



Tactical Talk

Volume 11, Issue 2

February 2007

“Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be the miracle.”

—Phillips Brooks

U.S. Episcopal bishop (1835 - 1893)

Inside this issue:

Student Shooting Incident 2

Speed or Accuracy? 4

Upcoming Classes 6

How to contact us 6

DUMMY ROUNDS

Dummy rounds are inert cartridges made to duplicate the size and shape of loaded rounds, but be incapable of firing. They can be used to safely function check a firearm, to teach a beginner to safely load/unload a gun, or as an aid to dry practice in reloading drills and malfunction clearance drills. Every shooter should have a few dummy rounds for their guns.

There are a number of brands and types of dummies available, but as with most things, quality varies greatly. The cheapest type are simple, one piece molded plastic replicas of live ammunition. These are very inexpensive, but they are very fragile, and don't hold up at all under use. Typically, the plastic rim chips off, making extraction difficult or impossible. The most expensive are solid, one piece aluminum dummies. These work very well and hold up very well, but they cost a lot. My choice are composite dummy rounds which use a real cartridge case, with a rubber bullet which fills the case completely. The brass case allows reliable extraction/ejection, and holds up well under extended use. These are available at Rangemaster in most of the common service pistol calibers. We sell them in packs of three dummy rounds, which is enough for most purposes.



Dummy rounds come in many forms. We recommend the version seen here at the extreme left. The others all have problems.



STUDENT SHOOTING INCIDENT

One of our students (we'll use his initials, LR) went through some courses here in 2001. He continued to practice, visiting Rangemaster several times over the next five years. Last February, his training was put to the test.

LR was in Columbus, GA, on business. LR lives in Memphis and has a Tennessee permit, which is valid in Georgia, so he was armed. LR went to a local shopping mall, with an associate, late in the afternoon. He was driving a rental SUV while in Columbus, and left it parked on the mall lot. LR and his associate exited the mall about 5:30pm, just as it was beginning to get dark, and headed for the SUV. As they approached the vehicle, LR noticed two young adult males walking in the opposite direction, toward the mall. Upon seeing LR and his friend, the two males changed their direction of travel from the direction toward the mall entrance to a direction to intercept LR at the SUV. LR immediately took note of this, and noted that the two were dressed in typical loose, baggy "urban thug" type clothing. LR tried to discreetly keep an eye on them as both he neared his SUV. Not wanting to turn his back to them, LR continued to the vehicle.

Both groups reached the vehicle about simultaneously, at which point the older looking of the two subjects reached under his sweatshirt for a pistol in the front of his waist. LR shouted "Don't do it!", as he immediately went for his own concealed Glock 22. As LR completed his presentation the subject had succeeded in getting his own gun out and was bringing it to bear on LR, so LR fired two rapid shots, both of which struck the offender in the upper center chest. The subject dropped immediately and expired on the scene. The second subject fled, and was not found.

(continued on next page)

LR and his associate moved to put a parked vehicle between themselves and the downed subject, and tried to watch over him while awaiting the arrival of police. LR holstered his pistol before the police arrived. Police took both LR and his associate to headquarters for questioning separately, then released both the same evening when their memories of the incident were the same and their statements matched the physical evidence.

I spoke with LR in person again recently, and although this event took place a year ago, he is still understandably upset that he was forced to take someone's life. His eyes still redden and fill with tears when he discusses the incident, but he is certain he did the right thing, and is glad that it was his adversary, rather than him lying dead on the pavement. He stated that although the suspect said nothing, it was *obvious* what was happening.

The lessons from this incident include:

BE ARMED! LR certainly did not expect to be involved in a shooting on that day, or at that mall. You don't get to pick the day—someone else will make that decision.

BE ALERT! LR noticed these guys the instant they changed direction from that of someone going to the mall, to that of someone intercepting him. Would YOU have noticed that while simply walking to your vehicle, chatting with a friend? If your answer is "No", you'd better work on your mindset and observation skills. Your pistol skills are moot unless your observation skills tell you there is a potential problem.

IF ATTACKED, FIGHT! A thug drawing a gun on you as you approach an SUV is **OBVIOUSLY** robbing or car-jacking you at the point of a deadly weapon. Don't wait until after he mortally wounds you to take action. The elements of Ability, Intent, and Imminent Jeopardy could all be summed up in the blink of an eye in this case. The time to act is **NOW**.

THE DANGER IS NOT OVER JUST BECAUSE THE FIGHT IS! LR moved to cover and holstered his pistol as soon as it was safe to do so. Responding police initially treated him as a suspect, because at that time, that is exactly what he was. The police will not know it was a justified self defense shooting until after they arrive, sort everyone out, look at the evidence, and interview participants and witnesses.

Speed? Accuracy? Why Not Both?

Over the years I have taken classes from, or observed the training of several dozen firearms instructors. I have noticed that many of them fall into one of two camps: speed freaks or anal about accuracy. Of course, the best of them realize that a blend of speed AND accuracy are truly what we need.

The trainers who are anal about accuracy generally don't use timers or stopwatches, and don't use drills that have par times or time limits. They encourage students to take their time and place the shots carefully. They say things like "There's no stop watch in a fight", and constantly exhort the student to take their time. The only measure of progress is the size of the shot group on the target.

The speed freaks tend to push the student to shoot faster and faster, and be satisfied with "combat accuracy". Whenever I have observed one of these, the standard of "combat accuracy" usually meant a hit anywhere on a silhouette target, from top-knot to toenail. The rationale offered is usually "any hit on the target is good, as long as it is delivered very quickly".

Almost fifty years ago, Jeff Cooper first wrote that the essential balance in combat marksmanship was "Speed, Power, and Accuracy" in EQUAL PARTS. He used the Latin words Diligentia, Vis, Celeritas to represent this balance, which came to be "DVC" in gunman shorthand.

Let's examine the anal about accuracy position. The statement that "there are no stopwatches at gunfights" is patently false. There is a time limit to every fight, and the stop watch is held by the Grim Reaper. Open ended time frames are fine against paper or cardboard targets, because *they don't shoot back!* In a real fight, our goal is always to hit the other guy before he hits

us. Our tiny shot group size doesn't matter if we can't deliver a hit before we're killed or crippled.

The speed is everything crowd is just as wrong. You simply cannot miss fast enough to win, and with a handgun peripheral hits are not much better than misses. The vital area on a frontal shot to an average man's torso is represented by an 8" to 9" square in the upper chest, NOT the entire body. Hits outside this area are often not even noticed in the heat of battle. Pistol bullets drill holes, and those holes need to be drilled in structures that are vital to continued action. The purpose of shooting an attacker is to make him stop, right now. That takes good hits.

What we need to learn to do then is HIT QUICKLY. We need to be fast enough, and hit well enough. This means we must learn to shoot accurately, and match the speed we shoot at to the distance/target size we are presented with. This can actually be written as a mathematical equation, for illustrative purposes:

$$\frac{SA/SP+TC+FT}{TARGET/DISTANCE} = HITS$$

SA/SP (Sight Alignment/Sight Picture) plus TC (Trigger Control) plus FT (Follow Through) is adjusted by the TARGET size and/or DISTANCE to the target. If we do this, we get timely hits. Up close, we need a rudimentary sight picture and quick trigger control. As distance increases, or we are offered a smaller exposed target, we have to slow down and refine the sight alignment and trigger control. At any distance, proper follow through reduces the time needed between shots.

The best way to learn these timing issues is through practice with a timer or stop watch. You have to learn to adjust your timing to be appropriate to the target size/distance. Up close, give yourself tight time limits, and practice until you can reliably beat them, while still getting good hits. As distance increases, increase the time limits a bit, and make yourself slow down a bit and get hits. These timing issues are critical to good performance.

RANGEMASTER
2611 S. Mendenhall Rd.
Memphis, TN 38115-1503



Phone: 901-370-5600
Fax: 901-370-5699
Email: Rangemaster@peoplepc.com
Please note new e-mail address!



www.rangemaster.com



Upcoming Specialized Classes

1911 Operator Course

February 10th-11th, Saturday-Sunday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. both days.
Learn to safely and efficiently use a 1911 pattern pistol.

OC (Pepper Spray) for Self Defense, taught by Paul Gomez
February 23rd, Friday, 6:00 -10:00 p.m., \$55.00.

Dynamic Marksmanship (2-day)

Watervliet Rod & Gun Club, Watervliet, Michigan, April 14th-15th,

Combative Pistol II

April 21-22, South River Gun Club, Atlanta, Georgia