

# SHTF Home Defense: Part 1 – Defending the Perimeter

by Sam Coffman (<https://readfomag.com/author/humanpath/>) February 4, 2015



Now Reading

SHTF Home Defense: Part 1 – Defending the Perimeter

Next > (<https://readfomag.com/2015/02/resilient-communities/>)

< Prev (<https://readfomag.com/2015/02/the-ol-one-two/>)

↻ (<https://readfomag.com/2014/10/skull-stomping-sacred-cows-in-living-colour/>)

Contents

Overview

Full Article

Comments

Dennis jumped on his mountain bike and pedaled as fast as possible through the brush and onto the short trail that would take him directly to the back door of his house in the growing evening darkness. Either his radio or batteries apparently had just chosen this inopportune moment to give out. Traversing the trail quickly on the bike was something he could do even in complete darkness however, as he had traveled it at least twice daily even before the collapse. Less than two minutes earlier he had spotted a truckload of armed men using his binoculars. Dennis knew they were raiders . They had running lights on and he doubted they had night vision equipment. The truck was turning into the entrance of his small, otherwise empty neighborhood and starting up the first hill.

Since the collapse and ensuing pandemic, everyone else in his neighborhood had left, died or been killed. Dennis, his brother's family and two other small families from the neighborhood were now the sole residents, and even they were making plans to leave within the next week. Things were just becoming way too dangerous now that word had apparently gotten out that there might be a house in this neighborhood worth looting, women worth raping and food, ammo and medicine to the raiders who took it.

Dennis and the other three families had consolidated into the largest house in the neighborhood that had an easy area to clear, was located at one of the highest elevation points of the neighborhood and had a crawl space underneath that they were able to dig out and expand. They had done their best to make it appear as though the house was not lived in, but it

was impossible - especially when there were children involved - for there to be complete noise and light discipline all of the time. They were going to be ready to bug out as a group in just a few more days, but based on this truckload of raiders, they were going to have at least one fight between the immediate present and that departure date.

He wheeled up to the house, giving the code word for a full alert to Josh about 500 meters away from the house. Josh was in the closest LP/OP to the trail he rode up on. "Prairie Fire, ETA 2 minutes" He said loudly enough for Josh to hear. For the moment, until they arrived at their final bugout location, they were down to three working FRS radios due to shortages on batteries and limited recharge possibilities. His own radio crackled as he heard Josh pass the word on to the nearside LP/OP that also served as the command center. Dennis noted that apparently his own radio at least received transmissions or maybe the battery was just no longer holding much of a charge.

Dennis dumped the mountain bike into what looked like a pile of trash in the back yard and quickly ran around front, stopping at the house to yell only loudly enough for everyone inside, the same code phrase for "attack imminent," then ran to the front to help check on tripwires and defensive positions. He could hear the sound of the truck now as it turned onto their street less than 6 blocks away. From his combat and military experience, he knew that no unit or team was ever fully ready for battle no matter how much they trained, but he hoped they had trained enough as a group of family and friends over the previous several months to at least get through this onslaught without any injuries or deaths...

### **Defending your home in a SHTF situation**

There are two very important concepts to realize when you are faced with the prospect of defending your home - whether it is in a post-SHTF scenario or someone breaking in: 1) A typical residential home is not a defensible structure unless it is either built that way or has been heavily modified and 2) Once the fight has reached the inside of your home, you have lost a good deal of advantage that you will have if you can keep them outside.

Because of this, there are a number of important priorities to consider in a SHTF situation when defending your own home, and this article will be divided into two parts. The first part will discuss defending your home while the attackers are outside of it while the second part will discuss the defense of your home once your attackers have entered the same structure that you are defending.

It is important to be able to deal with this kind of a tactical situation during low-light conditions. As an additional primer on some of the most important low-light tactics you can incorporate into your training and preparation, I highly recommend the "Own the Night" DVD produced by the Womach brothers, that is available online.

### **Creating Targets**

To defend your home correctly, you must take away cover (or lure them to false cover) from your attackers and turn them into targets. This can be done a variety of ways: You can clear all possible cover within a certain radius around your home (100 meters or more would be ideal). It may be that you already have this kind of yard, and are at the top of a hill looking down on all terrain 360 degrees around you, but chances are good that this is not your situation. I personally would have a hard time living in a home where I had no trees, rocks, logs and other such potential cover in my yard.

So in the case that you have natural cover (and a pretty yard), you need to consider two major things. How can you easily (with less than 10 minutes of warning) create a barrier for high-speed vehicle approach straight up to your house? And how can you direct foot traffic from that point, to areas that you want foot traffic to go to?

In other words, what can you do to force attackers into the positions that you want them to be in? Barriers such as fences, logs, rock walls, ditches, ponds, pools, heavy brush, etc., can all be used to keep people from getting to cover easily (or at all), expose them even more during their journey to cover (such as having to climb up and over a wall that profiles them). This is the type of "fortress-scaping" that you can undertake now if you have already decided that your home will be a bug-in location (which it generally should be) in all but the worst situations. Attractive walls, paths and heavy brush (for example greenbrier and other thorny plants that are very difficult to negotiate through with any speed) are very easy ways to direct foot traffic to the locations you want it in.

At the same time, give yourself vantage points over all potential cover, as well as placing or at least having locations for future strategic light structures (yes, they can be shot out, but if they can be operated remotely, offer a good spotlight situation when you are ready to shoot the target once lit and have at least several seconds to do so while also ruining their night vision temporarily), motion detectors, trip wires (flares, noise makers, booby traps, etc.).

So what kind of cover do you need for yourself from inside your home? In part 2 of this article I will talk about ways to fortify (and defend) your home - both in ways that are not apparent to the casual observer and will give you the advantage during an armed break-in, as well as full fortification in a SHTF scenario - but for the SHTF scenario you can much more easily convert a crawl space, basement or other type of ground-level shelter under your house (e.g. pier and beam construction) that will allow you to create very effective defensive positions. Think "foxhole" fighting positions whenever possible, as this makes you a much more difficult target giving you a huge defensive advantage over any approaching attackers if you have cleared your fields of fire.

## **Fighting at Night**

If you are not prepared to fight at night or in low-light environments, you are not prepared to fight at all. There are many considerations in regard to preparing and training for low-light conditions that include the most basic and primitive (flares, tritium/night sights, tracer rounds) up to the solutions that require power in order to work (IR lighting and night vision devices, flashlights, spotlights). IR and night vision is great, but make sure that you have the ability to sustain your power sources for the long run if you are truly interested in prepping wisely. In a complete collapse, batteries and sustainability of power will start to be at a premium in the first few weeks if not days. Target identification when fighting at night is one of the first and most important issues to deal with. Friendly fire is a very real probability in any night engagement involving teamwork. Another issue is keeping track of your equipment, loading magazines, dealing with being hit (both from the standpoint of first aid as well as loading and firing with an injured limb), dealing with equipment malfunctions, remembering where you keep gear, ammo, first aid, tools, etc. , team communication and signals and more. These are all things that can be practiced in the dark in your own home or back yard at night without having to use ammo. In fact, I highly recommend you get the basics of movement, gear and weapon management and weapon handling to a place that you feel very comfortable with before you even load a single round in your weapon and start practicing live fire. As a part of this type of preparation, there are some great resources out there to read, watch and learn from.

## **Part 2: Inside your Home**

In part two of this article, I will cover two primary topics: 1) Field-expedient methods of reinforcing your home in order to make it more defensible and 2) Tactics inside your home if attackers make it that far.

*Sharing is caring!*

Posted In

Defense (<https://readfomag.com/category/training/defense/>), FEB15 (<https://readfomag.com/category/feb15/>)

Tags

About The Author

Sam Coffman (<https://readfomag.com/author/humanpath/>)

Sam Coffman is a former Army Special Forces Medical Sergeant. He now teaches survival, primitive living, and medical skills at [thehumanpath.org](http://thehumanpath.org).

5 Comments

Leave a response

•

Gary

February 4, 2015 at 1:49 pm (<https://readfomag.com/2015/02/shtf-home-defense-part-1-defending-the-perimeter/#comment-9843>)

Excellent article Sam. Glad you are a contributor here and look forward to more articles in the future.

➔ (</2015/02/shtf-home-defense-part-1-defending-the-perimeter/?replytocom=9843#respond>)

•

Grimus

February 4, 2015 at 2:54 pm (<https://readfomag.com/2015/02/shtf-home-defense-part-1-defending-the-perimeter/#comment-9846>)

Nice work, Sam.

➔ (</2015/02/shtf-home-defense-part-1-defending-the-perimeter/?replytocom=9846#respond>)

•

Jim

February 4, 2015 at 6:37 pm (<https://readfomag.com/2015/02/shtf-home-defense-part-1-defending-the-perimeter/#comment-9853>)

Thanks Sam! This is just what we needed!

➔ (</2015/02/shtf-home-defense-part-1-defending-the-perimeter/?replytocom=9853#respond>)

•

JRT

February 4, 2015 at 8:31 pm (<https://readfomag.com/2015/02/shtf-home-defense-part-1-defending-the-perimeter/#comment-9865>)

Thank you for including crawl spaces in your article as a lot of people never think of this. Although it may be difficult to establish interlocking fields of fire because of the tight perimeter and sharp angles, a very good network can be established. This can include main fighting positions with frontal and overhead cover, alternate positions, tunnels connecting them along with a CP in the center of the buildings crawlspace.

Furthermore I completely agree that fighting from your house is a REALLY bad idea. If this story were my situation I would focus on ambushes on likely high speed avenues and fighting nodes 1 to 2 houses away from the real living structure. Paths to these nodes would be covered by range cards and nighttime firing stakes from the main living structure.

➔ (</2015/02/shtf-home-defense-part-1-defending-the-perimeter/?replytocom=9865#respond>)

(<https://readfomag.com/2015/02/the-ol-one-two/>)

<

(<https://readfomag.com/2015/02/resilient-communities/>)

>