



PARABELLUM

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What Does it Take to be Armed?

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It is said that life is a journey not a destination. My experience agrees with that philosophy. Since becoming a firearms instructor in 2008, my knowledge regarding guns and gun safety has grown tremendously. Much can be learned just by observing what people do with a gun in their hands. Lessons can be learned if the shooter knows what they are doing or not. I have stood behind thousands of people in competitions and training classes observing the results. A common theme that has been witnessed a multitude of times on the range, behind the counter at the gun store, or in the classroom is the belief that owning a gun and having the knowledge to make it go bang is enough. Enough meaning that the gun owner is armed and prepared to defend hearth, home, and the family from the evil lurking around the corner or down the street. Many people leave the gun store with their new purchase with a false sense of security. Many people buy a gun, load it up and put it on the night stand and never fire it. Do you know someone that fits this description?

The false sense of security that some folks have is not a new phenomenon. Col. Jeff Cooper has a famous quote on this subject that was coined several decades ago. Jeff Cooper said it like this, "owning a handgun doesn't make you armed any more than owning a guitar makes you a musician." The dictionary will disagree with Col. Cooper, but that does not change the facts or make Col Cooper incorrect. The dictionary may be where this misconception about being armed originates. Defending yourself from a violent crime or terrorist attack is a little more involved than point and click. There are many important and yet subtle skills involved in pointing the gun, and pressing the trigger and getting the bullet to go where you want it to go. The gun is not a talisman. It will not keep away evil by its mere presence. The gun owner must first have the gun. However, it is also incumbent to have the skill with which to use the gun both safely and effectively. If the skill to achieve hits is lacking, the citizen is not truly armed. If the citizen does not have safe gun handling skills, and shoots the threat and/or themselves or a third party that is counter-productive to the situation.

The 23rd Psalms refers to the comfort that the rod and the staff provide. Here in the twenty first century a good sidearm should provide comfort, confidence to the armed citizen; but only if the knowledge and the skill in the use of that sidearm is present. Check your ego at the door and get some training. There is no shame in having little to no firearms knowledge. Everyone had to start at some point. Seek out a good instructor and get some training. The most efficient way to develop the skills needed for good gun-handling and good marksmanship is through training. A knowledgeable instructor who can teach you what to do, show you what to do, and then get you to do it right; greatly shortens your learning curve. Good training is money well spent.



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All citizens who are concerned with their safety and security need to purchase a suitable firearm, and then get some training so that they can be truly armed and ready to defend themselves and their family. It is also important to note that shooting skills are perishable. Once you have the knowledge of what to do and how to do it. Go practice with your gun. Buying the gun is the beginning of the process of becoming armed, not the end.