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DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE REAL WORLD

Firearms Training Services
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NO NIGHT SIGHTS? by Tom Givens

I am often asked why the sights on my carry handguns and on my training/practice handguns are plain black steel, with the front sight painted a very bright, garish orange/red, instead of being Tritium lighted night sights. It's not that I dislike Tritium sights. It's just that they are possibly a waste of money.

Violent crime does not take place in a vacuum. In public, there is no reason for a bad guy to be in real darkness, nor for you to be there. Most violent crime happens on well lighted parking lots, and the rest happens on sidewalks under streetlights, or inside places like the local Stab 'n Rob. I have had my sidearm out on a Stab 'n Rob parking lot at 3:00am and was able to see the sights better than at 3:00pm on a rainy or overcast day. The fact is, if it is so dark you need a flashlight to identify a person or see what that is in his hands,

the flashlight will illuminate plain sights just fine. If there is sufficient ambient light to identify the person and see what's in his hands, you can see your sights. The time of day is irrelevant—all that matters is the amount of ambient light.

I have been asked why I use orange/red instead of light green, which should be more visible. Green does show up better than red in dim light, against a blank wall or a tan cardboard target. However, shades of green are common in outer clothing, which is what your sights will be aligned on. Bright orange/red is about the least likely color for a criminal to be wearing when he attacks you. That's why my front sights are bright orange/red.

In preparation for an Active Shooter Course we put on, I once went to the

food court of a popular local shopping mall, got a drink, and just sat at a table and observed. I had a notebook, and I kept tabs of the outer garment colors worn by everyone that came and went in the course of an hour or so. Black, brown, blue, gray, and green in various shades were by far the most heavily represented colors. No one wore an outer garment that was an ugly orange/red color. That color front sight will, however, show up very well against any of the colors listed. A policeman would call this "a clue."

The bright orange/red front sight contrasts well with the likely target, and contrasts well with the all black rear sight. If I'm looking through my black rear sight and can see orange/red, my sights are plenty well lined up for a fast shot at typical engagement distances. If a more precise shot is required, the orange/red front sight



still makes alignment easier, as it gives a sharp contrast to the black rear sight notch.

Automotive touch-up paint adheres to sights pretty well, as it is intended for use on metal, even better if primed. I often just use model paint and touch it up periodically. My carry gun and practice/training guns are identical, so my carry gun gets shot very little. The paint lasts a long time on it. The training guns get repainted more often.

One thing I don't like about night sights involves the common three-dot set-up. The tritium dots often do not line up correctly and cause a shift in point of impact when they are used instead of putting the top of the front sight even with the top of the rear sight. For this reason, if I have night sights, I prefer the vertical arrangement, like Heinie's Straight Eights.

Remember, night sights won't illuminate your target; they won't help identify a target or justify action; and if you can see your target well enough to make a valid decision to fire, you'll be able to see plain sights. If they make you feel better, by all means have them. Just don't expect too much from them. ■

If I'm looking through my black rear sight and can see orange/red, my sights are plenty well lined up for a fast shot..."

- Tom Givens

UPCOMING TRAINING

AUG 23-25

Firearms Instructor Course
(Law Enforcement Only)
South Dakota

SEP 7-8

Combative Pistol I
White Hall, AR

SEP 13-15

Pistol Instructor Course
Hot Springs, AR

SEP 27-28

Intensive Pistol Skills
Franklin, TN

SEP 29

Defensive Shotgun
Franklin, TN

OCT 3-5

Pistol Instructor Course
Xenia, OH

OCT 18-20

Shotgun Instructor Course
Dallas, TX

Eventbrite

The K-38



Here is a recent acquisition I'm very happy with. This started as a K-38, Model 14 with six-inch barrel. The barrel was cut to five inches, recrowned and front sight reinstalled. I pulled the Target trigger and hammer. I replaced them with a smooth "combat" trigger and a standard hammer with the spur trimmed just a little. The K-38 has a fairly heavy barrel and rib, and at five inches it seems to balance just right. I added an ancient pair of Rogers stocks with the finger grooves removed, and this wheelgun is just right. ■

– Tom

Shotgun Voodoo

by
Tom
Givens

There is more to properly using a serious social shotgun than most people realize. For one thing, ammunition selection is critical. Check out the targets to the right.

Slugs were fired offhand, from 25 yards, in my Beretta 1301. The slugs in the "T" in the head are exactly where they were aimed. Four rounds of Winchester Ranger Low Recoil one-ounce slugs, with three in one hole and one very slightly out. The group below that was Fiocchi 7/8 ounce Three-Gun coated slugs. Same distance, same gun, same shooter, same point of aim. Impact is several inches low. You can't just buy what's on sale and expect it to hit to the sights.

The buckshot target shows the pattern of four rounds of Fiocchi 00 Buck, 3-Gun 9 pellet load, 1250 fps, at 15 yards. Right on point of aim, good solid pattern. This also from my 1301.

Same trip, shot my 1928 vintage Remington Model 11 riot gun. Cycles flawlessly with Federal low recoil 8 pellet Flite-Control 00 but won't cycle reliably with Federal low recoil #1 buck with Flite Control. Why? No idea. This is why you have to test fire, pattern, and check out any load you consider for defensive use in your House Howitzer. ■





Our good friend and colleague Chris Baker works at Lucky Gunner, an internet ammunition retailer. He is set up for ammo testing and has done an exhaustive series of tests on defensive pistol and revolver ammunition, which can be seen on Lucky Gunner's website.

Recently, I asked Chris to acquire and test some of Federal's new short shotgun shells. I have been getting inquiries about these in shotgun class, so I wanted Chris to get me some real input on them, which he obliged. His comments are below. Thanks, Chris!

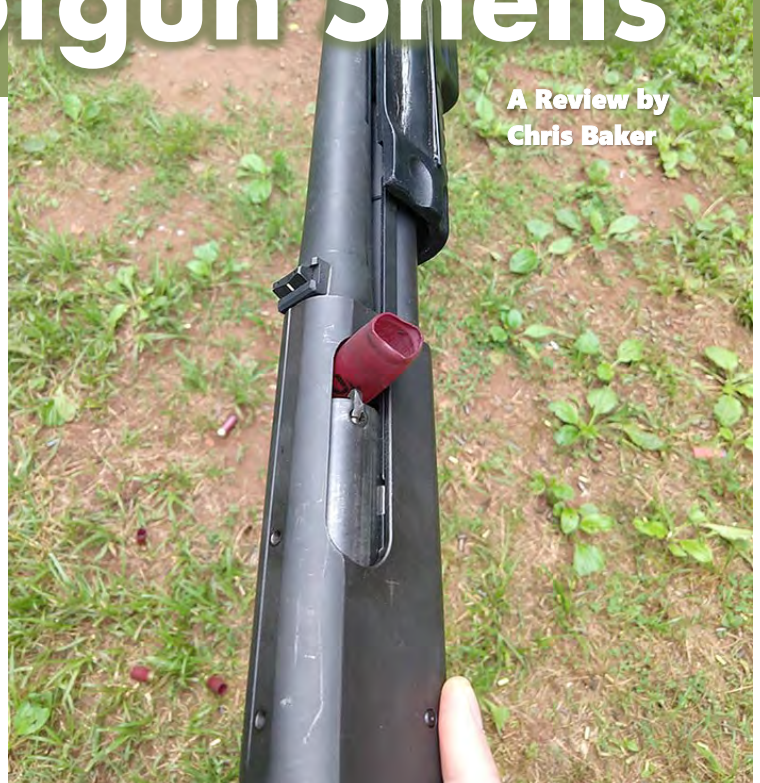
- Tom

Shorty Shotgun Shells

Got an update for you on this. I tried some of the Federal Shorty Slugs as well as the #8 shot (Federal has advertised a #4 buck option as well but I haven't seen that for sale yet).

They will feed in the 870 if you run the action vigorously enough and keep the gun in a horizontal orientation. If you fail to do either of those things, the spent shell will not fully eject, and you end up with a stovepipe-style failure (see photo to the right). Port loading was also hit or miss with the shorty shells. I'm not exactly sure what was going on with that because I had trouble duplicating the issue intentionally, but when I tried loading through the port, the shells didn't always want to chamber on the first try.

I also tried some with the Beretta 1301 and that was a definite no-go. When a shell is supposed to be released onto the lifter from the tube, the shorty shells are short



A Review by
Chris Baker



enough that two shells end up on the carrier (see photo to the left). Un-f*cking the action from that kind of stoppage is tedious, to say the least, so I wasn't very motivated to experiment further. Port loading with the 1301 did seem to work okay for what it's worth, but it had the same issues with ejection as the 870.

I clocked the velocity from the 1 oz slugs at 1076 fps from the 14-inch 870 barrel and 1150 fps from the 18-inch 1301 barrel. That's about the same as several of the common 2 3/4" reduced recoil slugs, and the recoil seemed comparable to me. So being able to cram more shells in the tube (I could fit seven in the 870 tube with a +1 extension) seems to be the only supposed benefit of this ammo.

There is a mini shell adapter available for the Mossberg 500/590 that is supposed to make these shells feed correctly but we don't have a Mossberg on hand to test that out. If you happen to see one of those in action, I'd love to hear about it.

Chris Baker
LuckyGunner.com

Drill of the Month:

Five-Second Standards



Throughout 2019, we will be running a Drill of the Month in each edition of the newsletter. The goal is help motivate folks to get to the range and actually shoot their defensive weapons, and to have some fun in the process.

Each month we'll post a drill or a short course of fire. You are encouraged to go to the range, shoot the drill, then post your thoughts and a photo of your target on the Rangemaster Facebook page. Get out there and shoot your carry gear!

Five-Second Standards

Designed by Tom Givens

The target you'll need for this drill is a B-8 repair center (the FBI-IP1 bullseye or the bullseye on an LTT target could also work). This drill was designed so it can be shot with any handgun that holds at least five rounds, including a J-frame. It is meant to be shot from concealment, with everyday carry gear.

- 5 yds** Draw from concealment (both hands), fire 5 rounds (5 secs)
From the ready, dominant hand only, fire 5 rounds (5 secs)
From the ready, non-dominant hand only, fire 5 rounds (5 secs)

- 10 yds** From the ready (both hands), fire 5 rounds (5 secs)

20 rounds total, 200 points possible, goal is a clean 200 under the time limits. I recently shot this drill a few times in a practice session with my Glock 17 and wound up with 198s and 199s. After a few tries, I finally shot a perfect 200 score. Give this drill a try and let's see your results. Good luck! ■

The 2020 Rangemaster Tactical Conference will be conducted on March 27-29, 2020, at the excellent facilities of the Dallas Pistol Club in Carrollton, Texas.

The Dallas Pistol Club is a very nice facility with multiple ranges and permanent buildings with real restrooms. Both the DFW airport and Love Field are 15-20 minutes from the range, and there are numerous hotels and restaurants 15 minutes away in the Galleria area of Addison, TX. There are also hotels and eateries five to ten minutes away in Carrollton.

As always, there will be live-fire training with handgun and shotgun; hands on training in empty hands skills, impact weapons, OC, and medical skills; and classroom training on a variety of topics including legal issues, personal tactics, historical information and much more. All of the usual suspects will be teaching, plus several trainers who will be presenting at Tac Con for the first time. Trainers

will include Massad Ayoob, John Farnam, Tom Givens, Southnarc, Gabe White, Chris Cerino, Scott "Jedi" Jedlinski, Wayne Dobbs, Darryl Bolke, Karl Rehn, and many more. There will be a Standards Match on turning targets, plus a one-on-one tournament for the top scorers. Nowhere else can you find this abundance of training and trainers in one venue.

Go to www.TacCon.info to learn more and register. Don't delay! Every year this event sells out four to five months in advance. One third of the available tickets sold in the first two weeks after the registration went live. Once the tickets are gone, that's it until the next year. ■



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