

Handguns and Self Defense

by Matt Schlueter



Handguns have so many uses in the shooting world, from being used for competitions at the Olympics, plinking at the range, hunting small and big game, self defense by our military, law enforcement, and law abiding citizens with concealed carry permits.

When talking about handguns and their uses in self-defense, it is important to remember whether carried by military personnel, law enforcement officers, or citizens with a concealed carry permit, a handgun is a tool of last resort and only to be used when deadly force is absolutely unavoidable.

People have taught and debated the different methods on how to teach the use of a pistol for self-defense. What is being taught as new and revolutionary today might not be as new or revolutionary as we may think. Some techniques that were developed in the past may have been put aside or forgotten. Only to be brought back later and refined by others. I go back to the time when WWII was in its' very beginnings and people like US Army Col. Rex Applegate, British Army Captains W. E. Fairbairn and Captain E. A. Sykes were training men to go behind enemy lines to gather intelligence, and conduct other missions to aid the war effort. In addition, Fairbairn & Sykes were training the British home guard, fearing a possibility the German Army might cross the English Channel for an invasion of England. It was during this time these men developed and taught what was to come to be called "Point Shooting" along with other self-defense techniques.

US Marine Corp Col Jeff Cooper also served in WWII, and later served during the Korean War. It was in the 1970's Jeff Cooper began developing the Weaver Stance and refining the use of a pistol for self-defense. In this development, the move was away from one handed shooting that had been used in the past, and moving towards the use of a two handed grip. Jeff Cooper developed a technique called a flash sight picture, which enabled the user to get their pistol on target quickly and increasing the chances the rounds would hit the intended target.

One handed "Point Shooting" and "Weaver Stances" with the two handed grip are still being taught in training to military personnel, law enforcement officers, and citizens for concealed carry. I find it interesting that Col. Cooper actually refined Point Shooting techniques by incorporating what he called a flash sight picture which increased the probability of the rounds hitting the intended target.

During NRA's Personal Protection in the Home Course accuracy for a defensive pistol is discussed, one point brought

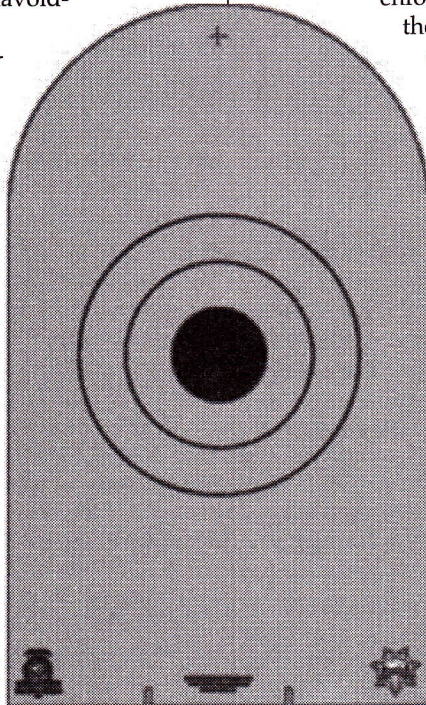
up is most defensive shootings are at close ranges usually 21 feet or less. Acceptable accuracy for defensive pistols at these distances is being able to put as many rounds as possible into a nine inch circle in a short amount of time. A trained person may be able to use point shooting out to 21 feet with devastating accuracy for self-defense purposes. It is the incorporation of the flash sight picture that brings point shooting into the modern world.

When discussing point shooting few people outside of law enforcement officers and military personnel have the time or money to become proficient enough so they can be able to engage targets out to 21 feet without the aid of sights. The incorporation of the flash sight picture increases the average person's chances at being able to hit the intended target. Point Shooting and the use of a Flash Sight Picture are both taught during a NRA Personal Protection in the Home Course.

If you carry a concealed pistol for self defense, I recommend attending a NRA Personal Protection in the Home Course. The goal of this course is to develop the student's basic knowledge, skills, and attitude essential to the safe and efficient use of a firearm for protection of self and family, and providing information on the law-abiding citizen's right to self-defense. You may contact any NRA Personal Protection in the Home Instructor to see when their next course is being held. If you do not have an instructor in your area you can check <http://www.nrainstructors.org/searchcourse.aspx> this feature on the NRA website allows you to see what courses

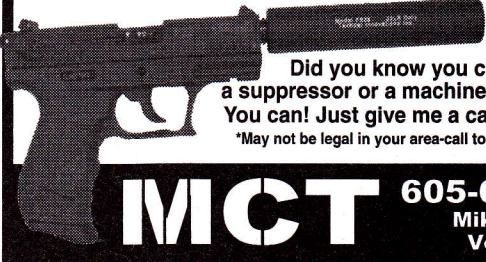
are available, by zip code or state. ■

Sources: Kill or Get Killed by Ret. Col Rex Applegate written in 1943; Shoot to Live by Captain W. E. Fairbairn & Captain E. A. Sykes written in 1942; NRA Personal Protection in the Home Instructors Manual Second Edition 2000, revised 8-11; NRA Website: <http://www.nrainstructors.org/searchcourse.aspx>



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