

Firearms; Vital Tools for Self Defense  
or  
Deadly Killers?

#### Introduction

There are presently in excess of 200 million guns in the United States, according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Each year this number grows by 4 to 5 million. There are 60 to 65 million legal owners of one or more guns.<sup>1</sup> There is a firearm on the premises of more than half the households in America. Most of them keep guns for protection. The others keep them for hunting, target shooting, collecting, and similar pursuits.

In recent years nearly 35,000 people have been killed annually by guns in the United States. These deaths include 15,000 murders, 18,000 suicides, and 1,500 accidents.<sup>2</sup> It is because of these statistics that many would like to ban guns altogether. But is that really in your best interest? Would it really benefit this country, or reduce the number of murders in this country? Consider the evidence in this article and you will see that guns should not be outlawed and that less gun control is necessary to preserve what the founders of this country believed in.

#### Guns are Beneficial

Guns can help prevent crime. This is a view held by many opponents to gun control. The criminals themselves agree. As part of a three - year study by the

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One such case involved eleven - year old Jason Green of Houston, Texas.

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Something was done. the Orlando Police Department set up a program to train women to use handguns. Over three thousand women armed themselves and took

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These are just a handful of examples of why handguns help prevent crime. There are literally thousands of these stories. The bottom line though is criminals will have guns and other weapons whether the government takes them away from law-abiding citizens or not. The plain and simple fact is guns give people an effective way to arm yourself and protect yourself when the police aren't around. Whether or not proponents of gun control want to admit it or not this is a proven fact.

Is Banning Guns a Good Idea?

The answer is clear, NO. Why not you may ask? Ask yourself this, if the government were to ban the sale and use and ownership of guns would criminals comply with this law? The problem with most gun control measures is that gun violence relates not to the number of guns but to who owns them. A person who is willing to commit a crime is not likely to abide by gun registration laws or even bans. James D. Wright a professor of sociology at the university of Massachusetts asks, "Why should we expect felons to comply with a gun law when they readily violate laws against robbery, assault and murder?"<sup>4</sup>

For this reason, many people argue, restrictive laws will not reduce crime because criminals will still have guns. And if criminals still have guns violence will continue. New York City, for example, has very tight handgun restrictions. To buy a handgun, city residents must apply to the police for a permit. Very few permits are given out. They primarily go to active duty and retired police officers, security guards and bodyguards. In addition anyone caught carrying a concealed handgun without a permit faces a felony charge and a mandatory prison sentence. Because of these restrictions, as of April 1991 there were only 61,497 legally owned handguns in New York City, a city of nearly 8 million people.<sup>5</sup> Yet research indicates that there are at least 750,000 handguns in the city and gun-related crime remains high. In 1989, 70 percent of the city's twenty-two hundred homicides were caused by gunfire. The BATF says that 96 percent of all handguns used for criminal purposes come from outside the city. This means that criminals still obtain handguns for illicit purposes despite New York's tough laws. But should the government have the right and the power to take guns away from citizens? This will be discussed in the next section.

The Second Amendment

The second amendment is a very simple idea that many people will try to complicate. Why? Because they try to twist it's concept to support their own ideas. But the second amendment to the constitution is a very straight forward, simple

statement.

The second amendment simply says " A well - regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed." Gun control proponent argue that this only applies to a state militia and not the right of an individual to own and carry a gun. Let us examine the constitution to see if this is indeed the case.

Let us begin by examining the first amendment. It states " Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Notice first of all that in this single amendment to the constitution there are actually six rights guaranteed to the "people". This will be significant in later discussion. Next, notice the significance of the word "people". This word simply means "the persons composing a community or tribe or race or nation." or "the subjects or citizens of a state". Notice that it doesn't mean the public as a whole or one but rather it means each individual.

With that said let us move on to the amendment in questioned, the second. " A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." Let us examine this one part at a time. "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state comma". This is ensuring the right of each state to have and regulate it's own militia. At the time of the writing of the constitution people were afraid of an over powering, dominating government like the government of England that they overthrew. This right would ensure that the Federal army wouldn't have total power as in the case of England. This would also give the states the independence they wanted while maintaining the unity of the whole country. Again, notice the comma. A comma is used to indicate the separation of ideas in a list. This comma can only mean one thing. This is were the idea of more than one right in an amendment come into play. Similar to the first amendment, this amendment guarantees more than one right. What is the second right guaranteed in the second amendment?

The amendment continues " the right of the 'people' to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." Here it is spelled out in black and white, in a simple statement. The people or each citizen has the right to keep and bear firearms. Proponents of gun control seem to forget this simple statement. They try to twist these simple idea to get people to

believe that this only applies to the state militia. As we see here though, from a simple discussion and a little reasoning we can see just how simple an idea this is.

#### Conclusion

In this paper it was shown just how regular citizens were able to defend themselves with the use of a gun. This was because they were trained in the use of the firearm as well as the safety aspects of its use. It has been shown that criminals are afraid of citizens armed with a gun. It has been shown that arming one self with a firearm can not only be a deterrent to crime but a successful defense. It was shown that if guns were outlawed then only outlaws would have guns. It has been shown that owning and caring a gun is your constitution right as laid out in the second amendment. Whether you agree with the evidence presented in this paper or not this are the facts. Some gun control proponents will try to distort these facts to hide the truth. But this is the truth. It is because of public option, fear and a misunderstanding of guns that many people feel that guns should be made illegal. But outlawing guns is not the answer. Alleviating the fear and misunderstanding about firearms is. It is only then that many people will see the benefit of the firearm. Taking guns away from law - abiding citizens while felons continue to use them is not the answer. It is your constitutional right to keep and bear arms. Clearly we have seen that outlaw guns would not be in our best interest. We have seen that doing so would not reduce the number of innocent people killed each year. This is why guns should not be outlawed and less gun control in necessary to preserve the idea and philosophies set out in the constitution of the United States.

#### Endnotes

1. Ted Gottfried, Gun Control and The Right to Bear Arms (Brookfield, Ct.: Millbrook Press, 1993 ), pg. 13
2. Ibid pg 17
3. Ibid pg. 48
4. Neil Bernard, Gun Control ( San Diego, Ca., Lucent Books, 1991 ) pg 68
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#### Guns are Beneficial

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One such case involved eleven - year old Jason Green of Houston, Texas. Home alone one night, he heard noises in the house. Arming himself with his father's shotgun he investigated and caught a burglar in the act. Just then his mother pulled up outside in the family car. Fearing the burglar might harm his mother Jason fired. His mother reacted by bursting into the house and firing her revolver. Hit by bullets from both guns the burglar died.

Jason's mother, like Jason, was defending her house against an intruder. There are about 645,000 defensive uses of handguns each year, according to Gary Kleck, a professor at Florida State University. He bases his figure on several surveys on handgun use, including one done for an organization that favors banning all guns. Kleck also concluded that hand guns used in self - defense, or some other legally justified cause kill 1,500 to 2,800 criminals every year. If other types of firearms besides handguns are included, then over 1,000,000 law - abiding citizens use guns for self - defense annually.

Guns also provide vulnerable women with some form of protection against rape and other violent crime. Recently, Orlando, Florida saw an increase in the number of rapes over a twelve - month period from 12.8 per 100,000 to 35.9 per 100,000. Women in Orlando were afraid to go out alone, even in the daytime. Citizens of Orlando demanded that something be done.

Something was done. the Orlando Police Department set up a program to train women to use handguns. Over three thousand women armed themselves and took

training courses. As a result, Orlando's rape figure dropped to 4.1 per 100,000 - a 90 percent drop from the previous high. Similar programs in Detroit and Highland Park, Michigan, and Montgomery, Alabama saw impressive reductions in crimes against women, including both rape and robbery.

One woman victim decided on her own that she had enough. A fifty - one year old woman of Los Angeles, California, twice raped by the same man, purchased a handgun and took lessons to learn how to use it. When the man return a third time she shot and killed him.

These are just a handful of examples of why handguns help prevent crime. There are literally thousands of these stories. The bottom line though is criminals will have guns and other weapons whether the government takes them away from law - abiding citizens or not. The plain and simply fact is guns give people an effective way to arm yourself and protect yourself when the police aren't around. Whether or not proponents of gun control want to admit it or not this is a proven fact.

Is Banning Guns a Good Idea?

The answer is clear, NO. Why not you may ask? Ask yourself this, if the government were to ban the sale and use and ownership of guns would criminals comply with this law? The problem with most gun control measures is that gun violence relates not to the number of guns but to who owns them. A person who is willing to commit a crime is not likely to abide by gun registration laws or even bans. James D. Wright a professor of sociology at the university of Massachusetts asks, Why should we expect felons to comply with a gun law when they readily violate laws against robbery, assault and murder?"<sup>4</sup>

For this reason, many people argue, restrictive laws will not reduce crime because criminals will still have guns. And if criminals still have guns violence will continue. New York City, for example, has very tight handgun restrictions. To buy a handgun, city residents must apply to the police for a permit. Very few permits are given out. They primarily go to active duty and retired police officers, security guards and bodyguards. In addition anyone caught carrying a concealed handgun without a permit faces a felony charge and a mandatory prison sentence. Because of these restrictions, as of April 1991 there were only 61,497 legally owned handguns in New York City, a city of nearly 8 million people.<sup>5</sup> Yet research indicates that there are at least 7

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