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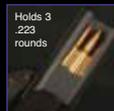
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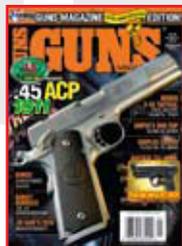
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# GUNS

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JANUARY 2010

Vol. 56, Number 1, 650th Issue



## ON THE COVER ON GUARD

The STI Sentinel Premier 1911 delivers for sport and defense.

### STORY:

Mike Cumpston

### PHOTOS:

Joseph R. Novelozo

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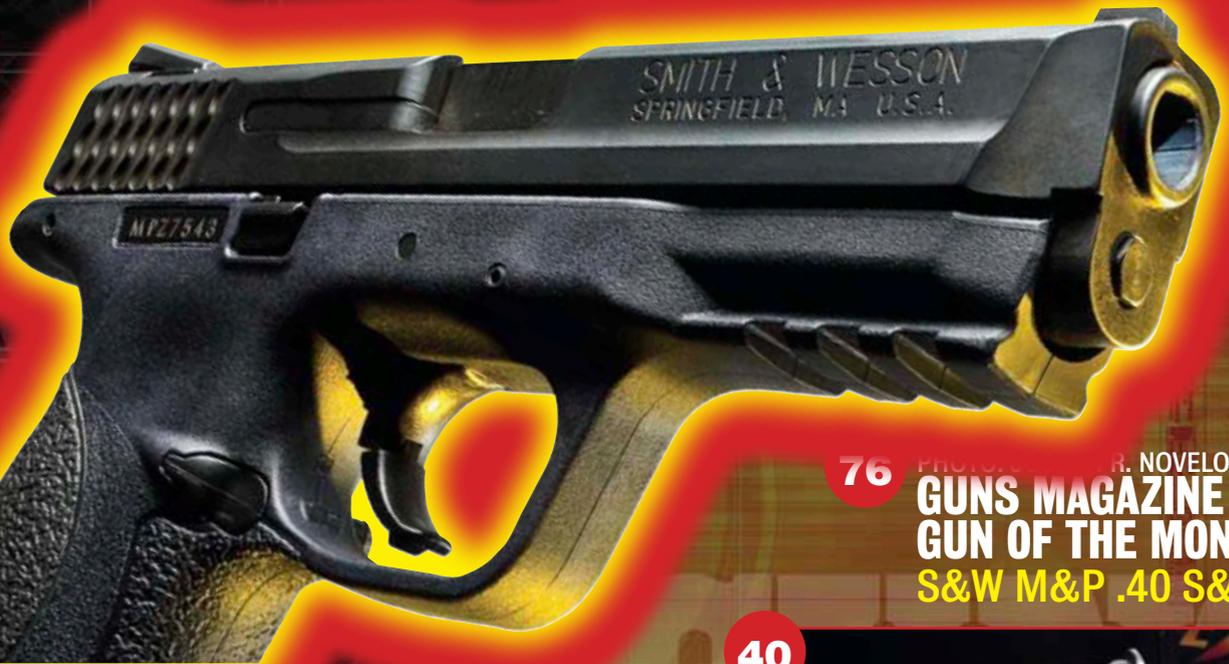


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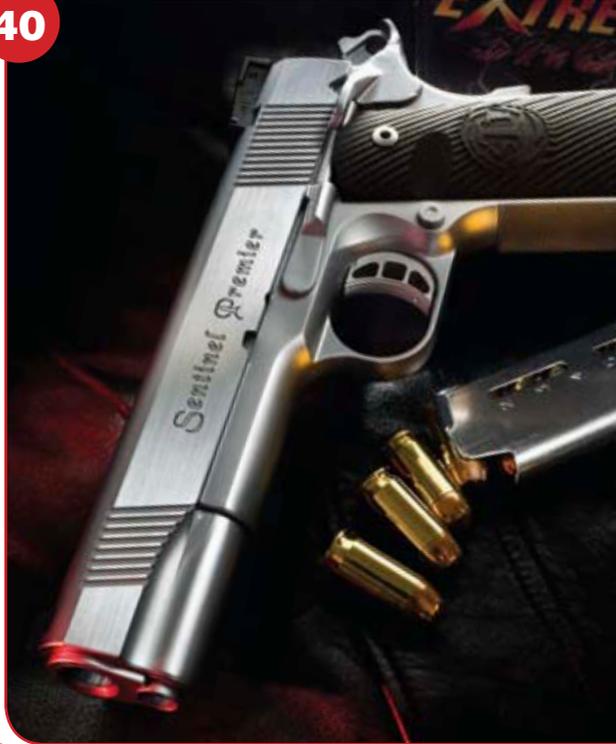


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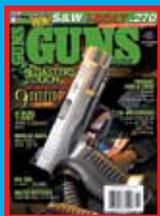
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GUNS MAGAZINE  
NOVEMBER 2009

# CROSSFIRE

## LETTERS TO GUNS

**GUNS Magazine**® welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit all published letters for clarity and length. Due to the volume of mail, we are unable to individually answer your letters or e-mail. In sending a letter to *GUNS Magazine*, you agree to provide Publisher's Development Corp. such copyright as is required for publishing and redistributing the contents of your letter in any format. Send your letters to *Crossfire*, *GUNS Magazine*, 12345 World Trade Dr., San Diego, CA 92128; www.gunsmagazine.com; e-mail: ed@gunsmagazine.com

## Stop Military News?

Like most Americans, I have a great deal of respect and gratitude for our men and women in uniform. I myself am a Vietnam veteran and served in the US Army. However, I don't see the point of all the articles about the latest Howitzer being used in the Middle East and the numerous articles about the war. If I wanted that, I'd subscribe to *Stars and Stripes*, or *Army Digest*.

I read your magazine to learn about the shooting sports and the latest products on the market. I mean no disrespect to our uniformed services but there are better venues for the latest military news than *GUNS Magazine*.

Leon Linderwell  
via e-mail

*This isn't the first letter I've received like this recently. I run these stories from the battlefields because few stories about our heroes show up in the mainstream news. You wouldn't have thought we had allies hard in the fight, either. So write if you think these stories should stay or go.* —Jeff John

## Black Guns

Sir, as a fan of your magazine for a couple of years, it has become boring for me! You have a great people writing for you. But enough is enough about black rifles! Do not get me wrong, I have three of them, but you can't pick up a magazine without an article on one. I read your magazine for the talented writers and info you provide.

Dan Church  
USAF Ret.

## Ballistic Coefficient

In his article on ballistic coefficients, John Barsness states "Hydrogen is a relatively light molecule, so wet air is actually "lighter" than humid air."

His conclusion is correct, but the explanation is slightly off. The density of gases is roughly proportional to their molecular weights. Water vapor (H<sub>2</sub>O) is 18, while nitrogen gas (N<sub>2</sub>), which makes up 80-percent of air is 28, and oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>), the remaining 20-percent of air, is 32. Thus is it easy to see that adding water vapor to the atmosphere lowers the density.

William Habig  
West Chester, Penn.

## Wrong Grip

Maybe Mr. Smolinski ("Wrong Grip" November 2009) should attend pre-mobilization training for overseas. During our training for a tour in Iraq, the very good instructors at Camp Shelby had a saying. Even though you may disagree with them they would say it is not *the way* but *a way* to accomplish the task at hand. It does seem that that's what is wrong with our country today, some folks can't believe there is *a way* other than theirs.

John M. Taliaferro  
Master Sergeant, Ret.  
Staunton, Virginia

## Water Pistols

Could you please do reviews of water pistols? It's about the only handgun they trust us with in the UK.

Now they are talking about banning airguns and I'm sure they'll find a lame excuse to ban BB guns, soon all we'll be able to do is point and shout "bang."

Please keep up your fight for decent law abiding citizens to own and use guns, don't become like the UK where every decent law abiding citizen who wants a firearm is treated like a wannabe criminal.

Great magazine—even the adverts are interesting.

Graham Thompson  
Glasgow, Scotland



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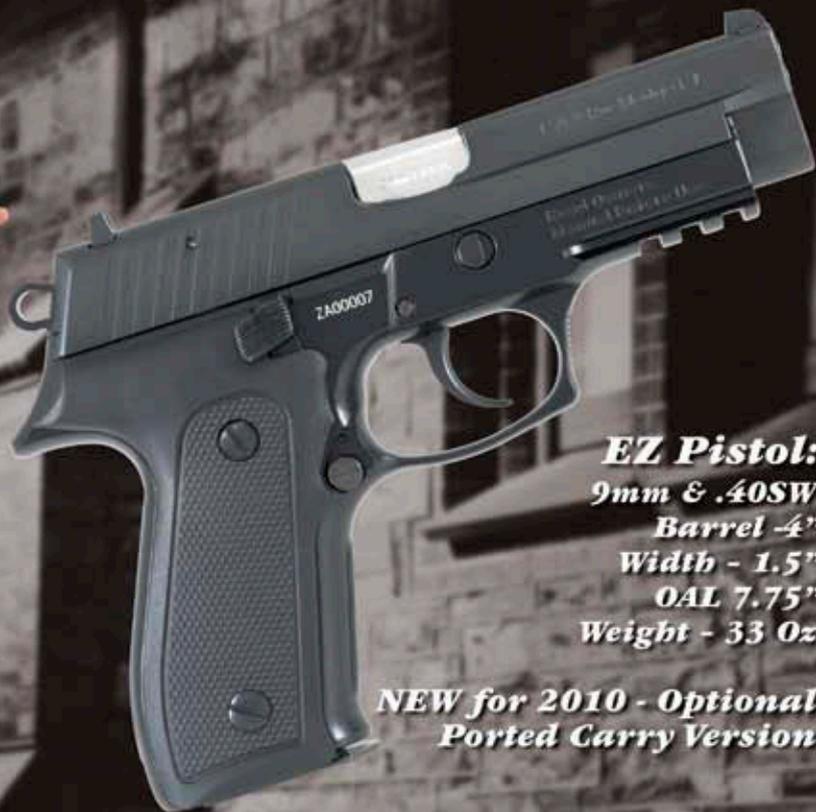
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# RIFLEMAN

• DAVE ANDERSON •

## RANGING THE SHOT Do you have time?



*Springbok were plentiful on this 2008 hunt on the Gras Ranch in Namibia (above), and the owners wanted several shot for meat. Rifle is Weatherby Mark V in .257 Wby Mag, scope is Leupold 4.5-14x40 with Boone & Crockett reticle. With me are tracker Julius Lasalus and professional hunter Errol Lambrechts. A key element of long-range shooting is knowing the range. Modern technology has met this need with laser rangefinders such as the Leupold RX-1000 TBR (below). Extremely light (7.8 ounces) and compact, Leupold claims accurate readings of 500 yards on game animals, 600 on trees or terrain. Dave got accurate readings at least 100 yards further than claimed. The rifle is custom pre-'64 Winchester 70 .30-06 built by the late Keesey Kimball topped with an older Leupold Vari-X III 2.5-8X.*



**O**ne approach to long range shooting is “clicking” by using click-adjustable turrets to dial in the appropriate settings for elevation and windage. Another approach is to incorporate additional aiming points in the reticle.

Clicking is more precise, multiple aiming points are faster. For big game hunting, I like the speed and simplicity of multiple aiming points. Two systems I like very much are the Leupold Boone & Crockett (B&C) and the Zeiss Rapid-Z.

The Gras Ranch lodge in southern Namibia has great plains-game hunting. Much of it is big open country, resembling Wyoming or Texas. Our professional hunters, Errol Lambrechts and Jannie Spangenberg, advise hunters be prepared for shots from 200 to 300 yards. My hunting partner and I took around 30 animals, with very few shots under 200 yards.

I took two rifles, one a Ruger 77 Mk II .300 Win Mag sporter with Zeiss Conquest 3.5-10X with Rapid Z reticle. The rifle dotes on Black Hills factory load with the 180-grain Barnes TSX bullet. It's an excellent combination for African plains game, where on a single hike you can run into game from 50 pounds to over 1,000, at ranges from a few yards to as far as you care to shoot.

Another favorite rifle is my Weatherby Mark V .257 Wby Mag, the scope a Leupold 4.5-14x40mm with B&C reticle. I used Weatherby factory loads with the 100-grain Barnes TSX bullet. Very accurate (I shot some 2" groups at 300 yards), it is a wicked long-range outfit.

In both scopes, the reticles are in the second focal plane. As the power is changed the relationship between the main crosswire and the lower crossbars changes. At first glance this might seem a disadvantage. If the bars are sighted for 300, 400 and 500 yards at one power setting they won't maintain those impact points at other power settings.

Ingenuous designers have turned this



**An outstanding hunting combination is the Ruger 77 Mk II Sporter in .300 Win Mag, Zeiss 3.5-10x44 scope with Rapid Z reticle (above). With Black Hills Gold ammunition loaded with Barnes TSX bullets, this combination shoots 3-shot groups under a minute of angle. Range the target, read the wind, hold steady, break the shot cleanly and the system does the rest. Viewing through the scope (below), the central crosswire intersection sights the Ruger 77 Mk II .300 Win Mag at 200 yards. Next bar below center sights rifle at 300 yards, 400, 500, and 600-yard bars are marked.**

seeming disadvantage into an advantage. By changing the magnification, the lower crossbars can be matched quite closely to the trajectory of many popular hunting cartridges.

Leupold supplies suggested scope settings for different cartridge "classes" of trajectory with the instruction manual. With the Zeiss Rapid-Z system a shooter with Internet access can go to the Zeiss Web site and enter data on the cartridge being used. The Zeiss program then calculates the power setting which will match the sight bars to the bullet's trajectory.

I won't take up space copying their instructions, except to say I found the instructions easy enough to follow, and they work. Whatever system you choose, you must confirm settings on the range. You need to confirm points of impact with your rifle and ammunition, not to mention your own shooting ability.

I don't take shots much over 300 yards at unwounded animals. I enjoy long range shooting—at paper and steel. Even if all other factors are correctly calculated (range, altitude, angle, barometric pressure, wind), shooting at live targets adds another factor.

### **Flight Time**

The factor is time of flight of the bullet. You can do everything right, but if the animal takes one step forward just as the shot is fired, a killing shot turns into a wounding shot. The longer the range the more time the animal has to move.

Even in open country such as the Gras Ranch terrain, you can generally stalk closer. If not, the Gras Ranch swarms with game. If one gemsbok or zebra has found a spot too open for stalking, what the heck, go find another. There are lots of them. Rains have been good in recent years, the grass is thick and lush, and game populations are exploding.



The Weatherby/Leupold combination worked perfectly with nine 1-shot kills, though I didn't have occasion to shoot beyond 300 yards. However, friend Roy Huntington (who was mostly taking photos while Suzi Huntington did most of the shooting) borrowed the .257 and made a great 400+ yard shot on a springbok.

By the last day of the hunt I had a string of 14 animals killed with the first shot and was feeling fairly confident. Pride goeth before a fall. My attempt at a second gemsbok very nearly turned into disaster.

Errol got us within 300 yards of a large herd and picked out an old bull standing broadside. Actually not quite broadside. It was angled forward just a few degrees, and my shot with the .300 Win Mag was just a bit too far back. I



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checked the point of bullet impact later at the skinning shed. The bullet struck about 4" behind the front leg. Had the bull been broadside or angled the other way a few degrees the bullet would have caught both lungs or angled up into the chest cavity.

As it was, the bullet just touched the back of one lung and continued on into the grass-filled paunch. Imagine a garbage bag stuffed drum-tight with wet grass clippings. We later found the perfectly expanded bullet among the paunch contents.

The herd took off in a cloud of dust. How Errol and Julius Lasalus, the tracker, kept track of the right bull I have no idea, but they did. Errol followed it with a Leupold binocular with built-in laser rangefinder. The herd stopped for just an instant and the bull turned to look back, facing directly at us.

"On the right," Errol said. "406 yards."

There would have been no time to fiddle with turrets. Even figuring bullet drop at 400 yards, then estimating the appropriate holdover, would have taken a few seconds.

With the Rapid Z reticle, I laid the crosswire numbered "4" on the bull's chest and broke the shot. The TSX bullet hit the center of the chest, through the big blood vessels above the heart and then most of the length of the body.

I get more satisfaction out of a stalk and a 50-yard shot than in a 500-yard shot. But in the real world things go wrong and we have a mess to clean up. That's when the right equipment can save the day.

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It is one thing to rob someone when all goes the threat's way. It is another thing when the person being robbed draws a gun and decides to fight back. I do not think I would shoot over my wallet or my car being stolen, but I would shoot to defend my family or myself. Knowing I can't outdraw a gun already pointed at me puts a certain spin on the issue many have not considered. That said, if it appeared to be turning ugly, I would do what I could and must to defend my family and myself.

This is just a concept because I don't believe everyone will always do what they think they will or what they planned to do in a fight. A chat room is one format, a gun pointed at your centerline from 3' away is another.

Carrying a handgun for personal defense—if done correctly—will be a life-changing or at minimum a life-style changing experience. To me, there seems to be this perpetual nag and rag about “Your gun is too heavy, too big,” “They sell all the .380s they make,” “The gun with me...” “This special hollowpoint...” and so on. It seems as the constant diatribe continues I begin to wonder who they're trying to convince—themselves or me?

Personally, I carry a 1911 or an N-frame as a primary gun and I'm happy with my choice. Apparently others can't say the same as they are very grumpy or defensive and eager to talk about why what they carry is best and why my choice sucks. All I know is

a handgun is a poor choice of weapon to fight with, so I carry the one that makes me the happiest. I only wish the same for others.

Also, so nothing slips past us, I have been known to carry different guns, even smaller ones, to supplement my primary defensive handgun. One is none... (you know the rest).

### *The Way Of Carry*

Historically, I carry in a Nelson-designed Sparks Summer Special. I have some Mitch Rosen elephant stuff and some of John Ralston's 5Shot Leather revolver and ankle holsters custom made to solve old guy issues. Like many things in life, sometimes you can't build custom cabinets with a chainsaw. That said, I have one other source I am very fond of because they make outstanding concealment holsters, namely the Comp-Tac Victory Gear of Spring, Texas.

Baseline Comp-Tac gear is made of Kydex and I have used their belt slides for years because of their tough wear-well tendencies. Recently I have been using two new versions, at least new to me, those being the Minotaur MTAC and Minotaur Neutral Cant concealment holsters. At first they appear to be odd ducks, but after wearing them for only one day I liked them very much. Now after time has passed I am even more satisfied with the holster. It is very flat and holds my 5" 1911 pistol high, tight and secure.

### *Fusion*

Fusion is the merging of diverse elements to make a unified whole, in this case leather and the Kydex materials make a solid holster. The Comp-Tac binding of these two components together has made for an excellent concealment holster for every day use. The Minotaur holster's back panel is made of leather while the holster body and belt clips take advantage of Kydex's strength qualities.

The pistol rides high and tight to the body and by feel only—perception vs. reality—rides tighter than my 40-year old IWB styled Sparks Summer Special.



*The butt-forward cant of the Comp-Tac Minotaur and Comp-Tac Beltfeed magazine pouch system have both become Clint's favorites.*



**The neutral-cant Minotaur conceals well. Here is an uncovered view, showing the cant of pistol.**

For many folks (based on their waistline) the “tighter” than Sparks deal might be awkward, but both holsters carry well for IWB designs, so it probably comes down to just what is most comfortable (also perception vs. reality) for each carrier.

### The Cant

I have used two cant versions of the Minotaur, a neutral and a butt forward. The butt forward works best for my body style as the butt corner doesn't print as much under clothing cover. A chop of the butt like in Luke Volkmann's 1911s may cure the mainspring-pointy-thing-sticking-out issue if it bugs you.

The neutral cant has some strong points especially if the pistol is carried slightly forward of the trouser leg center seam. In colder weather country it would make for an expedited and smooth draw, but, like with all things, a bit of practice will make it even better.

### Closing The Deal

As stated historically, I am a guy who thinks a cow was designed to make holsters from. The meat thing came later on. I can also state at this time in life the Kydex (both belt slides and IWB) are very helpful in my carrying of a full-size pistol. I would be remiss if I did not mention my affection for carrying extra ammunition, resolved by the Comp-Tac Beltfeed allowing me the four extra magazines I want carried in one package under a modest shirttail or sweat shirt. All and all the Comp-Tac people have helped me close the deal on getting durable solid platforms for carrying pistols and extra ammo for everyday use.

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# RIMFIRES

• HOLT BODINSON •

## SIG SAUER'S CLASSIC P229 .22 LONG RIFLE

And it can be a centerfire, too.



**SIG SAUER's P229 rimfire package also included a .40 S&W "X-Change Kit." The conversion kit consists of slide, barrel, recoil spring and guide and a magazine, also available in 9mm and .357 SIG.**

**D**id you hear of SIG SAUER's "Cash for Your Klunker Handgun" program? Offering \$200 for your klunker handgun if you purchased a new SIG pistol or rifle between September 7th and November 30th, 2009, this classy company has really hit the jackpot with a new .22 rimfire series fielded in the Classic P220, P226 and P229 platforms. The "Klunker" campaign really caught my eye, and I thought it's an ideal time to wring out their new .22 rimfire autoloader which, by the way, can be converted into a centerfire in 30 seconds.

Years ago, if you owned a SIG, it meant you were one of the lucky few who could afford a SIG P210, at that time, the world's most accurate, general issue 9mm on the market and a handgun indeed built and finished like a Swiss watch. The P210's mystique in handgunning circles still lingers.

SIG, standing for Schweizerische Industrie-Gesellschaft (Swiss Industrial Company) entered the American market in the 1980s as SIGARMS, renaming itself SIG SAUER in 2007. Today, SIG SAUER, located in Exeter, New Hampshire, is the largest member of a firearms business group including J.P.

Sauer & Sohn, Blaser and Swiss Arms companies. SIG is both a distributor and manufacturer of handguns and rifles for the civilian, law enforcement and military markets and also offers tactical training courses at its Epping, New Hampshire, Academy.

### **Widely Used**

The broad adoption of the SIG's P series of semi-auto handguns by the civilian, military and law enforcement communities is a firearms success story. The SIGs have earned a well deserved reputation for quality and reliability. In the USA alone, SIG's P series are carried by nearly 1 in 3 law enforcement personnel as well enjoying service with the SEALS, Air Marshals, Coast Guard and Department of Homeland Security.

Bringing out the complete P series in .22 rimfire is doubly cool.

In the midst of an ammunition drought, what better way to train than with a .22 rimfire clone? Yes, cheap ammo and plenty of it, sitting right there on the dealer's shelves!

### **Simple Conversion**

If you already have a P series SIG, all you have to do is change out the centerfire slide system, containing a complete slide, barrel, recoil spring, recoil spring guide and magazine, with one in .22 rimfire. If you don't own a P series pistol, you can buy the new rimfire model and take advantage of SIG's promotional pricing package for their centerfire conversion units should you desire to add one or more calibers.

Either way, the frame, grip, trigger and controls remain the same, only guns



**SIG's P229 rimfire proved to be a fun, lightweight, reliable and accurate pistol.**

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Featured: .380 Auto, Nickel slide & .380 Auto, Black

Ambidextrous safety and magazine release contribute to the experience of Walther handling in this new .380 auto lightweight pistol.

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	Sights: 3 Dot Steel, Drift-Adjustable Rear Windage
	Models: First Edition, Black, Nickel Two Tone

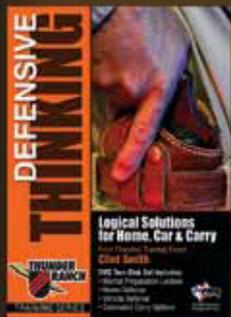


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## RIMFIRES



*The left side of the frame sports the takedown, decocking and slide catch levers plus the magazine release. The P229 rimfire slide assembly is clearly marked "22LR."*



*The generous and fully adjustable 3-dot sight provides a fast, crisp sight picture.*



*The complete conversion process from .22 LR to .40 S&W is simple and straightforward (it's also how you fieldstrip a SIG for cleaning). Remove the magazine, check the chamber, retract the slide and engage the catch lever. Rotate the takedown lever to the 6 o'clock position.*

## .22/.40

The P229 double-action model I had the opportunity to test was factory fitted with a .22 rimfire slide assembly. The centerfire options available for the P229 are 9mm, .40 S&W and .357 SIG. I ordered a SIG X-Change kit in the increasingly popular .40 S&W to check how easy it is for an owner to change calibers and to evaluate what level of accuracy can be expected from a multi-caliber package.

Several design features in the SIG line are notable in the P229. As a double action, the P229 has no manual safety to be disengaged before firing. Instead, it is fitted with a firing pin block linked to the trigger that frees the firing pin only at the last stage of trigger travel. It's a simple, reliable and fast system.

Once the pistol has been fired and you want to return it to your holster, a decocking lever on the left side of the pistol disengages the sear and the cocked hammer, allowing the hammer to drop safely into an "intercept" or safety notch.

The P series SIGs are generally very accurate. The P229 I tested averaged 2" at 25 yards whether it was fitted with the .22 rimfire or the .40 S&W "upper." The design features I've always felt contributed to the SIG's accuracy are a slide carried on rails inside the frame giving the slide a full level of support while the barrel is locked to the slide by a massive, squared barrel block that rises and seats into the ejection port. Overall, it's a very rigid design.

The P229 in .22 rimfire, on the other hand, features a simple blowback system. The barrel is 4-9/16" long and is



*Pull back the slide releasing the catch lever and ease the slide assembly forward off the frame.*



*Slide the conversion unit onto the frame, retract the slide and engage the slide catch. Rotate the takedown lever up to the 3 o'clock position. Pull back the slide, release it and function test the pistol. Thumb down the decocking lever to safely lower the hammer and you're ready for the range in a new caliber.*

fitted to an alloy slide assembly. When mated to the alloy frame of the P229, the overall weight of the unloaded pistol is a light 25 ounces. It's a nicely balanced combination, and handles and functions just like the centerfire P229, including its firing pin block, an excellent set of adjustable, 3-dot sights and integral Picatinny accessory rail. The only exceptions I noticed were the rimfire version's lightweight alloy slide does not lock back after the last round is fired whereas the centerfire slide is steel and does lock back.

SIG recommends using only high-

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<b>ACTION TYPE:</b>	Semi-auto, blowback
<b>CALIBER:</b>	.22 Long Rifle
<b>CAPACITY:</b>	10
<b>BARREL LENGTH:</b>	4-9/16"
<b>OVERALL LENGTH:</b>	7-3/4"
<b>WEIGHT:</b>	25 ounces
<b>FINISH:</b>	Black anodized
<b>SIGHTS:</b>	3-dot, fully adjustable
<b>GRIPS:</b>	Wrap-around polymer
<b>PRICE:</b>	\$608 (9mm, .357 SIG, .40 S&W conversion kits \$399.95)



As either a rimfire or a centerfire, the P229 held its own, averaging 2" at 25 yards.

speed .22 LR ammunition to insure reliability. Like all rimfires, the P229 had some very distinct likes and dislikes when it came to feeding, functioning and accuracy. It did not like Federal or Winchester 550 round bulk 36-grain HP's, Winchester Power Point or Super-X Dyna-Point. It did like CCI Mini-Mag and Remington 36-grain HVHP. Out of curiosity, I loaded the 10-round magazine with CCI Select Precision target velocity ammunition. In spite of the warning, target grade ammunition functioned perfectly and generated an average 5-shot group of 2". Rimfires are idiosyncratic. You just never know.

As you can see from the accompanying photographs, swapping out the rimfire slide assembly for the .40 S&W version is accomplished simply and quickly. The conversion did change the weight of the pistol from 25 ounces to 34 ounces and changed the balance slightly, but otherwise, it was the same, old, familiar, nice handling P229. The 180-grain FMJ American Eagle ammunition I had on hand averaged 925 fps and, at 25 yards, produced 5-shot groups ranging from 2" to 2-1/2".

If you seek a quality rimfire handgun with the added versatility of being able to handle three, popular, centerfire cartridges as well, the SIG SAUER P229 is a standout, best buy. It's one handgun that just might keep us shooting through bad times and good.

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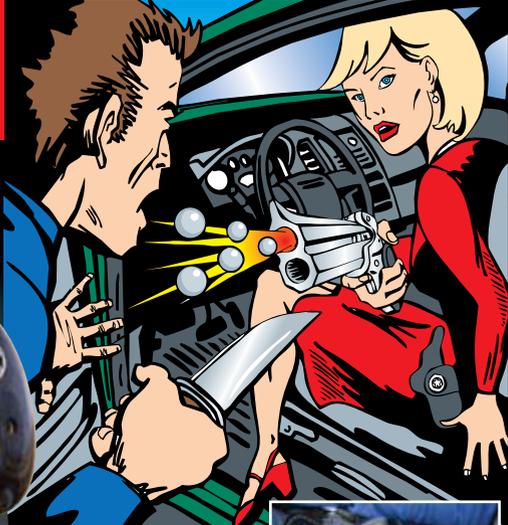


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# HANDGUNS

• MASSAD AYOUB •

## SMITH & WESSON'S LATEST

Demand for established guns delayed the new crop, but they're worth the wait.

**A**t the SHOT Show last January, Smith & Wesson had lots of cool new handguns to show us, and they were scheduled to be in the gun shops soon thereafter. Unfortunately, unprecedented demand for their mainstream defensive handguns in the post-election firearms purchasing frenzy set the new models half a year back on the production schedule.

In August '09, at a company seminar at the splendid United States Shooting Academy range in Tulsa, Oklahoma, S&W at last had the new stuff coming off the line for us to try, and soon for you to buy.

Consumer demand, channeled to S&W through their annual roundtables with assorted dealers, now brings you the Model 438. It's the shroud-hammer 5-shot Bodyguard Airweight, with single action cocking option, executed with a blackened aluminum frame. It's the same motif as the popular Centennial 442 "hammerless." Our test gun "shot to the sights" and recoil was mild with their latest "rubber" grips.

The "retro" lemon-squeezer guns,

with the old-style grip safety in lieu of the internal lock which S&W purists have come to vehemently hate, is now available in an Airweight configuration as the Model 42-1. It shot well despite its old-fashioned wooden "splinter" stocks, and like the 438, the test sample's sights were perfectly registered for point of aim/point of impact.

Perceiving pent-up demand for a 6-shot J-frame chambered for the lately introduced .327 Federal Magnum, S&W offers the Model 632 CarryComp. Its 3" barrel has an integral recoil compensator at the muzzle, and between that and the rubber grips, our test sample exhibited surprisingly mild recoil with the high intensity Speer 115-grain Gold Dot

load. The report was sharp, though. This would make a neat little trail gun for small game.

Conceptualized by Jim Unger, product manager for S&W's revolver line, the young Night Guard line is the first new S&W series to cross the lines of frame sizes. They range from the 315 model (6-shot K-frame .38 Special) through L-frame 7-shot .357 Magnum, to N-frame in .45 ACP, 8-shot .357, and even .44 Magnum. New this year is a 10mm Auto variation. Too big for the pocket, these are ultra-light belt guns made of exotic metals, with humongous Cylinder & Slide rear sights and XS Big Dot fronts. The ones I tested last year didn't shoot to the sights, but the ones at the seminar from the 2009 crop did, and that's a clear product improvement right there. The expensive Night Guard appeals to the discriminating revolver enthusiast who wears a belt holster all day, every day.

The Classic line now includes old-style K-38s and K-22s (see John Taffin's feature in November's issue). There's also a "Back To The Future" Model 57 in .41 Magnum, and a fixed-sight Model 58 reincarnation should be on dealers' shelves by the time you read this.

### Defensive Autos

Smith & Wesson now offers an ambidextrous frame-mounted thumb safety on all calibers and sizes of their polymer Military & Police pistols. This has struck a responsive chord in the marketplace. S&W execs tell me some 30 percent of M&Ps are going out of the shipping room now with this optional feature in place.

There's lots new in the company's excellent SW1911 line. Master pistolsmith Jim Garthwaite has been credited with the concept of the 4.25" "Commander" slide atop the compact "Lightweight Officers" frame, and as originally rendered by Colt in their old CCO it proved to be a perfect size "carry .45" in the 1911 format. S&W now offers the same combination as their SW1911 ES, and it is sweet. Recoil and muzzle jump are distinctly less than with the new 3" subcompact



Muzzle flash, and a hit on the target (above). Mas finds new 438 5-shot .38 Special Bodyguard Airweight satisfyingly accurate. Dr. George Dvorchak (below) shows controllability of new Walther PK380 (note spent .380 ACP shell casing).





The newest Walther (above) is essentially a P-22 chambered for the increasingly popular .380 ACP. The new SW1911 ES (below) comprises a "Commander" barrel/slide and "Lightweight Officers" type frame for greater concealability.



S&W introduced simultaneously. Both ran perfectly with everything from hardball to Remington Golden Saber in the hands of about 15 of us.

Particularly nice to shoot was the new all-steel 1911 in 9mm with 5" barrel. Thanks in large part to the fact it comes with Wilson Combat's new 10-round magazines, it proved perfectly reliable (always an issue with 9mm 1911s) and felt almost like shooting a .22 conversion unit. With modern 9mm ammo it will do for defense in the hands of the recoil-sensitive, and should be a great choice for IDPA competition in the Enhanced Service Pistol division. New introductions also include the PK-380, Walther's neat little P-22 but in .380 ACP, and the SW1911 TPF, with titanium firing pin and heavy spring instead of a firing pin lock.

S&W wasn't the only company that couldn't get its new products out the door on time this year, due to the huge demand for established products the buying frenzy engendered. Waiting for them may have been an irritation, but, after shooting them, those of us who used them to put a carpet of spent brass on the USSA ranges found them worth waiting for.

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# UPON ARS

• GLEN ZEDIKER •

## FANTASTIC FORE-ENDS

The big difference goes unseen.

**I**n virtually any venue where accuracy matters, a free-floating barrel is an essential element. That means the barrel is attached to the receiver or action and touches nothing else, or nothing else touches it, either way. External pressures and contact points (which cause pressures) influence barrel vibrations and also where the barrel is “looking” shot to shot.

I know it’s hard to believe something as stout as a heavy steel tube (a barrel) can be so easily persuaded to shift, but it can and will. It’s not so much the pressures and contacts themselves as it is their inconsistency.

AR-15s with a standard-style handguard, whether carbine or rifle, have the front handguard cap, and also

sling swivel, effectively attached to the barrel. Pressures against the handguard or sling swivel are transferred to the cap and, therefore, to the barrel.

### Easy Fix

This is too easy to fix on an AR-15. A “float tube” is essentially (if not actually) a piece of pipe with a barrel

nut on one end. The barrel nut secures the barrel into the upper in the same way as a standard configuration, and then the barrel just sticks out its other end. Now all the pressures put on the fore-end are directed to the upper receiver and not to the barrel.

Float tubes come in a huge variety of configurations. That’s good news. The better news is nearly all are two-piece where the tube itself can come on and off while its attachment point remains on the rifle.

Tubes designed for competitive shooting, such as NRA High Power Rifle, usually have vents and always a rail slot on their undersides to attach a handstop. The vents serve to both reduce tube weight and allow air circulation. They also catch wind. Some of us are going to smaller diameter float tubes to help improve “aerodynamics” for the standing position.

### Cheese Graters

Tactical-style float tubes are often covered over in Picatinny rails. 12, 3, 6, and 9 o’clock. Others allow customized attachment of rail mounting strips. Recommendations depend on what you’ll be mounting on the rails, but the customizable tubes usually feel better in the hand. I strongly suggest smoothing over any exposed and unused rails with specialty covers.

Float tube diameters vary, and most of the NRA Match Rifle style are larger. They normally will fit right over the gas block or manifold. Some of the tactical-style float tubes don’t give much room to mix components. Generally, you’ll be fine if you get the fore-end and manifold from the same manufacturer.

Specialized tubes exist for the NRA Service Rifle competitor to maintain the look of an A2 rifle, but still free-float the barrel and move the sling attachment point to the tube. It’s a very small diameter tube that allows the handguard pieces to snap in right over it. The front handguard cap and sling swivel mount are welded to one end of the tube and the Delta assembly is on the barrel nut as usual. There is no reason at all to choose



*This fore-end from Medesha Firearms (above) is on an across-the-course competition rifle. It is rotation-adjustable and has a rail slot for a handstop and accessory weight. A rail-to-rail alignment fixture (bottom, left from Brownells) makes aligning a 4-rail float tube with a flattop upper a snooze. This is dang handy, as some float tubes have alignment means incorporated but many are trial and error. One of the better products out there is the Daniels Defense float-tube (bottom, right). This is a high-quality piece. This configuration is rifle-length overall, but with a cut out to accommodate the carbine-length gas system. Nice. The Brownells rail covers make it even nicer.*



one of these configurations unless you are a competitive Service Rifle shooter.

I am not a fan of attaching anything to the gas block because it is attached to the barrel. I think it should just sit there and hold the gas tube.

### \$24 Question

A big question: Should you do this yourself? There's no answer that's not qualified, and one of the best questions is whether you're building it up or first having to tear it down. It will probably be more difficult to disassemble than to reassemble. Many factors enter. It doesn't matter if it's a standard front end on an M4 or a competition rifle with a very fancy float tube, all AR-15 barrels install the same way. Honestly, if you're starting from scratch building a rifle, the easiest way to go is a competition-type tube. The toughest to do are the "undertubes" for an NRA/CMP Service Rifle.

There's not nearly enough room here to detail the float tube assembly process. However! The really short course is: a barrel nut has openings that allow the gas tube to pass through. After enough torque has been applied to the nut to ensure correct seating (35 to 40 ft-lbs) then one of these openings has to be aligned with the receiver opening such that the gas tube is sitting exactly



**Here's a tube anyone can install, including all my cuzzins and that's saying something. It's from Midwest Industries and can be retro-fitted without so much as removing the front sight housing.**

centered. If you can do that, then you can install a float tube, more or less. There may be other tasks in anyone's project I can't anticipate, but that's the essential accomplishment.

### Tools, Tools, Tools

The tools to install it may cost more than the float tube, and as with any and all projects, the right tools make all the

difference. You'll need an upper receiver clamp, a vise to secure it, a barrel nut wrench, and a torque wrench, plus thread-locker and anti-seize if you want to do a good job. A No. 2 pin punch for the gas tube roll pin will likely be part of the process too. A short length of .177" drill rod (gas tube diameter) makes alignment easier. Taking the rifle down to build it back up requires removing

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UP ON ARS



It takes tools (above). You'll also need a receiver clamp and a honking good vise. Here's a carbine-length 4-rail (below) from Yankee Hill. Good product. It's clear to see how the barrel nut doubles to secure the float tube. The lock ring secures the tube into place, but I still use "blue" threadlocker.



any muzzle attachments and the front sight housing. I can't answer for sure, but you may encounter some glued-on parts. I always use glue for those parts, as well as gluing the barrel extension into the upper.

*Shameless Plug:* This article was specially adapted from a chapter in Glen's forthcoming book, *The Competitive AR-15: Builder's Guide*, available soon from Zediker Publishing. For more information, and more tips, log on to [www.zediker.com](http://www.zediker.com).

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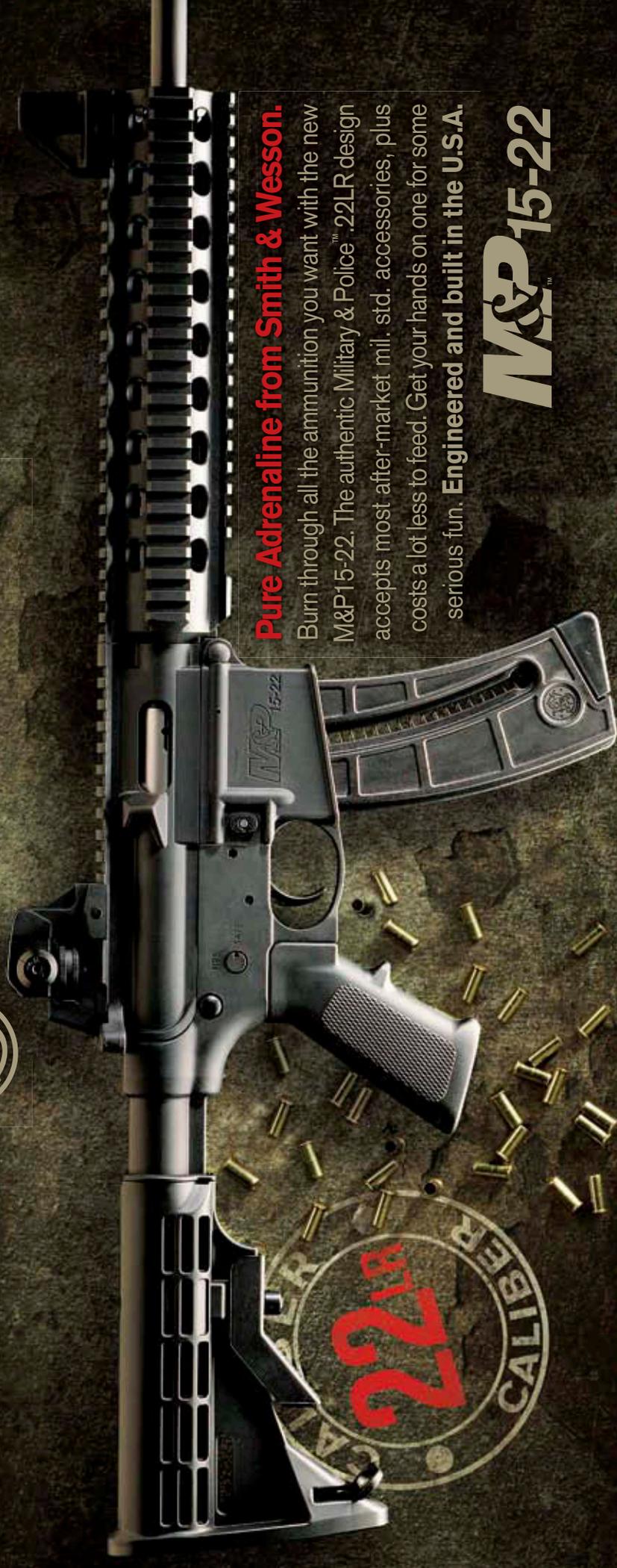
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# MONTANA MUSINGS

• MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO • PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO

## MARKSMANSHIP

It's on another level.

**A**fter many decades of being a hard-core shooting enthusiast, it has finally dawned on me that being capable of shooting good groups on paper with long guns or handguns doesn't equal good marksmanship. Here's a prime example. A Montana friend, Steve Brooks is a custom knife and custom bullet mould maker. He is also a 2-time national champion in the NRA's Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette game.

On visits to his shop and he to my gunroom, we have looked over each other's "trophy groups." Such are the ones so good you tape them to the wall so visitors can ooh and aah over them. Steve always commented his trophy groups were never as good as mine. The answer is simple. I shoot practically for a living in order to present some information to accompany these columns and articles. Hence I get much more practice in shooting groups than he. Regardless, he has proven he is a better marksman than I. That's because while he has won those two national BPCR Silhouette championships, I've only managed to struggle into the top 10 on two occasions out of 23 tries.

The difference is marksmanship and means the shooter can direct a single bullet to a single target. Every shot is a feat unto itself. Think about it this way: Nobody ever shot a deer with a group. Nobody ever knocked down steel

silhouettes with a group. Nobody ever defended his home, family, or life with a group. All those things are done by actually planting a bullet on a specific target.

So why shoot groups at all? Group shooting is done in order to quantify a particular firearm's level of precision or its compatibility with specific load combinations. Then the shooter is doing everything he can to trigger the firearm the same for every shot. He also makes every effort to ensure the rifle or handgun is carefully bedded into some sort of solid rest so the "test results" are as valid as possible.

### Rests

Also, take note of this idea. Have you ever heard anyone say, "Well, it's a really windy day today so I think I'll go out and shoot some groups?" No, group shooting is saved for good conditions so you'll know how well the



*This BPCR Silhouette competitor isn't trying to down those distant rows of metallic silhouettes with a group. Each shot in his string is a feat unto itself. (Photo by John Worthington)*

rifle or handgun and/or ammunition are performing together. Conversely, when someone is hunting, target shooting in a match or defending their life they have no control over weather. I've shot deer in driving snowstorms and participated in BPCR Silhouette events when the winds were so strong the targets had to be C-clamped to their rails to stand up at all.

Also there's no insurance policy you can buy in order to make certain a solid rest will be handy in real life conditions. In our BPCR Silhouette game we can



*Once Duke got his Luger 9mm properly sighted in he was able to start bouncing bullets off of the steel paddles regularly.*



use a prone, cross stick rest for 3/4 of the match. Conversely, the other 1/4 are dinner-plate-size chicken silhouettes at 200 meters fired offhand. Neither position is as steady as sandbags. Many hunters nowadays pack around with them various forms of “resting sticks” but there’s no certainty the lay of the land will allow their application. Such a “resting stick” might be too high for a downhill shot, too low for an uphill shot, or whatever.

Here’s another factor to consider. When my focus has been on shooting groups, I’ve been awfully lax about making sure my guns were properly sighted in. In fact if shooting at a black bull’s-eye, it is much easier to spot bullet holes with a scope if they’re in the white. Therefore, I’ve often had my guns’ scopes and sights set for bullet impact to be away from center. I hate to admit this but like some other hunters I’ve had to hurry up on the afternoon before hunting season’s opening morning and sight in my chosen rifle. That rifle may have shot beautiful groups but I didn’t have any idea where its point of impact was. Likewise, with handguns. I often have not cared where their point of impact in relation to point of aim was because so often they were just used for group shooting.

Here’s an example. Just recently I was shooting one of my current favorite handguns; a 1938 vintage 9mm German Luger. On paper it shot decent groups with both FMJ factory loads and a variety of handloads. I’ve been very happy with it in the 1-1/2 years it’s been here. Then just last week I took a 1/2 dozen of my handguns down to my steel range to plink dueling trees and paddle targets with them. At first

*Although Duke’s 1938 vintage Luger 9mm shot good groups it was useless for practicing marksmanship until properly sighted in. Until then, it just put its bullets to the left of where he was aiming.*



I couldn’t touch steel with that Luger. Then I remembered that on paper its groups were always left. I spent a few minutes with a brass punch and hammer moving its dovetailed front sight until it hit dead center for windage. Then I was smacking steel with that pistol in a satisfying manner.

Also, I’ve now made it my rule—surely a little late in life—to do all my recreational shooting in some manner other than shooting groups. When a new rifle, carbine or handgun is acquired some group shooting is done to ascertain its compatibility with the load I want to use. After that, I seldom fire any two shots in a row at the same distance, on the same level, or at the same target. Being able to hit one target after another is called marksmanship and I’m working hard to get better at it.

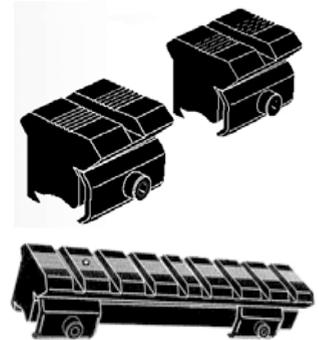
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# HANDLOADING

• John Barsness •

## WOULD ELMER KEITH WANT MORE? Handloading the .44 Magnum.

**D**uring a conversation at a recent gun show one guy suggested if former *GUNS* columnist Elmer Keith were still alive he'd be ecstatic about the recent revolver rounds far exceeding the power of Keith's most famous accomplishment, the .44 Magnum. Maybe, maybe not. Students of Elmer Keith's writings know he carefully cultivated his "big bore" image—but mostly with rifles. He's often quoted as claiming the .270 Winchester is "a fine pest rifle," and his preferred minimum for North American big game was a 33-caliber rifle with a bullet weighing at least 250 grains.

Keith recognized handguns are sidearms. He'd never draw a revolver if a rifle was handy, and though he once guessed he'd taken 60-odd big game animals with a handgun all were "targets of opportunity." Elmer Keith was a Montana and Idaho cowboy, raised back when game laws were often bent by circumstances such as hunger. His idea of a good revolver round was something powerful enough to make do when a rifle wasn't around, rather than as a substitute for a .338 Winchester Magnum.

Consequently I'm not sure Keith would be all that enamored of rounds such as the .454 Casull, much less the

.480 Ruger and .500 Smith & Wesson. There's some evidence he wasn't crazy about revolver recoil. After he talked Remington and Smith & Wesson into

bringing out the .44 Magnum in 1955, his next project wasn't something more powerful. Instead it was the .41 Magnum, a cartridge he used quite a bit in his later years—and he never asked any factory to bring out a more powerful elk round than the .338 Winchester Magnum, either.

### Low Mileage Revolvers

An informal survey recently made of a local Montana gun stores found quite a few lightly used .480 Ruger and .500 Smith & Wesson revolvers. At one store an observant clerk stated a majority of the "almost new" .480s and .500s



*It's possible Elmer Keith may have stayed with the .44 Magnum despite recent improvements in handgun power.*

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While warm it can be easily formed to your particular hand by gripping with a wet hand, then allowing the stuff to cool for a minute or two while continuing a firm grip. If you don't get it just right on the first try, MyGrip can be heated up again slightly with a heat gun. It also doesn't have to be applied to the whole grip; small pieces can be applied to the front or back of the grip, or anywhere else. Once it's on, the surface can be

heated lightly and a texture pad pressed into the surface to impart a pebbly grip.

It takes some effort to peel off, but doesn't harm what's underneath at all, and can be re-used indefinitely. If you ever decide to sell the firearm, MyGrip can be peeled off and used on something else.

It can also, of course, be used for about anything with a handle. My wife Eileen has MyGrip on a small cleaver with a handle that always felt too small in her hand. It works particularly well on hammers, taking much of the sting out of repeated nail-pounding, but the uses are only limited by imagination. I intend to try it as a cheekpiece on long guns and as stock bedding material for rifle actions and barrels. It comes in a variety of colors, including black, orange and even camo.

**GUNS**



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*Since 1876*

had been traded in on .44 Magnums. There's a reason for this, and one Elmer Keith would acknowledge: shootability. My guess is he'd still be using a .44 Magnum today, since it did everything he wanted.

His original idea for the .44 Magnum was simply a warmly-loaded .44 Special, using a cast 235-grain hollowpoint or 250-grain flatpoint at 1,200+ fps. He'd used this basic load for years, finding it provided all the power and penetration needed in a sidearm. When he proposed Remington offer a similar factory load, however, they worried about it being used in weaker revolvers. Keith then suggested lengthening the case so the round couldn't chamber in .44 Specials. Remington agreed if Smith & Wesson would make the revolvers, and the .44 Magnum was born.

## Powder

Keith's preferred load in the .44 Magnum was 22 grains of what was then Hercules 2400 and his 250-grain flatpoint. This powder is now Alliant 2400, and the latest data suggests a maximum of 20 grains with a 250-grain Keith-style bullet, and 21 grains with the 240-grain Speer Gold Dot Hollowpoint.

Alliant 2400 is still an excellent powder for the .44 Magnum for just about all bullet weights. Probably more

<b>.44 MAGNUM HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE</b>				
<b>BULLET (MAKE, WEIGHT, TYPE)</b>	<b>POWDER (BRAND)</b>	<b>CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)</b>	<b>VELOCITY (FPS)</b>	<b>GROUP SIZE (INCHES)</b>
SIERRA 180 JHP	Accurate No. 9	22.0	1,419	2.75
SIERRA 180 JHP	True Blue	16.5	1,389	2.19
CURTIS CAST 240 SWC	2400	21.0	1,224	1.63
CURTIS CAST 240 SWC	H110	23.0	1,243	3.19
CURTIS CAST 240 SWC	Enforcer	22.0	1,202	1.78
SPEER 240 GDHP	2400	21.0	1,217	2.05
SPEER 240 GDHP	Accurate No. 9	19.0	1,225	1.55
SPEER 240 GDHP	Enforcer	22.0	1,177	1.65
SPEER 270 GDSP	H110	21.0	1,162	5.75
SPEER 270 GDSP	Li'l Gun	19.5	1,155	2.75
NOSLER 300 JHP	Accurate No. 9	17.0	1,133	2.06
NOSLER 300 JHP	H110	20.0	1,125	2.27

Notes: Group size the result of 5 shots at 25 yards. The chronograph set 10' in front of the muzzle. Primers: Federal 150s. Federal cases were used with jacketed bullets, Remington cases with lead bullets. JHP: Jacketed Hollowpoint; SWC: Semi Wadcutter; GDHP: Gold Dot Hollowpoint.

popular with heavier bullets these days, however, is Hodgdon H110/Winchester 296 (110 and 296 are the same powder in different canisters). This powder has proven so good it's listed as the velocity leader with 240- to 300-grain bullets in almost every manual today.

However, some newer powders work quite well in the .44 Magnum. Accurate No. 9, for instance, has become fairly popular in the .44. I decided to compare No. 9 and some other new powders

alongside the old standbys in my Taurus Model 44. As can be seen from the chart, several of the newer powders rivaled the old favorites in performance, but it's still hard to beat a 240-grain bullet at 1,200+ fps as an accurate, shootable, all-around load in the .44 Magnum.

I've owned several .44 Magnums over the years but eventually ended up with the Taurus as a compromise between handiness and shootability. It's listed as having a 4" barrel, but

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*The Taurus 4" .44 Magnum is a fairly heavy revolver if worn just on the belt. This belt rig with shoulder strap by Norm Schertenleib distributes the load more evenly, makes carrying the Taurus revolver painless and out of the way of the primary arm—the rifle.*

the inch behind the muzzle is slightly enlarged and ported to reduce muzzle jump. Super-lightweight .44 Magnums have recently been introduced for such carry purposes, but I'm not crazy about shooting full-power loads in a light revolver—and suspect Elmer wouldn't have been either.

Like Elmer Keith, I was a Montana cowboy in my youth, and still live about 15 miles down the road from the ranch where Keith's family lived before moving to Idaho. My .44 Magnum is also a sidearm, used for general carrying in Montana's mountains where it might possibly be used on anything from a blue grouse to a deer to (heaven forbid) an attacking bear or 2-legged varmint. It's carried in a compromise shoulder/belt rig developed and made by custom leather maker Norm Schertenleib of Great Falls, Montana. The lower end of the holster attaches to your belt, but there's also a shoulder "sling" that takes some weight off your belt. It makes carrying a fairly heavy revolver so comfortable sometimes I forget it's there until needed, something of which Elmer would have approved.

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## THE YUGOSLAVIAN M-76 SNIPER

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**M**ade by Zastava and adopted by the Serbian Army in 1976, the Yugoslavian M-76 sniper rifle in 8mm Mauser made the press often enough in Kosovo and Bosnia during the wars of the 1990s to assure its place in modern sniping history. How good was it? Thanks to Century International Arms new M-76 offerings, we came away from the range exceedingly impressed with the accuracy and overall performance of the design.

Similar in concept to the Russian Dragunov and the more familiar Romanian PSL, the M-76 is a Kalashnikov variant. It looks like a large AK. It follows the design of the AK, and it disassembles like an AK. It's really

an RPK-type AK on steroids. Therein lies one of its inherent qualities. Its operation, disassembly and maintenance are immediately familiar to the average Kalashnikov toting conscript.

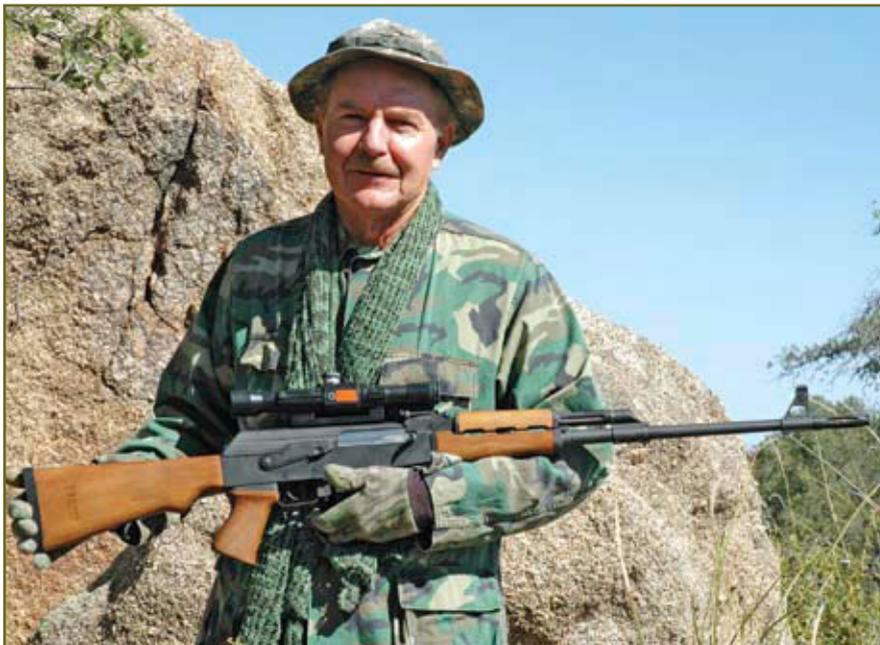
Designing an accurate sniping rifle

around an AK platform is not the easiest of tasks. Dragunov himself admitted he had a challenge on his hands when he began his original design work. In his own words, "The principal difficulties we encountered arose from the necessity to resolve all sorts of contradictions. It is sufficient to say that to achieve reliable action in difficult conditions, it is necessary to have the largest practical gaps between the moving parts; at the same time, to achieve the best possible accuracy, everything must be fitted together with minimal tolerances."

Century International Arms' M-76s are built using original M-76 refurbished parts kits mated (by law) with American made receivers, barrels and other minor parts to comply with current Federal statutes. Steve Kehaya, Century's Engineering and Product Development Manager, has really done a remarkable job of building the M-76 to its original Yugoslavian specifications by using only premium quality parts and optics, a milled receiver, new barrel and neat touches, like the addition of a TAPCO trigger that measured a consistent 3 pounds, 14 ounces on a Lyman electronic scale. Century's M-76 fulfills Dragunov's objectives of holding tolerances closely where necessary, leaving ample gaps for battlefield crud and putting a robust, rugged, accurate sniper rifle into the hands of us ground-pounding, milsurp enthusiasts.

### 8mm Mauser

One feature setting the M-76 apart from similar designs is its caliber. The Yugoslavian is chambered in 7.92x57 rather than in the Soviet sphere's



*The M-76 is an unusual big-bore AK, being chambered in the 7.92x57 Mauser rather than Russia's 7.62x54R. The M-76 pistol grip is unusually ergonomic and comfortable.*





*The M-76's original 4X Zrak scope offers great optics and repeatable adjustments. The original tritium illuminated reticle has long since decayed. The M-76 was heavily used by all sides during the 1990's wars in former Yugoslavia.*

7.62x54R. Remember all those 8mm Yugoslavian Model 24/47 and Model 48 Mausers and surplus 8mm ammo we've been seeing in the milsurp stream for several years now? The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later to become Yugoslavia, adopted the Mauser action and the 7.92x57 Mauser cartridge shortly after the turn of the 20th Century. Consequently, they built a major arms and ammunition industry around both the Mauser 98 action and 8mm Mauser cartridge.

Under Tito, Yugoslavia was a compliant Communist state but rather independent from Moscow. It was sheer logic and, in the national interest, that they picked standard 7.92x57 heavy ball to be the long range sniper round for the M-76. The 196- to 200-grain FMJ cartridge has also been Yugoslavia's standard light machinegun round for decades.

### **Mighty Beefy**

Century's "M-76 Sporter" is not something you'll be twirling around in the woods. The whole package weighs 11 pounds with an overall length of 44-1/2". Ah, but is it comfortable to shoot. I did all my testing in a T-shirt under a 100-degree sun. Sporting an M14-type flash suppressor, the M-76 is loud but recoil from this big gas gun, firing heavy military ball, is totally negligible.

Looking at the general features of the M-76, it sports a heavy 21-1/2" barrel, a milled receiver with a side rail scope base, an adjustable, compensating gas system, iron as well as optical sights, teak wood stocks with a rubber buttplate, sling swivels and even a bayonet lug. Fitted in a hard carrying case from Century, the M-76 comes with two, 10-round magazines, an AK-style bayonet, a 3-piece cleaning rod as well as a hemp pull-through, an AK buttstock cleaning kit, an oil/solvent bottle, a web sling, a canvas scope cover, canvas magazine and accessory pouch and a scope maintenance kit consisting of a soft, cotton cleaning cloth, dust brush



*Zastava Arms in Kragujevac dominates the Serbian government arms industry.*



*A 3-position gas regulator insures the action will cycle reliably in spite of ammunition quality or frigid temperatures.*



*The M-14 type flash suppressor is a proven design.*

and a multipurpose combination tool.

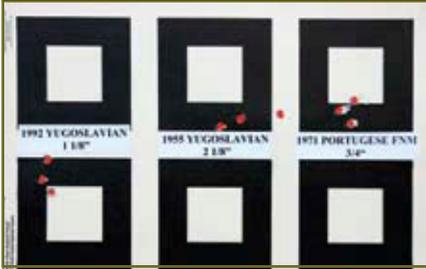
The ON-M76B model scope made by Zrak in Zvijezda is the original, 4x24, tritium illuminated reticle, scope found on the M-76. The tritium has thoroughly decayed and the scope no longer has an IR detection capability, but the optics are bright and sharp. The original



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With a tailored handload (above), the M-76 could be a half-minute-of-angle sniper rifle. Surplus 8mm is abundantly available. The M-76 favored the 1971 Portuguese FNM label. The exceptionally accurate FNM bullet (below, inset, right) features a straighter ogive than the Yugoslavian sniper round (below, inset, left).



Yugoslavian sniper was also supplied with a 5x80 passive night vision scope.

The Zrak is basically a modified version of the Russian PSO-1 scope designed for the Dragunov and shares with it an excellent range-finding reticle, a bullet-drop-compensating elevation turret and a windage turret graduated to 10 Mils. It also sports a retractable sun shade. The quick detachable saddle mount in which the scope is secured is made like a Mack truck and could stand up to a lot of battlefield abuse. A see-through mount, it permits the immediate use of the open sights. It proved capable of holding its zero when removed and reinstalled.

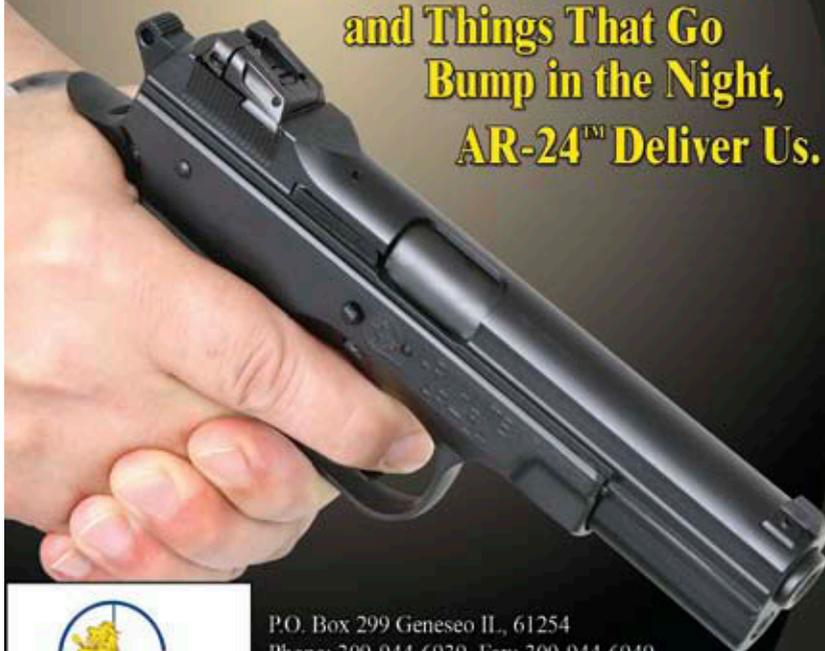
The reticle is intriguing. As you can see from the image I shot through the eyepiece, the aiming point is the tip of a chevron with the Mil hash marks on either side being used for rapid windage corrections and leads.

In the lower left side of the image is a choke-type range finder based on a standing man 1.75 meters (5'8" approx.) tall and calibrated from 200 to 800 meters. In use, the target's feet are placed on the bottom horizontal line and the distance in hundreds of meters is read off the point where the target's head touches an upper hash line. The range is then dialed in with the bullet-drop-compensating elevation turret, windage adjustments made and the shot taken. The system is fast and foolproof.

The reticle does not stay centered as adjustments are made but moves around within the field of view. For example, the aiming point moves down as the elevation is cranked up. To move windage to the right, you crank the reticle left which is the "+" side of the windage turret. This old, time proven, optical technology might prove disconcerting at first, but it's reliable.

For ammunition, on hand was some Yugoslavian 200-grain ball from lots dated 1955 and 1992, a lot of 1971 FNM (Portuguese) manufactured 197-grain ball and for the fun of it, I added in a

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(800) 527-1252

WWW.CENTURYARMS.COM

**ACTION TYPE:** Semi-automatic

**CALIBER:** 7.92x57 (8mm Mauser)

**CAPACITY:** 10

**BARREL LENGTH:** 21-1/2" (with flash  
suppressor 25-1/2")

**BARREL TWIST:** 1:9-1/2"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 44-1/2"

**WEIGHT:** 11 pounds

**FINISH:** Black oxide

**SIGHTS:** QD 4X Zrak scope,  
tangent rear and  
hooded front.

**STOCK:** Teak

**PRICE:** \$1,699.95

box of 170-grain RNSP Remington Core-Lokt and some 170-grain PSP from PMC. Measured over a PACT XP Professional chronograph, the average velocities of all lots, with the exception of PMC, ranged between 2,339 fps and 2,391 fps. PMC was very slow with a velocity of 2,223 fps.

The M-76 performed admirably at 100 yards with the military ball, but showed a distinct dislike for softpoint hunting ammunition. Average 3-shot groups measured 3/4" to 7/8" for the FNM ball (2,339 fps), 1-1/8" to 1-1/4" for the 1992 Yugoslavian ball (2,342 fps), 1-7/8" to 2" for the 1955 Yugoslavian (2,391 fps), 2 1/2" for the Remington (2,367 fps) and 3" for the PMC (2,223 fps).

The outstanding loads were the 1971 FNM 197-grain and the 1992 Yugoslavian 200-grain. The only visual difference between the loads is that the FNM bullet has a straighter ogive than the Yugoslavian. With a carefully tailored target handload, I suspect the M-76 could well turn out to be a 1/2-minute-of-angle sniper rifle.

The M-76 functioned flawlessly. The light TAPCO trigger was a delight to use, and the sharp tip of the chevron reticle provided an exacting aiming point. In the 100-degree weather with the barrel heating up to the point where it could no longer be comfortably held, I was impressed with the consistency of the size and location of the groups. The groups did not enlarge nor wander. Good barrel!

With a street price of \$1,699.95, Century's M-76 package may seem pricey, but in view of its historical uniqueness, limited availability and sterling performance, it's a probably a good milsurp investment and a rifle that will provide you with many hours of comfortable shooting pleasure.

GUNS

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# OUT *of the* BOX™

• JOHN BARSNESS •

## BURRIS FULLFIELD II 3-9X TACTICAL

This scope is just at home on a hunting rifle.

**A**ccording to some hunters a scope must cost at least \$1,000 or it just won't do for hunting white-tailed deer at 100 yards, much less the grand distances some big game animals are apparently shot at these days. Supposedly "affordable" scopes don't provide the toughness, optical quality or adjustment repeatability required by modern hunting.

In my experience, one of the consistent contradictions to that contention is the Burris Fullfield II. These scopes have been providing fine service on several of my hunting rifles for years now.

Fullfield II's used to be made in Burris's Colorado factory, but a few years ago Burris started making them in the Philippines. Please note "making." Burris did not outsource the manufacturing to a Pacific Rim "vendor," the common euphemism for getting optics made by another company, but provided the actual tooling and training for making the same Fullfield IIs once made here. The result? I've run several Fullfield II's from both Colorado and the Philippines through extensive tests and, if anything, the overseas models are little better.

### Light Transmission

This wouldn't mean much if the original Fullfield II's hadn't been darn good scopes in the first place. These days many shooters judge scopes primarily on optical quality, so over the years I've developed a method of comparing the view through different scopes. The two biggest components of optical quality are light transmission (brightness) and definition (sharpness), so I made up a simple chart with black and white lines that decrease in width from 1" to 1/8" from the top to the bottom of the chart. This chart is set up at night 25 yards from a shooting rest just inside one of the windows of my house, and is illuminated by the 100-watt light on my back porch, also 25 yards from the chart. Thus the light lands only on the chart, not the scope itself, so stray light doesn't interfere with the view through the scope.

The scope is then set at 6X (unless, of course, it doesn't go that high). This levels the playing field. Magnification

and exit pupil size both affect apparent brightness and sharpness, so to truly compare the optical quality of different scopes the magnification must be the same. The exit pupil must also be at least around 7mm in size, the maximum diameter of the pupil of most human eyes in dim light. Since just about all modern variables of 3-9X or more have 40mm objective lenses, setting them on 6X provides a sufficiently large exit pupil. (The distance is only 25 yards because at greater distance the atmosphere itself begins to interfere with testing. In effect, air becomes another variable in the test.)

The test itself is really simple. With the scope mounted on a rifle, and the

rifle on a steady rest, I focus the scope, then look at the chart and note the thinnest line I can clearly see. Below that line the chart appears gray, exactly like a zebra in the distance. Fullfield II's have always done very well in this test, ranking alongside some much more expensive scopes, including a few made in Europe. Sometimes the view through the Fullfield II's has been a little fuzzier around the extreme outside edges than in more expensive scopes, but over the decades I have also noticed the reticle is located in the center of the view of any scope, not around the edges.

### Rugged Value

Fullfield II's have also done quite well during ruggedness tests. These take place on a rifle that kicks pretty hard, anything from a .300 Magnum on up. Generally if a scope will last for at least a couple boxes of ammo on a .300 of some sort, then it will last a long time on most hunting rifles. Last year I



The Fullfield II Tactical is mounted in Burris Signature rings featuring a plastic insert. The inserts anchor the scope without marring and allow you to precisely align the scope with the bore.

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OUT OF THE BOX



John tested the Burris Fullfield II Tactical 3-9x40mm on a superbly accurate Remington Model 722 .222 Remington. The adjustments proved repeatable over ranges from 100 to 500 yards in a day of prairie dog shooting 150 rounds.

put a 2-7X Fullfield II on a Weatherby Vanguard Sub-MOA in .300 Weatherby Magnum for some extensive handload work-up. The scope never bobbled during the firing of hundreds of full-power rounds featuring bullets up to 220 grains in weight. Other Fullfield IIs have endured similar stress, and in fact I've never broken one, something I can't say about a bunch of other brands of variable scopes, some costing over \$1,000.

These days many shooters expect a scope's adjustments to be quite precise and repeatable, so they can turn the elevation dial to various settings and shoot at longer ranges. This has resulted in a rash of so-called "tactical" scopes, with readily adjustable knobs and, often, a 30mm tube, providing more adjustment range.

This trend is so universal that of course Burris had to introduce a tactical version of the Fullfield II, though thank goodness it doesn't have the skyscraper-high adjustment knobs of some tac-scopes. Its TAC-2 knobs are slightly less than 3/4" high, as measured from the bottom to the top of the turret caps, so the knobs won't get battered and bent in normal hunting use, or prevent the rifle from sliding easily into a soft case or saddle scabbard.

The knobs also have three screws on top that can be loosened to set the knob's dial to zero after sighting-in, a system I tend to prefer to dials only requiring hand-zeroing. Hand-zeroing the dial is indeed handy, but I've learned the hard way anything too-handy on a scope can mean inadvertent changes while hunting. A hunting scope should be as foolproof as possible.

The scope was mounted on an old but almost-new Remington 722 in .222 Remington. This rifle made the .222's reputation as a super-accurate cartridge, and is still regarded by many shooters as one of the most accurate factory sporters ever made. My own 722/.222, purchased last year at a local sporting goods store, upholds this reputation nicely. The scope was mounted in Burris's own excellent Signature rings,

## FULLFIELD II TACTICAL 3-9X40

**MAKER: BURRIS**  
331 EAST 8TH STREET  
GREELEY, CO 80631  
(970) 356-1670  
WWW.BURRISOPTICS.COM

<b>MAGNIFICATION:</b>	3X - 9X
<b>OBJECTIVE DIAMETER:</b>	40mm
<b>EYE RELIEF:</b>	3.8" (3X), 3.1" (9X)
<b>FINISH:</b>	Matte black
<b>CLICK VALUE:</b>	1/4"
<b>TUBE DIAMETER:</b>	1"
<b>INTERNAL ADJ. RANGE:</b>	50" at 100 yards
<b>LENGTH:</b>	12.2"
<b>WEIGHT:</b>	13 ounces
<b>RETICLE:</b>	Ballistic-Plex
<b>PRICE:</b>	\$456

with plastic inserts. The inserts not only prevent the scope from being ring-marked but function as interior shims to allow the scope to be lined up with the bore. This is essential for accurate adjustments.

The Fullfield II Tactical's adjustments were first tested with a collimator after the scope was mounted, and repeatedly returned to zero after the adjustments dials were clicked various amounts away from center. The clicks also checked out right at 1/4" on the collimator's grid.

However, it is one thing to check adjustments on a collimator and another to actually use them on a rifle fired in the field. The field test took place during a prairie dog shoot on Montana's Fort Belknap Reservation. I put around 150 rounds through the .222 one breezy morning, at ranges between 100 and 500 yards. At one point I was shooting mostly at a cluster of prairie dog mounds 350 to 375 yards distant, but occasionally a dog would pop up on nearby mounds only 100 or 125 yards away. The scope kept getting cranked to both settings, and went back precisely every time. And yes, it was easy to see and aim at prairie dogs out to 400 or 500 yards even with the scope set on "only" 9X. Burris's Tactical addition confirms the Fullfield II line is one of the best scope bargains around. **GUNS**

# Q AND A

• Jeff John •



The Stevens Model 35 offhand was a very popular .22 LR single shot pistol with 43,357 made during its 19-year production run.

## Q: Stevens Offhand

My father-in-law recently died and going through his home we discovered a single shot pistol marked J. Stevens Arms Company Chicopee Falls, Mass. U.S.A., serial number 305XX. It appears to be .22 LR caliber. We would appreciate any information you can give us. The caliber is not stamped on the barrel.

Dennis Yost  
Elizabeth, Colorado

**A:** Your neat little Stevens is one of 43,357 Model 35 Offhand pistols made from 1923 to 1942 according to *Flayderman's Guide to Antique American Firearms, 9th Edition* by Norm Flayderman (available from Krause Publications, 700 East State Street, Iola, WI 54990, 715/445-2214, www.krause.com).

They were made in .22 Long Rifle

and .410 shotgun (the .410 is subject to the National Firearms Act). They sell for between \$350 and \$600 and yours should be in the upper range because of its large amount of original finish.

## Q: Primer Storage

When I moved to Arizona in 1999, it took me months to get my loading room set up. Then I lost a few things like the proverbial sock in the dryer. Last week I found a neatly packed ammo can with 3,000 small rifle and a couple hundred BMG primers. All of them are in original packaging and the can was nowhere near any moisture.

Will the very high temperatures of being in an Arizona garage have done any damage to the primers? I was told the excessive heat could harm powder but I don't know if that is true, either.

Vince Padia  
via e-mail

**A:** Primers can be damaged by extreme heat, cold and humidity, according to Kent Sakamoto of RCBS. "The trouble is," said Sakamoto, "heat dries out the priming compound making it brittle and subject to disintegration during the seating process, causing a misfire. Further, the primer can still detonate if you try to disassemble misfired rounds and punch out the 'bad' primer. That is the reason that de-priming 'live' primers is not recommended. High humidity can cause the priming compound to be too wet to detonate properly as well." Sakamoto also advises against the use of metal ammo cans for powder or primer storage, "If anything sets off those primers or lights off the powder, the metal can just adds shrapnel!" A cool, dry place is the best place for storage of primers and powder.

After 10 years, the chances of those primers being damaged by the heat is quite good. Contact your local fire department for directions on proper disposal.

Smokeless powder can dry out in high heat as well, changing its burning rate and weight mass characteristics. Said Sakamoto, "The desired powder charge of 'X' grains of powder is achieved but the volume of powder is greater with 'dried' out powder, creating a potentially unsafe load." Smokeless powder is best left in a tightly closed factory container, in a cool, dry place and not stored with the primers. If the smokeless powder has lost its chemical smell, or has a rancid smell, it should not be used.

GUNS

## Questions and Answers

Due to the volume of mail received, GUNS cannot offer a personal reply.

Please e-mail your question to [ed@gunsmagazine.com](mailto:ed@gunsmagazine.com) or snail mail to:

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# THE 2009 GUNS CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

## TIME TO PULL OUT THE PLASTIC, PEOPLE!

**John Connor**

Hey, we know, and we can empathize, OK? You've already been through the difficult part, trying to figure out what the heck might tickle the fancies of folks on your Christmas list who are not *one of us*. Meaning, they don't love the smell of burnt gunpowder and Hoppe's No. 9, the heft and point of a well-balanced rifle or the graceful swing of an old side-by-

side on grouse bustin' from the bushes. They may not even like *dogs*, for Pete's sake—so what can you give people like *that*?

It's OK, you done good. Gettin' all 16 of 'em the same kinda slipper-sock, same color—even the same size—was a stroke of genius. On the 26th they can all get refunds and you buy whatever they want. Now you can shop for people you *understand*. And you better get to it, so here we go!

Every shooter's got a pal or two who owns a 1911 and needs to "get a grip!" If the grip needed must be slim, light, strong, precision-machined, distinctive and durable, check out *Aluma Grips*. Offered in a colorful array of checkering levels and anything-but-standard designs to "build your own," Aluma Grips add an attractive and functional custom touch at [www.alumagrips.com](http://www.alumagrips.com).



The gift of an *Adventure Medical Kit* says, "Hey! I care about you, knucklehead!" and, "Now stay outta my first aid supplies!" Don't confuse AMK's gear with el cheapo kits. These are well-organized professional kits featuring quality components. Their *Sportsman* kit makes a great gift, especially if you add some *AfterBite* and *Ben's* insect repellent, [www.adventuremedicalkits.com](http://www.adventuremedicalkits.com).



Olongapo Outfitters' *Grab & Go Rig* is like the bag that hung by every colonial Minuteman's door, holding his powder, patches, flint and balls ready to go in an instant. Made to secure multiple magazines for many semi-auto long arms—including the M1 Garand—they are meticulously cut and stitched one at a time, at a price that will surprise you. Versatile and tough, find them at [www.olongapoooutfitters.com](http://www.olongapoooutfitters.com).

The award-winning Bushnell *BackTrack* is "GPS made easy." The user just turns it on, designates a "home" or start point, then using only two buttons, can electronically log two more locations, no matter how far apart. Finding the way back is another simple button-punch. The digital compass points the way, and a readout of distance is shown on the large display screen. Amazingly simple, surprisingly affordable, [www.bushnell.com](http://www.bushnell.com).



The folks at MTM Case-Gard know how to keep stuff sealed tight and bone dry under the worst of circumstances, and they've built it all into their new *Survivor Dry Boxes*. Offered in two sizes and colors, each has a built-in compass, signaling mirror, double padlock tabs and more. If your pal's survival gear doesn't survive—will he? [www.mtmcase-gard.com](http://www.mtmcase-gard.com).



Finally, for your foul-weather huntin' buddy who's always wanting to take notes, draw maps or scribble scrambled thoughts but never has paper—or it's turned to mush—get 'em a *Rite In The Rain* weatherproof, smudgeproof *Field Journal* like this 1701 Kit. Long used by soldiers, surveyors and serious outdoorsmen, *Rite In The Rain* products make new fans with every purchase from [www.riteintherain.com](http://www.riteintherain.com).



Giving items of clothing can be risky—but not if it's Woolrich Elite Tactical's new *Elite Waterproof, Breathable Parka*. All you've gotta do is get the size right. Tailored for full function, easy movement, and ultimate weather protection, the *Elite* features a detachable hood, full underarm zips for ventilation, handwarmer pockets and a whole lot more at [www.woolrichelitetactical.com](http://www.woolrichelitetactical.com) and be surprised by the price.

You could do all your shopping at *Gunsite's* online *Pro Shop* and still make everyone happy. Just in logo-gear their famous raven, there are 40 items ranging from clothing to coffee cups, pens to posters and money clips to mouse pads. They even offer their own polished pewter Christmas tree ornament—and raven wrapping paper for the box it comes in! [www.gunsite.com](http://www.gunsite.com).



From the Pennsylvania woods to the jungles of Viet Nam, *The Original Woodman's Pal* has earned its reputation as the best bushwhackin', brush-clearing tool ever. Military issue since 1941 and still 100-percent made in the USA of all-American materials, it's a gift any outdoorsman will enjoy—and use hard. See all the models and accessories at [www.woodmanspal.com](http://www.woodmanspal.com).

Building on the success of their 120T tactical model, NovaTac designed the new *EDC 120E* for rescue, safety and survival in the outdoors. Precision crafted and tank-tough, a single tailcap button provides three levels of light up to 120 lumens and a distress-signal strobe mode. At 1x3" and 3.1 ounces, it's a lot of performance in a very small waterproof package. [www.novatac.com](http://www.novatac.com).



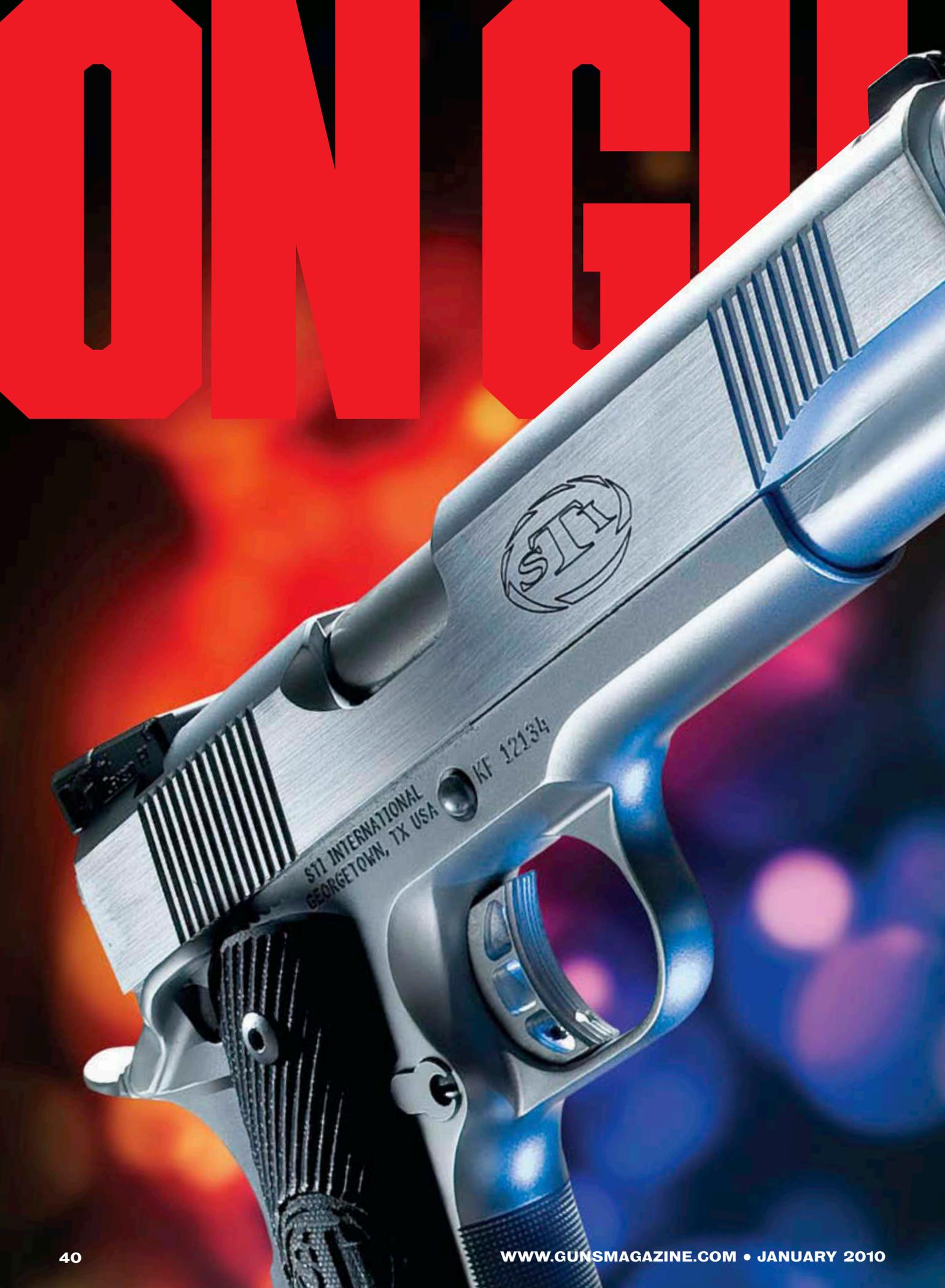
Here's three great gift knives to fit the tastes of almost anyone on your list: Al Mar Knives' *Eagle Classic* with honey jigsaw bone handle scales is an elegant "gentleman's stiletto." The hard-working *Blackfoot* by Lone Wolf Knives sports premium blade steel and rich Ebano wood scales, and Kershaw's *Model 1070C Echo* is an all-weather, any-task fixed blade for high country hunters from [www.almarknives.com](http://www.almarknives.com), [www.lonewolfknives.com](http://www.lonewolfknives.com) and [www.kershawknives.com](http://www.kershawknives.com).

Whether your giftee just wants to see who's eatin' the backyard pea patch at 0300, or who's breaking into the house down the street—and is that a gun in his hand?—they'll appreciate the lightweight but powerful *Night Cougar* night vision binocular from ATN. The *Night Cougar* comes complete with a head mount for hands-free viewing and an IR illuminator to lengthen its range. See all of their very capable models at [www.atncorp.com](http://www.atncorp.com).



Revision Eyewear has long been a major supplier of protective glasses and goggles to the US military and law enforcement agencies, known for exceptional clarity, lightweight comfort, and brute strength. Recently, Revision entered the shooting sports field, adapting its proven *Sawfly*

changeable-lens design to lenses meant for hunting and competitive shooting. Of course, they still meet or exceed the most stringent industrial and military ballistic protection standards. See the *Sawfly DeLuxe Shooter's Kit* at [www.revisioneyewear.com](http://www.revisioneyewear.com).



# UNFOLD

# DRD

## THE STI SENTINEL PREMIER 1911 DELIVERS FOR SPORT AND DEFENSE.

Mike Cumpston

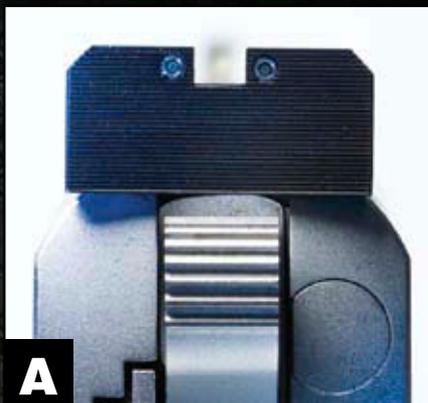
Photos: Joseph R. Novelozo

**W**ith this issue, *GUNS Magazine* celebrates its 55th year in publication. A trendsetter at its inception, *GUNS* was the first newsstand periodical dedicated entirely to firearms and sport shooting. Over the years, it has hosted the guiding lights of the shooting community with legendary men like Ed McGivern and Elmer Keith who contributed materially to the development of arms, ammunition and shooting technique as well as current staffers who continue in the same vein. Many are active innovators in the firearms field. All strive for the accurate and unbiased reporting which has earned *GUNS Magazine* the trust of its readership over the years.

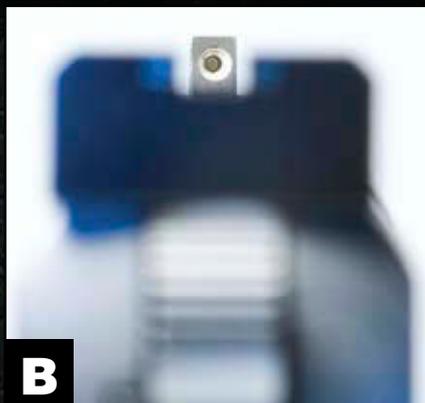
We chose to celebrate the arrival of *GUNS Magazine* into solid middle age by reviewing the STI Sentinel Premier—a state-of-the-art 1911 for the discerning shooter inclined to seek custom quality in a production pistol.

In recent years, the 1911 family has reached something of an evolutionary plateau with just about all of them

displaying commonality of balance, handling characteristics and external features right down to the 30 LPI checkering on the frontstrap. The Devil is no longer in the details but instead resides in the detailing. A custom gun builder will invest many hours of hand labor assuring the finished pistol is significantly more than the sum of its



**A**



**B**

**A** The rear sight is fully adjustable low profile Dawson/STI and offers a matted, square sighting notch. Tritium night sight inserts are included. **B** The front sight is set into a dovetail, proving very longwearing and durable over the old staked-in variety. The front sight is a square Patridge type and has a tritium night sight dot installed. **C** In addition to a generous ejection port, the top of the STI Premier's slide is finely matted to reduce glare along the sighting plane.

**C**



# GUNS

MAGAZINE



THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED AMMUNITION  
**EXTREME**



**THE STI SENTINEL PREMIER 1911**

**ON GUARD**



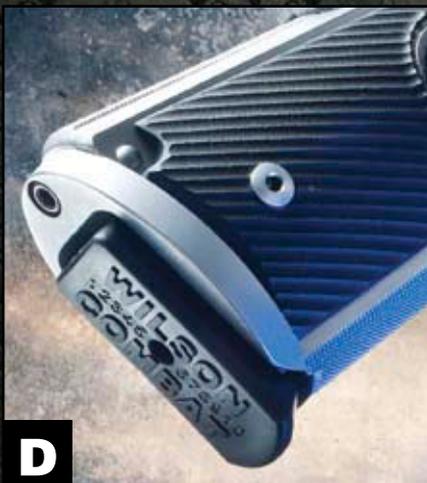
**A**



**B**



**C**



**D**



**E**

<b>.45 ACP FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE</b>			
<b>LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)</b>	<b>VELOCITY (FPS)</b>	<b>ENERGY (FT-LBS)</b>	<b>GROUP SIZE (INCHES)</b>
<b>BLACK HILLS185 JHP</b>	919	347	2.1
<b>BLACK HILLS185 JHP +P</b>	992	404	2.1
<b>SPEER 230 GOLD DOT*</b>	832	353	2.2
<b>REMINGTON GOLDEN SABER 230 JHP</b>	831	352	2.3
<b>SELLIER &amp; BELLOT 230 BALL</b>	784	314	1.9

Notes: Accuracy tested at 25 yards.  
 \*The Speer Short Barrel Load is designed to deliver high performance from 3" barrels.

individual parts. While STI employs its share of skilled gunsmiths, the large array of ultra precision automated machinery can put the ultimate degree of precision on at least a semi-production schedule. The advantages to the consumer include wider distribution of the firearm and shorter waiting time as well as a significantly lower price when compared to the more expensive custom handguns.

The Sentinel Premier follows a longstanding STI tradition in that it is competition-ready and approved by the governing bodies of IPSC and USPSA. The company also promotes it as suitable for personal defense and service use. Our sample is the full-gorilla version of the pistol, finished in industrial hard chrome

and fitted with an ambidextrous safety. These are the only options available to the consumer and, in combination, add \$345 to the overall package.

Initial inspection evoked a visceral reaction even in my gun-jaded psyche. The hard chrome finish, noted for extreme wear resistance is also very attractive. The frame and top of the slide appear to be glass bead blasted while the sides of the slide are polished. The front and rear slide serrations are narrow and, while completely functional, more attractive than the more common wide grooves on most machine-cut examples. "Sentinel Premier" is tastefully engraved on the left side of the slide with the STI logo occupying the right. The slide is flattopped with linear grooves between

**A** The Premier is finished in full hard chrome, a durable longwearing finish. Forward and rearward slide serrations are provided and the ejection port is lowered and flared. An ambidextrous safety is optional. With the slide locked back, the Recoil Master system is shown. **B** Unlike some STI offerings, the Premier uses a match-grade fitted barrel bushing to support the barrel. The barrel itself has a fully supported chamber. **C** The tritium-powered front night sight is by Trijicon. **D** The Premier features a compact mag well funnel to aid in seating the magazine. The stock magazine is an 8-shot Wilson Combat Elite. **E** The slide is expertly fitted to the frame at the back of the receiver. A beavertail grip safety ensures no hammer bite from the Commander-style hammer. The safety paddle is long, but not too wide and is easy to use.



PHOTO: MIKE CUMPSTON



PHOTO: MIKE CUMPSTON

The blue Sentinel Premier shot consecutive groups of 1.9" and 1.3" from the 25-yard bench with Mike's handload of a 230-grain commercial cast roundnose bullet over 5.5 grains of Alliant Unique. Photo: Mike Cumpston.

## BLUE SENTINEL PREMIER

The basic Sentinel Premier comes in blue finish with a single, portside safety lever. Base metal treatment is the same as with the hard-chromed sample we selected as the primary shooting sample. Aside from the single safety lever and color scheme, all the other features of the pistol are identical. The trigger pull on this one weighed in at 3 pounds, 6 ounces and was crisp and free of overtravel.

The remnant of our test ammunition established the blue pistol possessed the same accuracy as the primary gun with some factory loads producing very slightly larger groups. The observed difference might well have derived from some neurological or vision-related spasm in this shooter rather than the pistol itself. Freestanding 50-yard target results were the same with both pistols. It would be boring indeed if all of these pistols emerged from the highly mechanized production process as exact clones.

The basic Sentinel Premier really showed its individuality when I sat down at the bench with my lead softball load. A while ago, I switched over to the Meister Bullet and/or Oregon Trail cast 230-grain roundnose as my primary practice and non-critical use handload for an older, fussy pistol. The load had delivered consistently fine accuracy in my stable of 1911s but only loosely constituted groups from the chrome-finished Sentinel Premier. The basic blue Sentinel Premier digested them with the same perfect reliability as the other available loads while delivering consecutive groups of 1.9" and 1.3".

the sights to minimize any reflection if it manages to escape the matte surface.

The Dawson/STI low profile rear sight appears to be quite rugged and features apposite tritium glow plugs. The ramped front has a prominent white dot with a tritium element in the center making the sight picture very visible daylight and dark. A thoughtful touch is the little arrows showing which way to turn the windage and elevation screws for the desired effect. While many STI offerings feature bushingless bull barrels, the Sentinel Premier has a standard, match-fitted bushing. The barrel has a fully supported chamber.

A distinctive feature promoting instant sight recognition is the deep-crowned muzzle set flush with the barrel bushing. This produces an interesting and harmonious cosmetic effect but also serves to protect the end of the barrel. The bushing is closely fitted to barrel and slide requiring minor effort to turn but the bushing wrench supplied with the pistol was not necessary for disassembly.

The hammer is of the commander type and the trigger has an overtravel adjustment. STI identifies the grip panels as "black cristobal" They are indeed grayish-black with utilitarian and attractive checkering and the STI logo centered on each panel. In the broad view, plastic by any other name is still plastic but these grips are distinctive enough to add flair to the pistol and deserve a fancy name.

The action parts are, like the forged frame and slide, made on site at the STI factory. They are standard 1911 in every way but are produced by very precise Electron Discharge Machining from solid billets of steel. The parts have great structural integrity but require only a minimum amount of fitting by skilled gunsmiths. The recoil system is the Recoil Master. This consists of a

The light trigger pull facilitated this 3.8" 25-yard 1-hand offhand group (below) fired in the stance shown above. From the bench, the Sellier and Bellot 230-grain generic ball load turned in a 1.9" at the same distance.



This 1.7" 25-yard group (above) was fired with the Speer Short Barrel 230-grain Gold Dot JHP, which delivered 832 fps from the 5" barrel. Several 50-yard full-magazine groups were fired offhand from an isosceles stance. The Sentinel Premier kept all its shots within the scoring rings (below) of the B27. Photos: Mike Cumpston.



large spring and a fully captured smaller spring and requires a disassembly collar for easy removal and replacement. A primary and demonstrable advantage of the RM system over standard single springs an guide rods is significantly increased spring life-even in the sub compact 1911 pistols, that often eat up standard springs in just a few hundred rounds.

The magazine supplied is the Wilson Combat "Elite." This is a departure from earlier 8-round .45 ACP magazines with standard length bodies retrofitted with special followers and springs allowing the extra round. The Elite has the magazine body specifically sized for an 8-round capacity making loading of the

## THE RECOIL MASTER

Early reports of Recoil Master breakage have been successfully addressed by improved metallurgy, deeper threading of the guide rod elements, and larger component parts. Some shooters are able to differentiate between the recoil impulse of a Recoil Master as opposed to a standard guide rod arrangement. All I am able to discern is the RM makes for easier slide retraction than a standard 18-pound spring. Dismounting a Recoil Master equipped pistol differs from the standard 1911 drill. For such a pistol with the traditional barrel bushing, the process is as follows:

Make sure the pistol is unloaded.

Move the slide back so the slide stop lever is even with the small disassembly notch and push the slide stop out of the frame from left to right.

Hold the spring-tensioned slide in place while completely removing the slide and barrel assembly from the frame. The recoil spring assembly is now resting against the front of the link pin housing.

Thumb the Recoil Master forward compressing the spring and snap the plastic collar on the exposed end of the RM guide rod.

Rotate the Recoil Master until it will lift out of the slide. The barrel bushing can now be turned and removed in the usual manner freeing the barrel for removal.

Reassembly in reverse with no surprises in store.

### .45 ACP HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	ENERGY (FT-LBS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
CAST LRN* 230	Unique	5.5	787	316	2.6
SPEER 230 GOLD DOT	Unique	5.5	773	305	1.7

Notes: Accuracy tested at 25 yards. \*LRN=Lead Roundnose.

eighth round very easy and sparing the springs from excessive compression. The low profile mag well is attached with an Allen screw. This recoiled loose during firing and supplied the only glitch in an otherwise first rate shooting experience. A drop of blue Loctite would resolve the problem and this is not too much to ask of even the most persnickety end user. The peripherals in the hard case include a plastic bushing wrench, an allen wrench to adjust trigger overtravel, a takedown collar for the recoil master guide rod/spring system and the owner's manual.

### Shooting

The sample Sentinel Premier came from the box with a 3-pound, 2-ounce trigger pull. While many would consider this trip weight excessively light for defensive carry, it is the weight best loved by NRA match shooters. These shooters, firing from one hand, typically completely obliterate the 3" 10 and X rings of the 25-yard target with very few stray shots in close orbit in the next ring out.

The match-weight trigger enabled me to do much more consistent off-hand shooting than I usually demonstrate with the more common 4.5 to 5.5 pound triggers. I was able to keep several magazines of Sellier and Bellot 230-grain ball and Black Hills 185-grain JHPs inside the scoring rings of B-27 targets at 50 yards from the isosceles stance. I also fired a single 8-round string from the 1-handed "NRA Slow-fire" stance into a group that a truly competent match shooter would have been happy to turn in for his timed and rapid fire scores.

This evaluation took place during the post-election ammunition and component-hoarding scrape of 2009. Nevertheless, I had residual supplies of premium ammunition from Black Hills, Speer and Remington as well as a couple of staple handloads proven accurate in my personal pistols. Occasional supplies of Sellier and Bellot 230-grain ball rounds hit the local stores and I was surprised and gratified by its accuracy. The 5-round bench group measured 1.9" but the best 3 rounds were in a single overlapping void. This was the load I used to shoot my sub-4" slow-fire string.

Most of my 25-yard bench groups, regardless of ammunition, ran consistently between 2.1" to 2.3" with all five shots fairly evenly distributed.

My smallest group was with the Speer Gold Dot Short Barrel bullet loaded to match the velocities usually achieved by the factory loading of this bullet from a 3" barrel. The bullets expand reliably at that velocity and it makes for a very effective working field load for small game and varmints. Unfortunately, the same load also produced one of my largest groups at almost 3".

The Black Hills 185-grain and 185 +P loading were amazingly consistent with most groups at 2.1" to 2.2" and the largest not exceeding 2.3". These loads and particularly the +P variation, answer all the questions a shooter might ask of a general-purpose sidearm having reliable accuracy and a fulsome measure of raw power. My best guess is the gun would reliably group into 1" to 1.5" fired from a Ransom rest or by a shooter with younger eyes.

If the Ayoob formula positing the best three of five handheld shots are more or less equivalent to Ransom Rest results applies to my shooting, several groups do, in fact, demonstrate that level of accuracy. On the downside, this pistol turned in lackluster groups with my favored softball handload. It usually groups very well but tossed groups of 2.6" to 3"+ from this pistol. (The load redeemed itself from another Sentinel Premier with a best group of 1.3".) More importantly, the pistol functioned perfectly with all loads tried.

### Top Performance

STI promotes the Sentinel Premier as offering equal or better performance than the top dollar small shop 1911s. The sample pistol certain does deliver results equalling anything this shooter can do with the Government Model platform. Practical accuracy rivals my long-barreled field revolvers. A dedicated bull's-eye match shooter would likely be completely satisfied with the user-attainable accuracy straight from the box and find the only modification necessary might be one of the optical sights now popular in that course of fire. That being the case, the Sentinel Premier is certainly equal to the challenges of the practical shooting disciplines as well as the demands the outdoorsman places upon his sidearm.

The versatile Sentinel Premier is my favorite STI offering to date and I am well pleased that it has been chosen for the cover story of this hallmark 55th Year Anniversary issue of GUNS Magazine.

GUNS



### SENTINEL PREMIER

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114 HALMAR COVE  
GEORGETOWN, TX 78628  
(512) 819-0656, [WWW.STIGUNS.COM](http://WWW.STIGUNS.COM)

**ACTION TYPE:** Locked breech,  
semi-auto

**CALIBER:** .45 ACP

**CAPACITY:** 8+1

**BARREL LENGTH:** 5"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.5"

**WEIGHT:** 36.7 ounces

**FINISH:** Hard chrome

**SIGHTS:** 3-dot Tritium

**GRIPS:** Black Cristobal

**PRICE:** \$1,943.50, \$300  
(hard chrome), \$45  
(ambidextrous safety)

**WARNING:** Keep out of reach of children. Read all warnings on package.  
**AVERTISSEMENT:** Gardez hors de la portée des enfants. Lisez tous les avertissements sur l'emballage.

# DOWNSIZING THE BIG BORE SEMI-AUTOS,

[PART I]

## THE .22 LONG RIFLE CONVERSIONS FROM BOB MARVEL.

John Taffin

**No matter how many handguns are offered, be they revolvers, semi-automatics, or single-shots, and no matter what cartridge they are chambered in, none of them are more fun nor more practical than the basic .22 semi-automatic. At least one good example belongs in every shooter's battery. So what if you don't have a .22 but do have a centerfire semi-auto you really like but because of the expense of ammo don't shoot it as often as you would like to?**

Today we have at least seven companies offering .22 Long Rifle Conversion Units with models provided for such pistols as the 1911 and Commander, Browning Hi-Power, Beretta 92/96, Glock 19/23 and 17/22, Taurus PT92/99 SIG SAUER and EAA. Anyone with a semi-automatic such as

the above shooting such cartridges as .45 ACP, .38 Super, and 9mm can easily convert to the .22 Long Rifle. Even though a brick of .22s costs about twice as much, or more, as it did a year ago, they are still relatively inexpensive. This past weekend I found bricks from four different manufacturers ranging in price

from \$19 to \$22. Even at those prices, I can shoot a lot of ammunition for a small expenditure.

Economics aside, quite often folks buy a centerfire semi-automatic because they can—without ever actually learning how to shoot it well. Bad habits develop, not the least of which is flinching. Going back to basics with a .22 can help cure these problems as well as teach all the basics of shooting and safety. Conversion Units are easily installed, usually taking less than a minute, and the centerfire unit can also be returned to its proper place in the same amount of time. I am no gunsmith, not even close, however even I can do all of this (although I must confess it would be good to have three hands when swapping out top ends on a Browning Hi-Power).

I have now been shooting for over 60 years starting on my uncle's farm in the late 1940s with a .22 Harrington & Richardson revolver. My first very own firearms were both .22s, a Marlin Mountie and a Ruger Single-Six in 1956. Over the ensuing years I have shot literally everything including all the really big-bore sixguns, some of which make the .44 Magnum almost seem like shooting a .22. Not only did I start all of my kids and grandkids with a .22, I find myself more and more going back to my roots and shooting .22s again. There are very few things in this life more relaxing than shooting good .22s with friends and family, or for that matter, just being out alone. Regular readers know of my devotion to big-bore sixguns, but I must admit the lowly .22 semi-automatic gives me just as much, if not more pure shooting pleasure.

Let's take a look at the .22 Long Rifle Conversion Units being offered today. Before we look at them individually we can point out some common attributes. We already mentioned they are easy to install and this is true across the board. They are designed to be drop-in



Variations on the same theme are these .22 Conversion Units from top left clockwise, Tactical Solutions on a Colt Gold Cup, Kimber on a Kimber, Kimber on an Auto Ordnance, Ciener on a Series 70, and Ciener on a Colt Gold Cup. John will cover these in Part II in February's issue.



**Shooting .22 Conversion Units (above) means no recoil, no brass to shag, little expense, just pure enjoyment. Bob Marvel/ Advantage Arms .22 Conversion Units (below) complete with accessories come packed in this nicely padded case.**



units, but realize we are working with tolerances from many companies. Try to count all the different firms now offering or who have offered 1911s all with their own tolerances. All units installed easily, however some were too tight to work the slide reliably. If this occurs I would imagine it would not be very difficult to lap in the aluminum slide rails.

Here are some examples of too tight conditions. The Ciener Hi-Power Conversion Unit worked fine on both a modern Hi-Power and a Belgian Browning but was too tight on a modern Browning Hi-Power chambered in .40 S&W for the .22's recoil energy to work the slide. One of the Kimber Conversion Units was too tight on both a Dan Wesson Patriot and a circa 1914 Colt 1911, but worked perfectly on an Auto Ordnance 1911. In all cases it was handgun tolerances which were the problem.

### Tolerances

Anyone who has much experience shooting .22s, especially semi-automatics, realizes all .22 ammunition is not the same. Some semi-automatics certainly prefer one brand over another and also will not function reliably with certain brands. I tried several types of ammunition, both target and high velocity, in all of the .22 Conversion Units and have not yet found any that were unreliable if the right ammunition was chosen. Some companies caution only High Velocity .22 ammo should be used for reliable operation.

Each unit was broken in by first firing a full magazine of American Eagles. I chose this particular .22 cartridge as I have a couple of semi-automatic rifles which will not function reliably with this ammunition, while others produce consistent 10-ring accuracy with it. In every case save one, the first magazine full resulted in four or more, failures to eject and/or feed the next round. By the second magazine full this was down

to one or two failures, and by the third or fourth magazine every unit save one performed reliably.

Even more important than the ammunition chosen is the fact the male and female rails on the slide and frame must be properly lubricated. Big bore semi-automatics, even though it is not recommended, will often work with a dry slide—not so with .22 Conversion Units. The .22 does not provide a whole lot of recoil energy to work the slide reliably without proper lubrication. I use Gun Butter simply because I have it and it also has a needle-style applicator for easy use. Two units started acting up during testing. One with an aluminum slide matched up with an alloy frame needed to be re-lubricated after several hundred rounds had been fired, while another with a steel slide and frame went at least 500 rounds before it started to refuse to feed the last round. Lubricating again solved the problem.

Muzzle velocities are not included in the accompanying charts as I found an across-the-board consistency from one brand to another with Target loads all being within 15 fps above or below 900 fps, and the same parameters proved to be true with High Velocity loads from all manufacturers albeit at 1,000 fps. These results are from the standard 5" barrel provided on most of these conversion units with the 4" Glock unit being slightly slower. In Part II we will take an alphabetical look at individual units being offered, however for now we look at the .22 Conversion Units of Bob Marvel, the man who made them work.

Colt began offering .22 Conversion units for the .45 Colt Government Model back in the 1930s. First came the Conversion Unit and then .22 Ace complete pistols were offered. From what I have read there was one major problem with both—they didn't work all that well. Shooters who wanted a reliable .22 target or plinking pistol went

with a Colt Woodsman or High Standard and then later a Browning or Ruger. Colt Ace pistols or conversion units will bring big dollars as collectors items but not as practical everyday using .22s. The conversion units offered today flat-out work, and as far as I know the first man to make this possible was Bob Marvel.

In the 1980s Bob started building pistols designed for bull's-eye shooting. To date, shooters using his guns have won 21 national championships and set more than 40 national records. Shooters have also won a World and an International title in Bianchi and speed shooting events. In the 1990s Bob began building defensive and offensive pistols for both military and civilian use and he also began working with several companies to solve specific design and functioning problems. Late in the same decade he began training others to build custom 1911 pistols. Just over 10 years ago Bob designed the Marvel 1911 .22 Conversion Unit. Eventually he came up with three models of the 1911 conversion from his original company, Marvel Precision. The average 5-shot group size at 50 yards for over 1,000 units was less than 3/4".

In 2003 Bob left the original company and since 2007 has been working with Advantage Arms to develop a new 1911

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Conversion Unit with 23 changes from his original design of 1998. The Bullseye Model with excellent target sights, bold, black, square, and fully adjustable, is available through his current company, Bob Marvel Custom Guns. The target rib can be removed and replaced with a scope rib for seasoned citizen sixgunners like myself. Bob sent me two units for testing, a 1911-22T complete with target sights, and a Marvel Custom Pro 1911 set up for scope mounting using Weaver-style rings. On the latter I installed a Simmons 2.5-7X LER scope borrowed from one of my single-shot Contenders.

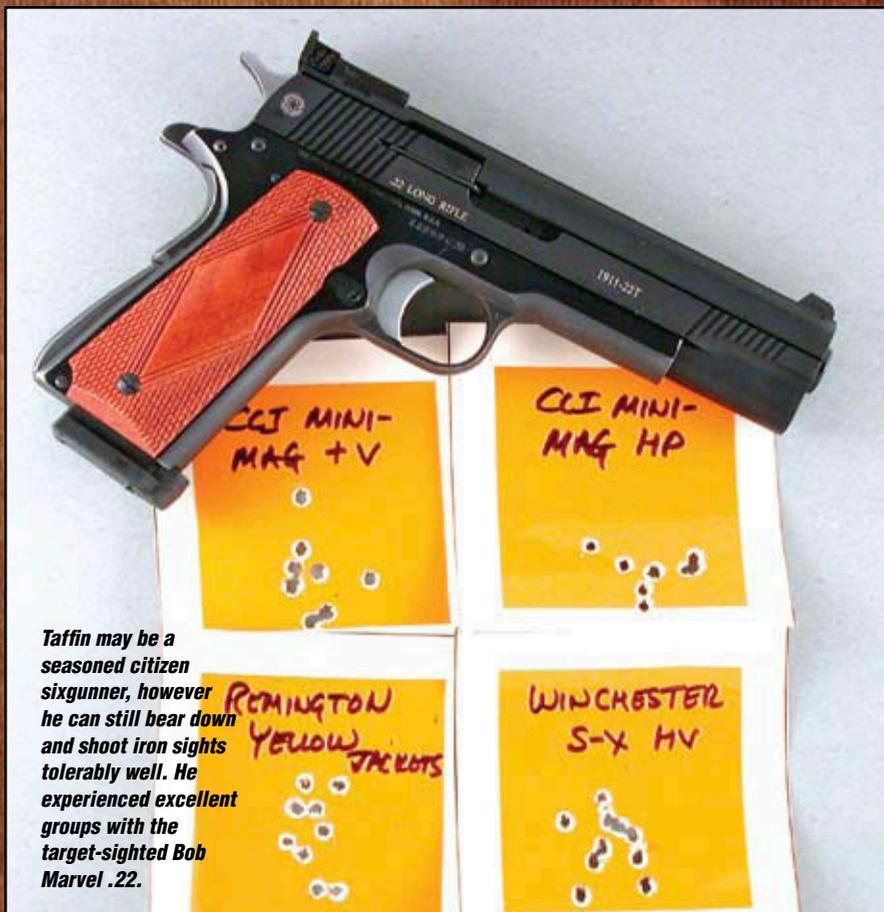
The scope ready 1911 Conversion Unit was easily mounted on a Colt Gold Cup. I had planned to install the 1911T Unit on a Springfield Armory .38 Super, however the ejector on the Springfield

Armory version was too tall and would not allow the unit to operate. I next tried a Colt Series 80 chambered in .38 Super and it proved to have a shorter ejector so the Colt and the 1911T mated up just perfectly. Installation consisted of simply removing the slide, barrel, bushing, plunger, and a guide rod of each Colt, which anyone knows who has ever stripped a 1911 takes less than a minute. The .22 Conversion Units were then put in place, the slide stop installed, the full-length guide rod tightened with a special tool, and the unit was ready to go. Both of these units are unique among those with aluminum slides as they have a steel insert which automatically locks the slide back when the last round is fired.

These units come packed in a padded sturdy plastic box, which also includes a cleaning rod, patches, Break-Free lubricant, and one of the neatest little gadgets for loading .22 magazines. This little tool looks like four quarters stacked together with a small rod extending from the middle of one side. This little rod fits into a hole at the bottom of the spring unit and is then used to reduce pressure as cartridges are loaded. Without this tool, or something like it, it would be a literal pain to load these magazines. Care must also be taken to make sure the last round is placed correctly in the magazine or it will not feed. I use a lot of CCI Blazer



*An added bonus with this Marvel Custom Pro is how well it shoots high-speed Remington Yellow Jackets at 25 yards.*



*Taffin may be a seasoned citizen sixgunner, however he can still bear down and shoot iron sights tolerably well. He experienced excellent groups with the target-sighted Bob Marvel .22.*

### .22 LR FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	GROUP SIZE (20 YARDS IRON SIGHTS, INCHES)	GROUP SIZE (25 YARDS SCOPE SIGHT, INCHES)
AMERICAN EAGLE HP	1-1/2	5/8
CCI MINI-MAG HP	1-1/4	1
CCI MINI-MAG +V	1	7/8
CCI STINGERS	2	3/4
REMINGTON GOLDEN HP	1-1/2	1
REMINGTON HV	1-5/8	1-1/4
REMINGTON YELLOW JACKETS	1-1/4	1
WINCHESTER SUPER-X HV	1-1/4	7/8
WINCHESTER WILDCAT HV	7/8	7/8

Notes: Bob Marvel Custom Pistols groups are the product of 9 shots at 20 yards from the 1911-22T, and 9 shots at 25 yards from the 1911 mounted with the Simmons 2.5-7X.

.22s, however they will not feed from the magazine into the chamber in either one of these Conversion Units.

I long ago discovered I am not as steady as I used to be or even was last year, maybe even last month. However I did get some excellent groups which are in the accompanying chart. From a machine rest Bob Marvel's .22 Conversion Units are superbly accurate. He sent me two 50 yard targets, one with 40 shots in less than 1" and 60 shots just over 1-1/4" and his 5-shot targets were less than 1/2".

I gathered data as I usually do by allowing myself one throwaway round so the recorded groups are for the best nine out of 10 shots. With iron sights my best groups were with, surprise, surprise, Winchester Wildcats for 7/8" at 20 yards with a scope in place.

American Eagle went into 5/8" at 25 yards, while I received another surprise with CCI Stingers delivering 7/8" all

proving once again the only way to find out which .22 ammo shoots best in each of individual gun is to actually experiment.

With the right ammunition performance of both units was flawless, too. Some ammunition such as the above-mentioned CCI Blazers and both

Winchester Xpert and Western HP simply would not feed and are to be avoided. The 1911T retails for \$385 while the Advantage Arms 1911 is \$249.

In our next installment we will look at .22 Conversion Units from Jonathan Arthur Ciener, Kimber, Marvel Precision, and Tactical Solutions.

GUNS

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## AUTO-ORDNANCE:

### What's in a name? History.

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# SAME CALIBER

## RIFLE AND PISTOL COMBOS

Mike "Duke" Venturino

Photos: Yvonne Venturino

**F**or 140 years American gun buyers have been in love with the concept of having their long guns—rifles and/or carbines—chambered for the same cartridges as their handguns. From a standpoint of factory available firearms this trend started in 1870 when Smith & Wesson introduced their Model No. 3 top-break revolver first chambered for the .44 Henry Rimfire, which had been introduced in the Henry rifle circa 1862 and then carried over to the Winchester Model 1866.

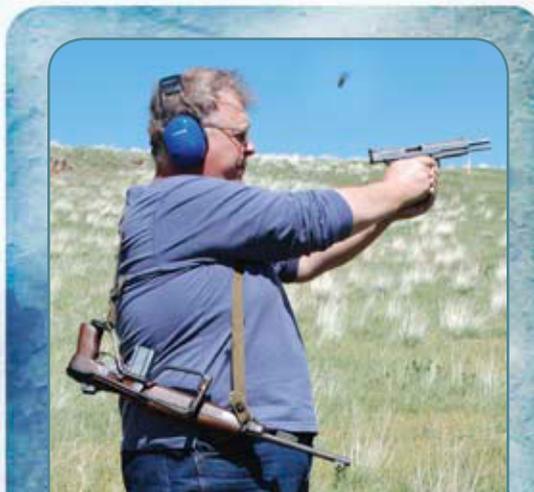
As handgun cartridges went back in those days, the .44 Henry wasn't too bad with 200- to 218-grain bullets over 24 to 28 grains of black powder. Depending on barrel length velocity was probably about 750 to 850 fps. Conversely from rifles it was a distinct pee-dunkler. That fact probably would not have made an impression on US 7th Cavalrymen on June 25, 1876 when the combined horde of Sioux and Cheyenne warriors shot them to pieces at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Modern archaeology has proven the Indians had hundreds of Henry and Winchester '66s on hand that day.

That guntoters of the 1870s wanted long guns and handguns chambering the same cartridge made some sense. There were still vast areas of the American West where dropping into stores and trading posts for resupply was but a dream. What is amazing is gun-buyers today still like the concept, even though rifles and carbines chambering pistol-size cartridges are definitely inferior in power and range to ones chambering even small rifle cartridges. But we do, I do, too.

For many years I've touted pistol-cartridge firing lever guns as my favorites. Such are the Winchester Models 1873 and 1892 and their modern clones. Also the Marlin Model 1894 is in that group—both new ones and originals. My personal favorites are the .44-40s and .38-40s in that same order. So it's only natural I've got sixguns and lever guns for both rounds.

Winchester had their '73s out for about four years by the time Colt got around to chambering revolvers for .44-40. They were instant hits with revolver buyers. By the time the first run of the Colt SAA ended in 1941, .44-40s were second only to .45 Colts in regards

to numbers made. In 1879 Winchester brought out '73s in .38-40 caliber and Colt then took five years to put the round in revolvers. You have to wonder why it took so long. With the success of .44-40 single actions, it would seem like they would have jumped all over the .38-40 as soon as it appeared. Most likely the Colt people were watching .38-40 ammo sales figures and when it was determined the round was indeed popular they jumped on the bandwagon, too. Here's



*Duke disliked shooting the AMT .30 Carbine because of the muzzle blast and prefers the US M1A1 .30 Carbine (slung) for toting around his Montana property.*

another thing to consider. The other big name handgun manufacturers of the late 1800s—Smith & Wesson, Remington, and Merwin & Hulbert—all made .44-40 revolvers. Besides Colt only S&W made .38-40s and only a few of them.

My rifle racks hold both replica and original, carbine, rifle and musket Winchester '73s in both of the above discussed calibers, and original carbine

and rifle Winchester '92s for the same. There's also a single Marlin Model 1894 .38-40 rifle in there with them. The handgun shelves hold an assortment of Colt and US Firearms Company's .44-40 single actions in barrel lengths from 3" to 7-1/2", blue/case color and full nickel finishes, ivory, wood, hard rubber, and bison bone grips. (I guess you can tell I like .44-40 handguns.) Only two Colt SAA .38-40s are there, along with a Colt New Service .38-40.

Do I use these .38-40 and .44-40 lever guns for "serious purposes" such as hunting or self-defense? Do I really "need" same cartridge combos? No, but I have shot deer with the .44-40s and used handguns in both calibers to finish wounded ones. What they do see use for is plain old fun: such as in getting together to shoot steel dueling trees and paddles with friends, or in the odd cowboy action match. There is much convenience in just taking one type of ammo out for either sort of outing.

Taking a mixture of cartridges on such occasions is an invitation for mix-ups. Firing a .38-40 down a .44-40 barrel does no harm and of course a .44-40 won't fit in .38-40 chambers. But get a .45 Colt round mixed in with some .44-40s and watch out. Here's an example. A couple of young Marines just back from Iraq back in 2003 dropped by my place and asked to shoot some "old guns" because they had seen the movie *Open Range* the night before. I made the mistake of taking .45 Colt and .44-40 rounds down to my range. Right off one of them slipped a .45 Colt round into my Cimarron Arms Model 1873 .44-40. That put it out of commission until it could be dismantled and the .45 Colt round retrieved.

Now here's a situation I think should be avoided at all costs. Reloading manuals used to contain special "hot" loads for .38-40s and .44-40s to be used *only* in Winchester Model 1892s or Marlin Model 1894s. Those two lever guns are far stronger than modern or original Model 1873s and most handguns. (Ruger has chambered both their super-strong Blackhawks for .38-40s and .44-40s and Vaqueros for .44-40s.) Naturally back in the 1980s upon buying my first Winchester Model 1892 .44-40 I assembled some of those high-pressure .44-40s. They were giving

# COMBOS

KEEPS THINGS LIVELY.

But, my shooting of “long guns” and handguns took a different turn in 2008. As I’ve written in these pages, I decided to go the full Monty with my World War II collection and added (legally owned) submachine guns. This has been my first journey into the world of full autos (although I’d fired a few previously) and I’m having loads of fun. So far I’ve acquired four made during that war. They are the ones I consider the most significant. Those are an American M1 Thompson .45 ACP, a German MP40 9mm, a British STEN Mk II 9mm, and an American M3 “grease gun” .45.

By the very definition of submachine

almost 2,000 fps with 200-grain jacketed bullets, and should never be fired in a Colt or clone-style sixgun or any Model 1873 lever gun.

One outing for deer with that Winchester '92 and such ammunition broke me of high-pressure .44-40 loads. I took a difficult downhill shot on a deer and luckily missed. Why was I lucky? Because, I tried to quickly lever another round into the chamber and it wouldn't fit. The mystery was solved when I looked for the empty case lying at my feet only to find it was one half a case. High pressure caused that case to separate about halfway up. The upper half stayed in the chamber. I was lucky because I didn't have a wounded deer to contend with and a useless rifle in my hands. That also caused me to think hard about having such hot loads floating around my gunroom and the havoc they could cause if put into a handgun.

Henceforth, all my .38-40 and .44-40 handload data is from manuals listing it for handguns. In fact this is my opinion formed from years of experience. If you're going to have same caliber combos all ammo on hand should be geared to the lowest common denominator—i.e. the weakest gun.

Perhaps ironically the loads giving the highest velocities I allow in my lever guns contain black powder. Yes, you read right—black powder! Black powder will propel a 200-grain .44-40 bullet or a 180-grain .38-40 to over 1,200 fps from a 24" rifle barrel. And if the lever gun is safe to shoot in the first place that load is perfectly safe to shoot in it and likewise with revolvers. None of my .38-40 and .44-40 smokeless loads exceed black powder velocities.

You might think this idea of combining handguns and long guns shooting the same cartridge would have ended with the Old West. Nay! Almost as soon as I rediscovered the .30 Carbine in M1, M1A1, and M2 Carbines, I had to buy handguns chambered for the little round. One was a Ruger Blackhawk single action, which the company has been offering continuously in .30 Carbine since 1967. The other was an AMT semi-auto. Both handguns were accurate, and both were reliable after I worked the bugs out of handloading for them.

That said, both were disposed of in short order while the carbines remain. Why? The .30 Carbine is a rather high-pressure cartridge—delivering about

40,000 copper units of pressure (cup). As such its muzzle blast from 7-1/2" (Ruger) or 6-1/2" (AMT) barrels was terrific. Neither was fun to shoot. Also both are *large* handguns. Instead, for toting around my Montana place, I use the folding stock M1A1.



The 9mm German “same cartridge combos” include (counterclockwise from top, left) the P38, FN Browning P35, Luger and the MP40 submachine gun. Duke keeps plenty of .44-40 revolvers including (below, top row, down, left to right) a Colt SAA Sheriff’s Model with 3” barrel, Colt “Peacemaker Centennials” with 7-1/2” barrels; Colt SAA with 4-3/4” barrel, and US Firearms with 7-1/2” barrel; Colt SAA with 4-3/4” barrel and US Firearms with 5-1/2” barrel and (bottom row) a US Firearms with 4-3/4” barrel and Colt SAA with 5-1/2” barrel.



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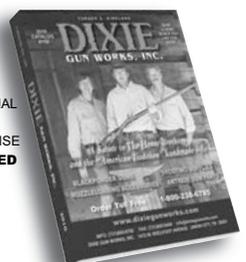
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gun it is inferred they are chambered for pistol cartridges. Not happy to have just the sub-guns I've also now added those same nations' most significant World War II handguns to the mix. When taking one or another or all of my WWII submachine guns down to my steel target practice range, I also tote along a handgun or two in the same caliber. For ammo all I have to do is pick up a metal GI ammo can labeled .45 ACP or 9mm and then shoot until I'm satisfied.

Let's see how they match up. With the US submachine guns, there are several .45 caliber handgun choices. The standard issue pistol at the time the M1 Thompson and M3 grease gun were being used was the Model 1911A1, but the US Army also had large numbers of earlier Model 1911s on hand. I have one each of those. Furthermore, due to the firearms shortage early in WWII, many US Model 1917 Colt and Smith & Wesson .45 ACP

revolvers were called back into service. I have those also.

The Germans had many different handguns in use in WWII, made at home, made in factories they had captured, and even ones bought from the Spanish. Arguably, the three most significant ones were the Luger, P38, and Browning P35. All were 9mm. So when I shoot my MP40 one or all of those 9mm pistols go with me.

When adopting a submachine gun the British also went with 9mm. Mostly for handguns they stuck with revolvers (.38s and .455s) in WWII, but they did buy substantial numbers of John Inglis made Hi Power 9mms, copied from the Browning P35 design. So I bought two of those to go with my STEN gun. One is the standard model and the other carries the tangent rear sight graduated to 500 meters and has the wooden holster/shoulder stock. When the STEN gun is



*Duke tried combining .30 Carbine handguns and carbines but gave it up because the handguns delivered tremendous muzzle blast. The guns are (from top, left) the US M1 Carbine, US M1A1 "paratrooper" carbine and US M2 Carbine. The handguns are (top) a Ruger Blackhawk with 7-1/2" barrel and bottom is AMT with 6-1/2" barrel. This is Duke's latest "same cartridge combo." (below) It consists of a 1970s vintage S&W Model 18 revolver with a brand new Colt M4 .22 LR as made by Carl Walther of Germany.*



**DUKE'S FAVORITE RIFLE-CARBINE-SUBMACHINE GUN-REVOLVER-PISTOL COMBOS**

CALIBER & BULLET (GRAINS WEIGHT & TYPE)	POWDER (TYPE)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (HANDGUN) (FPS)	VELOCITY(RIFLE) (FPS)	GUNS TESTED (BRAND & BARREL LENGTH, INCHES)
.38-40 180 RNFP	W231	6.8	852	1,185	USFA 4-3/4, Marlin M '94, 24
.38-40 180 RNFP	Goex FFg	33.0	990	1,265	Colt SAA 7-1/2, Win. '73, 24
.44-40 200 RNFP	W231	6.8	874	1,081	Colt SAA 7-1/2, Win. '73, 30
.44-40 200 RNFP	Goex FFg	33.0	868	1,177	Colt SAA 7-1/2, Cimarron '73, 24
.30 CARBINE 110 JSP	H110	14.5	1,452	1,962	Ruger BH 7-1/2, US M1A1, 18
9MM LUGER 115 FMJ	HP38	4.4	1,116	1,302	Luger 4.0, MP40, 9.75
9MM LUGER 115 FMJ	HP38	4.4	1,018	1,222	Inglis P35 5.0, STEN Mk II, 7.66
.45 ACP 230 FMJ	HP38	5.4	723	1,058	Colt 1911 5.0, Thompson M1, 10.0

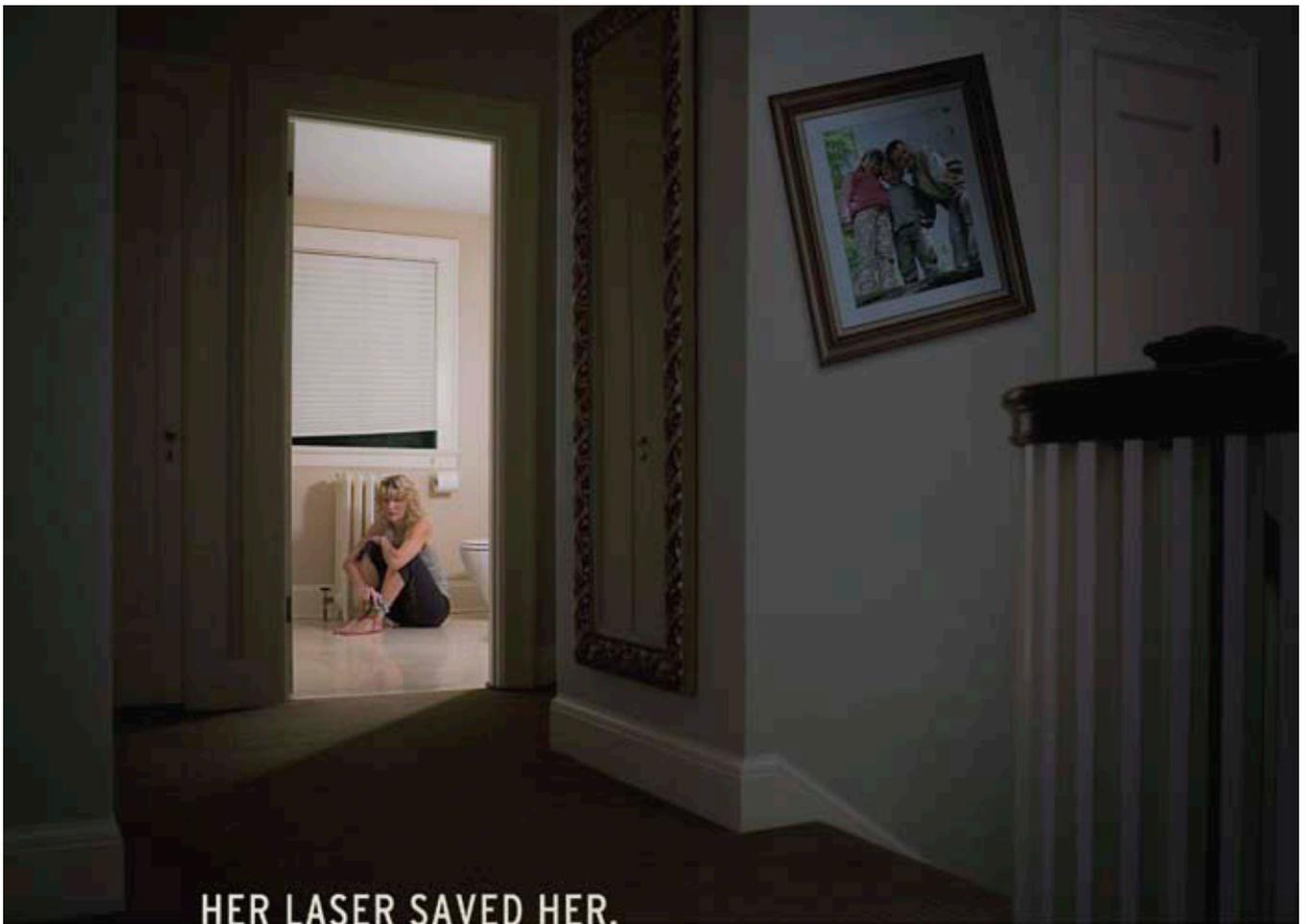
Notes: All velocities taken with Pact Professional Model Chronograph with start screen at approximately 6'. Starline brass used for all handloads chronographed. Bullets used: 180-grain .38-40 RNFP Oregon Trail; 200-grain .44-40 RNFP Oregon Trail; 110-grain .30 Carbine JSP Sierra, 115-grain 9mm FMJ Hornady; 230-grain .45 ACP FMJ Speer.

fired so are the Inglis 9mms.

As if I wasn't having enough fun, I put together one final long gun/handgun combination. Last year a friend presented me with a .22 rimfire revolver. It is a 1970s vintage Smith & Wesson Model 18 with 4" barrel. I have never done much with .22 rimfires so there wasn't a companion piece for it in my gun vault. That changed a few weeks back when I was browsing the

Shedhorn Sports store in Ennis, Montana. My eyes fell on what appeared to be an AR-type M4 Carbine like our armed forces are using. However, its tag said it was a .22 rimfire. Curiosity caused me to pick it up, so I was further surprised to see it marked "New Colt Holding Corp." and made by "Carl Walther Germany." I couldn't resist it and now have a fine .22 rimfire combo.

Just now I took a quick head count in the gun vault, and found that I can put together no fewer than 13 sets of rifle, carbine, submachine gun, pistol or revolver combos with even a few handguns left over. All are shot more or less regularly as the whim strikes me. I am evidence the same caliber combo concept that started about 1870 hasn't died yet.



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# THE .40 AT 20

**GUNS MAGAZINE'S 55TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR COINCIDES WITH THE 20TH FOR THE .40 SMITH & WESSON CARTRIDGE.**

**Massad Ayoob**

**I**t was early 1990, and the venue was the premier firearms industry convention. SHOT, the Shooting and Hunting Outdoor Trade Show—held in Las Vegas that year—saw the introduction of the .40 Smith & Wesson cartridge by Olin/Winchester, which had created the cartridge, and by S&W, which had built the Model 4006 pistol first to be chambered for it.

The new round was a hit of unprecedented proportions. Within a matter of only a few years, it would come to dominate the police handgun market in the United States, and would achieve huge popularity among the armed citizenry as well. It was a classic example of the right thing introduced at the right time.

The '80s had seen the first big wave of the coming tsunami in which the semi-automatic pistol would at long last swamp and drown the traditional police service revolver in North America. Throughout the decade, as the changeover gained momentum, there emerged two strong camps in terms of just what autoloader should replace the old six-shooter. This

was seen classically in the rank and file of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and would play itself out elsewhere, in police departments all over the country.

One camp held firepower was the raison d'être of a magazine-fed duty sidearm, and they wanted a large reservoir of firepower in their magazines. This side pushed for the paradigm of the period, a 9mm pistol typically taking a 15-round magazine with a 16th in its firing chamber. The S&W Models 459 and 659 fit that profile, as did the Beretta 92 series and the SIG SAUER P226.

The other camp felt "stopping power" was more important than round count, and the auto pistol that side wanted was the .45 Automatic Colt Pistol. There was

little question that a .45 slug hit harder than a 9mm. After all, at 230 grains the .45 bullet was literally twice as heavy as the long-standard 115-grain 9mm. The 1911 of the period carried seven rounds in the magazine and an 8th in the chamber, as did the SIG P220, while the Smith & Wesson Model 645 carried 8+1 and magazines were now available that would let a standard configuration 1911 do the same thing.

Different competent, charismatic instructors and role models pushed in different directions. The FBI saw Bill Vanderpool emerge as the champion of the "high capacity" 9mm, and Urey Patrick as the standard bearer for the .45. When rival teams form on important issues within an organization, it's important the leadership find a way to cut the Gordian knot and resolve the matter with a compromise that satisfies both sides and allows all to move on. In the Bureau, that role fell to John Hall, then head of the Firearms Training Unit at Quantico.

Hall took a novel route: the 10mm





The new .40 S&W chambered M&P40 from Smith & Wesson has been adopted by many law enforcement agencies nationwide. It features a lightweight polymer frame with interchangeable backstraps.

Auto cartridge. He determined through intensive testing that with a 180-grain bullet at a bit under a 1,000 feet per second, this load would meet the penetration and expansion standards the FBI had painstakingly determined through extensive research were necessary to their mission. It was a milder version of the full-power 10mm, which had emerged earlier, championed by Col. Jeff Cooper and based largely on his early work with Whit Collins in creating a wildcat round called the .40 G&A. With the subsonic 10mm load determined, the Bureau chose the Smith & Wesson Model 1076, literally made to the organization's specs, as its next standard issue service pistol.

Smith & Wesson then still employed the legendary Tom Campbell, who had not yet made the jump to Safariland, and master gunsmith and shooter Paul

Liebenberg was on board, too. They were joined on the new cartridge project by an outside consultant, Ed Hobbe. Working from a wildcat Liebenberg had created years earlier called The Centimeter, a short 40-caliber round intended to make Major power factor in IPSC shooting with a narrower cartridge that would allow more rounds in the magazine.

The group determined it could easily duplicate the ballistics of the FBI load for the 10mm, and do so in a cartridge the same overall length as a 9mm Parabellum. This allowed the use of smaller frames with shorter trigger reach, and the double-stack magazines would not make the gun too fat in the frame for the average user to comfortably grasp. While some were predicting all of law enforcement would follow FBI into the big 10mm, S&W had already seen the



early warning signs from departments that would not adopt a pistol requiring a large .45 frame, as the 10mm did, because of universal hand-fit issues.

As a result, the .40 S&W cartridge was born, with Campbell, Liebenberg, and Hobbe the parents who should have been listed on its birth certificate.

At a time when the typical "wonderline" held 16 rounds and the

**POWER**  
By Frank W. James • Photos By Ichiro Nagata

## CHP Chooses Smith's New .40!

By Michael Smith • Photos by Roger Anderson

The nation's largest state police agency, the California Highway Patrol, became the first major force to adopt the Smith & Wesson 4008. Along the way, Glock gets clocked, and the Double Eagle lands on its nose.



**C**alifornia Highway Patrol is the nation's largest state police agency, and it has just adopted the Smith & Wesson 4008. Along the way, Glock gets clocked, and the Double Eagle lands on its nose.

When I first heard that the CHP had chosen the Smith & Wesson 4008, I was surprised. The CHP is a large agency with a long history of using the 10mm Smith & Wesson 1076. The 4008 is a new design, and I was curious to see how it would perform in the hands of the CHP officers.

The CHP is a large agency with a long history of using the 10mm Smith & Wesson 1076. The 4008 is a new design, and I was curious to see how it would perform in the hands of the CHP officers.



**The .40 S&W has proven a versatile cartridge chambered in every size platform from the full-size Colt Combat Elite to pocket-sized guns like the Kahr K40.**



**Most .40s are suitable for concealment. Mas draws a Glock 27 during an IDPA match in Illinois. The new Glock 22 RTF .40, with light unit attached, rides in this deputy's Safariland security holster.**



typical .45 held eight, the S&W Model 4006 exactly split the difference with 12 rounds of .40 caliber. The new load had a “4” in its designation, and in its original load spat a 180-grain bullet at roughly the velocity of a 185-grain standard pressure .45 ACP. This was enough to satisfy the “big caliber” faction. With half again more rounds on board than a GI .45, it had sufficient cartridge capacity to satisfy the “firepower” advocates. It seemed like a perfect compromise, and police began to adopt it in droves, especially after the 4006’s quick acceptance by the trend-setting California Highway Patrol and the Alaska State Troopers. Iowa State Patrol and others would go with a double action only version, S&W’s 4046.

### **The Rise Of The Other .40s**

S&W’s dominion over its proprietary new cartridge did not last long. At that 1990 SHOT Show Gaston Glock spotted the round, and instantly took the concept to his engineering team. The first, rushed prototype of the .40 caliber Glock was little more than a rechambered Glock 17, and it didn’t stand up to the snappy recoil and particularly the viciously high slide velocity the .40 S&W round engendered. The prototype Glock’s failure to pass the CHP endurance test stung Glock, and prompted a re-engineering that included another frame pin and resulted in a heavier duty pistol all the way across the Glock board.

Meanwhile, Beretta chambered its Model 92 in .40 and dubbed it the Beretta 96. It would eventually be adopted

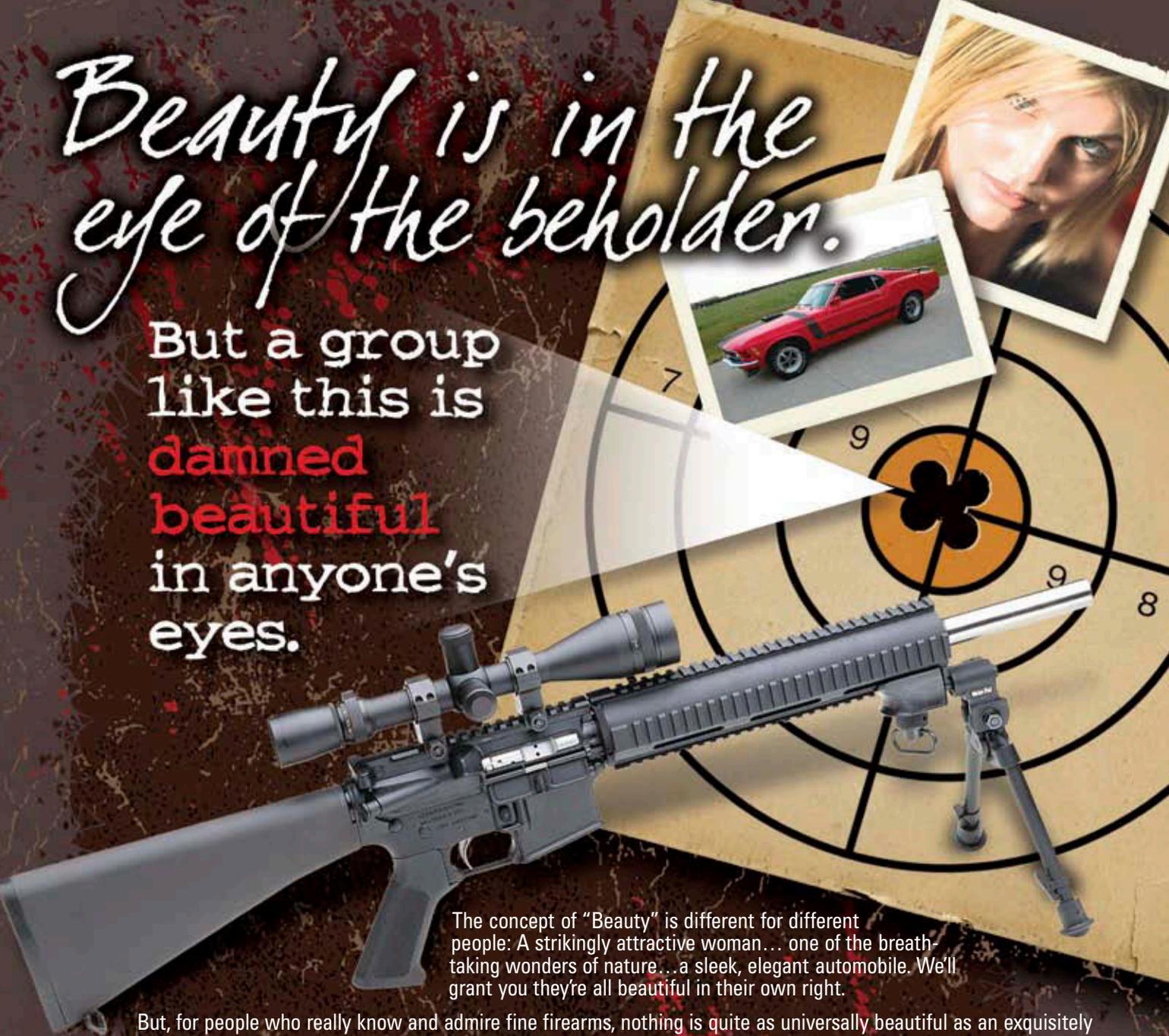
by state police in Florida, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. SIG took its time, reinforcing its P226 and coming out with its rugged, compact P229. SIG .40s would be adopted by troopers in Massachusetts and Michigan (in both cases replacing the same pistol in 9mm), Ohio, and Arizona, where troopers had previously had the choice of 9mm or .45 SIGs. BATF currently issues the SIG .40, too. Heckler and Koch’s USP proved quite popular in .40, becoming the official pistol of the Washington State Patrol, the US Border Patrol, and the Federal Flight Deck Officer program.

However, the Glock 22 was destined to become the most popular of its kind. The design geometry of its grip-frame and magazine accommodated 15 of the .40 S&W cartridges, making the gun a 16-shooter. If a 12-shot .40 had split the difference between a 16-shot 9mm and an 8-round .45 to become an ideal compromise, a 16-shot .40 seemed to go beyond compromise and become the best of both worlds.

Time marched on. The full-size Glock 22 and the 14-shot compact Glock 23 swept law enforcement. Boston, Detroit, Miami, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and countless cities and counties around the nation standardized on the Glock .40. South Carolina became the first state to outfit its troopers with the Glock .40 as soon as the G22 came out, and was followed by Missouri, Oregon, and even Illinois, whose trademark duty pistol had been the S&W 9mm since 1967. In the first decade of the 21st Century, Chief Bill Bratton would make the G22

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**The power of the .40 S&W is identical with the old .38 WCF albeit in a much smaller package.**



**Law enforcement had carried the .38 Special (left) for nigh on to 80 years, though some preferred the more powerful .357 Magnum (middle). The switch from the 6-shot revolver to the high capacity self-loading pistol culminated in the wide acceptance of the fledging .40 S&W (right).**



**Back in the late 1980s, the debate over firepower vs. stopping raged between the fans of the 9mm Luger (above, left) and fans of the .45 ACP (right). The emergence of the .40 S&W (middle) ended the debate for the most part. Improved performance of the 9mm (below, left, as exemplified by Hornady's new Critical Defense ammo) has narrowed the gap in popularity with the .40 S&W, especially in small lightweight pistols, but the .40 S&W is still quite popular in law enforcement, personal defense (with ammo such as Winchester Personal Protection) and competition.**



standard issue for new LAPD officers and optional for the rest, and Superintendent Phil Cline would also approve the Glock .40 as optional for Chicago PD. The Feds would go to it in a big way, too. After the S&W 10mm project went south on the FBI, the Bureau adopted the Glock .40 as standard issue a decade ago. It is also in use with US Marshal's Service and the DEA.

Armed citizens had more choice, but the compromise factor was at work there, too. The .40 S&W round has become hugely popular in the "civilian" sector. The compact Glock 23 and subcompact Glock 27, for example, are consistent best-sellers.

Most who have gone with the ".40 compromise" have been happy with it. Many still use the first generation load, a 180-grain JHP at around 980 fps. It basically duplicates the ballistics of the 19th Century .38-40 WCF. Departments such as Nashville PD (G22, Winchester Ranger) and Tulsa PD (G22C, Remington Golden Saber) have had excellent results with 2nd generation transonic ammo, 165-grain JHP at 1,140 fps. Border Patrol reports splendid results with a similar transonic 155-grain at 1,200 fps. These rounds roughly approximate the ballistics of the .357 Magnum with a 158-grain bullet at 1,200 fps. (A subsonic 165-grain, developed for the FBI, is more of a hot .38 Special by comparison.)

A 3rd gen load, the 135-grain JHP at 1,300 fps, equals or exceeds the devastating wound ballistics of the 125-grain .357 Magnum, and is produced by smaller ammo companies such as CorBon and Double-Tap. The South Bend, Indiana Police Department has had tremendous success with its SIG .40s and the CorBon 135. Finally, 200-grain handloads have made inroads in USPSA competition with the .40, but that bullet is not yet seriously in play on the defensive side. Clearly, the .40 S&W is a versatile cartridge giving its user a wide range of load options.

Of late, S&W is back at speed with its very own cartridge, because its polymer Military & Police pistol is making significant inroads. It has been adopted by numerous city, county, and state police departments, with .40 by far the



**Though not the most accurate pistol cartridge out there, the .40 S&W has more than enough accuracy for its purpose. Pistol is a Glock 22.**



**The SIG P226 in .40 was very popular with US law enforcement, although the P229 in .40 has replaced it as SIG's best-selling police pistol in the US today.**



**The Glock 27 subcompact .40 has proven hugely popular among armed citizens and off-duty cops alike. This one wears Trijicon night sights.**

most popular of its four offered calibers. The state troopers of Colorado and Iowa, for example, now carry the M&P40, and the same gun has recently been adopted by the city police of Detroit and Milwaukee.

Not all found the .40 the ideal compromise. The State Police agencies of Georgia, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina eventually traded their .40s for .45 GAP pistols from Glock. North Carolina cashed the .40 for the .357 SIG. In each case, a perceived need for more power was the reason offered.

The bottom line, however, is the .40 Smith & Wesson cartridge is here to stay. It is the standard issue of more American law enforcement agencies than any other. No caliber since the .38 Special has become so popular so quickly after its introduction. Simply put, the .40 S&W was a brilliant concept, in the right place at the right time.

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**6 1/4" overall, blade 3 3/4", 1/8" thick.**  
**SS167 Blade Only.....11.95**  
**SS167K Renaissance Kit.....14.95**

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**7 3/8" overall, blade 3 3/4", 1/8" thick.**  
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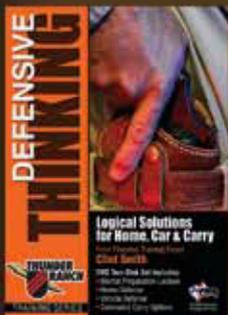
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# VIEWS NEWS AND REVIEWS

## RIGHTS WATCH

• DAVID CODREA •

### THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME

“I used to bring all of my producers to the shooting range in Manhattan,” MSNBC commentator Rachel Maddow told NBC “Late Night” host Jimmy Fallon.

What’s that? One of the most vocal “liberals” in the media championing the right to keep and bear arms?

Hardly.

“I like making liberals shoot guns,” she explained, “I just don’t think we should be allowed to bring them home... just leave it there. It’s a game.”

A communal solution coming from a progressive. How unsurprising, and not far from one of the gungrabbers’ dreams. From “Not-So Safe-Storage Laws,” by Dave Kopel, Dr. Paul Gallant and Dr. Joanne Eisen, we’re told “[A]nti-gun lobbies... have begun pushing for ‘community storage.’ Rather than keeping your guns in a safe in your home, you would have to keep your guns at a police station. When you wanted to use your gun for the day, you could check it out...”

For sport, you see. Because it’s all a game.

Except it’s not. What Maddow is talking about is nothing less than the complete evisceration of the Second Amendment. Which is a goal she shares with other elite media colleagues, who belittle gun rights activists with the platitude “Nobody wants to take your guns” while proposing doing exactly that.

The truth is, gun owners who reject their demands for control enrage them. And they use their positions of public access to make that known, to vent and even to deliberately mislead.

So when Chris Matthews interviewed a citizen, who had legally carried a holstered firearm on private property near a health care rally where the president was later to appear (but

nowhere near the president himself), the Hardball host couldn’t restrain himself from exploding in outrage at his guest over “the g... d... n gun!”

Continuing with their tradition of excellence in anti-gun propaganda, MSNBC deliberately cropped a photo of a man legally carrying a rifle at another event so the audience couldn’t tell that he was black. Per gun law expert, attorney and author Alan Korwin in an *Arizona Republic* opinion piece, “NBC-TV’s affiliate confessed (off-air) that including the armed man’s race... would undermine ‘the whole redneck right-wing extremist thing.’”

Which was the tack used by left-wing author, cartoonist and syndicated columnist Ted Rall, who used it to introduce his attack on gun owners who resist the national socialist agenda.

“This is a revival of Klanism,” Rall claims. “A black man is president, and the good ol’ boys don’t like it.”

Nothing like stereotyping people you hate as haters who stereotype. Which leads us to Rall’s “final solution”:

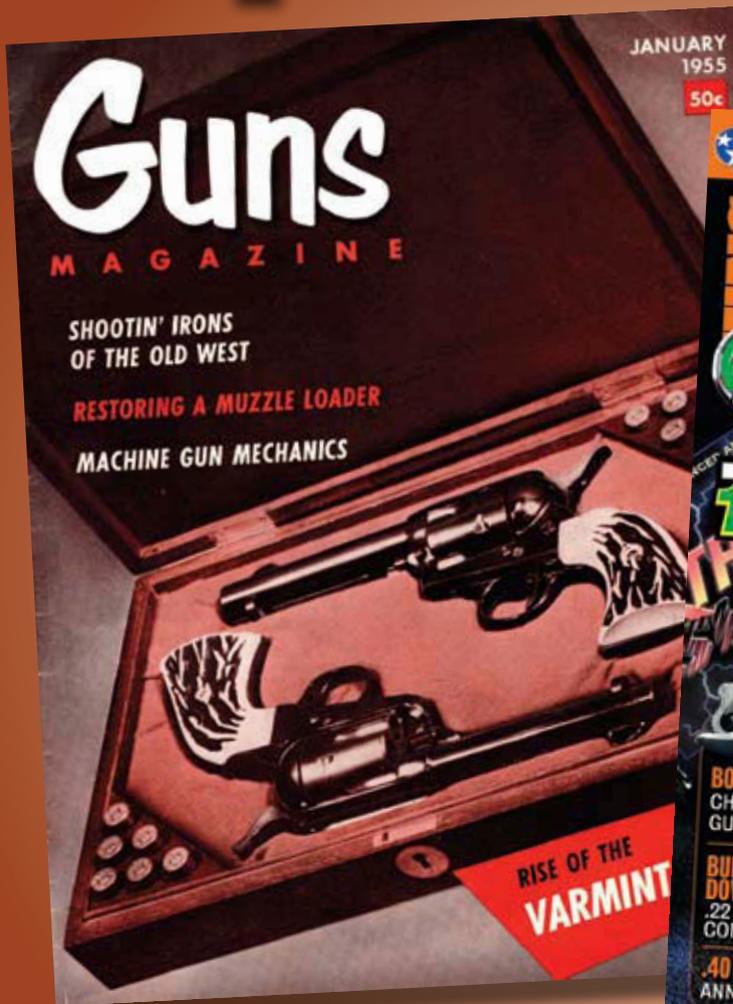
“These town hall terrorists could be declared enemy combatants and bundled off to Bagram with the stroke of a pen. If ever there were a reason for suspending civil rights, this is it.”

Careful, Mr. Rall. You’re talking about testing the ultimate last-resort purpose behind the Second Amendment. Some of us armed Americans take our Bill of Rights seriously and will not go gentle into that good night, bundled or by ourselves.

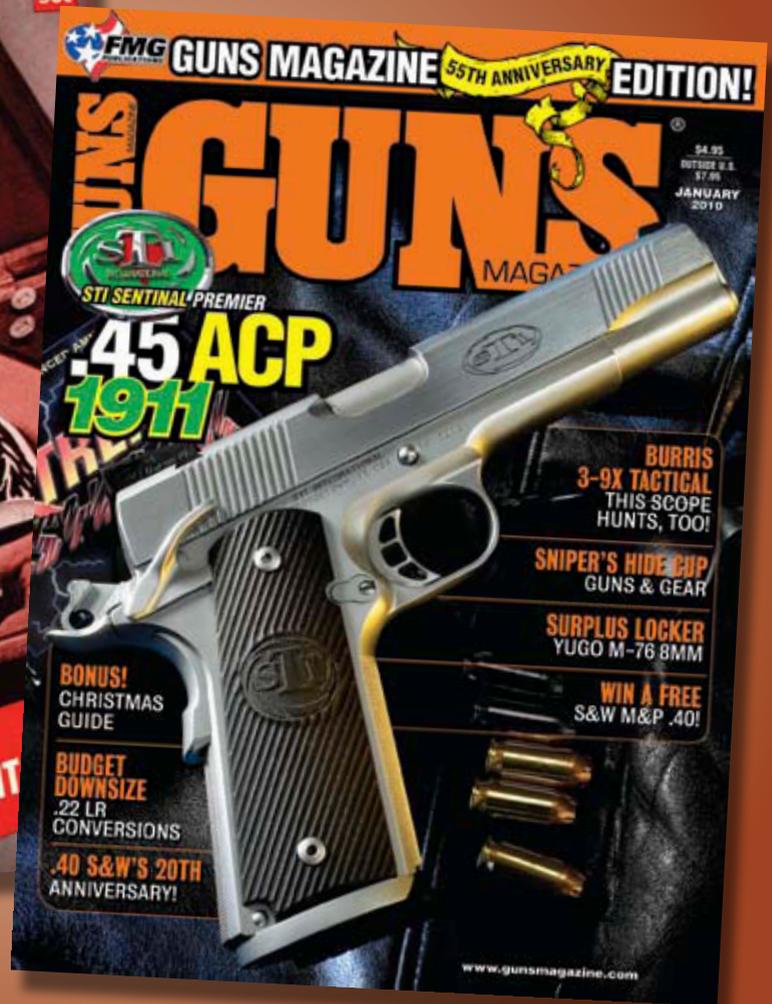
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# Experience Counts.



Issue 1 • January 1955



Issue 649 • January 2010

## *GUNS Magazine Celebrates 55 Years* Early retirement — not an option

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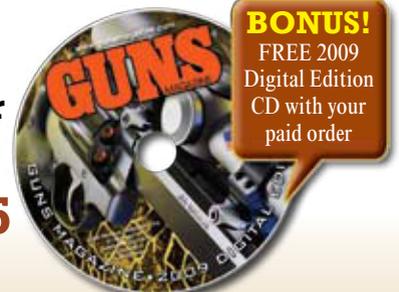
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IEWS NEW AND REVIEWS

## THREAT AGAINST KNIVES

The fight to protect America's knives is continuing, with threats by some to classify assisted-opening knives (and all one-hand opening knives) as switchblades. The American Knife and Tool Institute (ATKI) has been working with key committees in Congress to address this issue.

Currently there is a Senate amendment to the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2892) that would add a fifth exemption to the Federal Switchblade Act. This amendment would exempt any folding knife with a "bias toward closure" from being declared a switchblade. The bill passed both houses of congress and is conference committee at press time. Contact ATKI, 22 Vista View Lane, Cody, WY 82414, (307) 587-8296, [www.akti.org](http://www.akti.org).  
—*Courtesy NSSF*

## STUDY NEEDED ON MICROSTAMPING

The Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE) has submitted a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder stating its position that prior to further legislation being passed, a federally funded study on firearms microstamping must be conducted. This letter is another valuable tool for industry in the fight against firearms microstamping.  
—*Courtesy NSSF*

## BIG CONTRACT

Alliant Techsystems (ATK) received an initial \$105 million contract award as part of a 3-year contract by the US Army Sustainment Command in Rock Island, Ill., to supply various non-standard (non-NATO) ammunition for the security forces of Afghanistan. If all options are fully exercised, the contract value could potentially exceed \$200 million. This is ATK's second contract from the US Army to supply non-standard ammunition for the security forces of Afghanistan.  
—*Courtesy NSSF*

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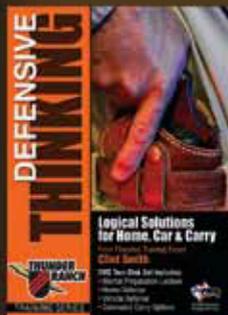


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# QUARTERMASTER



The Insight Procyon (attached to the S&W revolver) is a multiple function weapon light delivering 125 lumens for 90 minutes. Better yet, it fits in older holsters designed for the popular M3 weapon light. Below it is the handheld Regulus, a multi-function light delivering a maximum of 160 lumens for 2 hours or 300 hours on the low light setting.

## INSIGHT INTO INSIGHT LIGHTS

Clint Smith

From my perspective, Insight Tech-Gear has a relatively low profile in the industry even though they have been remarkably significant contributors to the well being of the military, law enforcement as well as civilians with their safety equipment since their inception in 1988.

Moving continuously forward, Insight has brought a new line of equipment forth under the banner of Insight Tech-Gear. Insight weapons mounted light systems were for years marketed by others. It is refreshing to see Insight step forward and get credit where it is due for their new products. The new Insight XTI Procyon—that takes its name from an F5 spectral star—has an anodized aluminum body that makes for a solid light system. Bearing the original slide lock attaching system, the Procyon will mount to all standard weapon rails. Another very strong selling point is Procyon's size and shape outline will fit the existing M3 holster carried by many police officers today... so *no* buying new

holsters, yet older light systems can be updated!

The Procyon is truly ambidextrous and its multiple function system allows for constant, momentary and strobe options to be deployed by the shooter. On the tech side, the run time is 90 minutes, the LED output is 125 Lumens and it draws power from two 123-lithium batteries. Along with the new Procyon, the Insight people have also introduced the Regulus—another star thing—LED handheld flashlight throwing a 160 lumens for 2 hours on high or more than 300 hours on the low-light setting. The Regulus stays with or exceeds the current market trend by bearing a momentary, constant strobe and dim settings all set into one end cap push button. The head and tail of the light are crenulated which is a fancy word for lots of dips and edge like things... sort of like the GG&G add on tactical thump-and-gouge widget.

So all in all, the Insight people deserve a job well done nod and a look-see by you if you're in the need of a weapons or handheld light. These, they have done right!

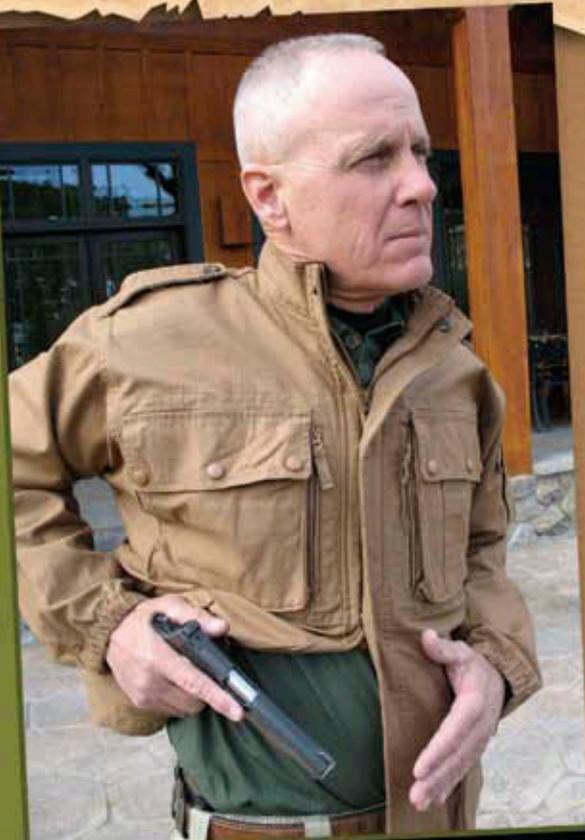
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**"The gun that's with you is better than the one that's home in the safe."**



# A GUNS MEDLEY

• JACOB GOTTFREDSON •

## LONG RANGE MAGIC The Guns Of The Snipers Hide Cup 2009.

**T**he Snipers Hide Cup 2009 was shot last April. The match consisted of some 30 events over three days with some night fire and included some pistol events. Rifle shots were taken at 30' as well as 1,000 yards and everything in between. Some were moving targets while the shooter was standing still, some were static targets while the shooter was moving, and sometimes both were moving. Some were shot from a helicopter.

Everyone would like to win or do well at this competition because there are expensive prizes and bragging rights to be had. It is interesting to see what competitors from all over the country, Canada, England and Australia bring to the competition with winning in mind. They spare little expense to purchase what they think will best do the job for both pistol and rifle.

Many shot .308s, but there were several .243s, .260 Remingtons, a

6XC, a .300 Win Mag, a .338 Lapua Mag, and at least a couple of 7mm WSM's. Herein are some pictures of what sniper's believe will put them in the winner's circle, with special attention given to the winner's rifle.

You will note that there is a predominance of US Optics and Schmidt & Bender scopes, Accuracy International rifles or variants, Surgeon or trued Remington actions, and McMillan A3 and A5 type stocks.

All of the competitors use some kind of hashmark reticle system in their scopes, most of which are calibrated in mil radians, others in minute of angle. Many shooters tape their comeups, wind, and moving target settings on their stocks. Some use handheld computers to accomplish the same thing or carry data books in their kit.

All the rifles have competition barrels from various manufacturers such as Krieger, Shilen, Hart, Bartlein, Walther, Broughton, etc. The rifles are generally built by custom gunsmiths to the shooter's specifications.

Rather than lay down a lot of ink, I thought the old adage of 1 picture is worth a 1,000 words might work best, so let's just check out some of the guns in the Winner's Circle.



**A** Terry Cross of KMW won the competition by a wide margin with this rifle of his own design. Terry designed the rifle to fit the specific needs of his Law Enforcement customers including SWAT units up to the US Marshals - S.O.G. The action is manufactured by Surgeon to his specifications, as is the stock by McMillan. Note the newly designed adjustable cheekrest hardware. Terry uses a 5.5-22x56mm Nightforce scope. **B** The ambidextrous magazine quick release is designed to eliminate accidental release while offering quick user access with minimal hand movement. While not shown in this photo, the stock screw access holes are designed with internal snap rings to retain the screws when the stock is removed for servicing. **C** Terry levels the Harris Bipod with the Pod Loc of his design. The stock has a dedicated bipod "station" integrally molded in for precise fit. This keeps the stock very secure and with a low profile. **D** Terry has incorporated a Badger Ordnance EFR Picatinny rail for night vision or whatever the shooter feels necessary. It is permanently inletted into the stock. For those wanting side mounted quick detachable sling swivels, those are included as well.





**A**



**B**



**C**

**A** This competitor also uses a Surgeon Rifles action in the Saber Asymmetric Warrior and sold by Ashbury International Group. This rifle is chambered in .338 Lapua Magnum and carries a Schmidt & Bender scope. **B** The Warrior has an elaborate adjustable buttstock that also folds just behind the pistol grip. **C** The Warrior also incorporates several Picatinny rails for mounting accessories on an elaborate metal fore-end.

This rifle has a carbon fiber wrapped barrel to reduce weight attached to a Surgeon action. The US Optics scope has a Horus Vision angle indicator and bubble level installed on the left side.



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A GUNS MEDLEY



*George Gardner's rifle. Owner/operator of GA Precision, George often shoots a .243 and always does well in these matches. The scope is from US Optics. Note that almost every competitor uses an extended bolt handle to aid in both leverage and quick access.*

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*Both of these rifles (above) are the Accuracy International design originating in England several years ago. However, AI's chassis design is sometimes used to mount Remington actions. The cost is reduced substantially. The rifle in front carries a Schmidt & Bender scope. The far rifle is mounted with a Horus Vision scope. The near rifle with data taped below the action has a folding stock. A typical Accuracy International rifle with a Schmidt & Bender scope (below). All rifles use a metal frame (chassis) to support the action. The sides are a rubberized material screwed to the metal frame.*

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**A** The rifle in front has a Remington action in an A5 type McMillan stock. The scope is from Carl Zeiss Optronics with a 72mm objective lens. The far rifle has the same configuration stock with a US Optics scope. **B** The owner of this Schmidt & Bender scope decided to clean the lens of dust and dirt during a break in the match by using canned air. On occasion, liquid is dispensed from the can and the liquid temperature is far below zero. The day was hot. The temperature differential caused the exterior coating to crystallize. Amazingly, the view through the scope seemed unaffected. **C** A typical setup for combat pistols. This one is a Glock in a BLACKHAWK Serpa holster.



## Why is there still an ammunition shortage?



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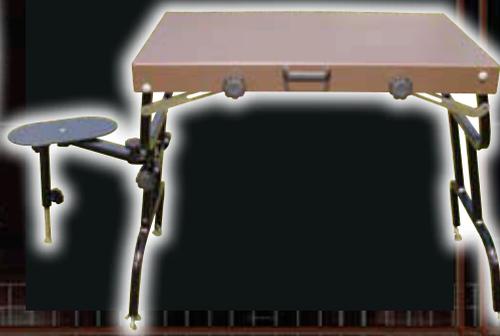
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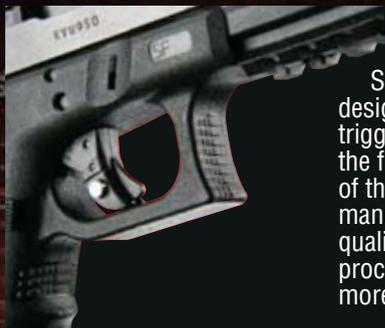
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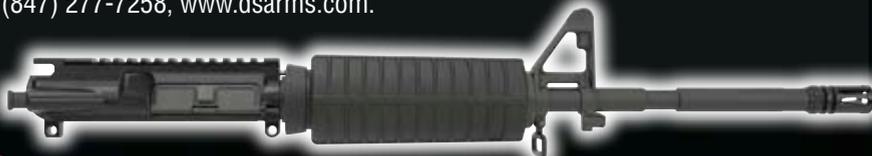
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PHOTOS: JOSEPH R. NOVELOZO

## S&W M&P .40 S&W!

It's the 20th Anniversary of the introduction of the .40 S&W cartridge in the 12+1 all-steel S&W 4006. The new polymer-frame S&W M&P is catching on with military and police forces worldwide. What better gun to giveaway during the month celebrating both GUNS Magazine's 55th Anniversary and the birth of one of our most popular cartridges?

We'd like you keep your hearing, too, so we've included a set of Pro-Ears Gold Electronic hearing protection with a noise reduction rating of 33 decibels. The hearing protectors weigh a scant 13.5 ounces. Like NASCAR? These are scanner compatible for motor sports spectators and have a 3.5mm mini jack making them radio compatible for law enforcement.

Not enough? How about also getting a Mantis Jyro knife? The Jyro can be opened with the side of the thumb and worn around the neck or on a belt with the revolutionary pendant sheath.



This contest is open to individuals who are residents of the United States and its territories only. Agents and employees of Publishers Development Corporation and their families are excluded from entering. Contest void where prohibited or restricted by law. Winners must meet all local laws and regulations. Taxes and compliance with firearms regulations will be the responsibility of the winners. Winners will be notified by CERTIFIED MAIL on official letterhead. ATTENTION DEPLOYED MILITARY: USE STATESIDE ADDRESS! No purchase necessary to enter.

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<b>CALIBER:</b>	.40 S&W
<b>CAPACITY:</b>	15+1
<b>BARREL LENGTH:</b>	4-1/4"
<b>OVERALL LENGTH:</b>	7-1/2"
<b>WEIGHT:</b>	24-1/4 ounces
<b>FINISH:</b>	Black Melonite
<b>SIGHTS:</b>	Fixed 3-dot
<b>GRIPS:</b>	Integral polymer
<b>VALUE:</b>	\$719
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<b>OVERALL LENGTH:</b>	5-1/2"
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<b>BLADE MATERIAL:</b>	M-vX
<b>BLADE STYLE:</b>	Spherical
<b>HANDLE MATERIAL:</b>	420HC
<b>LOCK STYLE:</b>	Frame Lock
<b>WEIGHT:</b>	4.1 ounces
<b>VALUE:</b>	\$160

<b>PRO-EARS PRO MAG GOLD</b>	
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Limit one entry per household.

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**(A) \$5,000 plus**      **(C) Under \$1,000**  
**(B) \$1,000 to \$5,000**      **(D) I don't hunt**

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**CIRCLE ANSWER(S) TO QUESTION OF THE MONTH:**  
**(A) (B) (C) (D)**

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# ODD ANGRY SHOT

• JOHN CONNOR •

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Well... Sorta-Resolutions.

**A**s a general rule I'm opposed to New Years' resolutions. Usually they're the result of coercion; someone wanting you to do something you don't want to do—and recipes for disaster, leaving you frustrated and guilt-ridden because you didn't achieve an unwanted and unrealistic goal by taking Draconian measures. Kinda like giving up ice cream by cutting your throat. I figure if giving it up or getting it done was that desirable or necessary, any date on the calendar would do; better, if it actually fits with what else is going on in your life. Most New Years' resolutions don't. But if you're gonna make some anyway, let me suggest a few, OK?

Gather the names, mail and e-mail addresses of the president and VP, your state and US senators, members of Congress and state assemblies. Get those local mayors, councilmembers and chiefs of police, county commissioners and sheriffs too. Pre-enter that info in your computer as a template. Set aside copy paper, envelopes and stamps, reserving them for sounding off to the people who are supposed to be working for you. The more organized you are the easier it will be, and the more likely you'll do it.

Polls over decades have indicated that only about six percent of US gun owners ever send letters or make calls to elected officials. Make this the year they're going to hear from you—more than once! Note: With politicians, e-mails can nudge opinions, but real letters have “throw weight.” Send both. If you're using a computer, it's just another couple of keystrokes.

### Just One New Shooter

If you don't compete, resolve to attend—just as an observer—two matches in 2010. Select different disciplines, like IDPA and Cowboy Action, or a 3-gun match and a long-range silhouette shoot. Learn what these folks do, and you'll frequently learn they do a lot more than burn gunpowder. Many local groups perform valuable community services, distribute information on gun rights, and monitor legislation at all levels. Even if you don't get involved in competition, you might find something interesting and even altruistic to do while making new

**If you had three minutes' notice and had to leave your home for an undetermined period, do you know what you would wear, much less take with you?**

friends.

Set a goal of introducing just one new person to shooting. It doesn't have to be hard, and you don't have to be a certified instructor, just a friendly, patient person.

If you're not that confident of your instructional abilities, you don't even have to take them shooting. Just give 'em the fundamentals and tell them

what your shooting interests are; let 'em hoist, point and feel the action of your favorite guns, then refer them to locally available novice instruction in safe firearms handling, like a hunter safety course and/or a concealed weapons permit certification class.

Just one person. Perhaps 1 in a 100 of those exposed decide guns are not for them, for whatever reasons. I'd go to Vegas with those odds...

### Prep For The Inevitable

About 3/4 of you live in places subject to earthquake, hurricane, flooding, tornados, severe storms, forest or wildfires, widespread power outage and public services shutdowns—mostly metropolitan areas if not inside the big cities. If you had to “hunker down and sit it out” without lights, gas or tap water for 24 or 48 hours—are you ready for that?

If you had three minutes' notice and had to leave your home for an undetermined period, do you know what you would wear, much less take with you?

I'm not doomsday-sayin' here; these things happen regularly. The sheer size of our country and numbers of our population work to make such occurrences seem less threatening, less likely to happen to us. But every day, it happens to some of us.

Resolve to give it some thought, and maybe take four simple actions to better prepare yourself and your family for an emergency, natural or man-caused.

If all you did was put up a couple of new smoke detectors, get first aid kits for the family, put 10 gallons of sealed water containers away and create the Go-Bag you would shoulder if a fire department bullhorn blares, “Get out, get out! Go north to the park now!” you will have done more than 95 percent of your neighbors.

### Signature Messes

Time to lighten up. Know what a “signature mess” is? That's the mess which, despite your compulsive neatness in every other way, has your name



written all over it. If you don't know what yours is, just ask your spouse. Good ones—and I hope you've got a keeper—tend to overlook 'em because they *are* yours, and you're otherwise the perfect mate...

Let's say it's your gun cleaning gear. In my case it's called "those stained, ripping cardboard boxes of junk decorated with oily rags." Is yours known as "the stinky burlap bag fulla crap that leaks all over the basement floor"?

Resolve to eliminate that in 2010. Toss all those worn-out bore brushes and sundry consumables, replace them and containerize everything to stack flat. Go online to [www.mtmcas-gard.com](http://www.mtmcas-gard.com) and check out all of their storage boxes—it may inspire you.

Here's the best part: There is not a spouse alive, male or female, who is not shocked and tickled pink to find you've reduced, tidied and neatly containerized your "signature mess." Such a move sends the signal that you are now all grown up, and you will soon proceed to organize the rest of your life. Go on, let them believe that, the poor deluded souls. You still get a big gold star.

Sure, I have a coupla sorta-resolutions myself: First, *learn how to walk again*. I'm workin' on it, and refuse to set unattainable goals. Just to "walk" and not fall down a lot will do just fine.

Second, I'll try to semi-adequately thank my wife and all the others who have stood by me throughout The Crippled Caveman Chronicles this past year and a half. That may take the rest of my life—and I'll never complete it. 



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# GUNS

MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2010

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# CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

## LETTERS TO TWO EDITORS

### The beginning...

**JANUARY 15, 1955**  
**Vincent T. Tajiri, Editor**  
**GUNS Magazine**

Dear Mr. Tajiri:

I am writing to you because of the events of the past couple days. I am 15-years old and a junior at John R. Buchtel High School. Last Friday my English teacher gave us an assignment to write a thank you letter to someone in business. I couldn't think of anyone to write to and then I went downtown and found something that almost made my heart stop. There on the magazine rack was a copy of *GUNS Magazine*; I understand it is the first issue. That cased pair of single action revolvers on the front cover caught my eye immediately.

I have to tell you I do not get to do much shooting except during the summer on my uncle's farm. You see there are no guns allowed in my house as my stepdad went through some of the worst fighting in World War II, was wounded in action, and then remained a prisoner of war until the end of the fighting. Someday, perhaps when I graduate, I will have a job and be able to buy my own guns. Until that time I will look forward to *GUNS Magazine* every month to keep me informed until I can actually buy my own guns.

I don't know if you can understand how hard it is to be passionate about firearms and not be able to have any. I am fortunate to have an English teacher who understands and allows me to write reports from the outdoor magazines and now I will be able to actually report on gun articles. Thank you again for making it easier for me to survive until I graduate and have my own job. When that time comes I guess I'll have to work on coming up with an idea on how to

actually bring guns into the house. Again, thank you for such a fine magazine and I look forward to many issues.

Sincerely yours,  
John Taffin

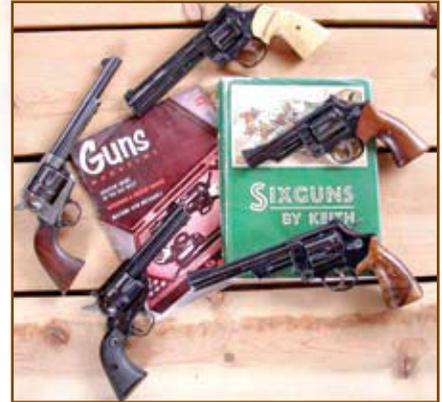
**SEPTEMBER 1, 2009**

Dear Jeff:

It doesn't seem possible 55 years have passed since I wrote that first letter to the editor of the then new *GUNS Magazine*. Here we are not only celebrating the 55th anniversary of *GUNS* but this is also my 101st Campfire Tales so I am beginning the second 100. I would imagine by time we hit the 200th someone else will be handling my writing chores but it is at least nice to look forward to the next step and dream. I've always been a dreamer and it seems we spend much of our early life dreaming, then live through several decades of reality, and then go back to dreaming again in our twilight years.

I would guess every kid growing up looks back at their time as the best time to have been living. Those before World War II mostly experienced country life and all that entails, even those growing up during the Depression look back favorably on their formative years, and by time the 1950s arrived life was looking pretty good. I have often maintained the 1950s were the best ever for kids to be kids. When 1950 arrived I was in the sixth grade and by 1959 I was married and reality had definitely sunk in.

Not only were the 1950s a grand time to be a kid, 1955 can certainly be labeled that wonderful year. Just consider some of the special things that took place that year. Ike had been elected on a platform of ending the Korean War and this happened in 1953 so by 1955 everything looked really good. Jeff, of course, you are much too young to have experienced



**All these arrived in That Wonderful Year 1955: At top is the Colt .357 Python, S&W's .357 Combat Magnum and .44 Magnum rest on Elmer Keith's Sixguns, and the Ruger Blackhawk .357 and Colt SAA .45 with the first issue of GUNS.**

any of this but believe me when I tell you there has never been a time like the '50s nor a year like 1955. In February of that year President Eisenhower sent the first advisers to Viet Nam; at the time it looked like a good idea, however little did we realize what would happen in the 1960s.

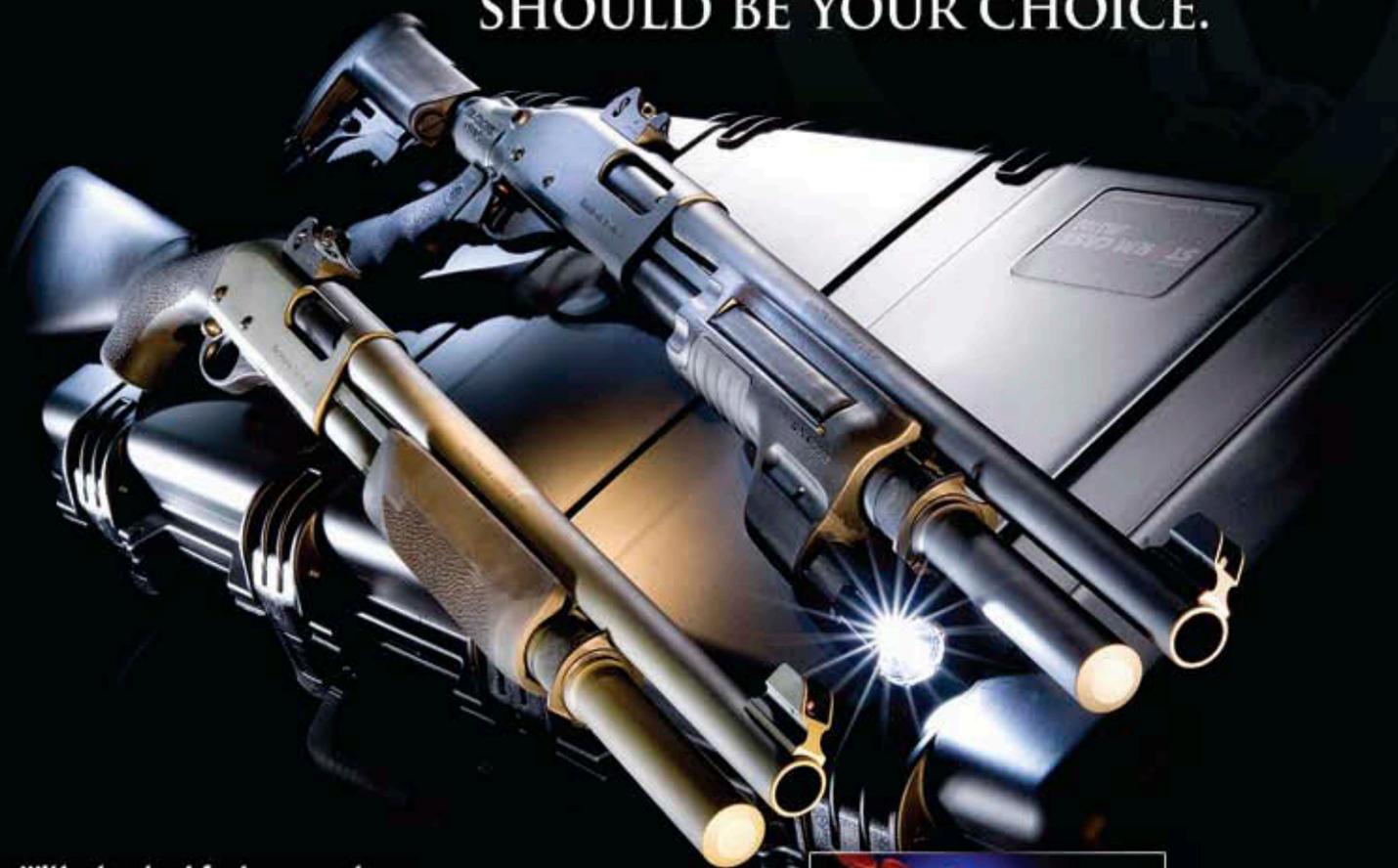
Every summer right up to 1955 parents were terrified at the thought of their child contracting polio; Jonas Salk conquered that dreaded disease with his vaccine which arrived in April of 1955. That same year Disneyland opened, *Gunsmoke* arrived on TV, and on a sad note, James Dean was killed in an automobile accident.

The real Dodgers, those from Brooklyn, beat the Yankees in the World Series, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on the bus and Civil Disobedience and Civil Rights had begun, and Coca-Cola arrived in tin cans. We all went to see *Blackboard Jungle* and heard Bill Haley and the Comets *Rock Around The Clock*. Rock and Roll had begun and we listened to real music by those such as Elvis Presley, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, and a wonderful

*continued on page 81*

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