



Tactical Talk

Volume 17, Issue 8

August 2013

"Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect every one who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are inevitably ruined."

-- Patrick Henry, speech of June 5 1788

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Instructor Courses

Oklahoma in September

Pennsylvania in October

Rangemaster's Three-Day Firearms Instructor Development Course is recognized as one of the premiere instructor courses for those wishing to teach defensive handgun skills to private citizens. Three full days of training are split about evenly between classroom instruction and range work. Attendees learn to coach others, learning to spot, diagnose and correct errors. In the classroom, academic training covers adult teaching theory; course design; implementation of training aids, including power point presentations; and much more. Students receive a 170+ page training manual, which becomes a valuable reference after class. Tuition is only \$499. The best way to master



any subject is to learn to teach it.

We have already conducted several of these this year around the country. We have two more coming up in 2013:

- ♦ Sept. 6-8, Fri - Sun, McCloud, Oklahoma (near OKC/ Shawnee)
- ♦ Oct 4-6, Fri - Sun, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (West Shore Sportsmans Association)

Call 901-370-5600 to register for either.

Nighthawk Custom Training

In June Lynn and I had the pleasure to teach a Combative Pistol Course at Nighthawk Custom Training's range near Rogers, Arkansas. Our host, Jon Hodoway, is a well known trainer himself who has put together a fine training facility in northwest Arkansas. This range is uniquely located at the center of a variety of metropolitan areas, being 222 miles from Oklahoma City, 220 miles from Kansas City, MO, 340 miles from St. Louis, 208 miles from Little Rock, and only 360 miles from Dallas. Jon frequently brings in outside trainers such as Massad Ayoob, John Farnam, and me. Here is a partial list of training available there in 2013:



Massad Ayoob Group MAG/40 Training - \$800
October 10th-13th, 2013

Massad Ayoob Group MAG/80 Training - \$900
October 14th-18th, 2013

Urban Rifle with John Farnam - \$625
November 2-3

Phone: [479-866-7280](tel:479-866-7280)
info@nighthawcustomtraining.com





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Mail Order: Payment by check, money, or credit card are accepted by mail. Please make checks payable to “Rangemaster” and mail to the address at the top of this page.

Quantity	Product	Price	Total
	Book: “Fighting Smarter” 3 rd Edition	\$29.95	
	DVD: “Concealed Carry for Self Defense”	\$22.95	
	DVD: “Defensive Shotgun”	\$22.95	
Subtotal			
Shipping (\$3.00 per DVD, \$4.00 per Book)			
Order Total			

Billing Information	Shipping Information (If Different)
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
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Zip Code:	Zip Code
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Credit Card Information	
Number:	Type: Visa MasterCard AmEx Discover
Expiration:	Signature:

The Colt Cobra, *by Tom Givens*

For roughly sixty years, from the mid-1920's to the mid-1980's, the small frame short barrel .38 Special revolver was the mainstay of American detectives and plain clothes officers, bodyguards, and armed private citizens. Just recently, a factory rep told me that Smith & Wesson sells more J-frame snubbies than any other handgun in their catalog and many people still rely on this type of gun for daily carry.

I have never been a fan of the .38 snubby as a primary weapon, for a number of reasons. It has a smaller grip and smaller sights than a service size handgun, holds far less ammo, is difficult to reload quickly, and the .38 Special is not known for effectiveness on big, angry doped up thugs. It is true that modern ammunition raises the effectiveness of the .38 Special round considerably, but I still consider it to be the minimum caliber I would choose for self defense. Also, if worn on the belt, the width of the cylinder makes the snubby little, if any, more concealable than a large caliber semi-auto with three times the amount of ammo in it. Even a little j-frame Smith is thicker through the cylinder than are most autos measured through the slide or grip frame. To me, the real niche for the snubby is as a second gun worn more deeply concealed than the primary sidearm it backs up. The small grip frame, short barrel, and light weight of the snubby make it an ideal choice for pocket or ankle carry as a second gun. This makes it a prime choice as a Back Up Gun (BUG) or for those occasions when clothing, activity, or environment make it just too difficult to carry a mid-size to full size handgun discretely.

For many years Colt was the world's preeminent manufacturer of handguns. In the early days of the 20th century, until after WWII, Colt was the main supplier of handguns to the US military, federal and local law enforcement agencies, and private citizens around the world. In response to demand for a more concealable handgun, in 1927 Colt introduced the Detective Special. This was essentially the very popular Colt Police Positive revolver with a 2" barrel replacing the standard 4", 5", or 6" barrel of the Police Positive. The Police Positive was a very compact revolver, with a smaller frame than that of the Smith & Wesson Military and Police model or the Colt Offi-



One advantage of the Cobra over the j-frame S&W is a front sight big enough to pick up quickly.

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cial Police model. These two service revolvers comprised the vast bulk of the revolvers carried by American police officers of that day, and both were a bit large for pocket carry. The Detective Special was an instant success. Weighing just 23 ounces, holding 6 rounds of .38 Special ammo, in a sturdy but compact package, the gun was soon in great demand.

After World War II Colt and Smith & Wesson began experimenting with aluminum frames to reduce the weight of handguns, which up to that time had been of all steel construction. Immediately after WWII, the US military toyed with the idea of replacing the 1911 .45 with a lighter, more compact handgun in 9mm, to standardize ammo with NATO, on whom we had thrust the 7.62X51mm cartridge, whether they liked it or not. Smith & Wesson developed the Model 39, 9mm semi-auto, and Colt the Lightweight Commander, both with aluminum frames. The military dropped the project, but Colt and Smith & Wesson saw the market value of lighter weight carry handguns and brought out several more in the next few years. In 1950, Colt produced an aluminum frame version of the Detective Special, dubbing it the Cobra, and a new era for snubbies began.

Although externally identical to the Detective Special, the Cobra dropped the weight from 23 ounces to just 15 ounces. Frankly, worn on a gun belt the difference is hardly noticeable, but in the pocket or on the ankle, the difference is immediately apparent. The first generation Cobra's made in the early 1950's had a full length grip frame, which extended all the way to the bottom of the wooden stocks. The front sight was narrow, and the rear sight notch was quite small. The ejector rod was short—too short to forcefully extract empty cases for a fast reload. All of these shortcomings were addressed in the mid-1950's when the second generation guns appeared.



The 6 shot Colt (top) is not appreciably larger than the 5 shot S&W j-frame.

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This Cobra, finished in electroless nickel is the author's favorite BUG.

The front sight was made significantly larger, just like the ones on the Official Police service revolver of that day. The ejector rod was lengthened, to improve extraction of fired cases. In 1966, the final improvement was made, when the grip frame was shortened substantially. This allows very compact grips of various designs to be fitted to suit the user's particular needs.

In 1973 the D-frame line, which included the Colt Detective Special, the Cobra, and the Agent were redesigned to "modernize" them. These last third generation guns have a heavier barrel, with a shrouded ejector rod, and tiny, hard to see low ramped sights. To me, they are far less desirable than the second generation guns, with their high visibility sights. My recommendation of the Colt Cobra as the premiere back-up gun assumes a second generation gun, which are easy to find and reasonably priced.

The second generation guns were made from the mid-1950's to 1973, and several hundred thousand were manufactured, so they are not hard to find. Cruise a few gun shops or check the various internet auctions, and you'll find a number of excellent examples. I have found several over the past couple of years in the \$375 to \$500 range, depending on condition. These little guns often have finish wear, but are mechanically sound, as they have been carried much but shot very little. I have a couple that are absolutely pristine on the inside, although the finish is quite worn on the exterior, especially on the aluminum parts. Since aluminum doesn't rust, the worn finish is of no consequence to me.

Why, you ask, would I hunt up these antique revolvers instead of just buying a new one from some other maker? Good question, and I have some good answers. First, the old Colt holds 6 rounds, not 5. In essentially the same size package, more ammo is better. More importantly, the Colt's have sights I can see. A front sight big enough to pick up quickly is the single greatest aid to high speed accuracy. If you only have 5-6 medium caliber rounds to fire, you'd bet-

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ter be getting hits with every one of them. That's a lot easier with the Colts. The old-timers often preferred the Colts over S&W's because on the Colt the cylinder rotates to the right, and the hand pushes the cylinder to the right (into the frame) to lock up just before a cartridge is fired. Theoretically, this gives a tighter, stronger lock-up to the Colt over a Smith & Wesson, which rotates counter-clockwise and is pushed away from the frame at lock-up. I doubt that this is a big deal, but I have noticed that my Colt's shoot very well for small revolvers. Finally, the 1950's and 1960's production guns featured very good fit and finish. The old Colt revolver action required a bit of hand fitting at the factory, which made it more expensive than some of its competitors. They are often much better made than current production guns.

One caveat—the aluminum frame Colts are not compatible with +P ammunition. Loads in the +P range will accelerate wear on these guns rapidly. The traditional 148 grain target wadcut-ter load (my preference is the Winchester Super Match) or the 125 grain Federal Nyclad load are both good non-+P choices that shoot very well in my Cobra's and offer good terminal performance.

Look up one of these second generation Colts and get acquainted with it. I think you'll be pleased.

www.alessigunholsters.com
716-706-0321

Mika Pocket Holsters,
608-606-3668

www.eaglegrips.com
800-323-6144

www.gunbroker.com
internet gun auctions

www.desantisholster.com
1-800-424-1236



For high quality leather gear for the Back-Up Gun (BUG) it's hard to beat the Alessi ankle holster.

JM Custom Kydex Gear

by Tom Givens

Recently I have been testing some new gear from JM Custom Kydex, of Reno, Nevada. This is extremely well designed and well made stuff, with various options available to fit the equipment to your specific preferences. You can specify the belt width for belt loops; the amount of cant you want, or straight vertical; and different heights of sweat guard. I, for instance, do not like for the sweat guard to extend all the way to the end of the



slide, as it gets in the way of obtaining a firing grip at high speed. JM will make a full sweat guard, a lower one, or none at all, your choice. I like that.

JM Custom has two versions of IWB holsters and a very fast and comfortable OWB design. I am currently wearing two of his single magazine pouches. These hold the mag's very securely and tuck the big, fat Glock magazines closer to the body than most, for better concealment. His prices are reasonable and turn-around time is pretty good.

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Armed Citizens Legal Defense Network *by Tom Givens*

The ACLDN was founded about five years ago by well known firearms trainer Marty Hayes, and the Advisory Board includes experienced trainers such as John Farnam, Massad Ayoob, Dennis Tueller, and me. The purpose of the network is two-fold.

First, the network is a training resource for its members. Upon joining, members receive several instructional DVD's covering the law of self defense and other topics to help you prepare for before, during, and after a critical incident. These DVD's are worth more than the price of membership. There is also a monthly journal, full of useful information.

Second, if a network member is prosecuted or sued for his self defense actions, the Board will review the case and provide expert and financial assistance if the case appears to involve legitimate self defense. Immediately, the network sends \$5,000 to an affiliated attorney, to get legal assistance started, and will donate further money as required for expert testimony or attorney's fees.

At this writing, the network has assisted members in 4 cases, all successful defenses. The network spent between \$2,500 and \$10,000 on these cases. The legal defense fund currently has over \$275,000 in it, and is growing.

Membership information can be obtained at info@armedcitizensnetwork.org , or the website www.armedcitizensnetwork.org . We have brochures and informational booklets on this program at Rangemaster, as well. Recommended!



Report on HiTS Class

by Tom Givens

I am always leery of firearms trainers who have not taken a course from someone else in years, or even decades. I have been carrying a gun professionally for over forty years and teaching firearms use professionally for over thirty-five years, and I still try to take at least two classes each year from someone outside of Rangemaster. This keeps me current, exposes me to new ideas and equipment, and let's me steal,



Here students fire while on the move in the recent Dallas HiTS class.

er... audit the techniques, tactics and drills devised by other trainers with different backgrounds and life experiences.

Thus, I do not teach today

what I taught twenty-five years ago, or even fifteen years ago. Failure to engage in continual training leads to stagnation and obsolescence.

I first met Wayne Dobbs several years ago when he attended a course I was teaching in Texas. He was already a seasoned instructor and an outstanding shooter at that time, and I was very impressed. Since then, I have seen him work at several annual Tactical Conferences and

other events. More recently, I met Wayne's partner, Darryl Bolke, at one of our conferences and I immediately decided



Here is part of the firing line during shotgun day at the Hardwired Tactical Shooting class in Dallas.

that I needed to attend a course put on by these gentlemen, who do business as Hardwired Tactical Shooting, or "HiTS". My road training schedule and theirs finally coincided in June and I was able to attend a one-day First Responder Pistol and one-day First Responder Shotgun course at the Dallas Pistol Club. I was not disappointed.

Rangemaster staff instructors John Hearne and Chris & Anita Hopkins also attended this weekend course. We each shot almost 400 rounds of pistol ammo on Saturday and almost 250 rounds of shotgun ammo on Sunday. In addition to sharpening and refreshing our own skills, we picked up some new drills to work into our programs here. I can highly recommend training with these guys.

Hardwiredtacticalshooting.com

Women's Alternative Carry Methods

Mode of dress and differences in body shape sometimes require women to seek an alternative to the belt holster for carrying a defensive sidearm. One of the most comfortable, concealable and convenient alternatives is the Belly Band, an elastic band worn around the waist, with a holster built in. These can be worn with a skirt, with pants or shorts, with or without a belt. A bit of experimentation will find the location on the waist where the handgun is both comfortable and well hidden. Some belly bands have additional pouches built in, to hold pepper spray or a spare magazine.

Here are some photos showing the various options for wearing a belly band with compact to full size handguns on ladies.



The belly band is a discrete way to carry a medium size handgun in feminine clothing.



The belly band conceals a full size 9mm Smith & Wesson M&P under a nice blouse.

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www.rangemaster.com

Update on the Tactical Conference

Our annual Tactical Conference will be conducted over three days.

Feb. 21-23, 2014

Friday through Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day

In 2014 the usual cast of trainers (John Farnam, Massad Ayoob, Southnarc, Todd Green, Marty Hayes, Tom Givens, etc, over 20 in all) will be presenting blocks of instruction, plus we have several new additions. Attorney and reserve police officer Mark Loreto will discuss the ramifications of traveling armed under LEOSA regulations; Cecil Burch will be teaching some of his innovative hand to hand concepts; and Kathy Jackson will be offering a segment on teaching firearms skills to females. As always, there will be classroom blocks, live action hands-on blocks, and the realistic tactical match in the range.

Cost is only \$299, the best bargain in the training industry. In 2013 we turned away about 20 applicants who waited too late to register. Space is limited, so the cut-off is strictly enforced. Sign up soon to avoid disappointment. The registration form and waiver can be downloaded at www.rangemaster.com.