



Tactical Thoughts Worth Passing....

After reading the chat forums and all the varying opinions reference shooting and tactics. I will add a few points I would relate to a new team member if I was running a tactical team.

I will start by saying that I learn many things from shooting schools, combat and instructing. I continually refined, stepped back and reevaluate all the data. I look at new and current data, trends and equipment evolutions. I adjust what I think is necessary.

Three types of people want to know tactics and guns. Military, Law Enforcement and tactically minded civilians. In my simple view, simple systems can work for all three.

WHAT IS THE BEST GUN (PLATFORM)?

Probably the one in your hand to start. M4 platforms for the rifle are the most common and you can do everything with a 16" rifle and a mid-length handguard. 16" will be short and long enough to get the job done without going through the ATF paperwork. A mid-length handguard will allow you to put all the latest and greatest accessories on your rifle and still get support hand placement that is the most ergonomic for all positions (standing, kneeling, prone).

Pistols vary. Glocks are the most common, but Sig and others are not far behind with their multi-size and option accessory packages. 1911's are good, but you need to dedicate more time and knowledge to the platform and maintenance. Just the safety is one more moving part. Know how to disassemble and clean it to the bones if you go with a 1911.

Buy a pistol with one trigger pull and keep it consistent. The same applies to rifles. If you shoot your game gun more than your duty gun, you will default to your game trigger. Try shooting a work gun while gaming.

I will close this section by saying that if you had a duty weapon issued, I would purchase one for my off duty carry or something really close. Beware of the man with one gun rings truer now than ever. Experiment as a hobby, not with what you carry to save your life.

LEARN TO USE IRONS ON RIFLES BEFORE YOU MOVE TO OPTICS

If you put optics on your rifle, you should have points of reference already established on how to hold and your head/eye relationship. If you do not, you are not going to shoot optics well.

Adding optics adds two sets of glass between your eye and the target. That makes three with your shooting glasses. You need to care for and maintain these. If you cannot see, you cannot shoot. If optics fail, get them out of the way and know how to run your irons. I know several officers that had to make the shot when optics failed. Their irons were co-witnessed.

Make sure you run your optics day, night, summer, winter to include rain and snow and understand the capabilities and limitations. Pull your rifle out of a cool air conditioned car into a humid environment and make a shot (ensure you treated your lens properly) Again, know your equipment.

SINGLE OPPONENT BATTLEFIELD

Law Enforcement (LE) works a great deal of single opponent battlefield scenarios while military is the opposite. LE must also be prepared for the multiple battlefield. This can apply to the scanning and shooting process as well where officers are taught to shoot their opponent to the ground and then look for additional threats.

MULTIPLE OPPONENT BATTLEFIELD

In the multiple opponent battlefield, I would teach my guys to shoot three rounds on a bad guy, then open both eyes, come off gun and scan for additional threats. If there are none, go back to your original target and assess it. If it needs more servicing, do so. Once the first shot is fired in combat, everyone starts moving. With every shot you make, you get tunnel vision through your sights. The battlefield will change during this time. Bad guys will move, civilians will move and your battle buddies will move. Understand this and look around.

If there are too many targets, concentrate on the ones not shot. Get bullets into them in a rapid manner as it impacts how close they come to you. If your opponents do not have a combat mindset and wish to break contact and run, allow them. If they continue to push on you, shoot them until they go down.

BIG BULLETS

Big bullets in the body make bad guys go away faster. You cannot shoot a larger caliber as fast as a smaller in regards follow up shots. Also, the ammo gets heavy and the mags do not hold as much with bigger bullets. Both big and small will work if you run the gun correctly. Both big and little bullets work as effectively on the head for all practical purposes.

NOT SO BIG BULLETS

Going to a 5.56/.223 bullet in a rifle and 9mm in a pistol will aid in marksmanship and rapid follow up shots. You may have to shoot your opponent more times to anchor them. Expect this and practice follow up shots. I have seen very few people die like in the movies with only one shot. At least not rapidly.

APPROACHING AND BY PASSING THREATS

I know of a Marine combat vet who is paralyzed in a wheel chair from the first Gulf War. His Squad Leader or Team Leader told him not to shoot a bad guy who was down and they were pushing past him. He complied with the order and was shot in the back by the bad guy and paralyzed the rest of his life.

I could not live with myself as a leader if I told one of my guys not to finish a threat and someone was hurt or killed because of my decision.

As you are approaching suspected threats in the military and are unsure of their status, skip a round into their head and ease your mind. If your fellow soldiers see this, they should understand what you are doing and they do not need to get carried away and do it as well.

This can apply to LE officers if you are pushing on a multiple terrorist event. If you do not shoot them in the head, drop security on them. Whatever the bad guys do when you leave them and push forward is your responsibility. Secure them with an officer or a bullet.

Conclusion:

Keep it simple. If it does not work on a flat range with no stress, it will not work on a battlefield.

Static action or fast moving assaults with single and multiple opponents-Which do you prepare for and will your system will work in both situations?

About the Author

Paul R. Howe is a 20-year veteran and former Special Operations soldier and instructor. Paul currently owns Combat Shooting and Tactics (CSAT) where he consults with, trains and evaluates law enforcement and government agencies in technical and tactical techniques throughout the special operations spectrum. See www.combatshootingandtactics.com for details.