



eJournal

of the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, LLC

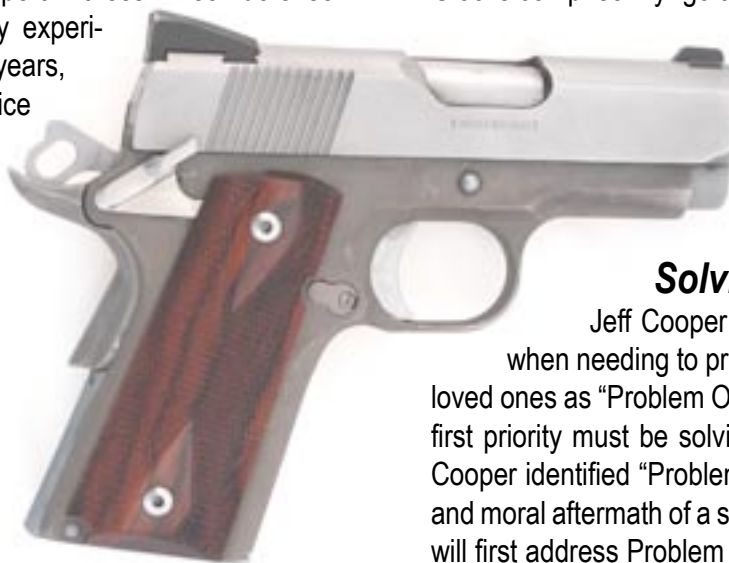
The Eighth Issue in our Inaugural Year — September, 2008

Selecting the right self-defense equipment

By Marty Hayes, J.D.

Much is written in gun magazines and on Internet forums about the kind of weapons we should employ in our self-defense plan. In this article, I will give my perspective as both a trainer and an expert witness in self-defense cases, while drawing on my experiences as a cop for about 30 years, since I still carry a special police commission.

Before talking makes and models though, I want to offer some perspective. Following a self-defense shooting, your gun will be confiscated. If the shooting occurs in the home, police are likely to confiscate all your firearms (more on this in a future article). But, for the purposes of this article, let's assume that the police take only the gun you used into evidence. That gun will remain in the police evidence locker until it is either released by order of the judge after trial, or given back to you months, if not years, later after police and prosecutors determine that they will not press charges. This brings me to the first point: I wouldn't use a prized pistol for self defense. I tend to carry guns about which I would not suffer any financial or emotional distress if they were forfeited. That means I carry stock guns, with perhaps a better set of sights. For example, on a recent motorcycle trip, I took along a Colt Defender and a Smith and Wesson Model 642. Total



Colt Defender

value of both guns combined adds up to under a thousand dollars, so if they sit in some police locker in Big Timber, Montana for five years, it's not the end of the world.

\$800 dollar 1911s, \$450 dollar revolvers and \$550 Glocks comprise my "go to" guns at home. Whether or not the police might have occasion to take my whole collection is a discussion best left to another time, since it entails a fairly lengthy legal analysis of 4th amendment issues.

Solving Problem One

Jeff Cooper described what a person faces when needing to protect their life or the lives of their loved ones as "Problem One." He was absolutely right: the first priority must be solving the life-threatening problem. Cooper identified "Problem Two" as dealing with the legal and moral aftermath of a self-defense shooting. This article will first address Problem One, then look at how choosing a self-defense firearm influences Problem Two.

As you know, in addition to leading the Network, I run a shooting school and have, for the past 20 years, advised students about gun selection. The first advice I give is to select a gun chambered in a serious self-defense caliber. That means caliber .38 Special or larger, with .380s relegated to the role of an "expert's gun." An expert armed with a .380 has a much better chance of survival because advanced training and skill should offset the ineffectiveness of the cartridge. Still, most experts don't carry .380s except as a back up, pocket gun.

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On the flip side, we don't want to choose a gun from which excessive recoil makes shooting difficult. New shooters especially benefit from choosing an easy-to-shoot gun as their first pistol. Train and practice with it, and then move up to a large caliber. For example, begin with a Glock 19 and use that as your first training and self-defense handgun. Later, if you want a little more powerful cartridge, get a Glock 23. The skills you learned with the Glock 19 will transfer completely to the larger caliber gun. The converse is also true. At our school, we see many students train with the full-sized Glocks, like a Glock 17, and then conceal a Glock 19 or 26 as their primary carry pistol. For my nickel, it makes sense to train with the gun that allows you the greatest likelihood of success in the training course, and then, once you've mastered the necessary techniques, transfer those skills over to the more difficult gun to shoot.

Additionally, I have for the last 20 years, proffered that learning how to shoot with a .22 caliber revolver or semi-auto pistol does no harm and does a lot of good. Once you have mastered the basics of grip, stance, sight picture and trigger squeeze, transfer these skills to a larger caliber handgun. In fact, if granted unlimited money and time, I would start all new shooters with at least eight hours on .22 caliber pistols. If all our students first arrived at the academy with a .22, they would pick up the skills in half the time and spend half the money both on training and ammo. Sheesh, don't tell them! I make considerable sums each year curing flinches caused by shooting large caliber guns too early in my students' shooting careers!

Handguns for Self Defense

Next, I would like to identify a few of my favorite self-defense handguns, although this list is certainly not all-inclusive. The previously mentioned Glock 19 is number one on my list because it is in a serious self-defense caliber, is small enough to be carried in a reasonable holster by most people, and is absolutely reliable. The controls are easy to use, parts are readily accessible in the rare event

of a breakage, and the recoil is very manageable. In fact, I see this gun in use by many self-defense instructors, who know enough to choose what works. Many times people

call the academy and ask for a recommendation on a gun, and before the question is finished, I answer, "Glock 19." We then start discussing particulars.

My second favorite self-defense gun is the Smith and Wesson Model 19, 2.5 inch .357 revolver. In fact, if I could only have one handgun, that would be it. You might ask,

"Why on earth choose a revolver?" Well, being an old revolver shooter myself, I do not have any pre-disposed biases. Once a person learns how to manage the double action trigger, it is as easy to shoot as any other gun, and it is chambered for the king of man-stoppers, the .357 Magnum cartridge.

In a survival situation, if I had to hunt for food, I could reasonably hunt large game out to 100 yards with a Model 19, because for some reason, that particular revolver is simply a tack driver. It is very easy to carry in a good pancake-style belt holster, and with a set of wooden Hogue Monogrips, I find it extremely easy to shoot. One can train with light-kicking .38 loads, and then switch to .38 +P or full-power .357 Magnum loads for carry.


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Glock Model 23 (top), Glock Model 19 (middle) and Glock model 26 (bottom).



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One caveat though, if you choose this scheme, make sure you train enough with the hot loads to know you can reasonably control the recoil, and by all means, shoot them in the dark! Depending on the load, the muzzle flash of the short 2.5-inch barrel can be pretty annoying. The revolver also comes in stainless steel as the Model 66, but it has an orange insert for a front sight, and I simply prefer black sights of the S&W Model 19.

My third recommendation for a self-defense handgun, the Springfield XD 9mm pistol, is a gun I have never actually owned and rarely fired. Even though I don't have a lot of experience with XDs, many of the top experts in the country swear by them, and if it is good enough for Clint Smith, Chuck Taylor and Massad Ayoob, it is good enough for me. I have shot XDs enough to know they shoot very much like the Glock 19, and are perhaps a little more ergonomically pleasing in the hand. Furthermore, the Springfield XD is extremely affordable, a valuable attribute to many.



S&W J-Frames: Models 60, 442, 640 and 36-6.

Fourth place on my list of recommended handguns goes not to one gun, but instead, to a class of guns. Those are the Smith and Wesson J-frame series of handguns, illustrated in the photo above. Options range from 2- to 3-inch barrels, fixed or adjustable sights, stainless or blued steel, hammerless double action only or traditional double action with hammer. The 3" barreled, adjustable sight models are a dream to shoot. However, put a Crimson

Letters to the Editor

We want to hear from you! Please send your letters with questions and comments to editor@armedcitizensnetwork.com.

Be sure to include your full name, town and state of residence. Though it will not be published, we also require an E-mail address that won't end up in your Spam folder, or a daytime telephone number for verification of your letter prior to publication.

Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.

Trace Lasergrip on a 2-inch Model 642, stash it in a Kramer pocket holster, and you can carry it in a pocket all day long and not even know it is there. There is no excuse for not carrying a serious self-defense handgun, when these babies sell for under \$500.

Finally, I believe any list of recommended guns for self defense would be incomplete without listing what Ken Hackathorn calls the world's finest close quarters combat handgun, the John Browning-designed 1911. Four years ago, I switched my daily carry and training handgun from the Glock to the 1911 and since then, I have become an ardent fan of this pistol.

I have three 1911 pistols that I routinely swap around for training and carry, a series 70 Springfield Armory, a Smith and Wesson and a Para-Ordinance. They all are set up with short triggers and extended magazine wells, and I can switch between them without a hitch. Also in the gun safe, is the aforementioned Colt Defender, a great lightweight carry gun. I don't train with it much because I am not sure the alloy frame was designed for thousands of rounds of use and abuse. Stored alongside the Defender is my "Sunday Gun," a Detonics Combat Master, designed by legendary designer and friend, Sid Woodcock. The Detonics doesn't get carried much, because I really would not want to lose it to the bowels of a police evidence locker, but on those special occasions when style demands, I will sport it.

As easy as the 1911s are to shoot well, they exemplify the term "two-edged sword." The single action operation is singularly unforgiving if safety rule #3 is violated (keep

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your finger off the trigger until the sights are on target and you are ready to fire). To compensate, the 1911 employs a manual safety that is routinely engaged when carrying. The shooter must sweep off the safety with the thumb before firing. Thus, the 1911 style of pistol demands a higher level of competence and training before it should be used as a self-defense pistol.

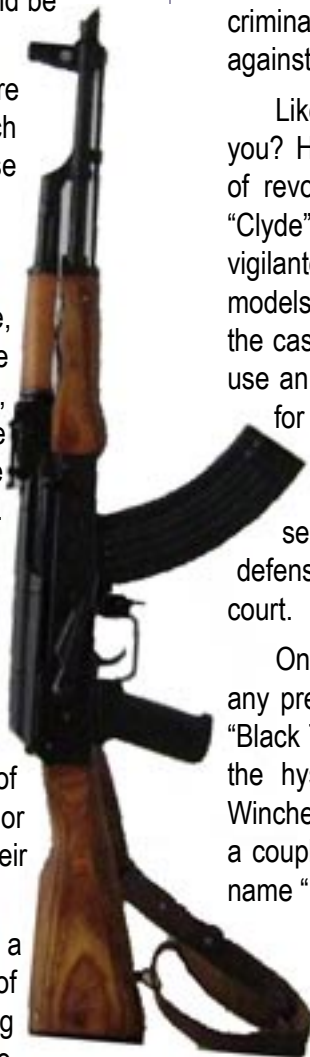
A final thought: Many fine handguns are omitted from this assessment, handguns which deserve a place here but didn't make it because this merely reflects my own preferences.

Problem Two

If ever we use a gun for self-defense, our choice of firearm will be included in the examination of our actions. In most situations, it's a non-issue, because most incidents are ultimately determined to be acts of reasonable self-defense, and the actor is not prosecuted. And, while I can't quote statistics, I would hazard to guess that most people are not sued after using guns in self defense, although I also believe the civil lawsuit for wrongful death or unlawful force is much more common than the wrongful prosecution. However, your choice of firearm used may be exploited when the facts of the incident are not clear, and the prosecutor or plaintiff's attorney tries to pile up evidence for their side. Let me explain.

I recently received an E-mail promoting a training course with the Kalashnikov style of rifle, the AK-47. This training course was being marketed to the civilian sector, with self-defense in mind. In a perfect world, it shouldn't matter what gun a person uses for self-defense, as long as the act itself was justifiable and the gun was legally owned.

Sadly, the world is not perfect. On January 17, 1989, Patrick Purdy used a Chinese clone of the AK-47 to shoot up a schoolyard full of children in Stockton, California, killing five children and injuring another 30. I believe this incident alone generated more anti-gun legislation, both in California and nationwide, than any other single incident in our history, and forever stained the AK-47 as a rifle used by evil people. Now, rational, logical thinking Americans can separate the type of rifle from the act, but it is likely if



Purdy had used an AR-15 rifle, a like stigma would have attached to it.

But, here is the rub, folks. Are we always judged by rational, logical citizens? Do you think perhaps a jury member might associate the AK-47 rifle with evil murderers? Do you think if you used an AK-47 for self-defense, the prosecutor or plaintiff's attorney might portray you as criminal? Could your choice of rifle tip the scales of justice against you?

Likewise, could your choice of handgun work against you? Handguns with names like "The Judge," or a pair of revolvers engraved with the monikers "Bonnie" and "Clyde" conjure up images of famous killers and backstreet vigilante justice. For my money, I'd prefer to use the same models of guns the local police use on a daily basis (or in the case of revolvers, used to use). Instead of an AK-47, use an AR-15. Moreover, if you decide to use a shotgun for home defense, you can argue that the police abandoned the shotgun in favor of a weapon that had "greater firepower" and increased lethality. I see the 12- or 20-gauge shotgun as a GREAT home defense weapon from the viewpoint of justifying its use in court.

One last thought: If you don't think the name game has any precedent, please consider the fate of Winchester's "Black Talon" ammunition. Primarily because of its name, the hysteria caused by the left-wing radicals caused Winchester to pull the ammunition out of production after a couple of years, replacing it with the generic sounding name "Ranger."

Gun Modifications

While we are on the subject of gun selection, let's address how modifications play to a jury.

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The first big issue concerns reducing trigger pull weight. The industry standard for a self-defense weapon's trigger pull is four to five pounds or greater. Lining up a dozen self-defense experts to make that point in court would be no problem: we could trot out the FBI's choice of weapon for their Hostage Rescue Team or cite agency after agency issuing the Glock handgun with the standard trigger pull weight of five pounds.

If the shooter uses a handgun with a trigger pull weight of under five pounds, they have opened the door slightly to a charge of negligence or recklessness, because they



Heinie Straight 8 Night Sights

ignored the industry standard. Depending on the facts of the case, it might not be hard to defeat that argument, if the ultimate issue didn't center on an accidental or negligent discharge of the weapon and solid logic backed using the lesser trigger pull. But,

why open the door for this argument at all? If you can't competently manage a five-pound trigger on your self-defense weapon, pursue training with a good instructor. ([See network affiliated instructor list](#)).

Replacement sights comprise one entirely court defensible gun modification as do night sights or a laser-sighting device. Sight modifications, routinely made on police service weapons, help the shooter hit the target more accurately, especially in the dark. There is no downside. In addition, I see no liability in changing grips to improve the pistol's fit in your hand (more on this in the next issue of this **eJournal**), nor to putting an extended magazine well on your 1911. For my money, these gun modifications are about the limit. Spend your money on practice ammo or training, and skip further modifications.

Ammunition: The 500-pound Gorilla

One incentive compelling me to start the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, LLC was the plethora of inane, "contrary to good judgment" and outright dangerous advice given over the Internet. If just one topic illustrates this issue, it is discussion of reloaded ammunition for self defense. In our third video, two attorneys broach this issue, but today I want to take this discussion a step further. First, there is nothing legally wrong or improper about using hand-loaded ammunition for self defense. Absent legal

concerns, I would be perfectly comfortable going into battle armed with my reloads. I would have personally checked to see that there was a proper powder charge in each case before seating the bullet, because I have had squib loads (no powder) from reputable ammunition manufacturers. Still, the negatives outweigh this positive.

First, by using hand-loaded ammunition, you allow the opposition to portray you as some crazed, Rambo type whose hobby consists of making killer ammunition. Can you guarantee that a jury would not be prejudiced by that argument? Although we know the argument is specious, it could certainly arise. More importantly, however, hand-loaded ammunition cannot be reliably replicated. Commercial ammunition manufacturers like Federal and Winchester keep independent records of the recipe used to make their products. Even if you keep exact records, you cannot provide independent data, so any ammunition used to conduct ballistic tests inevitably falls under suspicion.

Exemplar ammunition for testing could be critical in two main areas. First, an independent expert needs to test the dispersion of the unburned gun powder and other residue that creates the stippling seen on individuals shot at close range. Suppose you claim the person you shot was right on top of you when you pulled the trigger, but analysis of the gunshot shows little or no stippling. Suspicion that you lied, because normally stippling would be present. Let's say you used extremely efficiently burning powder, and your particular load produced little unburned gunpowder. Your report is indeed accurate, but nearly impossible to prove. If, instead, you had used commercial ammunition, tests conducted using cartridges from the same lot of ammo corroborate your claim. If, however, no exemplar ammunition is available, no test can be made, and the other side may convince the jury that you lied about the assailant's position when you pulled the trigger.

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The amount of gunshot residue expelled while firing and its transference to skin is the other area in which hand-loaded ammunition can cause a big problem in court. Gunshot residue tests are used to determine if someone fired a gun. If you and your opponent were struggling for your gun when you discharged it into his stomach, wouldn't it be nice to be able to prove that he had his hand on your gun when the gun discharged? Again, samples from a factory's production lot of ammunition is the only conclusive way to show how much debris should remain after firing.

Additionally, forensic science can determine if a particular gun fired a particular cartridge by examining the microscopic tool marks transferred from the gun's recoil shield to the case head. If hand-loaded cases have been fired before, this evidence is moot. Sometimes, even the bullet's external ballistics come into question, and then bullet trajectory is replicated by live-fire testing.

With these points in mind, I must postulate that any advantage to using hand-loaded ammunition is considerably outweighed by the potential downfalls. So, if we don't carry our favorite hand loads, what do we use?

What Brand to Choose

First, you might find out what your local police agency uses, and simply go with that load. However, at times police agencies select the load based on either price or penetration through barriers, so the answer is not that simple. If you are an apartment dweller, the last thing you want is a load that is noted for its deep penetration.

Pitched arguments have raged over the years about ammunition stopping power. If you select your ammunition based on a perceived ability to stop someone with one shot, is that a reasonable basis for your choice? Wouldn't it sound better to testify that you chose the particular ammunition based on its reliability, manufacturer's strength and that it met specific criteria?

What is that criteria? You will need to make your own decision, but for me, what follows guides my personal decisions. First, the ammunition must be commercially available. For example, while the Super Vel line of ammunition was ahead of its time, and you may still have a healthy supply of it in your basement, it should not be car-



Sorting and checking reloads.

ried because Super Vel went out of business a long time ago. Likewise, Triton Ammunition had an excellent product but is no longer manufactured. Do some study and find ammunition from a successful and well-established manufacturer that will serve your needs.

The next criterion is easy: I carry only good quality jacketed hollow point bullets that exceeds 1100 feet per second (fps). I stipulate 1100 fps based on my observation of ballistic tests in gelatin, in which that level of velocity seems to do a fine job expanding, even after going through several layers of clothing.

Finally, the ammunition must cycle reliably in your handgun. To test reliability, fire at least a couple of 50-round boxes through the gun with out malfunction. If you get malfunctions, make sure your gun is operating correctly, then retest. With ammo prices sky rocketing, some will argue that running a hundred rounds through your gun just to see if it works reliably all the time is way too expensive. If that is your sentiment, I suggest a revolver for your self-defense handgun. Reliability and malfunction issues differ for revolvers, though some testing is necessary to be sure the ammunition discharges reliably in the revolver.

Well, that is surely enough for now. One of the great advantages to publishing our **eJournal** on line is the freedom to expand on a topic in greater depth than the print media accommodates. In closing, I ask you to understand that these views are mine alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of our advisory board members who are professionals in their own right, and may have different experiences upon which to draw their own opinions. I welcome alternative opinions or rebuttals.

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President's Message

The political season has descended upon this great nation of ours like the stink of a pulp mill during a temperature inversion. Whew! Now, don't get me wrong, I actually like politics. In fact, I like it so much, that twice I have run for county office where I live and I am currently a Precinct Committee Officer for the Republican Party in my county. I am also the local party secretary, a title I love because it conjures images of Leonid Brezhnev and the former Soviet Union. Politics have fascinated me for a long time. When I was as young as five years old, I questioned my father why he voted for Richard Nixon instead of John Kennedy, although I didn't know much about party politics at the time.

As I write this, the Republican National Party just nominated Sarah Palin as its Vice Presidential nominee. Wow, what a pick! It appears that she has galvanized the conservative base and has brought John McCain, the Presidential nominee back into close to front-runner status. This is an example of what **one person** can do. A relatively obscure politician from the nation's largest state is now one of the most well known people in America, all in a week's time. She is ardently pro-gun, and shares other values with the conservative base which will absolutely help John McCain in a couple of months. But, it is her assistance with getting a conservative, pro-gun president elected that is her main attribute. You see, in my view, the most important question to ask your selves when casting your vote for President is, who do you want appointing the next two Supreme Court justices.

More about politics

Do you think your vote doesn't matter? Four years ago, there was a very close race for Governor in the State of Washington. Initially, Dino Rossi, the Republican nominee won the election by a VERY close margin: a few hundred votes among millions. This triggered an automatic recount, and when the votes were recounted, he won by an even smaller margin. In Washington, a candidate has the right to challenge the mechanical recount with a hand count, and this was the next step. Guess what? After what looked like an instant replay of the Florida "hanging chad" debacle of 2000, the Democratic candidate, Christine Gregoire won by 129 votes. Some say she stole the election, because it was shown that heavily liberal King County



Marty Hayes

violated election laws in how they counted their votes. A court challenge to the third recount was unsuccessful. This fall, my state is set for "Gregoire v. Rossi, The Rematch."

I am pretty liberal in my social leanings, fiscally conservative, and all this is mixed with a dose of constitutionalism. In my political experience, I have come to the conclusion that party politics is simply a way for power-seeking individuals to gain power. Democrats are democrats because they think that in their community the party label "Democrat" will more likely get them elected to a position of power. The same goes for Republicans. People run for public office (at least in the decision/policy making offices), less to actually effect a change for the better, but more to gain power. If a positive change occurs, well, that is a side benefit.

Last word on politics

If you don't like the way things are going, get involved. Seek out your local political party, and attend a meeting or two. Do as I did. When I saw an injustice occurring in my county, I decided to put my hat into the ring. I didn't win, but I believe I did make a difference by increasing awareness of the issues.

I also ran for and won a seat as a Precinct Committee Officer, which has a surprising amount of influence (read power), in the local county government. When, as a PCO, I saw our local party making decisions that I didn't agree with, I put my name forward and got a seat on the executive board of the local Central Committee, where some pretty weighty decisions are made. In a couple of weeks, we will be meeting to decide which candidates the local party will endorse, and to whom we will give financial support. We will likely help Dino Rossi financially, and do the same for a slate of local Republican candidates.

Of course, if the reader is more inclined to join the Democratic Party, please become a politically-active Democrat and do so quickly. The more gun owners we have in the Democratic Party, the better off this country will be. In 1968, I supported HHH (Hubert Horatio Humphrey) for President, even though I wasn't yet old enough to vote. I have heard that he was the best politician to never be elected President, and I couldn't disagree with that notion. As I understand it, he was a strong pro-gun voice in the Democratic Party.

I will close this message with one thought: Please understand that this column isn't about Republican versus Democrat. Instead, it is a plea to get involved politically. Your vote matters. Get involved. One person can make a difference.

A Primer on Concealed Carry Gear

by John Ralston

As a holster maker, I get a lot of questions about what kind of holster will make carrying a concealed handgun a little easier. I tell people that the choice to carry a concealed handgun on a daily basis is not one to be taken lightly. You should not throw your gear together hastily and without forethought. Ill-fitting, inadequate gear will make the endeavor cumbersome at best, and at worst, you may choose to stop carrying all together.

Like most anything of importance, it is best to start things off with a good foundation. The foundation for most forms of concealed carry is the belt. Going out to the local sporting goods store and getting their \$5 special isn't going to cut it for daily carry (or even occasional carry, in my opinion). Gun belts are made from two pieces of leather, bonded and stitched together, to create a strong support platform for your gear. A good belt will be made of the same quality leather as a fine holster and exhibit many of the same features as a good holster: nice stitching, smooth edges, and a quality buckle. It will be made for one purpose: to carry the weight of a gun and its accessories all day.

A belt does not need to be fancy to fulfill its purpose, but some features help a gun belt to melt into your wardrobe. Skiving the edges of the belt – not a necessity, but a nice touch – creates a “Dome” shape, which is usually associated with dress belts. The belt retains all of the stiffness necessary to support a heavy load, and it does not look out of place with Dockers. Extremely stiff belts are not necessary, either. A belt can be somewhat flexible and still retain the strength in the leather fiber to keep your load from sagging.

A cheap or worn out belt's sagging (even the good ones will eventually wear out) causes you discomfort or give away the fact that you have something hiding under your flannel shirt. A sagging belt lets that hunk of steel dig into places you didn't even know you had. Having to readjust your load every ten steps, or checking to make

sure that the piece of iron flopping around on your hip isn't going to fall out does not create a feeling of comfort, either. Your gun is far more likely to print and others are sure to notice you constantly fiddling with your pants. Buy a good belt, and expect it to cost about the same as a good holster, if not a bit more.

The actual holster is a bit more difficult to address. No holster is perfect for everyone – not a single one. Every body type is different and every individual has their own idea of what is comfortable. In any case, concealed carry is not necessarily going to be comfortable. Finding good gear will help, but the choice was made to carry a heavy piece of steel all day, and to find true comfort while doing it is a blessing. You might find the “most comfortable holster you have ever worn,” but that is not too say you like wearing it. It just hurts less than all the others. Beg and borrow from everyone you know, try as many styles as you can, and pick the best one.



Above: cross-section shows construction of 5-Shot Leather belt. Right: Stitching and skiving gives belt dressy look.



Quality Holster Construction

As for holster construction, a good holster is made from fine leather (maybe I am a bit biased on this point), and will be precisely molded to the gun it is intended to carry. When holstering a gun in a finely molded holster, you can actually hear it “snap” in place, which provides retention without the need for additional straps, snaps or buttons.

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This is a function of the leather itself, which is quite firm, and the holster leather is chosen for this purpose. Softer leathers will not be up to the task, and will soon soften. Then the holster will lose its retention, which can result in your weapon shooting across the parking lot as you jog to your car (I know...I don't jog either, that's what the car is for).

Accessories like mag pouches, flashlight pouches and cuff cases will be constructed in a similar manner. Stay away from holsters made out of soft suede like materials, unless of course you like the feeling of the sharp edges of your gun poking you in the side.

Quality holsters will feature stitching with heavy thread, nice detail molding, smooth edges and a nice overall appearance.

Depending on the maker or model, a holster may have a re-enforced mouth band of leather, metal or Kydex® which makes one handed reholstering a bit easier, but creates a slightly more bulky holster. Other features include a sweat shield to protect the gun from sweat and your body from sharp safeties, but does so at the sacrifice of certain grip styles. Variations include open or closed muzzle, snap loops or sewn loops. The variations are endless, and each has a purpose. The design of the holster itself is far less important than the fact that it fulfills your needs and

secures the weapon properly.

There are many holster makers today who can provide you with a handmade holster from their workbench for the same price as a production holster, maybe even a bit less. The trade-off for getting quality like this is the time it takes. As with all great things, making holsters is time consuming, and all of the top makers are in demand.

Now that you have found the proper gear, it is time to dress the part. If you are new to concealed carry, it is unlikely that you will find gear that fits into your current wardrobe. You will likely have to find a wardrobe that accommodates your gear. It is just part of the game, but an important one.

No sense getting great gear and then blow your concealment with pants that are too tight or cover shirt that is too short. (Editor's note: See article on next page to learn more about concealment clothing.)

Left: Springfield EMP fitted with Crimson Trace Lasergrips in 5 Shot Leather holster, with magazine pouches.

Don't skimp! After all, you have made the deci-

sion to defend yourself, now make sure your gear is up to the task.

About the author:

*John Ralston is the craftsman behind **5 Shot Leather, LLC** where he has been building custom holsters, belts, magazine pouches and related leather goods for 4 years. He is a graduate of Massad Ayoob's Lethal Force Institute, and an Endowment Life Member of the National Rifle Association.*

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Concealed Carry: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

by Kathy Jackson

For several years, I've had a quiet public hobby of people-watching. Specifically, I like to scope out what people are wearing to figure out if they could be carrying a gun on-body with absolutely no alterations to their outer clothing whatsoever. Confining my observations to adults who are clearly past early adolescence, I'd say that 80% of the women and perhaps 75% of the men I see on any given day could be carrying a gun in a belt holster, a shoulder holster, or an ankle holster. Include pockets, belly bands and SmartCarry devices, and the number approaches 90% for both sexes.

What this means is that I'm generally a little skeptical when someone tells me they simply can't conceal a gun on-body. When someone believes that, it usually means they haven't yet figured out how they can conceal the gun -- or that they aren't willing to make minor changes to accommodate their desire to carry.

The truth is that concealed carry does require some compromises. We all have to make decisions. Exactly which decisions have to be made will depend a great deal upon personal variables, but some possibilities include choosing to wear slightly looser clothing, selecting a stiff gun belt rather than a slim and flexible dress belt, or perhaps buying a gun slightly smaller than is truly comfortable to shoot. These are all normal and predictable adjustments to a new lifestyle. But these compromises do not have to be large and extravagant. When it comes to clothing selection, for example, the compromises can be so minor that literally no one else is aware of them but you. Perhaps you'll choose to wear mid-rise rather than low-rise jeans, or you'll buy your pants one size larger in the waist to accommodate

IWB carry more comfortably, or you'll simply add a comfortable fleece vest to your closet for those times when you don't want to think too hard about your concealment as you're getting dressed.

Getting down to specifics, when choosing a cover garment, here are some do's and don'ts:

- Do choose dark colors rather than light ones.
- If you choose to wear a light-colored shirt for concealment, look for the tightest weave and thickest thread possible so the shadow of the gun will not show through the fabric.
- Prints conceal more easily than solids.
- Stripes generally don't conceal that well, as they tend to accentuate the effect of any lumps.
- Stiffer fabrics tend to work better than softer ones.
- For women especially: save the slinky, slippery fabrics for parts of your body where the gun isn't. These tend to drape around the outline of the gun. For the same reason, stretchy fabrics are on the avoid list.
- There's no rule that says you cannot look attractive and still conceal a firearm. For women, a stylish tunic top does the job every bit as well as a fishing vest, and looks a lot nicer, too. As we head into fall, consider wearing a cozy sweater rather than a sloppy old sweatshirt. For guys, a grungy untucked tee shirt might work okay, but a crisp polo shirt looks more attractive and conceals the firearm just as well, if not better.
- Be creative. Remember that the majority of the clothing in your closet will work for some form of concealed carry, if you can just figure out the best way to use it.



People watching? How many ways could this woman be concealing a handgun?

- Consider pairing things you haven't paired before. Ask yourself if this blouse can be paired up with a different pair of slacks for better concealment, or if that pair of beltless pants would work with ankle carry, or if those

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low-rise jeans might do a better job concealing the belt holster when paired with a different shirt.

- Don't concentrate on what you cannot do. In other words, play to your own strengths rather than bemoaning your weakness. You might not be able to wear a pair of jeans and a sweatshirt to the office, but the suit jacket you have to wear instead might give you a great way to cover a shoulder holster or tote in a pocket. You might not be able to carry in your preferred belt holster while wearing a skirt, but that same skirt might make it possible for you to carry the gun in a SmartCarry-type holster.



Photographer's vest is appropriate for the camera-festooned professional. It may draw curious looks from one not so equipped.

- When carrying outside the waistband (OWB), it's important that your cover garment is definitely long enough to really cover the gun. Check by standing in front of a mirror and lifting your arms over your head as if pulling something down from a high shelf. If the holster peeks out the bottom, choose a different cover.
- In general, choose clothing that is loose enough to move easily over the concealed holster, but no looser. Avoid baggy, droopy, saggy clothing unless that's already your style.
- Avoid wearing clothing that doesn't feel as if it conceals well. If it doesn't feel right, you'll give yourself away by tugging at your clothing when you shouldn't.
- Always check new outfits in the mirror, from both front and back. Then move around naturally for awhile with-

out readjusting your clothing and check again to see if there are any obvious concealment problems.

Awhile back, some friends and I went out to dinner after a shooting event. We were all still in our range clothes, and several of the guys wore oversized photographer's vests to conceal their firearms. As the group walked into the restaurant, a man sitting in the waiting area looked up and his eyes widened. I heard him quietly remark to a friend, "Good grief! What's with all the goofy-looking vests over there?!"

This brings us to the final rule. When you choose an outfit for concealed carry, before you walk out the door, ask yourself, "If I weren't trying to hide a gun, would I be willing to wear this outfit?" If the answer is no, you're on the wrong track.

About the author: Kathy Jackson is the managing editor of the United States Concealed Carry Association's Concealed Carry Magazine.

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The Bible and Self Defense

In last month's Network eJournal (click link to view), this series illuminated the Old Testament view of use of force in self defense. As the series continues this month, the author considers New Testament admonitions about self defense.

by Dr. Richard Seim

"The Sunday shooting at a Knoxville, Tenn., Unitarian church ... left two people dead and five injured" (Foxnews.com, Monday, July 28, 2008). "Recently, there were two Christian musicians who were leaving a recording studio and were murdered for two dollars and their car" (U.S. Concealed Carry, Armed American Report July 25, 2008, No Safe Places, Don Myers). The need to establish what the Bible says about church security and self defense grows more and more urgent.

In our first three articles, we established that the Bible prohibits the unjust taking of a legally innocent life (murder) but does not prohibit the use of lethal force for self defense (Exodus 20:13 and 22:2-3). Scripture teaches us that we can defend others and that we should be ready to defend ourselves and others in a corporate setting (Nehemiah 4:11-15, Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12). That we should come to the aid of one who is crying out for help in the midst of a violent attack was inferred in Deuteronomy 22:23-27. We also noted that "God's deliverance" of Nehemiah included arming themselves and standing guard thus ending the threat. So, part of "trust God and He will take care of you," is picking up sword (handgun) and spear (AR) and being on our guard.

"But that is the Old Testament," some will say. "What about the New Testament? Did not Jesus say to 'turn the other cheek?'" Well, yes He did! But what did Jesus mean when He said that? Notice the entire passage of Matthew 5:38-39, "You have heard that it was said, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also."

There is only one way the meaning of this passage can clearly be established. What was Jesus quoting when He said, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth?" There



are several Old Testament passages that contain these words (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21). These Old Testament verses were written to keep a court of law from overstepping its bounds by not placing too great a penalty on the crime. Thus, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" refers to civil law and courts and judges passing just sentences upon the guilty.

From the rest of the context of Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus is indicating that the "eye for an eye" principle is not to be used for personal retaliation. As William Hendriksen says in his commentary on Matthew's Gospel, "The Pharisees, however, appealed to this law to justify personal retribution and revenge. They quoted this commandment in order to defeat its very purpose." Jesus is not talking about a self-defense issue here. He is talking about not exercising personal retaliation for an offense.

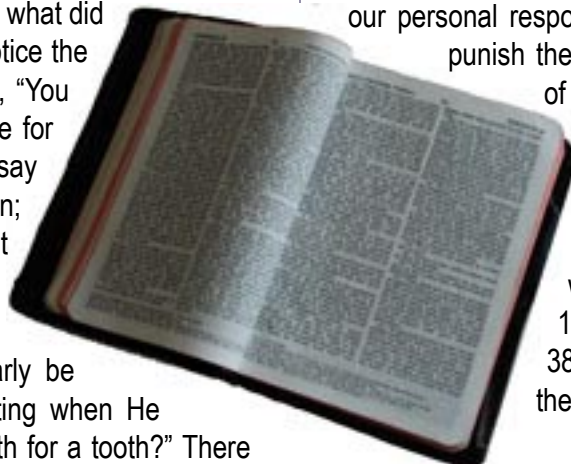
Warren Wiersbe summarizes well, "It also kept magistrates from issuing exorbitant sentences that did not fit the offenses. But Jesus asks His people to suffer rather than cause others to suffer (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Keep in mind that this has to do with private offenses; the courts must still deal with people who break the law and must be punished accordingly." So, Jesus is not forbidding self defense, He is telling us to leave vengeance in the hands of God and our courts of law.

Even the Apostle Paul interjects in his writings to the Romans that we are not to retaliate but leave vengeance in the hands of the Lord. "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

The Apostle Paul also makes it clear that it is not our personal responsibility but the government's duty to punish the evildoer. "For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil...

But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil" (Romans 12:13a & 14b). Even as Jesus did in Matthew 5:38-39, Paul makes it clear that one of the duties of government is to mete out

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"vengeance." Vengeance was not the duty of the individual in the Old Testament nor was it in the New Testament. Again, these verses are not speaking about self defense but retaliation.

Finally, what did Jesus mean when He said, "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also" (Matthew 5: 39)? Craig Blomberg explains, "Turn the other cheek" for us, "Resist in v. 39 was often used in a legal context (cf. Isa 50:8) and in light of v. 40 ["If anyone wants to sue you"] is probably to be taken that way here... We must nevertheless definitely resist evil in certain contexts (cf. Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9). Striking a person on the right cheek suggests a backhanded slap from a typically right-handed aggressor and was a characteristic Jewish form of insult. Jesus tells us not to trade such insults even if it means receiving more. In no sense does v. 39 require Christians to subject themselves or others to physical danger or abuse."

Self defense against a violent offender when your life is threatened is NOT what Jesus was dealing with in Matthew 5:38 & 39. He instructed us to allow the courts to do their jobs when it comes to civil offenses. Even in our society, an insult is not considered a life-threatening situation requiring lethal force. Jesus' law of love is to "turn the other cheek" to an insult, not to a violent offender intent on inflicting upon you grave bodily harm or death.

Next month, in our final installment, we will take a look at Jesus' rebuke to the Apostle Peter in Matthew 26:51-54 and see how that applies to us today.

If you enjoyed this column, be sure to read the October eJournal for Dr. Seim's next installment.

About the author:

Dr. Richard Seim is senior pastor at the Renton, WA Trinity Baptist Church. In addition to his calling as a Christian pastor, the author teaches NRA gun safety classes, and has graduated from multiple classes taught by the Lethal Force Institute and the Firearms Academy of Seattle, Inc.

USCCA Gives Network a Big Boost

The Network appreciates the very nice boost we received from the United States Concealed Carry Association (USCCA) when columnist Kevin Jamison featured the Network, its goals, plans and aspirations, as the topic of his article entitled "One Call," in the August/September edition of [Concealed Carry Magazine](#).

If you've not yet heard about USCCA, you're in for a treat. This four year old organization has a very complete web site with both a public section and areas that are available only to USCCA members. It also publishes the **Concealed Carry Magazine**, published eight times a year, featuring articles of interest to citizens who carry guns for self defense. Unlike many gun magazines, this one is written from the perspective of the every-day citizen, concerned with individual safety and their right to own and carry guns for self defense. In fact, one of the regular columns is entitled "The Ordinary Guy," and another regular feature, simply called the "CCM Profile." Like the rest of the magazine, both put the spotlight on ordinary gun owners.



Presently, USCCA memberships start at \$27 per year, which gives the subscriber access to the organization's web site and its members-only forum; a \$37 per year membership yields a subscription to the group's excellent magazine; the \$47 per year subscription is good for both the magazine and full access to the organization's web site and discussion forums. Any level of membership allows the subscriber to download PDFs of back issues of the magazine.

Another easy way to get to know the folks at USCCA is to take them up on their offer of the free weekly newsletter available by subscription on their web site <http://www.usconcealedcarry.com/>

Be sure to check out the USCCA. They are doing excellent work that runs very parallel to the interests and concerns of the Network.

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Book Review

The Gun Digest Book of Combat Handgunnery

by Massad Ayoob \$24.95

256 pages, 500 black & white photos

ISBN: 0-89689-525-4

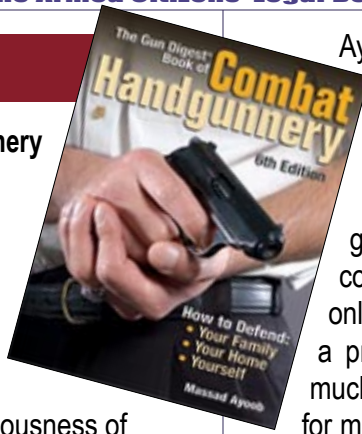
Assuming the mantle of teacher, mentor and guide should not be done lightly when the topic taught is nothing less than individual survival of violent crime. The seriousness of that role is not lost on author Massad F. Ayoob, who adds his most recent tome, **The Gun Digest Book of Combat Handgunnery** to the list of dozens of books and countless articles he has written over the decades.

Published as the 6th edition (Ayoob also authored the 5th edition in 2002), **Combat Handgunnery** is an extensive work covering topics ranging from gun and holster selection, shooting techniques and much more, all updated for the 2007 release date of this, the latest edition.

Combat Handgunnery leaves no doubt that Ayoob takes seriously the responsibility of educating readers about self-defense issues. If looking for reliable information on handguns for self defense, it is hard to beat the assurance the author gives in the first chapter: "If something seems new and radical compared to older 'doctrine,' try it yourself before you decide. I can promise you that there is nothing recommended in this book that has not been proven where it counts."

Introducing the gun selection topic, Ayoob kicks off the book with a look at classic handguns, modern variations on those themes, and a lot of history about the development of handguns including the 1911, the P-35 and a variety of revolvers. If you think a history about the development of some of our most lasting handgun masterpieces might be dry, think again. Ayoob not only sets the stage for the period of the history under discussion, but adds details about the guns that make the reader feel like an industry insider. For example, several chapters into the book, the author reveals why the before-its-time Colt Pocket 9 went out of production before it ever really got started. That's just the beginning of a book packed full of the details and history the author has picked up in his 40-some years in the business of guns and self defense.

While discussing classic guns, Ayoob offers good tips for buying a used revolver or semi-automatic pistol that the reader may well use to save hundreds of dollars at the gun counter. Calling firearms "the ultimate durable-goods,"



Ayoob estimates that buying used can cut costs in half, leaving that extra money for training and ammunition "and enjoying the life and the people you bought that gun to protect."

A mere 25 pages into the book, the reader gets a look at Ayoob's parallel field of expertise: the courts. Introducing the double action, double action only and very light trigger issues, Ayoob explains that a prosecutor mindful of his win/lose record doesn't much care if he or she scores a conviction for murder or for manslaughter. This attitude fuels many of the cases in which a justifiable shooting results in manslaughter charges, because the prosecutor need only convince the jury that the shooter's actions were momentarily careless. This crucial revelation gives more than an academic or historic perspective, and because it concerns every person who selects a self-defense gun, should not be overlooked as just part of a review of defense guns.

In a later chapter, the relative advantages of revolvers and semi-automatics receive a good analysis, and the issue of double action only or traditional double action semi-autos considered again, as is the question of running double action autos on safe or off safe. Likewise, Ayoob analyzes point shooting vs. using the sights to aim. The parallel discussion in a later chapter on CQB techniques should sober any armed citizen reading it. "At close range, it's not a shooting contest; it's a fight," Ayoob writes, shocking the reader out of notions bred on static shooting ranges about how armed confrontations play out. The author provides thirteen heavily illustrated pages on close quarters concerns ranging from the ready position, close quarters shooting, moving off the line of force, scanning, and more.

In compiling this book, the author breaks the mold so common to gun and self defense books and the result is a book that is hard to put down. Interestingly, it is not until the eleventh chapter that the essential information about "Avoiding Mistakes" is presented. Here he shares the wisdom of Mike Baker: "Seemingly obsessive concern with firearms safety is the mark of the firearms professional." How to accomplish it is detailed in a dozen vital pages. This chapter also illustrates gun safety ranging from gun handling, dryfire, gun cleaning, home storage, securing guns in cars, and interacting with law enforcement during a traffic stop.

In the fourth chapter, beginners will find excellent advice on getting started, in which Ayoob takes us from

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buying the gun at a gunshop, to seeking out training, mining resources at the local gun club, and how to train and practice to build competence. "Don't try to buy skill at the gunshop. Buy ammo or reloading components there instead, to better reinforce and enhance the skills you already have," Ayooob advises sagely.

As the chapter segues into the topic of practice, readers may be surprised to read, "How do you best practice? This way: Stop practicing!" This master instructor goes on to suggest actually training yourself with purpose-oriented shooting exercises."

What follows is a section on trigger control, how gun fit influences accurate shooting, and the role of options like wide triggers, serrated triggers, trigger stops, and more. Next Ayooob addresses what he calls the lost secrets of combat handgun shooting, outlining a series of five techniques critical to successful shooting, with advice to mentally run through the five easily remembered "secrets" as a checklist when the shot really counts.

It might be too easy for readers with a self-defense focus to ignore chapter five because the title talks about competition and shooting qualifications. That would be a mistake, however, because it tells the experience from Ayooob's viewpoint, with much to be learned from this master shooter that we can apply to any shooting problem. Enjoy the story, but learn the lessons: "Focus on the task, not the goal." "You need a damn good gun with damn good ammo for something like this." "The trigger is the heart of the beast," and four more little jewels of wisdom applicable to the complex task of shooting under stress.

A lot of armed citizens struggle with the question of what kind of ammunition to carry for self defense. Ayooob's twelve-page chapter on this topic will go far to set them on the right path. Starting with caliber .32 Auto, Ayooob gives a few paragraphs of history and ammunition analysis that covers all the common defense calibers, including new comers like .357 SIG and .45 GAP.

Concealment holsters receive similar, detailed analysis, as do police holsters, magazine pouches and speed loader carriers, in a heavily illustrated chapter. For the sixth edition, the update addendum to this chapter focuses on alternative retention holster designs that move away from the retention strap to trigger guard locks, and their role outside of law enforcement. Next, the author offers a heavily-illustrated lesson about techniques for reloading revolvers and semi-autos. Once again, the equipment and its proper deployment is illustrated by stories like the

Newhall, CA massacre, which defined the need to move from carrying loose cartridges to using speedloaders for revolver-armed officers.

By the tenth chapter, Ayooob is back to his life's work – teaching, with illustrated descriptions of the shooting grasp, stance, two-handed and one-handed shooting, and technique enhancements to make it work better.

Gun modifications, including a special section on replacement sights, adding safeties to revolvers and Glocks, and especially reliability modifications offered by gunsmiths. Ayooob weighs in on extended magazine wells, extended slide releases, aftermarket handgun sights, laser sights, even personalized engraving on a special pistol. Next, instruction on fitting the gun to your hand size includes a discussion of different sized guns, as well as various aftermarket grip options.

The sociology of guns and self defense training come into focus in the thirteenth and final chapter when Ayooob gives his views on women and shooting, minority gun ownership, and the question of when children should be introduced to firearms. This section includes an excellent description of resources available to parents of children who want to learn to shoot, as well as descriptions of how the author and others taught their children about gun safety and shooting. Toward the end of the section, Ayooob writes "that he has found the gun to be nothing less than a tool of parenting," thus endorsing the wonderful experience of parental involvement with the kids when the whole family goes to the range for a safe shooting experience.

Through ***The Gun Digest Book of Combat Handgunnery***, the message and lessons are enhanced by Ayooob's interesting and colorful prose. Key points are emphasized by cases supporting Ayooob's arguments, and the author's penchant for relating how developments in guns and ammunition came about makes for enjoyable reading.

As Ayooob's seminal work, ***In the Gravest Extreme***, published in 1980, has aged, many have expressed desire for an updated version of that work. Not only does Combat Handgunnery update the vital information of that earlier work, its topics extend into numerous other areas not broached in that earlier classic.

The Gun Digest Book of Combat Handgunnery deserves the same acclaim as ***In The Gravest Extreme*** earned. It is a very complete resource for students of armed self defense.

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A Breath of Fresh Air

by Marty Hayes

Last month, my wife and I took a much-needed break from our duties here and at the academy, and went on a five-state motorcycle ride, making it all the way to Sturgis for a rally T-shirt. Even though we hit five different states, it seems like we spent all our time in Montana, as that state from end to end is HUGE. They don't call it the Big Sky Country for nothin'.

On the trip out and back, we stopped in Big Timber, Montana (don't you just love that name) for a food and gas break. The first time, we just hit a local restaurant and had lunch. But on our way back to Washington State, we took the scenic (I-90 business) route and pulled into a rambling wooden structure called "The Fort," which promised gas, food, water, liquor and guns! Now, you might be wondering about the liquor and guns mix, but understand that there was no bar attached. It was just a small but well stocked convenience liquor store. But the highlight of the stop was the full service, well stocked gun shop I encountered, and after a little biker tourist re-con, I came back outside and told Gila I wanted to spend some time there.

After waiting for a break in the steady stream of customers at the gun counter, I introduced myself to the gun shop proprietor, Don Vancil, who runs the gun counter for owners Jeff and Laura Cowell. After my introduction, he mentioned he "knew of me" as he is an avid gun magazine reader, and had read some of the articles written by Massad Ayoob, in which I was mentioned. Of course, the third of my personality called "the ego" lapped up this recognition, and we had a very amicable chat between customers, who seemed to be local folks and travelers like me.

At one point, a boy of about ten came in and wanted to look at an AR-15 rifle. It seemed like Mr. Vancil and this young man had a long history of this sort of interaction. He explained that he believes the youth are the future of gun ownership, and that the boy's dad was a good customer.

One wouldn't expect to find high-end handguns in Big Timber, MT, but the gun case was full of thousand-dollar

1911s, quality Sig Sauers and plenty of Glocks. But even more compelling than the inventory, was the political philosophy discussed. Of course, introducing myself as the President of the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, LLC turned the conversation toward the role of law enforcement and the armed citizen, since incidents in which law enforcement officials and prosecutors put their own self-servicing interests ahead of the interests of the law abiding armed citizen necessitated the formation of the Network. Mr. Vancil assured me that the Sheriff Daniel Tronrud of Sweet Grass County MT, shares our views. In fact I believe Vancil's exact words were, "Our sheriff thinks everyone should carry a gun." I would think, of course, that would make his job much easier, as crime would be virtually non-existent in Sweet Grass County, MT, and the County Commissioner's meetings would likely be very polite affairs!

What a breath of fresh air it was, to learn by happenstance, that such a great place still exists in America. In fact, ranking right behind getting to spend some time with my wife's aunt

and uncle and the great motorcycle riding in Montana, my visit to The Fort was the highlight of the trip. The Fort doesn't have a web site, but it does have e-mail, so if you want to drop them a line and simply thank them for being there, it is fort@mtintouch.net.



Don Vancil takes a moment with a customer for the next generation, who has asked him about an AR-15.



Editor Gila Hayes

Editor's Notebook

Most of this issue of the **eJournal** is devoted to the equipment of self defense. The proper handgun, holster and concealment clothing are all discussed, because these are the topics on which the student of armed self defense inevitably spends much of his or her time. There is, however, another crucial aspect of armed

self defense of which we hear less.

That topic addresses mental preparation, and is often referred to as mindset. Many define the self-defense mindset as a willingness to use violence to prevent violence against us or other innocents. That's a fine start to a deeper subject.

Violent criminals prefer victims who are easy to overcome, first because they are easy to surprise and next, because they are not inclined to vigorous resistance. Mental preparation to defend against these predators is, in my opinion, multi-faceted. It requires acknowledgement of dangers in our daily environment. Why is it that people will wear seat belts to avoid horrific injuries in traffic accidents or equip the home with fire extinguishers to prevent fire, but won't even acknowledge that people just like them fall victim daily to violent crime? When someone says, "Rapes, murders and assaults don't happen here," they illustrate the denial present among not only the folks dubbed by some as "sheeple," but also gun owners who don't carry when it is too inconvenient.

At the other extreme, is the gunslinger who has passionately embraced the armed lifestyle without bothering to wrestle with the question of whether or not he or she could kill another human being in defense of himself or another. Resolving this challenge cannot be done superficially, nor can the resolve be borrowed from an admired mentor. Parroting the catchphrases of a charismatic instructor is not the same as knowing in your heart what actions you can and cannot perform.

We must refine the aversion to killing our own kind that is present in all but sociopaths. This refinement entails differentiating between predatory humans and those who respect others' rights. This necessity is illustrated at its most extreme when an armed citizen faces a youthful offender

bent on killing. The report reads, "I never imagined I would need to point my gun at a kid," though that statement is only available if the victim survives. We must weigh the value of our survival against that of the assailant, whether or not that predator fits in our stereotypical expectation of what a violent criminal looks like.

I have long proposed that self esteem is at the heart of the defensive mindset. Without a sense of worth, there is little reason to eradicate in ourselves the passivity our society so effectively teaches. An individual convinced that they contribute nothing of value has little for which to fight. Interestingly, many coming through life-threatening experiences report that determination to stay alive for a spouse, child or parent fueled their survival. We need to harness this last-stage revelation, and bring it to the forefront of our consciousness as we scrutinize our right and responsibility to self defense.

We're talking about soul-searching, not a snap decision. We're talking about establishing boundaries: how far you will allow another to aggress against you, and how far you will go in your defense. And there is not enough time to do this as you try to work out whether the guy who has twice followed you across the street is just another pedestrian or someone

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The **eJournal** of the **Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, LLC** is published monthly on the Network's web site at

<http://www.armedcitizensnetwork.org>.

We are actively soliciting the participation of writers with expertise in self-defense firearms, the legal profession, and the self-defense training field. If you are interested in contributing to the **eJournal**, please contact editor Gila Hayes by E-mail sent to editor@armedcitizensnetwork.org.

The **Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, LLC** receives its direction from these corporate officers:

Marty Hayes, President

J. Vincent Shuck, Vice President

Gila Hayes, Operations Manager

We welcome your questions and comments about the Network.

Please write to us at info@armedcitizensnetwork.org.

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who is following until there are no witnesses around.

I proposed earlier that criminals prefer two things – absence of resistance, and the element of surprise so the prey doesn't run away. Let's talk about the latter aspect. In a remarkable number of instances, a crime is perpetrated or attempted by someone the victim reports they'd noticed earlier. Though the actual attack is often reported as a lightening-fast blitz, the set up was usually initiated considerably earlier. If you doubt it, check out the blog of Xavier, and his experience in a Wal-Mart parking lot <http://xavierthoughts.blogspot.com/2008/03/encounter-at-wal-mart.html>. Alertness and awareness are critical, and so is trusting your early warning system, listening to your instincts. In the best case, that means leaving before the move is made against you, or perhaps facing the threat and verbally de-escalating the situation if possible as well as drawing the attention of witnesses. In less favorable circumstances it means being ready to evade or counter-attack, assessing the lay of the land and any resources available to you.

Preparation for the counter attack naturally involves hands on training, but also entails an element of mental preparation. Mental crisis rehearsal works by envisioning the steps required to overcome an attack, seeing yourself executing those steps and prevailing. The mind's eye is a powerful tool, not only providing you with options and strategies, but it is also useful for envisioning how you might employ that slick disarming move you learned in class last Saturday. Mentally explore numerous "what if" questions, putting yourself in the attacker's shoes, and thinking through how to overcome. Engage all your senses in the mental imagery – hearing, feeling, smelling, seeing. Mental rehearsal is a powerful tool used by athletes, skilled drivers, police officers and others. Why not employ it?

Victims are governed by fatalistic passivity, believing they cannot resist an attacker and in their belief is created their reality. Mentally rehearsing how to overcome an assailant creates *your* reality – that of a survivor who lives confidently in his or her world, aware that dangers exist, yet strong in the skills and tools, the strategies and tactics with which you have prepared.

Refusing to accept defeat, even when the odds seem overwhelming, is another aspect of the defensive mindset. Mental toughness is not a characteristic with which people seem to have much experience these days. The body can

endure tremendous punishment, and go on long after it seems it should have collapsed; it is the mind that too often admits defeat and quits struggling to survive.

Humans are emotional creatures. If plagued with the tendency to give up, dig deep for an emotion you can latch on to when you must fight. For some, it is love of family and they will fight desperately to preserve those loved ones as well as themselves so they can remain with them; for others, it is righteous outrage at the assailant's violation of your boundaries; and still others are honor driven to take on the duties of the sheepdog so eloquently defined by Dave Grossman.

Whatever motivator drives you, get to know it intimately. Find out if it is sufficiently powerful to drive you beyond your fear and fuel your fight to save your life.

Recently I read a column by Dave Grossman in which he quoted famous test pilot Chuck Yeager. In his autobiography the celebrated pilot wrote that as a flier he had a healthy fear that he could die, so he channeled that concern into learning as much about his airplane, its emergency equipment, and made him "respectful of my machine and always alert in the cockpit." Because combating fear is not an aspect of survival about which much has been written, I appreciated Grossman's application of Yeager's comment to the mental side of defense preparation.

While mindset is an intensely personal thing, we can benefit from the guidance of others who have recorded their thoughts on the topic. Much as been written on the topic of mindset, including one of my favorites found in an older, out of print book by Stanford Strong, **Strong on Defense**. Naturally, we also turn to the writings of Jeff Cooper, Massad Ayoob and other luminaries, as well. Other resources include the work of Dave Grossman, and some like Gavin DeBecker's book **The Gift of Fear**. Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Foundation Advisory Board member Tom Givens has slated one of his instructional DVDs for the topic of mental preparation. When it is done, it will join his instructional DVDs on getting started shooting, concealed carry conceals, and the defensive shotgun. We eagerly await the chance to share his knowledge, as well.

While we wait, though we *do* have an excellent article from Tom Givens scheduled for the October edition of the **eJournal**. Be sure to check back next month, since you won't want to miss that one! Meanwhile, look inside yourself and ask if your survival skills, determination and gear are up to the task.

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How to join - mail in form

Print this application form and FAX it in to us at 1-360-978-6102 (if you are using a VISA/MC), or mail it to P.O. Box 400, Onalaska, WA, 98570 with your check for \$85. Your first year's membership will expire at the end of month following the one in which we received your membership application. Please include a copy of your state issued Concealed Carry Permit or other suitable background check with your application form, so we can accept and process your membership application as soon as possible.

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