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Opinion: Some thoughts regarding guns and other tools

By SAMUEL A. MADSEN | Guest columnist

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Webster's Dictionary defines a tool as "a ... device that aids in accomplishing a task" and "something ... used in performing an operation or necessary in the practice of a vocation or profession."

Nowhere in this definition is any mention of a tool having a will of its own or being inherently good or evil. A tool can only function as operated by a human being. Sadly, virtually any tool can be used either for good or evil. There are many examples of the evil uses of ordinary tools:

— July 14, 2016 — A terrorist drives a truck into a holiday crowd in Nice, France, killing 86 and injuring 458 others.

— March 26, 1990 — An arsonist carrying a grudge and a can of gasoline sets fire to the Happy Land social club in the Bronx, New York, killing 87.



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— April 19, 1995 — An anti-government extremist detonates a bomb made from fertilizer and fuel oil in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 and injuring hundreds.

Sept. 11, 2001 — Terrorists armed with box cutters and knives hijack four commercial jetliners and crash them into buildings in New York City and Washington, D.C., and a field in Pennsylvania, killing nearly 3,000, injuring over 6,000, and throwing the U.S. and much of the rest of the world into turmoil.

Trucks, gasoline, fertilizer and box cutters are not evil. They are merely inanimate objects designed for legitimate purposes that, as seen above, can be misused by evil people for evil ends.

Recent mass murders in schools and other locations have generated many calls to ban the particular style of firearm used in some of these attacks, with many people apparently convinced that banning certain inanimate objects will reduce the ability of evil individuals to cause harm to others.

An AR-15, or any other gun, is much like the tools in the above-listed atrocities; it has no mind, will or initiative of its own. It is designed and built to be used for productive and legal purposes, such as hunting, target shooting and, as the Founding Fathers intended when they guaranteed that “the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed” by law-abiding citizens wanting to protect their property, lives and liberty from attack by criminals, terrorists or would-be tyrants.

I and a hundred million plus other Americans legally own hundreds of millions of guns of all types. Only a tiny minority of people in this country commit rapes, murders, assaults, robberies and other crimes. The reason the rest of us don't is not because we lack the necessary means, but because we have made the moral determination that we will not do so. To combat crime and violence we must address the darkness that lies within the hearts of those who do evil, not inanimate tools that are principally employed by the law-abiding to protect and defend themselves, their loved ones and their liberty.

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