

Are Alternative Weapons Practical in a Post-Disaster World?

I've read a lot about weapons and self-defense through the years, and even written a fair amount about the subject. These are probably the most controversial subjects to be found in the prepping and survival world, with everyone having an opinion. But I'll have to admit, I've always been concerned about many of those opinions. It's not that I think I'm smarter than anyone else in the room; it's just that I think some of those opinions are based on unrealistic expectations.

The expectations I'm talking about are their expectations of a post-disaster world. Or, perhaps I should use the term "post-apocalyptic world," as that's the way many of us see it.

Unfortunately, our understanding of that post-apocalyptic world has been largely formed by fiction. We've all seen movies where someone is either just trying to survive or they are trying to complete some great quest in the world left behind by some disaster. They face challenges and enemies and ultimately overcome, sometimes using firearms and sometimes using much cruder weapons.



None of us really know what sort of post-disaster world we'll encounter; partially because we don't know what sort of disaster will cause it. Adding to the complexity, there's no way to predict how millions of people are going to react. Most will likely react poorly, making their survival unlikely. Even so, there will be a fair number of people who survive. Ten percent of 330 million people is still 33 million; all of who will be pinching and scraping to survive; and that's just here in the U.S.A.

The recent popularity of zombie movies in the last decade has only makes this worse, with everyone expecting some sort of zombie apocalypse or other. Even those of us who are more level-headed about our prepping have had our concept of a post-disaster world altered by Hollywood's images. We see a world that will become much more primitive, with semi-destroyed buildings and people scurrying around like rats, looking for some morsel to eat.

That world, as imagined in Hollywood, may yet come; but it won't come quickly, and it certainly won't come immediately after a disaster. People aren't going to instantly forget what civilization is, including how to use firearms. Many of those who survive will be armed with modern firearms, scrounging ammo whenever and wherever they can. If your favorite weapon is a tomahawk, I have to tell you, it isn't going to do much good against those bullets, unless you manage to get really, really close before they can pull the trigger.

Of course, there is no "one size fits all" in self-defense, any more than there is for any other area of life. A post-apocalyptic world will be fluid, with the situation changing constantly. We will have to adjust to those changes, both in changing the weapons that we are using and the tactics that we are employing.

Shortly After the Disaster

The first, and most critical, time period we need to concern ourselves with it the time immediately following the disaster and for as much as a couple of years after that. The key thing about this time period, is that people will have firearms and ammunition will be available; maybe not in the stores, but from raids they commit on others. You can probably count most especially on the criminal element having firearms and ammo; both the experienced criminals and those who cross the line in an attempt to survive.

These are the types of people we talk about in the prepping community. The ones who will attack our homes, trying to steal our stockpiles. Since they come from or are closely associated with our existing criminal element, we can expect them to act like the criminals of today do. In other words, while criminals in some countries might use knives to attack their victims, we can expect these criminals to be fully armed with firearms, which they will have no compulsion against using against us.

Thinking that we might be able to fight off such criminals with non-lethal weapons or melee weapons from the Middle Ages is either extremely naïve or extremely foolish. Even a bow is out of the question, unless you're stealthy enough to make Rambo jealous and can shoot that bow as good as Hawkeye from the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The question won't be whether you should use firearms to defend yourself, but rather how fast and how accurately you can shoot.

There's no question that it will be necessary to stockpile ammunition for this period of time. Even so, the blanket "10,000 rounds" is probably more than you'll need. If you actually survive enough attacks to use up 10,000 rounds of ammo, maybe Rambo needs to take some lessons from you.

A Long Time After the Disaster

Things will change as time goes on. Ammunition will get used up and become harder to find. The same four-legged predators who will be attacking anyone they think has food and supplies will have trouble coming up with ammunition. While they won't stop killing people, they'll probably become more careful in the use of the ammunition they have left. Eventually, they'll reach the point where they only shoot when they have to, hoarding every round they can.

Nobody really knows just how much civilian-owned ammunition there is in the United States. But with 8.1 billion rounds of

ammunition being manufactured per year, we can be sure that there are several billion rounds in the hands of civilians, even after taking out ammunition which is purchased by the military, law enforcement, and other government agencies.

Looking at that another way, there are an estimated 500 million privately-owned firearms in the US, in the hands of roughly 100-million gun owners. If each one of those gun owners only has an average of 100 rounds of ammunition for each of their firearms, that would be 5 billion rounds.

It will take some time to go through that 5-billion rounds; but it will eventually happen. When it does, and that might take several years, the people who are still alive won't all join hands, singing Kumbaya. Mankind is too violent for that. Rather, that is when they will turn to other weapons. It is in that time that the bows, tomahawks and medieval melee weapons will become useful; not until then.

What weapons you choose to have for such a time is up to you. We all have our favorites. Mine happens to be the bow. The bow allows me to fight at a distance, hopefully helping to keep me from becoming injured. Since the criminal element is lazy about firearms practice, I assume they will be about bow practice as well, giving me the advantage.

Of course, like Legalos, I will need something besides my bow, for those times when the enemy gets too close for bow work. I have a couple of different options for that time. But the bow is definitely my silent weapon of choice.

People Who Live in Gun-free Cities

There is an exception to all this that I'm saying. That's for people who live in some of our major, Democrat controlled cities, where they can't own firearms. Of course, those laws, which were supposedly enacted to curb crime, don't keep guns out of the hands of criminals, just law-abiding citizens.

That, of course, puts the law-abiding citizens at a disadvantage.

Personally, I wouldn't live in such a city. Even so, I understand that there are many people who have to, because that's where their jobs are. It's one thing if you work in a job where you can move to another city or even a small town; but it's something else entirely if you work for a major corporation which has its offices in one of those cities. Your choices are to leave the job and possibly not find another one that's as good or to stay in that city and not be able to properly protect yourself and your family.



In such a situation, it would probably be best to bug out to a smaller town as soon as possible; as your survival chances would be considerably better. But that still leaves the problem of getting out of town, without getting killed. Unless you're going to hide firearms in your home, illegally, bugging out might be extremely dangerous.

Of course, there are often ways that you can own firearms legally in such cities. It might require a bunch of paperwork and proving that you're not a criminal. But it is possible. If not, my best answer is to have your firearms cached in the nearest possible legal place. That might be at a friend or family member's home. If you don't have that available, then you could stash them in one of the storage places that have sprung up all over, along with the rest of your survival gear and supplies.

As for getting out of town, I'd count on stealth, rather than fighting. Avoid confrontations at all cost. Keep whatever weapons you do have hidden, but readily available. Should you end up having to fight, use surprise to your advantage. Once you've disabled your adversary, get out as quickly as possible. Don't give them a second chance.