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**Use Of Firearms For Personal Safety And Defense**

**By Bill Wallmuller**

For many years, firearms have been considered effective defensive weapons. If you think things through you will realize that due to the deadly potential of guns they are really a poor choice for personal protection for the vast majority of people.

The use of firearms is unwarranted in most circumstances. Their use in any situation can have grave consequences. The use of a gun in defending one from an assault could be considered "excessive force" in many jurisdictions. It would be up to the victim to prove that a life-threatening situation occurred and deadly force had to be used. Please bear in mind that nearly 80% of all the assaults in our country are committed without weapons of any type. Increasingly it is taking place that even when the victim is not charged of a crime for using a licensed gun they could find themselves on the losing end of a civil lawsuit.

The intent of personal protection devices is to only distract and disable the attacker and be able to escape to get help. It is also known that most people using a gun for defense don't know when to pull the trigger and when not to pull the trigger. Professional law enforcers have to go through intensive training in shoot and no shoot scenarios and yet they still sometimes get caught up in legal problems.

Believe it or not, using a handgun can actually be less effective at stopping an attacker than using self-defense devices such as defensive pepper spray or O C spray. Besides, assailants have been known to kill or seriously injure someone in a matter of minutes after they had been shot defensively, even many hours after being shot with so-called man stopper ammunition.

A firearm used defensively can be taken away from the intended victim and used against them. Even though it is a fact that defensive technology devices could be used by an assailant in the same manor against the victim, the consequences are not as potentially lethal.

Sometimes the emotional trauma and psychological effects of a victim shooting another person can be devastating. Even veteran law enforcement officers are many times affected, especially if the perpetrator is killed. Many victims are unprepared for the intense emotional aftermath of killing someone [even in self-defense] and whose agenda was to only protect him or herself. This scenario is

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a very real possibility when firearms are used.

When there is a presence of a gun the crime sometimes escalates the likelihood for death or serious injury. Once a firearm is introduced by the victim, its use is the only action remaining and an innocent person may be injured or killed; and as previously mentioned, the use of the gun by the victim [ justified or not] is subject to legal litigation. Maybe the victims will not be charged with a crime, but it would be very likely for them to find themselves at the wrong end of a long and costly civil lawsuit.

Last, but not least there is large burden on the gun owner to properly secure their firearms. There is always the possibility, no matter how secure the gun is kept, a child or teenager could get their hands on a firearm with tragic results.

In closing, I would like to mention that firearms can have a legitimate and useful role in self and home defense, but only [and I stress only] if the person is fully trained on the use and handling of the firearm,

totally comprehending the responsibility and consequences of the use of a gun and has the psychological toughness to use a firearm for the purpose of self-defense.

Mr.Bill Wallmuller is the founder of Merokee Enterprises. You can find out more about self defense technology by visiting:

<http://www.personal-defense-technology.com/>

### **What's With These Apologies?**

**By Kathryn A. Graham**

#### **What's With These Apologies? by Kathryn A. Graham**

It's always the same refrain, over and over again.

The Latin expression "ad nauseam" means "to the point of nausea." My nausea threshold is pretty low early in the morning, I must admit. To add insult to injury, I always have to ask the same question - and endure the endless, whining answers - every time I teach a new concealed handgun class.

"Why do you want to carry a firearm?" I ask a new crop of students.

"Well, I wouldn't, except . . ."

"I won't actually carry it, but sometimes I have to drive through really bad neighborhoods . . ."

"I don't want a gun, but my husband thinks I should have one . . ."

And so on. Ad nauseam . . .

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Each student acts somehow furtive, somehow ashamed, as though they are doing something they wouldn't want to tell their mothers about.

Their mother's mothers would be turning in their collective graves over this ridiculous attitude!

A firearm is a tool, and our grandparents and great grandparents knew it very well. Yes, a firearm can certainly kill. So can a power saw, and I know what I'm talking about. I almost watched my adopted brother bleed to death from such a horrific accident. Screwdrivers and ice picks are among the most popular murder weapons. And an automobile is the deadliest machine of all! Automobiles kill many, many more people than those killed by firearms each year.

So which of these devices do you think we should ban?

Tools, including firearms, do not get up and do evil deeds by themselves. I tell my concealed handgun students, again and again, there is no such thing as an "accidental" discharge. There is only a negligent discharge. If you learn the safety rules, and make them a part of your every instinct, firearms are no more dangerous than any other tool. And they are far more useful!

Oh, I can hear your collective gasp of horror all the way down here in Texas. Yes, dammit, firearms are useful!

You constantly hear claims that firearms are killing kids left and right. The simple truth is that more kids are killed playing high school football each year than die from firearms related incidents, including suicide! Another fact that might interest you is that zero percent - that's zero percent - of kids who are given firearms and proper training in their responsible use ever commit crimes with those firearms. The

firearms used in juvenile/young adult crime are all illegally obtained anyway.

Yet firearms are used by law-abiding citizens to prevent a staggering 2,500,000 crimes each and every single year! And on almost every single occasion, no shot is ever fired.

Now tell me the truth. If someone told you about a tool that could prevent 2,500,000 crimes per year, and didn't tell you it was a firearm, you would definitely call that a useful tool, wouldn't you? Of course you would!

So why does everyone choke on the idea that firearms are useful?

My students have come to me because they each have made a decision to take responsibility for their lives and the lives of their loved ones. It is a difficult and courageous decision, the mark of a true adult. They have faced and accepted the reality that police nearly always come anywhere from minutes to hours after the crime is committed, and therefore are incapable of protecting the victim.

The men and women who come to me for concealed handgun instruction have recognized this, and they have decided not to be victims. They have decided, like the courageous five aboard Flight 93, not to go quietly to the rear of the airplane and call home.

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They have decided, like the founding fathers of this country, to bear arms for lawful and moral purposes. This is not an act of cowardice. It is an act of great courage. Our forefathers who took up arms pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. Those were not mere words then, and they are not just words now. Everyone who chooses to bear arms today is making the same pledge.

You don't believe me? Well, look at it this way. If I observe an unarmed citizen in life and death trouble, and I am armed, I have a moral obligation to step in and at least try to save his or her life. In doing so, I am almost certainly risking my own life on his or her behalf. If I am so unfortunate as to be forced to shoot someone in the course of offering said citizen my aid, I will be paying lawyers and fending off civil suits for the rest of my days - which should effectively wipe out any fortune I am ever able to accumulate. Finally, the very subject of firearms is so emotional that it is entirely possible that a jury may convict me of an actual crime even though I was acting in clear self-defense or defense of a third party. This may not touch my "sacred" honor, but it certainly affects my public honor if I am so unlucky as to be convicted of murder!

So choosing to bear arms is indeed an act of great courage. It is a decision and a stance that any human being should be proud of.

Yet my students do not come to me with pride. They come to me furtively and ashamed, desperately making excuses for their decision as if the mere association with firearms will somehow damage their integrity as human beings. Before I can even begin to teach them what they must know to bear arms safely and legally in this state, I must teach them that armed self-defense is their right, not a privilege they must ask for - and never, never something they should apologize for. They are requesting a concealed handgun license from the state for the sole purpose of remaining out of jail, but they were born with the instinct and the right to defend their own lives. This instinct is not immoral, and it never will be. And there is nothing nobler than the decision to risk your own life to defend someone else.

It is interesting to watch the process. They sit a little straighter now.

The next step is to teach them Texas law and a few simple rules for resolving conflicts without violence. We cover some firearm safety rules, and they take a range test so unbelievably easy it only proves that they know at which end of the range the target is located. That test is meant to be easy. It should be easy for an 80 year old grandmother to pass. It was designed that way!

After the state requirements and testing are completed, they take their first steps on a lifetime journey together. I would not presume to tell my students what is right and what is wrong. I tell them about Texas law, that's all. But I do have an obligation to make them think about right and wrong. They must begin to set their personal boundaries and define what they are and are not willing to do.

In the midst of a firefight is not the place to make these philosophical decisions!

For example: If a burglar broke into your house tonight and tried to make off with your VCR, would you confront and try to stop him? If he attacked you then, would you shoot to defend yourself? You had better know the answers to these and many other questions before you choose to keep and/or carry a firearm. When the situation is happening, it is already much too late to think it through. I ask my

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students to try imagine every possible circumstance and decide what they would and would not do. The thinking process is never complete. It is ongoing.

There is self-defense, and there is murder. Much of the time that line is clear and obvious. But many circumstances can blur the line between self-defense and murder to the point where there is no clear cut right and wrong answer. Personal boundaries must be set in that gray area. In fact, I can't imagine any decision more personal except possibly the decision of what deity to worship.

That idea sinks in, and my students leave the classroom with a lot of thinking to do.

What they do not yet realize is that the thinking they will do over the coming months and years is going to change them forever - and for the better. It never fails.

That is the hidden virtue of firearms. We do very little moral thinking in our society. Most kids today are actually embarrassed at the mention of "right" and "wrong." Yet concepts of right and wrong, of duty - and of sacrifice - go hand in hand with the idea of lawful carry. Training your kids in the use of firearms offers a golden opportunity to teach them moral values.

Thomas Jefferson, one of the great architects of our nation, understood this very well. In 1785, he wrote a letter to Peter Carr, then attending school in Paris, in which he offered warm advice on how best to seek success, both in college and in life.

In Jefferson's own words: "A strong body makes the mind strong. As to the species of exercise, I advise the gun. While this gives a moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprise, and independence to the mind. Games played with the ball, and others of that nature, are too violent for the body, and stamp no character on the mind. Let your gun therefore be the constant companion of your walks."

Excellent advice.

At a tiny 5'1", Kathryn A. Graham is a licensed private investigator, pilot, aircraft mechanic and handgun instructor in Texas. Also a prolific author, she has written numerous articles, short stories and a science fiction novel. <http://www.kathrynagraham.com/>



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