

Shooting To Stop the Threat

By: Tom Perroni

If you have ever had any formal defensive Handgun training from a top notch firearms instructor, you probably heard them say, 'Shoot to Stop the Threat' What do they mean by this? Well the first thing you need to understand is the difference between Target Accuracy and Combat Accuracy.

1. **Target Accuracy**= is defined as "any shot that has precision; exactness when it hits a pre defined place on a specific target..." Hitting in the exact center of a target.
2. **Combat Accuracy**= is defined as "any shot that significantly affects the targets ability to present a lethal threat."

There is a myth in the handgun community. The ONE shot stop myth" is it reasonable to expect a single round to stop the attacker or any danger? This may sound good however we know that this is not a reasonable expectation from a single handgun bullet, especially a handgun bullet. I have a saying "A handgun is a tool a tool to fight your way back to the long gun or shotgun you should have had if you new you were going to be in a fight. You can read more about this in my article "Handgun Stopping Power".

Combat Accuracy has several important key points to remember.

1. When training with 'Combat Accuracy" one is not required to shoot the proverbial 2 inch group on a target but instead bullet placement on the upper torso can span the width of the shooters hand. If we are shooting perfect 2 inch groups we are shooting way to slow, taking precision shots or "Target Shooting" One needs to get bullets down range on the target with the goal of prevailing in this gunfight.
2. Hits anywhere on the target that cause the attacker to stop or disengage are considered "Combat Accurate" If for example your attacker has a knife and he attacks and you are able to get off two rounds that hit him in the pelvic geretel and he drops the knife and disengages that is 'combat accurate and you have stopped the threat.

However you must also have a "Combat Mindset" this is also discussed in a previous article. Shooting to stop the threat means that you continue to stay in the fight by shooting until the threat stops. However realize this may be 10, 15, 20, 25 or even 30 rounds, Getting hits on the target anywhere that will stop the threat or fight. But once the threat stops you must also stop shooting. You may only use force as a last resort especially deadly force. Not stopping once the threat has stopped is using excessive force. You may also only use the amount of force that is *REASONABLE AND NECESSARY IN YOUR SITUATION*. By understanding Combat Accuracy most shooters will be able to shoot faster by not

overemphasizing concepts that come from target shooting and therefore prepare themselves to stop threats faster in a real world incident. I know some people will have a hard time with this approach, because you have been taught for decades to go to the range and shoot at the center of a target. You need that gratification that comes from shooting and being able to measure your idea of successes. Also remember that the root word in Gun Fight is Fight. Fights are dynamic and you are moving and your hits will be few. I teach that in a gunfight a 100% shooter becomes a 70% shooter due to stress, tunnel vision and sheer dynamic movement. Understanding the actual goal of each round you are firing makes it clear that you need to be prepared to fire as many rounds as it takes!

So when you go to the range and practice you're shooting you need to focus on a few key things. You must present the handgun as quickly as possible I teach the (5) points to the draw at Perroni's Tactical Training Academy. You need to start shooting as soon as the handgun is on target. This could be as early as step # 3 in the (5) points of the draw. We continue to fire all the way through the draw stroke. "Zipper Method" Placing rounds in the upper torso are in the width of a hand span and also trying for the perfect head shot. Moving to cover and reloading as necessary because we know the average number of rounds fired in a gunfight is 10 and of those 10 rounds only 2 hit the target. (80% miss-rate)

1. SHOOT as many rounds as necessary to stop the threat.
2. Move to cover while shooting reload from behind cover.
3. Keep Shooting While communicating (for the subject to stop, for someone to call police, to find out where the subject is.)
4. Only when the threat stops do you stop shooting!
5. Handgun goes to low ready; you scan for bad guys and shoot to stop the threat.

Live the way you train, and train the way you live. Because when you are in a fight for your life you will not rise to the occasion you will default to your level of training. (How good was your training?)

Going to the range and shooting at a piece of paper that is not moving or shooting back while putting perfect holes in a nice group is not training for the fight. While I think accuracy is important you must train to prevail in a real world gunfight. You must shoot to stop the threat! Also always remember:

"Conflict is inevitable; Combat is an option"