



## **A DIGEST OF WALTER J. DORFNER'S PAPER ON P&S**

The following is a digest of a paper on AIMED Point Shooting that was written by Walter J. Dorfner SSgt VSP, when he was Vice Chair of the Use of Force Committee of the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council, at the Vermont Police Academy in Pittsford, VT. At that time, he also was the lead firearms instructor for the VSP. Walter died in 2001. I made the digest, and Walter approved of it as written.

The digest was publish in the Vermont Trooper and Women Police - Winter 1999-2000 - Point Shooting - The Next Step in the Evolution of Survival Shooting?

The digest gives a detailed description of what AIMED Point Shooting or P&S is, how and why it works, and it gives Walter's experience with it.

Though the shooting method is not new, it is not widely known or accepted in the gun community as a survival shooting method. Also, the shooting method was not taught at the academy. However, it was presented by Walter to new VSP members.

Walter used the term Point Shooting in his paper to identify the method of shooting. I have taken the liberty to add the word AIMED in front of it, as the method employs the index finger to aim the gun, which is more than just Point Shooting. Point Shooting is normally understood to be shooting sans sights, or unaimed shooting.

The term AIMED Point Shooting is an oxymoron of sorts. A more technically accurate term would be Instinctive Aimed Shooting With the Use of the Index Finger. That however, leaves me a little cold. I prefer AIMED Point Shooting, or Point & Shoot, or just P&S.

The digest is written from a layman's point of view and in layman's terms, because that is what I am.

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### **THE NEXT STEP IN THE EVOLUTION OF SURVIVAL SHOOTING**

During the past 20 years or so, little has been learned on how to overcome the limits on performance that occur in survival shooting situations such as auditory exclusion, tunnel vision, rapid impulse shooting, etc.

For maximum survival shooting performance, the shooting method used must be as natural and mechanical as possible. That will leave the mind free to make appropriate decisions and direct appropriate actions in high stress situations.

AIMED Point Shooting meets the requirements. It utilizes our basic instinctive abilities and the muscles and tendons of the forearm and hand to allow one to quickly and accurately aim, and if needed, shoot to defeat a threat.

In 1990, the Vermont State Police converted to the Sig Sauer P228 auto loading 9mm pistol. A dramatic increase in accuracy using aimed fire was observed, but that was not the case when the weapon was not in the line of sight.

An experiment was made to see if the index finger could be used to more accurately aim a pistol when it was not in the line of site. The experiment was based on the fact that we can point instinctively and accurately at objects with our index finger.

First, some paper plates were set up at 7 and 12 yards on a personal range. Then a pistol was picked up and the index finger was placed on the frame and over the take down pivot. The middle pad of the middle finger was placed on the trigger. The index finger was pointed at a target and the middle finger was used to shoot.

After a short while, a hit was made with each shot and in a small group. That was done by just pointing at a spot and firing without use of the sights.

## **THE ANATOMY OF THE FOREARM AND HAND**

The anatomy of the forearm and the hand was then studied to determine how our muscles and tendons work with that method of shooting. Several interesting relationships were found.

1. The muscles and tendons used to flex the index finger are mechanically separated from those that flex the middle, ring, and little fingers. That allows the index finger to be flexed independently to pull a trigger.
2. The muscles and tendons that are used to extend the index finger are isolated in the lower forearm. That allows the index finger to be extended and locked independently for pointing.
3. When any finger is flexed, one tendon is used to move the tip of the finger, and another is used to move the middle part of the finger.

First, the tip of the finger is curled back by one tendon.

Then the middle part of the finger is flexed by another tendon. It pulls the middle part of the finger straight back, and the middle joint of the finger is used as the pivot for that action.

4. The tendon in the middle finger that pulls the middle part of the finger towards the palm, also passes from the base of the middle finger through the center of the palm. That keeps the pulling force centered and straight back.

5. The middle finger also can be flexed or extended individually.

## **FIELD SHOOTING WITH THE INDEX FINGER**

When using the index finger to shoot, one can induce error by having too much or too little of the finger on the trigger.

As the trigger is pulled, the curling action of the finger tip can cause the weapon to be pushed or pulled off target center.

The amount of error is relative to the trigger weight. More error is introduced with double action firing when 10 or more pounds of force are needed to cock and fire the weapon, than there is with single action firing, when 3 or 4 pounds of force are needed to fire the weapon.

## **FIELD SHOOTING WITH THE MIDDLE FINGER**

When the middle pad of the middle finger was placed on the trigger, the force needed with double action to cock and fire the weapon, felt much lighter than the measured 12 pounds.

With single action, the 4 pound force that was needed to fire the weapon, felt like simple air resistance.

Also, as the middle pad of the finger was on the trigger, the curling action of the tip of the finger did not affect the fall of the shot.

Another benefit was that the centerline bore was more closely aligned with the web of the hand. That provided for both a natural pointing of the weapon and better control of recoil forces.

New shooters with limited hand strength, had a problem pulling the trigger smoothly with double action when the index finger was used to pull the trigger. That was not true when the middle finger was used to pull the trigger.

When experienced shooters were exposed to the technique, some converted to it when they saw improvement in their speed of target acquisition and accuracy even when the weapon was not in the line of site.

During entry drills against live targets, who were generally moving, AIMED Point Shooting allowed for fast accurate shots during dynamic and highly stressed encounters.

In live fire entries, shooters did well even when the bullet traps were set anywhere from 3 to 7 feet off the floor and scattered about the building at varying distances.

In the immediate area, accurate shots were made with the pistol at waist level while moving.

When shooting instructors, students, and new shooters used the technique with a weapon in the line of sight plane and below it, the ratio of hits to shots fired went up significantly.

To learn the cause for this, the weapon was pointed at the target, held in position, and the sight picture observed before a shot was fired. The impact corresponded to what the sight picture showed would be the point of impact.

The AIMED Point Shooting technique allows the sights to be lined up instinctively and mechanically as opposed to cognitive alignment.

## **WEAPON COMPATIBILITY WITH AIMED POINT SHOOTING**

The AIMED Point Shooting method was tested with a wide variety of pistols, revolvers, shotguns,

submachine guns, assault rifles, and sniper weapons. All tested perfectly well except for the 1911 Colt Pistol. Here is a listing of the weapons found to be compatible. A cautionary note on the 1911 Colt follows the listing.

SIG - P228, P229, P239, P220, P230, P232, P225, P226  
S&W - 4506, 3903, 39, 59, 66, 49, 1006, 4006, 622, 3000 Shot gun  
Colt - 1911 (Caution), Python Trooper, Detective Special  
H&K - P7M13, USP, MP5 Navy, MP5SD  
Glock - 17 thru 33  
Beretta - 92, 96, Cougar, SMG  
Ruger - P89, Blackhawk, GP1000, Security Six  
Seacampo - 32  
Remington - 870, 1187, 1100, 870 Marine, M-24  
Bennelli - Super 90, M1  
Ithica - Model 37  
Mossberg - 500 Series  
USN-SEAL - 300 Win. Mag. Sniper rifle  
US Military:  
- M16A1 @ 300 meters  
- M14 @ 500 meters  
- M21 @ 500 meters  
- M1 @ 300 meters  
- M24 @ 700 meters

### **CAUTIONARY NOTE ON THE 1911 COLT PISTOL**

On modern autoloaders, the take down pivot can be used as a reference point on the frame to ensure correct placement during gripping.

On the 1911 Colt it protrudes from the side of the frame, and during shooting if it is pushed by the index finger through the frame, the gun can jam.

Also, the AIMED Point Shooting method should not be used with revolvers that are out of timing, or with autoloaders if the index finger extends beyond the muzzle or rests over the ejection port.

### **GOOD UNIFORM RESULTS**

Hundreds of test were made with both shooters and novices to prove the repeatability of the mechanical sight alignment. All were told how to grip and hold an unloaded gun and use the index finger to point it at a spot in a safe direction. Then they were asked to tell what they saw when they looked over the sights.

All responded with words that matched or were similar to the accepted definition: "the tops are level and the single bar is between the 2 rear posts."

### **SUMMARY**

Based on our instinctive abilities, the anatomy of the forearm and hand, and the results of hundreds of tests, the AIMED Point Shooting method of survival shooting is superior to current close quarters shooting methods.

AIMED Point Shooting as developed and tested is expected to be the next step in the evolution of survival shooting.

## **NOTE ON SHOT GROUPS**

In the initial shooting test, the shot groups were found to be consistently to the left. That was felt to be due to a lifetime of using the index finger to shoot with and which now pushed on the frame with each shot.

A simple exercise was designed for those who may find it hard at first to lock the index finger in the extended position when using the middle finger to pull the trigger.

Hold your fingers and thumb in the position they would be in if you were holding a weapon with the index finger straight out. Then move the middle finger as if you were pulling the trigger and keep the other fingers still.

## **NOTE ON AIMED POINT SHOOTING AND DRAWING A GUN**

It can take a well experienced and practiced shooter time to learn how to draw a gun and place the index and middle finger correctly.

It can take considerable practice before a gun can be drawn from a Safariland SS III holster with the index finger being placed on the take down pivot and the middle finger placed along the trigger guard ready for the shot when on target.

End.