

**FMFRP 12-81**

# **Shooting To Live**



**U.S. Marine Corps**

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FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-81, *Shooting To Live*, is published to ensure the retention and dissemination of useful information which is not intended to become doctrine or to be published in Fleet Marine Force manuals. FMFRPs in the 12 series are a special category: reprints of historical works which are not available elsewhere.

2. SCOPE

This reference publication was written in 1942 by Captain William E. Fairbairn and Captain Eric Anthony Sykes, both of the Shanghai Municipal Police Department. The volume presents an excellent review of standard techniques and some unorthodox methodology in the use of the pistol. Firing positions, loading, unloading, the building of combat ranges, known-distance ranges, types of holsters, and the wearing of pistols are delved into with great clarity and precision. For weapons enthusiasts and for officers and SNCOs who are tasked with pistol training and marksmanship, this book will add to your knowledge and capabilities in carrying out your duties.

3. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS



M. P. SULLIVAN  
Major General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Deputy Commander for Warfighting  
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# SHOOTING TO LIVE

WITH THE ONE-HAND GUN

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## PREFACE

It may be said that there is already a sufficiency of books on the one-hand gun and its uses. Some justification for an addition to the list might be considered to exist if the subject could be presented from a different angle, and that is what is now attempted.

*Shooting to Live* describes methods developed and practised during an eventful quarter of a century and adopted, in spite of their unorthodoxy, by one police organisation after another in the Far East and elsewhere. It is the authors' hope that their relation of these methods may contribute to the efficiency, and therefore safety, of those whose lot it is to use the one-hand gun in the course of duty.

W. E. F.

E. A. S.





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## A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The toughest city in the world was Shanghai. The time was the 1930s. The streets were ruled by gangs. Violent gang wars, murder, rape, and robbery were the order of the day. The night belonged to roaming gangs of toughs. In charge of the Shanghai Municipal Police, Capt. W.E. Fairbairn and his partner, Capt. Eric Anthony Sykes, were determined to reclaim the streets for the citizenry.

*Shooting to Live* is the product of Fairbairn's and Syke's *practical* experience with the handgun. Hundreds of incidents provided the basis for the first true book on life-or-death shootouts with the pistol. *Shooting to Live* teaches, in clear, concise terms, all concepts, considerations, and applications of *combat pistolcraft*. The methods taught here provided the basis for all the later masters—Applegate, Weaver, Cooper, Taylor, Chapman, Farnham, Hackathorn, et al. This all-time classic book on combat pistol shooting is a must for the serious shooter.



## INTRODUCTION

After the successful retreat of the British Expeditionary force from the shores of Dunkirk in 1940, England began a period of reorganizing its army and strengthening the home guard against the expected German, cross channel invasion. At the same time, training in commando and para military type operations was initiated.

Experts in close quarter fighting techniques, and training, were assembled from all over the commonwealth and allied sources. By the time of Pearl Harbor the most skilled and famous of these men were also engaged in training special intelligence personnel for operations in enemy occupied territory. Schools were operated under tight security conditions all over the English countryside and in Northern Scotland where country estates of the nobility were used as training centers.

In 1942 the U. S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) under command of Colonel "Wild Bill" Donovan began its program and buildup for similar clandestine operations, with its own personnel, when the main thrust of American military might was ready to aid the allies in retaking occupied Europe. Captain W. E. "Dan" Fairbairn was attached to the OSS for training purposes. The writer, a very willing, "eager beaver" lieutenant, was assigned to him as an assistant for a one year period that was followed by a special duty assignment of the same nature with E. A. "Bill" Sykes in Scotland near the British Commando training center.