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Why Civilians Should Carry Guns

By David Morris

In his book, "More Guns, Less Crime," John R. Lott Jr. argues that guns in the hands of civilians do far more good than harm. Lott is an economist at the University of Chicago who has been researching this very question for several years.

His research shows that: Mass public shootings are more common in states that prohibit citizens from carrying concealed weapons. Men, and especially women, who use guns to resist assailants, are significantly less likely to be seriously injured in violent crimes.

Contrary to arguments favored by gun control advocates, legal possession of concealed handguns does not raise the number of accidental firearms deaths or suicides. Knowing that a homeowner may be armed discourages burglars from breaking into occupied dwellings.

No concealed weapons permit holder has ever shot a police officer, and there have been cases where permit holders have used their weapons to save officers' lives.

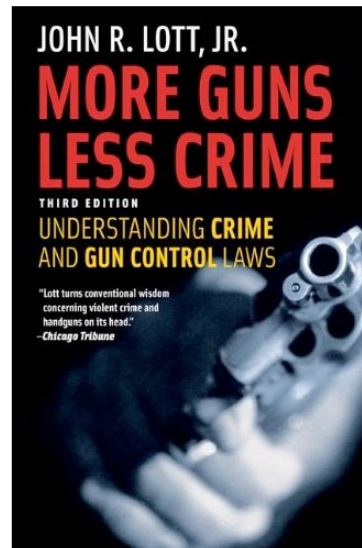
Lott was the chief economist at the U.S. Sentencing Commission, the federal group that sets penalties for federal crimes. Lott says, "When I saw the huge life-saving effects of owning a gun, I decided to get a gun."

Lott studied 14 states that adopted right-to-carry laws between 1987 and 1995. Before the states passed these laws, their number of mass public shootings per 100,000 population was 0.0136.

After they passed right-to-carry legislation, that figure dropped to .002 per 100,000 people, a decline of 84%. Lott concludes that gun control laws have noticeably reduced gun ownership in some states, but with unfavorable results.

For each decline of 1% in gun ownership in these locales, there has been a 3% increase in violent crime. Women who offer no resistance to a violent attacker are 2.5 times more likely to suffer serious injury than women who resist with a gun.

Women who resist without a gun



are four times more likely to be seriously injured than those who offer armed resistance. More children die in bicycle accidents each year than die from all types of firearms accidents. Finally, Lott concluded that concealed handguns are the most cost-effective method of reducing crime. They provide a higher return than increased law enforcement, incarceration, or private security devices.

If you've been reading for long, you know that I am a big proponent of concealed carry. Personally, I didn't need any statistics to make my decision. I simply accept the fact that when seconds count, professional help is only minutes away—and I'm on my own in the meantime.

When I'm with my wife and sons...or even carrying one of my boys, I want to have every advantage possible in

the event that I have to defend them from a violent encounter. Try and do what you want to me alone, but when it affects my family, I'll take every advantage that I can possibly get to make sure that they are not victims.

If you have any reservations about carrying concealed, please let me know by emailing me at David@LamplighterReport.com.

On Vacation? Don't be a Victim!

By David Morris

This would fall under the category of, "Don't be paranoid, but..."

When you are traveling for pleasure (or just talking with friends in your hometown), there's a growing crime trend you need to be aware of.

Here's a scenario that's becoming more common as cell phones and the internet connect criminals across town and around the globe.

Pretend with me for a second that you've decided to do something fun for the holidays. Maybe it's going to a big tourist attraction across the country or even just looking at a Christmas lights and gingerbread house exhibit at a local hotel.

A middle-aged couple approaches you with a camera and asks you to take their picture. Naturally, you agree. Before you know it, a conversation is struck and you're becoming friendly with these nice people. As a matter of

fact, this couple is so appreciative of your taking their picture, they offer to take yours. They've got a professional camera instead of a camera phone, and after they take a picture with your camera phone, they offer to take one



with their camera. After they've taken your picture, they ask if you have any big plans for Christmas/New Years and you tell them your plans to visit relatives for a couple of days.

Caught up in the excitement these strangers offer to send you a copy of the photograph of you that they

just took. You agree. The next step is how the trouble begins. If they're going to send you the pictures they took, they need your home address or your email address. If you're thinking what nice people they are, be careful.

You give them one or the other address. If you give them your home address, they've got you. If you give them your email address and it happens to have your name in it or connect to your name via a Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter search, it's relatively straightforward to get your home address as well.

But not only do they have your address, they know when you won't be home. What you don't realize is these delightful people are actually working the tourist spots looking for naïve and trusting people.

They're looking for the kind of people who are willing to give out their personal information, some

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indication that their house is worth robbing, and when it will be available for ransacking. Now, all the bad guys need to do is phone their cohorts who live near you, if necessary, and pass on the information.

Thieves like these are working in exotic locations all over the globe. But you can also find them at California's Disneyland, Las Vegas' casinos, New York's Empire State Building and just about any place where tourists are likely to visit. In addition, you can find them lurking in coffee shops, restaurants, and other everyday locations.

These thieves use deception to steal your valuables. And deception is your best defense against them. If you are approached by other travelers, be on your guard. It's great to be friendly, but you must protect yourself and your valuables at all times.

Here's where I differ from a lot of preppers and socially aware people...I love talking to strangers and I like meeting with friends in coffee shops to talk.

I've had to continually balance these habits against security over the years, but have figured out a few things that have made it possible to stay relatively invisible in plain sight. In short, I have done what I can to try to enjoy the best of both worlds...have the freedom to be friendly with strangers who are probably good people while doing it in a way that doesn't expose my family to additional risks.

It's way too easy to find out about threats like this and respond by closing yourself off to social interaction. That's definitely one solution, but

I like talking, learning about other people, debating, and being forced to clarify positions in my head quickly enough and coherently enough to communicate them to another person sitting in front of me.

So, here are some tips that you can use to remain social and safe:

- If you insist on using a last name or if people you're talking with are insistent on asking for one, pick out a "stage name" to use when you're away from home. It could be the last name of a childhood best friend that you'll naturally respond to, a name that sounds like yours, or something completely random. In any case, you will probably want to use your real first name.
- If a stranger offers to send you pictures, an article, or anything else through the mail, give them a mail box drop address.
- Want to have a stranger email you those great pictures they snapped? In this day and age of free email addresses, it's very easy to set up non-descriptive email addresses that can permanently forward to your main email address. Do you like Lord of the Rings? Get an address like LOTR247@yahoo.com. Like big guns? Then maybe something like 45beatsa9@hotmail.com will work. In any case, you want to make sure that you never connect your name or other personal information to this address so that you can use it without hesitation.
- Regardless of whether you're talking with a stranger or whether

you've been talking with a friend in a public venue, another thing you can do to keep a conversation from coming back to bite you is to pay with cash instead of paying with a card that has your name on it. Personally, I don't always pay with cash, but I do constantly evaluate my current situation before deciding whether to pay with cash or plastic. Some specific instances where you might want to do this during the holiday season are when you see friends and tell them about what Christmas gifts you've bought, when you're going to Christmas Eve service, or when/where you're going to Christmas/New Year's Eve parties.

- When you fly, try to keep your boarding pass folded so that your name doesn't show. When you pick up your checked luggage, remove the baggage tag as quickly as possible. Put it in an outside pocket of your bag in case an airline/airport employee questions you about whether or not you own the bag.

A friend of mine has worked on VERY secret projects for the last decade. As a result, he's very conscious of protecting his wife and family...especially when traveling overseas. They use their names to get in and out of the country that they happen to be in, but use different names during their stay. They both have topics that they're passionate about that fall outside of their professions, and when people ask what they do, they say they're community college professors.

When I first asked him if he was concerned about being targeted for

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kidnapping, he said that he was...but it wasn't because of his job...it was because he and his wife both had \$70,000 jobs and that they'd be seen as great express-kidnapping targets in some of the beach resort towns they liked to visit out of the US as well as home robbery targets while they were out of town.

I mention this because it has always

struck a chord with me...here's this guy with a ton of valuable secret information in his head and the only threats he's worried about are the ones that are common to my family and yours.

As you're out and about or traveling this holiday season, seeing and talking with friends, start trying to put these tips into practice.

Remember, they're not hard and fast rules, but rather guidelines that you should alter so that they are comfortable for you to use as well as giving you a higher sense of security.

Questions, Comments? Let me know by emailing me at David@LampLighterReport.com.

Gold and Taxes

By David Morris

One reason that many people buy precious metals is to hold as a hedge against inflation and/or the collapse of the dollar (which is a concern, regardless of whether people live in the US or another country).

There was a great article at blog.milesfranklin.com on November 4th that gave some great illustrations of this. Miles bought a million dollar house in 2005 when gold was at \$500 per ounce. It would have cost him 2000 ounces if he'd paid gold. He bought his house with a 10 year 0% interest loan. Today, six years later, he can pay off that loan with 571 ounces of gold and keep the other 1429 ounces. This, of course begs the question as to whether the dollar dropped in value by 75%, whether the "value" of gold went up 300%, or whether it was a combination of both.

In fact, when priced in gold, home prices, commodities (CRB Index), and the Dow Jones Industrial Average have all dropped 70% or more in value... even though all three have gone up when priced in \$US.

This is quite frustrating to me...in fact, it's cruel. In my mind, most of the reason why gold and silver has shot up in price over the last 10 years isn't so much because of supply and demand, but rather as a reflection of poor monetary policy, an overprinting of currency, and inflation.



To add insult to injury, the IRS says that you have to pay taxes on how much your precious metals "went up in value." The fact that I'm being taxed based on how much the dollar dropped in value in relation to gold and silver just doesn't seem right to me.

Although I know some precious

metals speculators and traders, most people who I've talked with about precious metals over the years buy it and hold it. Sometimes they'll trade it for guns, cars, land, etc. but for the most part, they won't sell it unless they are in a really bad situation.

Like I said, when you do sell precious metals, the IRS says that you owe taxes on whatever gains you made since you bought it. If you get audited, you have to prove the price that you paid for the metal and if you can't prove it, the IRS can declare that you received it as a gift and tax you on the entire amount that you sold it for.

A quick note...Keep in mind, I am not an accountant or a tax professional. I've got a bookkeeper who does my books and an accountant who does my taxes. What I'm going to share with you should not be taken as tax or legal advice and you should consult with a local professional before taking action based on the personal experiences I'm sharing with you.

This means that if you get in a bind

and need to sell a gold coin for \$1700-\$1800 and can't find your receipt from when you got it, you might be responsible for paying tax on the entire amount...regardless of whether you bought it for \$300, \$1,600, inherited it, or even if you paid \$1,900 for it and are losing money.

With that in mind, here's a strategy that you might want to talk with your CPA about. If it is a fit, then it could allow you to get spendable money for your precious metals without paying any taxes. It could also allow you a strategy for lessening your gold holdings and increasing your silver holdings without taking a significant tax hit...no matter what kind of coins you have. For you investors out there, it could also allow you to increase your basis (possibly substantially) from when you originally bought your coins or rounds.

It assumes that you're charitable and/or tithe...and that simple sentence might have been all you needed to read to understand the concept.

In order to explain the concept, I'm going to need to set up a hypothetical situation. Let's say that Bob makes \$40,000 per year, is active in his church, and believes in the importance of tithing. Bob has also been accumulating gold and silver regularly for more than 10 years, having bought gold at under \$300 per ounce and silver for less than \$5 per ounce instead of putting money into an IRA/401(k). For argument's sake, we'll say that gold is at \$2,000 per ounce. Bob likes to sleep at night and does his best to obey the law, which includes paying taxes if he sells precious metals for more than he paid for them. He doesn't like it or think that it is right, but he does it anyhow.

As I said, Bob tithes, giving \$4,000 per year to his church. This year, he decides to give two ounces of his appreciated gold instead of cash and replace it immediately.

So, Bob goes to his local coin dealer and gets an appraisal for one of his 1 ounce gold coins, showing that it's worth \$2,000 and has no collectable value. He then takes the coin and the appraisal to his church's accountant and they give him a receipt to use for tax purchases.

Bob then goes back to his coin dealer and buys another (different) 1 ounce gold coin. By doing so, Bob has increased his basis from the \$300 that he paid in 1999 up to the \$2,000 that he paid today. If he eventually sells the coin, he'll pay taxes on \$2000-\$300=\$1700 less.

To clarify, let's say that a month from now, gold is at \$2100 and Bob has to sell his gold coin. If he still had his old coin, he'd have to pay taxes on \$2,100-\$300=\$1,800 if he had the original receipt from 1999 and pay tax on the entire \$2,100 if he didn't have the original receipt. If he gives the coin away and buys another, different one, at \$2,000 per ounce, then he only pays taxes on \$2,100-\$2,000=\$100 of gain. At a 15% long term capital gain tax rate, that's a potential savings of \$315. In other words, it's a big deal.

As a note, you may need to call a few coin shops to find one that will sell you a coin at the same price that they'll buy the coin from the church.

Scenario 2 is that Bob hit a rough patch that wiped out their cash savings and then his wife has an unexpected \$2,000 dental bill that they have to pay for out of

pocket. Bob finds himself in a situation where he has to sell a gold coin to get his wife out of pain...quickly. Option 1 is that he sells the coin and uses the cash to pay the dentist. If he does this, he has tax ramifications to deal with. Option 2 is that he finds a dentist who will take the gold coin in trade...but that brings up possible tax issues as well. Option 3 is that Bob donates the gold coin to his church, uses a "teaser" 0% credit card offer to pay for the dental procedure and pays off the credit card over the next 6 months with the money that he would have tithed if he hadn't donated the gold coin.

Scenario 3 is one that is based on the historical pricing relationship between gold and silver. The concentration of silver is roughly 17 times greater in the Earth's crust than gold. Historically, gold has been 17 times more expensive than silver. At this writing, gold is 52 times more expensive than silver.

Many people feel that gold and silver will eventually go back to their historic price relationship and that it will happen because of silver increasing in value rather than gold decreasing in value. As a result, when the gold/silver ratio is high, some people want to swap out of gold and into silver. The problem with this is that, again, you may very well end up having a taxable event as a result of selling the gold to buy the silver.

Again, one way to handle this is to tithe gold to your church and start buying silver with the money that you would have been tithing to your church.

Just a reminder, the IRS doesn't mess around. Make sure you talk with a CPA about this strategy before you decide to do this.

Christmas List

By David Morris

We're on the home stretch to Christmas and I want to recommend a hand full of items that I personally own and am very comfortable endorsing. There are a couple of things in here that you'll probably ONLY see me endorsing in the Lamplighter Report and not in the weekly newsletter.

I'll start out with books. These aren't necessarily my all-time favorites, but they're all ones that I'm confident you'll enjoy.

Fiction

I love reading a few chapters of fiction at night before going to bed and end up reading 2-4 novels per month. Here are a few great recommendations for you:

- **“Overton Window” by Glenn Beck:** This is a great page turner whose storyline is how an evil billionaire uses the media to manipulate how large masses of people think. The crazy thing is that every “fictional” anecdote in the book has parallels in real life.
- **“Full Black” by Brad Thor:** I love Brad's books. The basic storyline of all of his books revolve around a central lone wolf black ops hero who loves America, freedom, and apple pie and is willing to do whatever is necessary to eliminate clear and present threats to freedom. Brad's a shooter and has several real life black ops friends who he's learned from and who review his books to ensure that the fictional action sequences represent reality.

“Full Black” is about a group

of Al Qaeda terrorist cells who take their orders from a nameless, faceless leader for security purposes. The leader gets killed and replaced without the terrorist cells knowing and they begin making attacks whose main purpose is to enrich their new leader.

- **“One Second After” by William Forstchen:** I believe this was the first EMP (Electromagnetic Pulse) novel, and I'm very thankful for it and for the other novels in the genre that it's inspired.
- **“Lucifer's Hammer” by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle:** This was released in 1977 and is one of the pioneer end-of-the-world novels and it's about a comet that impacts the Earth, its impact, and how people reacted to the electrical grid, supply chains, and social order collapsing around them.

Non-Fiction

- **“Terror at Beslan” by John Giduck:** This book is not a light read and I wouldn't recommend it for anyone under 21 (unless they're headed off to war) or squeamish people who are closed minded to the possibility that there might be evil people in the world. This is the after action analysis of the 2004 massacre of over 300 children and adults in Beslan, Russia by Chechen Muslim Al Qaeda Terrorists.

It IS a book that should be required reading for anyone who's in law enforcement or education. There is a general

belief that everyone in the world is inherently like Americans and views other humans with as much value as is the norm here. One of the things that Terror at Beslan details is how young Chechens who live in extremist villages are forced to watch torture and executions as young as eight and start participating shortly thereafter.

Exposure to and participation in these kinds of activities during the formative years allows people to more easily do things that normal Americans would consider unthinkable and simply getting a snapshot into the formative years of our enemies is very valuable.

- **“Tactics of the Crescent Moon” by H. John Poole:** Think “Art of War” and “The Book of Five Rings” meeting AK-47s, IEDs, and the internet. This book details the mindset, thought processes, strategies, and tactics of militant Islam throughout the centuries. Based on the fundamentals of unconventional warfare, Poole covers how the central core thought processes that we're seeing in Iraq and Afghanistan are the same effective strategies that have been used since bows and arrows ruled the battlefield.
- **“How to Survive the Most Critical 5 Seconds of Your Life” by Tim Larkin and Chris Ranck-Buhr:** I know Tim and Chris and think the world of them, but even if I didn't I'd say that this book is a true treasure. One of the problems with polite society is that most people assume that they

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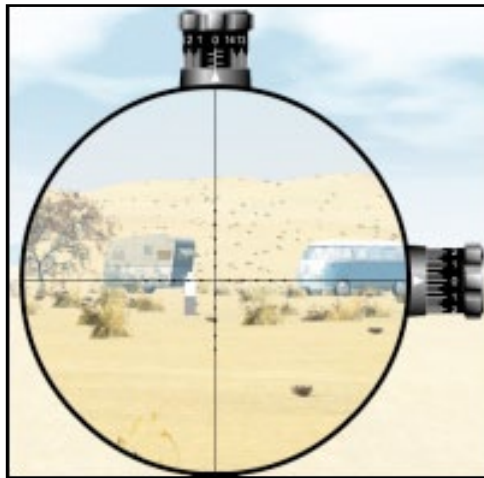
can use words to talk someone down who only understands violence and has decided to use it. Tim and Chris cover practical, usable steps for sane, rational, moral people to be able to go from living normal life to being able to flip the switch and quickly take out a violent attacker. This is stuff that only “nice” people need to learn. Psychopaths and violent criminals don’t need anyone to teach them how to psychologically go from 0 to 11. In short, if you’ve ever wondered whether you could REALLY flip the switch and defend yourself with martial arts, a bladed weapon, or a firearm, you owe it to yourself to read this book. You can get it for free through a special offer at surviveinplace.com/targetfocustraining

Other items:

- **Long Range Shooting Simulator from ShooterReady.com:** I’ve bought two versions of this software and consider it to be a vital tool for anyone who is interested in long range shooting or tactical marksmanship. I’m not a professionally (SWAT/military) trained sniper, but I LOVE long range shooting. Anything that lets me use a slide rule and a calculator under stress along with things going “boom!” is fun to me.

There are three big components to long range shooting: Physical, math, and DOPE (data on personal equipment). If you’re weak in any of these areas, you’re not going to get consistent hits on target at any real distance.

The sad and frustrating part of this is that normally learning long range shooting takes firing lots of rounds downrange, which is expensive. With the Long Range Shooting Simulation, you can do training that would take hundreds of dollars and tens of hours of range time in the comfort of your own home.

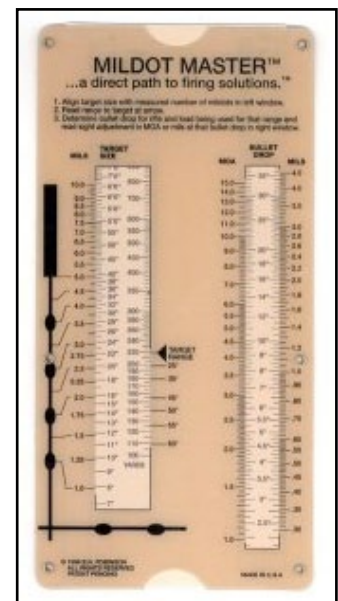


Long range shooting simulation will let you train with multiple calibers, multiple reticles, different wind speeds, different wind angles, shooting at higher/lower elevations, timed targets, moving targets, partially obscured targets, desert and urban environments, and targets at unknown distances.

If you’re using a Mildot Master (another great gift), a typical scenario would be like this:

1. A scenario comes up on your screen with a target of known size at an unknown distance and a windssock.
2. You read the windssock to determine wind speed and direction.

3. You use your reticle (I use oval Mildot) to range the target. You will need to compensate for zoom depending on whether you’re using a 1st or 2nd plane zoom lens.
4. Line up your target size and the size of the target in mils (mili-radian) to determine the range.
5. Use your DOPE or bullet drop chart to determine bullet drop at that range.
6. Using the Mildot Master, figure out your elevation adjustment and either dial it in or hold-off appropriately.
7. Dial in or hold off for windage.
8. Press the “Fire” button and see how you did.

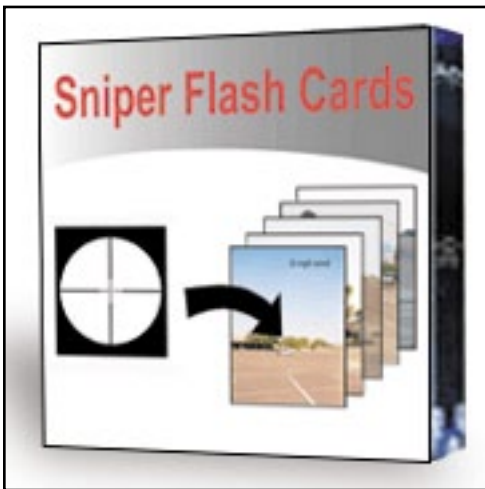


A strength and weakness of this system is that the ballistics of every round are identical, wind

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is consistent from crown to target, and every trigger press is flawless. This is not the real world, but isolates one particular set of skills that are vital to long range shooting so that you can master the skills much quicker and cheaper than you can throwing rounds downrange. You can get the Long Range Shooting Simulation at ShooterReady.com and the Mildot Master at Mildot.com.

- **Sniper Flashcards from Sniperflashcards.com.** This gift complements the Long Range Shooting Simulator and is a tool that allows a beginning shooter to acquire at an unknown distance between 300 and 500 yards, develop a firing solution without taking their eyes off of the target, and deliver a combat accurate shot within five seconds.



Normally, the process takes MUCH longer than five seconds and includes using a ranging scope, laser rangefinder, and/or multiple calculations.

The system was created by Victor Aguilar. I'm not sure if Victor says where he was born, or wants

it known, so I'll only say it was Eastern European and he watched the Soviets come in and take over. As an adult, one of his passions is to make sure that nothing like this will ever happen again and Sniper Flashcards is one of the tools that he created to help Eastern Europeans have a cost effective way to train up civilians to defend themselves from hostile military takeovers.

I don't know whether or not this will ever be a concern in America, but I do know that I've used the lessons learned from training with Sniper Flashcards to blaze through timed long range target courses.

As a note, Sniper Flashcards will allow you, with practice, to make 300-500 yard combat accurate shots using extreme hold offs, but "combat accurate" does not equate to a clean kill required for hunting and should never be used for that purpose.

- **Stealth Holster:** I wrote about this a few weeks ago, but the Stealth Holster from Stealthholster.com is my daily carry holster. It's an inside the waistband holster that is basically a lightweight velcro belt with an integrated holster. This setup allows you to carry IWB with ANY pants/shorts, regardless of whether you are wearing a belt or not. The Stealth Holster works whether you wear your shirt tucked in or untucked and besides being one of the most comfortable designs I've tried, one of the neatest benefits of this design is that you can sit down on a public toilet without having to figure out

what to do with your firearm and/or holster.



- **Gerber LMF II fixed blade knife:** This knife is a workhorse. I've been beating the snot out of mine for about a year and a half and it's never let me down. It's not technically the best knife in the world, but at \$60-\$70 on Amazon, you can own 2-5 of them for the same price as 1 "premium" knife.
- **50 Titanium CR123 batteries from batteryjunction.com** BatteryJunction.com is a GREAT source for batteries...especially expensive batteries. And, if you use CR123 batteries in lights or other gear, you might seriously want to consider ordering some Titanium 1400 mah batteries. In the tests I've done and tests I've read, these batteries perform equally or outperform almost every CR123 battery, including batteries from Surefire. What really tipped the scales for me is the fact that I can get these batteries for less than a buck apiece at BatteryJunction.com. Since these are lithium ion batteries, they've got a shelf life of up to 15 years!
- **Lithium AA & AAA batteries:** Jumping off from the previous

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recommendation on the CR123 batteries, if you've got a good supply of alkaline AA and AAA batteries, you might want to consider starting to buy lithium ion AA & AAA batteries. Depending on the temperature and load, they have 3 times the capacity of alkaline batteries, weigh less, and have a longer shelf life. The main place where we use lithium ion AA batteries is in my handheld GPS.

- **Petzl Zipka 2 & Zipka Plus 2 headlamp:** This is the headlamp of choice for myself, my wife, my parents, and everyone else who we've given one to. I've had the original, generation 2, and have a handfull of the Plus 2s. They're tiny, lightweight, run on AAA batteries, and will easily attach to your head, wrist, or almost anything else that's smaller than your head.



The Zipka Plus 2 (the only one I'd recommend) has 5 modes... bright white, dim white, white strobe, red, and red strobe. We use the red setting every single night for reading in bed, checking on the kids, and for pretty much anything during the night where we need light.

You can find them at Amazon, REI, and other retailers.

- **KaBar TDI LDK:** LDK stands for "Last Ditch Knife" and that's a great description of what this knife is. In the included sheath, it's about the same size as a credit card and only 2-3 times thicker, making it very easy to conceal. It's made to be integrated into the laces on boots, worn as a neck knife, or kept on you anywhere/ anyway that you could get access to it in a last ditch situation.



I haven't found myself in a life or death situation where I had to use it in a last ditch fight to the death, but I use the little bugger almost daily for opening mail, boxes, or other normal light duty knife tasks. I've found that if I'm around squeamish people that this knife doesn't freak people out nearly as much as my folders. You can find them for around \$20 on Amazon and at many other retailers.

- **Propane Adapter to go from big (grill size) tanks to camp stoves:** This is only useful if you have a propane camp stove or propane camp lantern, but if you do, it's really nice to be able to run them off of full size propane tanks in addition to being able to run them off of the little portable camp size propane tanks. You do need a plan to stabilize your

camp stove or lantern, but once you've got that figured out, you're set. You can get them at REI and most outdoor retailers.



- **Two mini-survival kits (one to use, one to carry):** My favorites are the Lifeline Ultralight Kit and the Adventure Medical Kits Pocket Survival Pak. Both are small and available from REI. I suggest getting two with the plan of pulling everything out of one of them and practicing with the contents until you're positive you're comfortable. In the probable event that you don't get stuff replaced after using it during testing, your second kit will be 100% ready to go.

- **Volcano Stove:** These are great little stoves and you can get them off of Amazon or from BePrepared.com. They have a couple of great features... one of which is that they'll run off of propane, charcoal, or wood. The other is that they're very efficient at transferring heat from your fuel source to the cooking surface so you can cook with a minimal amount of fuel.



Stealth Fire

By David Morris

If I told you that there was a way to make a campfire that would be nearly invisible from more than 20-30 feet away...even at night, produce very little, if any, visible smoke, AND produce more heat for cooking and boiling than a conventional fire with just twigs, kindling, and scrap pieces of wood, would you believe me?

What if I also told you that this design could be extinguished in seconds and require very little effort to hide the fact that it ever even existed? So well hidden, in fact, that if someone came upon your campsite 3-5 minutes after you decided to put out your fire and bug out, they wouldn't see plumes of smoke or ash on the ground and very likely wouldn't even know that you'd had a fire.

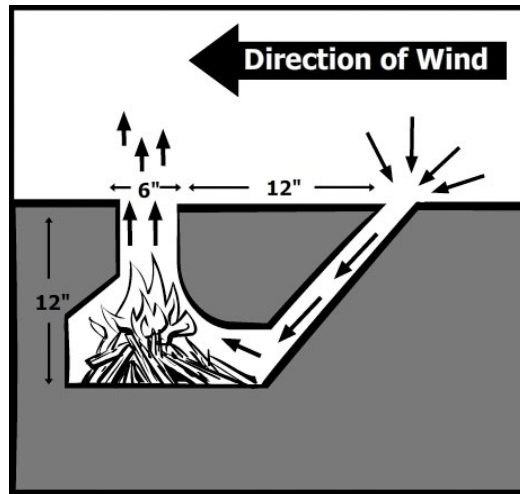
And finally, what if this technique for making a fire would work in almost all soil types...even crumbly soil, loose sand, gravel, or packed wet clay and would put out blast-furnace-intense heat regardless of whether or not there was wind with no blowing or continual physical effort on your part?

If I wouldn't know the exact design that I was talking about, I'd say that this was a pipe dream, but fortunately, it's very real.

I'll get into the details in a second, but the cliff notes version is that it's a Dakota fire pit with a couple of major tweaks.

A Dakota fire pit is brilliant in both its design and simplicity. In short, it is a fire pit that is shaped like a gourd with a small air tunnel coming off of the bottom of the pit and going up to the surface. From the side, it looks kind of like a tobacco pipe. For the purposes of this article, we'll call the

pit where the fire is the combustion chamber, the hole in the ground above the combustion chamber the chimney, and the air tunnel the snorkel.



You can make the fire pit almost any size that you want, depending on the soil, how much time you have, whether it will be a one-time use fire pit or an extended use pit, and your needs, but an easy size to visualize is a 6" diameter hole in the ground that widens out to an 8-12" diameter combustion chamber underground. The top of the combustion chamber is normally below the main root level of the vegetation on the surface.

The pit opening and the combustion chamber can be rectangular or circular—the final shape often ends up depending on what you run into once you start digging. The snorkel will angle up from the base of the combustion chamber to the surface 6-12 inches upwind from the opening in the ground for the chimney and will be as small as you can make it...which is normally determined by the soil conditions and digging instruments that you have available. It will be smaller if you can use a trowel or a stick to make your snorkel,

larger if you have to use a camp or entrenching shovel, or bigger yet if you need to use a full size shovel.

You don't want this snorkel hole to be too small, but in general you'll find that a smaller snorkel will cause the velocity of the air entering the combustion chamber to be higher, which is a very good thing.

There are several great attributes to the Dakota fire pit, among them:

1. As the fire gets going, and the heat goes up through the chimney, the air in the combustion chamber is replaced by fresh air coming in the snorkel. Since the snorkel can be set up to feed the combustion chamber from the base, and since the air going through the snorkel is in motion when it reaches the fire, it has an effect much like someone constantly blowing lightly on the base of the fire.
2. While you CAN use big chunks of wood and logs in a large fire pit, you can make hot, useful fires with small debris in a small fire pit. In fact, a Dakota fire pit will allow you to boil water and cook meals using only kindling/twigs. This makes the design ideal for situations where fuel is at a premium.
3. When you dig the chimney and the snorkel holes, the first thing you want to do is remove the grass "plugs." If you don't widen the mouth of your hole too much as you're digging, you can replace the plugs very quickly when you're done. When you decide to put your fire out, simply put all of the

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dirt that you dug out back into the hole, replace the plugs, and there will be little to no indication that you had a fire. If you pour the dirt in fast enough and soil conditions are right, very little or no smoke will even reach the surface.

rocks in it awhile before calling it a night, put dirt over your rocks/ coals when you're ready to go to sleep, make your bed over it, and enjoy a few extra degrees of warmth through the night, even if it's not over a very big area.

4. Since the combustion chamber is underground, the fire is protected from the wind. Besides making it easier to start the fire in heavy winds, it also helps cut down considerably on blowing embers.
5. Since the flame is underground, people won't be able to see your fire unless they're very close. This advantage is increased if you make the fire away from trees and other overhanging items that light can reflect on.
6. Because the fire gets the air that it needs through the snorkel and retains heat, this kind of fire achieves almost complete combustion and burns with much less smoke than an above ground fire. You WILL still get visible steam when burning wet wood, but also not as much as with an above ground fire.
7. Since a lot more heat stays in the combustion chamber than an above ground fire, a small fire pit fire is more forgiving of being fed wet kindling than a small above ground fire.
8. Boiling or cooking in a container is as easy as setting something (a metal grate, green twigs, etc.) across the top of the hole to hold your container.
9. As with any fire pit, you can put

10. You might learn the hard way, but I'll try to help you skip the lesson—when you're cooking over a Dakota fire pit or any other fire, you want to avoid woods that are resinous, like pine and other evergreens. They may pop, burn hot, and the sap may help you get your fire started, but they'll impart a bitter taste on any food cooked over them.

One very common problem with Dakota fire pits is having the snorkel collapse. In one of those wonderful moments where desperation, experience, creativity, and luck collided, I realized that I could simply "cheat" and use a pipe for the snorkel. I'll freely admit to "cheating" at a lot of survival skills and disciplines. There's a saying among people who practice wilderness and primitive survival skills, "In survival, there's no such thing as cheating...only survivors and corpses." That doesn't mean that you can ignore the fundamentals, only that there are no rules as to how you get the fundamentals accomplished and you can and should look at EVERYTHING in your environment as a possible tool.

I use a simple narrow gauge 1 1/2" x 15" household plumbing drainage pipe with a 90 degree turn at the end. They're light, sturdy, the straight end works well for augering through soil, and the 90 degree turn

makes for a palm-friendly surface to push on.



Using a pipe for the snorkel tube has a few big advantages over a traditional dirt snorkel:

- You can simply push and twist (auger) the pipe through the ground to create your hole and skip digging with hands, sticks, or trowels altogether. Depending on the soil, you may have to clean out debris to keep augering or clean it out when you're finished so air can go through it freely.
- Once you've augered the pipe down to the combustion chamber, you can either remove it or, if you're concerned about the snorkel collapsing, you can leave it in place.
- Using a pipe allows you to adjust where you want the air going through the snorkel to enter the combustion chamber. If you want the air to enter the chamber at the edge, pull the pipe out. If you've got a cool spot in the middle of the chamber, simply push the pipe in so the end of the pipe is in the middle of the combustion chamber.
- Using a pipe allows you to have a much smaller hole than you

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could with an entrenching tool or even a trowel. In addition, the smaller diameter pipe causes the air sucked through it to enter the combustion chamber with more velocity, which increases the efficiency and output of the fire.

Another easy “cheat” that you can do that will enhance the effectiveness of the Dakota fire pit is to use a small PC fan or a cooling fan from Radio Shack to force air through the snorkel into the combustion chamber at a higher velocity. You can use this technique regardless of whether you’re using a pipe for the snorkel, or are simply using a tunnel through the ground.



I’ve mainly used salvaged laptop computer fans, but, as you can see in the picture, have also used small 12V hobby fans from Radio Shack. I drive both with 9V batteries, but you could also use a salvaged PC battery, 12V battery, or smaller batteries in series. With an alkaline 9V battery, you’re looking at 2-5 hours of run time, depending on the battery and the fan. With a lithium ion

battery, you’re looking at roughly twice as long of a run time and less weight.

The impact of even a little 1 ½ inch fan is impressive, to say the least... especially during the early stages of a fire or when speed is important. The embers in the combustion chamber get bright enough to be uncomfortable to look at, the flames curl around and form cyclones when the currents are right, and at times, it sounds like a jet, blast furnace, or rocket stove.



In short, it enhances everything that is good about the Dakota fire pit... cleaner burning, more heat output, less smoke, and even more tolerant of putting damp fuel on a small fire.

This is a textbook example of taking a very primitive wilderness survival skill and adapting it for urban survival situations. In the middle of a million acre wilderness area, you aren’t too likely to find a PC fan, a battery, or a length of pipe, but in an urban survival situation, it’s likely that you could find all 3 without too much searching...and if you can’t

find all three, you can still use either the fan/battery or the pipe on their own.



You’ll want to allow for 15-20 minutes to make your Dakota fire pit if you’re using a pipe for your snorkel and 30-50 minutes if you’re digging your snorkel. This seems like a long time, but the efficiency of the design and the fact that it allows you to make your fire with less tinder, less kindling and lets you effectively cook by only using twigs and debris normally makes it a net time and energy saver. The time and energy conservation element really kicks in with the 2nd, 3rd, and subsequent fires.

If you’re allowed to have open fires in your community, making a Dakota fire pit is a great activity to do with kids... possibly making smores a reward at the successful completion of the task :) In fact, if it’s possible, try to schedule a time in the next few days to practice this form of fire making.

Questions, comments? Let me know by emailing me at David@LamplighterReport.com.

For feedback, or to comment please contact David@LamplighterReport.com

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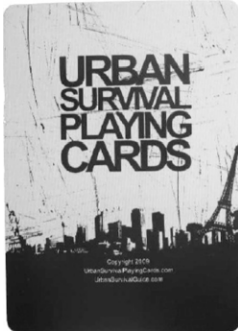
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I wanted to take a moment to say thank you for your membership to The Lamplighter Report. This issue is packed with some powerful information that will help you to prepare you and your loved ones in the event of terrorist attack, natural disaster, economic collapse, or a pandemic.

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