

The Redrock Readiness Newsletter

Episode 14: Guns 101

“Therefore the people of the Nephites were aware of the intent of the Amlicites, and therefore they did prepare to meet them; yea, they did arm themselves with swords, and with cimeters, and with bows, and with arrows, and with stones, and with slings, and with all manner of weapons of war, of every kind.”

--Alma 2:12

At the request of several members of our ward, we decided to do a newsletter overviewing weapons and things you might need to know about them. A firearm is one of the best ways to protect the food storage and other things you've amassed for your prep kits, not to mention yourself!

Now, before you go out shopping for a gun, keep in mind that when you go into just about any one of the local gun stores, the fat, balding guy with the intellect of a semi-sentient eggplant behind the counter is going to claim to be a “certified Delta Force/Navy Seal/Marine Force recon sniper with 85 confirmed kills” with whatever weapon he just happens to be showing you at the time. Sure he is. (And if it's not the guy behind the counter, it'll be the guy on your side of it that claims much the same.) Dollars to donuts an individual with a legit military background isn't going to be working in retail—he can work elsewhere and make a lot more money.

In short-- take any advice with a grain of salt.

D: Ladies, when you go shopping make sure you get a weapon you, personally, can handle. Some ranges let you try out different makes and models, which means you can make sure you don't drop a bunch of \$ on something that hurts your hand! The gun industry is a lot like the videogame industry—it's a bit of a boys' club. But keep talking to folks and trying things out. You'll run into a lot of fanboys busy promoting their favorite toys, but keep digging and you'll find helpful men and women who just want you to get something you can use safely and confidently.

* * *

Vocabulary Check!

Round = the ammunition that goes into the gun (a bullet is a part of a round)

Caliber = Refers to the size of the round.

Chamber = Where the ammo goes. It has to be the right size for the right round.

Magazine = The case the holds the ammunition. Sometimes mistakenly referred to as a “clip”.

* * *

You're going to need a primary weapon (typically a rifle or a shotgun) and a secondary weapon (a pistol). You'll use the rifle for **home defense out to mid-range engagements** (25 m – 300 m). In a pinch, it could be used for hunting small to medium game too.

If you go with a shotgun, be aware that the different shells do different things at different distances.

Pistols are used for **concealed carry and home and vehicle defense**. You use them closer up than rifles or shotguns—think “bad breath range”—no further out than 10 yards or so.

RIFLES

If you decide that you're going to go the rifle route for your primary, the best literal bang for your buck is a standard, **flat-top railed AR-15 type rifle**, preferably in the **shorter carbine length**. **Rock River, Del Ton, DPMS, Smith & Wesson, Heckler & Koch (HK), and Sig Sauer** are all great manufacturers of AR-15s.

RIFLE ACCESSORIES: You might look at acquiring some sort of **combat or reflex optic** to help you achieve faster target acquisition. **EoTech, Aimpoint, Dr. Optic and Trijicon** all make great sights.

SHOTGUNS

There are 2 weapons that I recommend: **a Remington 870 or a Mossberg 500**, both of which are pump action. (Both of these makers also make semi-automatic models but they are both pricier and more mechanically complicated.)

PISTOLS

Your pistol choice is going to come down to **what fits your hand and works for you**. “Works for you” is a little hard to quantify, but when you pick up a weapon that works for you, you'll know it—it'll have a vibe, a feel to it that makes sense to you instinctively.

My recommended makes include **Sig Sauer** (noticing a trend?), **Glock, Springfield XD, XD(M), Heckler and Koch (HK), and FN Herstal**. They're reliable and time-tested.

There are other makes that work well too, but let me tell you what I don't recommend: the Smith and Wesson M&P. While some people like them, I personally am not a fan because its parts are stiff and difficult to handle. Pick one of the bolded makes above and you'll save yourself the hassle of messing with fancy trigger kits, etc. (You don't want to try amateur gunsmithing unsupervised.)

A NOTE ON REVOLVERS

I won't say “Never get a revolver!” – If you decide they float your boat, good for you! However revolvers have their drawbacks too, especially the lightweight frames made from scandium, or unobtainium or other random alloy. The recoil is a beast, you won't like shooting it, and if you don't like shooting it, you won't practice with it...which defeats the purpose.

D: Ladies, don't let the men behind the counter talk you into a revolver! Revolvers may look like they'd fit ladyhands better, but that small size comes at a cost: their lighter weight means they'll have a mean kick and will leave your hand sore. Sore hands mean you won't practice. :(Don't be intimidated by a semi-automatic pistol. You CAN rack the slide, I promise. In fact, you'll be able to handle it the whole thing just fine. All it takes is the proper technique and some practice. If yours truly, Tiny McPianofingers can handle one, so can you!

AMMO: MAGAZINES

Buy good quality magazines, as they are a key component of what makes your gun work, or not work such as the case may be (I use **Magpuls** for my AR, because they just work, every time). **Close to 85% of all weapon malfunctions are caused by the magazine**, so don't skimp!

AMMO: ROUNDS, CALIBERS AND YOU

First, **caliber refers to the size of the round that's going to go into the firearm** and dictates what kind of ammo you're going to buy. In order to do that, your firearm needs to be chambered in the appropriate size—otherwise your ammo may not fit your gun! No Bueno!

We recommend getting **pistols** chambered in **9mm**, **.40 cal S&W**, or **.45 cal ACP**. Why? Both law enforcement and military use these rounds, which means they'll always be manufactured and somewhat findable, even if, say, stores shut down.

DON'T get any pistol chambered in .380 (9mm kurz) or smaller (such as 25 auto, .22 cal, etc). That size just won't do the job reliably each and every time. Also stay away from .45 GAP, .38 Super/Auto, .357 SIG or some crazy Zombie Bear-Slaying round of insanity, etc. Besides sounding goofy, when ammunition is in short supply, these types of rounds are the ones you can never find.

Get your **rifle** chambered in **5.56 NATO**—that way you can use both that size round as well as most .223 rifle ammo you may find. (If you just get it chambered in .223, **you will NOT be able to use 5.56 ammo.**) **Buy new manufacturer name brand ammunition for your everyday carry and use in your kit.** For practicing on the range (and only on the range!), factory reloads are ok and a more cost-effective way to go.

As far as ammunition, any name-brand, brass-cased ammo is a good bet. However, **stay away from anything that is steel-cased** as this is horrible for the internals of your AR-15. The rules for buying new, manufacturer name-brand ammunition for your everyday use (and using factory reloads for range practice) hold for AR ammo, too!

If you use factory reloads, they're loaded to spec. This means they won't have the tendency to misfire on you or ruin your gun by blowing it up. **Non-factory reloads carry no such guarantee.** Buyer beware!

HOW MUCH OF THIS STUFF DO I NEED, ANYWAY?

As far as the quantity of rounds you need to stockpile for a rainy day—not ammo you’ll practice with at the range, but your hoarded Emergency Backup Ammo—you need approximately 1 case (1000 rounds) of rifle ammo per rifle and 500 rounds per pistol.

D: Here’s that equation in pictures, for the less math-inclined. :)

1x  = 500 Rounds

1x  = 1000 Rounds

For example, two AR-15-type rifles and three 9mm Glock pistols equates to 2000 rounds of rifle and 1500 of 9mm pistol.

 +  +  = 1500 Rounds

 +  = 2000 Rounds

1500 + 2000 = 3500 Rounds.

B: This may seem like a lot, but I promise you it isn’t. The basic fighting load for most U.S. Military Infantryman is ten to fifteen 30-round magazines—300 to 450 rounds on tap. Something to consider.

* * *

Now that you’ve purchased your new weapons and have run home gleefully with them, what should you do next? Tune in next week to find out!



Whhheewww. If you just actually read that whole thing, feel free to do like I did and take a nap—you’ve earned it! And then make a post-nap tuna sammich, too.

I’m still not speaking to Beau, because not only is he not letting me have my own PayPal account so I can order from GinormousTrophyFish.com, but now he refuses to get me a tiny gun to keep those two big Rottweilers across the street from

hassling me when I'm talking to the ladies. He says I couldn't work it because I don't have opposable thumbs. :(

Still, I gotta admit—the guy knows lots about weapons. Hey, it's his job! So if you ever need help learnin' gun stuff, I know he'd be happy to talk to you. See you next week!