



Tactical Talk

Volume 7, Issue 7

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**Gunshot wounds are
like commercial real
estate. Location,
location, location!**

Inside this issue:

<i>Random Thoughts by Tom Givens</i>	2
<i>Article continuation</i>	3
<i>Concealed Carry News from Other States</i>	3
<i>How to Contact Us</i>	4

Special Classes of Interest

ANNUAL FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION COURSE

July 25-27, 2003, Fri.-Sun., 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day. All guns and ammunition furnished. **\$399.00**. Certifies for a state handgun instructor license.

TWO-DAY COMBATIVE PISTOL COURSE, AT RANGEMASTER

Two full days, 800-1,000 rounds, includes low light training and much more. **\$299.00**. August 16-17, 2003, Sat.-Sun., 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

ANDY STANFORD, OPS SURGICAL SPEED SHOOTING

Sept. 13-14, 2003 at Rangemaster, Sat.-Sun., 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

DYNAMIC PISTOL COURSE at KR Training, Austin, Texas

Oct. 11-12, 2003, Sat.-Sun. Taught by Tom Givens and Jim Higginbotham, plus Karl Rehn of KR Training. Cost **\$300.00**.

COMBATIVE PISTOL with TOM GIVENS

at Tactical Response Range, Clarksville, TN, Oct. 18-19, 2003. Two intensive days of training. **\$299.00**.

COMBATIVE PISTOL with TOM GIVENS

at The Responsible Shooter indoor facility, Marcus Hook, PA (Philadelphia), Jan. 24-25, 2004.

From a Polite Society Member . . .

Margaret Summey, 64, was relaxing at home in Duncan, SC, when Timothy Doyle Huitt, 43, broke into her home. "I went straight and got the .357 Magnum", Summey says. She shot the intruder, and police ruled the shooting justified. Doyle was found collapsed in the street with a gunshot wound in his leg. "I would have used a shotgun", Summey said afterward, "but I just had new countertops done and I didn't want to tear up the kitchen." (*Spartanburg Herald-Journal*)



Random Thoughts on Handgun Reliability and Longevity

By Tom Givens



I am often asked which pistols work better or hold up longer under heavy use. I personally see about a million handgun rounds go downrange every year, both here at Rangemaster and in classes on the road. In addition, we have a selection of range rental/class guns here, which see very heavy use. The following are my observations over the past seven years of full time teaching. Your mileage may vary. Guns are commented on in no special order.

As a point of interest, my friend John Farnam once told me the Colt company commissioned a huge market research study, and found the average American-owned handgun is fired seven times in its lifetime. (Yep, seven rounds.) Of course, those of us who fire thousands of rounds a year make up for those who never fire their guns at all.

1. SIG- The SIG line of handguns are very ergonomic and the controls are well placed. We see a LOT of P229's in .40, and a LOT of P239's in 9mm or .40. We see fewer P220's in .45. Reliability seems to be first rate, as long as you stay with SIG factory magazines and decent ammo. There does not seem to be a lot of aftermarket accessories for the SIG, which undoubtedly contributes to their reliability.

The weak point in the SIG seems to be the trigger return spring, which will eventually break if you shoot enough without replacing it. I would definitely replace this spring by 20,000 rounds. The recoil spring needs to be replaced every 3,000 rounds. Keep the grip screws snugged up, but do not over-tighten.

2. GLOCK- The Glock line seems to be among the most reliable right out of the box and have few long term issues. They are not, however, perfect. The most common problems include:
 - A. Aftermarket parts. If it says "extended" or "titanium" don't put it on your Glock for self defense. Almost every Glock we see actually break on the range has such parts in it.
 - B. Cleaning. It seems to be a point of honor among Glock shooters to see how long they can go without cleaning or lubing their gun. This accelerates wear and can lead to serious issues (see C). The factory applied grease is NOT permanent.
 - C. Glocks do blow up, especially in .40 or .45. I have personally seen five .40's and one .45 let go. In each case, a dirty chamber or cruddy ammo was involved, preventing full chambering of the round. The Glock will fire out of battery, resulting in a blown case head. Keep the barrel clean, lube the gun properly, and use good ammo and the odds of this happening are reduced greatly.
 - D. The 9mm mid-size guns, G17 or G19 seem to hold up the best of just about all common handguns.
3. Smith & Wesson- The DA and DAO Smith & Wesson autos hold up pretty well, except for several small parts in the lockwork, such as the drawbar. Inspect them frequently on any defensive pistol.
4. Springfield Armory XD (HS2000)- There are not a whole lot of these in circulation yet, but in our limited experience they seem quite sound. We had a 9mm HS2000 in rental/class service for some time. In 30,000 rounds we replaced the recoil spring once, and the magazine catch spring once, plus replaced the original magazine at 25,000 rounds.

(continued on page 3)

5. The 1911's- The 1911 pattern pistol is made by so many manufacturers, in so many countries, in so many configurations that it is impossible to make sweeping generalizations about them with any degree of credibility. Saying "1911's don't work" is like saying "cars don't go fast". There is a world of difference between a WWII GI gun that is flat worn out, a 1911 clone made in the Philippines, and a quality 1911 like a Kimber or S/A.

For one thing, the 1911 was designed when serious fighting guns were hand fitted at the factory by employees who worked there for thirty, forty, or more years before retiring. The design does not lend itself well, therefore, to modern CNC machining methods. For best results, buy a quality base gun, then have a competent 1911 tuner go over it and complete the hand fitting process the factories can no longer afford to indulge. When you buy a "semi-custom" 1911, like a Wilson or Les Baer, the price difference is in the additional hand fitting over say a stock Colt or Kimber. I recently attended a Clint Smith handgun course, and in the course of two days fired 750 rounds through one 1911, with no cleaning. I did not have a single malfunction. This is the standard I expect my 1911's to perform to, and I own several that will.

- A. Stay with a 5" barrel, steel frame gun. Anything else is a departure from the original design, and will increase your problems. The 3"-3.5" guns are the hardest to get to work reliably.
 - B. Replace your recoil spring every 3,000 rounds, just like changing the oil in your car. The gun will run better and last longer. The springs from ISMI, Wolff, and Wilson are good.
 - C. Get quality magazines. Many 1911 functional problems are not gun problems at all, but the result of cheap, poor quality magazines. Avoid MecGar, USA, and ProMag like the plague! Wilson or Chip McCormick mags will go a long way toward functional reliability in your gun.
 - D. DO NOT tinker with your gun, especially NO POLISHING of feed ramps or other surfaces. Owning a 1911 is NOT a license to alter, replace, or otherwise screw up parts.
 - E. A catalog like Brownell's has over 1,000 parts and accessories for the 1911, a total rivaled only by the AR-15. You don't need them. When you have your gunsmith go over your 1911 and tune/fit it, tell him if you want different sights, safeties, etc and let him fit them. This is not a kitchen table job for the typical owner.
 - F. A properly fitted 1911 has probably the longest service life of any common pistol. The .45 ACP cartridge works at low pressure (17,000 psi, compared to 35,000+ for the 9mm or .40 S&W), and the steel frame contributes to long service. My good friend Jim Higginbotham has a 1911 I had built by a custom 'smith in the 1970's, and that gun currently has over 200,000 rounds through it.
6. Beretta 92/96- I have a great deal of experience with the 92 through military training classes Higginbotham and I conduct for Special Forces and other small units. If properly lubricated and kept clean, they work well, but are fragile for service use.
- A. The locking blocks are a weak point, and often break, rendering the gun inoperable. If you have the older locking block, with square corners, I suggest you get a new one, which has radiused corners. This prevents cracking of this critical part.
 - B. DO NOT dry fire the Beretta without a snap cap in the chamber to cushion the firing pin. Dry firing on an empty chamber WILL result in a broken firing pin eventually in these pistols.
 - C. Clean the locking blocks and their frame recesses thoroughly, and lubricate them well. TW-25B applied after thorough degreasing seems to be the best lubrication.

Whichever pistol system you use, follow these tips to ensure a long, trouble free service life:

1. Use good quality magazines and good quality ammunition. Don't scrimp on either if you want the gun to run.
2. Keep the pistol clean and properly lubed. Field strip and clean after each range use. Inspect for wear at each cleaning session.
3. Replace recoil springs every 3,000 rounds. Replace other springs (firing pin springs, mainsprings, etc) every 10,000 rounds.
4. Avoid aftermarket gizmo's and add-on junk.
5. Detail strip the gun (you may have to have a gunsmith do this) and give it a thorough cleaning and lube once a year.

Take care of your gun and it will be more likely to take care of you.

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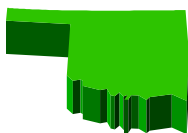
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The opening page of our website, rangemaster.com, now features a photo gallery. Just click on the "Photo Gallery" and you'll find fourteen photos from various Rangemaster activities, with detailed captions.

Concealed Carry News from Other States

North Carolina has had a permit system for several years, but they did not recognize any out of state permits. Their law has just been changed, and we can expect **Tennessee** to be reciprocal with **NC** in a few months.



Oklahoma recently changed their state law to recognize ALL permits issued by any state, including **Tennessee**. **Alaska** has changed their state law, making it legal to carry a concealed handgun anywhere in the state, without a permit. **Alaska** now joins **Vermont** as states that recognize their citizens' full rights of self defense.

The **Missouri** legislature has passed a concealed carry permit law and sent it to the Governor for signature. The Governor, who is anti-gun, has said he will veto the bill. The Republican controlled legislature is confident they will have the votes to over-ride his veto and bring the bill into law. If **Missouri** does pass this bill, there will only be five states left in the US in which residents do not have the right to defend their own lives or the lives of their loved ones.



I plan to live forever.

So far, so good.