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RANGE • MASTER

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# RANGEMASTER

DEFENSIVE TACTICS FOR THE REAL WORLD

Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## (TOM'S BOOK)

Here's a write-up for the latest edition of my book, *Fighting Smarter*. It was first published in 2000, but this third edition is completely revised, updated, and expanded. I hope you find it useful.

- Tom

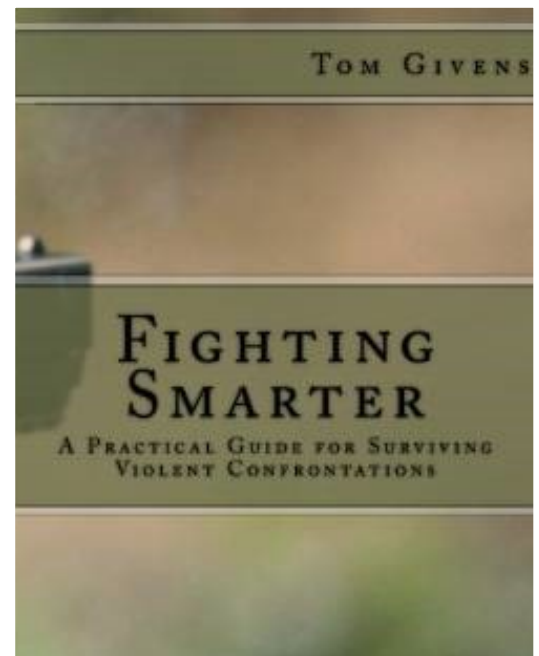
Fighting Smarter is the result of over 40 years of specialized training, education and experience in using handguns for self-defense. Consisting of 40 chapters and over 300 pages, this book is full of vital information for anyone concerned about personal security.

The first half of the book deals with the "software" issues, such as developing your awareness skills, building a winning mindset, and your legal rights and responsibilities. There is also a great deal of information about crime and how criminals operate, to help you see problems as they develop.

The "hardware" section deals with selecting the right

gun, holster, and ammunition and proper training to take control of your life.

The author, Tom Givens, has been carrying a gun professionally for over 40 years and has been conducting training for over 35 years. Givens serves as an expert witness on firearms and firearms training issues in both state and federal courts all over the US. He is a former champion competitor in both IPSC and IDPA competition, and he holds an IDPA Master rating in CDP, ESP, and SSP divisions. Givens has written well over 100 published magazine articles in *Combat Handguns Magazine*, *SWAT Magazine*, *Concealed Carry Magazine*, *Soldier of Fortune*, and other publications. This is his fifth published textbook. ■



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## WHAT'S NEXT on the CALENDAR

[www.eventbrite.com/o/tom-givens-6762296023](http://www.eventbrite.com/o/tom-givens-6762296023)

Eventbrite™

**RTFS Instructor Course**  
February 27 - March 1  
Robertsdale, AL  
(Pensacola, FL area)

**RTFS Instructor Course**  
March 6-8  
Nexus Shooting Center  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL

**RTFS Advanced Instructor Course**  
March 14-15  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL

**Dynamic Marksmanship**  
March 28-29  
Florence, SC

**Intensive Pistol / Defensive Shotgun**  
April 11-12  
New Orleans, LA

**Combative Pistol 1**  
April 25-26  
Bryan, TX  
(Austin area)

# A NEW ERA IN TRAINING



**Second  
Amendment  
Foundation**  
**Training Division**

The Second Amendment Foundation is one of the oldest and largest gun rights groups in the US. SAF was the driving force behind several of the recent high profile gun rights lawsuits that resulted in pro-gun rights decisions in the US Supreme Court. The Second Amendment Foundation has consistently been the most effective guardian of our personal rights.

Recently the SAF announced formation of the new SAF Training Division (SAFTD). The official news release follows below. Both Lynn and I are proud to be affiliated with this operation and are deeply involved in its initial stages. I serve as the national director of training, overseeing the development of course content for the various training operations. Lynn is in charge of the women's training division and will be developing a curriculum aimed specifically toward women.

- Tom

**PRESS  
RELEASE  
01.05.15**

BELLEVUE, WA – Following a year of organization, the Second Amendment Foundation

Training Division (SAFTD) has embarked on the development of a program specifically directed at training the new and inexperienced shooters in the defensive use of pistols, shotguns and carbines.

In early 2014, experienced trainers from throughout the country were recruited to act as the core of SAFTD and to begin the development of a number of foundational courses. Initial offerings include MOI – Methods of Instruction, Defensive Handgun 1, Defensive Handgun 2, Defensive Shotgun 1, Defensive Shotgun 2, Defensive Carbine 1 and Defensive Carbine 2 in addition to instructor level course work to train a national cadre of firearms instructors to offer SAFTD courses throughout the nation.

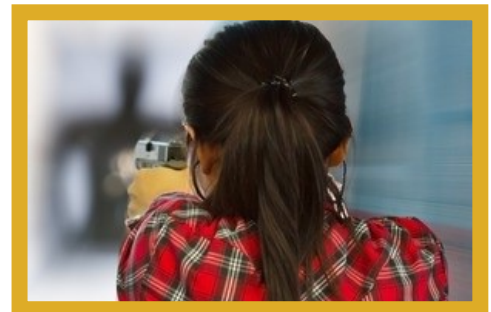
All of the courses offered are presented with the defensive use of the individual firearm in mind. While familiar foundational material is presented, additional defensive topics and activities

are included such as firearm selection, holsters, use of force, discussions about AOJP – Ability, Opportunity, Jeopardy, Preclusion – Disparity of Force and much more. All Level 1 courses are introductory and foundational. All Level 2 courses take the student's foundational skill set and builds it into a more comprehensive defensive shooting level.

These courses will be the introductory set rolled out through the Spring and early Summer of 2015. The national introduction of the SAFTD courses will be held at the Shot Show in Las Vegas in late January. Initial instructors will be trained beginning in February. Initial student level coursework will begin in mid-March. All coursework will be scheduled via SAFTD's website with all available courses and regional trainers being listed along with full course descriptions and full bios of all certified SAFTD instructors.

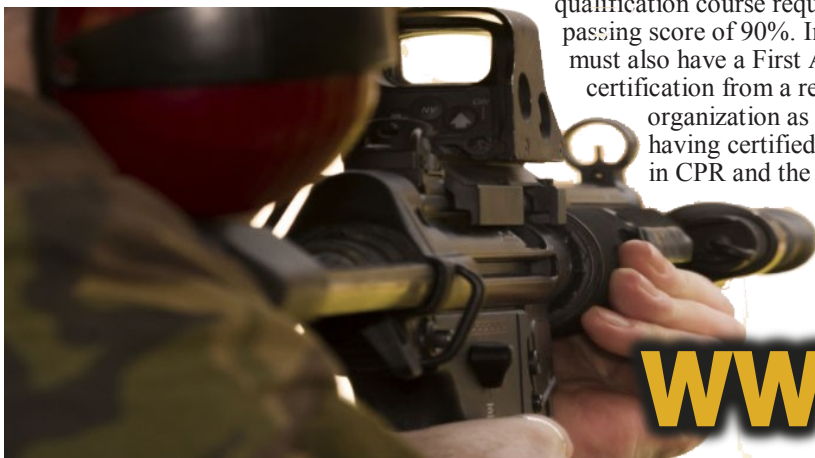
Instructors will need to attend SAFTD's MOI course – as well as completing periodic Continuing Education, the course they wish to be certified to teach and the instructor version of that course while achieving passing scores of 90% on all written exams. At the end of the instructor course, they will shoot a qualification course requiring a passing score of 90%. Instructors must also have a First Aid certification from a recognized organization as well as having certified instruction in CPR and the use of an AED.

In addition to the core offerings SAFTD will also be offering a Situational Alertness for Everyone (S.A.F.E.) course which is designed to teach the student to develop and adopt the situational awareness mindset while at home, at work, on the road, traveling, on the phone etc; and teaches how to make your home safe and less attractive to would be robbers and home invasion.



SAFTD will also be offering a Women's Program. The SAFTD Women's program was developed by women for women and addresses the special needs of women, their firearms, security and special concerns with carrying a firearm both on and off-body. Initially our Women's program will consist of Women's Defensive Handgun 1 and 2 but will eventually lead to a full women's program starting in early 2016 including State Chapters and State Leaders for each state.

We are excited about our program. We strongly believe it fills a significant gap in what is being offered to a new defensive firearms student. We look forward to meeting you all at in the weeks, months, and years to come. ■



**www.SAFTD.org**



**N**ot long ago I was enjoying a steak dinner with several other full time firearms instructors. We had two from Rangemaster, two from Gunsite, two from the American Institute of Marksmanship, and a couple of law enforcement firearms instructors from local agencies. During dinner, the topic came up, "What phrase really darkens your day when you hear it?" The unanimous answer was "Hell, I grew up around guns."

This simple six-word sentence is guaranteed to cause dread among firearms

trainers, and is usually the signal that a long, stressful, and frustrating day lies ahead. Why is that? It's because this is usually a sign that the speaker is both ignorant and stupid. The word "ignorant" is not an insult. It simply means that the person in question does not have some required knowledge of the subject at hand. "Ignorance" can be fixed. In fact, I make my living fixing it. Stupidity, however, is another matter entirely. The person who chooses not to train because "hell, I grew up around guns" tends to be so dull-witted that he actually doesn't even realize that he is ignorant. He doesn't know that he doesn't know.

Pretty much without exception, these are the people who commit the most serious safety violations, as well as being horrible shots. In fact, there are six errors these folks commit so regularly that it seems to be standard operating procedure for HIGUAG shooters.

Three of these errors are directly safety related, while the other three are the reason they shoot so poorly.

First, let's discuss the safety issues. Invariably, the HIGUAG shooter has no concept of trigger finger discipline (#1) or

untrained people with any clue how to do this, though; and a lot of negligent shootings result from poor habits.

The other three errors are more related to poor shooting than to safety, and we see them just as often in these folks. The first is an improper grip. For reliable function, proper trigger manipulation, and recoil control, there is more to gripping a handgun than "just pick it up." A

proper technique here can make a big difference in shooting ability. The same goes for trigger control. I rarely see self-taught shooters who understand trigger finger

placement issues, slack, trigger reset, or other nuances of good handgun shooting. Precision with a handgun is probably 90% trigger control, and some competent instruction can often do wonders for a shooter's accuracy. Follow through, or more precisely the lack of it, is the third shooting issue I see most frequently in the untrained.

American males seem to think they are born with genes for driving a car well at high speed and for shooting a handgun well under stressful, demanding conditions. Suggesting they seek professional training in these pursuits seems to be akin to questioning their virility. In truth, a handgun is a hand tool, easier to use well than a violin but a bit more complex than a shovel. Admitting you need training in its use does not make you less of a man, trust me. ■

- Tom

# ARE YOU A HIGUAG SHOOTER?

muzzle discipline (#2). One day while we still operated our fixed facility range, a 70ish gentleman on my indoor range was sitting on the bench behind the firing line, holding a Glock pistol in a firing grip, with his finger on the trigger, carelessly pointing it at several people as he examined something on the side of the slide. When I took the pistol from him and gave him some "counseling," it came up that he had no formal handgun training, but had "grown up around guns." Sigh....

The third safety violation I typically see with these folks is a sloppy and dangerous manner of drawing and re-holstering a handgun. Presenting a handgun from a holster and subsequently re-holstering it is quite safe, IF done correctly. I rarely see



In January, Lynn and I traveled to Las Vegas for the annual SHOT show. This is an opportunity for us to visit with other industry friends and to attend

meetings with several organizations whose boards we serve on. The Expo Center is huge with about 1,500 different exhibitors, and over the course of two or three days you walk about 15 miles of aisles. I used this trip as an opportunity to try out a new holster from Alien Gear, a relatively new vendor. Wearing this holster 12 hours a day while walking several for miles would give me an excellent opportunity to see if it is as comfortable and concealable as the maker claims.



The holster design is not anything radically new. It consists of a backplate and a Kydex detail-molded shell to hold the pistol. The backplate attaches to the belt with nylon clips, metal clips, or leather loops. The unique thing about this holster is that on the side that goes against your body, the backplate is covered with neoprene rubber, similar to the material inside a wetsuit. This provides a soft, somewhat padded surface that eliminates any rubbing on your body by corners, slide latches, or other protrusions on the pistol. Also, the neoprene somewhat grabs the inner clothing keeping the rig from shifting around through the course of a long day of walking. The user can easily adjust the height that the pistol rides at by adjusting the loops where they attach to the holster body. Thus, the holster can be fitted to the individual user's preference.

Although of very high quality, these holsters are not expensive at all and are available for a very wide variety of handguns. I highly recommend them. Visit [aliengearholsters.com](http://aliengearholsters.com) for details. ■

- Tom

# Establishing a Dominance Paradigm

On January 9-11, 2015, we conducted the first Establishing a Dominance Paradigm course in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

## EDP AAR



This was a very intensive three-day course taught by Craig Douglas (Southnarc), William Aprill, and Tom Givens, with each trainer concentrating on his particular field of expertise. We had 15 students from literally all over the country, coming from as far away as New York City for this course. Days were long, typically running from 8:30 AM until 7 PM. The training involved classroom work, live fire on the range, and very realistic scenario-based training using Simunitions equipment.

William April has a unique background, having worked as a deputy sheriff and Deputy US Marshal before becoming a licensed psychologist. He has worked extensively with criminals both in a law enforcement and a mental health capacity. His lectures included a great deal of information on criminal psychology, but there was also a heavy emphasis on the brain physiology of stress and how to control that stress in a crisis. Southnarc put the trainees through a number of scenarios involving various role-play interactions. We had a separate training area with movable walls and furniture which allowed us to set up some very realistic

scenarios. On the range, I set up progressively more difficult drills with a lot of issues intended strictly to raise the students' stress level, and those drills were quite successful in inducing anxiety and stress in the shooters. Both the scenario-based training and the live fire gave the students the opportunity to experience high levels of stress and to use William's techniques to control that stress and still function. Lynn Givens and Tiffany Johnson, as well as Jack Barrett, our host, joined the primary trainers as role players in the scenarios. We were able to put the students into real-life problems and have them work out their own salvation. Great training!

I'd like to thank Jack Barrett of the BDC Gun Room Indoor Range in Shawnee and his entire staff. They provided a wonderful facility and excellent support work throughout the three days of training. Craig, William and I plan to offer this course once a year, in January, at the BDC Gun Room. This is an outstanding brand-new indoor training center with multiple classrooms and ranges. Watch this newsletter for details of the 2016 class. ■



More photos & videos available at [www.rangemaster.com/establishing-a-dominance-paradigm/](http://www.rangemaster.com/establishing-a-dominance-paradigm/)



(Left to right) Tiffany Johnson, Tom Givens, Lynn Givens, Craig Douglas (Southnarc) and William Aprill at the Establishing a Dominance Paradigm course. Lynn and Tiffany worked as role players during some of the scenario based training, which is a valuable source of experience in decision making and handling rapidly evolving situations.

The BDC Gun Room training complex in Shawnee, OK, includes two very modern ranges and multiple classrooms. First class!

