**Tip #4:** Prep the trigger while the gun is moving toward the target. This will allow a much more accurate and faster first shot versus getting the gun out there and aligned, THEN beginning to pull the trigger. As mentioned in Part 1, prepping the trigger on the draw is an advanced level skill, and requires much dry fire practice to master before ever doing it live fire.

**Tip #5:** Trigger prep is key on transitions, but especially so on anything requiring fine accuracy and fast transitions. Grand Master Bruce Gray has said, “The answer to every shooting question is ‘Prep the trigger!’” Well, I wouldn’t go quite that far, but it’s certainly the answer to this string. How do we do fast, accurate transitions on a small head box at seven yards? Answer: prep the trigger while the gun is moving between targets, take up the slack, get the trigger hard up against the “link” resistance point, and apply almost as much pressure as necessary to fire the gun but not quite, so that, when the gun does get to the next target, it’s only a matter of stabilizing the sights in the head box and applying just that last bit more pressure to fire the gun. If, by contrast, we wait to begin pulling the trigger until the gun is already on the next target, we are WAY behind the power curve.

**Tip #6:** Stop thinking of shooting for “the head” and replace that with “the very center of the head box.” Your target is not that entire 6” x 6” area but instead a bullet-hole sized circle in the very center of the box, your goal to put both shots through that same hole. Think of it that way, and even if your shots are somewhat off that goal, still they will both land inside the box. As Mel Gibson said in “The Patriot,” “Aim small, miss small.”

Strings 1-4 of the IDPA classifier are the only ones requiring head shots. Beginning with String 5, from now until the end of the classifier it will be all chest shots. In our next installment (#3 in the series) we will discuss String 5, shooting with the support hand only, then skip ahead to String 7, shooting with the master hand only, since the tips for improvement on both strings are so similar. In installment #4 we will finish up Stage 1 with String 6, a modified *El Presidenté*.

Left: The head box on the IDPA target is a fairly small target, requiring decent technique to hit multiple times, fast.

Below: When prepping the trigger for an accurate shot, the slack is taken out of trigger travel, the trigger is hard up against “the link” reset point, and almost enough pressure to fire the gun (but not quite) has been applied to the trigger.

Here is what it looks like live fire on the IDPA classifier. The gun is out of the holster and oriented downrange, the hands have almost completely met in the two-hand grip, and the index finger is beginning to slip into the trigger guard to begin trigger prep while the gun is moving toward the target.

During this (simulated) draw, Thomas has the gun a few inches from full extension and the trigger is already prepped.

During final lockout, the gun reaches full extension, the sights align and stabilize, and the last bit of pressure necessary to fire the gun is applied to the already prepped trigger.

Here the gun is almost at full extension during a live-fire draw, the trigger is prepped, all that is necessary is to “float” the gun out a few inches more, stabilize the sights, and fire the shot.