

Gun Myths

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1. Do guns kill people or do they save lives?

More often than not weapons save lives. However due to the fact that our media is so often antigun, the positive aspects of self-protection often go unreported. The scholar, John Lott, wrote a data-based, honest book about this curious phenomenon of selective news reporting, entitled, "More Guns, Less Crime". Nevertheless, the literature published by various firearms presses and sometimes unfortunately, self-interested magazines, often does describe situations where civilians have successfully defended and saved themselves or others with a firearm. Our personal experience has been that some students we have trained have come back and described situations where their knowledge and unimpeded access to a usable firearm have deflated a situation that could have easily gotten out of hand quickly, or worse, become lethal.

Firearms training and knowledge is a proactive as opposed to reactive response to your personal security and defensive needs. No serious trainee ever wants to take a life or use a firearm inappropriately. On the contrary, such individuals consciously choose NOT to become a statistic.

The fact is that a firearm used appropriately by a trained individual can level the playing field when such an individual is confronted with the threat of a physical confrontation neither sought nor expected that could result in his or her imminent bodily harm. Most citizens believe that the police are a buffer between criminals and society. However, evidence has shown that most often the police are reactive only when they receive a report of prior or ongoing criminal acts.

Most law abiding citizens have a false sense of security and are unprepared for true criminal aggression. The "trained" law abiding citizen has a better than even chance of survival and victory when faced with the brutality of a violent criminal attack. This is made possible by having the self-protection and self-defense skills provided through comprehensive firearms training.

It is important to highlight the fact that a firearm is just a tool that can be used appropriately or inappropriately just like any other tool. Without adequate preparation, any tool is valueless, or worse dangerous. As we currently are experiencing today, even tools that no one previously thought could be dangerous, have been used to wreck havoc on people and institutions. Specifically take a look at the computer.

Ten years ago before the current epidemic of computer viruses and widespread hacking, who would have thought that a computer techie could be dangerous. Today there is little doubt about the power that such skills can have in the wrong hands. Malevolent computer hackers have become a threat to the very fabric of our society; for example, nuclear and other power generator installations, financial institutions, and military and law enforcement agencies.

A firearm does not have independent agency because it does not have conscious thought. Therefore a gun cannot shoot anyone or "go off" unless there is someone who misuses its capabilities.

Throughout recorded history, society has produced numerous effective and deadly protective implements and lethal tools. Often times the people with the weapons were the source of power and the people without them were their victims. Firearms neither increased nor diminished human's ability to destroy one another, but did allow average people to prepare for common or individual defense. The invention of firearms did not alter human beings' violent propensities.

No one and no entity has the right to legislate away from us our rights to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

2. Don't more guns mean more crime?

The majority of firearms are legally purchased and owned by responsible, law abiding, individual citizens. Unfortunately, the firearms we as a society cannot control are those on the black market where criminals have to go to arm themselves in order to avoid the legalities of legitimate purchase.

Percentage wise, the firearms used in crimes are mostly attached to the underground market. In a small number of cases, illegal usage of firearms by registered owners usually occurs by untrained or psychologically unbalanced individuals who shouldn't even own a butter knife! The numbers of firearms produced in reality do not correlate with the numbers of crimes actually committed. It is only when an isolated event gets reported by the news media and purported to be a sign that firearms are the most destructive element of our society that undue attention is raised about the need for gun control (e.g., the Columbine school shootings, Washington, D.C. area snipers, etc.)

It is important to recognize that in many of these cases (e.g., Columbine), the perpetrators had other lethal weapons as well, such as explosive devices, knives, and so forth. Few people have gone on record arguing for bomb or knife control!

The majority of statistical and epidemiological studies have shown that the legal availability of guns is actually correlated with a lowered incidence of reported violent crimes (Lott, 2000). These studies have revealed that in the United States, states with rigid restrictions on law abiding citizens' access to firearms (i.e., gun control laws) have a higher incidence of violent criminal activity than do states that have laws that allow for registered concealed carry privileges. In fact, other studies demonstrate that countries that have taken away citizens' rights to own firearms (e.g., Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Japan) actually have higher rates of violent crime per capita than do countries where such regulation is not legislated.

Totalitarian regimes flourish in countries where only the government, the military and the police are permitted gun rights (i.e., Cuba, Iran, Iraq, North Korea). In such societies,

citizens are clearly at the mercy of the state. For the best example of this one has only to look at the bureaucratic net that was weaved in Nazi Germany during the 1930s when Hitler was building his power. The end result was the ultimate in fascist governments, mass genocide, and the elimination of a generation.

Statistics compiled by leading criminal justice authorities reveal in numerous cases, that the showing of a firearm is often a powerful deterrent to a criminal otherwise intent on carrying out an attack. Because violence is so horribly distasteful, law abiding citizens need firearms to prevent and deter violence, and survive it if it is unavoidable. Therefore, carrying a handgun as a viable defense measure makes good sense. However, the cardinal rule is:

You should never draw a firearm unless absolutely necessary (read in a life threatening situation), and you should never draw a gun unless you are ready to use it. The goal should always be to defuse a situation as quickly as possible without violence before the situation can turn violent.

Carrying a firearm is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly because it is often the last resort for defusing a situation rather than escalating it. Responsible gun owners recognize and understand this. Thus, they are *peacemakers* and not outlaws as some would have us erroneously believe. So, for law abiding and responsible citizens, carrying a firearm for personal defense and protection is a sensible thing to do. One carries a gun as a tool to be used only when needed.

People who legally carry concealed handguns are not cowboys. They value and cherish human life and do not denigrate it. In fact, assuming the responsibility of legal gun ownership highlights how important it is to be in control at all times. One must celebrate human life and detest aggression and violence.

3. Do gun control laws stop criminals from getting firearms?

Absolutely not! The underground marketplace is still the viable source of goods for criminals and those who are desperate that it has always been. One has only to look at the failure of the United States government to control the distribution, sale and use of illegal

drugs. People who are determined to use any illegal commodity usually find a readily available source despite government regulatory restrictions.

The most compelling issue that distinguishes firearms from other regulated or prohibited commodities is that firearms are capable in the right hands of repelling criminal attack, violent confrontations, and promoting personal survival. Therefore, in many overly regulated (i.e., Big Brother) states that discourage firearm ownership and prohibit legal carry privileges, many law abiding citizens are faced with a dilemma. That is between carrying illegally to protect themselves and finding themselves criminal violators, or surrendering themselves to opportunistic criminal attack. This then creates a breeding ground for black market enterprise. The fact is that when legal avenues for obtaining desired products (whatever they are) are closed by the state, then this open up opportunities for other sources to profit. The question is do we want to see criminal organizations control the sale and distribution of firearms?

If a state wants to regulate firearms ownership, as states do with drivers' licenses, the best way to demonstrate genuine concern for the public good is not to make criminals out of its citizens but rather to make sure its citizens are properly trained. This can be easily accomplished by having people attend a qualified course of instruction before firearm privileges are granted and/or licensed. This can be easily legislatively mandated by any state government that is genuinely concerned about the welfare and safety of all of its citizens.

Question: *What's in a name?* Answer: *A lot more than is implied in hearing it initially if you choose to be uninformed.*

It is important to remember that many organizations purposively choose names that mislead the public. For example, there are organizations that have the words "public safety" in their name, yet they do nothing to teach people how to live safer lives. They are in fact ultimately dedicated to taking away people's rights and property!

On the other hand, other organizations, such as the National Rifle Association (NRA), are dedicated to running organized educational programs to help people enjoy self-defense

safely. In fact, there are firearms manufacturers that have devoted large sums of money to public safety awareness and education (e.g., Sturm Ruger, Glock, Smith & Wesson, and so on).

4. Do I have a right to own a firearm?

YES. However, along with that comes a lot of responsibility. It is essential to know the laws of the state you live in. It is important to know that just like with anything else that is dangerous, you have to have good instinctive training and know the tool's limitations in order to prevent self-inflicted or accidental discharges. Additionally, important is proper training by an instructor who is genuinely concerned with your survival and who has a full working knowledge of firearms and defensive tactics and life strategies. We point out that to get to the point of having "instinctive training", you have to really work at it. Conscious and deliberate practice makes skills automatic, subconscious and instinctive and helps you stay safe.

5. What does the United States Constitution really say about gun ownership?

The founding fathers of the United States who designed the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights had direct experience with the European tactics of oppression. As such, they specifically designed and appropriately positioned the Second Amendment as one of the most important amendments to the Constitution as part of the Bill of Rights. It specially mandated the right of the individual citizen to keep and bear firearms to combat oppression, tyranny and injustices so often perpetrated in the European theater.

In our opinion, what the founders have written in the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights should be set in concrete and not violated by any special interest groups in whatever name they choose to interfere with the founding fathers' original intent. The founding fathers realized that a citizenry that was prohibited from arming itself was at the mercy of any government that took away that right, and that any government that did so was not "by and for the people". So, the purpose behind penning the Second Amendment was to make sure that all law abiding citizens of the new republic of the United States could defend themselves from tyranny or aggression stemming from either internal or foreign sources.

6. Do I have a right to carry a firearm?

In our opinion, CERTAINLY! With few national exceptions, most state governments in the U.S. have realized the urgency and direct need of the populace to be able to protect themselves in criminal and other aggressive situations. This comes with the realization that there is not enough police to protect its citizenry on a 24 hour-7 day a week basis. One can live with the illusion that the Police are out there defending us, but the realities are often tragically different. In fact, the courts have ruled that the police have no legal responsibility to protect individual citizens from criminal attacks. The legally, court adjudicated responsibility of the police is to "keep the peace" and "protect the public".

It is interesting to note the following contradiction. Anti-gun organizations (gun banners and "gun grabbers") argue that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution only gives gun ownership rights (read *the right to self defense*) to an organized militia (read *organized state governments*). This was certainly not the intent of our founding fathers who sought to protect the citizenry of the Republic against further and future tyranny! After all, why would the founding fathers want to substitute one form of tyranny for another? These same anit-gun groups disseminate the erroneous belief that the police are there to protect the individual! They clearly have it backwards!

The police are legally responsible for keeping the peace and protecting the "public". That is why the Second Ammemdment stipulates that the right to self-defense (read the right to bear arms) is an individual right.

Defensively it could be related that where citizens are legally armed with concealed weapons permits, a notable crime drop is immediately realized (Lott, 1998). However, untrained people with firearms permits are more often than not more of a hazard to themselves than is an actual criminal attack.

The days of being able to walk down the street in your neighborhood without fear of some degenerate element of society are long gone. Training and weapons privileges dramatically reduce the effects of the smallest minority on the planet--"criminals". It would

be a great world to live in that didn't require defensive measures and lethal force. However, Utopia is a pipe dream written about and not reality.

It is essential to know the laws of the state you live in. States like New Jersey that have no carry permit privileges actually endanger their population rather than protecting it by putting citizens at the mercy of criminals who don't obey the law. With that said, it is important to recognize that citizens like Bernard Goetz, the NYC subway vigilante, took protective measures to an extreme, violating NY State's laws. Perhaps if he had the opportunity to legally obtain a carry permit, the incidents that led eventually to his subway criminal actions could have been prevented or at least diminished without the tragic outcomes for all concerned. Society doesn't need morons, vigilantes or emotionally disturbed people with firearms, but the majority of citizens should be able to protect themselves from the few who would otherwise prey on them and do them violent harm.