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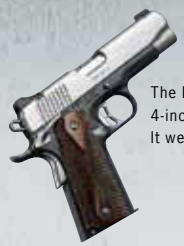

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MARCH 2011
Vol. 57, Number 3, 664th Issue

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CROSSFIRE
LETTERS TO GUNS

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Infidel

Thanks to a good friend of mine, it was suggested I subscribe to *GUNS Magazine* and I've been glad ever since.

I read with interest and disgust, Odd Angry Shot, authored by John Connor. I also ordered two ball caps, one for me and the friend who suggested your periodical.

Thanks for a very interesting, at times, thought provoking magazine.

Alan Jerram
via e-mail

Thanks Alan! For any of you interested in an Infidel hat, contact OPSGEAR, 386 North Redwood Road North Salt Lake, Utah 84054, (866) 608-1543, www.opsgear.com.—Editor

Time & Motion

In John Barsness' article, "Saving Time and Motion," he compares the relative merits of using a mechanical scale vs. an electronic scale. He concludes using an electronic scale is too slow for loading many rounds.

Sometimes a hybrid method is worth considering, which is faster than both: Set the electronic scale for your intended powder load, and set your mechanical powder dispenser at around a grain less than the intended load. Then all you have to do is drop the mechanical load into the electronic scale's tray, put it on the electronic scale, and let it fill to the intended load. It only takes a second or two.

Sometimes gray is better than black or white.

Dan Becker
Warminster, Penn.

Christmas Gifts

I read John Connor's article about Christmas gifts for our troops over seas and it brought back a father's pride. We were having a rummage sale 2 years ago and my son was 7 at the time. He said that he wanted to sell his toys and buy the soldiers guns and bullets. We explained that the military supplied the guns and ammo but the soldiers needed, and would appreciate, other things from home. He sold about $75 worth of toys which we matched along with both his grandmothers. He went to anysoldier.com and picked three soldiers and bought items from their lists, then mailed everything to them.

He was privileged enough to meet two of the young soldiers when they came home. One was from the town next to ours and the other was from Ohio. We still talk to the soldier from Ohio and he has come to visit us several times. Both of them expressed the good feeling they get when they receive care packages from home. It lets them know that they are not forgotten.

Everyone should remember that they are fighting for our freedom and deserve all of our respect and honor. Also, it's amazing what a father can learn from his 7-year-old boy.

Wayne Gotz
Pinopolis, SC

Happy Mas

As a relative newcomer to the whole subject of firearms, I love to read the various articles in you magazine. I always check out the on-line version while waiting for my print edition. I got my license to carry just a few years ago (I'm now almost 60) and carry a Rock Island 1911. I also own a vintage Remington M1917.

Well, I'm reading the article on the SIG 2Sum and I look at the photo of Mas Ayoob and the caption that says "A happy Mas with 2SUM…" All I can says is, if that's a *happy* Mas, I'd sure hate to see him when he's *unhappy!*

I'm still chuckling as I type. Keep up the good work, I'm getting a good education.

Gardere Wynne Sewell LLP
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GUNS

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RIFLEMAN

• DAVE ANDERSON •

RUNNING SHOTS

They take practice—and the right rifle.

Recently I was reading Alexander Lake's *Killers in Africa* (1951). He recounts guiding two English hunters, St. Leger and Meagher, prior to WWII. These old gentlemen refused to shoot at standing animals: "Not sporting, y'know. Must bag 'em on the wing."

A rifle doesn't have to be heavy to balance well. This first-generation Remington 700 Titanium .30-06 (above) balances 5" ahead of the trigger. The Ruger 77 Hawkeye .300 RCM Compact Magnum (below) is one of the most appealing rifles to appear in recent years. It is compact (just as the name implies), fast handling and balances perfectly for offhand or running shots. The .300 RCM provides power and a flat trajectory even with the short 20" barrel. Scope is a 3-9X Redfield Revolution.

Lake wrote, "I explained that I thought it more sporting to be sure of killing rather than wounding, St. Leger said, 'Do 'em in quickly. Elephant guns, y'know. Mustn't dispatch sitting beasts. Be like shooting sitting hares, what?'"

I doubt many today would concur with this definition of sportsmanship. But before we feel too smug and superior, consider our own attitudes to wing shooting. If I were to show up for a pheasant hunt with a scoped .22 rifle and start shooting them on the ground, I suspect the term "unsportsmanlike" would be applied, even though there would likely be fewer wounded and lost birds.

When I first began hunting whitetail deer back in the '60s, the adults who let me tag along hunted in small groups by "pushing bush." While a couple of hunters would watch likely escape routes, one or two others would work through the bush and get the deer moving.

Breaking Cover

Almost always, shots were at running deer as they broke cover and headed for the next bush. I've shot more whitetails that were running than standing, including the first I ever shot at age 14. Nor have I ever wounded and lost one. Maybe because no one ever told me it was difficult, I've never been intimidated by running shots.

If I thought about it at all I'd have thought, well, that's how the adults I respect hunt so it must be OK. I hope I don't come across as too hypocritical when I say you should never shoot at an unwounded moving animal—but a good rifleman should be capable of making such shots if necessary.

A good running shot is usually a good offhand shot. The same degree of trigger control is essential to coordinate sight picture and trigger press. Getting the shot off quickly is more important than minor increments of accuracy.

Can You?

Try an 8" paper plate at 100 yards as a target and use an electronic shot timer. Start with the rifle at "port arms," safety on. At the beep, fire one shot at the plate. A good time is

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Ruger Compact Magnum in .300 RCM (L) and Remington 600 .308 are about the same length overall but the Ruger's balance is more muzzle forward. It holds and swings better for offhand or running shots.

four seconds (of course it only counts if the shot hits). When you can hit consistently with times under the five second range, your trigger control is likely good enough for running shots.

Rifle fit and trigger quality are critical. In the 1970s I used a Winchester 70 in .270 Win. It was no lightweight, nearly 10 pounds all up. With its rather beefy barrel the balance point was about 6" ahead of the trigger.

Trigger pull was 3 pounds and beautifully crisp. With its muzzle-forward balance it wasn't the fastest handling rifle I've ever used, and its weight was a burden on long hikes through snow and bush.

But how that rifle did perform on running game! With its muzzle-forward weight, once the rifle got rolling it was almost impossible to stop the swing (which is about the worst mistake you can make). I'd slide the horizontal crosswire along the body of the game and when the lead of the vertical crosswire looked right, the crisp trigger would release almost without conscious thought. I made a lot of 1-shot kills on running game with that rifle.

Obviously this was too good to keep. I picked up a light Remington 600 carbine in .308 Win, another very accurate rifle with an excellent trigger. It was a joy to carry in thick cover and on long hikes.

Trouble was I couldn't hit running game with it. It was both light and muzzle light, balancing around 3-1/2" ahead of the trigger. It was quick to start the swing and equally quick to stop.

As long as the rifle swings smoothly without stopping, the lead can be off a few inches either way and you'll still get a solid hit. But stop the swing and you can easily shoot behind the game, even at moderate ranges.

"RANGE, SPEED OF TARGET, ANGLE, REACTION TIME, SPEED OF SWING. THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN IS BY PRACTICE, WHICH ADMITTEDLY ISN'T EASY."

Balance is more important than weight. What I like is a rifle weighing 7 to 8-1/2 pounds all up, with the balance point about 4-3/4" to 5" ahead of the trigger. I like a 13-1/2" length of pull and I'd rather have it an inch short than 1/4" too long. I like a 2-1/2- to 3-pound trigger, crisp and above all consistent.

How Much To Lead?

There are so many variables I can't give a pat answer: range, speed of target, angle, reaction time, speed of swing. The only way to learn is by practice, which admittedly isn't easy. Not many ranges have moving targets. The best alternative most of us have is to shoot skeet or sporting clays.

When I was a kid I would hang targets, tin cans and such, from a string, set them swinging and shoot with my air rifle from 10 yards or so. My other "training" was hunting rabbits with my big dog Tex. He didn't have the speed to catch them, but he'd root around in one bush and eventually a rabbit would break out and head for another. Using my Anschutz .22 I'd get two or three shots off, spotting bullet strikes and correcting. I missed a lot at first but as time went on I hit more than I missed. One I recall was running broadside flat out. I killed it with one shot and it must have rolled 20'. I paced the distance at around 80 yards.

Key points: (1) rifle fit and trigger quality are critical (2) first learn to shoot quickly and accurately offhand (3) lead the target (4) keep the rifle swinging smoothly (5) break the shot without stopping the swing.

Oh yes, and once you know how to do it, don't—unless necessary to keep wounded game from escaping. GUNS

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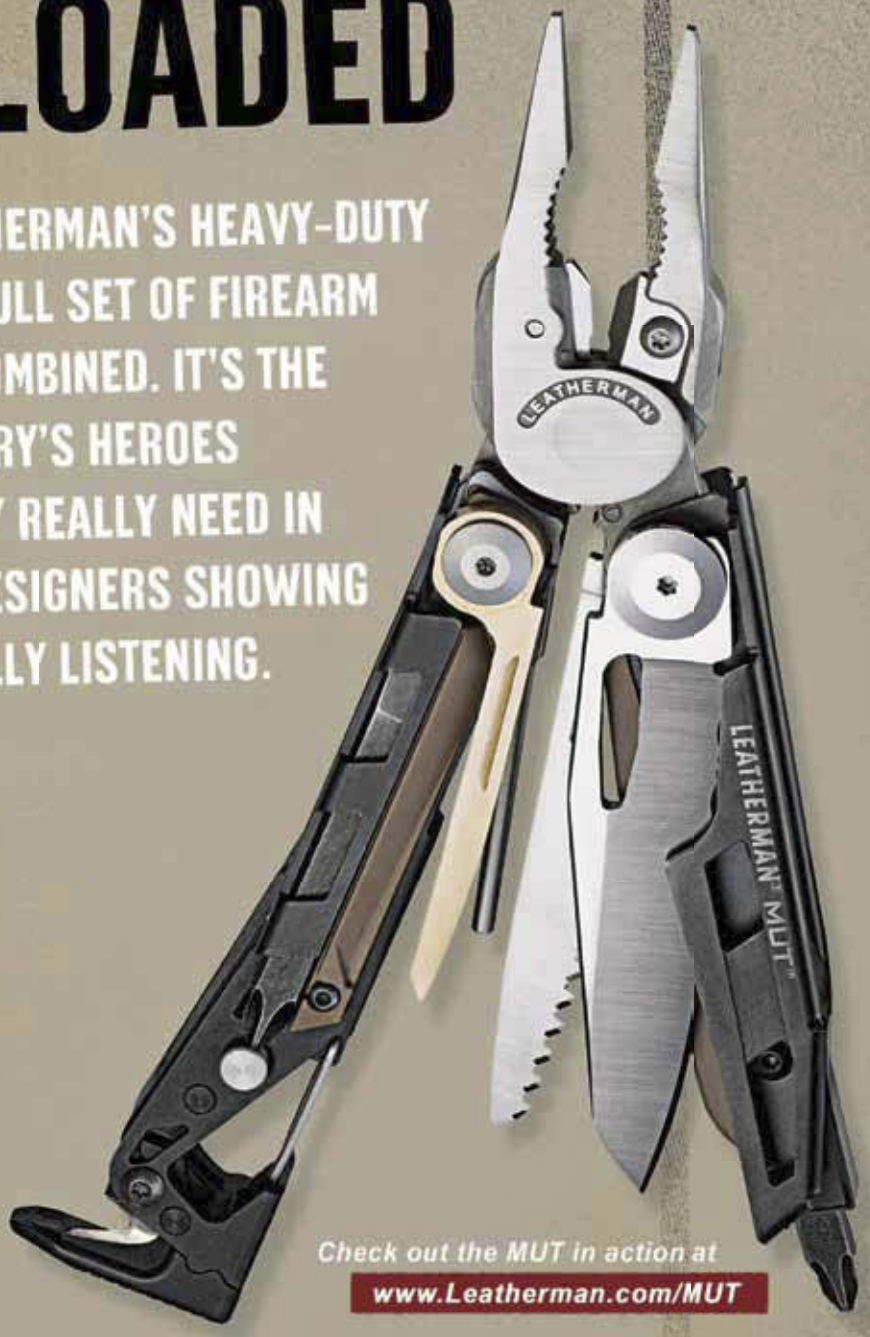

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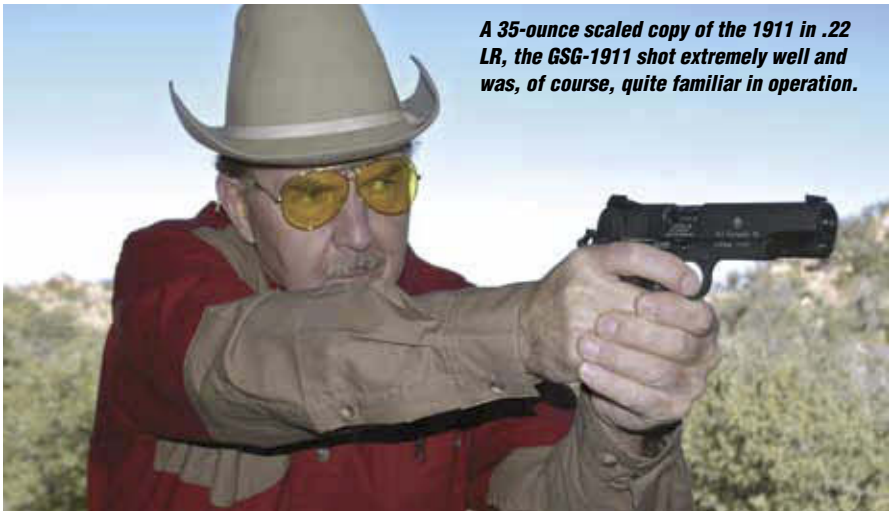
An endearing quality of the .22 rimfire is it can, and has been, chambered in every significant handgun and rifle design since its inception. The great benefit of the rimfire's adaptability is we can enjoy a variety of "understudy" firearms. By "understudy," I mean a rimfire handgun or rifle that approximates the style, size, features, weight and handling characteristics of a classic centerfire model.

Good examples would be the Winchester Model 52, Kimber M-57M, CZ 452 or Anschutz 1710D for a bolt action; a Marlin 39A, Browning BL-22 or one of the many Henry models for a lever action; a Colt/Walther M4/M16, Smith & Wesson M&P15-22 or Ruger SR-22 for an AR, a Freedom Arms Model 83 or 97, Taurus Tracker, EAA Bounty Hunter, S&W M 617 or Ruger Single-Six for a revolver. However, when it comes to the semi-automatic handgun, a rimfire Model 1911 clone clearly dominates the field like the Kimber Tactical, Colt Ace, Chiappa 1911-22 and the latest entry, German Sport Guns' GSG-1911.

Walking into any gun shop in town, I'm always asked, "What's new?" Sometimes I have a tidbit and sometimes I don't. If I don't, I ask them, "What's new?" Strolling into Murphy's Gunshop in Tucson, Arizona, recently, Chuck Donohue grabbed me by the arm and asked if I had seen the new GSG-1911. I hadn't. From the rimfire handgun case, he pulled out one of the nicest 1911 rimfire clones I've ever had the pleasure of handling.

Features Galore

It had all those nice bells-and-whistle type features we look for in an enhanced model. Working the action and then dry firing it, I asked what kind of a price tag it was carrying. When Donohue responded I could walk out of the door with it for $329.95, the fellow standing behind me asked if they had another one in stock! A few minutes later, I did walk out the door with that GSG-1911.



A 35-ounce scaled copy of the 1911 in .22 LR, the GSG-1911 shot extremely well and was, of course, quite familiar in operation.

The magazine fed roundnose and hollowpoint ammo flawlessly, including cone-pointed Aguila Colibri.

Two-years ago in these pages, we reviewed German Sport Guns' rimfire clone of the HK MP-5. It was spectacular in its details and the quality of its machining so spectacular, in fact, that HK lowered the legal boom on GSG, prohibiting them from manufacturing any more rimfire MP-5s. Also, if you own a GSG-5 SD with the original fake suppressor on the barrel, contact GSG immediately to get a replacement suppressor unit. The BATF has ruled the original fake-suppressor design is in violation of the National Firearms Act, and that is one act you do not want to be on the wrong side of.

While GSG has turned its sights to other new projects, what's interesting is Germany is becoming a hotbed for cloned classics. Recently imported were accurately machined copies, albeit in semi-automatic mode, of the German MP-38 "Schmeisser" in 9mm and the MP-44 "Sturmgewehr" in 7.92x33. Running $4,000 and $5,000 respectively, they're costly clones. That's why the GSG-1911, retailing for $329.95 is such an excellent value for the quality you receive at a time when the value of the dollar is scraping along the bottom.

Full Size

If someone were to hand me a GSG-1911 rimfire, and I didn't look at the chamber, I would swear it was an enhanced .45 ACP at first glance. It has the same dimensions, weight and feel of a standard size Model 1911 with a 5" barrel, and with the exception of a few small parts like the

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You probably won't need to shoot 96,322 rounds* with any handgun, but the fact that an HK P30 can give you the reassurance that if you need to stake your life on the reliability and durability of any handgun, you can depend on a P30 from Heckler & Koch. Designed for European law enforcement agencies, the P30 is a premiere sidearm for anyone serious about personal security. Available in 9 mm and .40 S&W, the P30 comes as a standard model, L model (long-slide), and S model (with ambidextrous safeties).

Choice of trigger firing controls include HK's renowned Law Enforcement Modification (LEM) enhanced double-action only and a conventional double-action/single-action mode with a decocking button. And all P30 models are easily customized for any operator with changeable backstrap inserts and grip panels. For more information and to put an HK P30 in your hands, see an HK Authorized Dealer. For the location nearest you, go to www.hk-usa.com or call 706-568-1906.

*96,322 rounds fired by HK P30 9 mm serial number 129-012246 (shown above). For the full story, visit http://pistol-training.com/archives/2668.

US: www.hk-usa.com / Global: www.heckler-koch.com
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HK
HECKLER & KOCH

At 25 yards, the GSG-1911 proved very accurate.

sights, it's all metal.

Examining the details more closely, the GSG-1911 features a Novak-styled, 3-dot sight system. The streamlined rear sight is adjustable for windage while elevation is controlled by the height of the front sight. Three front sight blades with different heights are included with the 1911, and I found the middle-height sight was perfect for a 25-yard zero. The 3-dot sight picture is sharp with ample daylight around the front blade.

The 1911 clone sports a slick, extended, ambidextrous thumb safety, as well as a good-looking and functional upswept beavertail grip safety. Of course, there's a 1/2-cock safety notch on the ultra-light, skeletonized, match hammer, but if you want to practice cocked-and-locked drills, this clone will really accommodate you. The tension on its ambidextrous thumb safety has been set just right—not too hard, not too soft.

The skeletonized, lightweight trigger is fully adjustable for over travel with a turn or two of one of the Allen wrenches included with the gun. On my Lyman electronic trigger scale, the trigger measured a consistent 5 pounds, 11 ounces. The manual specifies 5 pounds, 5 ounces. (When was the last time you saw a trigger weight specification in a rimfire manual?!) A few ounces either way isn't critical. What is, is the consistency of the break point, and the GSG trigger deserves an A-rating for its crisp, consistent let-off.

GSG-1911

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ACTION TYPE:
Semi-auto, blowback
CALIBER:
.22 Long Rifle
CAPACITY:
10
BARREL LENGTH:
5"
OVERALL LENGTH:
8.58"
WEIGHT:
35 ounces
FINISH:
Matte black
SIGHTS:
3-dot, adjustable
GRIPS:
Walnut, checkered
PRICE:
$329.95

Metal Magazines

The metal magazine holds 10 rounds of Long Rifle. It fed roundnose, hollowpoint and even the little conical pointed bullets found in Aguila Colibri flawlessly. According to GSG's excellent owner's manual, the 1911 has been adjusted for standard as well as high velocity Long Rifle ammunition, which surprises me. The 1911 did function perfectly with CCI Select at 965 fps. On the other hand, it would not eject Federal UltraMatch at 958 fps. I would tend to stick with HV ammunition. One exception to the rule in my experience is PMC Sidewinder at 1,044 fps. The PMC would not fully eject and stove piped every round.

At 25 yards, the GSG-1911 would keep 5-shot groups of CCI Mini-Mag (1,174 fps), Remington HVRN (1,015 fps) and CCI Select (965 fps) within 2" to 2-7/8". For some reason, it did not like any of the Winchester brand Long Rifle ammunition, including my favorite, Super-X Power Point.

The Novak style 3-dot sight picture is sharp and fast on target. The GSG-1911 sports all the familiar controls found on an enhanced Model 1911. Nicely checkered walnut grip panels (below) offset the upward sweeping beavertail grip safety. The skeletonized match hammer delivered speedy lock time.

For plinking around the homestead or indoors with a proper backstop, Aguila .22 Colibri, powered by priming compound alone, proved perfect in the GSG-1911. Colibri feeds from the magazine, but you have to manually operate the slide. At 10 paces, tin cans are in deep, deep trouble with Colibri.

Disassembly and reassembly of the GSG-1911 follow the standard, familiar 1911 drill.

With the cost of centerfire ammunition today, practicing your marksmanship and self-defense drills with a rimfire clone makes more sense than ever. We're fortunate to have a quality, full-size, rimfire clone like the GSG-1911 available at a very affordable price. GUNS

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MONTANA MUSINGS

• MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO •

THANK YOU TEXAS COLLIE RESCUE!

God bless 'em.

Mike "Duke" Venturino
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

This column will be very difficult for me to write but I'm going to give it a try. Many times I've bragged that my life is perfect: perfect wife, perfect home, perfect job, even the perfect dog. That last was named Brennan. He was a huge tri-color collie and my constant companion since adopting him from our local animal shelter in December 2005. He traveled with me to all the BPCR Silhouette shoots here in Montana and was a fixture at whatever spot well behind the shooting line where I set up my equipment. We were not master and dog, but partners.

Brady made himself at home on the couch after Duke brought him back to Montana from Texas.

How such a wonderful dog as he could end up in an animal shelter is another story and doesn't reflect well on human beings. The police found him on the streets here trying to get in cars with people. They turned him into the local shelter where Yvonne works part time. After his adoption I engaged in some sleuthing over a period of months, obtaining his American Kennel Club registration papers and even a photo of his win at a dog show.

Friends and strangers alike often commented on how close Brennan and I were. To which I always said the following, "Yes we are. I don't want to have to outlive that dog." Now I must, for on Sept. 9, 2010, in a horrible freak accident in our driveway I killed him. No words can describe my grief—and my guilt. Yvonne thought it was going to kill me, too. And to be honest I almost wished it would.

A friend snapped this photo of Duke in his office with Brennan only hours before Brennan's accidental death. He was Duke's constant companion.

In an effort to do something positive in my despair, I got Brennan's AKC papers out and attempted to trace his bloodlines. My thought was perhaps a puppy of his linage would help my state of mind. For reasons too long to detail here that path went nowhere.

Yvonne being far wiser than myself said, "Why don't you check out collie rescue websites? Maybe you can rescue another collie like you did Brennan." I replied to her, "Yvonne, there couldn't be enough abandoned collies to justify rescue organizations for them." With a stern look back at me she said, "Duke, you are so stupid. I bet there are dozens of collie rescue organizations." With that she googled "collie rescue" and proved herself correct. Nationwide there are perhaps hundreds of collies ranging from puppies to elderly ones, all desperately needing homes.

I wasn't totally sold on the idea but being unable to sleep much one night, I started perusing collie rescue

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websites in the wee morning hours. Montana is a distant place from most centers of population so none of those organizations were nearby. Finally, I encountered one titled Texas Collie Rescue (www.texascollierescue.com) based in Houston. Scrolling down the dogs listed as available, I stopped and stared. One 5-year-old, tri-color male named Brady looked as if he could have been Brennan's brother. Of course I recognized the fact he would not be another Brennan. I'm at least that intelligent. Still it couldn't hurt that they looked so much alike.

I read and reread his biography. Through no fault of his own Brady had been adopted twice and then abandoned. Again the reasons why that happened are too long to repeat here and again don't reflect so well on mankind. Because the Texas Collie Rescue website said it had last been updated on Aug. 14 and it was now mid-September, I had little hope that such a beautiful dog was still available. Regardless, as soon as was polite the next morning I called about Brady. He was still available! And even better he was being foster homed in the same Texas town where Yvonne's mother and stepfather reside. That same day they visited with him at the foster home and called us with a glowing report. So I submitted the necessary application by fax to Texas Collie Rescue. Normally they insist on a home inspection but since that wasn't feasible they settled for photos of our home and property, including our large, fenced backyard.

Duke and Brady (above) made their introduction at Brady's foster home in Texas. Duke and Brennan relaxing on a typical evening (below) in the Venturino household. The cat is an injured one Yvonne foster homed until it healed. This was* not *a posed photo.

We were approved but there remained the question of how to get Brady from Texas to Montana. Neither the folks at Texas Collie Rescue nor I trust the cargo holds of airplanes for dog transit. I told them "I'll drive. I can be there in three days." At first I thought there must be a day's delay getting started because our mini-van needed an oil change. Again Yvonne's wisdom helped. She said, "Get your clothes together while I take the van to one of those quick change lube places. *You need to go get that dog!"* I made it to Texas in two days.

Brady is all I could have hoped for. Of course he isn't another Brennan but he does possess those wonderful collie characteristics of gentle nature, loyalty and intelligence. The drive back to Montana gave us time to get acquainted. I will remember it fondly as one the best of my life's many road trips. Brady is lying beside me now as I write this and, like Brennan before him, when I leave the house he figures he's supposed to go too. I've taken him to one shooting event so far and gunfire doesn't bother him a bit. After Brennan's death what I desperately needed was a dog that desperately needed me. And Brady is it.

Texas Collie Rescue doesn't have a facility per se. It's an organization of folks whose focus is on saving dogs of this breed. They take in unwanted dogs and expend considerable time and treasure in helping them find their "forever homes" as Brady has. If I lived closer I would join them. It can't be said that Texas Collie Rescue saved my life but most assuredly their existence has helped save my sanity. The world needs more people like them.

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TRUE GRIT?

The Colt Single Action for self-defense.

I have carried a handgun in one form or another for 40 years and—without reservation—95 percent has been for protection either in the military or as a law enforcement officer, with the majority of carry time being done as a civilian for my personal protection.

Having taught for most of that time, I have had a lot of time to just shoot guns with the other odd five percent, in which the guns saw use in competition activities—though I was never much good at killing bowling pins, paper B27s or the occasion dastardly steel-plate cowboy.

While doing all this, sometimes I carried guns others might never consider as a carry gun. I mostly did so because I could or to confirm ideas and concepts I had been mulling over in the self-defense category. About 10- or 12-years ago I shot and carried a Single Action Army revolver (with, of course, the only true SAA being a Colt). Before anyone rips the editor about how my choice is not correct—you can carry whatever you want—I am just telling you my personal feelings and experience. So a 4-3/4"-barreled Colt .45 SAA it is. Anyways, the gun was pretty interesting and raised some unique concepts and thoughts for personal protection use.

Good concealed carry guns for their time—and their time could still be now. They include (top to bottom) the Colt .45 Single Action Army, Colt Sheriff's Model .45 and Colt D.A. Lighting .38.

The Single Action is very slow to reload. Maybe you should think about carrying two?

Mostly I did the research with someone who can shoot a single action top notch, Mike Venturino… even though he is on a submachine gun and a jeep or two binge—y'all (as they say in Texas) shouldn't pick on him so much. He is "learning" stuff, like me, by trying out concepts and mostly having fun doing it. Bottom line: My baby brother can shoot the SAA. So I had him do a few draw and fire and shoot stuff drills comparing his SAA skills (he shoots a Colt too!) and his newer acquired skills with a 1911, which some people consider a worthy piece for protection even at it's advanced age—I know the advanced feeling—anyways the kid did pretty good (see the sidebar).

The Carry

I carry the SAA in two formats, with the first being a good, old modern Milt Sparks Summer Special made up for the 4-3/4"-barreled revolver. As a good holster should, it covers the triggerguard, doesn't rock on the belt while carried or move when you draw from it. The gun doesn't bother me inside the waistband but, admittedly, it might be a bother to some. I've just carried in an IWB for decades so my butt has the permanent IWB dent and I'm used to it.

The "Real Favorite" Carry

Although the Suspender Holster is not modern, I like it a lot and use it often. For lack of a better or more

THAT'S SAVAGE ACCURACY.

When James Italiano of Mission Viejo, CA cuts the deck, he likes to show off a little bit. He uses his Savage Model 12 F-Class target rifle to split them edge-to-edge at 100 yards. Of course every one of our hunting guns has that Savage target-gun heritage built in; like the new Model 10 Predator Hunter Max 1 with AccuStock. This revolutionary system gives you the same stability and bedding of a target gun in a lightweight field gun. Best of all, it makes coyotes fold like a bad hand.

Card courtesy of James Italiano, Mission Viejo, CA

Model 10 Predator Hunter, Max-1

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The concealed carry draw using a Colt Single Action Army works this way. (Note in photo 2, Clint's thumb is not *on the hammer.)*

SHOTS ON THE TIMER

This is not scientific—besides most scientific stuff is wrong anyways—this is just the truth.

The distance is 5 yards, shooting at an IPSC target and we aimed with the sight things.

- **TIME FOR THE FIRST ROUND, ON TARGET, FROM TRUE CONCEALED CARRY.**

MODEL	TIME (SECONDS)
1911	2.75
SAA	2.60

- **TIME TO FIRE FIVE ROUNDS, ON TARGET, FROM TRUE CONCEALED CARRY.**

MODEL	TIME (SECONDS)
1911	4.50
SAA	5.20

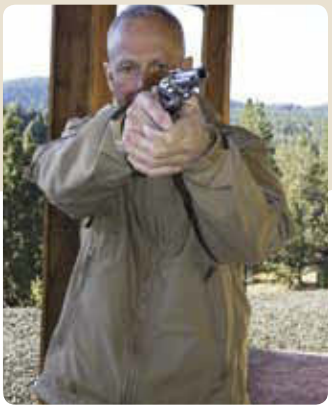
- **TIME FROM FIRST TO LAST ROUNDS, FIRING FIVE ROUNDS PLUS ONE MORE FROM CONCEALED.**

MODEL	TIME (SECONDS)
1911	8.70
SAA	15.50

- **TIME TO SHOOT UNTIL EMPTY, THEN RELOAD AND SHOOT UNTIL EMPTY**

MODEL	TIME (SECONDS)
1911	13.40 (15 rounds total)
SAA	34.00 (10 rounds total)

Easy to see here there is a difference in technology. Then again, there *is* a difference in technology. First-round and 5-round times aren't that far apart and the .45 Colt 250-grain bullet centered up is a pretty stout hit… I don't care what century you're in.



correct name for the holster, it attaches to the two buttons on the trousers and in the holster backside by a ring attached to the hanging suspender strap. I don't know what it is, but I know other guys have the same issue. As I've gotten older, my butt goes away and there isn't anything to hold my pants up, so suspenders work. Even fancy lawyers in New York City wear suspenders, so I can't be that out of style (like I worry about it) and my suspenders have holsters, which is even better yet.

That said, the suspender holster works well. I put pants on with a T-shirt and then drape a for-real shirt or jacket over the top of the trousers and gun, which conceals the big revolver easily.

The Reload Issue

Yeah, yeah I know, but then again here is a thought… I just carry another Single Action Army like the first one. It is a very quick old-man's reload. One is none, two is better, especially when it comes to a reload.

As an FYI, I always carry the gun hammer down on an empty chamber.

Yeah I know five shots isn't a Glock or a 1911, then again I am not sure why I want or need more ammo? I know the "gunfights" forums talk about a lot of shooting, but is there a lot of hitting? If I don't hit what I shoot at I'll need lots of ammo. If I hit what I shoot at I won't need a lot, so maybe I should consider shooting better, not always more? Do what you will because you will, but shooting more isn't always the answer. Maybe all of us should consider hitting more stuff?

If someone brings up the Miami FBI shooting and says, "There was a nominal 120 rounds fired," yeah, you're right, except that fight was won in the final stages by Agent Ed shooting a 6-shot revolver—he hit stuff. We had a recent 2010 shooting here in Oregon with a stupid jerk with a knife going after a cop. The cop shot four rounds got four hits and the bad guy died—in four rounds. You can berate me for a lack of rounds the SAA carries, but be careful—don't always believe you'll solve your problem with a sky fulla bullets, with the occasional hit on target. Maybe the shoot faster mantra should be balanced with the shoot gooder reality. Yeah I know "shoot better" but maybe you'll remember "shoot gooder" longer.

Today

I realize the Single Action Army probably isn't the best choice for self-defense today; then again most handguns are not good for fighting with. They can work, they will work and they have worked in the past, but they have also failed. The strong point for the SAA is a lot of you have them out there today, if for no other reason than the joy of shooting them or for Cowboy Action shooting sport, and no matter what reason you have them for, they are still a viable tool for defense.

Hitting the target is a *big* deal, so I figure I'll carry the gun I like and a gun I can *hit* stuff with. Most gunfights are won by the last round fired. If the last round is the first round fired, then we might have something, no matter what century your gun is from. GUNS

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BOLT CARRIER ASSEMBLY

The heart of the rifle.

In an AR-15, the bolt and carrier are the "action." The upper receiver serves to hold the barrel and give the bolt carrier a place to ride. There's no integral relationship between the receiver and the firing mechanism. That's different.

The bolt carrier "carries" the bolt back and forth in the upper receiver. It functions to house the bolt, sure, and also to reset the hammer. The carrier also bears the brunt of the gas pressure during operation; this pressure moves it back to cycle the firing mechanism. The bolt carrier has nothing to do with headspace. That's all in the bolt. Using the same (checked and checked off) bolt in different carriers is accepted as "safe."

Bolt carriers come in two basic configurations and then a few unique takes. The essential designs differ mainly at their back ends. AR-15 carriers have a shorter section of full diameter at its tail; the M16 carrier has a longer section. The M16 carrier has a shrouded firing pin and so requires a "large-collar" pin style. The extra collar diameter is necessary for it to be reset. When Colt did the "receiver block" to prevent owners from installing any full-auto parts, they sliced the rear of the carrier bottom slap off.

Class III Parts?

To the semi-automatic shooter, the differences in these carriers come down to weight. The M16 is heavier, just over an ounce. That's good. Now, I can't tell you to run out and buy one, M16 parts without Class III validations are a violation of the NFA. That's Federal Law. There are some "match" carriers that possess forms virtually identical to the M16's. This, as anticipated, is done to increase carrier weight. Some also like the shrouded firing pin because they think it's more reliable. In a clean rifle there's no difference. Dirty guns are unreliable, no matter which parts they're made from.

When I have the choice and when I think the rifle really "matters," I like to have a heavier carrier, and a set that's all it can be. That means proprietary carrier design, select bolt and on down the list of pieces, each representing what I think is the best of its kind, and mostly because it just makes me feel good.

Otherwise, "good" is good enough, as long as good is not a conjecture. I honestly don't think a "premium" carrier can make a rifle shoot any better. They are usually well

Here's your third hand. This is the Sinclair bolt tool. Its job is to compress the ejector so it can be easily installed or removed. Works like a charm. There's a hole in the tool that allows access to and for the ejector pin.

Glen had a wave of bad firing-pin retainers. He bought a package of six and three were usable. The ends didn't match in alignment or lengths and no amount of finesse could get the bad ones installed. After making sure it's a worthy part, he polishes and "rounds" the ends of the firing-pin retainer to make sure it's as easy as it should be to remove and reinstall. He also started using the very old-style, solid firing-pin retainers with zero problems. As often as a carrier should be broken down, such a purchase is not extravagance.

Here's nice. Originally designed by Dan Young and now done by Les Baer, it's a hunk-a-hunk of pretty metal, with features. The flutes help it hold lube and reduce surface area, and the quality and extra weight suit it well for competition use. Plating makes for no-stick clean up. Speaking of, some fear the fact the plating makes the carrier harder than the upper receiver, but, guess what? Steel is harder than the upper receiver, too. Keep it all well lubricated!

Bolt carrier designs are essentially limited to two formats for the back end of the carrier to take. Specifically, how much back end it has. M16 bolt carriers and most aftermarket "premium" carriers have a longer portion of full diameter. That makes them heavier. Glen likes heavier carriers. Higher mass means the bolt will stay locked up a little longer. If you're shooting a carbine or higher-pressure loads through a rifle, that's some insurance against pressure-induced extraction difficulties, as well as against case failures from the same cause.

conceived, however, and good to go. Quality concerns are not concerning.

Coatings

Coated or plated carriers I do think are an asset, but not an advantage. The coating makes them clean up easier and is "slicker" than Parkerizing or oxide. Oil, of course, is slicker than any finish and if either is lubricated like it should be then there's little to no point in reality for this notion. Mostly they clean up easier. Again, they don't perform better, meaning that your rifle won't shoot even one bit better with a plated or coated carrier.

Bolts?

When I can find them I use Colt's. I've yet to see a bad one. Machining is nice, especially on the faces, and firing-pin-hole sizes are consistently smallish. Firing-pin-hole size should be checked and critiqued.

Firing-Pin Holes

Blueprints call for a .058" diameter pin hole. That's ideal. If the hole is too large then primer problems will—not can—show. How big is too big? I say .062". Measure with a caliper, which is not precisely accurate, but that will show if the hole is in the smaller or larger range.

Excessive pin-hole diameter leads to primer structure failures, meaning they pierce. It's not the fit between the pin and its hole in the bolt, just the size of the hole itself. A bolt with a hole that's too big will likely not allow the use of (normally accepted) maximum-pressure loads.

We've talked about the other parts assemblies that complete the bolt, extractor, ejector and gas rings, in other articles. Quickly, though, I think it's a good idea to disassemble a complete bolt to do a little fit and finish on the ejector and extractor.

Back to the bolt carrier. Look over a new one for any rough spots, ridges or burrs and don't be afraid to smooth them over. Chrome plate won't budge much, but phosphate-finished steel will. Then keep the darn thing lubed. I use a little grease on the underside and then oil all over. Same with the cam pin; grease on its top side and oil elsewhere. Keep all this assembly clean.

Pay particular attention to the recess where the back of the bolt lives. It's tough to get the carbon deposit out of there, so, therefore, most folks don't. That's a major cause of the "mystery malfunctions" that tend to turn up after, say, 2,500 rounds of neglect. (That, and sacked buffer springs.) Likewise, keep the bolt tail (area behind the gas rings) free of

Blueprints call for a .058" diameter firing-pin hole. That's ideal. Mostly we're guarding against a firing-pin hole that's too large. To that end, 1/16" (.0625") or No. 53 (.0595") drill bits can be used as checks. If the first fits the pin hole, get another bolt. If the No. 53 won't go, use that bolt with confidence. Measure bits beforehand with a micrometer. They have a tolerance.

Here's a specialty tool to remove the otherwise patently inaccessible crud in the recess in the carrier. A few turns with Brownells' Mark Brown Carrier Scraper and you'll be amazed at how much black dust piles up.

deposits. Carbon can be tough stuff. If you get tired of brushing, try GM Top Engine Cleaner. Strong stuff. Get it at your Chevy dealer.

Shameless Self-Promotion:

The preceding is a specially adapted excerpt from The Competitive AR-15: Builders Guide, *a new book by Glen Zediker and Zediker Publishing. Check out www.gunsmagazine.com/Zediker or call (662) 473-6107.* GUNS

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RELOADING HOLLAND'S CLASSIC

The .375 H&H.

The .375 Holland & Holland Magnum was introduced in 1912, and even after almost a century is still considered the world's most versatile big-game cartridge, usable on everything from antelope at several hundred yards to brown bears and Cape buffalo close up. While many of today's safari hunters consider the "three-seven-five" a little light for elephant, many professional hunters do not—especially if their client flinches when shooting one of the .40+ caliber rifles designed purely for *big* game.

Oddly enough, relatively light recoil is one of the .375's virtues. Notice the word "relatively." A typical 9-pound .375 rifle certainly kicks more than a .30-06, but most hunters who actually shoot a .375 (rather than just theorizing) find the come-back isn't nearly as bad as they'd imagined.

Recoil

In fact, many shooters report the .375 doesn't kick any harder than a typical .300 magnum. Strange as it might seem, this opinion isn't merely subjective. The Sierra Bullets Infinity ballistics program calculates that a 9-pound .375 H&H rifle, shooting a 300-grain bullet at a muzzle velocity of 2,550 feet per second, generates 42.6 foot-pounds of recoil and 17.5 fps of free recoil velocity. An 8-pound .300 Winchester Magnum, shooting a 180-grain bullet at 3,100 fps (easily attainable with a handload), generates 39 ft-lbs of recoil and 17.7 fps of recoil velocity.

The .375 was originally designed to shoot 235-, 270- and 300-grain bullets to the same point of impact. These days not as many hunters use 235-grain bullets, instead mostly sticking to 260- or 270-grain bullets for lighter game and 300s for heavier game, but many .375 H&H rifles will still group all those bullets close enough together to be useful in the field. This isn't much of an advantage in North America but can help in Africa, where a wide array of animals can be encountered in a single safari.

The .375 H&H is the minimum legal cartridge for Cape buffalo in much of Africa and with modern bullets does a good job.

The moderate velocity of the .375 doesn't tear up too much meat, even on smaller animals like this impala, taken with a 300-grain Nosler Partition.

Bullet Range

In addition, reduced loads can be worked up with the 200- or 220-grain bullets designed for the .38-55 and .375 Winchester, sometimes even matching the point-of-impact of full-power 300-grain loads. Such loads work very well on woods deer and even varmints. While preparing for one safari, I shot dozens of prairie dogs with the 220-grain Hornady flatpoint from a Ruger No. 1 .375, and while the load didn't shoot as flat as a .22-250, the terminal effect was very similar.

A spitzer of 260 or 270 grains can be started at 2,700 to 2,800 fps, with a trajectory just as flat as the 180-grain .30-06 load, and works fine on small antelope at longer ranges, as well as large, dangerous game. If ranges aren't going to be too long, 300-grain bullets also work fine. Some hunters even download 300s to 2,300 or 2,400 fps for reduced recoil, and find they still kill even Cape buffalo very well. My friend Berit Aagaard cleanly took a big bull in Zimbabwe with 300-grain bullets at 2,300 fps.

Solids

Many African PHs still advocate an expanding bullet for the first shot on Cape buffalo, followed by solid (non-expanding) bullets for subsequent shots. Buffalo rarely drop instantly to the first bullet, so

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the theory is following shots will be at tougher angles, either rear-angling or (rarely) through the skull as the buffalo charges.

However, super-tough expanding bullets have changed this thinking somewhat in recent years, in particular the Barnes Triple-Shock X-Bullet. Either the 270- or 300-grain TSX penetrates deeply enough to work on about any shot angle.

Thoughts On Penetration

In fact the 300 grain may penetrate too much. One of the problems in Cape buffalo hunting is that they're often found in herds, either small groups of older bulls or large herds of cows, calves and bulls. Since buffalo also tend to hang out near water, they're often in thick cover, and it's difficult to see if the bull you're shooting has another buffalo standing somewhere beyond. A bullet that completely penetrates the first buffalo may travel on to hit another buffalo. A friend once had his first bullet go on through a bull and hit an unseen cow buffalo on the other side. Luckily, the bullet also hit the cow in the chest, killing her as well—but it could have just as easily hit some non-vital area.

Consequently some PHs prefer a bullet that doesn't penetrate quite so much. The 270-grain TSX doesn't penetrate as deeply as the 300-grain, but to be really sure the bullet doesn't exit, it's best to select a lead-cored bullet that expands into a more rounded mushroom. The 300-grain Nosler Partition and Woodleigh Weldcore have a long record of success, but neither penetrates as deeply as the TSX, so should be backed up with solids for follow-up shots.

Even the toughest modern bullets sometimes encounter a really hard part of a Cape buffalo. This mono-metal solid bent on a neck vertebrae.

.375 H&H HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
GUN: MARK X MAUSER, 22" BARREL				
Speer 235 Hot-Cor	*Varget*	*70.0*	*2,630*	*1.88*
Sierra 250 GameKing	*Reloder 15*	*75.0*	*2,771*	*2.16*
Nosler 260 Partition	*IMR4895*	*68.0*	*2,673*	*1.12*
Hornady 270 Spirepoint	*Reloder 15*	*70.0*	*2,663*	*1.49*
Sierra 300 GameKing	*Varget*	*64.0*	*2,492*	*1.50*
Nosler 300 Partition	*IMR4350*	*81.0*	*2,531*	*.91*
Barnes 300 TSX	*H4350*	*75.0*	*2,410*	*1.31*
GUN: RUGER NO. 1, 24" BARREL				
Hornady 220 Flatnose	*IMR4227*	*35.0*	*1,920*	*2.12*
Nosler 260 AccuBond	*Reloder 15*	*69.0*	*2,699*	*1.21*
Kodiak 270 Spitzer	*Reloder 15*	*69.0*	*2,708*	*1.57*
Nosler 300 Partition	*Varget*	*62.5*	*2,409*	*1.56*
Nosler 300 Partition	*H4350*	*75.0*	*2,589*	*1.50*

The trend these days is to flat-tipped solids. These have been found to not only penetrate straighter than traditional roundnose solids, but to also create more tissue damage. Many are also mono-metal, usually made of hard brass, so there's virtually no chance of deforming or losing weight. I say "virtually" because I have seen one .375 mono-metal solid severely bent after striking a buffalo.

One of my PHs had been guiding another client just a few days before my safari, and when he put a finishing shot into the bull's neck the bullet hit one of the very hard vertebrae and bent rather than penetrate, something the PH would have regarded as impossible beforehand. This just proves, once again, that Cape buffalo are very tough animals, in every way imaginable.

Even when not hunting Cape buffalo, I still tend to carry a few .375 rounds loaded with solids. They're very useful for finishing smaller animals without ruining hides or meat, and all the meat is always used in Africa, a continent that's constantly protein-starved. However, one thing many hunters soon discover when using a .375 on even small African antelope, such as springbok and impala (or even white-tailed deer), is that heavy softpoints also don't shoot up much meat, especially 300-grain bullets, due to their moderate muzzle velocity.

The .375 is easy to handload, except for the fact it's one of the few belted cartridges that actually needs to headspace on the belt, due to the sloping case and slight shoulder. After their first firing, cases will last longer if the sizing die is set so the shoulder also contacts the front of the chamber, reducing case stretch.

The .375 H&H is less useful in North America than Africa, but still very popular in Alaska, even with competition from the .375 Ruger. Just about any small-town store has a few boxes of .375 H&H on the shelf. The .375 H&H works not only on brown bear and grizzly but the huge Alaskan moose—and works equally well on distant caribou. It still is the most useful big-game cartridge on earth. GUNS

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(RE)ACQUAINTING WITH THE 1911

Two months with an old favorite reminds you of strengths and weaknesses in the platform.

I'm "ballistically promiscuous," i.e.: "so many guns, so little time." I generally change guns every training tour. By midsummer I had spent 2010 carrying the SIG E2 P226, Ruger P345, Beretta 92, S&W in flavors from .45 revolver to M&P 9mm auto, Springfield XD .45 ACP and, probably more than anything else, assorted Glocks. There were also a bunch of test guns thrown in for short periods, since it's kinda hard to test a carry gun for its intended purpose without actually carrying it to see if it has sharp edges that dig, or bulbous portions that bulge.

With the summer sun high, I decided to dedicate to the 1911 platform for a few months. There were several reasons why. The centennial of the 1911 was coming up, and there would be articles to write about that. 2010 was, for me, the 50th anniversary of owning such guns, having received my first as my most memorable Christmas present ever at age 12 in 1960, so there was a little personal nostalgia thing going, too.

There was also a logistical thing going. I was about to spend almost two months on the road, mostly teaching, but with a murder trial, the Gun Rights Policy Conference (GRPC), a visit with younger daughter/son-in-law/grandkids and the IDPA National Championships also on the schedule. Dress code would vary widely, from shorts and un-tucked polo to tailored "court suit," so concealability would be a factor. So, of course, would "shootability." I needed something accurate enough to win a match with, generic enough to teach gun classes with and concealable enough to carry discreetly within a broad wardrobe spectrum.

The 1911 proved to be a natural for that. Most of my students these days show up with autoloaders, so a revolver was out for primary carry, much as I enjoy shooting matches with them. The GRPC was in San Francisco, where under the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act I was legal to carry, but being out of state and not on official police business, had to comply with local laws such as California's stupid 10-round magazine limit. Carrying 10-round magazines for an 18-shot Glock personally offends me, so a single-stack gun seemed logical. If you're only gonna have a single stack, you may as well

Here reloading on a demonstrated qualification, Mas appreciated the mag-well funnel on the Wilson CQB.

"Pair guarantees spare," and Wilson (top) with big mag well and fiber-optic sights was better for match shooting, while smaller, night-sighted Brown .45 was better configured for CCW.

Smoke and flying brass mark the shot, but Wilson 1911 is still on target "weak-hand only" with 230-grain hardball as Mas competes in IDPA Nationals in Tulsa, Okla.

have a .45 as a 9mm… and, in what seemed like a confluence of the stars, the 1911 emerged as the logical choice for the long trip.

Versatility

I traveled with a "holster wardrobe" that included an inside-the-waistband (IWB) Ayoob Rear Guard I had designed for Mitch Rosen long ago, a KyTac high-ride Kydex outside-the-belt holster by Dave Elderton and a High Noon left-handed concealment scabbard in case I sustained an injury to the dominant arm. Two high-quality 1911 .45s went along for the trip. One was a 5" Wilson Combat CQB Elite I was testing for a magazine article and promised Bill Wilson I'd use in the Nationals. It included humongous geezer sights complete with bright green fiber optic front, and a magazine funnel, both good things when running at speed in mostly daylight practical pistol competition.

The other was a signature model Ed Brown stainless into which I'd had some design input, with a 4.25" barrel and Ed's trademark Bobtail rounded butt, and the Trijicon night sights I prefer for defensive use. The Wilson was the competition pistol, the Brown was the daily carry gun, and they shared duty as "teaching pistols." One thousand rounds of Rem-UMC 230-grain hardball, 500 rounds of Remington 185-grain JHP and 100 of Winchester Ranger-T 230-grain were in the van when it rolled out of the driveway. The Ranger was my primary carry load.

The slimness of the 1911 made it comfortable inside the waistband for "wake-up to bed-time carry." I had well over 1,000 rounds through the Brown when I started, and more than that through the Wilson by the time I finished, and both ran 100 percent. Both are also "1" guns" for grouping capability at 25 yards, always a confidence-builder for the user. Reliability plus accuracy is what you're paying for in a Brown or Wilson gun, not just bragging rights. As with all 1911s, a low-bore axis plus up-to-date technique kept the muzzle down when shooting fast and furious against the clock with full house (194,000 power factor) ammo. I shot too slow, but the gun worked superbly in both the Nationals and the Kentucky/Tennessee Regionals in Paris, Tenn. (When we left the latter and I was grumbling about my glacial times, my sweetie told me, "Don't worry, dear… we'll always have Paris.")

For more than two months of handgun-related work, the 1911 had proven itself to be all the handgun I needed. The platform had me covered for match shooting and handgun training, for discreet and comfortable concealed carry and for home defense. (Well, hotel room defense anyway.) Never once did I feel inadequately armed with a single-stack magazine of large-caliber bullets proven to expand to about 1" in diameter at FBI's stated optimum penetration depth. It had fit my hand like the proverbial handshake of an old friend.

Because, after all, it was an old friend. Gee… it's almost enough to make me "ballistically monogamous" again. GUNS

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It's time to give the Beretta M9 a 15-round salute. The year 2010 marked its 25th anniversary as the official US service pistol for our Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. While the M9 and the 9mm Luger have never reached the iconic status of the M1911 and the .45 ACP, the Beretta has served our forces well in conflicts like Just Cause, Bosnia, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and the continuing war on terrorism.

With a new US defense contract being signed in 2009 for an additional 450,000 more M9s, the Beretta is going to be around for a long time. In honor of its 25th anniversary, Beretta has recently released the M9 Commercial model which carries all of the correct military markings on its slide and frame, as well as a lanyard stud and is as close a clone to the military model as we'll see.

Being a family-owned firearms company dating back to the year 1526, Beretta has been in the handgun business a long time. We can begin to trace some of the design features of the M9 back to the Model 1915/1919, marketed as the Model 1922. Chambered in .32 ACP (7.65mm), the Model 1922 was the first Beretta pistol to feature a slide almost fully cut open on top.

Open Top

The open-top slide design, which we see again in the M9, virtually eliminates ejection problems. With the M9, you will never experience a "stove-piped" case nor do you have to open up an ejection port to solve the problem. There is no ejection port. Once the barrel and slide begin to move to the rear, it's clear sailing for a spent case. The open-top slide has almost become a signature for Beretta semi-automatic designs, and if you ever have to speed load a single round into the chamber in an emergency, it's the best design existent.

Theoretically, you would conclude Beretta's exposed-barrel system would be highly susceptible to the muck and dirt of war. It is, and it isn't. The M9 has to be kept clean, but it's easy to clean, and its recent reliability under combat conditions is not in question, except for after-market magazines, which we'll come back to.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the M9 design is its similarity to the features of the German P.38, the most refined handgun of WWII. It

The M9 is a big pistol, yet very comfortable to shoot.

Like the P.38, the M9's under-the-barrel locking block secures the barrel to the frame.

The rear sight is drift adjustable for windage and features a white dot below the notch. The front sight has a white dot in its center as well.

Beretta's M9 Commercial model carries a special "M9-xxxxxx" serial number. The open slide has almost become a Beretta trademark.

After testing seven models, my officer friend chose the BLACKHAWK! Serpa Thigh design during "office" hours although the Galco rig (left) proved very comfortable.

DISASSEMBLY/REASSEMBLY

The M9 is a snap to fieldstrip.

1: Remove the magazine. Clear/unload the pistol.
2: From the right side of the frame, depress the disassembly lever release and rotate the disassembly lever on the left side down.
3: Pull the slide and barrel assembly forward off the frame.
4: Compress the recoil spring and remove it with the spring guide.
5: Push in on the locking-block plunger while pushing the barrel forward slightly. Lift and remove barrel and locking block from slide.
6: The pistol is now fieldstripped and can be cleaned and lubricated. Reassemble in reverse order.

shouldn't really come as a surprise. Under Mussolini, Italy and Germany were allies during WWII, and the Italian arms designers got an up close and personal exposure to the whole complement of German weaponry. It's the extent of the similarity which is interesting.

Similarities

The P.38 features an open-top slide. Score one. The P.38 was the first successful double action semi-automatic issued as a general service sidearm. Score two for P.38 with its double-action trigger. The locking system of the P.38 features an underbarrel, locking bolt that secures the barrel to the frame and is activated by an operating plunger. (The M9's locking system is a clone of the P.38's.) Score three for the P.38. The P.38 features a hammer-dropping safety, permitting the pistol to be carried safely with a round in the chamber. Score four for the P.38. Weapon design is rarely so totally revolutionary.

In 1970, three of Beretta's top engineers, Carlo Beretta, Giuseppe Mazzetti and Vittorio Valle, were

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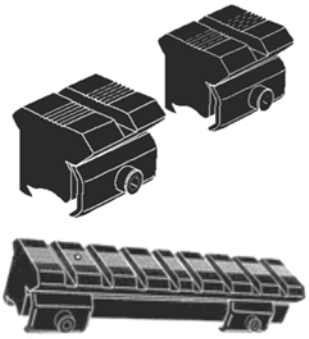

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The M9 is very accurate and, because of its size, pleasant to shoot.

The slide-mounted safety is ambidextrous and decocks the pistol. A red dot indicates "fire."

The M9 magazine release can be switched to the right side for a left hand shooter. Black plastic grips with the Beretta logo are standard.

The M9 retains a military lanyard loop.

tasked with designing a new 9mm handgun. Beretta had experimented with simple blowback designs for the 9mm Luger round, but the stiff mainsprings necessary to contain the high pressure cartridge made cocking difficult and recoil sharp. The 9x19 cartridge is a hot little number, rated with a maximum average pressure of 35,000 psi, the same pressure rating as that of the .357 Magnum.

At Beretta, the design objectives for the new pistol included a double-action trigger system, a high-capacity magazine, a lightweight aluminum frame, a hammer-dropping safety and an ability to feed any 9mm Luger cartridge. By 1975, prototypes of the M92 were ready and full production began in 1976.

By 1977, the US military establishment was instructed and funded by Congress to develop small arms on a service-wide, joint procurement basis. This was the beginning of the Joint Services Small Arms Program (JSSAP). Trials for a new 9mm NATO compatible pistol began in 1978 and ran through 1984. The Beretta 92SB-F and the SIG P226 emerged as the last two, head-to-head contenders, and Beretta, which already had a strong manufacturing facility in Accokeek, Maryland, was able to underbid SIG, which was building the P226 at the SAUER plant in Germany. It was a controversial decision, but as they say, "the rest is history." The M9 and the 9mm NATO cartridge are here to stay.

As someone who officially carried the M1911, and unofficially, the S&W M39 and S&W M60, in the service, I was surprised the JSSAP ended up with as large and heavy a sidearm as they did. If you're a ground-pounder, weight and size of your gear are

critical factors. With a loaded weight of 41 ounces and a length of 8-1/2", the M9 is a big handgun for big hands. It's a 2-fisted handgun because there is no way your thumb can disengage the slide-mounted, ambidextrous safety if fully gripped with only one hand.

Pleasant Shooting

On the other hand, being a large pistol, the M9 is a pleasant 9mm to shoot. Recoil is minimal. It points like a bird dog. Its 2-dot sight picture is clear and unobstructed, and the accuracy of the M9 is impressive. At 25 yards, 5-shot groups with inexpensive 115-grain ball by Remington (1,072 fps) and Federal (1,140 fps) routinely averaged 2-1/2" to 2-3/4". On my Lyman trigger scale, the double-action pull registers 10-1/2 pounds and the single action a very consistent 5 pounds, 11 ounces. The M9 sports a loaded-round indicator and a firing-pin block. Fit is excellent and the matte black, baked enamel finish Beretta calls "Bruniton" is proving to be durable under combat conditions.

I recently asked an officer friend what his favorite M9 holster was when deployed. He observed he had actually tested seven different designs in combat. In the field, he favors the BLACKHAWK! Tactical Serpa Thigh holster and for garrison work and down time, Galco's vertical or horizontal shoulder holsters or a Fobus paddle holster.

While the M9 went through a tough, initial shakedown cruise with some cracked slides and fractured locking blocks, those metallurgical and design issues have been addressed. The only complaint I hear loud and clear these days from troops in the field revolves around the cheap, aftermarket magazines the Pentagon ordered. They've proven highly susceptible to dirt, they jam and they simply don't work. When lives are at stake and semi-automatics are totally dependent on functioning magazines, you wonder if there's any accountability left in government procurement circles.

After 25 years of service and "Made in the USA," the M9 is a sidearm we can be proud of. I'm sure some day the 25th Anniversary M9 Commercial model with its unique M9-xxxxxx prefixed serial number will become a desirable collectable. Even if it doesn't, no milsurp collection would be complete without at least one example of the United States service pistol that will probably be on duty for the next 25 years. Ah, what better excuse is there to upgrade the collection a bit? GUNS

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ACTION TYPE:
Double-action, semi-auto
CALIBER:
9mm Luger (9 x19)
MAGAZINE CAPACITY:
15+1
BARREL LENGTH:
4.9"
OVERALL LENGTH:
8.5"
WEIGHT:
40.9 ounces (loaded)
FINISH:
Bruniton
SIGHTS:
2-dot fixed
GRIPS:
Checkered plastic
PRICE:
$650

FURTHER READING

MODERN BERETTA FIREARMS, GENE GANGAROSA, JR. SOFTCOVER. 288 PAGES, ©1994, $16.95, IDSA BOOKS, P.O. BOX 36114, CINCINNATI, OH 45236, (513) 985-9112, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/IDSABOOKS

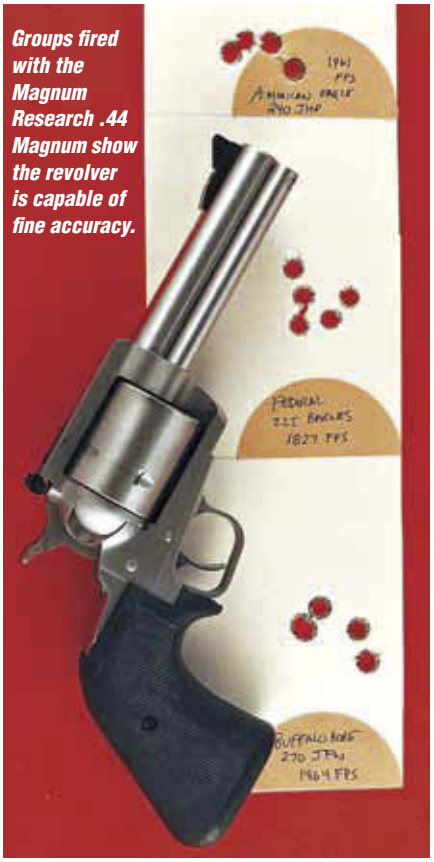
OUT of the BOX™

JOHN TAFFIN

SHORTY FORTY-FOUR

A hard-hitting, easy-packing .44 Magnum from Magnum Research.

Much of my high school class time was spent dreaming over gun catalogs. Anyone from that era will remember the breathtaking pictures of custom rifles in the Weatherby and Herter's catalogs. It wasn't long before my main interest switched to sixguns, especially custom sixguns. At the time, all I could do was dream. It was also about this same time those who specialized in customizing cars began to be noticed as a whole industry grew up, mostly in California. Someday I would have the custom guns and a custom car.



Groups fired with the Magnum Research .44 Magnum show the revolver is capable of fine accuracy.

In 1956, fresh out of high school, I bought a 1949 Ford Club Coupe, V-8 stick shift (of course) and set about customizing it. I bull-nosed the hood with fiberglass, added fender skirts and twin pipes, and soon discovered my dream car was eating deeply into my gun budget. I sold the car to a friend who won many drag races with it and I settled down with a '53 Merc 2-door hardtop that needed nothing but driving. My gun budget was safe. It was also about this same time custom gunsmiths, specializing especially in 1911s, did their magic on War surplus .45s. There had always been a few custom sixgunsmiths such as Pop Eimer, J.D. O'Meara and R.F. Sedgley going back to the time between the two World Wars, however it would be the 1970s before we really saw the advent of the modern era of the custom sixgunsmith. Today we have the best craftsmen who ever lived plying their trade and there are several dozen all with a heavily backlogged schedule.

The custom carmakers of California were soon noticed by car manufacturers who began to incorporate some custom styling ideas in the cars coming from Detroit. The same thing has happened in the firearms industry and manufacturers, such as Magnum Research, are now offering sixguns with features, which have heretofore only been found on custom revolvers. Magnum Research has been offering their BFR (Biggest Finest Revolver) for some time now in several cylinder and frame sizes and their latest offering is the Shorty Forty-Four. The BFR was offered several decades ago as the D-Max revolver. Magnum Research took over, not only greatly increasing production, but also turning this revolver into a high quality factory/custom offering.

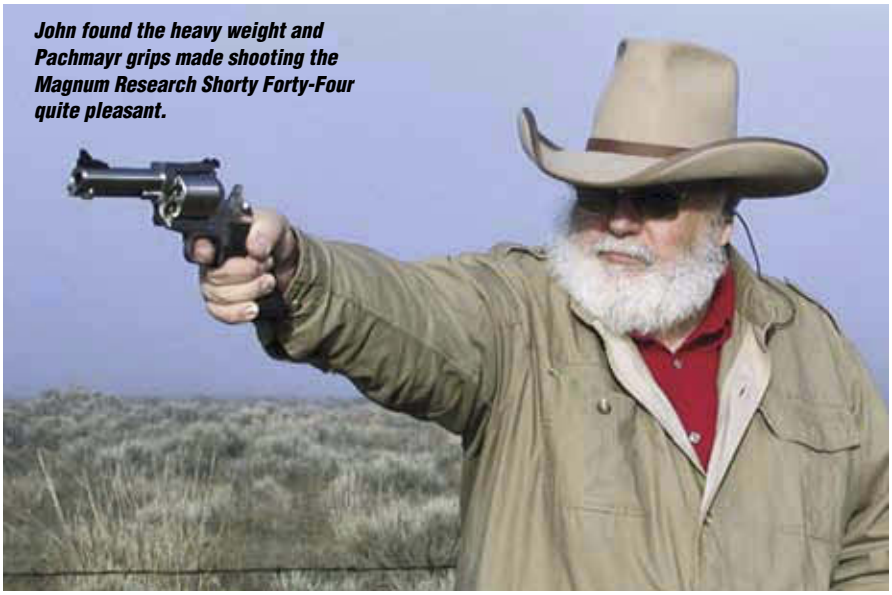
Now To The Shorty

The Shorty Forty-Four is an all stainless steel 5"-barreled sixgun with several custom features. A fully adjustable rear sight is mated up with a ramp-front sight, which is attached to the barrel with a screw. With factory .44 Magnum loads available in bullet weights from 165 grains up to and including 340 grains, even an adjustable rear sight can't always cover such a range in point of impact. Magnum Research solves this problem by including three different height front-sight blades. The heavier the bullet normally the higher the front sight needs to be. In addition to this excellent sighting system the massive flat-topped frame is drilled and tapped for a scope-mount base, which is included. The barrel features a recessed muzzle crown that aids in preventing dinging of the muzzle (which can result in accuracy going south very quickly).

SHORTY FORTY-FOUR

MAKER: MAGNUM RESEARCH
130 GODDARD MEMORIAL DR.
WORCHESTER, MA 01603
(508) 635-4273
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/MAGNUMRESEARCH

ACTION TYPE:
Single-action revolver
CALIBER:
.44 Magnum
CAPACITY:
5
BARREL LENGTH:
5"
OVERALL LENGTH:
11.25"
WEIGHT:
54 ounces
FINISH:
Brushed stainless steel
SIGHTS:
Adjustable Rear Sight; Interchangeable Front
GRIPS:
Pachmayr rubber
PRICE:
$1,050



John found the heavy weight and Pachmayr grips made shooting the Magnum Research Shorty Forty-Four quite pleasant.

.44 MAGNUM FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
AMERICAN EAGLE 240 JHP	1,461	1
BLACK HILLS 300 JHP	1,202	2
BLACK HILLS 320 LSWC	1,186	1-1/8
BUFFALO BORE 270 JFN	1,464	1
BUFFALO BORE 305 LBTLFN	1,364	2
BUFFALO BORE 340 LBTLFN	1,376	1-1/4
CORBON 225 DPX	1,402	2
CORBON 320 HC	1,324	1-3/4
FEDERAL 180 JHP	1,675	1
FEDERAL 225 BARNES EXPANDER	1,527	1
FEDERAL 240 HI-SHOK JHP	1,444	1-3/8
HORNADY 180 XTP-JHP	1,455	1-1/8
HORNADY 200 XT-JHP	1,432	1-1/2
HORNADY 240 XTP-JHP	1,424	1-1/8
HORNADY 300 XTP-JHP	1,157	1-1/4
GARRETT CTGS 310 HAMMERHEAD	1,365	1-1/2
WINCHESTER 210 SILVERTIP HP	1,424	1
WINCHESTER 250 PLATINUM TIP HP	1,437	1

Notes: Group size is the product of four shots at 20 yards. Chronograph set at 10' from the muzzle.

Another custom feature is the use of Allen screws to fasten the grip frame to the mainframe. The large headed cylinder pin is also locked in place by a screw entering from the bottom. However, the main custom feature is the cylinder. It is made long enough to utilize 340-grain bullets, is chambered for five rounds instead of six, as are many custom sixguns, to provide more strength. In addition to this, the Shorty Forty-Four features a free spinning pawl, which allows the cylinder to rotate either clockwise or counterclockwise for loading and unloading. Most importantly, if a bullet should happen to jump the crimp enough so that it contacts the back end of the barrel as the cylinder is rotated, preventing it from rotating normally, you can simply rotate the cylinder counterclockwise around to the loading gate and the offending round can be ejected.

Free Spinning

This last feature may allow a cartridge whose bullet has moved forward to be removed, but nevertheless it is a good idea to always keep fresh ammunition in the cylinder. Two decades ago I did some tests with both the .454 and heavy .44 Magnum loads by firing all but one round in the cylinder, then reloading and repeating the process. It didn't take long for that one lone cartridge to start to allow its bullet to move forward, and no loads were able to last more than the firing of 15 rounds before the bullet moved

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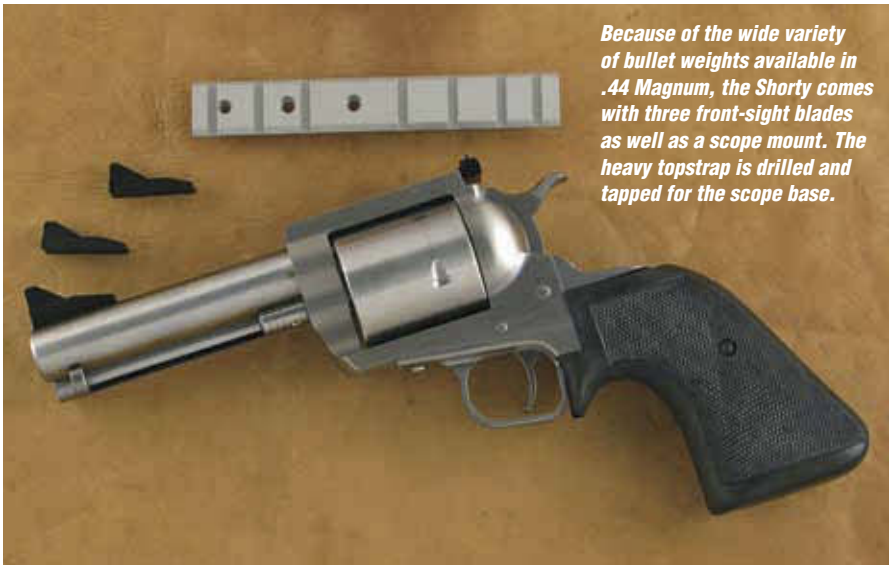

Because of the wide variety of bullet weights available in .44 Magnum, the Shorty comes with three front-sight blades as well as a scope mount. The heavy topstrap is drilled and tapped for the scope base.

The Magnum Research Shorty Forty-Four has a heavy 5-shot cylinder chambered and capable of taking long, heavy .44 Magnum rounds.

enough to jam the cylinder. Big guns are for big situations and fresh ammunition can prevent them from becoming bad situations.

The Shorty Forty-Four has a Ruger-style wide hammer and trigger along with a transfer-bar action. Even with the heaviest of loads it is not uncomfortable to shoot for two reasons. This is a massive, sturdily built revolver weighing 54 ounces empty; the weight comes from not only a heavy topstrap but also a heavy bull barrel, full length ejector rod housing and, of course, all steel construction. This all cuts down somewhat on the portability, however it certainly aids in reducing felt recoil. This heavy weight is matched up with a set of what appears to be Pachmayr checkered rubber grips which fill in behind the triggerguard preventing knuckle dusting.

The .44 Magnum kicked hard in 1956 with the original 240-grain factory loads. Over the ensuing decades stouter loads with heavier bullets have become commonplace, which of course adds to the recoil factor. This Magnum Research .44 Magnum is about as pleasant to shoot with heavy loads as it is possible for a short-barreled, single-action sixgun to be. Accuracy, as the results in the accompanying table show, is excellent over a wide range of loads using bullets weighing from 180 grains to 340 grains. With the latter clocking in at 1,375 fps with a group just over 1", it is easy to see the manageability of this big little sixgun.

With its all stainless steel construction, heavy-duty cylinder and frame and transfer bar safety, this is a rugged sixgun which can be carried safely fully loaded and be packed with confidence in rough weather and potentially dangerous situations. Consider it an insurance policy with a relatively small price tag for the custom features provided. GUNS

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OUT of the BOX™

JACOB GOTTFREDSON

LONG RANGE AR
Rock River Arms Varmint EOP.

In a past article, I lamented the fact a Rock River Arms AR had beaten me in a 600-yard, F-Class match. The AR was short barreled and was only fitted with iron sights. The little pipsqueak .223 beat my rifle, a $5,000, 1,000-yard Benchrest rifle chambered in .308 Baer using 190-grain Sierra MatchKing bullets doing 3,300 fps and with a scope approaching $2,000. We both shot close to perfect scores. How could this happen?

My adversary was using 77-grain ammo loaded by Black Hills Ammunition. I pondered that until I could stand it no longer and finally asked Rock River to send me one of their rifles for testing.

When it arrived, the markings on the side indicated it was chambered in 5.56mm. Black Hills had been kind enough to send along some of their 77-grain, 5.56mm ammo to try. Also, I had samples of several different bullet weights in .223 ammo. As it turned out, the RRA AR was not the small AR style that had beaten me. It was a larger barreled version called the Rock River LAR–15 Varmint EOP. That was not a big problem. In my mind such a rifle should still not be competitive with my custom built marvel for which I had paid dearly. And if it were, why?

To ensure I could give it every advantage, I mounted a Leupold 40X Competition scope on it. The rifle was designed for both target shooting and game, but can be used in tactical settings as well. It shoots the smaller more explosive rounds well for prairie dogs, but with the twist rate of 1:8", it shoots the heavier rounds even better for larger game, such as coyotes, at relatively long range with plenty of remaining velocity and energy.

I was impressed from the get go with just their case and the thought that went into it. RRA calls it the AR SafeCase and said, *"It was designed for the safe shipment and storage of a rifle, and is compatible both with our small (LAR-15) sized platform and the larger LAR-8 platform as well. It is lockable (although not FAA approved) and stores the rifle, obviously, disassembled. At the time we designed it, there were multiple locales in the US where a firearm was required to be stored either locked or disassembled… and this case does both."*

The Rock River Arms LAR-15 Varmint EOP. EOP stands for Elevated Optical Platform. The scope is Leupold's Competition 40X. It shot well, and very well with Black Hills 77-grain 5.56mm Match ammo. Jacob's sample has a 20" barrel and is provided with a .223 Wylde Chamber.

LAR–15 VARMINT EOP

MAKER: ROCK RIVER ARMS
1042 CLEVELAND RD.
COLONA, IL 61241
(866) 980-7625, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/ROCKRIVERARMS

ACTION:
Gas-operated semi-auto
CALIBER:
5.56mm (Wylde Chamber)
UPPER:
Forged EOP (Elevated Optical Platform)
BARREL LENGTH:
20" (tested), 16", 18", 24" optional
HANDGUARD:
RRA Aluminum Free Float Tube
PISTOL GRIP:
Hogue rubber
BUTT STOCK:
A2 Buttstock
WEIGHT:
9.5 pounds
OVERALL LENGTH:
38.25"
SIGHTS:
None (Elevated Optical Platform)
RETAIL:
$ 1,160

The rifle was not unlike most AR's I have dealt with, though the trigger is a 2-stage match and much lighter than most stock AR's. I love that trigger! The one in my test rifle is the latest evolution of an RRA design. Although not readily adjustable by the end user, by using different disconnector springs made specifically for their trigger, they can set the trigger up for different pull requirements. Most are set in the 3.5 to 4 pounds total pull weight, but match triggers can be set for 4.5 to 5 pounds to meet the required minimum pull weight. LE models are usually set at 5.5 to 6 pounds or more.

The barrel is button rifled and air gauged to set specifications. It is a 6-groove design, 1:8" right-hand twist.

Testing

I shot several rounds through it evaluating the Burris Eliminator scope and was now evaluating the rifle itself. I consumed several rounds testing it with the Leupold 40X scope as well. The rifle has not jammed nor were any other problems encountered.

The rifle was producing about 1 MOA with light loads, but when I switched to the 77-grain match loads Black Hills produces for the military,

Jacob first used the rifle testing Burris' new Eliminator scope (see February 2011 issue). The rifle proved worthy on the 600-yard line, posting 5" groups consistently.

the groups shrank significantly. Several of my ARs have 1:9" twists. Some of them shoot the heavier bullets acceptably, but not quite as well as the light stuff. The RRA LAR–15 Varmint EOP's faster twist rate helped carry the heavier bullets.

I could easily hold .7" at 100 yards and 5" at 600 yards for several 5-round groups with the Black Hills 5.56mm 77-grain loads. This is competitive in an F-Class match for example. The bull is 6" and the X ring 3" in diameter. If you can keep your windage head about you, perfect scores of 150 are in the bag. Thus, there is every reason to understand why the fellow matched my score against my $5,000 rifle, beating me by one X count. The difference was not only cost: He didn't have to work a bolt after every round… just push a little button.

The Wylde Chamber

The rifle sports a Wylde chamber. The RRA website explains it thus: *"The .223 Wylde chamber was designed as a match chambering for semi-automatic rifles. It will accommodate both .223 Rem and 5.56mm NATO ammunition. It is relieved in the case body to aid in extraction and features a shorter throat for improved accuracy."* I shot both type rounds in it, the 5.56 being the Black Hills 77 grain.

The EOP designation stands for Elevated Optical Platform. This allows the rifle to accept some sights and scopes with shorter ring configurations. The EOP upper is 3/4" taller than the standard rail height of an A4 upper. This configuration provides greater stability for the scope than just tall rings would. The concave rear cut and the sharp drop off in the front allows the bells to be lower than the base in some cases.

The triggerguard has been enlarged to allow for the use of gloves in winter conditions. The pistol grip is from Hogue, which gives it that rubbery texture characteristic. The barrel in my sample is 20". The forearm is heavily serrated and fluted with a bipod or sling swivel stud at the end. The cocking handle is extended for use with a scope. The fore-end gas block has a small rail for attaching any number of accessories, most notably a co-witness sight.

I talked with RRA's Steve Mayer at length about the rifle. Steve is presently their Law Enforcement/Government Sales Manager and New Product Development Coordinator. He proved to be a great source of information, some of which grace the paragraphs of this article. I appreciate his generous input.

Bottom line: Rock River Arms provides some excellent features that others do not in a stock AR at a relatively modest price. GUNS

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CLICK VALUE:
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TUBE DIAMETER:
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WEIGHT:
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Q&A

Questions & Answers

• JEFF JOHN •

Due to the volume of mail received, GUNS *cannot offer a personal reply. Please e-mail your question to ed@gunsmagazine.com or snail mail to:* GUNS *Q&A, 12345 World Trade Dr., San Diego, CA 92128*

Sight Height Woes

Q: I recently got a Winchester Model 94 .30-30, serial number 2,738,XXX, and the problem is the groups are too low. I shot reloads as well as factory loads and the groups are good, but too low. The rear sight is as high as I can adjust it. So, I thought maybe I could get a lower front sight? The front sight is 1/2" in height, the base is 1/4" and the blade insert is also a 1/4". Does anyone make a shorter front sight? If not, any other ideas? I don't know, is a tang sight an option?

John Turner
Elmer, N.J.

The Marble Arms Tang Sight, shown here on an 1890 Winchester, offers windage and elevation adjustment and is a versatile addition to pump and lever guns.

A: You have one of the first post-'64 Model 94s, which began at serial number 2,700,000 according to S.P. Fjestad's *Blue Book of Gun Values, 31st Edition.*

Replacing the front-sight blade should be a straightforward job for any gunsmith (and is a fairly straightforward job if you have any gunsmithing tools). You can buy the correct height front sight and acquire the tools for the job from Brownells.

First shoot a group at a measured distance (I'd suggest 100 yards, but 50 would work). Then use this:

Sight Adjustment Formula

Sight Radius (the distance from the back of the rear-sight blade to the face of the front sight) x Amount to move group in inches (measured from the center of the group to where you want the new group to center) ÷ Distance to the target in inches (50 yards = 1,800 inches, 100 yards = 3,600 inches). The answer will be in .001" increments.

Since you'd need to have a gunsmith drill and tap another hole in the tang to mount a Marble Arms Tang Sight, it will be a more expensive fix, but the Marble sight offers a longer sight radius and is windage adjustable as

well, so would be a versatile addition. Marble Arms' offers front sights, too.

Since we're talking about drilling and tapping, you could look into having the side of the receiver drilled with two holes for mounting of a Lyman or Williams receiver sight. Either should also give you the height you need without replacing the front sight (although it might be a good idea in any case). You can compare all the styles through the Brownells catalog, too. These two sights also offer windage as well as elevation.

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DAVISON, MI 48423
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WILLIAMSGUNSIGHT

Targets

Q: What is the source for the Rifle Target that fits a 3-ring binder shown in Clint Smith's column "Parts & Pieces" on page 22 of the December 2010 issue?

Mickey Gallaway
Houston, Texas

Mountain Plains Targets are easy on the eye and can be purchased with the diamond in a variety of sizes depending upon the magnification of the scope. Photo: Heidi Smith

A: The excellent targets, in a variety of sizes are from:

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DIAMOND DO

John Taffin

Have you ever had defeat snatched from the jaws of victory?! Have you ever waited a long time for something really special and then watched it disappear before your eyes? If so you can empathize with me. Last winter I heard Tactical Solutions, which has long offered aftermarket parts and especially lightweight barrels for Ruger and Browning .22s, would soon be offering their own .22 Long Rifle semi-automatic rifle. Naturally, I ordered one. It was to have a red fluted barrel, red receiver, and a red laminated Raptor stock. For most of my life it has always been blued steel and walnut when it came to rifles, but I must admit to really liking the colored rifles offered by Tactical Solutions.

Dan at Tactical says their products are "life-changing" and I guess he is correct, as Diamond Dot has her Purple Passion .22 and I have the Camo Carbine and Green Machine all built on Ruger 10/22 receivers. The new red one was to be a really special rifle for me. I had possession of it from the time I picked it up at Tactical Solutions, drove the 15 minutes home and stepped in the door. Diamond Dot's office is in the living room and as I opened the door and entered I heard "I want that!" before I closed the door behind me. It is a good thing Idaho is a Community Property state as the only way I will be able to shoot this Red Rifle is by borrowing it!

It only seemed fitting the Red Rifle should have a red scope, but since she had "requisitioned" the rifle I let Diamond Dot pay for the scope. We ordered a Leupold FX-1 4x28mm rimfire scope and had it red anodized by the Leupold Custom Shop. Leupold's Custom Shop offers several anodized finishes on their line of scopes including red and various other colors as well as camo patterns.

Our experience with Tactical Solutions .22 conversions go back several years. Our local club holds .22 bull's-eye matches in which Diamond Dot wanted to participate. However, we ran into a major problem. She found out she could not hold up a Ruger .22 semi-automatic pistol as she just did not have enough strength in her shoulders. The doctor went in with the thought of stretching her rotator muscles, however they were torn too badly for this to be done. The answer had to be found elsewhere, and the elsewhere turned out to be a lightweight Tactical Solutions replacement barrel on a Ruger .22 MKII. The lighter weight allowed her to shoot well enough with two hands to not only compete but beat many of the men.

All of the Pac-Lite .22 barrels offered by Tactical Solutions are machined from solid aircraft aluminum, equipped with a hardened stainless steel ejector and the actual barrel is a .22 steel liner. These liners are premium button rifled chrome moly steel with a twist rate of 1:16". This style barrel carries over to their Ultra Lightweight 10/22 barrels.

As mentioned earlier we already have three Tactical Solutions Ultra Lightweight rifles built on the Ruger 10/22 platform. One is finished in camo, one is green and the other is purple, with each one matched up with a similarly colored stock. They are great little rifles and we enjoy them immensely; however, in each case it was necessary to acquire a complete Ruger 10/22 and discard everything except the receiver. Actually in only two cases, as for the third rifle I amazingly found a 10/22 action only in a local gun shop. Now that really doesn't make sense as one would think it would be easy to find all parts except the action. I still wonder what happened to the rest of the gun.

Notice the extended magazine release on the Tactical Solutions X-Ring .22 (above) and the Picatinny rail machined integrally with the receiver. John will have the rings finished in red soon to match the rest of the rifle. The Tactical Solutions barrel (below) is a thin steel rifled liner in an aluminum sleeve. The forearm of the red laminated Raptor stock on the Tactical Solutions X-Ring Red Rifle curves down giving the whole rifle a racy look.

The Tactical Solutions rifle is custom built from the ground up using many of the firm's options starting with the X-Ring receiver, dimensionally the same as the Ruger 10-22, so the huge panoply of optional parts can be employed.

OT SEES RED!

Tactical Solutions Red, that is.

Tactical solutions calls their newest product the X-Ring. Here's what they say about it: "The Tactical Solutions X-Ring is a precision machined rimfire receiver and bolt that has the same footprint as the popular Ruger 10/22 and is designed to accommodate a vast array of aftermarket barrels, stocks and trigger groups available for the 10/22. The X-Ring is machined from solid aircraft 6061 T6 Billet and is held to the most exacting tolerances. A mil-spec scope rail is machined directly on to the receiver and accommodates precise scope mounting with both Weaver and Picatinny-style rings."

Tactical Solutions is offering the X-Ring in red, blue, purple, black, matte black, gray and silver. Each receiver is fitted with a hardened steel bolt, double spring system, custom contoured charging handle and features through-the-back cleaning. Once the receiver is selected, the rifle is then built to the customer's specifications. The Ultra Lightweight barrels are .92" in diameter, 16.5" in length and come standard with flutes. The muzzle end of the barrel may be ordered with 1/2-28 threads to accept compensators or suppressors and a threaded protective end cap is provided to protect the threads when no add-on is in use. Currently rifle barrel colors available are red, blue, purple, pink, gray, black, matte black and matte olive drab. Other manufacturer's aftermarket barrels for the 10/22 will also fit the Tactical Solutions X-Ring receiver.

Tactical Solutions also offers the SB-X 12.5" barrel which is made legal by a permanently attached shroud bringing the length up to 16.5". The barrel portion itself is threaded to accept a suppressor, which fits inside the shroud; the rifle may be used with or without a shroud in place. This is the barrel I have on my Tactical Solutions Rifle which I have named the Green Machine. I use it with the Tactical Solutions Suppressor in place as well as without. By using the shrouded barrel the rifle is not overly long with the suppressor in place. Suppressors are controlled by the federal government and require a special $200 license for possession. Tactical Solutions can help with the necessary paperwork.

John barely got in the door before Diamond Dot laid claim to "her" Red Rifle from Tactical Solutions. It didn't take much, all she said was: "I want it!"

Tactical solutions offers several choices of stocks, including the Raptor, which is available in several colors and also the Hogue rubber overmolded stock, such as I have on the Green Machine. Another option offered by Tactical Solutions includes a solid aircraft aluminum extended magazine release, available in several colors, with compensators constructed from 6061-T6 Billet aluminum and quick detachable scope rings. The scope rings are normally only available in matte black however we have ordered a custom pair and Diamond Dot's Red Rifle will soon really be all red as the black rings are replaced when the custom rings arrive.

Of course, shooting has a serious side, however most shooting should be fun and especially so when it comes to .22s. A .22 rifle and several bricks of ammunition can provide hours upon hours of fun with family

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Typical 50-yard groups from the Tactical Solutions X-Ring Red Rifle show what the relatively lightweight barrel can achieve.

.22 LONG RIFLE FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
American Eagle	*1,244*	*5/8*
CCI Blazer	*1,228*	*3/8*
CCI Mini-Mag HP	*1,257*	*3/8*
CCI Velociter	*1,358*	*3/4*
Federal Gold Medal Match	*1,149*	*1*
Federal Hi-Power	*1,247*	*1*
Remington HV	*1,185*	*1*
Winchester Power Point	*1,257*	*1-1/4*
Winchester T22	*1,169*	*1-1/2*

Notes: Groups the product of best five of six shots at 50 yards. Chronograph screens set at 10' from muzzle.

and friends. Many of us reload to save money, as well as tailor loads to a particular gun. Reloading is only part of it as brass must be retrieved, tumbled, sorted and inspected before it can be reloaded. Not so with .22s. They are simply shot and enjoyed. They are also extremely accurate out-of-the-box. Sometimes .22s can be very particular about what load they prefer, however by trying several different manufacturers you can usually find the proverbial tack driver, or at least close to it. There are several high dollar brands of match-grade .22 ammunition available, however don't be surprised if the more economical loads work the best.

My first personal firearm was a Marlin 39A .22 levergun purchased in 1956. I still have it and over the ensuing 50+ years have added a wide range of .22 fun guns to our family's collection. Along the way each of our three kids and eight grandkids have learned to shoot starting with .22s. We have leverguns, semi-automatics, pump guns, bolt guns and single-shots; they bear names such as Clark Custom, CZ, Ithaca, Marlin, Remington, Ruger, Savage, Taurus, Thompson/Center and Zastava. Some are superbly accurate, while others, such as the single-shot Ithacas, are strictly fun guns and learning tools.

Several of these .22 rifles have heavy, match-grade barrels designed to shoot tiny little groups. Everyone knows there is no way a semi-automatic rifle can outshoot a heavy-barreled bolt gun or even a heavy-barreled semi-auto. This should be especially true of a rifle such as the Tactical Solutions X-Ring with its lightweight, relatively short barrel constructed of two pieces of aluminum and steel. After all these years of shooting, there is not too much that surprises me, but I must say I was very pleasantly surprised by the accuracy of this X-Ring .22 rifle. I called Tactical Solutions and they were happy to report this is what they are hearing about all of these rifles.

Full test results are shown in the accompanying table but I would like to point out two of the least expensive brands available, Federal's American Eagle and CCI's Blazer, gave outstanding performance. I shoot in an area with a canyon to the right of me and it seems there is always wind blowing out of, or down through the canyon. Perfectly calm days are very rare so testing has to be done

X-RING

MAKER: TACTICAL SOLUTIONS
2181 COMMERCE AVE.
BOISE, ID 83705
(866) 333-9909, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/ TACTICALSOL

ACTION TYPE:
Semi-automatic
CALIBER:
.22 LR
CAPACITY:
10
BARREL LENGTH:
16-1/2"
OVERALL LENGTH:
35-1/4"
WEIGHT:
4 pounds, 6 ounces
FINISH:
Red anodized
SIGHTS:
None, integral Picatinny rail
STOCK:
Laminated red and gray wood
PRICE:
$824 (price varies with options)

FX-1 4X28MM RIMFIRE

MAKER: LEUPOLD
1440 N.W. GREENBRIAR PKWY.
BEAVERTON, OR 97006
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WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/LEUPOLD

MAGNIFICATION:
4X
OBJECTIVE DIAMETER:
1.4"
EYE RELIEF:
4-1/2"
INTERNAL ADJ:
20" elevation & windage at 100 yards
RETICLES:
Duplex
PRICE:
$187 (black)
PRICE (CUSTOM SHOP ANODIZING):
$120 extra

with some amount of wind present. This makes the results even more impressive. American Eagle ammo clocked out at 1,244 fps from the 16.5" barrel of the X-Ring and placed five shots in 5/8" at 50 yards. The Blazer ammunition was only slightly slower at 1,228 fps and placed its five shots in 3/8" at 50 yards. This X-Ring proved to be very partial to CCI brand ammunition, as the CCI Mini-Mag HP also grouped in 3/8". The fastest ammunition tested, the CCI Velociter, at 1,358 fps and grouped its five shots in 3/4". Simply outstanding!

As this is written Diamond Dot is celebrating her first day of retirement. She is looking forward to spending time in the sewing room we had built on and the wood carving room which used to be an extra bedroom. The Red Rifle and a whole lot of other fun guns will also be taking up much of her time. She has definitely earned relaxation. GUNS

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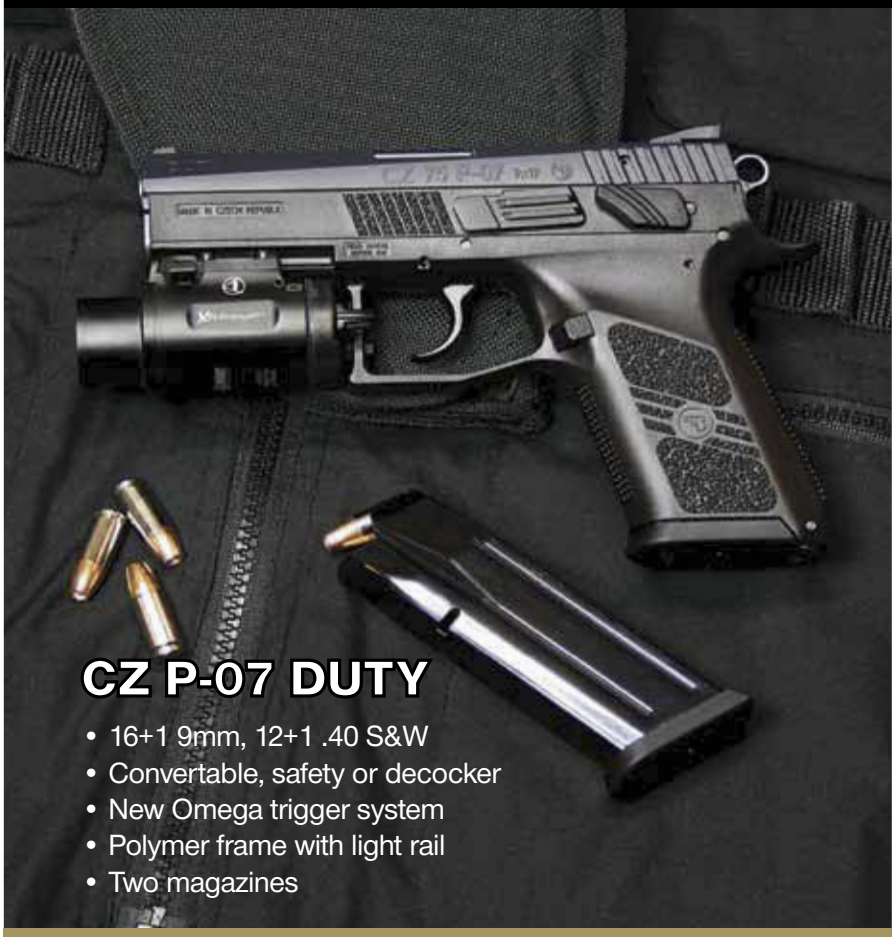

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Kimber's Super Carry Pro comes standard with 3-dot night sights. The tritium inserts glow green in the dark (inset).

The lightweight Super Carry Pro is still very controllable due to the well-designed beavertail grip safety. An ambidextrous thumb safety is standard as well.

The 4" barrel has no conventional barrel bushing and thus requires a full-length recoil spring guide.

THE SUPER CARRY PRO .45 ACP

Kimber defines the big-bore concealed-carry pistol.

Massad Ayoob Photos: Joseph R. Novelozo

The latest from Kimber is the Super Carry Pro, a collection of some of the best designs ever in a 1911 .45 designed for constant concealed wear. Take the shortened barrel/slide assembly and lightweight aluminum frame of the landmark 1950 Colt Commander. Pay homage to Ed Brown's Bobtail roundbutt. Include ambi-thumb safety and big, easy to see night sights.

Note stock checkering, solid aluminum trigger and flush slide stop stud on Kimber Super Carry Pro. The holster is a 1RH in black shark trim by Alessi Holsters.

Notch the front of the rear sight into a "cocking shelf," because LAPD's gunfight-seasoned Special Investigations Section demanded that on Kimber's SIS series about three years ago, so the slide could be manipulated 1-handed by applying that contact point to the edge of holster or belt. Round off the sharp edges in what Kimber calls the Carry Melt. Ignore the possibly counter-productive trend toward front-slide serrations and leave those cuts on the back of the slide where so many of us feel they belong.

Take a 1/4" off the traditional Commander length, bringing it down to a 4" barrel. Use a bushingless coned barrel, which will require a full-length guide rod. Add some fancy scaling to the slide serrations, and put some of that scaling atop the slide where it looks stylish and may give a little more hand traction to an overhand slide grasp. Et voilà: You have the Super Carry Pro from the Kimber Custom Shop.

First Look

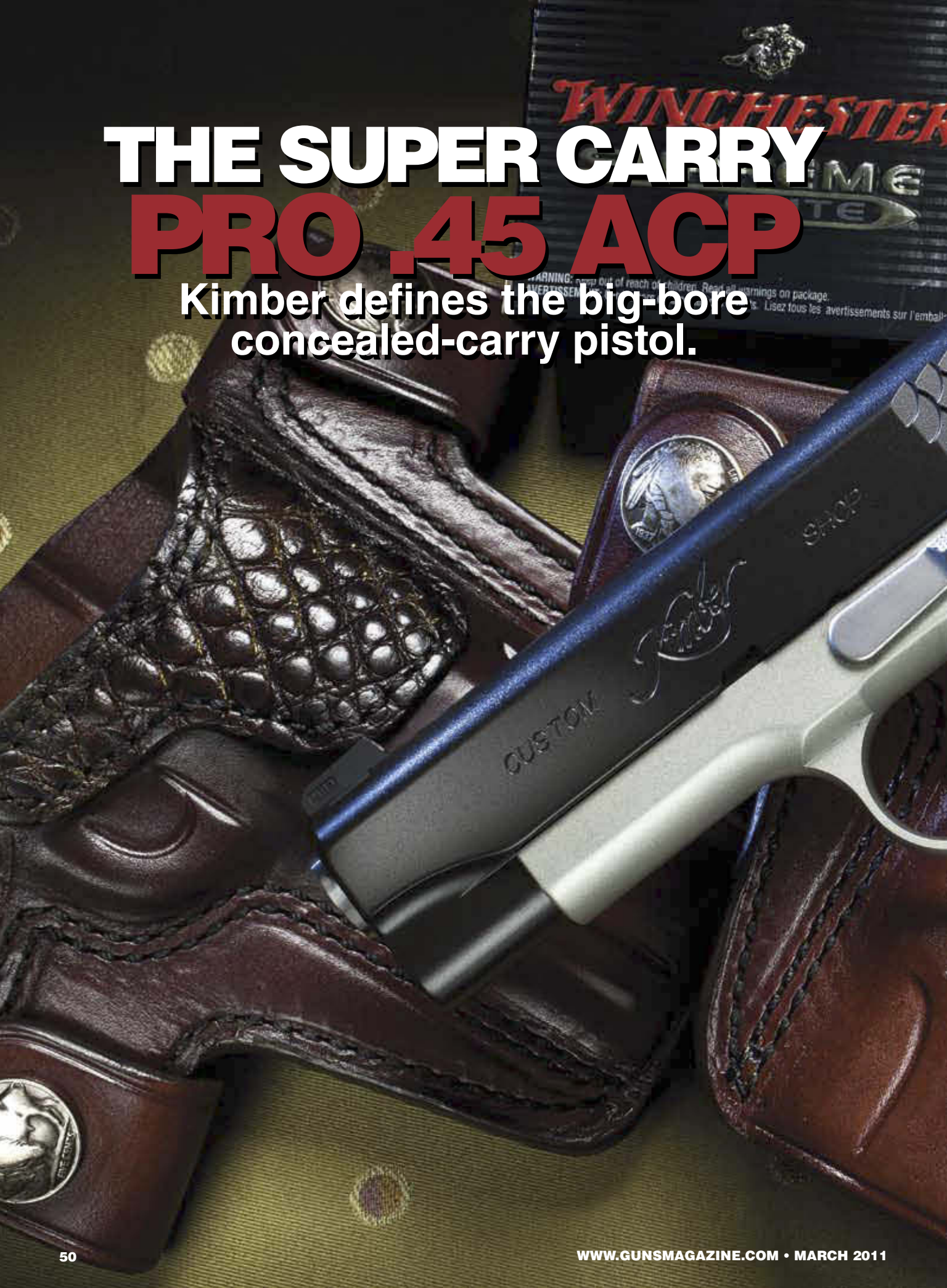
The slide is matte-black stainless, the frame "Satin Silver KimPro II" for a handsome 2-tone effect. That same "scaling" replaces checkering on frontstrap and backstrap, and doesn't *seem* as secure at first, but the pistol does not move in the hand when grasped firmly—even during rapid fire.

The rounded-off mainspring housing fits well in the hand, mating perfectly with the heel of the palm. The laminated wood stocks have traction-effective checkering that appears a little coarse and crude in comparison with the rest of the gun's classy motif, but of course, that's subjective. Heck, I'm kinda coarse, crude—and ugly—so I'd be a hypocrite if I held that against the gun. Besides, it's intended for concealed carry, right?

The action runs smoothly, but feels a little stiff due to its 22-pound recoil spring. Even so, none of our several testers, including petite females with delicate wrists, had any problem loading, shooting or otherwise manipulating

THE SUPER CARRY
PRO .45 ACP

Kimber defines the big-bore concealed-carry pistol.



WILEY X
GUNS
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the Super Pro Carry. On a slide with a shorter than GI-length cycle, note the owner's manual says of this 22-pound recoil spring: "CHANGE EVERY 800 rounds." Their "all caps," not mine, on Page 7 of the manual. That tells me we should take the advice seriously.

Pull weight of the solid aluminum trigger averaged right at 4-3/4 pounds on my Lyman digital scale from Brownells, right within the factory spec of 4 to 5 pounds. It rolled off cleanly, conducive to the surprise break a marksman prefers. Excellent street trigger, living up to the company's promise in the Kimber catalog of a "Match Grade" trigger.

The test gun, serial number KR115791 (a different specimen was sent to our photographer in the interest of deadline expedience) came with a single KimPro 8-round magazine, with flat bottom that fit flush to the frame. As with most loaded 8-round mags (the recent Wilson EDM being a notable exception), this took most of the flex out of the cartridge stack, requiring forcible insertion to lock in place when the slide was forward.

One feature I really liked is the slide-stop stud (a.k.a. "takedown button") is shortened flush to the frame. This prevents accidentally pushing the part out of position with the trigger finger when it's "in register" on the frame during right-handed shooting. I've seen that pressure push a regular slide stop far enough out of position to lock up a 1911 after the first shot. Well done, Kimber!

The magazine well is lightly beveled. Reloads weren't as fast as with a competition chute, of course, but were acceptably smooth.

On The Hip

The roundbutt Brown pioneered on the 1911 removes a key bulge point from the 1911's profile and also removes one sharp edge that has been known to dig into the carrier's side, especially if you have a bit of avoirdupois that wants to hang over the gun when you carry it tight to the body, inside the waistband.

When this gun came in for me to test, I had been carrying a Commander-length, all-steel Ed Brown 1911 with the Bobtail treatment for a couple of months. The roundbutt Kimber carried very comfortably in the same holster, an inside-the-waistband (IWB) Ayoob Rear Guard I designed for Mitch Rosen back in the 1990s. The lighter-weight, aluminum-frame pistol (28 ounces unloaded) was palpably more comfortable during all-day carry. With a shirt between it and the skin, comfort was excellent. Against bare skin with the now-concealing shirt untucked, the coarse stock checkering wasn't abrasive enough to be bothersome.

At the 25-yard bench, I set up an MTM pistol rest and a ruler allowing me to measure to the nearest .05". Each group would be tallied once for all five shots, to get an idea what practical accuracy could be expected if the shooter had a solid firing position and no stress symptoms. A second measurement of the best three shots would be done, because the years have taught me this will generally factor out enough unnoticed human error to approximate what the same gun/ammo combination would have done for all five out of a machine rest.

Going in alphabetical order, Black Hills 230-grain JHP +P had a snappy recoil as expected, but nothing that hurt the hand or couldn't be controlled. One high shot stretched the 5-shot group to 2.5", but the other four shots measured 1.15". Had a 25¢ piece been in the center of that group, all four of those bullets would have dinged it. The best three went into .85". No wonder Black Hills has the reputation it does for accuracy.

Remington 185-grain Express jacketed hollowpoint was one of the first approved FBI duty loads for .45 ACP, and has a long history of feeding fine in any gun that also feeds hardball. (Pretty decent track record on the street too, and a bit less kick than hardball.) Out of the Kimber Super Carry Pro, it punched five holes 2.90" apart center to center. The best three hits were in an 1.25".

Winchester USA brand 230-grain FMJ, their generic practice ammo may be the nation's most popular training ammunition. The Kimber Super Carry Pro put five rounds of this stuff into a group that measured 2.05" horizontally, and less than 1" of vertical dispersion. The best three shots were in .75". It is good when a not-cheap pistol gives you this kind of accuracy with economy-priced ammunition! I've won IDPA matches in the past with Winchester White Box, in both .45 ACP and 9mm. Good stuff—and it certainly proved so in the test gun. I guess Kimber wasn't kidding when they said the barrel in this pistol was match-grade.

On The Firing Line

Bench testing gives a good idea of a firearm's accuracy, but its handling is best assessed in some more dynamic activity. An IDPA or USPSA match is always good for that, but the area match schedules and the

Super Carry Pro controllability in action. As slide locks back empty, arrows show last three spent casings still in the air, and gun still coming back on target.

With Black Hills 230-grain +P JHP, four of five shots would have hit a quarter at 25 yards. A very potent, yet still controllable, self-defense load.

Using post-in-notch sight picture at 25 yards, the gun printed a bit low with all loads tested. This was Remington Express 185-grain JHP.

Inexpensive Winchester White Box USA 230-grain FMJ hardball delivered this group of five shots from the bench at 25 yards.

SUPER CARRY PRO

MAKER: KIMBER
1 LAWTON ST.
YONKERS, NY 10705
(800) 880-2418
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/KIMBER

ACTION TYPE:
Single-action semi-auto
CALIBER:
.45 ACP
CAPACITY:
8+1
BARREL LENGTH:
4"
OVERALL LENGTH:
7.7"
WEIGHT:
28 ounces
FINISH:
Satin silver frame, matte-black slide
SIGHTS:
Fixed night sights
GRIPS:
Laminated wood, checkered
PRICE:
$1,530

editor's deadline sort of passed each other going in opposite directions. So, my next best bet was to shoot a qualification course with the little beast.

I chose one approved by the Police Standards and Training Council, in the state where I'm a sworn officer, for off duty guns. Since the operative term in "Kimber Super Carry Pro" is carry, that seemed appropriate. It can be shot in 5-round strings for a total of 50 shots (in deference to J-frame revolvers), or in 6-shot strings that consume 60 rounds. I went with the latter.

I started at the 4-yard line with the gun in the weak hand. (Yeah, I know, I'm supposed to say "non-dominant hand." Yes, I understand the rationale for that, but if one's confidence is already so frail that saying "weak" instead of "non-dominant" is going to destroy their self-confidence, "weak" probably *is* the correct word.) The big, white-circled, night-sight dots were easy to see even with the, uh, non-dominant eye, and all six shots went center. Yes, the light .45 moved from the recoil of 230-grain Rem-UMC hardball, but proper technique snapped it right back on target. "Strong hand only" was pretty much the same story.

From 7 yards, recoil was a gentle bump and the 12 shots went into one ragged hole, with the mandatory reload smooth as glass. Back in 1950, a great gun writer of the time named Bob Nichols got hold of a prototype of the lightweight Colt Commander .45, and professed amazement at how controllable its recoil was. Unfortunately, lots of folks back then shot with their shoulders leaning back and no weight into the gun, so of course a 27-ounce .45 rose higher than a 39-ounce one. Moreover, from the beginning—and for decades—Colt Commanders came with nubby little grip tangs that bit the snot out of shooters' hands. These two factors combined to give lightweight .45s an undeserved reputation for kicking painfully and uncontrollably. The beavertail grip safety on the Super Carry Pro made it extremely comfortable to shoot.

Moving back to 10 yards for 18 rounds of shooting from cover positions, I remembered to hold high in the developing target group, because I was using a post-in-notch sight picture now (more distance = more precision required), and it had been grouping low with that sight picture from 25 yards. That turned out to be the right strategy, and with 42 rounds fired by then, I finished with all bullet holes in about a 3" group. The last 18 rounds were fired from 15 yards, 2-hand offhand, and I started getting a little sloppy, but not sloppy enough to leave the center scoring zone. The final score was 100 percent, 300 out of 300 with a group a little over 3" wide and a bit under 5-1/2" vertically. For a lightweight concealment pistol, I was not unhappy with that outcome at all.

Reliability

We ran several hundred assorted hardball and JHP rounds through the test gun. There was only one malfunction. While shooting the Action Target Dueling Tree (the gun never missed a plate in three magazines), the slide locked back one round sooner than I thought it should have. I looked down and saw a live cartridge sitting loose atop the Kimber magazine. A reflexive flick of the wrist tossed it cleanly out of the ejection port and I reloaded and kept going. There were no other malfs of any kind, and none of any kind when shooting with Wilson EDM magazines.

A quick surf of the net found one Super Carry Pro user who'd needed an extractor tweak to get 100-percent function out of his, and another who had some function problems early on before his specimen smoothed out and worked perfectly without mechanical adjustment. All the rest I could find had 100-percent clear sailing from the beginning. The manual that came with the Super Pro Carry reads, "For proper break-in of the firearm shoot 400 to 500 rounds of Quality Factory Ball (230-grain FMJ) Ammunition, cleaning and lubricating the gun every 100 to 150 rounds." (Page 27.)

It shocks us old folks to see a $1,530 retail price on a 1911 .45. I got my first .45 at age 12, a GI-surplus Colt 1911 that cost $37.50 at the gun shop. But that was half a century ago. In the here and now, Kimber seems to be charging a fair price for the features and performance that come with the Super Carry Pro. GUNS

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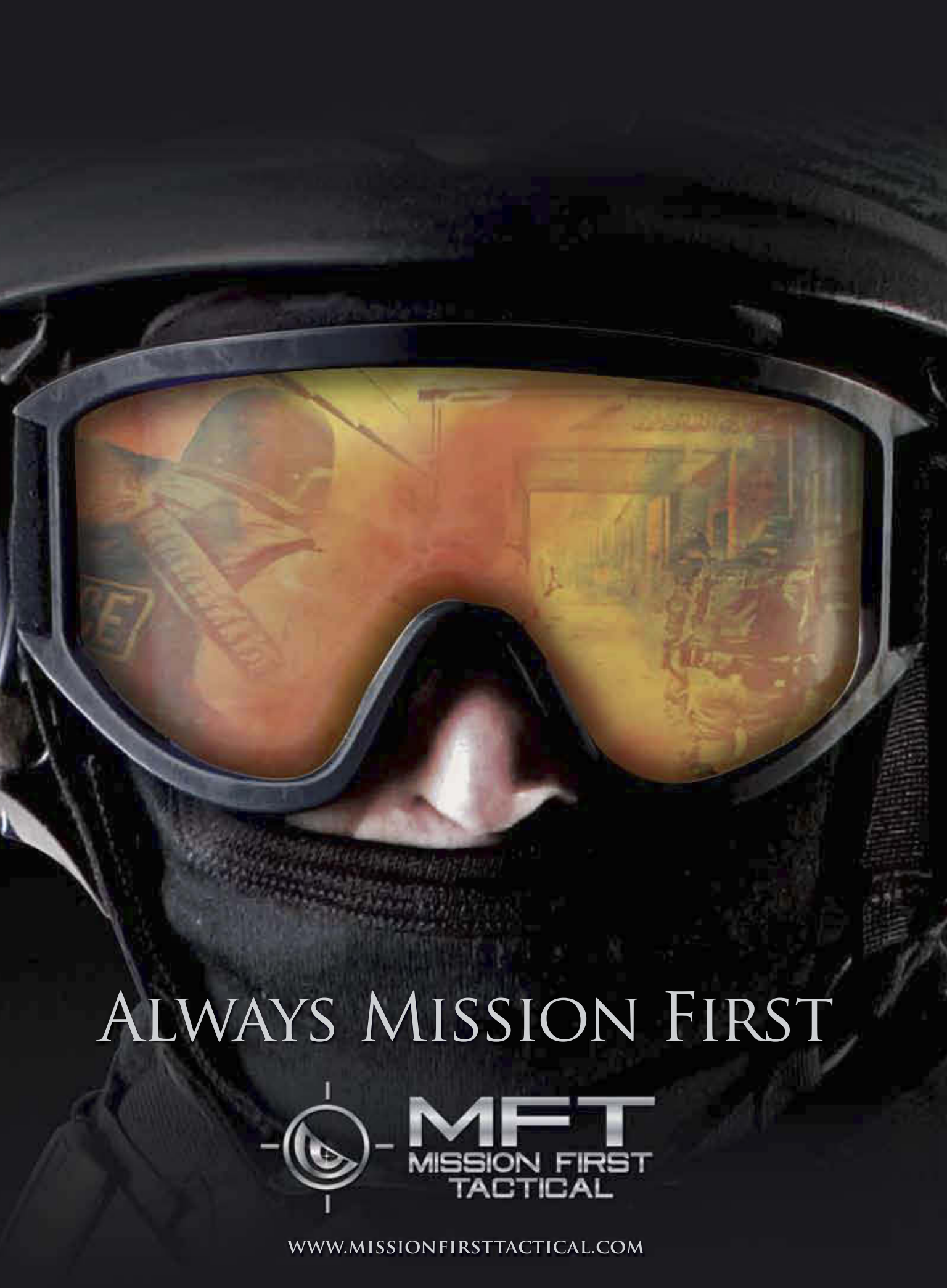
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My 600th Gun

THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF GUN COLLECTING.

Mike "Duke" Venturino
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

Back in the April 2005 issue of this magazine, in an article titled *A Lifetime Of Guns*, I talked about the first 500 guns I have owned, ending with some details of the special present I bought for myself as the 500th one. Due to some quirk in my personality, I'm a list maker and back in my teens started keeping track of every firearm I have bought, traded for, or was given to me. That tattered, hand-jotted sheaf of notebook paper is still with me and the list is still growing. In fact a recent tabulation showed in the six years since the above article was written, I've owned exactly another 100 guns. Shortly I will give you some details of the very special one Yvonne bought for me that coincidentally ended up being my 600th gun.

One of Duke's prouder moments as a BPCR Silhouette competitor was when he was presented with a Shiloh Sharps Model 1874 .45-70 because he finished highest at the 2006 National Championships among those firing Shiloh rifles.

First however, it's interesting to view some tallies of the types of firearms I've owned in approximately 50 years. This shows how interests focus, then change. For instance, in those first 500 guns well over 1/3 were single-action revolvers of all types. They ranged from a wide variety of Colt SAAs to original Smith & Wesson Model 3 "Schofields" to Ruger Single Six .22 rimfires. Over half of my first 500 guns were handguns. Those break down to 153 single actions, 84 double actions and 27 autoloading pistols. A mere one was a single-shot pistol.

Then in the next 100 guns only 1/3 were handguns. A breakdown of those handguns by type is also revealing. Only five were single-action revolvers, 12 were double-action revolvers and 17 were autoloading pistols. Why the reversal? One reason is that since the turn of the century I've been working at assembling a shooting collection of World War II firearms. Therefore, autoloaders like a German Luger, a Japanese Nambu and both Belgian and Canadian P35 Brownings now reside in my gun vault.

In the last 100 guns, why did double-action revolvers prevail over single actions? Because I decided to gather all Smith & Wesson Model 20-somethings. Those are the large, N-frame revolvers numbered Model 20 through Model 29. A few of those revolvers are very rare such as the Model 21 .44 Special of which only 1,200 were made. (That includes those made prior to S&W's 1957 incorporation of model numbers for all their handguns.) Some of those 10 sixgun models were already on hand such as the pre-Model 29 .44 Magnum I bought in 1968. Others were diligently

Duke's 600th gun happened to be this Japanese made Lewis Machine Gun bought for him by Yvonne.

In his most recent 100 guns Duke bought five chambered for .30 Carbine including (from left to right) the M1 Carbine, M1A1 "paratrooper" Carbine, M2 Carbine, Ruger Blackhawk revolver and AMT autoloader. He has kept the Carbines but sold the handguns because their muzzleblast makes them no fun to shoot.

searched out until I could actually photograph all Model 20-somethings together. All those revolvers are gone now except for the pre-Model 23 .38 Special and pre-Model 27 .357 Magnum that were gifts from friends.

An interesting side note concerns those five single actions purchased among the last 100 guns I've owned. They all came from the relatively new US Firearms factory back in Connecticut because that company impresses me deeply with their commitment to quality. Among those five USFA single actions are three I consider special. One is one an engraved .44-40 with 5-1/2" barrel with serial number YMV1 (Yvonne M. Venturino) and one is an engraved .44-40 with 4-3/4" barrel with serial number MLV3 (Michael L. Venturino). The third is one the company terms their Custer Battlefield .45. It has a 7-1/2" barrel and antique finish so it resembles the original Colt SAA .45 on display at the National Park Service's Little Bighorn Battlefield Museum here in Montana. I was even lucky enough to get the year of the battle—1876—as its serial number.

Of the 17 autoloading pistols bought since 2005, one stands out in my affections above the others. That's a Colt Model 1911 that was made in 1918. It came with an original holster carved with a fellow's name and the date 1931 along with a facsimile of the US Army's Signal Corps insignia. That makes the handgun interesting. What makes it especially dear to me is that for some reason I shoot it well. Using a special set of glasses so that my aging eyes can see pistol sights, I can actually hit a target with that .45 ACP better than with most any handgun I currently own.

Comparing some of the tabulations of the rifles bought in my first 500 guns to those purchased in the most recent 100 is interesting. In the first 500 there were 64 lever guns, counting Winchesters and Italian replicas thereof, Marlins old and new and even a couple of modern-style Browning BLRs. In the last 100 guns there has been nary a lever gun. I feel those already in my racks will suit me forever.

Among the first 500 guns I bought there were 61 BPCRs (Black Powder Cartridge Rifles). Most of those were various versions of Sharps, both originals and new reproductions by Shiloh Rifle Manufacturing and C. Sharps Arms Company. Collectively those Sharps were chambered for almost all of the big-bore cartridges offered by the original Sharps Rifle Company of the 1870s.

In the beginning I mentioned buying a special gun as my 500th. That was a very beautiful Shiloh Sharps Model 1874 .45-70 with presentation grade wood and with my MLV initials inlaid in silver on the side of the receiver. What has made me especially fond of that rifle is when using it in 2006, I managed for the first time to place in the top 10 scoring shooters at the NRA BPCR Silhouette National Championships. What was even better was that at that time the Shiloh Company made it a habit to present two of their fine rifles at the nationals. One went to the overall winner and one went to the highest placing shooter firing one of their rifles. That year of 2006, my 9th place finish netted me that second Shiloh presentation rifle—one of their Roughrider models also in .45-70 caliber. And that's not all. In 2008 I used that rifle fitted with a 6X MVA scope to win the Arizona State Championship for Scoped NRA BPCR Silhouette. Such things tend to make one very proud of certain firearms.

Also I'm often impetuous in my gun buying. At the 2009 BPCR Silhouette Nationals, I was having a conversation with a reader when out of the corner of my eye I spied a rifle with a "for sale" sign hanging on it. I said to him, "Hold

While acquiring his most recent 100 guns Duke decided to assemble all of Smith & Wesson's Model 20-somethings including (from top to bottom of left row) a Model 20 .38 Special, Model 21 .44 Special, Model 22 .45 ACP, Model 23 .38 Special (middle row top to bottom) Model 24 .44 Special, Model 25 .45 ACP Rim, Model 26 .45 ACP, (right row top to bottom) Model 27 .357 Magnum, Model 28 .357 Magnum and Model 29 .44 Magnum.

that thought for a moment." Then I walked over to the rifle and saw it was a Lone Star Rolling Block .45-70, and even better it belonged to a friend of 20 years. I immediately shelled out the cash for the rifle and then turned back to the reader and said, "Now, where were we?" I've since shot some fine scores with that rifle, too.

Not all guns stick like those mentioned in the last few paragraphs. At the 2009 Arizona State Championship for BPCR Silhouette a fellow waved a cute little carbine under my nose. It was a Model 1891 Argentine Mauser in its original 7.65mm. Cute it was, but when fired recoil caused its forearm to hop off the front sandbag about 4". It was quickly put on the market. Likewise with two .30 Carbine handguns I purchased among the last 100 guns. One was a Ruger Blackhawk revolver and another an autoloader from the now defunct AMT Company. Both were sold because their horrendous muzzleblast made them no fun to shoot.

Duke is especially proud of these two Shiloh Model 1874 .45-70s. The top one he bought for himself in 2004 as a special present to commemorate his 500th gun. Then, in 2006, he used it to win the bottom one. In turn he used the bottom .45-70 now mounted with an MVA scope to win the 2008 Arizona State Scoped BPCR Silhouette Championship.

Duke's two current favorite military rifles are (top) a US Model 1903 Springfield .30-06 with 3X Leatherwood scope and (bottom) a German K98k 8mm Mauser with 1.5X, here with a Numrich replica Zf41 scope mounted in place of the original.

Although in the first 500 guns I'd owned there were a couple dozen various types of military rifles, it wasn't until this last 100 guns that I dived into accumulating them big time. In fact, a full 1/3 of the last 100 guns I've owned have been pre-1945 vintage military rifles. These have been all sorts of American, German, British, Japanese and Soviet rifles. Two stand head and shoulders above the other 31 in my esteem.

Those both incidentally wear scopes, which again means my favoring them could have something to do with eyes now being over six decades old. One is a "parts gun." A fellow of my acquaintance started building up a US Model 1903 Springfield using a combination of original and new parts. Before finishing it, however, he and his wife started a family and he looked for a buyer to complete the rifle. That was I. Along with finding a few more minor parts, I had a gunsmith drill and tap the Springfield for one of the 3X Leatherwood Malcolm scopes. That turned the rifle into a reasonable facsimile of the '03s mounted with Lyman 5A scopes the US Marine Corps used early in WWII. With good ammunition and on a good day that

rifle can put its bullets into about minute of angle clusters all the way to 500 yards. When I took it with me on a visit to Clint Smith at Thunder Ranch in Oregon, he paid it the highest of compliments by saying, "If you ever want to sell that rifle, keep me in mind."

My other favorite military rifle is German in origin. Early in WWII the Wehrmacht began fitting tiny 1.5X scopes designated Zf41 on K98k 8mm rifles. They were supposed to be "marksman's rifles" but ended up also getting pressed into sniper service. Mine is original and even shown in the book *Backbone Of The Wehrmacht, Part II*. However, its vintage scope was so cloudy it was not useable. I switched it out for one of new manufacture by Numrich Arms Company and now that rifle will keep up with my '03 "parts rifle" out to about 300 yards or so.

I've made no secret in these pages that my WWII collection includes a number of legal full-autos. These include what I consider the most significant submachine guns of WWII. Those are US M1 Thompson, German MP40, British STEN Mk II and US M3 "Grease Gun." Instead of an actual Russian PPsh41, I settled on a North Korean-made version and that, of course, spurred me to also purchase an US M2 .30 Carbine. That latter full-auto was adopted late in WWII but was considered "standard issue" in the Korean War.

Duke's favorite handgun among his most recent 100 guns is this 1918 vintage US Model 1911 .45 ACP.

Now to the special 600th gun: some years back Yvonne inherited a modest amount of stocks when a great aunt passed away. With the stock market being so shaky, early in 2010 she said to me, "If I cash in some of those stocks would you invest the money in another machine gun?" (How I *love* that woman!) What I located at the Ohio Ordnance Works was a Japanese manufactured Lewis Machine Gun. The Japanese Imperial Navy was licensed to manufacture these by the British starting in 1932 and they were used both on aircraft and by their Special Naval Landing Forces (Naval Infantry) throughout WWII. Caliber is 7.7x56mm Japanese Rimmed. If that one sounds like it would be difficult to find brass and dies for, never fear, it's just the Japanese name for .303 British. I've now fired hundreds of rounds through my Lewis gun. It's awesome!

One of the silliest things I ever said was this; "This is the last gun I'll ever need." At age 19 in June of 1968, I spoke those words to my mother on the day that I bought my first Colt SAA. (A .45 with 5-1/2" barrel.) She tended to fret because I spent about every penny that came my way on guns, gun magazines and handloading components instead of on cars, music or girls, which was how most of my friends disposed of their limited funds.

Perhaps I even meant it. Perhaps at that time I didn't even realize I was a hopeless "gun junkie" and as such would never, could never, cease questing for new and different guns. Now I know it, accept it and can live happily with myself. Number 600 will not be my last!

GUNS

GOLD FOUND IN UTAH!

Browning X-Bolt White Gold .243, that is.

John Barsness

The first thing anybody notices about the Browning X-Bolt White Gold is its appearance, especially in an age when many rifles are styled like basement plumbing. The White Gold's style could be called Retro Bling, a sort of cross between the California look epitomized by the Weatherby rifles of half a century ago and present-day "I've Got Mine."

The metal is all stainless steel, except for the aluminum bottom metal and some gold engraving on the rose-and-scroll engraved receiver. The stock is fancy-grain walnut finished to a mirror-shine, with a moderate Monte Carlo hump on the comb. There's even a rosewood pistol grip cap and angled fore-end tip, both complete with white-line spacers.

This fits right in with a recent trend in custom rifles. In the past few years, a few "traditional" (wood-stocked) custom riflemakers have broken away from the so-called classic style that's dominated the genre for several decades. Classic bolt-action stocks haven't really changed all that much in the last century, unless you consider 2-screw sling-swivel studs and minute differences in the "pedestals" under 98 Mauser bolt releases as radical changes. In the 21st century some shooters are searching for a different look. The interesting thing about the X-Bolt White Gold, however, is that unlike some objects built with a lot of show, there's also a lot of go.

Browning has insisted since the X-Bolt's introduction that it's a different rifle than their popular A-Bolt, a design that originated in the mid-1980s. At first glance the X-Bolt looks like an A-Bolt, with a 3-locking-lug bolt in a very similar receiver, but there are major differences. One is the magazine. The A-Bolt's detachable, staggered-round, steel magazine attaches to the inside of a traditional hinged floorplate. The X-Bolt's detachable rotary magazine, made of synthetic polymer, slips right into the bottom of the action and feeds the rounds in a straight line into the chamber.

While many traditionalists hate the thought of a "plastic" magazine, many high-quality rifles (such as the German Blaser bolt-action) have featured polymer magazines for many years, with a demonstrated record for reliability. The X-Bolt's magazine functioned perfectly throughout the tests.

Another difference between the X-Bolt and A-Bolt is a button at the base of the bolt-handle that allows the bolt to open with the tang safety still on. The X-Bolt's safety also actually blocks the firing pin, along with the trigger mechanism. Thus the bolt can be opened with the firing pin still safely held back, just as in some of the more revered bolt actions such as the 98 Mauser and Model 70 Winchester. The X-Bolt's safety button is on the tang, where many retro-shooters (including a former *GUNS* staff writer named Elmer Keith) believe the safety on any long gun should be located.

The trigger itself is also different from the A-Bolt's. Browning calls it the Feather Trigger, a 3-lever system adjustable from 3 to 5 pounds. It's supposedly free of creep and factory-adjusted to 3-1/2 pounds. The trigger on the sample rifle broke very cleanly, and my Timney trigger gauge measured five consecutive pulls that averaged 3 pounds, 10 ounces, varying only 3 ounces between the lightest and heaviest pulls.

The stock adds a couple of interesting touches to overall function. Browning claims the Monte Carlo comb allows more contact between the recoil pad and the shooter's shoulder. This is a big claim, since individual shooters vary considerably in physical dimensions. However, it's true that a

The Browning X-Bolt White Gold has distinctive styling, matched by fine function.

The test shooting was done on a beautiful day in October, with almost no wind.

A) The nicely figured walnut of the Monte Carlo buttstock is fitted with Browning's Inflex Technology pad. B) The receiver is scroll-engraved, with the name gold-plated. C) The detachable rotary magazine is made out of tough polymer and feeds rounds in a straight line.

moderate Monte Carlo will fit a wider range of shooters better than the so-called classic design with a hump-free buttstock.

The classic stock evolved back when most hunting rifles had iron sights, so the buttstock angled downward somewhat. With the comb cheeked firmly, the shooter's eye was at the correct height to aim with irons. Eventually, however, scopes became the standard sight, and scopes kept growing in size. Consequently the classic stock's butt-angle had to be raised in order to retain cheek-contact with the comb.

The end result with many rifles is a buttstock that angles so high that, with many shooters, only the toe of the recoil pad maintains contact with the shoulder. This not only can cause some pain when the sharp toe of a typical tire-rubber factory pad jabs into the shooter's shoulder joint, but tends to flip the muzzle up during firing.

The exception is a shooter with very square shoulders and a relatively short neck. These match up very well with a very straight, classic stock. But the average shooter isn't built that way—the reason a moderate Monte Carlo fits more people comfortably. This may not agree with classic rifle aesthetics, but sometimes practical reality doesn't match aesthetic theory.

The stock is also fitted with Browning's Inflex Technology recoil pad, originally developed for Browning shotguns. The pad is made of typical modern super-soft polymers, but the interior structure of the pad also tends to pull the comb of the stock down when the gun is fired, reducing felt recoil on the face. The kick of the .243 Winchester really didn't amount to much of a recoil test with the X-Bolt White Gold, but I've fired many Browning shotguns fitted with the Inflex Technology pad, and it works, especially on light 12 gauges.

Serious Scope Mount

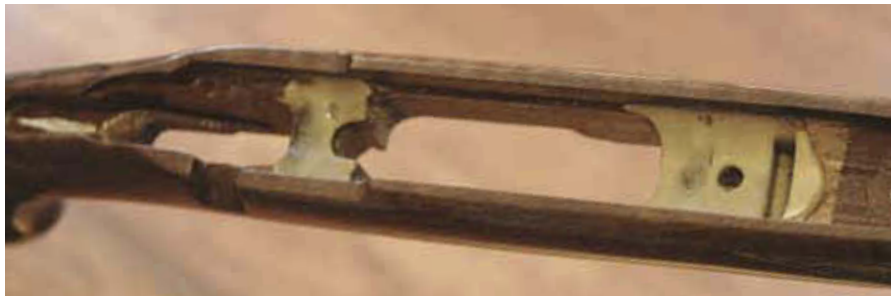
Another difference between the A-Bolt and X-Bolt is the eight scope-mounting holes on the action, four each on the receiver ring and rear bridge. These are the basis for the "X" in the action name, and provide a stronger and more stable connection between the scope mount and action. The rings used were light aluminum rings marketed by Browning, bearing

The higher comb of the Monte Carlo-styled stock is designed for scope use. Note the 3-lug bolt has only a 60-degree throw.

a very strong resemblance to the popular Talley Lightweight rings, with the bottom half of the ring screwing directly to the action—a very strong arrangement.

The X-Bolt retains a couple of the really good features of the A-Bolt—light weight and accuracy. The listed weight of the .243 White Gold is 6 pounds, 8 ounces, but the test rifle actually weighed 4 ounces less. This is unusual, believe me, as many factory rifles weigh a 1/2 pound or more over the listed weight. It balances well, however, due to the medium-contour 22" barrel.

The test scope was a Weaver 3-15x42 Super Slam weighing a hefty 20.8 ounces, but even so the scoped rifle weighed only 7 pounds, 11 ounces. A more typical 3-9X would drop the overall weight to a little over 7 pounds, a very nice weight for a hunting rifle.



The action of the X-Bolt is nicely epoxy-bedded, with the barrel free-floated.

Over the years I've shot a lot of A-Bolts and a few X-Bolts and all proved very accurate. The first A-Bolt I encountered was the .270 Hunter model my wife Eileen bought in 1986, the first year the A-Bolt appeared, partly because it was so light. She hunted with that rifle for most of a decade, at one point taking 10 big game animals in a row, from pronghorn to moose, with one shot each. It would group anything from 90-grain Sierra varmint bullets to 150-grain Nosler Partitions inside 3/4". The first X-Bolt I ever shot, a .308 Winchester used on a pronghorn hunt in Colorado a few years ago, would do the same thing with Winchester factory ammunition loaded with the 150-grain XP3 bullet.

There are several reasons for this accuracy. First, the factory Browning barrels are darn good, and the one on the White Gold was no different. After all the test-firing, my Hawkeye borescope revealed a very smooth bore with only a couple of tiny traces of copper-fouling, and the chamber and throat were very smoothly cut as well.

Second, the barrels are of reasonably stout contour, measuring .6" at the muzzle, thicker than most barrels on light rifles. It's free-floated,

.243 WINCHESTER HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
Nosler 55 Ballistic Tip	*Big Game*	*48.0*	*3,896*	*.29*
Sierra 70 BlitzKing	*IMR4895*	*40.0*	*3,357*	*.84*
Hornady 87 V-Max	*AA3100*	*46.0*	*3,258*	*1.09*
Swift 90 Scirocco II	*VV N560*	*44.0*	*3,045*	*.99*
Nosler 100 Partition	*Reloder 17*	*40.0*	*3,030*	*.65*

X-BOLT WHITE GOLD

MAKER: BROWNING
ONE BROWNING PL.
MORGAN, UT 84050
(800) 333-3288
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.
COM/BROWNING

ACTION TYPE:
Bolt-action
CALIBER:
.243 Win (tested, many others)
CAPACITY:
4
BARREL LENGTH:
22"
OVERALL LENGTH:
41-3/4"
WEIGHT:
6 pounds, 4 ounces (test rifle)
STOCK:
Fancy walnut
FINISH:
Gloss
PRICE:
$1,439

enough that a doubled dollar bill could be easily slid between the barrel and fore-end channel, all the way to the front of the action.

The action itself is also very stiff, with a much smaller cut-out for the ejection port than in many traditional rifles with magazines that must be loaded from the top of the action. It's nicely epoxy-bedded into the stock, both at the front of the action ring and under the bridge, where the rear action screw is located. Put quality, free-floated barrels on a stiff, well-bedded action, and accuracy should be good.

The test shooting took place on a beautiful October day in the mid-60's, with only the hint of a breeze. The barrel was allowed to cool between groups until it could be comfortably handled, but the groups were shot as quickly as possible, just as they might be in hunting. The handloads were primarily bullet/powder combinations that had grouped well in other .243 Winchesters, along with one new load with Alliant's Reloder 17. I simply had to try RL-17 with 100-grain Nosler Partitions and the load worked very well, with top velocity and accuracy.

One of the great things about modern computerized manufacturing is a much wider variety of rifles can be built on the same theme. Before computers most rifle makers offered two basic models, a standard and deluxe. Today dozens of different models can be offered, one for every shooter's taste and bank account. Browning's suggested retail price for the White Gold is over $1,400, putting it well above the low end of the factory-rifle scale, but a lot of hunters should like its combination of striking looks and fine function. GUNS

RESURRECTING THE ROPER GRIP

Keith Brown's way.

Steven Dodd Hughes

The decline in manufacturing in America has put many a man out of work, but in a few instances has initiated a second career in the firearms trade. After 20-something years as a journeyman Screw Maker, 11 with General Motors, handgun grip maker Keith Brown faced the closure of his plant. His subsequent venture into self-employment renewed his lifelong interest in grip making and resurrected the legacy of some of the finest grips ever made in America, those of Walter F. Roper.

Keith Brown made Roper-style grips for the Steven's 1950-era S&W K-38 .38 Special and K-22 .22 Long Rifle.

Between the World Wars, competitive pistol shooting was an enormously popular sport as were custom pistol grips, the most popular and subsequently best-known grips were made under the name W.F. Roper. In truth, an engineer and designer, Walter F. Roper did not make the grips himself. A virtually unknown French-born craftsman named Mathias Gagne actually crafted Roper grips and departed this earth with little known about him.

A few constants remain in the surviving examples of Gagne/Roper grips: Each and every pair is entirely different, all feel good in the hand even if they don't fit your hand and each has an artistic quality beyond W.F. Roper's notion of the practical shooter's needs.

There is no known information regarding production records, manufacturing techniques or much of anything about Gagne. Roper went on to design target sights, target guns and accoutrements, as well as write magazine articles and books titled *Pistol and Revolver Shooting* and co-authored *Smith & Wesson Handguns.* He wrote at length about his theories of grip design that Gagne obviously used, but Roper rarely mentions the craftsman himself.

One enlightening tidbit about Gagne is found in this paragraph by Roper, "I doubt if my experiments with handgun stocks would have gone any further… if I had not met a man who I believe to be the finest worker

Keith Brown at his workbench surrounded by custom grip projects.

of wood I had ever seen. To this man, Mathias Gagne should go a big share of the credit for the thousands of stocks I have furnished… while these stocks have been made to my design, it was Mr. Gagne's craftsmanship that made them possible."

Research

Keith Brown had seen a few sets of Roper grips over the years but wasn't satisfied with his attempts to replicate them until meeting Lee Jarrett, longtime S&W guru. Jarrett encouraged Brown by bringing several sets of the original grips to an Ohio Gun Collectors show, lent them to Brown and bought several of his early examples. Brown studied the original grips, making mental images and taking notes. While researching Ropers he found several citings about Roper grips in the writings of Charles Askins, Elmer Keith and others. Keith Brown discovered the S&W Internet forum (www.smith-wessonforum.com) about this time and found other folks with like interests, posting photos and information about Roper grips. Forum member Kevin Williams, who had written the most comprehensive information about Gagne to date for the S&W Collector's Association, sent photos and much Roper material to Brown.

In something of a convergence, as Brown's employment at GM was being phased out, he found the S&W Internet forum, researched Roper grips to the point of feeling confident about recreating them and after discussions with his wife Laura, decided to go into handgun grip making as a full-time occupation. Brown had made grips as a hobby since high school and had enough knowledge, tools, materials and enthusiasm to get started, what he needed was a specialty. Early in 2006, Brown felt like he could reliably offer revolver shooters something that hadn't been available for several decades—Roper-type custom grips.

An original set of N-frame Ropers (left) compared with a new custom set of Keith Brown's reproductions (right).

Fancy English walnut K-Frame Ropers by Keith Brown. Note how well the grain matches along the bottom of the frame.

Target shooting was very popular in the pre- and post-war era. This is a vintage S&W Model 1950 .44 Special Target N-Frame with original thumbrest Roper grips.

Premium Walnut

In the past several years Brown has come to some good decisions about reproducing Walter Roper's handgun grips. Although he will use other species of walnut, Brown prefers Juglans regia, the so-called English, French or Circassian walnut. He believes it makes the best grips because it works well with hand tools, takes finish well, checkers well and offers a better strength-to-weight ratio than other woods, besides many consider it the most beautiful wood in the world.

Brown found it difficult to locate high-quality grip medallions, escutcheons and screws. The pre-war vintage hardware was the best but there was no regular supplier. He finds it ironic that having made millions of screws on Acme screw machines, he now makes his grip screws and escutcheons one at a time on a small shop lathe. He models them after the pre-war fittings, using nickel silver for the escutcheons and stainless steel for the screws. The escutcheons are the early deep-cup type with the screw head sitting well down into the cup and the threaded side deeply dished as well. The escutcheons are made to fit flush with the wood rather than inset like later factory grips. Screw lengths are calculated to match the thickness for each frame size and grip thickness. Some might consider this of minor importance but the appropriate hardware adds a large measure of quality and sophistication to his custom grips.

The medallions can't be reproduced, as they are the Smith & Wesson's trademark. Used in

factory style or reproduction grips, he prefers customers supply their own medallions. They are usually scavenged from old grips or purchased from those having hordes of surplus medallions. They are not generally used for Roper-type grips.

Measurements

Traditionally custom grip makers request a tracing of the shooting hand for correct fitting to the customer. The hand is traced with the palm flat with the trigger finger spread from the other three fingers. Walter Roper discussed how he interpreted measurements taken from a drawing but did not offer any step-by-step procedure.

Keith Brown says, "There are eight actual dimensions I determine from the hand tracings. Three for the thickness at different locations." He has arrived at key dimensions based on Roper's writings, including from the top of the middle finger to the outside of the pinky, that determines the distance from the shelf under the triggerguard to the bottom front of the grip. Measuring from the knuckle of the middle finger, then adding one finger width arrives at the amount of filler under the triggerguard, usually 3/8" to 1/2". The palm is measured from a line across the knuckles to the palm of the hand at the base of the thumb, determining the thickness of the grip panels. Roper grips are thinner than most others, relying on the different thicknesses to assure a firm and consistent grasp of the gun. They also have an attractive flare at the bottom determined by another measurement.

Keith Brown doesn't just make replica Roper-style grips. Here is a modern-style Combat grip on a nickel S&W Model 13 .357 Mag.

These are reproduction service grips by Keith Brown for a S&W .38-44 Heavy Duty.

An original set of Roper grips still serving on this S&W Pre-Model 27 .357 Mag.

Brown says, "After seeing as many hand tracings as I have, and with the feedback I've received from clients I can judge hand fit pretty quickly and accurately. But each hand tracing presents a picture of how they will be shaped and I determine a specific set of dimensions for each client. " And just like the original Ropers, each grip is different from all others.

Reading Walter Roper's treatise on grip making, you might imagine all his grips had an exaggerated palm swell, but in fact this is seldom seen in the original grips. Roper grips are asymmetrical in this way, having the palm swell on only one side but the swell is seldom very large. This is one of two places where Keith Brown grips and original Roper's differ. Brown asks his clients and most prefer to have the grips made with equal swell on both sides—or ambidextrous if you will. The grips look better that way and, in the event of a lefty ever using them, will work as well. This is not the case with thumb-rest grips as they are always asymmetric because the thumb rest is on one side and the palm swell on the other.

Brown also uses much fancier wood than most Roper grips ever had. And why not? Many a grip collector has wondered why original Roper grips exhibit straight grain walnut, a question that will never be answered. In my experience, fancy wood is much more in demand these days than at any other time in firearms history.

Brown uses shop-made jigs to route the grip blanks to almost match the frame size. The grips are then fitted to an actual revolver frame with small chisels precisely inletting to the "stock circle." Next, a revolver frame guides drilling the stock-pin hole. Brown tries the grips on several frames to insure they are neither loose nor difficult to install.

"The grips go on and off of the frames dozens and dozens of times during the process," Brown says.

Extra wood is removed to match frame contours then each grip is individually shaped using hand tools and hand-held power tools to dimensions determined from the clients hand tracing. The grips are then hand-sanded to 400 grit in preparation for finishing.

Brown prefers to checker the grips prior to applying stock finish. The checkering is accomplished entirely with hand tools in Brown's interpretation of Roper's ribbon-and-diamond checkering pattern with most being 18 to 20 lines per inch as were originals. Roper's checkering has

These revolver grips are in various stages of form, from walnut blanks to finished and checkered.

always reminded me of the "art deco" style of the 1920s and '30s. Brown's own checkering design has evolved slightly by changing the bottom from a straight line to more of a fishtail. Accomplishing such small panels is very difficult but Brown accomplishes it with aplomb.

Keith Brown's stock finish varies between a 3-part proprietary concoction he mixes to replicate authentic S&W finishes to an oil-modified polyurethane for a glossier and more bulletproof finish.

As a testament to Brown's complete quality, I've been a professional custom gunmaker for more than 30 years and have made several grips for myself. I have two sets of KB Grips and two more sets ordered, the first set exceeded my expectations for quality or craftsmanship and they fit my hand like my shooting gloves.

The majority of Keith Brown custom grips are in the Roper style for Smith & Wesson revolvers, although he makes other styles for other guns. He produces some 150+ pairs of grips per annum and maintains a steady backlog of orders. Each set is entirely custom made and sell very quickly when they rarely appear on the used market. Approximate cost is $350 for Roper-style target grips. Prices vary by options and grade of walnut with current delivery time about five to six months.

There has been a tremendous resurgence of interest in classic revolvers; the resurrection of Roper-style grips is just in time.

Author Hughes would like to thank Lee Jarrett for supplying original Roper grips for this story. Custom gunmaker Steven Dodd Hughes has written three books and hundreds of articles about custom gunmaking. Find more info on the subject at: www.finegunmaking.com.

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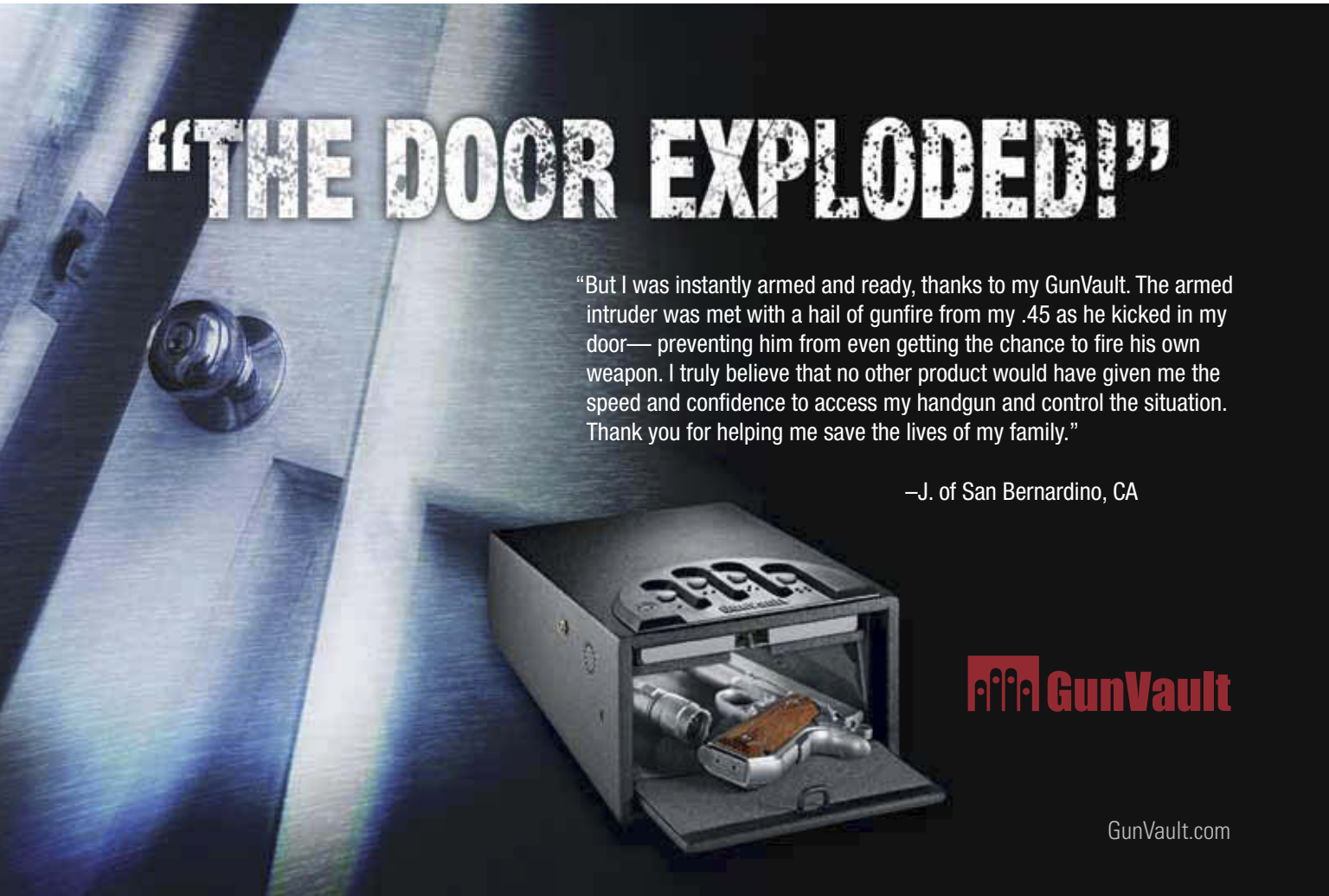

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CUTTING FINERY DEFINED

Knifemaker Tim Britton's Serpentine Whittler.

The traditional folding knife still has a huge following among those who like a simple working knife in their pocket. Many who grew up with good ol' fashioned pocketknives welcome more blades than one for everyday chores and appreciate the history that accompanies them. Custom knifemaker Tim Britton is one of those and he carries on the fine art of making traditional folders with high flair.

Britton's Serpentine Whittler is a refined, handmade 2-blade folder that not only exemplifies the high degree of craftsmanship found in the best handmade knives today, but features all the materials you'd expect in a fine knife. The Whittler's curvaceous handle has stag scales with 416 stainless steel bolsters, the Wharncliffe main and secondary pen blades are top shelf BG-42 steel (stainless also) with all steel sporting a brushed satin finish. Wharncliffe style blades have a flat edge, which make for excellent utility cutting (electrician's prefer it for wire stripping) and—as the name implies—excels at whittling. The small pen can be used for everything from cleaning your nails to detail work, such as opening letters and small packages. In essence, this folder will handle everything you need in a pocketknife and has all the right stuff to give you a lifetime of service.

At $325, as shown, Tim's Serpentine Whittler is not for every budget, but for those who appreciate the best in quality, blades that walk and talk and the beauty of stag in hand, this folder has it all. Other handle materials such as jigged bone, burl wood and pearl are available, and the knifemaker offers it all up in a zippered fleece-lined pouch. Britton offers other traditional pocketknife patterns and makes a pretty mean group of tactical knives as well. GUNS

Tim Britton brings a touch of class to the gentleman's folding knife.

KNIFE: SERPENTINE WHITTLER

MAKER: TIM BRITTON
5645 MURRAY RD.
WINSTON-SALEM, NC 27106
(336) 923-2062
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/ TIMBRITTON

BLADE MATERIAL:
BG-42 stainless steel
BLADE LENGTH:
Wharncliffe main 2.75", pen 2"
OVERALL LENGTH (CLOSED):
3.5"
WEIGHT:
2 ounces
HANDLE:
Stag with 416 stainless steel bolsters
PRICE:
$325

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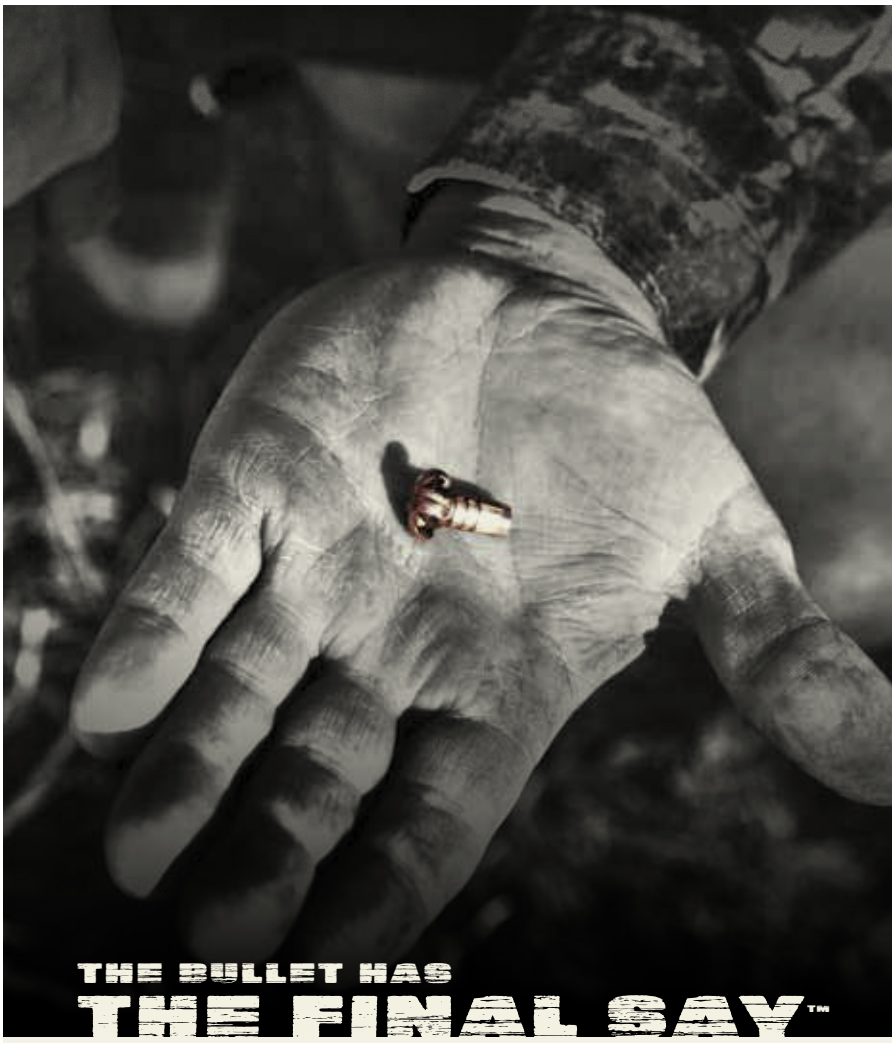

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GUNS VNR

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RIGHTS WATCH

DAVID CODREA

Is Victory in the Eye of the Beholder?

"GOA Racks up Huge Victories from Coast-to-Coast" the email proclaimed. "Candidates backed by Gun Owners of America scored tremendous wins…."

The "no-compromise gun lobby" was referring to the results of the Nov. 2010 midterm elections, where Republicans recaptured the House and took an unstoppable majority away from Senate Democrats.

"In many cases, GOA was the *only* national pro-gun organization to actively oppose Nancy Pelosi's 'Blue Dog' Democrats," the announcement continued. "Our aggressive opposition to these Representatives—who are mistakenly considered to be somewhat conservative—was well worth the effort as Pelosi has now been reduced to minority status."

This was a thinly-disguised reference to the National Rifle Association's "single issue" endorsement policy that included support for many presented as "pro-gun Democrats."

"We are a non-partisan organization, and we don't base any grade or any endorsement on a party affiliation," Institute for Legislative Action executive director Chris Cox explained in a *National Review Online* interview. "We have a pro-incumbent policy," he added.

This did not go over well with the GOP establishment, which apparently feels a sense of entitlement, despite fielding a few outright miserable choices like "assault weapon" ban bill author Mark Kirk of Illinois, and Dan Coats of Indiana, who had previously supported both the Brady Bill and the federal semi-

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SS167K Renaissance Kit.....14.95

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SS166 Blade Only.....12.95
SS166K Cobra Kit.....14.95

Sportsman

7 3/8" overall, blade 3 1/2", 1/8" thick.
SS164 Blade Only.....12.95
SS164K Sportsman Kit.....14.95

Ringtail

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SS873 Ringtail Only.....12.95
SS873K Ringtail Kit.....14.95

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440 stainless steel. Blades 3 1/4", cutting edge 6", 1/16" thick with 7/32" holes.
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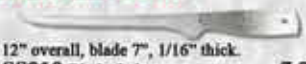
FILLET BLADES

8A Stainless steel fillet blades. Kit includes blade, pins, handle material and instructions. Optional leather sheaths sold separately.

Fisherman's Fillet



12" overall, blade 7", 1/16" thick.
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Alaskan Fillet

16" overall, blade 10 1/2", 1/16" thick.
SS912 Blade Only.....12.95
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Trout Fillet Blade

Thin, flexible 8A Stainless fillet blade Overall 10-1/2", blade 5-3/4" x .045" thick. Kit contains blade, pins and dymondwood.

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PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

auto ban.

"National Republicans are furious with the National Rifle Association, their natural ally," Z. Byron Wolf of *ABC News* reported, "for endorsing 58 incumbent Democrats who support gun rights. And with Republicans aiming to win control of the House, some are promising retribution for the NRA next year."

As expected, claims of victory came not only from the actual winners, but also from those desperate to put a good face on a bad outcome.

"Supporters of common sense restrictions on guns, from both political parties, won a number of US Senate seats," the Brady Campaign postured, citing the afore-mentioned Kirk as their poster boy for triumph.

"On the Democratic side, gun control supporters Senators Barbara Boxer in California; Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand in New York; Ron Wyden in Oregon, Barbara Mikulski in Maryland and Daniel Inouye in Hawaii won. Richard Blumenthal in Connecticut, Michael Bennet in Colorado and Chris Coons in Delaware were elected to the Senate as well," their release continued.

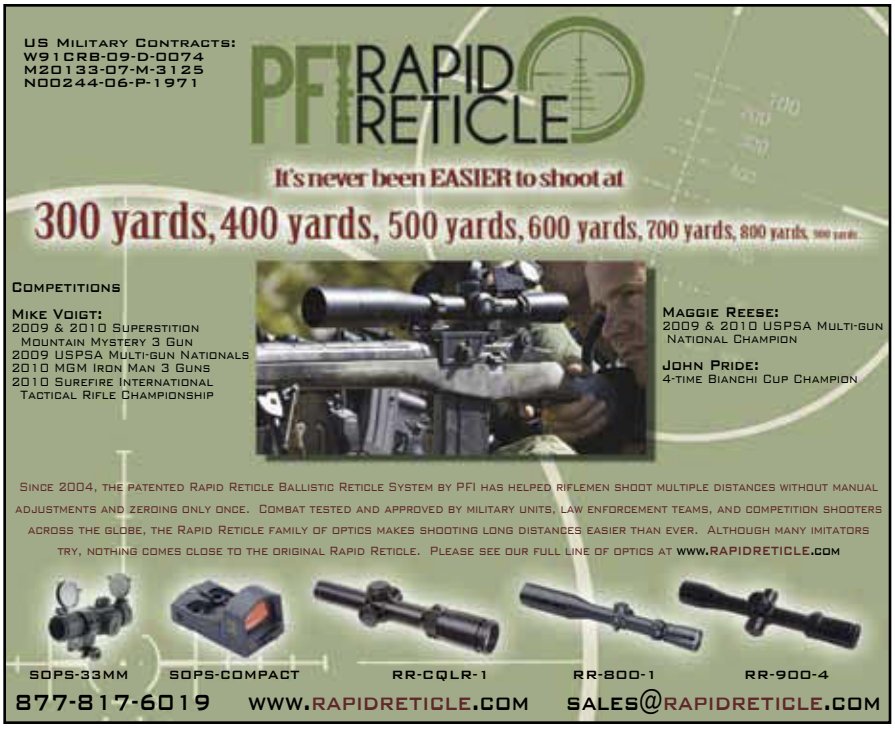
"This shows again that support for common sense gun laws will not hurt candidates at the polls," Brady president Paul Helmke implausibly claimed.

Fortunately, author and attorney David B. Kopel (see "Aiming for Liberty," Aug. 2010 "Quartermaster") was able to put this in perspective.

"US Senate: The net result of Tuesday was a gain of +6 votes on Second Amendment issues," he wrote in the *New Ledger*. "In not a single US Senate seat did the gun control lobby gain ground."

There's no question the elections give cause for hope. But unless the "pro-gun" representatives show a willingness to challenge the status quo, rebuff new citizen disarmament attempts and start repealing existing edicts, I'd hold off on proclaiming "Mission Accomplished!" and focus on "We have just begun to fight." GUNS

Visit David Codrea's online journal "The War on Guns" at waronguns.blogspot.com or visit DavidCodrea.com to read his Examiner column.



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NEWS

Potterfields Donate $1 Million to National Wild Turkey Foundation

Larry and Brenda Potterfield of MidwayUSA recently donated $1 million to the National Wild Turkey Foundation to support youth shooting programs, including the "JAKES Take Aim" program.

The "JAKES Take Aim" program will provide opportunities for youths, ages 17 and under, to try shooting in a safe, fun environment. With the generous donation from the Potterfields, the NWTF aims to triple the annual number of youth shooting participants at its JAKES outreach events from 50,000 to 150,000 youths by 2014.

"Thanks to the generosity of Larry and Brenda Potterfield, more young people will have the chance to try shooting sports and may discover a passion they will enjoy for the rest of their lives," said George C. Thornton, NWTF CEO. "This program will be a step toward solidifying the future of shooting sports in America."

Displaying the check for $1 million to the NWTF for the organization's "JAKES Take Aim" program are (from left to right) Larry and Brenda Potterfield, MidwayUSA; Peggy Anne Vallery, Chair NWTF National Board of Directors; George Thornton, CEO NWTF; and Robert "Doc" Dettmer, Member NWTF National Board of Directors.

Larry Potterfield, Founder and CEO of MidwayUSA, remarked, "Brenda and I believe in supporting youth programs that teach our next generation about shooting and shooting safety. The NWTF is doing a great job with our youth, who are the future of shooting, conservation and the outdoor industry. We are proud to help them change the future."

Contact MidwayUSA, (800) 243-3220, www.gunsmagazine.com/midwayusa. For more information about the NWTF and the "JAKES Take Aim" program, please visit www.NWTF.org/Jakes.

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Basra SWAT Trains In Close Quarters With US

The only markers on the range are the burnt craters where vehicles were once parked. Steel cable juts out of the ground, rusted and frayed as it sticks up from under the sand. There are no buildings in sight, and only a rough road gives any sense of direction in the desert.

For the Basra Special Weapons and Tactics team and the trainers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, it's the perfect place to train their fellow Iraqis on close quarters combat tactics.

The Basra SWAT team has trained with various Special Forces units, including the Navy SEALs and the British SAS, and every bit of training counts. The 1st Bn., 68th Arm. Regt., currently under the operational control of United States Division-South and the 1st Infantry Division, has taken up the task of teaching the Basra SWAT team not just tactics, but how to pass on their knowledge in tactics to others.

A member of the Basra Special Weapons and Tactics team demonstrates the proper form to ready a weapon to other members of the SWAT team during a training exercise in Basra last Oct. 4. The SWAT Team is working with the 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment to learn how to instruct other police officers in Basra. US Army Photo: Sgt. Cody Harding, 1st Infantry Div, PAO

The 10 SWAT members will go back to their unit able to train 52 other policemen, said Capt. Christopher Thompson, the Co. C Commander.

"What we're hoping with these 10, is we set the training model these guys will use from here on out," said Thompson, an Ellsworth, Kan. native. "Once we're gone, these guys will train future generations of SWAT."

The range consisted of several wooden targets set up on steel posts the Soldiers and SWAT members brought and prepared on their own. After a few dry runs with their AK-

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47 rifles, the SWAT team practiced engaging targets in close quarters, turning to face and engage targets and shooting while advancing.

Co. C is involved in several missions around Basra, including counter-mortar patrols, time-sensitive targets and security for the Basra Operations Center, a joint Iraqi and US installation.

About the only thing they don't do, according to Thompson, is drive tanks. "Which is kind of ironic since this is in fact a tank company," he added.

Sgt. Kent Marshall, a tanker with Company C, 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, instructs a member of the Basra Special Weapons and Tactics team on engaging a target while moving during a joint training session in Basra last Oct. 4. US Army Photo: Sgt. Cody Harding, 1st Infantry Div, PAO

Mohammad Kareem, a member of the Basra SWAT team, said the training is going a long way to allowing the Iraqis to protect their country. "We believe the American forces and the experts try to do the best to have the Iraqi Security Forces trained so they can take all of the responsibility in the future so they can attack and face the terrorists and militias in Iraq," Kareem said.

"Everybody knows that the Basra SWAT team has a lot of experience," Kareem said. "We need to keep our experience up; we need to keep training; we need to keep trying. The SWAT team is always going to be ready." For more USD-S news, visit their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/1stinfantrydivision. — *Sgt. Cody Harding, 1st Inf. Div. PAO*

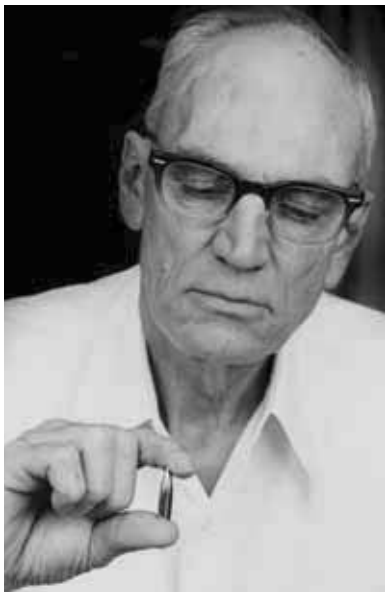
Nosler Founder Passes Away

John Amos Nosler, inventor and founder of Nosler, Inc., died of natural causes at his home on Oct. 10, 2010. John founded his company in 1948 and remained president until 1988 when his son, Robert (Bob)

Nosler purchased the company. John remained as chairman of the board until his death at the age of 97.

After a stubborn, mud-caked Canadian moose failed to go down, despite a well placed shot from John Nosler's .300 H&H in the fall of 1946, John started thinking about a way to make a bullet that would perform well every time, no matter what the size of the game or the shot angle.

Over the next year, he experimented with bullet design, finally settling on a unique, dual-core bullet that was really the first Partition. The following fall, John and his friend, Clarence Purdie, both killed moose with one shot using John's new bullet. In 1948 the Nosler Partition Bullet Company was formed.

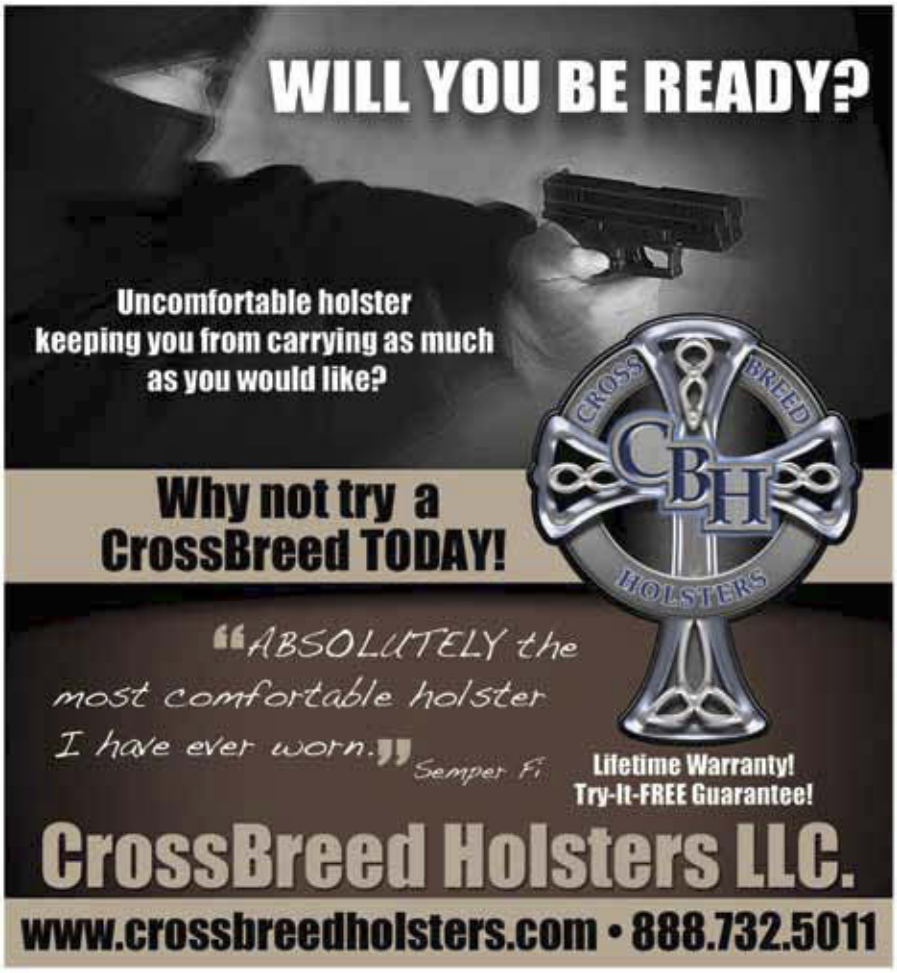


John Nosler examines one of his company's bullets in the 1970s.

After a few years of production on lathes, John developed the impact extrusion method of manufacture. This groundbreaking method produced bullets with extremely concentric jackets that could be optimized for a wide range of uses. The Nosler Company continues to create and offer a wide range of bullets for target and hunting. — *Courtesy Nosler*

Chinooks Escape Afghanistan Winter

After 737 flying hours and having moved in excess of 691,000 kilograms of supplies and equipment over the last eight months, Australia's Rotary Wing Group rotation is returning home for a well-earned break and mandatory maintenance on their aircraft.



The task group and their two CH-47 Chinooks will return to Afghanistan early in the new year to recommence flight operations in support of ISAF efforts—a deployment they have undertaken since rotations began in 2006.

The Chinooks are unable to fly during Afghanistan's harsh winter months.

The two Chinooks chalked up an impressive 860 sorties, transporting more than 4,700 troops while assisting the efforts of the International Stabilisation Assistance Force (ISAF)

Soldiers from the 5th Aviation Regiment remove the blades from the CH-47 Chinook helicopter to ready it for transport back to Australia after an 8-month deployment in the Kandahar region of Afghanistan.

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on this current rotation.

Task Group Commander, Lieutenant Colonel David Lynch said the effort of the team was highly commendable.

"On just about all the missions we flew this year supporting our coalition partners; our crews were fulfilling the role of Air Mission Commander, taking the lead and providing direction to the other Coalition aircraft involved in the missions," he said.

A major contribution to the Rotary Wing Group's sustained high performance was the role played by the maintenance crews who were responsible for keeping the "Chooks" in the air.

Craftsman Joshua Campbell helps break down the Australian CH-47 Chinook helicopter ready for transport on a C-17 Globemaster III from the Kandahar Air Field.

"A key mission requirement for the Task Group was to ensure that the CH-47s were mission ready whenever they were required," Lieutenant Colonel Lynch said.

"This year, we did not fail on a single occasion to provide support when we were assigned to a mission.

"This magnificent effort by the maintainers to keep our aircraft reliable and available through out our deployment period has underpinned our success this year," added Lt. Col. Lynch.

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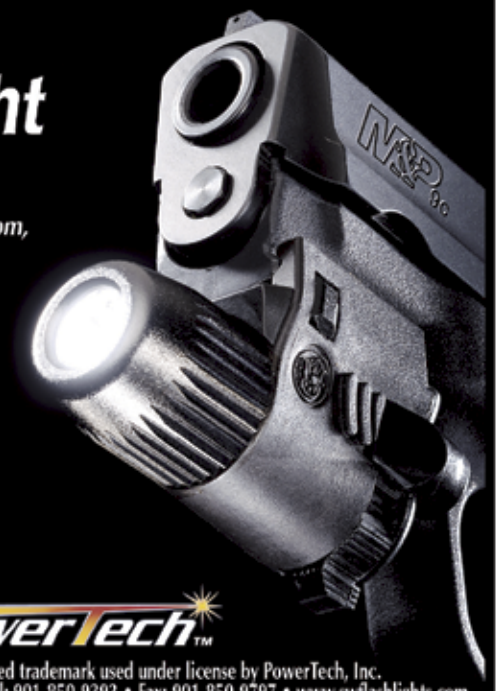

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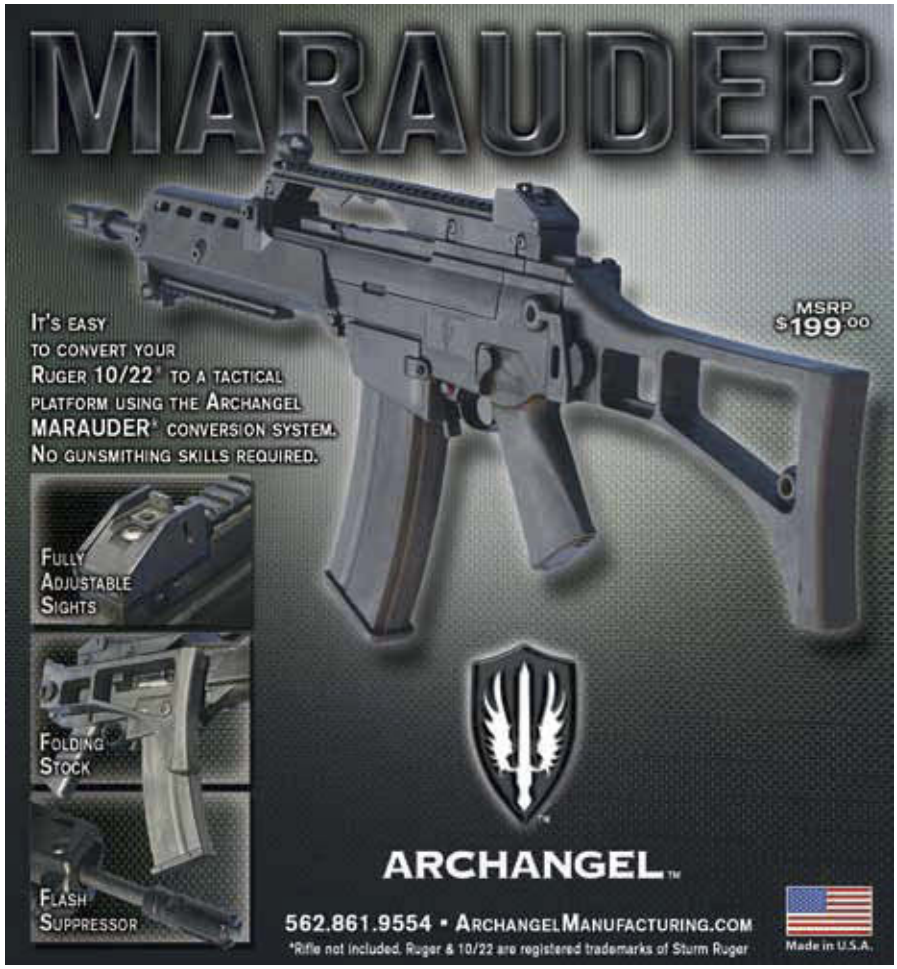

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A CH-47 Chinook helicopter is loaded onto an RAAF C-17 Globemaster III for return to Australia after an 8-month deployment to Kandahar, Afghanistan.

stripped the Rotary Wing Groups double-decker bus-sized helicopters and packed them into a pair of Royal Australian Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircrafts for the return trip to Australia.—*Courtesy ADoD*

Aimpoint's 1 Millionth Military Sight

Aimpoint, the originator and worldwide leader in electronic red-dot-sighting technology, has announced the company's shipments of M68 Close Combat Optics under contract to the US Army recently passed a total of 1 million sights. Contracts for the M68CCO have been issued to Aimpoint by the US Military since 1997, and continue with shipments as part of the latest contract for 565,000 sights awarded to the company in August 2009.

Aimpoint has delivered more than 1 million M68CCO weapon sights to the US Army since 1997.

"The continuous use of Aimpoint sights by the US Army for the past 14 years is a great honor for our company, and passing the 1 million sight mark is indeed a momentous achievement" said Lennart Ljungfelt, President of Aimpoint AB. "The M68 Close Combat Optic has continued to evolve and improve over the years with feedback from our experience

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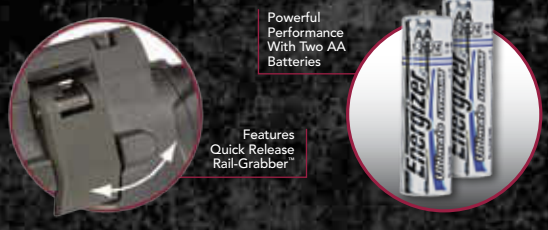

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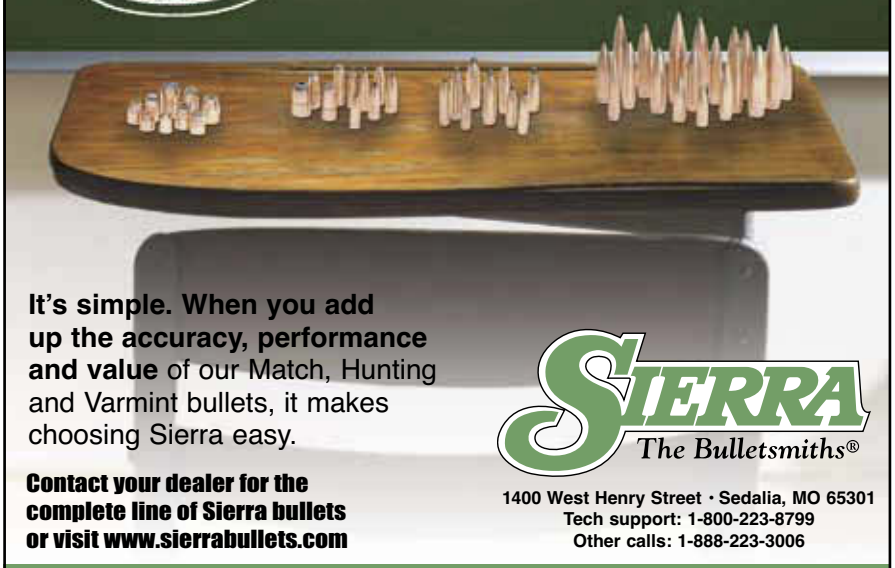

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during use with the US Army, and we look forward to continuing to meet future requirements as they arise."

Aimpoint sights have been tested and chosen by the US Army following several competitive evaluations, and Aimpoint is the only manufacturer type-classified to supply the M68CCO to the US Military. The company's products are currently in service with all branches of the US Military, and the wide variety of models available make the product suitable for nearly all infantry weapons from small arms to heavy weapons.

The M68CCO is an electronic red-dot-reflex sight which increases effective marksmanship, and allows the user to acquire and engage targets with increased speed and accuracy without diminishing situational awareness. The optic is extremely rugged, and the latest versions of the sight operate continuously for up to 8 years using a single AA battery.

The contract for the M68CCO is administered by the US Army Materiel Command's Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center (ARDEC) located at Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, in close cooperation with Program Executive Office Soldier (PEO Soldier).

Based in Malmo, Sweden, Aimpoint supplies the US market through a wholly owned subsidiary, Aimpoint Inc, based in Chantilly, Virginia.— *Kristi Elrod, Aimpoint*

AIMPOINT
14103 MARIAH CT.
CHANTILLY, VA 20151
(877) 246-7646
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/AIMPOINT

Mossberg Teams With Patrick Flanigan

O.F. Mossberg & Sons, a leader in the design and manufacturing of hunting, shooting sports, youth, military and law enforcement firearms for over 90 years, teams with Xtreme Sport Shooter Patrick Flanigan. In this new partnership, Flanigan will begin using Mossberg shotguns as he pursues numerous world records. He will also work with Mossberg to introduce fast-paced shooting sports to a new generation of shooters.

In 2006, Patrick Flanigan set the world record with a pump-action shotgun in Xtreme Sport Shooting. As an 8-time world record holder, he continues to push the limits of this sport. On Oct. 22, 2010, Flanigan shattered his previous world record,

breaking seven clay targets thrown by hand, shot individually from the hip with a Mossberg 500 pump-action shotgun. Flanigan also timed his new Mossberg 930 semi-auto shotgun with intervals of a round per tenth of a second, which matches or beats some of his current records.

Patrick Flanigan, well-known Xtreme Sports Shooting champion has teamed with Mossberg and will shoot the firm's made-in-USA shotguns.

Flanigan explained he has teamed up with Mossberg because they offer the three things he looks for in a shotgun: reliability, speed and natural accuracy. "I found all of that and much more with the first trigger-pull of my new Mossberg shotguns. All shooters, whether professional, rookie, or avid sportsmen, need to have a strong sense of confidence when they uncase their shotguns to challenge the field or shooting course. I not only feel a strong sense of confidence, but an even stronger sense of pride and honor because the Mossberg guns I shoot are stamped 'Made in USA' and that is how I spell real confidence."

Mossberg strives to create innovative shotguns for the hunter and avid shooter, with designs that optimize accuracy, reliability and function. The company continues to focus on the next generation, offering the most extensive line youth firearms. Now, through Flanigan's enthusiasm and fresh outlook, they will continue that emphasis.— *Kim Cahalan, Media Direct Creative* GUNS

MOSSBERG
7 GRASSO AVE.
NORTH HAVEN, CT 06473
(203) 230-5300
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/MOSSBERG

QUARTER MASTER

Lancer Systems L5 Magazine

Clint Smith

Magazines, being the ammunition source for semi-automatic firearms, are, of course, important to how the system functions. Several times in my lifetime, there have been attempts by a naïve government to regulate a firearm's theoretical rates of fire by regulating the magazine capacity by people who do not understand, serious people know how to load the system they use regardless of capacity. Small magazines simply mean more manipulation and the smaller the magazine the more reloads a shooter might need. Small magazines might modify the rate of fire but not the marksmanship ability of the person behind the gun.

The Lancer System L5 magazines went through three 1,000-round rifle classes with no trouble.

With the strong possibility I'll see another attempt to regulate firearms and or magazines, I always look for good magazines. Lancer Systems makes translucent AR-15/M16 magazines in versions that hold either 20 or 30 rounds. Translucent means some sort of plastic and, with no disrespect intended, the Lancer looks like plastic—but whatever they are made of, it is tougher than a lot of metal I have seen. I just completed pushing the magazines though three 1,000-round rifle schools while having 15 different people run the magazines in 15 different rifles.

One of the best things I heard was a Salinas, Calif. cop who said, "I was afraid I'd broke it setting my fat butt on the mag grinding it into the gravel, I picked it up and it worked fine." The translucent magazine is easy to see through and has stout-metal feed lips molded into the body for reliable feeding. The L5 has non-tip or cant followers and high-quality springs. The rubber-like magazine baseplate is a very good part that lots of other magazine makers should look at. Bluntly, perception could be the Lancer L5 might be feeble or frail. The bottom line reality is the magazines are strong, reliable, well made and function. Good stuff.

LANCER SYSTEMS
7566 MORRIS CT., SUITE 300
ALLENTOWN, PA 18106
(610) 973-2600, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/LANCER

Battlelab Trauma Intervention Kit

John Connor

Among my many quests in life—for the best cheeseburger, best .45 ACP round, best dog toy—I've been looking for the most compact, but fully-loaded, best-organized and easily portable first aid/medical pack, and I found a great one: the Battlelab Trauma Intervention Kit from Diamondback Tactical.

This is way more than your typical "ding & ouchie" kit. Designed for military and police users, it's also ideal for backcountry hunters, boaters and anywhere you're "off the grid."

The BTIK contains an impressive 101 items, to treat everything from blisters to bellyache and migraines to gunshot wounds, in a tough nylon case measuring just 2.5x6x8.5", weighing only 1 pound, 15 ounces. Go online for a list of contents.

The case itself unzips clamshell-style to lie flat, revealing a sectioned interior. Initially, all contents are encased in two sealed plastic bags. I recommend adding two resealable bags to replace those once they're opened. The only other supplies I've added to this point are a sterilized thin-bladed knife, an IDF tourniquet, two extra pouches of QuikClot for severe hemorrhaging when fast medevac just ain't happening and a set of Sliver-Gripper Tweezers, though there's already a forceps in the kit. Even with 100-plus items inside, there's expansion room.

The kit can be hand-carried or quickly attached to a belt with the included hook-and-loop closed strap. There are also two detachable elastic leg straps, plus a loop-pile patch and MOLLE webbing on the front to attach other pouches or accessories.

The 1 pound, 15 ounce Battlelab Trauma Intervention Kit contains 101 items necessary for serious injury far from help.

This is an ideal kit for remote area wanderings, vacations and road trips. And remember, the life you save might be your own… The BTIK is available in black, coyote brown, ranger green, CRYE camo, etc., for $105.95. You couldn't buy the contents individually for that price.

DIAMONDBACK TACTICAL
23040 N. 11TH AVE. BLDG. 1
PHOENIX, AZ 85027
(800) 735-7030, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/DIAMONDBACKTACTICAL

It's Magic!

Jeff John

Birchwood Casey No. 77 Magic, anyway. This water-based black powder solvent is one of the easiest and fastest solvents I've ever tried. I used no brushes to clean the musket shown. I just sprayed the inside of the

Birchwood Casey's No. 77 Muzzle Magic Cleaner and Muzzle Magic Foam made clean up of this Brown Bess a snap.

Flintlocks get fouled pretty nastily, what with the flashpan and the jets of sparks coming back out of the touchhole upon ignition and heavy fouling in the barrel. But clean up can be easy and fast.

barrel with Muzzle Magic Foam (it comes in a pump sprayer and it took about 5 pumps to fill the Brown Bess' 37" barrel) and let it sit while I used cleaner on a patch to wipe away the fouling from the lock and external parts.

Upon running a patch down the barrel, a thin stream of dirty black liquid squirted 2' in the air. I scrounged up an old refrigerator produce tray (I knew my old pop had saved it for a reason) and turned over the musket so future eruptions would be captured below. The bore cleaned up in about a dozen passes, followed by a couple of dry patches and finally an oiled patch.

Black powder can be extremely messy. Products like Birchwood Casey No. 77 Muzzle Magic and Magic Foam make black powder clean up a snap, especially on muzzleloaders with barrels not easily removed for cleaning.

BIRCHWOOD CASEY
7900 FULLER RD.
EDEN PRAIRIE, MN 55344
(800) 328-6156, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/
BIRCHWOODCASEY

Burris Fast Fire II

Mike Cumpston

The Burris sight brings a large measure of practicality to handgun-mounted reflex sights. It is quiet compatible with holster carry and general use. The Burris may prove more durable than the current top of the line traditional adjustable open sights used on many 1911s.

Distribution of the long-awaited GSG .22 LR version of the 1911 is in full swing. We have two of them on hand and the design proves to be a fine understudy for the full-bore Government Model pistols. One of our pistols wears the cutting edge Burris Fast Fire II red-dot sight. The low profile, heads-up display features a generous .82"x.59" sight window of multi-coated glass. The 4-MOA red dot is powered by the ubiquitous CR 2032 lithium battery, with a service life of approximately four years. A sensor regulates the intensity of the dot to match prevailing lighting conditions. Windage and elevation are 1" per click at 100 yards and lockable when the desired adjustment is reached. Weight of the sight, sans mount, is .9 ounces. It is the first sight of its kind to be completely waterproof. The sight is approved for slide mounting and estimated to withstand more than 1,000 gravities. The Novak-type dovetail mount is correct for the GSG 1911. GUNS

The German Sporting Guns 1911 is a reliable and accurate full-featured handgun at prices comparable to many rimfire conversion units. The group was fired with CCI Mini-Mag HPs at 25 yards. The Burris Fast Fire II sight is very rugged and provides all the advantages of a single aiming plane, rapid target acquisition and seamless accommodation to prevailing lighting conditions.

FAST FIRE II
MAKER: BURRIS
331 E. 8TH ST.
GREELY, CO 80631
(970) 356-1670, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/BURRISOPTICS

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SCREEN:
.82"x.59"
INTERNAL ADJ. RANGE:
190" elevation & windage at 100 yards
CLICK VALUE:
1"
BATTERY:
1 CR 2032 lithium battery
WEIGHT:
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OVERALL LENGTH:
1.8"
DOT SIZE:
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PRICE:
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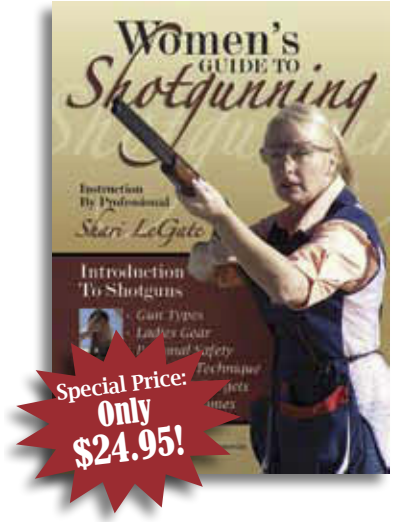

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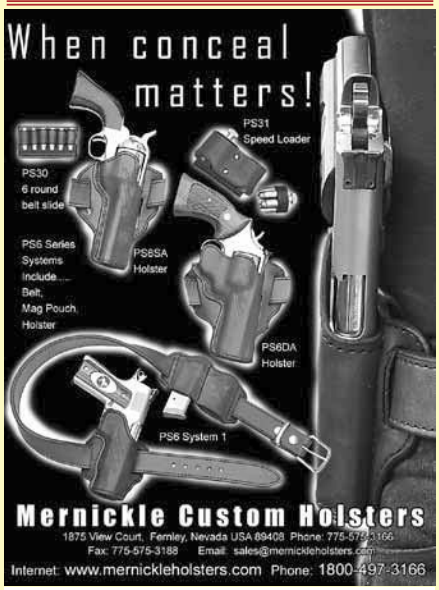

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CW4043

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GUNS MAGAZINE

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DESANTIS HOLSTER

With the Thumb Break Scabbard FN Herstal FNP-45 4-1/2" Holster the firearm rides high and is presented at an optimum draw angle. Its thumb break and exact molding, together with a tension device, allows for a secure and highly concealable carry. This picture illustrates the 3-slot model. Belt slots are 1-3/4" wide. Available in black or tan leather, with or without suede lining, plain or basket-weave finish. DeSantis Holster, (800) 424-1236, www.gunsmagazine.com/desantisholster

BENELLI M4 SINGLE POINT SLING ATTACHMENT

GG&G

The Benelli M4 Single Point Sling Attachment's rectangular slot is fully de-burred to decrease friction between the webbing and the steel sling attachment. The low profile slot will accommodate sling webbing up to 1-1/4" wide. Installation requires rear stock removal and reinstallation. A special tool, designed, developed and manufactured by GG&G is required for this procedure and is included along with complete instructions. In field tests, installation took between 20 and 30 minutes to complete. GG&G (800) 380-2540, www.gunsmagazine.com/gggtacticalproducts

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Talon HD binocular series features high density (HD), extra-low dispersion glass that delivers impressive clarity, resolution and color accuracy. They are fully multicoated with XR glass coatings to maximize light transmission through the optical system for the finest image detail and brightness. Protected with ArmorTek, providing a scratch-resistant, stainproof surface. Dust, dirt and smudges are easily removed without fear of scratching the optical glass. O-ring sealed for reliable waterproof, fogproof and dustproof performance. Includes soft carry case, neck strap, tethered objective lens covers and rainguard. Vortex Optics, (800) 426-0048, www.gunsmagazine.com/vortexoptics

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ZERUST

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TK 15 R5

FENIX

The new TK 15 R5 with a max output of 337 Lumens from Fenix is made from durable aircraft-grade aluminum with a Type III hard-anodized anti-abrasive finish. It is waterproof to IPX-8 standard and features a digitally regulated output that maintains constant brightness. The TK 15 also features a reflector with high efficiency and focus for far throw and wide lighting range. It has a max lifespan of 100,000 hours and four adjusting levels. Included are a holster, lanyard, spare o-rings and a rubber switch boot. Fenix, www.gunsmagazine.com/fenix

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MAROM DOLPHIN MEDICAL POUCH

EMA TACTICAL

The Marom Dolphin Medical pouch features 11 separate storage compartments easily holding the Improved First Aid Kit (IFAK). This 4x6x6.5" pouch with carry handle is made from 1000/500 denier Cordura. The exterior front features two compartments for sterile gloves and scissors. Two zipper pulls on the outside of the pouch provide for quick ambidextrous opening. There are four interior mesh compartments with elastic lips and a removable center grab bag with carry handle that contains five more compartments. Heavy-duty, easy to carry and access in any emergency. EMA Tactical, (215) 949-9944, www.gunsmagazine.com/ematactical

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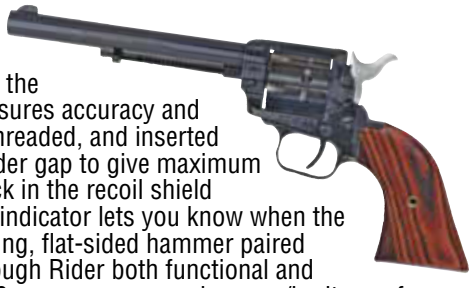
ROUGH RIDER 9-SHOT .22 LR AND .22 MAGNUM

HERITAGE MFG.



The Rough Rider 9-shot, chambered for the .22 LR and .22 Magnum cartridges, assures accuracy and reliability. The machined barrel is micro-threaded, and inserted into the frame for the optimal barrel/cylinder gap to give maximum ammunition performance. A hammer block in the recoil shield provides extra protection and the red-dot indicator lets you know when the gun is ready for action. An authentic-looking, flat-sided hammer paired with exotic cocobolo grips, makes this Rough Rider both functional and handsome. Heritage Mfg., (305) 685-5966, www.gunsmagazine.com/heritagemfg

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GOAT TUFF PRODUCTS

The EQUALIZER Release, designed for short draw archers or those that have had to shoot lower poundages due to age or injury, allows the archer to increase draw length by up to 3". It features an adjustable wrist strap with dual-tongue buckle. It fits comfortably in the palm of the hand, with an In Line adjustable trigger that allows for the perfect alignment of the arm, wrist and release. The EQUALIZER may also be shot as a back tension release. The release body is precision machined from billet aluminum with all internal parts of stainless steel for years of use. Goat Tuff Products, (520) 742-1701, www.gunsmagazine.com/goattuffproducts

"THE CENTENNIAL" 1911

VOLKMANN CUSTOM, INC.

Volkmann Custom introduces their 100-year anniversary 1911, "The Centennial". This hand-fit custom 1911 features a beautiful color-case-hardened frame and on top sits a high-polished, traditional blued slide. It also features 24-kt gold inlayed lettering and hand-carved engraving by a master engraver. The customer gets their choice of sights, grips, triggers and safety. These "one-at-a-time" hand built pistols are a limited run and will only be available for the year of 2011. Volkmann Custom, Inc., (303) 888-4904, www.gunsmagazine.com/volkmanncustomguns

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GOD'A GRIP

The God'A Grip Original is a self-customizing grip that adheres securely to most shotguns, rifles, pistols and crossbows. The grip provides a shooter with a more comfortable and accurate shooting experience, allowing for a secure and steady grip even in wet or cold weather conditions. The Cheek Pad's shock-absorbing qualities allow the shooter to reposition his or her head on the stock after a round is fired more quickly and comfortably. Made from shock-absorbing sorbothane and adheres to a firearm with a 3M adhesive, which won't damage the stock. God'A Grip, (312) 242-0200, www.gunsmagazine.com/godagrip

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Hey! Baby doll! Don't let them big lugs walk off wit' these gems. Wanna make some special stitches? Throw yer ticket in the hat, too.

Ya can't win if ya don't enter, so send them postcards in pronto, see? Or take the survey and enter online at www.gunsmagazine.com. Mebbe play the field and do both. Whattaya gotta lose?

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QUESTION OF THE MONTH: Your go-to home defense weapon is?

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ODD ANGRY SHOT

• JOHN CONNOR •

THE TWO AMERICAS
In search of definitions.

I can't casually use the term "Americans" to describe the residents of that geopolitical entity known as "The United States of America" anymore. It just doesn't feel right.

It's real; I see it and feel it—there are two very different Americas. It's a gaping division of the nation, but I lack words for it, and it evades definition. It's not about "haves" and "have-nots"; it's not ethnic or racial or neatly split along political party lines. It's certainly not about military and civilians, though the first examples which come to mind juxtapose the two. Maybe you can help.

The Soldier & The Senator-Select

My home base is a ranching, farming and logging area, but there's a 5-star mountain resort nearby. Local folks avoid it; it's alien ground. One morning our little airport was jammed with 50-plus young people who had just concluded a week-long snow-and-skateboarding extravaganza, snowboarding the high slopes one day and playing at a million-dollar skateboarding park at the mountain's base the next. I was jammed in line to check my gunbag, listening as three scions of the rich, swaddled in designer down, exhorted a fourth to join them for a month in Machu Picchu.

"Dude! We'll chew some tasty leaf, smoke some fine buds! We'll *hang*, we'll *chill*, dude!" He of the handwoven hemp pants and Patagonia parka, happily assented; he had nothing better to do.

"Hempy" wound up in front of me in the TSA line, too. Ahead of him were three obvious brothers, two in well-worn jeans and scuffed boots standing outside the rope; one, the youngest, in Army ACU, inside. He was headed back to Iraq. His brothers had done their service, apparently in the same unit, and mustered out. They

Two distinct Americas—but the lines aren't very sharp….

spoke of raising beef, canola and high-school hell; an old girlfriend, a newer truck and a brand-new baby. The youngest received instructions to "Stick with Sergeant Long, he'll steer you straight," and "You write to Momma, y'hear, and don't give her cause to worry!"

As we approached TSA's checkpoint, the brothers said their goodbyes, then turned back for fast, fierce hugs, last warnings, a last "love you, bro'"—and they were gone. When the kid turned, Hempy made eye contact and engaged him.

"So, you're like, *Army* and stuff, huh?"

Putting him on, the kid peered and pointed at the Army tapes on his chest and pack. "Hmm… Army, Army… Yup; looks like I'm in the Army."

"That's *cra-a-a-a-z-zy*, dude! Army! Like, *war* and everything, right?" Hempy declared theatrically. The kid cocked an eyebrow.

"Yeah," he said, "Like, *war*."

"That's *cra-a-a-a-z-zzy!* Hempy repeated. "Man," he shook his head, "Why? You could be *hangin'! Chillin'!* Dude!"

The kid might have made a brusque reply, but just then an airline staffer stopped and looked at Hempy's "board bag." Besides his carry-ons, he had a huge, expensive bag which snuggled his snowboard and skateboard. The lady explained it was much too big for carry-on.

"Nah, I got an extra ticket for my boards. *They stay with me, man*," Hempy advised. At that "man," the lady stiffened, then saccharine-smiled, "Sir, come with me, please."

The pilot had announced a delay, and we were all belted in when Hempy was finally escorted aboard and settled, smirking, in two seats: one for him and one for his *boards, man*… The kid and I shared a look; "from another planet," it said—or is it "another America"?

Let me ask you: Which one is most likely to become a US senator, and which might be labeled a "potential domestic right-wing terrorist"?

The Beautiful (and not so beautiful) People

I've stopped wondering who these famous and fashionable "celebrities" are. It seems "The Other America" worships a star-studded galaxy of people who have no discernable performing or productive talents, no values other than stylish superficiality and no admirable accomplishments or traits whatsoever—yet they are admired, envied and fawned over fanatically. A *GUNS* reader recently noticed a blurb about an apparently famed Hollywood celebrity couple breaking up. He had never heard of them, so he investigated.

Spencer Pratt and Heidi Montag have their own pages on Wikipedia.

Both have appeared on MTV "reality" shows, making them "stars," although Spencer isn't even listed as an actor, but rather as a "TV personality." His talent seems to lie in looking contrivedly, fashionably disheveled and getting in front of cameras.

A sort-of-singer, Heidi recorded an album aptly named *Superficial*. A section of her Wikipedia page details her dozen-plus plastic surgery procedures. Spencer and Heidi co-wrote a book entitled: *"How To Be Famous: Our guide to looking the part, playing the press, and becoming a tabloid fixture."* It has obviously worked for them. He's 28; she's 24. They're *celebrities*, folks. Millions know them—don't you?

"What the @#& are you looking at?"*

America doesn't know who Matt Garst is. He's not a Hollywood celeb, but he's kind of a rock star in his Marine infantry company. Leading a patrol in Afghanistan, Corporal Garst was evaluating a potential observation post site when he stepped on a huge IED. It had plenty of power, but proved to be buried too deep in packed earth. Troops on the other side of an 8' wall saw Matt's legs flailing out of the debris funnel of the explosion—*above the wall!*—and concluded he was a goner. The blast launched him at least 10' vertical and over 15' horizontal. When they ran around the wall, they found Matt standing, rifle in hand, thoroughly ticked off.

"What the @#&* are you looking at?" he demanded of his shocked Marines. "Get back on the cordon!" Garst shook his head, knocked off some dust and refused air evacuation. Then he led his squad four rocky miles back to their base.

"I wasn't going to let anybody else take my squad back after they'd been there for me," he said. "That's my job." Back at base, he took some ibuprofen, grumbled over the attention of Navy medical corpsmen checking for blast trauma and took an ordered day off to rest. The day after that, he was back on patrol, leading his squad.

Matt Garst will never have his own Wikipedia page.

Maybe the two Americas are divided only by their icons. One of mine is a kid who will do his duty, write his mom so's not to worry her and come home to raise beef and babies. Connor *OUT*

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GUNS MAGAZINE

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Intensive Care and in my own private room. The rooms are large, with three chairs plus a couch which seats four, so the kids and grandkids could cram in and we could watch football. So there we were, all of us plus my new friend. Would you believe my constant companion since the operation, and for who knows how long, is a Teddy Bear? The entire third floor of the hospital was filled with old men, mostly older than me, all clinging to a Teddy Bear.

The Teddy Bear is not for comfort but actually serves a purpose. I sleep with it clutched to my chest, as I sit and read it is on my lap helping to hold my book and as I walk around I carry it by the arm or leg and it doesn't seem to care if it is upside down. The reason for Teddy is to hold it tight against the chest whenever coughing to protect the incision and sternum and also as long as the arms are wrapped around Teddy, they cannot cause any undue stress. My old cat, who has spent hundreds of hours on my lap as I read, seems to be a mite jealous of the interloper but he has managed to work his way into his regular spot. We spent last winter together reading Winston Churchill's six volume *History of World War II* and we are now into the first volume of *History of the English Speaking Peoples*. So the cat's place is affirmed.

This whole thing is, of course, a negative thing; however, it has many positive attributes one of which is a real stunner to me. I have never been in what one would call life-threatening situations. Three times, twice with my young family, the fact I had a big-bore sixgun allowed me to gain the upper hand and defuse what could have been a bad situation. The predators decided very quickly we were not prey. In every one of those situations I was in control; not this time. Everything was out of my hands and as I look back, I realize I was never afraid. I had come to the brink of death and felt totally at peace. This was the first time I have ever been operated on in a hospital and I expected to be terrified; I was not. The valley of the shadow of death has no control over me and because of this the future holds no terror.

Now don't take this wrong! I am not in a hurry to check out. I want to see my grandkids grow up; I want to see the great grandkids as they come along. I don't want to do anything stupid that would cause serious injury to myself, however the finality of life is totally accepted. Many things have changed. I realize I was anxious about things especially as I watched the years go by and realized how few were left. Going through this experience I now realize what was important is now insignificant and what in many cases was insignificant is now very important. Shooting every .44 Special ever made is no longer important; spending every possible precious moment with friends and family is extremely important.

When you get to my age it's easy to look askance at the younger generation. I laid on my back for one week while several dozen young people took care of me 24/7. I have learned to look past the earrings and tattoos and see real dedicated human beings. These young men and women were all pleasant, always friendly, always helpful no matter what I needed and no matter what time of the day or night it was. I also met some very interesting young people such as a physical therapist whose mother is a full-blooded Apache; what a wonderful interesting fellow he was. How do I even begin to thank the doctor and his operating room staff, without whom I wouldn't even be writing this now.

In his latest book, Bill O'Reilly, talks about the danger, particularly among young people of constantly being hooked up to some kind of electronic gizmo: "No longer are loyalty and true friendship admired or even sought after in many quarters. What's being sold today in their place is instant gratification. Just turn on a computer, and you can create your own world. Who needs to deal with real problems and come up with effective solutions when escapism only a finger-click away? Why bother cultivating close personal relationships when you can chat with thousands and never even leave your home?"

It wasn't technological gizmos that helped me through all of this. It was the close, personal relationships of friends, many of whom are readers, and family. The prayers, well wishes, good thoughts, visits, calls, cards, e-mails, all from real people aided me tremendously. Family members and friends visited constantly in the hospital, some several times a day. I'm still getting several visits per day at home three weeks later. It makes a huge difference in recuperating. By the time this appears I should be back to normal and back to work. I will probably have to go three months or so without shooting, however, by my staying ahead it will hardly be noticed. Through all of this Dot has been more than a Diamond; she has been my Rock.

Good Shootin' and God Bless,
John

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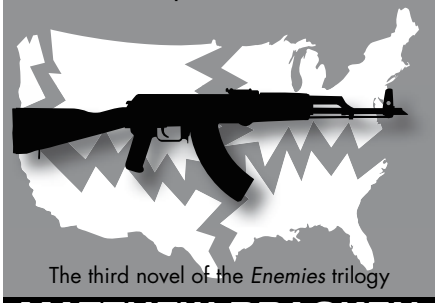

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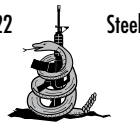

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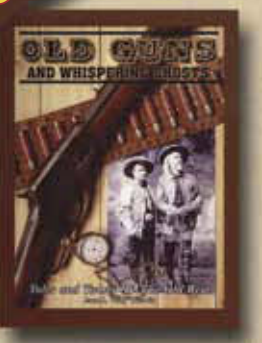

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CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

CLINGING TO GUNS, RELIGION, AND...

A Teddy Bear!?

Dear Jeff: What a difference a day makes! Fearless Leader, both you and His Esteemed Editorship, Roy Huntington of *American Handgunner,* told me basically to take the summer off, as I was so far ahead I could afford to relax somewhat. So I took both of you at your word and spent much time this summer shooting with friends and family; however, I could not completely play without doing some work. It is simply part of my makeup to always stay well ahead. This attitude goes back over half a century. It was this time of the year, 52 years ago, when I first met the lady now known as Diamond Dot. We were married within three months.

The decision was made for me to go to college, but how? Especially since we had our first baby on the way. Dot would stay home and I would work the night shift in a factory while attending classes during the day. Over the next four years we had three babies, and I took care of school and work while Dot did everything else. We went nowhere except church and the grandparents' houses, and she never complained. It was the toughest time of our life and we learned to totally depend upon each other. I also knew if I ever fell behind I would never catch up, and in fact, be steamrollered. That has stayed with me ever since.

So this summer, in addition to gathering some data and taking some pictures to prepare for writing this winter, I also kept up with any deadlines. My last deadline was the cover feature for the January/February 2011 issue of *American Handgunner*, which was due Oct. 15. I mailed it on Sept. 22. The next day was to be a totally enjoyable day. I would deliver Dot and her friend to the chartered bus at 7:30 a.m. so they could travel 500 miles and spend the weekend in Portland, Ore., at a quilt show, come back home and switch to the Chevy pickup, and then meet my friend Denis in the desert for some fun shooting followed by lunch at El Tenampa. Friday would be more of the same. Saturday the kids and grandkids would come over to watch Boise State play football. Great plans.

I got up at 6 a.m. to dress and load the pick-up and it looked like a beautiful morning. I had just finished dressing and all was well and then Bobby Burns (The best laid plans of…) and Murphy's Law both hit me at once. As I walked out of the bathroom I experienced the most excruciating pain of my life. It is often hard to pinpoint real pain but it seemed to be coming from my back and throat. At first I surmised I had pulled a muscle and would just tough it out. Then the dizziness came and I knew something was drastically wrong. I worked my way to the other end of the house and told Dot she better call 911. I went into the front room to sit down and wait for the paramedics. They were there in what seemed like only minutes and I remember them putting me into the ambulance, starting the ride, however, I do not remember arriving at the hospital. The rest of the day plus some of Friday is just a blur.

If the pain had not been so bad and if Dot had not called 911, I would have died within a few hours. What had happened was a tear in the artery to the aorta of my heart. I was on my way to bleeding out. The emergency operation took almost six hours. They had to open the sternum from top to bottom and then spread it apart to get to the artery and repair it. The prognosis is two to three months of virtually no physical activity whatsoever while the sternum bone heals. I can still be writing and thankfully I gathered data during the summer. I won't be alone as I have a new companion to help with the healing. You both know I have a house full of animal trophies; now I have a new one which will receive a cherished spot when this is all over.

I did not get to do any fun shooting for those two days, however, by Saturday afternoon I was out of

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