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## Week 52 of 52: Long-Term Security and Defense

Posted By [Tess Pennington](#)

On October 5, 2012 @ 2:57 pm

Category: 52 Weeks to Preparedness

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*Max Velocity of [www.MaxVelocityTactical.com](http://www.MaxVelocityTactical.com) <sup>[1]</sup> has been kind enough to dedicate his time and professional insights to our preparedness community. He has an extensive military background, having served in both the British and the U.S. armies and also as a high threat security contractor. He has served on six military operational deployments, including to Afghanistan immediately post-9/11, and additionally he spent five years serving as a security contractor in both Iraq and Afghanistan. During his career in the British Army he served with British SOF (The Parachute Regiment), to include a role training and selecting recruits for the Regiment. More recently, he has served in a Combat Medic and Civil Affairs role in the US Army Reserves. He is the author of two books: [Contact! A Tactical Manual for Post Collapse Survival](#) <sup>[2]</sup> and [Rapid Fire! Tactics for High Threat, Protection and Combat Operations](#) <sup>[3]</sup>. With his vast military background and real world experience, Max provides the kind of information that every prepper needs to learn, understand and integrate into their long-term security and home defense plans.*

### Long Term Security and Defense of your Retreat Location by Max Velocity

In this article for the final week of '52 Weeks for Preparedness' I will discuss long term security and defense of your retreat location. We cannot predict now exactly what conditions will look like after a collapse and as such I urge you not to make too many assumptions based on your particular idea of what such a post-SHTF situation will look like. The purpose will be to give you the general principles and techniques of defending a location, which you can tailor and apply as necessary and appropriate. It is best to adopt a mindset of flexibility and gather mental and physical knowledge and 'tools' in order to be able to develop your response and put some of these measures in place as you find them necessary and appropriate. For the article I will assume a broad post-SHTF situation of societal collapse with a general absence of law and order.

What is the threat? As a prepper hunkered down at your home, with food stores, the most likely threat will be from looters and marauders. These could take many forms from a simple beggar, through starving neighbors, mobs, tricks and deceptions, to a tactically organized group with weapons and equipment. The worst case is some sort of organized paramilitary style force with heavy equipment bent on forced redistribution. Therefore, remain flexible and have an emergency rally point and extraction route should you be overmatched. Know when you have no alternative but to bug out. You can make this decision if you have the information before the threat arrives and conduct the bug out in good order. Alternatively, you may be forced to make the decision as the attack progresses and have to 'break contact' and withdraw under enemy fire; this is one of the most difficult tactical maneuvers. Work on your leadership, decision making and decision points so that your response under the pressure of both time and enemy is optimal. Tied in with this is the need for clear rules of engagement and for the use of force appropriate to the threat.

This short article is mainly concerned with defense of a single location and as such will not go into techniques such as mobile and area defense, which could be useful for a larger community. Remember, the best form of defense is to avoid the fight. But that may not be possible and you have to always plan and prepare for that fight. You can better avoid the fight by adopting a lower profile at your location, attempting to conceal your supplies and capabilities. The opposite of this is to have a high profile and try to use threat of force as a deterrent. But remember that a good rifleman could sit out at long range and simply shoot

your defenders in their sentry positions. In my opinion, the best approach for a small survivor group is to adopt a lower profile while maintaining the capability to defeat threats as they are encountered. The following are some principles of defense that you should consider and apply to your location and plan:

- All Round Defense, in order to anticipate a threat from any direction.
- Depth, in order to prevent penetration of your defended position.
- Mutually Supporting Sectors of Fire, in order to increase the strength and flexibility of a defense.
- Concealment and Deception, in order to deny the adversary the advantages of understanding.
- Maintenance of a Reserve.
- Offensive Action (where appropriate), in order to seize or regain the initiative.
- Administration, to include:
  - Appropriate numbers of trained personnel.
  - Appropriate weapons, ammunition and equipment.
  - A watch system for early warning.

Most modern family homes do not lend themselves to defense. The structure is vulnerable to high velocity rounds which will pass through multiple frame, wood and plasterboard walls, and also simple mechanical breaches are possible with tools and even vehicles used as rams. They are also very vulnerable to fire. If you try and defend your house from the windows, then you will not be protected by the walls framing those windows and the room can be filled full of high velocity rounds by an attacking group. There is a real danger of being suppressed by superior firepower. If you stay back from the windows as you should, then you limit your fields of fire and unless there are enough of you defending then the enemy will be able to take advantage of blind spots to close with and then breach the house. You need a basement or other ballistic protected safe room for your noncombatant personnel (kids etc.) to shelter in; otherwise they will not be protected from the violence and from the high velocity rounds ripping through the walls.

One of the key things for a prepper defense of a location is to have an appropriate number of trained personnel with appropriate firearms, ammunition and equipment. You will also have to take measures to harden the building to slow down attempts to breach. You need to consider whether or not you want your property to look derelict; this could be good or bad in the circumstances. It would be worthwhile to consider boarding up or shuttering at least the ground floor windows and think about putting up door bars or even board up some of the doors. This will also help with light discipline. External boards can make the place look derelict, but looking derelict could also encourage approach by potential squatters. You could put up the boards internally, or something similar, in order to maintain a low profile and slow any breaches. There are a lot of pros and cons each way. When boarding up doors, ensure that you have at least two independent exits that can be used both for routine tasks but also for egress if you have to escape. Boarding up your windows and doors does not make them ballistically hardened. You could have sandbags ready to go, and you will need to consider a big pile of dirt to fill them from. Consider the benefits of simple mass of soil in protecting you from high velocity rounds, and for the construction of fighting positions. Sandbags need to be at least two deep to protect against high velocity rounds. If you try stacking enough of these on a modern upper floor, or even a ground level floor with a basement beneath, then the weight of a constructed fighting position may cause a collapse. You could stack sandbags externally around designated window fighting positions on the ground floor, but you will need a lot of them. Other alternatives would include filling a chest of drawers with soil to create firing positions, or maybe even material such as steel plate that will weigh less but will provide ballistic protection.

From the principles of defense it is clear that we need to establish a plan which provides early warning, all round defense and mutually supporting sectors of fire. We also need to create depth, which is best utilized outside the building rather than with fall back positions inside the house. We can create depth using external fighting positions to keep attackers away from the house, which will also aid mutual support. A key thing that will really help defense of a house is to have a second or more positions outside of the main building that can provide fire support, thus these positions support each other by keeping enemy away from the house and each other. This position(s) could also be another house or cooperating neighbor if it works

out that way. This creates a 'cross-fire' so you must enforce fire discipline and allocate sectors of fire to ensure you do not cause 'friendly fire'.

A very important concept is that of 'stand-off'. This can be created with a combination of fighting positions in depth and cleared fields of fire with obstacles. If you have an obstacle, such as wire, it must be covered by fire to be effective. Utilize stand-off distances to keep enemy away from the property, combined with obstacles to slow vehicle and dismounted approach. Examples like wire are good for dismounted personnel and also vehicles if it is correctly laid concertina wire. Obstacles such as steel cabling, concrete bollards or planter boxes and felled trees will work well against vehicles. This will also have the effect of reducing the risk of attackers getting close to set the place on fire, which they are likely to try if they can't get in to get your stuff. If we expand this concept we can see how a mutually supporting neighborhood with checkpoints/roadblocks and observation/fighting positions will provide a great advantage. Stand-off is also important in terms of engaging the enemy with accurate effective fire at the longest range that is physically and legally possible. If you are competent and have the equipment for long range effective suppressive fire, this can have the effect of keeping the enemy at arm's length and reducing the accuracy and hence effectiveness of their fire, which will prevent them successfully suppressing you and subsequently maneuvering onto your position to breach or burn the property. In addition, consider the presence, placement and potential hard protection of any flammable sources on your property and close to your buildings, such as propane tanks and fuel supplies. Ensure they cannot be repeatedly fired upon by the enemy to cause a fire or explosion. The ability to generate accurate effective long range defensive fire depends on skill, equipment, positioning of fighting positions, your policy for the use of force and also the way the terrain affects weapons killing areas and ranges. To engage at long range you have to reasonably fear that the enemy presents a threat of lethal force against your defended location. However, if you are in a closer urban or wooded environment you may find some of your fields of fire are limited and you will have to plan and position accordingly.

Administration is a key factor. While you are maintaining your defense you need to look after the welfare of the team, equipment and the site itself. Administration is what preppers usually concentrate on. This is your "beans, bullets and band-aids". This is an area where those that are non-combatants can really pull their weight and make a difference. You must maintain a watch system which will be tied in to 'stand to' positions and maybe some form of 'Quick Reaction Force' or reserve, depending on the resources and numbers available to you. Your watch system can be augmented by other early warning sensors such as dogs and mechanical or electronic systems. Day to day you will need to keep the machine running and this will be the biggest challenge as time goes on. Complacency Kills! Depending on the extent of your preparations, stores and the resources within your property, this will have a knock-on effect to your ability to remain covert and the requirement to send out foraging patrols. People will also start to get cabin fever, particularly kids, and you will need to consider how to entertain them. Consider that while mundane tasks are being completed, there is always someone on watch. People that are not on watch need to have weapons and ammunition carrying equipment close or on their person while doing other things. Consider carrying long rifles slung as well as handguns everywhere you go on the property, with at least a light bit of web gear with some additional magazines in pouches. Rifles should never be out of your arms reach if there is any kind of threat of attack. You should put rifle racks or hooks/nails on walls in key rooms, out of reach of kids, so that rifles can be grabbed quickly if the alarm is sounded.

Regarding your noncombatants or protected personnel; what you do with them depends on who they are. The younger kids will need to be protected in the safest location you have. Others will be useful to do tasks such as re-load magazines, distribute water and act as firefighting crews. Note that you need to have fire-extinguishers and buckets of water and /or sand available at hand during a defense to put out any fires. The more tasks you give people during a crisis, the more the activity will take their minds off the stress of the situation and the team will be strengthened. Ammunition replenishment, water distribution, casualty collection point, first aid, watching the rear and looking after the younger kids are all examples of tasks that can be allocated to make people a useful part of the team when personnel resources are tight.

Firearms and equipment has been covered under the [home defense article](#) <sup>[4]</sup>. For this kind of defensive situation you will be well served by the ability to detect, observe and accurately

engage enemy at the longest range possible by day and night. This is easily said, but would take throwing money at it to get all the equipment you need to best do it. In terms of firearms, I would recommend tactical type high capacity magazine rifles for the main work, backed up by handguns and pump action 12 gauge shotguns. The shotguns are good for close work and if the enemy gets in to the building, last ditch stuff. Long range hunting type rifles are good for observation (scope) and longer distance engagement. You would be best served with good optics for your weapons and also observation devices such as binoculars. Think about night vision and even thermal imaging if you can afford it. You will also have to consider that even if you can afford a night vision device, it will only work for whoever has it so how will the rest engage? What type and configuration of these night vision devices, on weapons as sights or not? Without night sights you can fire at muzzle flash or use whatever illumination is available, white light or whatever. A good option is to have parachute illumination flares. Loose barking dogs on your property are perhaps the best low budget early warning system; however consider that they may give away your position if you are trying to be totally covert. Decide on your priorities and strategy and tie that in with what money you have to spend on equipment. You can get expensive systems such as ground sensors, lights and alarms, but these cost money and you have to consider their use in a long-term grid down situation. I would prefer to spend money on optics and night observation devices which will last without grid power (but will require batteries) and can also be taken with you if you have to move locations. Here are some basic suggestions for equipment to augment such a defense:

- Appropriate tactical firearms & ammunition
- Web gear and magazines
- Ear and eye protection
- Body armor and helmets, NIJ level IIIa or Level IV
- Barbed wire, coiled (concertina) and for low wire entanglements
- Sandbags or other ballistic protection options
- Night vision devices
- Binoculars plus optical rifle sights
- Black out curtain and pre-cut plywood for windows
- Parachute illumination flares
- Trip-flares
- Trauma medical kit incl. CAT tourniquets
- Range cards
- Two way radios and/or field telephones
- Multiple fire-extinguishers and/or buckets of water

If you have put a group together for such a defense, they need to be trained on not only tactical shooting and basic small unit tactics and movement, but also briefed and rehearsed on the defensive plan including fighting positions and sectors of fire. Consider that depending on your circumstances and the terrain, you may be benefited by running periodic clearance patrols around the property to mitigate against surprise attack, and to do this your team need to be able to patrol and move tactically, as well as respond to any enemy contact. You will preferably have a medic with a trauma bag. You do not want to ever run out of ammunition, so make sure you have as much as you can reasonably purchase. Like tactics, ammunition quantities are a subjective argument with many solutions. I recommend a personal load of six to eight thirty round magazines on the person, with at least as many full magazines for resupply. And once you have used that, you need another resupply! In a real life contact you will likely use less ammunition than you may during training and you must concentrate on effective accurate fire rather than simple quantity. Train your team to engage positively identified enemy, or suppress known enemy positions. A rapid rate of fire is 30 rounds per minute; a deliberate rate is 10 rounds per minute.

Practice and rehearse the command and fire control procedures at your location, including the communication of enemy locations and actions. Use range cards to tie in sectors for mutual support and to prevent 'friendly fire'. Run 'stand to' drills like a fire drill by day and by night and be able to call out which direction the enemy threat comes from. Be aware of diversions and demonstrations intended to distract you from the main direction of attack. Always cover all sectors, even with just one observer looking to the flanks and rear in a manpower crisis. Keep unnecessary noise and shouting down, allowing orders and target indications to be passed around the position. Every team member is a sensor and a 'link man' to pass on information.

Having said all that, you are not going to open fire on just anyone coming to your location. Any actions that you take should be justifiable as self-defense. Do be mindful of tricks and the potential for snipers. However, don't give up on morality and charity and don't illegally open fire on anyone that comes near your defended location. You need to agree on rules of engagement for your sentries and you should apply escalation of force protocols to meet a threat with the proportionate and appropriate force necessary to stop that threat. Have the ability to warn anyone approaching, whether you have permanent warning signs or something like a bullhorn that you use as part of your escalation procedures through warning to non-lethal then lethal force as you begin to identify them as posing a threat. Remember that escalation of force is a continuum and you can bypass the early stages and go directly to lethal force if taken by surprise and faced with a lethal threat that must be stopped.

Max Velocity

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#### Biography:

Max Velocity is an author and trainer providing tactical instruction and advice for those preparing for disaster survival and high threat, protection and combat operations. He is the author of two books on security issues:

[Contact! A Tactical Manual for Post Collapse Survival](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

[Rapid Fire! Tactics for High Threat, Protection and Combat Operations](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

### Preps to Buy:

- Appropriate tactical firearms & ammunition
- Web gear and magazines
- Ear and eye protection
- Body armor and helmets, NIJ level IIIa or Level IV
- Barbed wire, coiled (concertina) and for low wire entanglements
- Sandbags or other ballistic protection options
- Night vision devices
- Binoculars plus optical rifle sights
- Black out curtain and pre-cut plywood for windows
- Parachute illumination flares
- Trip-flares
- Trauma medical kit incl. CAT tourniquets
- Range cards
- Two way radios and/or field telephones

### Action Items:

1. Create a defensive plan including fighting positions and sectors of fire and ensure that all group members know the plan and rehearse the plan regularly.
2. Agree on rules of engagement.
3. Train each group member on tactical shooting and basic small unit tactics and movement.
4. Practice and rehearse the command and fire control procedures at your location, including the communication of enemy locations and actions.
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