

handful of others reckoned that with 200 men they could take over the camp; *then* worry about Plan B. But first they needed to obtain control of the facility, with its food and shelter.

The Germans needed 200 men out of 30,000 soldiers. They got 10. As Gerhardt pronounced, "It seems that a real man is the exception rather than the rule."

Undeterred, Gerhardt awaited an opportunity, and when it arose, he seized it by the throat. Claiming experience as a typewriter repairman, he got a Russian alone and killed him with a chair. Then the German took the guard's rifle and – well clothed – crept out of the camp in the dead of winter.

The eye-watering story of how Gerhardt survived, traveling by foot and by rail with numerous detours and delays, is an epic of survival. Remaining alone, speaking barely a word, he lived by stealth, observation and ruthlessness. He killed only when necessary, reckoning more than 20 times but fewer than 50. Suffice to say that the trek home took him a year and a half.

Ten out of 30,000: one in 3,000. Or, in decimal terms, 0.00033.

For Americans concerned with preserving the Bill of Rights, that's no reason for optimism. If we take Gerhardt's severe yardstick, from the NRA's roughly three million members, that's only 1,000 good men and women. Among about 70 million gun owners that's still just 23,000.

Of course, we're not talking about a lethal situation framed in visceral terms of live or die. So when we ask, "How many good people are there?" we're not talking about who's willing to risk possible death now in preference to a slow death later. Nor are we

limited to how many will put the crosshairs on an enemy's second button and press the trigger.

But every one of us has options in the centuries-long struggle to preserve our way of life. It's a campaign that will far outlive anyone currently breathing – if enough of us are willing to make the effort on behalf of our posterity. Otherwise...well, you can fill in the blanks for yourself.

The choices are clear: you can sit around bemoaning the current political climate or you can start working toward (dare we say it?) "Change."

Anybody can donate money, even in the present economy. But are you willing to donate some of your time and expend some effort? If so, how often, and for how long?

The new president and commander in chief began as a "community organizer." Are you willing to do as much?

- How often are you willing to stand up and state your opinion?
- How often are you willing to write or email your elected representatives?
- How often are you willing to make phone calls?
- How often are you willing to address and stuff envelopes?
- How often are you willing to take people shooting?
- How often are you willing to recruit new NRA members?

Very few humans ever have the need to demonstrate their character as Gerhardt did. But still, your actions will define your worth. In short, ask yourself: "Am I a GOOD man or woman?"

Answer that question. Then, if only for your sense of self-respect: **DO SOMETHING.**



3-11-01, VIRGINIA TECH, MUMBAI

soning causes a stir, but the problem persists.

So...what to do, aside from arming the few campus cops? Permit some students to carry guns in college?

In a word, yes.

It would be unpopular, but we should acknowledge that the inevitable deaths and injuries from mishandling firearms will not equal – let alone exceed – the crime casualties on a "gun-free" campus. After all, two people rarely get shot in an accident.

There are other prospects. Those colleges still permitting ROTC offer a possible source of competent gunhandlers. Additionally, veterans attending school have at least been exposed to small-arms training, and they're generally mature individuals.

Then there's the unspeakable-unthinkable. Arm professors who want to protect their students and themselves. The prospective ratio of such academics undoubtedly hovers in the low single-digit range, but it's another option. And it's certainly preferable to cowering under a desk while a soulless stalker walks around the room, plinking craniums.

Terrorists 2,998, Defenders 0

On September 11, 2001, 19 Islamic terrorists armed with boxcutters hijacked four airliners and succeeded in crashing three into buildings in New York and Washington. The passengers had long since been disabled by their government, though two Saturday night specials would have saved 2,774 victims at the World Trade Center. Two more handguns would have spared 224 others. That's 2,998 innocent lives in four

airplanes and on the ground in New York, DC, and Pennsylvania. How many accidents among armed passengers would it take to offset those losses, let alone more than 6,000 injured?

A flight of fancy: I used to shoot with a commercial pilot who dreamed of founding "Freedom Airlines," where any CCW holder could bring aboard any firearm "as long as it doesn't need wheels." The only other restrictions: passengers' guns would be inspected for empty chambers, and no alcohol would be served. Otherwise, welcome aboard, you're flying the safest skies around.

But let's face it: self defense isn't for everyone. The human species will always include a significant proportion of non-coping, feel-good, grass eaters who think with their glands. Unfortunately, those are the types who generally pursue positions of authority and deny the copers, thinkers, and meat eaters the fundamental right of self defense.

Whether the assailants are domestic criminals or international terrorists matters not at all. (If you were either, would you rather shoot up a school in Idaho or Massachusetts? A mall in Arizona or New York?) Whatever the law, there is no preventing some deranged people from acquiring weapons. The human tragedy is that all too often the feel-good "solution" to violence becomes the means by which mass murder is possible.

So get angry: get a CCW, get a list of legislators, and get to writing, haranguing, and voting.

And get going.

