

Bullet & Blade Symposium 2009

The Bullet & Blade Symposium 2009 has already come and gone and was measured a success by all in attendance I spoke to. I would like to express my thanks to Kelly Worden, Paul Castle and Gary O'Neal for helping me put on the training event. A very big thank you to everyone who flew and even drove over 29 hours to attend and make the event worth putting on! The hotel and conference room were great and I thought the range layout showed a lot of promise for advanced training in Symposium's to come.

This was the first of what I would like to see become an annual event offering Natural Spirit International's *Worden Defense Systems* combatives and Sabre Tactical's *Center Axis Relock System* for extremely efficient close quarter firearms usage. We had a variety of participants for this event ranging from those who have never seen Mr. Worden to those who have trained with him for over a decade. As well we had those who have never touched a firearm before to full time Law Enforcement and Military personnel. In the end everyone I spoke to agreed that they definitely "got their moneys worth" and left with both new skills and drills and an understanding of how to implement their knowledge in a Close Quarter Conflict utilizing Empty Hand, Edged, Impact Weapons and Firearms.

Day one started off with a bang. Grand Master Kelly Worden rocked the floor with a solid day of *Worden Defense Systems* curriculum. The Travel Wrench was used as a tool to bring our attributes into alignment. Interior roll, swinging gate, hubud and other drills were used as bridges to our striking and locking techniques. This forced the participants to move from attachment which is keeping to the reality of a Close Quarters Conflict. As the day progressed we were lucky enough to have Mr. Worden integrate edged weapons, base disruptions and even some lock flow into a very full day.

Unfortunately Mr. Worden had to leave right after his day was completed as he needed to have his gall bladder taken out! That's right he had more gall stones than an aquarium tank in his gall bladder and was in such pain he needed surgery. Even with that going on he demonstrated and communicated his System to a room full of participants leaving no one to wonder if NSI and *Worden Defense Systems* is a "tactically sound" and complete system. Thank you Datu.

The first night we had a *Fitness and Nutrition for Operator's* lecture given by myself. Here I spoke on how to most efficiently chase the goal of fitness and which movements and approaches have been found to lead to measurable results. I then waded into the topic of nutrition, specifically the Macro and Micro nutrients in food and Dr. Sears's approach to balancing them at every meal via the *Zone* diet. Particular emphasis was placed on changing the quality of food via a *Paleolithic* diet conception. I tried to tie it in with the fitness craze of CrossFit (www.crossfit.com) who in my opinion is doing a great job educating and training people to reach these goals and beyond no matter their level of fitness, age or ability.

Day two was done by Paul Castle and found us in the hotel conference room. It was a mixture of hands on drills and learning the concepts which have led to the CAR Systems over 90% hit rate in actual combat situations! The focus was on pistols but carbines and shotgun usage was also covered. I watched as a room full of people learned how to defend in a 360° circle with either hand using aimed fire with a pistol. They accomplished this feat that most Law Enforcement and Close Protection Specialists cannot do in just one day. The Close Quarters weapon retention skills were definitely a highlight for many and everyone took to delivering tucked pistol punches with elbow and knee strikes as follow ups very readily. The CAR System allows the user to maximize their ability to fire very rapidly at close quarter ranges (some at 6 rounds a second in the 10 ring!).

The night of day two had a relaxing chat with Mr. Gary O'Neal held at the hotel. Here we were able to sit and listen to the real life experiences of a man who has truly led the "been there done that" life of a warrior. Mr. O'Neal spoke on many of his experiences in his over 30 years in the US Special Forces Community and answered questions on a wide variety of topics. The topic was initially "Warriorship" and what it meant to be a contributing member of today's society but even after the session ended talk continued on into the night in many areas. It was truly unique and I feel extremely valuable in our continued search for comprehension of a truly well rounded and sound Warrior of Today.

Day three was range application day and it was all live fire. Thank you to CAR Master Instructors Bob Stonehill and Jon Miller for helping to run the ranges. We shot pistols in 9mm, .40 cal and .45ACP as well as half a dozen Remington 12 gauge shotguns. As I mentioned we had a range of experience with firearms in this group. We separated into two ranges and practiced all the drills and positions we trained the day previous. We started at extreme close quarter's distances and moved back slightly. Keeping in the theory that 54% of Law Enforcement gunfights occur within 6 feet (hit rate of 22%) and over 90% of gunfights occurring within 30 feet (hit rate about 18%), our goal was to get really good at these distances first. After some initial practice with the ambidextrous CAR system we added the Sabre Tactical Shoot "Body-Head" drill. This drill was created to give a taste of how complex simple techniques become under stress.

As I said the main focus was on the use of the pistol but did a portion on the 12 gu. pump action shotgun. Everyone was able to practice shooting a 12 gu. with one hand! This was due to the CAR Systems unique ability to reduce the felt recoil of a firearm by over 90%. It was also demonstrated how to clear stoppages and reload the pistols and shotgun completely one handed. Before you know it we went through almost 400 shotgun rounds and 2000 rounds of 9mm and a further 2000 rounds of .40 cal. But the course wrapped up successfully and safely.

My initial thought for developing this Symposium was to bring the two worlds of Natural Spirit International (Kelly Worden) and Sabre Tactical (Paul Castle) out and expose the techniques and concepts each system has to offer to those who have not yet

seen them. I specifically targeted the NSI people to share the CAR System with and like wise the *Sabre Tactical* Instructors to share *Worden Defense Systems* with.

From here I hope to see everyone practice their newly found concepts and then meld them into one unbroken tactical platform. When it comes to shooting and firearms I believe there is a very strong difference between target shooting and “gun fighting”. Likewise I believe there is a strong difference between the combatives skills commonly taught to Law Enforcement and Military and what works in a Combat Situation. I am excited to bring together two Systems I believe are of the utmost in tactical efficiency, *Sabre Tactical* and *Worden Defense Systems*. I have been working on many strategies and drills to develop these two worlds and bring about what I believe to be the world’s finest compilation of tactical skills and drills. These techniques have been proven effective in combat and are easy to teach and practice.

The only draw backs I could readily see to the Symposium 2009 were that it was too short. Some further organization and the separation of beginners and those experienced with firearms into groups should lead to everyone being able to advance their tactical knowledge and competency at their level. Further, I think that the Bullet & Blade Symposium 2010 should be 4 days long, offering 2 days of Worden Defense Systems tactics and 2 days of Sabre Tactical firearms based tactics.

I would like to start to bridge the perceived gap between the “systems” of Worden Defense and the Center Axis Relock. For me that is mainly in the implementation of training drills and techniques. It is important to get a solid foundation in training tactics and techniques then escalate those into situational awareness and strategy then finally coming back full circle to attributes and simplicity.

I am looking at the 2010 Symposium being held in Nashville TN possibly in May. This will allow us to still provide enough firearms (pistols/shotguns/carbines) and have enough range space to allow for two separate groups, beginner and intermediate for the firearms tactics. Depending on the initial response numbers wise I may add an air soft scenario component for home, vehicle, ATM type defense scenarios.

I will be putting Bullet & Blade 2009 video footage and photo’s up on a separate web site in the near future. Please be sure to look for the link and check out the fun.

Hope to see you all at Bullet & Blade 2010!

Sincerely,

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