

The Circuit

ISSUE
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For Security And Protection Specialists

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For a Post-Covid World

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By Orlando Wilson

OPERATING AS A COMMERCIAL SNIPER THE MYTHS AND FACTS

The sniper and sniping are topics that have been romanticized and surrounded by many myths and misconceptions. In Issues 37 and 38 of the Circuit Magazine, I address some of these myths in my article "Countering Snipers."

In the following article, I will talk about precision rifle and sniper training for close protection operations.

To start with, let's kill a central myth right off the bat. And that myth is that jobs for commercially employed snipers are widely available and accessible. That is not true. You will not do a sniper course and then be hired as a sniper in a war zone. You will not find any companies that are advertising such jobs. If they are, then I'd be dubious. In days gone by in Iraq and Afghanistan, I understand some security companies employed defensive marksmen, but those jobs are non-existent these days. If such jobs do happen to exist, they will go to those with many years of military and law enforcement

sniper training and experience, not someone who has just completed a week-long SIA CP course which likely consisted of virtually non-fail firearms.

Let's be clear: the only people who can legally use snipers are militaries, law enforcement and government agencies. Private security guards and contractors can only work on defensive operations. And in most locations, they can only work armed when with a client or on a client's property. Anyone with experience in responsibly managing armed contracts will tell you that the insurance liabilities for a commercial sniper would be out of this world, as would the criminal and civil liability if they snipe someone by mistake or if they even shot a bad guy intentionally. ➤



So, if someone on FaceBook is telling you contractor sniper stories or offering you contracts, I would say they are delusional because you're not going to be sat on the roof of an office block somewhere with a .50 Barret earning \$1000 a day.

Now, some of you reading this might be considering a career as a mercenary. To start with, in most

places, such work is illegal and not paying as well as it did many, many years ago. Take a look to see what the volunteers in the wars in Dombass and Syria were earning, if anything at all. I hear the Ukrainian army is now looking to recruit foreigners at €1200 a month. I think they are planning some type of foreign legion, which will be a regular and disciplined military unit.

In Syria, the YPG were using foreign volunteers, some in sniper roles. One such unpaid or minimally paid volunteer was a UK citizen called Jac Holmes. Jac had no formal military training but proved himself in combat and was a commander of a YPG sniper team. He was killed in Raqqa in 2017 while clearing mines. The chances are if he had returned to the UK again, he would have been arrested and

investigated by the UK police for terrorism offenses, even though he was fighting the Islamic State extremists.

Precision Rifle & Sniper Training for Close Protection

So, what are the practical applications for precision rifle and sniper training in the close protection context? First, it is always a benefit to learn how to operate as many variants of firearms as possible, as you never know what you might need to use or maybe come across and have to verify if it's unloaded and safe.

Most precision and sniper rifles are what's called "bolt action." You need to manually operate a bolt to cycle the rounds from the magazine to the chamber to load and unload the gun. Bolt action rifles are ubiquitous for hunting, and many sniper rifles are just upgraded hunting rifles. The Remington 700 is a classic example of this. Bolt action rifles are very simple to operate, and the various models from different manufacturers are relatively similar.

There are various semi-automatic sniper rifles around. If you can operate the main military rifles like the M-4, AK and G-3, you should have no problems safely unloading ►



and loading these rifles. The basic principles apply to all firearms: keep them pointed in a safe direction and keep your finger off the trigger!

All hunting, precision and sniper rifles need to be "zeroed" to shoot accurately. This means the sights

on the rifle need to be set to the point of impact of where the bullets land, at a specific distance, when fired from the rifle. There are many different types of scopes and sighting systems. If you understand the basics of how to zero a scope to a rifle, you should be able to work with most systems.

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In many places, bolt action rifles are available for sporting and hunting purposes, and as with any firearms, they could be used for self-defense.

If your client has land, it may be easier to obtain a hunting rifle legally than a pistol. But it might be difficult to justify that you shot someone in self-defense if they were 300 meters away, unless, of course, they were shooting at you accurately. Remember, if you shoot someone with a pistol or a rifle, be sure you can justify your actions beyond any reasonable doubt and also expect to get arrested and go through a legal nightmare!

As for sniper training, is there any relevance for close protection

operations? It depends on where you are working and what you're doing. I would say that learning the basics of how professional snipers operate will help you better formulate realistic operational plans and procedures if you're operating in hostile environments or working with a client who is under an active threat. Meanwhile, basic fieldcraft and counter skills can be employed when providing estate security or operating in rural environments.

Bottom line: As with any training and knowledge, you need to ask yourself, "do you need it, and how can you apply it." If you have the time and think it could be useful, it might be worth the money!

Orlando Wilson has worked in the security industry internationally for over 25 years. He has become accustomed to the types of complications that can occur, when dealing with international law enforcement agencies, organized criminal and Mafia groups. He is the chief consultant for Risks Inc. and based in Miami but spends much of his time traveling and providing a wide range of kidnapping prevention and tactical training services to private and government clients.