very low. This may well lead you to conclude there is no need to actually carry a gun daily or to devote a couple of weekends to defensive training.

However, on the way to work tomorrow morning, while parking your car, two career criminals decide that they need your car to get out of the area, and they are willing to kill you to get it. Your actual threat level on that day is quite high, but you are working on the assumption made in your threat assessment. Or, another scenario—you are in your secure office building when a co-worker is fired. He believes, correctly or incorrectly, that you are responsible for the loss of his job, his pension, his health care and so forth. He decides to kill you on his way out of the building. As I write this, less than 24 hours ago, a federal ICE agent got into a dispute with his supervisor and shot the supervisor several times. The agent was then killed by a third ICE agent in the office. This occurred in a “secure” federal office building. Again, the perceived threat and the actual threat didn’t match.

The problem is that a life threatening event which calls for immediate gunfire to save your life or the life of a loved one may be a low probability event, but the negative impact of losing is so high that we cannot afford to be wrong. The odds of your needing your handgun to stay alive might be one in four, or one in four hundred, or one in four thousand, but if you are the one who needs it today, you’ll need it very badly! I have almost sixty private citizen students who have had to use a handgun to save their own life or the life of a loved one. All of them won their fights, and only three were injured. I do, however, know of two students of mine who were killed in street robberies. Both were executed for the contents of their pockets in separate incidents. **Neither was armed at**

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

the time of their death. Their threat assessments told them that they had no need to be armed on those days, they were wrong, and now they are dead.

A related misconception is that “since I have a low probability of needing a gun today, I’ll just carry this little gun”. I have investigated or studied literally thousands of shootings over the last four decades, including almost sixty cases involving my own students. I can assure you, in a life threatening crisis you will be zero per cent involved, or you will be one hundred per cent involved. You will never be forty per cent involved in a gunfight! Either your life is in grave danger or it is not. If it is, you will be very glad that you bothered to wear a mid-size to full-size pistol and at least one reload for it. If you carry that gear religiously, every day for thirty years and you never have to use it, that’s great. If, on the other hand, you fail to carry it just one day and you or a loved one are killed or crippled as a result, that’s bad.

The final misconception is that we can eliminate risk. That is simply not possible. “Life is a sexually transmitted disease that is invariably fatal.” (My favorite quote from Jeff Cooper.) What we can do is manage our risks. From a personal safety standpoint, we can do this fairly simply by following these guidelines:

Follow Farnam’s Dictum: Don’t go to stupid places, hang out with stupid people, or do stupid things.

Have a security professional look over your home and make the changes he suggests involving better deadbolt locks, window locks, lighting, and alarm system.

Learn to pay more attention to your surroundings when in public. Look for anything that is out of place. Watch people you don’t know whenever they are nearby. Ask yourself two questions, “Who is around me?” and “What are they doing?”

Get some reality based self defense shooting training. If you want to do a “man camp” five day rifle course, that’s fine. They are great fun. Mark that on your vacation budget, though, and set aside the time for training with a daily carry sidearm.

Accept the fact that to have control over your life and to properly manage your risks, you need to actually carry your defensive gear, every day. The gun in the safe at home simply won’t help you on the grocery store parking lot .

Rethinking Firearms Training and Qualification

By Lt. Marlan J. Ingram, Memphis LEU



Memphis Firearms Instructor Sgt. Natachia Johnson, demonstrating Position SUL, which allows the officer to perform a 360 degree scan, without muzzling other officers or innocent bystanders. A Simunitions pistol is being used for illustration purposes. All photos in this article courtesy of Officer Don Reber, Memphis LEU.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the term 'qualified' means "fitted (as by training or experience) for a given purpose: COMPETENT." Mind you, that definition listed in quotations comes directly from the dictionary. If we interpret that literally, then it means that the officer who has passed a firearms qualification is both trained and competent to perform the required law enforcement purpose, especially as regards the use of firearms. I would expect that if we put the question to law enforcement officers, administrators, and even the general public, many would agree that the officer, by virtue of the training that the officer has received, does in fact meet that definition of the term qualified.

A couple of months ago I penned an article for the STF website entitled 'Survival in the Line of Duty' indicating that the year 2011 so far has been one of the deadliest on record for law enforcement officers in this country. In other words, officers who are both trained and competent (qualified), are being killed in record numbers, in most cases by individuals who have never received any training and have never passed a firearms qualification! How can this be?

I believe that there are two key points which can help answer that question. For one, the criminal is playing by a different set of rules, or rather, is employing that firearm with a different 'mindset' than the law enforcement officer. Two, the criminal is operating at a higher 'level' than the law enforcement officer. We will come back to the mindset part of the equation shortly, but to understand how a supposedly 'untrained' criminal can operate at a higher level than a trained law enforcement officer, I've come up with what I call the Five Levels of Armed Individuals.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Five Levels of Armed Individuals

Level One = Gun Owner: This is an individual who goes out and purchases a firearm for home defense, and after loading it (or leaving it unloaded), leaves the firearm in a drawer by the side of the bed, but never trains or practices with it.

Level Two = Casual Shooter: This individual will occasionally go to a range for casual, informal plinking, or target shooting. While this individual may not have any formal training, at least using the firearm on a fairly regular basis would theoretically give this individual an advantage over someone at level one.

Level Three = Armed Professional: Generally, this is a legally armed professional, such as a law enforcement officer. This officer has received a certain level of formal training, to include shooting a minimum qualifying score on a set course of fire. The officer will then undergo once or twice yearly requalification to insure that the officer is still performing at the minimum level. Unfortunately, the minimum score that officers are required to meet is routinely set low enough that those who are struggling at the bottom end of the performance scale can still pass.

Level Four = Competitive Shooter: This is an individual who seeks to maximize their personal skill, and compete against other individuals in timed, stressful, target competition. In short, it is a sport, and this individual is shooting with the intent of obtaining the highest score possible.

Level Five = Gunfighter: This is an individual who, from the moment they pick up the firearm, understands that the intent is to use it on a 'two way shooting range' - in other words, *against other human beings*. Whereas the average officer will qualify with the officer's weapon once or twice a year, the armed criminal offender (according to an FBI study) will practice with their weapon approximately twenty three (23) times a year.

Of the five levels listed, the two that we are most concerned with are Level Three (Armed Professional, specifically law enforcement), and Level Five (Gunfighter, specifically an armed criminal). Let's expound on these two levels further.

Napoleonic Military Tactics (a name given to, 17th, 18th, and 19th century military tactics) dictated that soldiers would stand in a designated spot, load upon command, and discharge the firearm in the proper manner, in a rigid, step by step format. If we look at the history of civilian individual combat with firearms, then such usage was usually governed during this same period by the Code Duello, which, just like the Napoleonic Military Tactics, dictated the distances, where to stand, loading and firing, and in general, the 'rules' that were to be followed by the participants – even in a life and death fight. Not following such rules could have very severe consequences (firing squads, etc.).

If we think that such an antiquated way of operating our firearms is only a historical oddity, then I would bring to your attention the fact that most modern target shooting, competition, police firearms training, and firearms qualifications follow the same basic format. In other words, an individual can go through a modern 21st century training academy to become an officer, but that individual will still be trained to standards that are little changed from the Napoleonic era. This is pretty much Level Three firearms training.

On the other hand, an armed criminal offender is someone who has already made a conscious decision to not obey the rules. The armed criminal offender is not concerned with standing still, is not concerned with firing the prescribed number of rounds in the proper manner upon command, and is

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

willing to cheat, and even kill, in order to win the encounter. This is Level Five firearms usage.

As 2011 statistics have shown so far, officers at Level Three are dying in record numbers when they find themselves in gunfights with criminals who are at Level Five. However, there is another element to the equation. Basically, if you find yourself in a gunfight, you are going to be in one of two positions: You will either be in a dominant position, or you will be in a non-dominant position.

In a dominant position, the officer has the advantage, and has the armed criminal offender (subject) at gunpoint, and reacts (using deadly force or not) based upon the actions of the subject. We call this Judgmental Shooting, and I believe this is where, for the most part, we excel.

The other part of the equation, however, is where the officer is in a non-dominant position. In other words, the criminal has the advantage, and is in the role of the predator, which means that the officer is the prey. This is a key area where I believe that police firearms training can be improved.

Before giving specifics of how I believe that police firearms training can be improved, I want to touch on one more aspect, and that is the 'mindset' to which firearms are employed in a deadly force confrontation. I'm a big believer in conflict avoidance and de-escalation, and I believe that if we as law enforcement officers can keep a situation from degenerating into a gunfight, then it is better for all involved. However, when that is not possible, when the situation crosses the line, and you find yourself in a gunfight, then you need to mentally 'switch gears', and determine that at the end of it, you will be the one standing. If you are at a disadvantage, then you need to fight your way out of it and turn the tables on your opponent. If you are shot, you need to keep fighting and not give up or surrender, no matter what. Determine NOW that if a predator decides to make you the prey, at the end of the encounter, you will be the victor! That is what I call mindset.

Now, I believe that once you recognize that there is a problem, you should also seek solutions to correct that problem. Using the information that has been presented here, along with other research on gunfight statistics, I've come up with ten (10) points which, if utilized to alter current firearms training and qualification programs, can potentially begin to change the outcome of future deadly force encounters involving law enforcement officers.

New Training and Qualification Guidelines – A Ten Point Approach

Point One – Distance:

For training and qualification 90+ % of the range work should be from approximately 4 or 5 feet, out to a distance of 21 feet. This is based on the following:

Each year, the FBI compiles gunfight statistics, including the distances at which gunfights typically occur. Typically, 92% of gunfights occur at 4 to 10 feet, with the remainder of those 8% of gunfights stretching out to 15, and sometimes 21 feet, although a few were listed as 'contact' length gunfights, meaning the participants were touching each other at the time of the shooting.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Point Two – Movement:



Sgt. Johnson demonstrates dynamic movement. The first photo illustrates her start position. The second photo illustrates her moving dynamically off the line of attack. The third photo shows her in position to deliver a 'burst' of fire into the attacker.

Upon the draw, the officer should perform *dynamic* lateral movement off the line of attack. There is no advantage to standing still and allowing your opponent to get accurate shots at you. We call this 'Getting off the X'.

Point Three – Shoot until the threat is neutralized:

Forget about shooting double taps, or controlled pairs. FBI statistics show that in gunfights, an average of 3 to 5 rounds are fired per participant. The problem is, at the start of the gunfight, you do not know how many rounds it will take to resolve the matter. This does NOT mean pointing the gun in the general direction of your adversary and shooting until the gun is empty (also known as spray and pray). To correctly train on this point, follow this simple two step guideline:

Instead of firing a 'pattern', vary the shot strings. In other words, if you fired 2 rounds on the first string of fire, then fire 5 on the next string, then 3 on the following string, followed by 4 on the next, etc. Do this until you have broken the habit of always firing the same number of shots each time you fire.

Once you have broken the pattern of firing the same number of rounds each time, set up a knock down target, such as a pepper popper, and shoot until the target goes down. The number of rounds needed to take down the pepper popper will vary depending on your shot placement, and the tension set on the pepper popper.

Point Four – Scan (360 degrees) after firing:

FBI statistics show that in 40% of the gunfights law enforcement officers were involved in, there were multiple subjects. Always look for more predators. In addition, scanning helps to break the tunnel vision which is a natural response to a stressful situation such as a gunfight.

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

Point Five – Vary your ‘start’ position:

From which direction will an attack come? If you can't guarantee that an attack will always come from the front, then vary the start position prior to firing: You can start facing left (target on the right), facing right (target on the left), facing rear (target behind you), sitting down, and even while you are on the ground.

Point Six – Hot Range/Self Sufficiency Concept:

When it's time to reload, or when you have a malfunction, then do it – get out of the habit of ‘waiting’ for a range officer to tell you to put more ammunition in your weapon when it is empty, and if it malfunctions, instead of raising your hand and seeking help, learn to do it yourself – FAST! In addition, whenever you reload or fix a malfunction – MOVE! Move to cover if it is available, but if it's not, then keep moving. Also, learn to shoot, reload and fix malfunctions with one hand, with either hand.



Sgt. Johnson illustrates a one handed Phase 1 Malfunction Drill. In the first photo, she taps the butt of the pistol on her leg to insure that the magazine is seated. In the second photo, she racks the slide, utilizing the rear sight, on her belt buckle. In the third photo, she is once again ready to re-engage the threat.

(Continued from page 10)

Point Seven – Low Light Gunfighting:

According to the FBI statistics, most attacks on officers happen between 10:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight. You can't control the time the criminals will attack you, but you can prepare for operating in a low light environment by training for it in advance. This includes low light (ambient light), and flash-light techniques.

Point Eight – Contact Length Gunfighting – also known as Extreme Close Quarters:

For safety purposes, this training can be conducted utilizing Air Soft guns, and a defensive tactics training dummy. Practice, while at 'contact' length with the dummy, *dynamically* and *aggressively* striking (with your non gun hand) the eyes, throat, or groin of the dummy, and then drawing and shooting a burst of fire into the dummy (Point Three), and then dynamically moving off the line of attack (Point Two). Because of the close proximity of the dummy and Air Soft pellets bouncing off of it, wear safety goggles for this training.

Point Nine – Training Frequency:

Here in the Memphis branch, every officer trains on the firing range every month and there are several of us who get additional practice outside of work. I know that some will look at that frequency, and cite budget and manpower issues as a detriment to such an approach. In such a case, you can substitute a month of live fire with Air Soft training, or Simunitions training. Even 'dry' work can be beneficial. Last year, our range was down several months for renovation. During the time that it was down, we trained each officer each month, utilizing Air Soft or empty weapons. We utilized dummy rounds with the Remington 870 shotgun, having the officers not only load and fire it (with dummy rounds), but loading it, firing it, and clearing malfunctions ONE HANDED. When the range was back up for live fire, the officers had not only maintained their proficiency, but most of them improved!

Point Ten – Realistic Training via Simunitions:

Once or twice a year (with the exception of Contact Length Gunfighting – for safety reasons) I would conduct realistic training with Simunitions, utilizing the points outlined above. This will give you an opportunity to put that training to use against live, breathing, unpredictable human beings. This is as close as you can get to replicating the conditions of a real gunfight.

The points that I've outlined in this article, are not necessarily new points. In fact, there are several shooting schools and courses that teach these very concepts. Combat Focus Shooting (of which I am an instructor), Suarez International, and Israeli Combative are some of the ones that immediately come to mind. I know that some in the law enforcement community, including our own Federal Reserve System, have instituted such training. However, as I've had an opportunity to travel and train in a lot of different locations with a variety of law enforcement units outside of the FRB system, I will tell you that MOST agencies have not instituted such training.

As a law enforcement trainer, if I see this as an issue, then I have a responsibility to conduct such training, and to encourage others to do so. Not only can this help turn the tide on the deadly statistics that have plagued the law enforcement community recently, but it can also insure that the officers finally meet the definition of the word 'qualified'

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