

 **TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"**
"WELL REGULATED MILITIA" – WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



By Stephen L. Bakke  December 3, 2015

Here's what provoked me:

An anti-Second Amendment writer took off in several directions, but I wanted to specifically address his argument that the Founders' intent is irrelevant in today's world. I need about twice the space allowed to make a real convincing argument, so I have to live within my constraints. The facts aren't complicated, but take up more space than mere knee-jerk, opinionated "sound-bites."

Here's my response:

"Well Regulated Militia" – What Does That Mean?

John W. Otis scoffs at the modern relevance of the Second Amendment in "Gun control is the cure"-11/29. He wrote this regarding "well regulated militia": "since there are none today, the Second Amendment is pretty much obsolete."

Jefferson provides advice on interpreting the Constitution: "...instead of trying [to determine] what meaning may be squeezed out...or invented...conform to the probable one in which it was passed."

"Militia" did not merely refer to creation of a standing army. Our Founders' gave hints:

- "A militia when properly formed are in fact the people themselves...and include...all men capable of bearing arms." - Senator Richard Lee (1787)
- Arms in the hands of the citizens may be used at individual discretion for the defense of the country...or self-defense." - John Adams

Is it relevant today? It's not unheard for a community to create a group of trained citizens to share responsibility for security at a school.

I've insufficient space for a complete argument, so let me conclude that our Founders were certainly reacting to the reality of having to form a standing army. But additionally, their documented arguments and discussions show their intentions included the right of general self-defense.

Next we should debate the meaning of "well-regulated"!