

# TACTICS AND PREPAREDNESS

SKILLS AND SURVIVAL FOR ALL SITUATIONS



## EATING INSECTS

MEALWORM SALAD, CRICKET COOKIES, AND THAI GRASSHOPPERS

BY ALY MOORE AND ASLI PEKCAN

**Insects are an underutilized alternative protein source that offer promising options for sustainable, nutritious and delicious food.**

**W**hile eating bugs is a practice with a rich history across the world's various cultures, very few Western societies are familiar with it today. For people who did not grow up with insects as normal ingredients, the wonderful world of eating bugs is a new discovery. Entomophagy—the practice of eating insects—will normally come up in

the search results for anyone interested in topics like a) supplementing their daily diet with protein, vitamins and fiber; b) finding alternatives to meat for protein; c) combating global hunger; or d) using insects as animal feed.

The insect industry is broad. Beyond feeding insects to humans, we can consider insects' role in the future of

livestock feed, fine-dining restaurant menu items, premium fertilizer, waste solutions, circular agriculture, improved soil health, natural medicine, functional food, biodiversity management or even space travel.

Insects are a highly sustainable food source. Most insects require fewer resources, including land, *continued next page*

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## STAFF

<b>DAVID MORRIS</b> and <b>"OX"</b>	Publishers
<b>CHRIS GRAHAM</b> <a href="http://www.chrisgrahamauthor.com">www.chrisgrahamauthor.com</a>	Editor
<b>JOHN HIGGS</b>	Copy Editor
<b>BETTY SHONTS</b>	Graphic Designer

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## INSECTS ARE A HIGHLY SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE, FULL OF MACRO AND MICRO NUTRIENTS.

water and feed to raise than other protein sources, while producing fewer greenhouse gas emissions. Many insects have an extremely efficient feed-to-body-mass conversion ratio (insects are cold-blooded and require less feed per unit of body weight than traditional livestock to sustain themselves). We can also consume an insect's entire body, wasting little flesh.

Insects are excellent sources of macro and micro nutrients, making them a great addition to any diet. Depending on the species, they can be sources of protein, fiber and other vitamins and minerals. For example, pound for pound, eating insects provides similar levels of protein to conventional meats like beef and chicken. Additionally, insects often have higher levels of nutrients like iron, zinc and calcium when we also consume the exoskeleton.

Last but not least, insects can be delicious. Insects have been consumed by humans for thousands of years throughout history. Currently, it is estimated that over two billion people around the world deliberately eat insects as part of their diets and virtually all people inadvertently consume insects without ill effects. They offer unique flavors and textures that present an opportunity for innovation and creativity in the culinary realm.

Many sources cite over two million

recorded species of edible insects, while there are likely hundreds of thousands that we just haven't tried out. Some of the most common species include beetles, caterpillars, bees, ants, grasshoppers and crickets. In North America, grasshoppers and crickets are the most widely produced and consumed.

We believe that bugs that are farmed specifically for human consumption are as safe, if not safer, (due to larger genetic variance from humans) than traditional livestock. Insects caught in fields often contain greater levels of pesticide residues than those caught in forests, because these insects feed off of vegetables and grains that are farmed with pesticides. Otherwise, common methods of preparing insects also lend themselves to making them more safe to consume. Methods like roasting, frying or boiling help inactivate potentially harmful microbial content in wild insects.

Collecting foods from the wild presents risks that are generally mitigated by farming to established standards in controlled environments. Those who forage for wild insects should take care not to over-harvest and possibly disrupt ecosystems. Areas that have consumed wild-harvested insects for thousands of years are facing new challenges in modern times. As small villages gain access to larger markets and customer bases, they may also risk over-harvesting.





## CHOCOLATE “CHIRP” COOKIES

### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup soft butter
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp hot water
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 ¼ cup flour
- ¼ cup cricket powder
- ¾ mini chocolate chips
- ¼ cup whole roasted crickets

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 F
2. In a large mixing bowl, cream together butter and sugars
3. Beat in eggs and vanilla
4. Dissolve baking soda in hot water
5. Add to butter mix with the salt
6. In a second bowl, whisk together flour and cricket powder
7. Then add the dry ingredients to the wet mix; stir just until combined
8. Mix in chocolate chips and crickets
9. Bake for 10-12 minutes until edges are golden brown



## MEALWORM LENTIL SALAD

### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ can 15 oz. lentils
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- ¼ cup chives
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- ¼ cup parsley
- ¼ cup roasted mealworms and/or grasshoppers
- Olive oil, salt, pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Rinse and drain lentils.
2. Halve/quarter cherry tomatoes.
3. Slice chives.
4. Add all ingredients to a small bowl and toss to combine.
5. Add in bugs and vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper.
6. Stir and serve immediately or refrigerate to develop the flavors more.

Bugs are high in complete proteins, which contain all nine essential amino acids. In general, edible insects contain 67-98 percent of edible protein, with 46-96 percent of this protein being composed of essential amino acids. Many bugs contain healthy fats, including essential linoleic and -linolenic acids (omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids). They also contain other vitamins and nutrients like iron and zinc, deficiencies of which are common public health concerns.

In fact, most edible insects contain more iron per 100g serving than beef. The exoskeleton of insects is a supplemental source of fiber. Chitin, the main component of exoskeletons, is an insoluble fiber that is beneficial for digestive health.

Insects are increasingly available all over the globe from online stores. For a list of reputable sources to buy bugs from, check out: <https://bugible.com/shop/>. Insects can often be found in local shops in locations

where bugs are commonly consumed. Insects are increasingly available in health food grocery stores or on aggregators like Amazon.com.

Insects are often described as “flavor vehicles” and will take on the flavor of a seasoning or marinade, while adding a savory, umami component and a satisfying crunch. Each insect has its own flavor, but categories can be created around different species. For instance, crickets and mealworms are known

for being nutty, earthy and/or “mushroomy”. Grubs and larvae that are higher in fats have a meatier flavor, while scorpions or locusts are said to be “shrimp of the land” and have a slight “shrimpy” flavor. Black ants contain formic acid and have a sour, lemon-pepper flavor.

Insects can be cooked in a large variety of ways. We recommend that you first euthanize insects in a “humane” way. Insects are commonly euthanized by being placed in a freezer for 2-3 hours. Raw insects can be washed and then prepared by boiling or roasting them directly over a flame. Other methods include frying them in oil or roasting them in an oven for 1-2 hours at 200F.

Many purchased insects come dry roasted. You can eat these as they come, but you may choose to flavor and to lightly fry or sauté them. Dry roasted insects have a longer shelf-life than raw “wet” insects. Moreover, insects can be ground up into powders or “flours” and used to make baked goods like breads or cookies. ✓

## BIOS

*Aly Moore (www.bugible.com) studied public health at Yale University and went on to found and scale startups in the fields of entertainment and technology. Since 2012, Bugible has grown on Instagram (@bugible) and evolved into the leading PR authority for the insect agriculture industry, appearing on Netflix’s “Bill Nye, Food & Wine”, Forbes and others. Today, Bugible focuses on continuing to spread awareness about other sustainable and nutritious bugs through collaborations with institutions from the International Culinary Center, Yale University, parks & recreation districts, to the Girl Scouts of America.*

*Asli Pekcan is a volunteer for Bugible.com. She works in the healthcare field and enjoys writing about the insect industry and experimenting with insects in cooking.*

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## THAI-STYLE GRASSHOPPER PAD KRA PAO

### INGREDIENTS:

#### Thai-Style Grasshoppers

- 1.5 cups dry-roasted grasshoppers
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 inch knob ginger, thinly sliced
- 1 stalk lemongrass (optional), cut into 3-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 1 tablespoon oyster sauce
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt to taste

#### Pad Kra Pao

- 4 green onions, thinly sliced (separate green tops and white bases)
- Handful of thai peppers, minced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 inch knob ginger, minced
- 1 pound ground chicken or pork
- 1.5 cup sliced green beans, 1 inch length
- 2 cups thai basil leaves
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 2 tbsp oyster sauce
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt to taste
- 1 lime, zested and juiced

### DIRECTIONS:

#### Thai-Style Grasshoppers

1. Heat up 2-3 tablespoons of vegetable oil in a large pan or cast iron skillet
2. Add garlic, ginger and lemongrass and cook until garlic and ginger are slightly browned
3. Add grasshoppers and sauté for 1 minute with aromatics before adding fish sauce, oyster sauce, sugar and salt. Cook for another 3 minutes to ensure grasshoppers are crispy and fully coated
4. Remove from the pan and let cool while preparing the rest of the dish

#### Pad Kra Pao

1. In the same skillet, heat 1 more tablespoon of oil
2. Add white parts of green onions, three minced thai peppers, garlic and ginger
3. Soften the aromatics and then add the ground chicken or pork
4. Break up the meat as it cooks and add a generous pinch of salt
5. When the meat is fully cooked on the outside, add sugar, fish sauce, soy sauce, oyster sauce and more salt to taste
6. Add green beans and cook until slightly softened, but still crunchy
7. Turn off the heat before adding the thai basil and stir to wilt the basil
8. Mix in lime juice, zest, green onion tops and remaining thai chilis (adjust how much depending on your preferred spice level)
9. Finally, add grasshoppers (you may chop them up into smaller bites if you want)
10. Garnish with extra grasshoppers and Thai basil



# TEXAS RANGER:

THE EPIC LIFE OF  
FRANK HAMER, THE  
MAN WHO KILLED  
BONNIE AND CLYDE

BY JOHN BOESSENECKER SUMMARY BY JOHN STEVENSON

**From an early age, Hamer was taught to hunt and fish. He spent a great deal of time out in the hills teaching himself to track and studying the habits of animals.**

**H**e became a legendary marksman who would be renowned for his ability with a firearm. When Hamer was sixteen, he went to work for a sharecropper. McSween, the share cropper, saw Hamer practicing shooting and offered him \$200 to kill a man. Hamer's reply was: "Hell no! I'm not gonna kill that man for you!" Frank went directly to the man and warned him of McSween's intentions.

Two days later, McSween shot Hamer in the back with a shotgun. Hamer was cool enough to return fire, hitting his assailant, allowing him time to escape with the aid of his younger brother. He nearly died, but when he recovered, he was even more self-assured.

Five years later, while working as a cowboy on a ranch, Hamer tracked two horse thieves from the ranch. After several days of following their trail, he singlehandedly apprehended

them and delivered them to the county sheriff. That same year, Hamer captured another horse thief for the sheriff, a former Texas Ranger. He offered to recommend Frank to the Rangers and Hamer accepted. He was enlisted as a Texas Ranger in Captain John H. Rogers' Company C in April of 1906.

The Texas Rangers were the most famous law enforcement unit of the time. Their history included the legend of Captain Bill McDonald responding to a riot alone. In 2020, Americans are used to videos of platoons of police officers standing by and watching rioters and looters destroy jobs and businesses causing billions of dollars of damage in cities like Portland, Minneapolis and Philadelphia where mayors and local officials have ordered police not to intervene or otherwise deterred upholding the law. But in the Old West, when questioned by the mayor and sheriff

as to where the rest of the Rangers were, McDonald supposedly responded: "Rest, hell! You ain't got but one riot, have you?" and promptly took down the ringleaders, ending the riot. The "One riot, one Ranger" reputation was mainly due to the Ranger's reputation as steely-eyed killers that allowed small numbers of them to be effective in facing down large mobs. The Rangers were requested regularly in order to prevent mob justice in the form of lynching.

Hamer didn't require training in tracking, riding or gun fighting. He spent his time learning from Captain Rogers "to investigate crimes, to understand the statute books, to make arrests that would stick, to develop informants, to safely transport prisoners, and to give accurate and compelling testimony in court."

On December 1, 1906, Hamer was part of



## Hamer didn't require training in tracking, riding or gun fighting.

**FRANK HAMER (BLACK HAT) WITH OTHER TEXAS RANGERS.**



a posse that was tracking a murderer. They cornered him in a brothel in the town of Del Rio. The man advised the posse that he was not coming out. After 30 minutes of waiting, the sheriff ordered his men to open fire on the brothel. Hamer was covering the rear windows with his rifle when he observed a revolver barrel protruding from behind a curtain. He took aim and squeezed off a round that hit the man right below his left eye, killing him almost instantly.

During his first year as a Ranger, Hamer gained invaluable experience handling investigations, working undercover, keeping the peace in towns, tracking criminals and scouting with U.S. Customs inspectors. In November of 1908, after two and a half years as a Ranger, Hamer took a job as the city marshal in Navosta. The job paid twice what the Rangers paid.

While marshal of Navosta, Hamer developed his skills as an investigator, using a large network of informants to solve crimes. His word was his bond and he never reneged on an agreement with a source. During this period of history, mob justice and lynching were common in Texas, but while Frank Hamer was city marshal, there was none of it in his jurisdiction. Hamer believed in due process and equal protection under the law and the record shows that is how he operated.

Hamer moved on in April of 1911, to become a special officer working for the mayor of Houston. This job involved helping to control the explosion of crime that followed the oil boom in the early 1900s. Hamer resigned in

April of 1913 after he assaulted a journalist over stories that he had written about him. After months of unemployment, Hamer secured a position as a temporary Navosta police officer and later became a livestock detective in Kimble County.

In 1915, the Rangers expanded. The Mexican Revolution was raging, causing unrest to spread across the border into Texas. This chaos provided Hamer the opportunity to return to his beloved Ranger service and the camaraderie that he missed.

The violence in the Rio Grande Valley spiked as a band of insurgents known as, "sediciosos", murdered Anglos as part of a plan to take back United States territory that had once been Mexican. This became known as The Bandit War.

Governor Ferguson sent the Rangers under Captain Henry Ransom to the border with instructions to, "clean it up if he had to kill every damn man connected with it." Ferguson gave the Rangers assurances that they wouldn't be prosecuted for crimes that they might commit in carrying out his directive.

The border war continued into November of 1915 when Governor Ferguson finally put a stop to summary executions. The conflict had become brutal to the point of vigilante style attacks on innocent civilians from both sides. The violence abated somewhat, but did not end until after General John Pershing led his expedition into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa and his band. Shortly thereafter, President Wilson sent a hundred thousand National Guard troops to the

border bringing enough pressure to bear that the Bandit War was officially ended.

Frank Hamer's part in The Bandit War is not well documented. He is known to have participated in a few skirmishes with bandits, but what can be gleaned from people who were there seems to exonerate him from participating in any atrocities.

In 1918, Hamer was back on the border near Brownsville after two lawmen had been murdered by smugglers. The Rangers received a tip that smuggler Encarnacion Delgado would be leading a load of mescal across the border. They set up near where the smugglers were expected to cross and waited for them.

The local Sheriff, who had operational control of the stakeout, had briefed that the lawmen were to announce themselves before engaging the smugglers. Hamer vehemently disagreed, telling the sheriff, "If you try to arrest him, you'll get yourself shot for sure."

When Delgado arrived with his load of mescal, the sheriff ordered the smugglers to halt. Delgado fired a round from his .45 revolver killing Ranger Tim Timberlake. Hamer engaged the smuggler with his .25 caliber Remington Model 8 hitting him five times and killing him. Hamer never forgot the lesson of that gunfight and it would have a profound influence on how he acted in future deadly force encounters.

In late 1918, he received a tip that an arms shipment was being sent from Houston to Pancho Villa's forces across the border from Brownsville. Hamer dutifully reported the plot to higher headquarters in Austin. Hamer

## MAINTAINING THE HIGH STANDARD OF LAW AND ORDER

### REMINGTON MODEL 8



#### 15 Shot High Power Autoloading Rifle

In the world's history of firearms, the Remington Model 8 .35 caliber stands alone as the most powerful commercial autoloading rifle made, equipped with 15-shot magazine and beaver-tail fore end, it is nothing less than perfection for police work. Fifteen rapid, smashing aimed shots—equivalent to three ordinary rifles in one—plus extra range, penetration and shock. This gun is now being used by some of the largest police and patrol units in America, as well as scores of individual officers. So equipped it is only sold for police work.



**ABOVE: HAMER ACQUIRED A .35 CAL. REMINGTON MODEL 8 TO PURSUE THE BARROW GANG. HIS POSSE ENDED THE GANG (RIGHT) IN A HAIL OF BULLETS.**

received a personal visit from a Ranger Captain telling him that the Adjutant General of the Rangers was ordering him to allow the shipment through. Hamer replied that he “didn’t care if they were orders of the President of the United States—that they were a violation of the neutrality laws and he didn’t purpose to have anything to do with it.”

Hamer was assigned to a ninety mile stretch of border alone. He believed that it was an attempt to have him killed. Realizing that he needed help, he made an arrangement with the commander of the Tamaulipas State Police. Hamer became the virtual head of this unit of policemen who patrolled the Mexican side of his section of the border. When Hamer had word of crimes committed in Texas, he notified the head of the Mexican police force to help capture the criminals who generally fled south to Mexico. Hamer’s arrangement proved to be so successful at cleaning up his section of the border that his enemies within the Ranger service had to find another way to get rid of him.

Through an administrative trick, Hamer was discharged from the Rangers in June of 1919, but he was not done yet. After a changing of the guard at the top of the organization, Hamer was re-enlisted in the Rangers in December of 1919. With the passing of the Volstead Act (prohibition), Hamer was offered

a position as a federal prohibition agent at almost quadruple his Ranger salary. In May of 1920 he began work in San Antonio as a “dry agent”.

In March, Hamer and a group of soldiers, policemen and prohibition agents engaged in a firefight near El Paso with a band of twenty-five smugglers that lasted for over two hours and in which over ten thousand rounds were fired. Three prohibition agents were killed in gun battles with smugglers that March leading a frustrated Hamer to ask of the ranking federal officers in the area, “What are you people doing to lose so many men?”

The agents would yell, “Manos arriba!” (Hands up) at the smugglers to announce their presence. In return, the smugglers would open fire. Hamer had a different idea. He led a posse to lay in wait for smugglers. When a group of six appeared with cases of liquor on their shoulders Hamer whispered to his fellow officers, “Don’t do anything until I give the word. When I give the word, do exactly as I do.” When the smugglers reached the U.S. side of the river Hamer said “OK!” At the same time he opened fire on them with his rifle. All six smugglers were killed. “Hamer then, looking squarely at the young agents, said, “Now holler, ‘Manos arriba’ at these sons of bitches and see how many of them shoot you”. Hamer was finished with taking chances with desperados.

At the end of August, 1921, Hamer resigned as a prohibition agent. The governor commissioned him in the Ranger service as a Captain. He headed to Del Rio to assume command of Company C. Hamer continued to enhance his reputation as an impartial investigator who called out corruption wherever he found it.

In January, 1933 “Ma Ferguson” took office as governor and disbanded the Rangers. In 1934 Lee Simmons, superintendent of the Texas Prison System, came to him with a proposal. He wanted to know if Hamer would track down gangsters Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker. Simmons told Hamer that he would be completely in charge of the investigation, he’d have whatever backing he needed and that his involvement was known only by the Governor and himself so he could remain low profile. He also said, “Captain, it is foolish for me to try to tell you anything, but in my judgement, the thing for you to do is put them on the spot, know you are right—and then shoot everybody in sight.” Bonnie and Clyde had a history of murdering law enforcement officers, and gambling lives on the good will of killers to cooperate with arrest was not what Hamer was encouraged to do.

Hamer wasted no time in getting to work. He studied the Barrow Gang’s habits at length and later recalled, “I soon learned that Barrow

played a circle from Dallas to Joplin, Missouri, to Louisiana, and back to Dallas. Occasionally, he would leave this beat, but he would always come back to it as most criminals do." Hamer decided to begin his manhunt in Louisiana. The reasoning was simple; Louisiana was the one state near his home in which Barrow wasn't currently being hotly pursued.

Hamer surveilled Clyde Barrow's family hoping to get a lead. He spent the next few months tracking Bonnie and Clyde through several states following their trail of robberies and murders, gradually closing the gap.

In April, Ivy Methvin, the father of Henry Methvin (a member of the Barrow Gang) came forward with an offer to give up Bonnie and Clyde if Henry were to receive a pardon. The Methvins had become alarmed by recent threats from Clyde that he would kill the whole family if there was any treachery. Hamer and his fellow lawmen decided to capture Bonnie and Clyde on a remote stretch of road that they would have to travel in order to reach the Methvin's home.

On May 23, Hamer had Ivy Methvin park his truck on the west side of the country road facing north. At dawn they removed a tire from the truck hoping that Clyde would recognize Ivy and stop to help him. On the

east side of the road, Hamer and his five-man posse set up in a linear ambush stretching about 20 yards long in the brush and tree covered embankment.

At 9:15, Bonnie and Clyde pulled into view. They were positively identified by an officer in the posse who was familiar with both of them. As they pulled up to Methvin's truck, several officers yelled, "Halt!" and simultaneously, another opened up with his Remington shotgun. Bonnie and Clyde went for their weapons, but it was too late. The posse unloaded on the car, killing them both.

Hamer later stated, "I hated to have to shoot her. But as they drove up ... and I pulled down on Barrow, knowing that some of my rifle bullets we're going to snuff out her life along with his, I recalled how she had helped Barrow kill nine peace officers .... Thinking of that as I drew down on them and sighted down my rifle barrel, I gritted my teeth and pulled the trigger as quickly as I could." When it was over, the vehicle had been hit 167 times, Bonnie had been hit by forty-one rounds and Clyde had been hit by at least seventeen.

The manhunt for Bonnie and Clyde had lasted for more than a year and had proven to be beyond the abilities of the FBI and

the law enforcement agencies from a dozen states. Frank Hamer had taken three and a half months to complete the task.

Hamer died in his sleep from a heart attack at the age of seventy-one.

Frank Hamer lived a life that straddled two distinct time periods, beginning in the Wild West and stretching into the twentieth century scientific era of law enforcement. He had characteristics that would have distinguished him as a superior lawman in any period: bravery, intelligence, willingness to do his duty no matter the consequences, and the strength to sleep well, confident he had done what was right. Frank Hamer's experience provides real lessons on self-defense and firearms application that are often lost between the tactical ignorance of reporters, the fantasies of armchair warrior-bloggers and the willful blindness sometimes encountered in the upper echelons of the various agencies of our time. A fierce warrior; it was Hamer's integrity that made people on all sides of disputes respect his word. ✓

#### BIO

*John Stevenson is a former police officer, U.S. Border Patrol agent and Federal Air Marshal.*

## GEAR REVIEW

### RECON RANGER

A bicycle can be your ticket to exploring the outdoors, getting away from crowds and serving as transportation in difficult-to-access locations. Traffic congestion or other contingencies may not suit your car. A good bicycle can triple (or more) the distance practical to travel on foot and an electric bicycle can multiply that distance and boost your speed. The Recon Ranger can provide a top speed of 25-30 mph and a powered range of 30-50 miles between charges. Spare batteries and solar charging units are available. You may want to stash one at your home, at your work or in your truck or boat.

[www.reconpowerbikes.com](http://www.reconpowerbikes.com)





Jesse Rodriguez practices shooting with NVGs through the optic on a Deep River Custom Tactical 2011 pistol in 2020.

# BLACK OUT **Low Light Pistol Match**

BY **BRENDAN SOUDER** PHOTOS COURTESY **RPGi**

Imagine you are at the start position on one of the stages at a local shooting competition and you hear the R.O. yell: “Lights!”

**T**he stage that was lit up and familiar goes completely dark. Shooters who compete at a night match quickly begin to realize why we say, “You get what you train for.” The feedback we hear most often at RPGi is the need for more low light training, and we are dedicated to our shooters.

It was a dream of mine to bring low light shooting and competitions to the Panhandle of Florida. As a career SOF guy, competitive

shooter and law-abiding concealed carry individual, I immediately saw the importance of low light training for the community. The staff and I have achieved success in generating interest in this type of training and activities that have brought out about 100 shooters for our low light shooting matches and filled our classes.

RPGi Combat matches are built around circumstances that go beyond competitive

shooting. One would say our matches are a hybrid of USPSA/Tactical Games/Multi-gun and we build these events out to be a social experience where shooters can exchange ideas on guns, gear, ammunition and training. We’ve incorporated aspects of combat marksmanship, close quarters battle, vehicle close quarters battle and breaching with other skill-based techniques and procedures. The RPGi “Blackout” Match is set up as a four-



**RPGI BLACKOUT MATCH WINNER OCTOBER 2020- AKADIAN CAMPBELL.**

stage mini-match that focuses primarily on aspects of shooting in complete darkness. Shooters for this match can choose between one of the two divisions; White Light Division or the Night Vision Division. The stages are technical in a manner that challenges some of the best shooters, with the added pressure to make it happen under NVGs or white light. Purposeful training is the key for finishing ahead of the pack.

Each stage is built to support a technique or procedure that presents an additional stressor or obstacle to negotiate for our shooters. We mandate that competitors leave their lasers and lights in the off position before the start signal (shot timer), which in our opinion is the most common untrained items guys and gals face at our matches. Developing muscle memory through training on how to turn on your light or laser before engagement is critical for low light shooting tactics. Shooters are welcome to don a body armor vest with ballistic plates for a 10-second bonus, which is a piece that can prove challenging in the match if left untrained.

Stage One “Close Quarters Steel” is a CQB-generated scenario that forces the shooter to open the door while safely maintaining

their firearm and to fight from the door frame of the house before entering the shooting area. In this course of fire, we stress the economy of motion aspect that would motivate the shooter to develop a strategy on taking down the remainder of the course from Left to Right or Right to Left to support a logical flow, resulting in a better time overall. Training for this type of course of fire should include drills that shooters practice using their controls (switches for lights/lasers), shooting around barriers, shooting with lights or NVGs and setting up courses that force economy of motion or movement planning.

Stage Two “Ladder Drill” is a short course designed to challenge a shooter’s ability to change levels and use barriers during engagements. The course incorporates a steel ladder, shooting while moving and safe weapons handling in low light conditions. The best shooters of the match will be the ones who go “one for one” (meaning no miss or make-up shots) on steel and continue shooting while moving after the ladder portion. To nail this kind of stage, competitors



left: Ethan Szymczak, the winner of the NVG division receives prize from Brendan Souder at RPGi Blackout match in May of 2020.

below: Amy Way uses a mini-ram to breach door at RPGi Combat Match in 2020 at Southern Tactical.



would benefit from shooting on a barrier or similar ladder to simulate changing positions, and engaging the plate rack at night would pay dividends in acquiring low light skills. For instance, white light shooters with iron sights will see a different looking sight picture in complete darkness and utilization of a weapon mounted light (WML). The competitors using NVGs will also benefit from adjusting their focus for shooting targets at close range and more than likely not want their laser on the highest setting to avoid washing out the rest of the targets.

Stage Three “Hammer Time CQB” is a simulated two-room shoot house that allows the shooter to use mechanical breaching to enter into the structure and complete the course of fire. During this stage, shooters will utilize the “economy of motion” strategy and make their best attempt to eliminate make up shots for the fastest time. At this stage, we constructed an all-steel door that uses heavy-duty magnets to keep the door closed. The breaching hammer provided allows us as



staff to educate our competitor briefly on the usage of mechanical breaching tools. After all, there is a right and wrong way to use a breaching hammer and the wrong way can be painful.

Stage Four, "Tight Spaces," is another short course that we designed with the shooter's kit in mind, off-hand shooting and limited space in the shooting area to maneuver for accurate engagements. We find that some competitors have their kit set up to cause them to lose items during strenuous movement. In this stage, each shooter has to make a short jump off of a box before entering the shooting area. Shooters will also find it challenging to shoot off-hand on the stage and although it's not mandatory, folks will find out quickly that it's the best option here. People sometimes seem to want to primarily train the items they are good at, but in this instance, our guys find it critical to conduct off-hand shooting drills with pistol, shotguns and rifles. You are in a bad position if you show up to a match and experience your first off-hand shooting occasion during the course of fire.

#### TRAINING TIPS:

- Safely conduct dry fire practice of weapons manipulation and magazine changes with kit at the house with normal lighting conditions (build your handling skills and work your controls).
- Safely conduct dry fire of weapons manipulation with kit in low light to no light conditions (activate your light/lasers and test your NVGs). Practice changing magazines, acquiring a sight picture, adjusting red dots and transition targets.
- Visit the local shooting range and safely practice shooting in and around barriers, changing levels, movement drills (economy of motion) and running a plate rack multiple times.
- Shake your kit out, ensure that aggressive movement or jumping off a short box doesn't result in your magazines or other items falling out.
- Practice safely walking with your white light activated in pure darkness. This can be achieved in a back yard (where legal), garage or in your house. The same familiarization and training should be executed with NVGs.



### RPGI STUDENT ENGAGES STATIC STEEL TARGET AT LOW LIGHT TRAINING COURSE DURING SUMMER OF 2020.

- Maximize resources and safely live fire the higher percentage of your ammunition during your low light and no light range time.
- Sign up and take high quality low light shooting courses. These courses will enhance your knowledge and can provide an optimal environment that will bring your capability to the next level.
- Apply a thin film of Chapstick to your WML lens to prevent carbon dust from accumulating (this also helps with cleaning post-training or match).
- Bring anti-fog for your clear lens shooting glasses. This is a must for shooting during fall and winter. The cooler temperatures cause fogging and a potentially dangerous and severely limiting situation during the course of fire.

#### OFTEN OVERLOOKED:

- Show up early (during the daylight) and walk the stages before darkness. We also recommend reading the rules or printing out the stage plans if available before arrival.
- Show up to the match with your magazines loaded and kit ready to go to allow additional time for stage walkthroughs.
- Test fire your guns before registration (this allows you to reduce some anxiety). This is critical to ensure your weapon, WML/Laser, and equipment works properly
- Change your batteries on the day of the match and come with spares (we see folks' batteries die on stages regularly).
- Check your WML/Lasers and anything with a tightening bolt/screw before and after each stage and re-tighten as necessary.

Regardless of whether you want to be a "sportsman" or just want to get better at shooting, competitive shooting matches are an excellent platform for learning. Competition tests your abilities for accuracy, speed and armed problem solving. Competition lets you know where you have the most room for improvement in your training regimen. Folks in this community are easy to talk to and willing to help you get started. Be on the lookout for RPGi matches and training in 2021. Train. Evolve. Compete. ✓

#### BIO

*Brendan Souder is an active duty soldier, a competition shooter, and owner/operator of Range Project Group International (rpginternational.us) in the Panhandle of Florida. RPGi hosts shooting competitions and training courses that leverage the SOF background/competition hybrid model. The views expressed in this article are the opinions of Brendan Souder and do not reflect views of the U.S. Military.*



# TACTICAL BREATHING

BY **DAVE GROSSMAN**

**On September 6, 2001, while working on a Robbery Task Force, I used [tactical breathing] seconds prior to shooting and killing a masked armed robber in a grocery store.**

**T**he detectives had received information that this guy was going to rob a grocery store in town, so my partner and I were assigned to be in the store as the take down team. He was going to use the M-26 Taser to subdue the subject. In the previous six robberies, the suspects had been armed with a revolver, a semi-auto handgun, and a sawed-off shotgun. My job was to cover my partner.

Detectives saw the suspects leave in a vehicle and they began a moving surveillance on them. We could hear what was going on over the police radio. The suspects drove by the store several times and stopped a couple of times to see if anyone was following them. Eventually, one of them was dropped off nearby.

We had surveillance set up in the parking

lot and he could see the suspect at the end of the building. Surveillance was giving us play-by-play of what the suspect was doing: He would crouch down behind a dumpster to conceal himself when cars drove by the store. We had plenty of time to think about what was going to happen.

I realized my heart rate was elevating. You know when you smash your finger with the hammer or slam your finger in the car door, and the finger starts throbbing? That's how my heart felt. I told myself that it was time to start breathing. I kept breathing the way you instructed until I felt my heart stop pounding. I'm not sure how long it took, but I knew when I was ready. So I thought. It took half a second to fire seven rounds from the MP5 [submachine gun] on full auto. Six rounds struck the moving target. The next

thing I remember was standing over the suspect thinking, 'BRING IT ON!' and 'HOLY SHIT!' at the same time.

—Correspondence to Colonel  
Dave Grossman From  
Officer Rick Lanoue

Tactical breathing is an easy-to-do technique that can be used in a stressful situation to slow your thumping heart beat, reduce the tremble in your hands, deepen your voice so you do not sound like Mickey Mouse, and to bathe yourself with a powerful sense of calm and control. In other words, it is a tool to control the sympathetic nervous system. One police officer who used tactical breathing in a confrontation with an armed robber, summed it up with these succinct and powerful words: "Using the breathing technique...I slowed



myself down, got a good sight picture, and fired the fatal head shot." After a critical incident, tactical breathing is a highly effective tool to help you delink your physiological arousal from your memory of the event.

Here is what is happening inside your mind and body and why this simple breathing method quickly restores your calm and control. For our purposes, let us divide your body into two parts: the somatic nervous system and the autonomic nervous system. The somatic nervous system is involved in those actions you have under conscious control, such as moving your arms and kicking a stone out of your path. The autonomic nervous system is involved with those things that you do not have under conscious control, such as your heartbeat and perspiration. Indulge me for a moment and try a little physical demonstration that will help you completely grasp the differences in these two nervous systems.

First, let's test your somatic nervous system. Raise your right arm. Excellent. You have demonstrated your mastery of the somatic nervous system. Okay, you can lower it now. Stay with me, it will get harder.

Now, let us test your autonomic nervous system. When I say, "go," I want you to raise your heart rate to 200 bpm, start perspiring, and see if you can manifest a little stress diarrhea. Ready. Go! What happened? You failed because you cannot consciously control your heart rate, make yourself perspire or have stress diarrhea, even if you wanted to. It is called the autonomic nervous system because these actions are automatic; they are not under conscious control.

As you read the last two sentences, your inhalation and exhalation were also autonomic actions. If you had to consciously control your breathing, you would die when you fell asleep. That said, please take a deep breath and then let it out. With that conscious action, you just pulled your breathing from autonomic to somatic control. Breathing and blinking are the only two actions of your autonomic nervous systems that you can bring under conscious control anytime you choose. As such, your breathing is the bridge between your somatic and autonomic nervous system.

Think of your autonomic nervous system as a big, shuddering, shaking machine that has only one control lever sticking out from its side. Your breathing is that control lever; the one thing you can reach out and grab. When you control your breathing you control the whole autonomic nervous system. As

discussed earlier, the autonomic nervous system has two branches: the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system. Through proper breathing, you can control your sympathetic nervous system response, the fancy term for fear and anger. As mentioned earlier, uncontrolled fear and anger are the same thing, they are just

heard of these expressions? "I was scared out of my wits," "I was so scared that I couldn't see straight," or "I got the crap scared out of me." These are all common expressions to communicate some of the things we have been talking about in this book. In the same way, when we were children and overly excited about something, many of us were told by our



PHABAN - THE DIGITAL ARTIST

**If the heart rate gets too high, tunnel vision sets in, depth perception goes out, fine and complex motor control shuts down, and the forebrain shuts down.**

two different manifestations of the puppy getting out of control. Tactical breathing is a leash on the puppy. The more you practice the breathing technique, the quicker the effects kick in, as a result of powerful classical and operant conditioning mechanisms.

Although we continuously find new uses for tactical breathing, it is really nothing new. The yoga, Zen and martial arts communities have used breathing control for centuries. The rifle marksmanship community has used it for over 100 years, and the Lamaze community has used it for over 50 years. (I tell my warrior audiences to think of tactical breathing as "combat Lamaze.") Yoga, Zen, and the martial arts may have some mystical connotations, but when you strip away the mysticism, all that is left is a simple process that allows you to gain conscious control over your unconscious nervous system, and then puts it to work for you.

It is really just common sense. Have you

mother, "Just take a deep breath." Well, mama knew what she was talking about, except for us it will be three, deep belly breaths.

The technical term for the procedure is autogenic breathing, but in the warrior community it is typically called tactical breathing or combat breathing. Though it is derived from many places, Calibre Press and Gary Klugiewicz should be credited for pioneering it and spreading it throughout the warrior community.

*Due to poor planning on my part, I once found myself in front of an abortion clinic where a hundred sign-waving protesters wanted a piece of me. Half were pro-choice and half were pro-life; more were arriving every minute. There was shouting and pushing and when a couple of big guys tried to push me aside, I pushed back, inadvertently knocking one man, a national leader, down a set of steps. That ignited his people and they began*

*screaming hysterically, some threatening to get me.*

*My eyes were watering profusely, I was trembling, and my chest was heaving as if I had run a mile.*

*I held my position and, imperceptible to the crowd, I drew a long, deep quiet breath, held it for a four-count moment, and then slowly and quietly released it for a four count. I paused empty for a four-count and then repeated the procedure. After the third cycle, my trembling had stopped, my breathing had quieted, and my eyes cleared.*

*I remained calm until my backup arrived.*  
—A police officer

I teach tactical breathing to Green Berets, federal agents and even surgeons in hospitals so they do not lose their fine-motor control in the middle of an operation. (My definition of a bad day is when my surgeon begins to lose his fine-motor control.) I also teach it to basketball players to improve their free-throw rate and to college kids suffering from test anxiety. I know of one martial arts instructor and two police officers who used it in the middle of their heart attacks. Four deep belly breaths and they were able to pull their heart rate down. Many police officers have contacted me over the years to relate how they have used tactical breathing to make desperate life and death shots, or how they have taught it to their kids to use when they get hurt, but my favorite story comes from one of my college students. I taught this young man the breathing exercise when he was in my intro-psychology course; in fact, I taught it to all of my students and made them do it, periodically, during tests in order to help them with test anxiety.

A couple of years later, this student came up to me in a supermarket in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and said, “Hey, Colonel Grossman, you remember that breathing exercise you taught us? That stuff really works.” I asked him what happened. “I got into a traffic accident,” he said, “and my car flipped over and I was trapped with a broken leg. I began to panic and then out of the blue I remembered what you taught us.”

The mind is like that: If you are trained, what you need can be there for you, and sometimes it seems to come out of the blue.

“I began to panic,” the young man said, “and then it was just like you were there in class making me do it during a test. I began breathing in through my nose, holding it as you had taught, exhaling and then holding empty. You know what? That worked, it calmed me down.”

I asked the young man what happened next.

“What could I do? I’m trapped in my car! I reached over, turned the radio on my favorite station and waited for somebody to come get me. They eventually got there with the Jaws of Life, pried the car apart, and pulled me out. They told me that if I had panicked I would have probably killed myself.”

If he had panicked, he would have probably killed himself. What did Yoda teach us about fear? “Fear leads to the dark side . . . Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate and hate leads to much suffering.” The degree to which you control your fear and anger is the degree to which you control your hate and suffering. Your goal is to prevent fear, prevent anger, prevent hate, and prevent suffering. The degree to which you control your fear is the degree to which you have mastered yourself as a warrior.

## THE MECHANICS OF TACTICAL BREATHING

*The devil is in the details.*

—Old German military maxim

There is still a need for extensive research to see how long each phase should be held, but for many years now the four-count method has worked wonders for warriors around the globe. Once you start using it, you can tailor it to your body’s needs. For example, you might find that you need to hold each count for five seconds and that you need five cycles of the procedure to achieve the desired effect. This is fine. It is just like adjusting a tuning knob: Grab hold of the knob and keep turning it until you get “dialed in” to the level that works for you. For now, let us use the four-count method. Begin by breathing in through your nose to a slow count of four, which expands your belly like a balloon. Hold for a count of four, and then slowly exhale through your lips for a count of four, as your belly collapses like a balloon with its air released. Hold empty for a count of four and then repeat the process. That is it. Short, but effective. Now, follow along as I guide you through the procedure.

In through the nose two, three, four. Hold two, three, four. Out through the lips two, three, four. Hold two, three, four.

In through the nose deep, deep, deep. Hold two, three, four. Out through the lips deep, deep, deep. Hold two, three, four.

In through the nose two, three, four. Hold two, three, four. Out through the lips two, three, four. Hold two, three, four.

Maybe you are feeling a little mellow now or

maybe you didn’t notice a difference since you were already relaxed. But in a life and death situation, we know this simple exercise can be a true revolution in human development. For the first time in human history we are teaching large portions of our population to consciously control the unconscious part of their body.

## TACTICAL BREATHING IN WARRIOR OPERATIONS

Our tactical unit was involved in the fatal shooting of a suspect recently during a protracted barricade situation. The suspect was a former prison gang member, wanted for homicide, and had become trapped during a home invasion while fleeing the police. One of our shooters [after the incident] made some comments that I thought you might find interesting.

[The officer] was in a position approximately 40 feet from the suspect when he ultimately fired and struck the suspect with his M4 [carbine]. The area was dark and the officer was wearing a protective mask because of chemical agents [tear gas] previously fired into the structure.

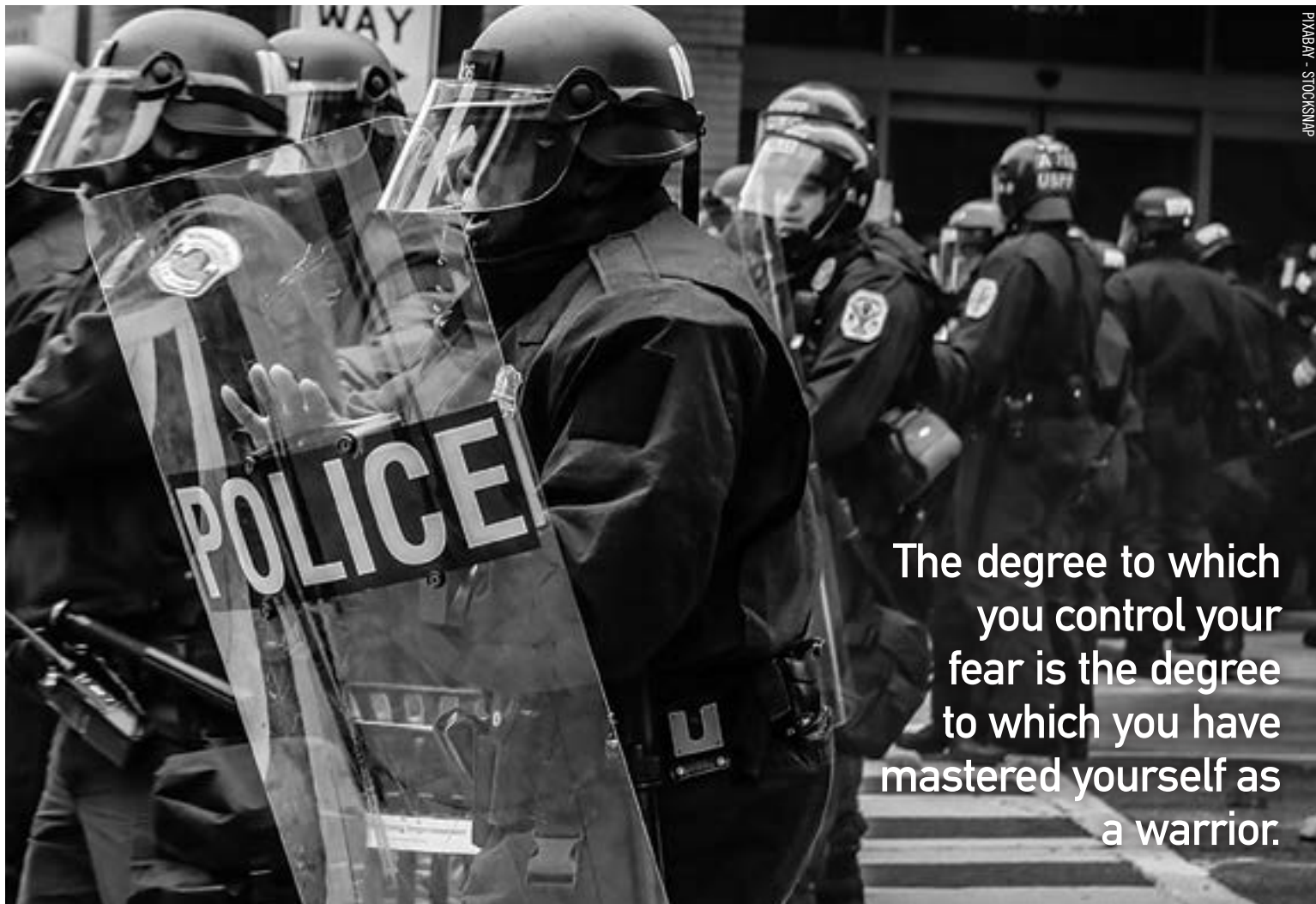
Over time, the suspect made numerous statements to negotiators that he was going to “come out shooting” and that the officers had “better get ready because I’m going to blow away the first ones I see.”

*The officer who ultimately shot the suspect spoke afterwards of the “up and down” mental preparation he went through prior to the suspect’s eventual exit at a full sprint. He said that during the time leading up to the shooting, all he could think of was “the things Colonel Grossman told us about visualizing a deadly confrontation,” and how he did “those breathing exercises that he discussed and demonstrated.” The officer is adamant that your lecture and book On Killing helped him prepare for the critical incident that he knew was about to unfold in front of him. Thank you for your significant contributions in the preparations of my officers to do what was right, just, and necessary, and for their mental/emotional well being afterwards.*

—Correspondence to Colonel Grossman From a SWAT lieutenant

Tactical breathing can be used before, during and after a combat situation. When used before, it quickly calms and prepares you to function at your best in a hostile environment. Say you are a member of a tactical team and your heartbeat is racing in high Condition Red as you prepare to crash through a door. With





The degree to which you control your fear is the degree to which you have mastered yourself as a warrior.

a heart rate at such a high level, the slightest stimulus is going to put you over the top and possibly cause you to overreact. While you wait in those minutes or even seconds for the “doorman” to smash the entry point, use the four-count breathing technique to get your heart rate down to the target range in low Condition Red or high Condition Yellow.

Many police officers have told me that they have done really stupid things in high-speed chases, and every week we hear of another jurisdiction somewhere in the country no longer allowing their officers to engage in pursuits. Officers drive fast to hot calls all the time, so why do they get tunnel vision and stop thinking when driving in a high-speed pursuit? If you said it is the puppy’s fault, you are correct. When the driver’s heart rate gets too high, tunnel vision sets in, depth perception goes out, fine and complex motor control shuts down, the forebrain shuts down, the midbrain takes over, and the puppy is driving the car! An excited little dog is now careening that car through the streets, making all kinds of bad decisions and scattering terrified citizens.

Trainers of emergency vehicle operation

courses who have introduced tactical breathing into their curriculum, report that the quality of performance among their trainees have broken all previous records. Charles E. Humes has pioneered a powerful and effective training process in which police officers are taught to breathe automatically, as a conditioned reflex, in response to the sound of their siren.

When an officer is calm, you can hear it in his voice on the police radio, even while driving 80 mph in pursuit of armed felons. He sounds like that famous transmission from Apollo 13: “Houston, we have a problem.” The crew was in outer space—outer space!—and when they saw a warning light flash suddenly, followed by a loud bang, Jack Swigert announced calmly over the radio, “Houston, we have a problem here.” The astronauts remained calm because most of them were drawn from fighter pilots and test pilots, and the only way they had stayed alive across the years was to function with steely calm in the face of great danger. If a test pilot blows his cool, he dies. When a police officer or any warrior blows his cool in a life and death event, he too might die.

If you are in an administrative supervisory position, and you are listening to a high-speed chase on the police radio, pay close attention to the officer calling the pursuit. If the officer is losing fine-motor control in his voice, then he is probably also losing fine-motor control in his hands. If his voice sounds like Barney Fife or a 12-year-old girl—high-pitched and over-the-top excited—pull that officer off the chase. If you hear the calm and in-control voice of an astronaut, a fighter pilot, on the radio, let him proceed.

### **TACTICAL BREATHING AFTER THE INCIDENT**

You can and must use this breathing technique after the event, especially during the critical incident debriefing discussed earlier, to delink the memory from the physiological arousal. The worst response you can have to a traumatic event is to have fear of its memory. The example of the Arkansas State Trooper who had a powerful SNS response upon hearing a starter pistol is typical of untold thousands of other people who have lived through a terrifying experience. The first

time that memory comes rushing back it can scare the daylights out of you because no one warned you that it might happen. You expect to be scared in combat, but you do not expect to be scared later, for what seems like no good reason.

After it scares you the first time, you live in fear of it happening again. The next time it is going to be even worse, because when the puppy comes through the screen door, you are going to run from it and he is going to chase you. If you continue to allow this to happen, you create a vicious cycle that will spin you downhill. Instead, use tactical breathing to control the puppy by putting a leash around his neck and staking him out in the front yard so he cannot come through that door again.

Take a deep breath. Do it right now, as you read this. There, see? You have the power to do this any time you want. If you let anger or fear control you, it is because you have made a conscious choice to not use the breathing technique. You have a leash around your puppy's neck and you have chosen not to use it. If uncontrollable anger or uncontrollable tears start to happen, remember that they are not really uncontrollable, because if you control your breathing, then you can control the emotions.

Some people would say that PTSD is a self-inflicted malady. To a certain degree, from one perspective, there can be some truth to this. We must never "blame the victim," but some aspects can result from ignorance, and now you are no longer ignorant. If you have not made peace with the memories, if you have not done a group critical incident debriefing and worked your way through that memory and made peace with it, there is a good possibility it will come back to bite you when you testify in court. You have been fleeing from the memories, refusing to come to terms with them, but in court you cannot avoid them, and the result can be very traumatic.

A slick lawyer in a thousand-dollar suit will stand in front of you and conduct a cross-examination. But he does not want you to testify, he wants the puppy on the stand. He wants that neural network to activate so that you hyperventilate, your heart pounds, your brow perspires, your voice quavers, and your face turns white and blotchy. Keep in mind that the lawyer has been trained to play head games with you, and he is paid big bucks because he is very good at what he does. He wants to create stress and trauma in your life, and he does it by whistling for the puppy. If he

is successful the jury will think you are a liar or, at the least, unreliable.

As a warrior you have three goals in life that you strive to accomplish. First and foremost, protect the innocent; second, convict the guilty; and third, draw your retirement. These are three honorable objectives, but now you are confronting a slick lawyer in a shiny suit wanting to prevent you from doing all three by trying his best to spin you down the path of PTSD.

The best advice I was ever given for testifying in court was simply to "Take

... your ... time." You have all the time in the world, so use it. I relate it to my competitive pistol shooting, when I have lots of time to make a shot. I take a nice deep breath, let it out, and caress the trigger. When you are on the stand and that lawyer asks the first question and your heart pounds in your chest, just take ... your ... time. Think of it as going into battle. Take a deep breath, hold it, let it out, and then slowly, calmly, professionally, put the answer right between the lawyer's beady little eyes.

You control your body; your body does not control you. And the lawyer? He is not even in the equation.

#### OTHER USEFUL TIMES TO BREATHE

*"I have not yet begun to fight!"*

*"Now would be a good time to start!"*

—Terry Pratchett

There are many good times to breathe. Sometimes tactical breathing works to bring relief from health problems. Co-author Loren Christensen knows a woman who suffers from migraine headaches, an affliction she did not have prior to her tour in the Gulf War. When she feels a migraine coming on, she immediately begins the four-count breathing process and, if caught in time, she wards it off.

This is not a panacea. Breathing will not solve all of life's ills, but it can help in many cases. Consider this example.

*I know that this may sound strange, but have you had anyone tell you that the combat breathing technique you teach may help with physical ailments such as heart burn? In the past I used to be devastated by an intolerable amount of pain from heart burn, no matter what I did (a bottle [literally] of Pepto, Tums, or any other antacid would not help at all) I was about resigned to the fact that I would have to go to the doctors office for a prescription.*

*One day in the middle of such an attack I used the technique to take my mind off of the pain, and almost immediately it was gone. Since then, when I feel an attack coming on, I use the technique and I avoid an attack all together*

—Correspondence to  
Colonel Grossman From  
Ron C. Danielowski

One of the most important things we can do is to use the breathing exercise to help others in their time of need. I was first introduced to it as Lamaze which my wife used in childbirth, and I was so impressed with the combination of visual concentration, relaxation, coaching, and breathing, that I have continued to use it for a lifetime.

On one occasion, one of my young soldiers was in a motorcycle accident and I went to the hospital to check on him immediately after the accident. He was strapped to a hard wooden backboard, in great pain as he waited to be X-rayed. It was a good feeling to have a tool to give him to help in his moment of need, and I coached him through the full Lamaze process with great success.

On another occasion I used the breathing, tied in with the other Lamaze techniques, with my son when he split his eye open and needed stitches. The doctor at the emergency room was amazed at his calmness as the numbing shots and stitches were applied. Many individuals have been able to use this tool to help their children when they were injured. One law enforcement officer wrote to me and gave a classic example.

*A few weeks ago, my nine-year-old daughter fell from our swing. She let out a bloodcurdling scream that brought my wife and I to investigate. She was lying on her back, screaming and holding her right arm. One look told me that it had been broken in at least two places.*

*I remembered what you had taught on breathing and immediately started her on "Combat Breathing." She immediately calmed down ... I drove her to the hospital and made her continue to breathe in a proper military manner ... After being treated and her arm being put into a cast for three broken bones, the staff told me that they had never had such a calm child in their hospital with such a severe break."*

—Correspondence to  
Colonel Grossman

## The procedures we had set in place had established a “national standard” for post-trauma responses.

One of the tricks for teaching children to breathe is to use a flower and a lit candle. Demonstrate to the child: “Smell in the flower, enjoy it; blow out the candle, watch the smoke. Now you do it.”

As a warrior, your concern is always to help others, and to do that you must be the rock of calm. When the whole world is coming unglued and all about you are losing their heads and blaming it on you, your job is to be that rock that others can anchor themselves to, and tactical breathing is one powerful tool that helps make that possible.

We know that attitude can be contagious. Panic can be contagious, and so is calm. As a warrior, you must be an example of calm and, in that capacity, you can and must pass on the calming benefits of this exercise to others.

Soldiers, police officers and educators are often the first to debrief a person after a traumatic event. Say you are a police officer and you arrive at the scene of an armed robbery where the Seven-Eleven clerk has been beaten; or you are an Army officer getting a combat report from one of your units; or you are an educator and a kid has just been in a fight. In each of these cases you are going to ask what happened, and you have both a professional and a moral obligation to insure that the individual reporting to you remains calm.

An agitated and anxious person has trouble recalling facts and might even lose pertinent pieces of information. You do not want to interview the puppy, because once it has taken over, your efforts can be in vain. When you are in the business of gathering information, you need to first get the subject calm so you can conduct the most productive interview possible. Not only will you get better information, you will have made a giant step in helping that person avoid lasting psychological trauma and from spinning down the path of PTSD. Remember this: the probability of loss of life after a traumatic event can be greater than loss of life during the event.

Here is what you can do to help prevent that.

You want to calm the victim as you begin to get information or as you just reach out to offer a helping hand. Place a comforting hand on his shoulder, speak calmly and quietly, and ask him to take in a deep breath to your count of four and then hold it in while you again count to four. Tell him to let it out to your count and hold again to your count. When done correctly,

this interview can be an initial debriefing that will begin the process of patching the hole in the person’s screen door and helping him down the path of healing. If not done correctly, say you too become excited and agitated, you just might allow the victim’s puppy to make the hole in the screen door even larger. Your actions need to be calm, helpful and in control to help close down the neural network linking the memory of the event with the emotions, so that he can begin the process of healing.

Gary Klugiewicz is a law enforcement trainer who does a lot of work in corrections, especially cell entries, where two or more corrections officers charge into a cell to take a violent or threatening prisoner down onto the floor. Gary says that many prisoners, having nothing better to do, initiate lawsuits at the drop of a hat, most often when force has been used against them. To try to prevent this, he now includes tactical breathing techniques whenever he has to use physical force. He charges into the cell, takes the con down, sits on his back, and says, “Listen, I want you to breathe. I’m not going to get up until you breathe. Breathe in, two, three, four. Hold it, two, three, four. Let it out, two, three, four. Hold it, two, three, four. I’m not getting up until you do this.” The prisoner obeys (since he has no choice), and within seconds the effect from the breathing procedure kicks in and mellows him. “You know,” Gary says, “these guys sue for anything, but I’ve never had anybody sue me for making them breathe.”

On March 24, 1998, I walked in the door of Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas, after an 11 and 13 year-old boy had gunned down 15 people. I offered my services to Jack Bowers and Linda Graham, the two crisis counselors who had been put in charge. Jack and Linda were two of the most remarkable, competent and compassionate people I have ever met. They immediately accepted my offer, and it was one of the highest honors of my life to be able to work under their supervision, along with the other magnificent members of the crisis team during that crisis.

I taught tactical breathing to mental health professionals and clergy the night of the massacre. The next morning, I conducted the initial briefing for all of the teachers and established a cognitive foundation for their debriefings, which included training and rehearsing the tactical breathing procedure. Later, the survivors were broken into small

groups and began to work their way through their experiences. During this debriefing, only anxiety was forbidden. As soon as anyone began to show anxiety, as soon as the puppy began to come through the screen door, the person was made to stop and do tactical breathing. This process allowed the survivors of this deadly event to confront their memories and emotions, and begin to delink them from their physiological responses.

The next day, the mental health professionals, clergy, and teachers conducted debriefings with children using the same rules and techniques. The results were excellent. Of course, we cannot measure success in such circumstances, but there were immediate and observable positive responses from counselors and subjects, and a host of anecdotal support later to show the effectiveness of the breathing technique. In one case, a mother complained to a counselor that she was so anxious that she had been unable to sleep. The counselor said that he had her do just one cycle of tactical breathing and, to the woman’s amazement, she yawned.

I am happy to report that, to the best of my knowledge, there have been no suicides associated with the Jonesboro massacre, although there have been some resulting from the Littleton, Colorado, school massacre, and the Oklahoma City bombing. The national team of experts who arrived in Jonesboro 36 hours after the incident, under the very competent supervision of Dr. Scott Poland, stated that the procedures we had set in place had established a “national standard” for post-trauma responses.

Using this breathing technique to help calm people is a simple, compassionate and decent thing to do, just like our mama did for us when she told us to calm down and take a deep breath. It makes people feel better in just a matter of moments, and it helps them to regain control so that you, as an interviewer, can interact with the adult upstairs, not the puppy out in the front yard. ✓

### BIO

*Dave Grosman ([www.killology.com](http://www.killology.com)) is a retired US Army lieutenant colonel. He is a Ranger, a former West Point psychology professor and author. This article is an excerpt from his best selling book: **On Combat** (available now on Amazon).*





# PISTOL RETENTION SKILLS

BY JAMES WASHINGTON

**According to 2019 statistics there are 18.66 million Concealed Carry Weapons Permit owners in the United States, which is a 303 percent increase since 2007.**

**T**his growth can also be seen in the amount of industries and organizations that have sprung up in support of CCW owners demanding specialized clothing and gear for carry purposes. This has carried over to gun manufacturers as well, with guns designed with compactness in mind in multiple calibers.

We also see this support of the CCW community with the increase of training companies offering classes as basic as the course needed to obtain a CCW Permit being taught by regular citizens, to more advanced pistol courses taught by law enforcement officers, special operations soldiers and top competitive shooters. All of these are welcome additions for training those who have decided to carry a firearm.

One area I see lacking for CCW gun owners

is weapon retention courses. If you search Google it is easy to find articles concerning law enforcement personnel who have been disarmed while on duty only to be killed with their own weapon. That same weapon has also been used to shoot and kill other officers or private citizens. Carrying a gun comes with responsibility, and being disarmed can result in your death or the death of someone else.

There is a great deal of video and testimonial documentation of criminal street and prison gangs drilling weapons disarming techniques as part of a daily routine. On average, 30 percent of officers shot in the line of duty are reportedly shot with their own guns and 4.5 to 8 percent of officers killed in the line of duty are reportedly killed with their own guns every year.

Those officers are hardworking individuals like you. They are reportedly trusting and

community oriented, they attend church regularly, and use less force than other officers. They may have had complacent attitudes at the time of the incident, although they were on duty. Some were overweight and out of shape, something most Americans can relate to.

When you are carrying, you have to stay mentally aware of your environment at all times. I have carried a gun nearly every day since 1989 and I know that it is hard to always be tuned in when you are out in the world conducting your daily business. Taking this into account there are a few things that need to be discussed when carrying a concealed handgun. From that point on, wherever you go, there will always be at least one gun in the area and if someone has bad intentions on their mind you could easily make yourself a target. This is one of the main reasons I am

If someone takes your gun and goes out and hurts or kills others, you are accountable for those lives.

anti-open carry for private citizens and law enforcement.

Whenever I was armed on duty in soft clothes or off duty, I never allowed my pistol, badge, magazines or cuffs to show. I never dressed in standard “I have a gun clothing” or wore the tell-tale dress of the armed “shoot-me-first” vest or fanny pack.

We have to remember that in most violent crimes involving street level crews there are multiple offenders involved and distraction and deception are often utilized. So, if you are targeted while carrying openly, you have taken away your tactical and surprise advantages.

You not only let them know you are carrying, but exactly how you are carrying. Let the ways you would approach someone to disarm them run through your mind. Can you see the adjustment you would have to make for disarming someone who is carrying strong side, to cross draw or appendix? Now, add in the fact that you will be reacting to an attack with an opponent that knows how you are carrying. Plus, we have not added the likelihood of the second offender. One can see how much further behind the reactionary gap you will be.

This leads us to discussion of holster selection and there are plenty to choose from. Speed of the first shot from the holster is a valuable skill to build on with regular practice, but it is not the sole skill to learn when carrying a gun. I preach the use of holsters with some level of retention, but I am not talking holsters that require you dancing a jig before you can clear leather, like Level Three holsters.

Simple, Level One holsters are adequate. They are there to give you time to react and close your reactionary gap, but training *must* be mixed into your routine. Also, remember that over time holsters can get worn through use, so they will have to be replaced when their effectiveness wains.

It may be hard to fit in training on a regular basis, but it is necessary. Your subconscious mind cannot tell if you dry-practice or if mental scenarios are real or not, so **safely** practicing retention drills in the garage at full speed will help you with execution in the real world. You need to keep this defensive drill basic and increase the repetitions until they flow cleanly.

There are two types of weapon retention. The first is retention while the gun is holstered and second, retention after the

gun is drawn. A third type of retention is “off-body” carry retention, but I am not a fan of off-body and do not recommend carrying in that manner. In a perfect world, you would be able to face your potential subject, hands at chest level and weapon bladed away from the threat in a classic law enforcement interview stance. However, at the onslaught you would likely just be walking or standing when the attack happens and if your awareness fails, it may come from the rear without warning.

### **HOLSTERED WEAPON RETENTION:**

Being a left-handed shooter with the gun on my strong side, the offender reaches for my weapon from the front with his right hand or both hands. I would immediately check the attack by forcefully grabbing the gun if I can, or grabbing over the top of the offender’s hand(s) and force them down into the holster as if you were doing dips. This will be a race and I would rather have a handful of gun than hands and wrist, but you have to make sure to lock down hard on either position. You will have to drop your center of gravity at the same time and step to your rear with your strong-side foot and rotate your torso hard in that direction like you’re trying to hit a home run. With your free hand you will have two options depending on the offender’s reaction. If he can keep his arm in the bent position you can throw an elbow to the head region. If you are able to extend the subject’s arm(s) when you turn away you can then throw an open hand slap to the temple, ear area or brachial stun to the area where the trapped muscle and neck come together.

If this attack comes from the rear, with the offender grabbing your gun with the same-side hand as your strong side, you will again quickly grab and apply downward pressure to interrupt the offender’s intended efforts. Again, you will drop your center of gravity and whip your off-side hip around to face your offender and begin to viciously throw forearm brachial stuns while continuously turning into the offender.

### **DRAWN WEAPON RETENTION:**

When it comes to disarm attempts after the gun has been drawn the offender can either grab your gun at the 45-degree angle or manage to push your gun up past the engagement angle towards the sky. The best way to handle these types of disarm attempts is with a technique called “blending”. After the offender grabs your gun and pulls, you

will push after, again lowering your center of gravity, when he pushes you will pull, you add a turn left or right for what the situation dictates.

So, when they are pulling you will push, step to the outside of the offender’s foot at a 45-degree angle left or right, then turn into the offender and try to check their nearside heel with the arch of your outside foot. Do not stop with the downward pressure on the gun. Just work this technique in reverse for the push from the offender. This is not an advanced move—although there are those who will argue it is—but if you have any experience with grappling sports it’s quite simple. This is a boilerplate technique that works extremely well and can easily become part of one’s fighting arsenal with minimal practice.

Another type of retention technique that is growing in popularity is the aid of an edged weapon to assist with weapon retention. Slicing into their wrist then turning the blade and running it up the ulna or humerus bones to the elbow joint may discourage an attempted weapon grab. However, with the efficiency and unique attributes of a knife, additional training and practice is very important because you could easily injure yourself and take yourself out of a fight with a knife.

When the flag goes up and you have to protect your gun from being taken, you are in essence defending your life. When you are in a fight for your life and those you are responsible for, you have to go full-bore into that fight with all you have. If someone takes your gun and goes out and hurts or kills others, you are accountable for those lives. Make sure your use of weapons conforms to the laws in your jurisdiction. Identify the vulnerabilities you face. Identify the skills needed to mitigate those vulnerabilities and train them regularly. Make sure your training is safe for you, your training partners and all bystanders. Inert guns and rubber knives can be life savers. ✓

### **BIO**

*James Washington (axiosofdefense.com) served as a patrol officer, field training officer, firearms instructor and police sergeant. He served on the FBI Gang Task Force in Chicago for six years and is a firearms & tactics instructor for multiple agencies and armed citizens.*

# PROFILES OF COURAGE

Whether you are facing communist torture, interrogation and “re-education”, facing Wuhan Virus attributed protocols or facing the politics of censorship, there are times when each of us can use a little inspiration. Sometimes it helps to put your challenges in perspective. Sometimes it’s encouraging to see how selfless human beings can be. This account is the Silver Star award citation for Charlie Plumb, author of *I’m No Hero*.



## CHARLIE PLUMB

**T**he President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lieutenant Commander Joseph Charles Plumb, United States Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while interned as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam during September 1967. Lieutenant Commander Plumb’s captors, completely ignoring international agreements, subjected him to extreme mental and physical cruelties in an attempt to obtain military information and

false confessions for propaganda purposes. Through his resistance to those brutalities, he contributed significantly toward the eventual abandonment of harsh treatment by the North Vietnamese, which was attracting international attention. By his determination, courage, resourcefulness, and devotion, Lieutenant Commander Plumb reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Naval Service and the United States Armed Forces. ✓