

TACTICS AND PREPAREDNESS

SKILLS AND SURVIVAL FOR ALL SITUATIONS

BALLISTIC RESPONSE TO ACTIVE VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS AT GUNSITE

BY BOB WHALEY

Ballistic Response to Active Violent Encounters (BRAVE) is a family of classes presented at Gunsite Academy designed to enable students to develop multiple skills in the field of personal protection studies.

The classes were developed in response to requests for a cost and time effective means for students to gain knowledge and skill beyond the basic abilities encountered in other classes.

When evaluating your training needs,

recognize there are at least two levels. Level one consists of core skills. Basically, the bullet goes in here, comes out here; stand like this; aim like that, etc. You have to have those skill sets before you move on to the next level of tactical training. In tactical training, you analyze a problem

(street crimes, carjacking, home defense, etc.), decide what skills are needed, develop and rehearse a basic plan of action then perfect your plan in a variety of square range and scenario-based exercises. Often, students stop in one level of training or the other for a vari- *continued next page*

**PRACTICAL
SHOOTING
WITH THE**

M1911

BY BRENDAN SOUDER

I have been a fan of the 1911 since I was old enough to hold a gun.

Growing up on a Virginia farm about an hour from the beltway, my dad took me shooting on our land on some weekends. I remember shooting his collection of pistols and my favorite was his Colt .45. There was something so smooth about that gun that I didn't fully understand at the time. I never really thought about the fundamentals of marksmanship, I just knew I could shoot a Coca-Cola can at 25 yards consistently with that steel beast. There are some guns that are built to shoot right out of the box. That M1911 pistol was and will always be the prime example.



**BRENDAN SOUDER OF
RPGi IN EL PASO, TX.**

The 1911 style pistol was born out of a requirement to field a self-loading pistol to replace revolvers at the end of the 1890s. During the Philippine-American War (1899-1902) American soldiers reported the ineffectiveness and lack of stopping power of the .38 Long Colt revolver and Colt M1892 revolvers. Soldiers during this conflict reported that the revolvers were unsuitable for jungle warfare conditions and lacked sufficient stopping power. During this conflict the guerillas “Moros” dosed with opium to conduct self-sacrificing attacks against soldiers in close combat situations. After this feedback from soldiers fighting abroad and Colonel John T. Thompson’s pistol round effectiveness test in 1904, the M1911 chambered in .45 caliber became the definitive solution.

The 1911 pistol platform is traditionally built around the same metal design carrying with it a good bit of weight and solid controls. The trigger on the 1911 is what makes this gun special in my opinion. Shooters will say “1911 style trigger” occasionally to describe the highly advantageous design and feel of a crisp breaking trigger that takes little to no effort to press for a clean shot. This feature alone makes the 1911 without equal and other manufacturers compare their triggers to that of a 1911. The U.S. government reportedly bought 2.7 million M1911s that saw action in WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam

War and with special units today. If you don’t have a 1911 in your home, odds are your dad or granddad does.

The traditional 1911 comes with a single stack magazine holding seven to eight rounds. The pistol has two built in safety mechanisms; the grip safety (which some people keep strapped down) and an external thumb safety which make it ideal for a carry platform cocked, with a round in the chamber, and the thumb safety on. The pistol sights may vary, and many 1911 pistol shooters have either kept their original sights or swapped them for other enhanced mechanical versions and/or mounted a mini red dot. Additionally, the 1911 platform has been chambered in many other calibers by firearm manufacturers to include: 9mm, .38 Super and .40 caliber (2011 series). The chambering of other platforms has drastically increased magazine capacities allowing for the double stack style magazine design holding, in some cases, over 20 rounds of ammunition.

There are probably more aftermarket parts and variations for the 1911 style pistol than any other pistol in the world. I tend to look at 1911 style pistol shooters/owners in three groups. Collectors generally have mint condition Colt M1911A1 pistols that are unmodified and rarely shoot their handguns. The collectors also buy and trade these handguns much like classic car collectors do through-

out America. This group of 1911 owners can cite historical references and tell stories about a 1911 based on the manufacturer and serial number.

Tacticians are a large group of 1911 pistol shooters, probably the largest, because of the long history of use and performance of the pistol. Since the early 1900s the 1911 has been in circulation amongst military, law enforcement and used as personal defense weapons internationally. The 1911 is heavily touted for its ease of shooting and accuracy (capable of one-inch groups at 25 yards). This platform is highly attractive to shooters who depend on reliability and accuracy in life or death situations.

Competitive shooters shoot the 1911 style pistol internationally. Most competition pistol shooters who finish in the top percentage shoot a 1911 or 1911 variant, whether chambered in .45 ACP or something else. I have seen competitors who switched from striker fired pistols such as Glock, immediately see significant improvement in performance when operating the 1911 style platform.

The 1911 handgun is a great pistol to train with. Unlike other handguns, the 1911 doesn’t require the same grip pressure to manage recoil like a striker fire polymer gun or revolver. Pressing the trigger on the 1911 won’t build a callus on your trigger finger like others with five pounds of trigger do.



If you are interested in being proficient with the most prolific weapons in the world, you cannot overlook the M1911.

ZEROING/SIGHTING

Unless the 1911 has fixed sights, I recommend going to the range and punching paper to ensure your pistol is zeroed or sighted in before you conduct any extensive training sessions. This is one of my first steps on pistol shooting and it would be a waste of time shooting a pistol or firearm in general without having your sights dialed in. I check my zero at 25yds for practical pistol shooting (tactical or competition). I typically use a magic marker and make a small circle (2-3 inches) on an IPSC brown target as a point of reference. Lastly, if you are going to change sights, do it right away and don't waste time. Shooters with bad vision should look into fiber optic front sights with a blacked-out rear or spend the money for a red dot.

AMMUNITION

I recommend that shooters attempt to stick with the same ammo in training as they do in competition or real-world applications for the tactician. This should be an attempt to focus on reliability with your specific load and/or to gain a feel for how your pistol will shoot with that specific round. Ammunition loads can vary greatly between manufacturers and reloaders. While shooting a .45ACP 1911 is smooth and easy, there is a great deal of difference in shooting 185gr .45ACP Jacketed Hollow Point traveling at 1050 feet per second



**BOTH IMAGES THIS PAGE:
DEEP RIVER CUSTOMS OF
SPRING HILL, FLORIDA.**

(FPS) and shooting a 230gr .45ACP Full Metal Jacket round traveling at 800FPS.

HOLSTERS

Select a good holster and magazine holders that fit your practical application. Buy once, cry once mentality. I have witnessed several individuals arrive to a course with a fabric holster and later elect to purchase a newer holster. Shooters who are a hybrid tactician/competitive shooter should look at multiple options (inside the waistband, outside the waistband, competition holster and active retention holsters).

DRY FIRING

You can't dry fire this platform like a striker fired pistol. I ended up damaging some components (firing pin and firing pin stop). For those wanting to dryfire these 1911 style platforms, what I suggest is to use a small piece of

foam from an earplug and place it over your firing pin where the hammer strikes, drop the hammer a few times to set it in place. Use this method when dry firing and it will save you from replacing a firing pin and/or firing pin stop. Also, I suggest working magazine changes frequently when dry firing at home. Last but not least, ensure you don't drop magazines on a hard surface such as concrete (garage) or tile/hardwood in the house. Find a rug or carpet. This is the fastest way to damage your metal magazines.

LIVE FIRE TRAINING

Most who end up spending the money to switch from their striker fired pistol to a 1911 realize fairly quickly some differences in how they have to change their techniques for manipulating their controls. When I switched over to a 1911-style handgun I went to the range after dry fire practice and shot the fol-

lowing drills repeatedly: Drawing and shooting 1-3 round strings on a shot timer at 5-7yds at an IPSC paper target. My intent was to maintain all shots into the "A" zone and nail the fundamentals of my draw stroke while continuing on through the shot process. I noticed that I needed to land on the gun in a certain way to activate my safety lever during the draw stroke. Shooters definitely don't want to take their safety off at full presentation (it would be extremely slow and look weird).

The other thing that you would notice when transitioning to a 1911 is the significant weight difference in most cases. In my case, I swapped over from a Glock 17 with slide cuts to an STI 2011 Eagle 5.0. The other drill I love to do when warming up on a pistol is the Bill Drill (Six shots are fired as quickly as you can achieve six acceptable hits on target at seven yards from the holster). Most would say six rounds is excessive, but you can really focus and work on some of the fundamentals that become extremely important when shooting a longer string of fire. Once you get past two rounds on a six round string your grip starts to become loose if you are not careful. This is important for recoil management, follow through and finding those sights again quickly.

MAINTENANCE

You will need to keep your pistol clean to ensure reliability in training, real-world or while shooting matches. The 1911 breaks down into what seems to be a thousand pieces, but with practice and intimate knowledge of your 1911-style pistol one can learn quickly. Always check your ejector and extractor. This is a common part that can cause problems if not checked out while conducting maintenance. It is critical to clean the top end of the gun and the frequency purely depends on how many rounds are shot. When taking out the extractor, shooters will more than likely encounter accumulated carbon and grime in the channel. The magazines should be cleaned after live fire training sessions to prevent any potential malfunctions. Magazine cleaning for single stack 1911 platforms can be conducted less frequently, but double stack platforms present a high chance of malfunction due to dirty magazines.

As I look back at the most enjoyable and accurate pistol my father let me shoot at our farm, I remember the legendary Colt 1911. In my opinion, the M1911 pistol designed by John Browning over a century ago is still, ounce for ounce, the best performing pistol platform in the industry. After 20 years in the

Army, I have yet to shoot a handgun that has compared to this platform. There is no pistol I would rather shoot and if I had to throw every pistol away except one, my 1911 style handgun (2011) would be it.

If you are interested in being proficient with the most prolific weapons in the world, you cannot overlook the M1911. In addition to the millions produced, skills for operating the M1911 are nearly identical to those for operating the 9mm Browning Hi-Power, another military pistol used by the forces of more than 50 countries and still found all over the world today. Train safe, train hard and be prepared. ✓

BIO

Brendan Souder is an active duty soldier, a competition shooter and owner/operator of Range Project Group International (rpg-international.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.

GEARREVIEW



ADVENTURE DFI PLUS

The Jetsurf Adventure DFI Plus is a motorized board for surfing and can be transported in your car's trunk. An integrated alternator makes the board independent from charging and the additional fuel tank extends its' range up to 100 km. The operation of this board is designed to be tool-less for simplicity in the field. It is only a matter of time before Jetsurf boards emerge in the public eye for infiltrating and exfiltrating special operations personnel during the day and at night, but you can use yours for fun and exploration. If the price tag is unappealing, check out used options, and cheaper boards made by foreign competitors.

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