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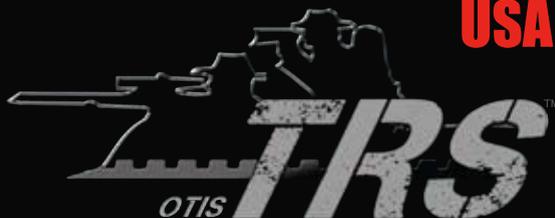
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MAGAZINE

JULY 2010

Vol. 56, Number 7, 656th Issue



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### POCKET PISTOL PERFECTION

Kahr PM9 &  
Crimson Trace  
Laserguard.

#### STORY:

John Taffin

#### PHOTOS:

Joseph R. Novelozo

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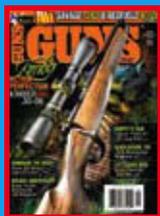
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MAY 2010

# CROSSFIRE

## LETTERS TO GUNS

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

### No Loonies Here

I will admit that .300 Win Mag ammo is available everywhere, but it seems Mr. Barnes should do a little more research before he calls a .308 Norma owner a loonie as he did in his May column. I will take my .308 Norma Mag or my .30-338 and duplicate or exceed the .300 Win Mag with approximately 8 or 9 percent less powder. In fact I can almost duplicate .300 Weatherby ballistics in either being only 100 fps slower with the heavy bullets and use 12 percent less powder. Hotrodding either round is not necessary because of the efficiency of the Norma and the .30-338. To duplicate their ballistics with a .300 Win Mag you have to hotrod the rifle and even then you end up short.

Winchester was still sitting when Norma brought out the .308 Norma Mag. The .300 Win Mag is a great cartridge, but will never be as good as the .308 Norma Mag or the .30-338. I personally use 7mm necked up to .30 in my .30-338, so I guess it should be called a .30-7mm Mag. I don't have the neck thickness problem associated with the necked down .338, but the brass is basically identical. Winchester should have adopted the .30-338 cartridge instead of the .300 Win Mag. Mr. Barnes, you owe us .308 Norma and .30-338 owners an apology.

Phil Beckwith  
Riverton, Wyoming

### Codrea Defended

I just have to comment on Mr. Houser's letter in the May issue concerning David Codrea's "Right's Watch" column. He suggest the column should be written by a constitutional scholar rather than a political activist. I certainly hope he doesn't mean one like our current President, Barack Obama.

I'll just keep reading all different opinions then decide for myself who makes the most sense. When Mr. Houser states Mr. Codrea "shouldn't be allowed to write for your fine magazine," he

sounds like the very people that would take away our 2nd Amendment rights. Now, to me, that just doesn't make sense.

Keep the magazine just as it is, and I just love the "Odd Angry Shot" by John Conner and the military coverage.

Jim Howe  
Owego, New York

### Likes Connor

I have been a subscriber to your magazine for some time now. I look forward to all the articles and all the columns each month. However, I especially look forward to Mr. Conner's column.

I know he likes to portray himself as a knuckle-dragging troglodyte on occasion. I don't buy it. So many of his articles in the past are so well thought out, erudite and so well written I believe you might have a warrior scholar on your hands. "Pause And Remember" in April's issue is another excellent article that causes me to wonder if he is not a direct descendant of Thomas Payne. Mr. Payne once wrote America was going through a "time to try men's souls."

I believe we are again entering such times in this country. Thanks to Americans like Mr. Conner, we have a shining light to continue pointing toward a continuation of our American Heritage and away from those in our midst who would forget our past and push toward mediocrity lack of self dependence, and a total disregard for personal responsibility.

I thank God for John Conner and all men and women like him. In my book he, and those like him, are true American patriots. God bless America.

Scott Puckett  
via e-mail

### Correction

In the Optics column by Jacob Gottfredson in the June issue, the "Minimum Agreed Price" for the Konus M30 8.5-32x52mm should be \$500. We apologize for any confusion.—Editor

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# RIFLEMAN

• MASSAD AYOOB •

## THE .22 LONG RIFLES OF APPLESEED

Based on military rifle qualification, the entry-level event is dominated by the Ruger 10/22.

I had been hearing a lot about the Appleseed Project, which runs weekend courses around the country providing history lectures and rifle marksmanship training, and finally got the chance to take one. This particular shoot was at the Hernando Sportsman's Club in central Florida. Inclement weather cut attendance to a couple dozen, about half of the usual turnout.

The course of fire focuses on a 40-shot Army Qualification Test (AQT), done at 25 meters with reduced-size targets intended to duplicate Army bobbbers at 100, 200, 300 and 400 yards. Rifles on the line included the AR-15, M1 Garand, M1A, Kalashnikov, Simonov and even Mosin-Nagant—but, by far, the most common choice was the humble .22 Long Rifle.

Appleseed wants to bring its message to all of American society, including kids, new shooters and the physically challenged. For all those demographics, the mild recoil and report of the .22 Long Rifle make the experience less intimidating, and allow the student to focus on the fundamental marksmanship principles emphasized at Appleseed. In a time when ammunition is both hard to find and more expensive than ever, the 400-round requirement for an Appleseed weekend is easier and more affordable to meet with a brick of .22 LR.

### Why 10/22?

Though the AQT has its roots in a time when the bolt-action Springfield '03 was still in common use, and

Appleseed lore is the record score on the course, which was set by a septuagenarian Master competitor in NRA Smallbore using an iron sight, bolt-action .22, the simple fact is the semiautomatic gives the shooter more time to concentrate on trigger squeeze. When you have less than a minute to drop from standing into the designated shooting position, load, fire two and reload eight (an homage to the honored M1 Garand and its 8-round en bloc clip), and do it all in less than a minute, a "time and motion study" favors the autoloader. Starting with action open, and no great rush to eject the last casing, the bolt gunner will have to perform some 36 movements of the bolt, where the auto shooter requires only two. Counting the reload, the auto shooter needs to remove his finger from the trigger only twice, while the bolt action user will need 10 separate acquisitions of the trigger.

The Ruger 10/22 dominates this type of shooting, and not just because it's so hugely popular. The Marlin Model 60 actually has been produced in millions more than the 10/22, and its trigger and



*The Rifleman's Patch is the grail of Appleseed shooters, earned on the Army Qualification Test.*

inherent accuracy are perfectly sufficient. It is generally encountered though, with a tubular magazine much slower to reload under time constraints than the 10-round rotary box magazine of the 10/22. This is why at Appleseeds, the most popular Marlin, is actually the Model 795, due to its box magazine. However, the good little 795 is still a distant second to the 10/22 in popularity.

### Sights

One reason for the 10/22's dominance is its famous reliability reduces distracting, time-devouring malfunctions. Another is the 10/22 lends itself to modular reconfiguration: more accessories are available for it than for any other .22 rifle. This includes various shorter stocks for smaller shooters and



*A coach-and-pupil, ball-and-dummy drill at Appleseed. Rifle is Ruger 10/22. The event took place at the Hernando Sportsman's Club in Florida last February.*

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Holding 10 Mini-Mags in one hole smaller than a dime at 25 meters (above), Mas was happy with the accuracy of the Clark Custom 10/22 at Appleseed. Mas used this Clark Custom 10/22 with Douglas barrel, Brownells stock, Tasco scope. Shooting mat by BLACKHAWK! (below) doubles as rifle carry bag.



higher comb stocks particularly useful in offhand and prone applications. (Half of an AQT is fired from prone.) The rear leaf sight standard on most 10/22s is not optimal. You're welcome to go optical, or replace the irons with the high post front and drum-like rear aperture from Tech-Sight.

A Tech-Sight, plus a cheap cotton GI loop sling, equals an LTR, or Liberty Training Rifle, the quasi-official .22 of Appleseed. I shot the event with my Clark Custom 10/22 Squirrel Rifle, with a great trigger job by Kay Clark-Miculek and fitted by her with a 16.25" heavy, fluted Douglas barrel. Set in an action

shooting stock from Brownells and mounting an inexpensive Tasco 3-9X scope set at 8X magnification, it gave me all the performance I could ask for, and won for me the coveted Appleseed Rifleman's Patch. That said, though, the Patch has been won many times over with bone-stock 10/22s.

My personal look at the Appleseed experience can be found in my blog, at the entries from 2/1/10 through 2/6/10, at [www.backwoodshome.com/blogs/massadayoob](http://www.backwoodshome.com/blogs/massadayoob). It's more important, though, to get an overview of the organization from the Appleseed Web site. Pay particular attention to the "what to bring" section. A lawn chair for the lectures, a cooler full of water, a Blackhawk combination gun bag and a shooting mat all proved hugely useful, as did an ample supply of spare magazines. Be sure you're sighted in precisely at 25 meters before you get there. Some of the targets are tiny.

If you get involved in Appleseed, you can find yourself shooting high-power rifles at 500 yards and more, but the two-day intro program is, no pun intended, the core of Appleseed. Bring kids. They attend for free, as do females and serving members of the military. I enjoyed the heck out of it. Frankly, I appreciated the passionate, "human detail focused" lectures on the events of April 19, 1775,

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An extended magazine release, Tech-Sights and cotton loop sling (above) turn this 10/22 into a "Liberty Training Rifle." Chamber flags were required for safety whenever a rifle was "grounded." A Ruger 10/22 with Tasco 3-9X shot fine for one attendee (below). Tie-breaker V-rings of the targets are the size of bottlecap for "100 yards," dime for "200," 9mm diameter for "300" and pencil eraser for "400-yard" duplicator.



even more than the excellent refresher on riflery. The Appleseeders want to bring back the time when America was "The Nation of Riflemen." It is a worthy objective.

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## V'S BOX

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**P**art of today's marketing is to send out the firearm in a cool box. As a matter of fact, oftentimes just the box the gun came in sells for more money than the original gun did, as is often the case with Smith & Wesson revolvers. A big draw to some collectors is to confirm the gun they are buying today has the correct box it came in when the gun was sold 50 years ago.

The memorabilia interest is a big deal to some and comes in all forms, from guns to boxes to even having the correct sight adjustment tool in its proper place in the box. Then, there are other people who could care less saying, "It's a gun. Take it out, throw the box away and shoot the gun." As in most things, there is a balance between the two opinions.

I look forward to seeing the works of steel from progressive and bold craftsmen who are still youngsters, like Burton, Chen, Yost and Volkmann. Always thinking, these guys also create peripheral cool stuff like Volkmann's

Box Special. The Vbox is just a box—but then Luke Volkmann takes the box a step further, plants his feet and does a gun box correctly. In the vein of James Bond's famous "Q"-issuing-gear-mode, the Volkmann Box is a pretty solid, complete package.

The box is a very high-quality, pressure-seal-lockable, double-latch case with a carrying handle resembling a submarine hatch handle—and it is also about that durable. The outside is black and embossed with the Volkmann nameplate. The black, solid foam interior is broken into five compartments. The



The Volkmann Combatant Carry pistol comes with its steel counterpart—a Chris Reeve Green Beret Knife. Note the optional Ed Brown "Bobtail" mainspring housing on the Volkmann 1911.

#### COMBATANT CARRY

**MAKER: VOLKMANN CUSTOM**  
1595 CARR STREET  
LAKEWOOD, CO 80214  
(303) 888-4904  
[WWW.VOLKMANNCUSTOM.COM](http://WWW.VOLKMANNCUSTOM.COM)

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

**CALIBER:** .45 ACP

**CAPACITY:** 7+1

**BARREL LENGTH:** 4-1/4"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7-3/4"

**WEIGHT:** 35 ounces

**FINISH:** NP3 (+\$250)

**SIGHTS:** Fixed night sights

**GRIPS:** Exotic wood

**PRICE:** \$2,495

#### GREEN BERET

**MAKER: CHRIS REEVE KNIVES**  
2949 S. VICTORY VIEW WAY  
BOISE, ID 83709  
(208) 375-0367  
[WWW.CHRISREEVE.COM](http://WWW.CHRISREEVE.COM)

**BLADE LENGTH:** 5-1/2"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 10-7/8"

**BLADE MATERIAL:** CPM S30V

**BLADE HARDNESS:** 55-57 RC

**WEIGHT:** 11.8 ounces

**SCALES:** Black canvas micarta

**FINISH:** KG Gun-Kote

**PRICE:** \$289

large opening accommodates a pistol, most often a Combat Carry 1911.

The second large opening holds a Chris Reeve knife. Reeve needs no introduction from me to the knife educated, and Volkmann has chosen wisely by selecting Reeve's steel. The knife is a 5.5" fixed-blade version of Reeve's famous Green Beret product line. Options in pistol and knife selection for the box are available; a folder-type knife, as might be required by you, is also available.

The third compartment is one of my favorites as it holds four magazines, which is the way pistols should be sold and shipped. The "sell 'em and ship with two mags" people should pick up on this point. After all, what good is a fighting pistol with two magazines? Volkmann's

own name-brand magazines are mated up to his guns, and my personal Volkmann 1911 is one of the few guns I like to carry using only Volkmann magazines in and around it. So there is no misunderstanding, Volkmann's guns work with all high-quality magazines such as Wilson, Baer, etc.; I just like using Volkmann mags with a Volkmann gun.

In the last but not least department, the small compartments hold a LED SureFire light, lubricant and a maintenance cloth. As a note of interest to the owner of a Volkmann gun—and there are many—the Vbox is available as an upgrade option to fit the gun you already have. Just contact the shop.

### The Pistol In The Box

In the end, it is mostly about the gun in the box, and the Volkmann product line offers several options. My personal preference is the 5" pistol. Considered old fashioned as it approaches its 100th birthday, the 1911 is, to many, still a standout icon of personal defense tools. The wise know no handgun is good for fighting, but many consider the 1911 to be as good as it gets.

The playground chatter blog crowd berates the 1911 but it has served well the people who take the time to learn to shoot it with skill, well. Ultimately, the 1911 is no better or worse, because



*The complete Volkmann Box system, with 1911 Combatant Carry, Reeve Green Beret knife, SureFire light and three extra magazines, in one heck of a stout box.*

any handgun used for defense needs a competent person behind it. That out of the way, Volkmann builds his renditions to or above industry standards in regard to barrel length, sights, finishing and all of the other "stuff" done to the 1911 pistol.

I have shot both the full-size and Commander-size Volkmann models, and both far exceed the accuracy requirements needed for any defense applications. Both of my "shoot 'em" models were finished in NP3 and there

is probably no tougher finish, at least that I know of. As appropriate to a handgun of this quality, fit and finish were as I expected, and I opted for small thumb safeties and pretty basic formats. Excellent checkering paired with rough texture stocks make for a sure and positive firing grip.

So, in the end, the Vbox is just a box, but the guns inside are more than special. Should you need a gun that really works and just happens to come in a good box, you now have a place to look. **GUNS**

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# MONTANA MUSINGS

• MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO • PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO

## BE THE MASTER OF YOUR BULLET SUPPLY

In a leaden sort of way.

**R**ecently I searched the gun stores in this region of Montana, plus a couple of gun shows, in search of a box of jacketed .32 Auto bullets. In normal times, they weren't abundant. In the "Great Component Shortage of 2009/2010," they just didn't exist.

The great shortage affected all components: powder, primers, bullets and brass. There's not a lot the ordinary fellow can do about powder and primers except keep stocked up. (Modestly, not hoarding!) Used brass can usually be found and in a true pinch many cartridges can be formed from others. As for bullets, there's really no excuse for anyone being completely out. You can be the master of your own bullet supply—well, at least for about 90 percent of rifle bullets and certainly for all handgun bullets—if you're willing to cast them yourself.



*By casting his own rifle and handgun bullets, Duke considers himself the master of his own bullet supply. Note the shelves full of bullet moulds.*

Some consider bullet casting an obnoxious chore. It certainly can be in the heat of summer, or when moulds are being recalcitrant. The solutions are: don't cast in the heat of summer unless your casting area is air conditioned, and learn enough about casting to overcome mould problems. (We'll troubleshoot some of those mould problems in future columns.)

Personally, I've turned bullet casting into quality time by listening to verbatim readings of books on cassette tapes or CDs. When engrossed in a good book, I find myself looking for an excuse to pour more bullets. In fact, I keep four electric lead furnaces on hand. Three are dedicated to specific alloys and the fourth is kept empty in case one of the others quits on me. The smallest handgun bullets I currently cast are 75-grain .32s to take the place of the jacketed bullets I couldn't find, and the largest are 265-grain .455 Webleys. For rifles, I currently cast 6.5mm on the small side, up to .58 caliber Minié balls for a replica Civil War rifle musket. My heaviest rifle bullets are .45s weighing 560 grains for BPCR Silhouette competition. The shelves above my casting table hold about 120 moulds among those parameters.

Already I can hear some readers' thoughts: "Sure you can cast bullets for all those old and obsolete oddball cartridges you love so much, but I'm into modern stuff like the 9mm in pistols, varmint shooting with my .223 Remington and elk hunting with my .300 Weatherby Magnum. I have to buy jacketed bullets."

### You Do And You Don't

Of course, you're not going to be able to (easily) drive homemade lead alloy bullets to the 3,000+ fps speeds of .22 centerfires and .30 magnums. That doesn't mean you can't shoot cast bullets from them. In prior days, I had



*Duke's extremes in cast bullets in handguns run from the 75-grain .32 Auto bullet (far left) to the 265-grain .455 Webley bullet (2nd from left). In rifles, his current smallest is 140-grain 6.5mm (3rd from left) and largest is the 58-caliber Minié Ball (2nd from right). His heaviest rifle bullet is the .45 caliber 560-grain Creedmoor style (far right).*

great luck with 22-caliber cast bullets in .22 centerfires. From bolt-action .22 centerfires (even a .220 Swift) I've gotten accuracy of 1.5 minute of angle at 100 yards at about 1,800 to 2,000 fps. In times of severe bullet shortages, that could keep someone plinking small varmints out to 150 and perhaps even 200 yards.

As for the big boomers, back in the 1970s I gave a handful of .30 caliber cast bullets to a Montana friend whose primary hunting rifle was a .300 Weatherby Magnum. He wanted them to pot the occasional grouse he encountered. One morning he hadn't walked into what he considered "elk country" yet, so he had one of the cast loads chambered in his rifle. To his surprise, he stumbled upon what turned out to be a trophy book mule deer at less than 100 yards. Going through the antics of unchambering the cast load and getting a jacketed one ready would have spooked the deer into the next county. So he dropped it with one cast bullet shot. His only complaint was he thought the cast bullet ruined more meat than his jacketed loads.

Lately I've talked a lot about building a collection of World War II battle rifles. So far I haven't delved into building



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cast loads for the autoloaders—my M1 Garand .30-06, German K43 8mm or Soviet SVT40 7.62x54mm. I will someday as time permits. Conversely, with those same calibers in bolt-action rifles, I've had extremely good cast bullet shooting results. In fact, sometimes the 100-yard groups with my homemade bullets equal or surpass those made with jacketed bullet handloads. And those loads at about 1,800 to 2,000 fps don't pound my already abused right shoulder much.

### Pistol Use

In 2009, I started doing considerable shooting with a variety of WWII vintage 9mm pistols. And like so many of you, the shortage caught me with a limited 9mm jacketed bullet supply. I've happily been shooting my home-cast 9mm bullets with nary a problem. Poured of linotype, sized to a rather large diameter (for that caliber) of .357", the 120-grain roundnoses from Lyman mould 356242 have run through FN (Belgium) and Inglis (Canadian) Browning Hi Powers and a German P38 and a P08 Luger without a hitch. Of course, the .45 ACP goes with lead alloy bullets like beer with peanuts, but I also just added a 1944 vintage Japanese Nambu 8mm to my WWII collection. Along with the RCBS reloading dyes one of their special order 110-grain roundnose 8mm Nambu moulds was ordered, too.

The point I'm trying to make is that we shooters can be the masters of our



**Duke regularly shoots his Remington US Model 1903A3 .30-06 with cast bullets and the rifle has proven very accurate with them (inset). On average, the rifle shoots cast bullets with about as much precision as it delivers with jacketed bullets.**

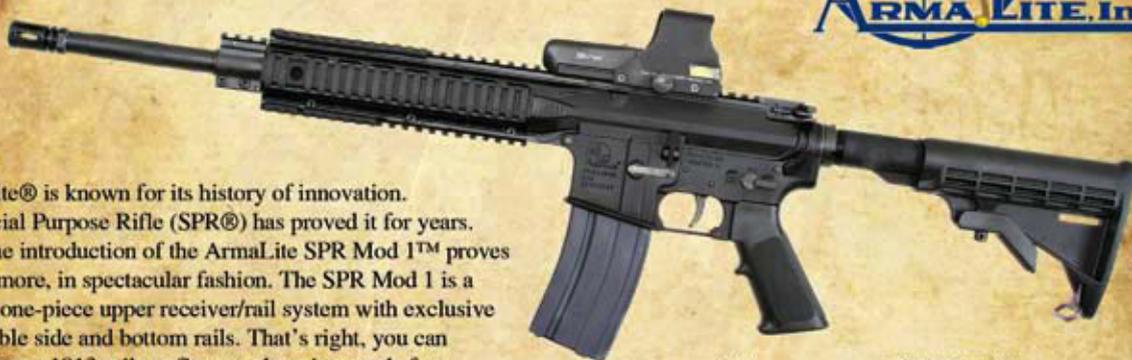
own bullet supply. Rifle shooters can put away a box or two of their favored jacketed hunting bullets, or perhaps a bulk box of varmint bullets. Keep them stashed for the next shortage; they certainly won't go bad with age. Then for fun or practice, rely on cast bullets. This would certainly beat not being able to shoot at all. To do this requires an outlay in basic equipment and it requires time. If you're reading this magazine, I

feel you can probably afford the basic equipment. Time shortage is something I understand but we all have the same 24 hours in our day.

For me, having enough bullets to always shoot takes priority over some other endeavors. I consider bullet casting a fascinating and rewarding adjunct to the handloading facet of our shooting hobby. I wouldn't feel complete without it.

**GUNS**

## ArmaLite® Introduces The SPR Mod 1™



ArmaLite® is known for its history of innovation. Its Special Purpose Rifle (SPR®) has proved it for years. Now, the introduction of the ArmaLite SPR Mod 1™ proves it once more, in spectacular fashion. The SPR Mod 1 is a forged, one-piece upper receiver/rail system with exclusive detachable side and bottom rails. That's right, you can change your 1913 rails to fit your changing needs for sights... lights... lasers... grips... or swivels.

The SPR Mod 1's one-piece construction offers you a continuous optics platform (COP). There's no gap to bridge between receiver and upper rail when installing your scope or sights. This one-piece construction's strength and rigidity will also keep your sights zeroed in the most trying conditions.

**The new SPR Mod 1 typifies the "ArmaLite Standard of Excellence."**

Caliber:	.223/5.56 NATO
Barrel:	16" chrome lined, chrome moly vanadium steel
Rifling twist:	RH 1:7"
Muzzle Device:	Flash suppressor
Front Sight Base:	Picatinny gas block
Sights:	A.R.M.S. polymer #71L-F & #71L-R
Trigger:	Tactical two stage
Length:	35.5" with stock extended, approximately 32" collapsed
Weight:	Approximately 6.5 lbs.
Accuracy:	1.5 - 2.5 MOA

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# GET THE SAVAGE EDGE

# RIFLEMAN

• DAVE ANDERSON •

## SWIFT SCOPES

Value and quality combined.

I can get as moony as anyone about vintage Colts, Marlins, Savages, Smith & Wessons and Winchesters. When the boys are sitting around crying in their beer about the good old days, I sob with the best of them.

Sometimes I remind the crew we have mighty fine guns these days: Better steel alloys, improved heat treatments, and incredibly precise CNC tooling make for outstanding quality and more consistent accuracy, at prices (relative to incomes) providing tremendous value.

All true, but about then one of the boys opens a gun case and shows off a gorgeous pre-war Savage 99, or a '50s era S&W with its beautiful polish and bright blue finish, or a pre-'64 Winchester 70 with just the right amount of wear from 50 years of careful use, and I'm plotting how to trade him out of it.

But optics... that's a different story. We are living in the golden age of optics. Never before has such quality been available. Never before have your hard-earned dollars bought so much quality.

In the early 1960s, the best buy in scopes was the Weaver K4 at around

\$45. Fixed 4X scopes from Bausch & Lomb, Leupold, Lyman and Redfield were around \$60. Relative to wages, comparable prices today would be around \$450 to \$600.

Today, for a third of the money, you can buy a scope with more precisely ground optical glass, far superior lens coatings, better low-light performance, more precise and repeatable adjustments, superior and much more durable moisture seals.

The Swift Premier 3.5-10x44mm scope shown here is a perfect example. When I began buying and using scopes 45+ years ago, scopes offering this level of performance were not available at any price. Today we take such performance for granted.

The Premier (with 1" main tube) and Premier 30mm are Swift's top of the line scopes and are certainly comparable

<b>3.5-10X44</b>	
<b>MAKER: SWIFT SPORT OPTICS</b> 12105 W. CEDAR DRIVE LAKEWOOD, CO 80229 (877) 697-9438 <a href="http://WWW.SWIFT-SPORTOPTICS.COM">WWW.SWIFT-SPORTOPTICS.COM</a>	
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	44mm
<b>MAIN TUBE:</b>	1"
<b>EYE RELIEF:</b>	3.5" (3.5X), 3.2" (10X)
<b>OVERALL LENGTH:</b>	12.8"
<b>WEIGHT:</b>	13.5 ounces
<b>ADJUSTMENTS:</b>	1/4 MOA
<b>RETICLE:</b>	Quadraplex
<b>RETAIL:</b>	\$279.95

in quality to other makes and models in a similar price range. The sample on consignment is an attractive, well-made scope which provided excellent performance. I especially like the long (5.75") main tube, which allows the scope to fit most popular short and long action rifles without the need for extension rings.

### Torture Test

After initial examination I submerged the scope in warm water (with lens and turret adjustment caps removed) for the better part of an hour, then left it in the freezer overnight. There was no moisture leakage or fogging.

Eyepiece focusing is the quick-adjust type. It turns with enough firmness it's not going to go out of adjustment by accident, but there's no locking feature so keep it out of the hands of fidgety friends. On the other hand, if someone does fiddle with it, resetting to suit takes just seconds.

Swift uses BaK7 Schott glass for the optics, fully coated with what they call Light Amplifying Optics Coating. Low-light performance was very good, certainly far more than needed for legal hunting hours.

### Tracking

To check adjustment tracking, I fitted the scope to my Ruger 77/22 target model in .22 Magnum. Turrets are easily finger adjustable, no need to dig around for a coin. The target I used



Swift Premier series 3.5-10X is a quality, well made riflescope. The long main tube makes it easy to mount on either short actions such as this Ruger 77 Compact or on a long action. The adjustment ring rotates smoothly and positively and eyepiece focus is the quick adjust type.



*The Ruger 77 Mk II Compact .308 (above) was tested with the Swift Premier 3.5-10x44mm WA (wide angle) scope. The scope comes with lens caps and removable sun shade. Knife is by Cold Steel. Dave's favorite .22 Magnum rifle is this Ruger 77/22M target model (below). The Swift Premier 3.5-10x44 scope is a good match for this accurate rifle. Sharp optics should make for easy aiming on 150- to 200-yard ground squirrel shots—once the snow finally goes away.*

had four aiming points spaced in an 8" square. One minute of angle is slightly over an inch (it rounds off to 1.047" at 100 yards).

After sighting in at 100 yards, I dialed in 30 clicks right windage which should have moved point of impact 7.85". Actual distance between group centers was 7.75". Thirty clicks down likewise moved point of impact down 7.75". Thirty clicks back left gave 7.5" movement. Maybe it was my shooting, as 30 clicks back up put the shots right in the original group. Pretty good tracking!

### More Recoil

Next, I fitted the scope on a little Ruger 77 Compact in .308 Win. The .308 isn't a recoil beast but it's no toy either, and in this light rifle, recoil is fast. Sixty rounds with no shift in point of impact isn't a test of long-term durability, but at least it shows there are no fundamental flaws. Suggested retail on the 3.5-10x44mm is \$279.95 but if you look around, you might find one on sale. The scope comes with lens caps and a 2" long sunshade. It's a lot of scope for the money.

The Ruger 77/22 in .22 Magnum is a rifle I really like. I use it to test scope tracking because it is accurate, doesn't kick and shoots sub-MOA groups at 100 yards for a lot less cost than shooting factory centerfire ammunition. It shoots well with most types of ammunition, but it absolutely dotes on Winchester Supreme ammunition loaded with 30-grain bullets.

I especially like this cartridge for ground squirrel shooting. They are fairly quiet, less likely to annoy country folk than centerfire .22s. Recoil is virtually nonexistent and barrel wear isn't a concern even on those 500-round days. Accuracy is excellent and trajectory flat enough for 150 yard shots—and you can



stretch that to 200 yards if wind isn't a concern.

Ammunition is considerably more expensive than .22 LR, but much less than factory centerfire loads. Of course, reloaders can assemble centerfire reloads for similar or even less cost, but if your time is valuable it may not be worth it. Assembling 1,500 or 2,000 rounds for a ground squirrel shoot isn't quite the same as putting together 40 rounds for a mule deer hunt.

On prairie dog or ground squirrel shoots I generally have a .204 Ruger or .223 Rem for longer shots, and the .22 Mag to take care of short and medium-range shots while the centerfire's barrel is cooling. That's the plan at least, but in fields where the ground crawls with squirrels by the thousand, the centerfire doesn't get much use!



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# HANDLOADING

• John Barsness •

## CHEAP HANDGUN BULLETS! Of the cast variety.

**W**hile looking at the used firearms in a local sporting goods store, I ran into a friend who's equally addicted. We started talking and the subject of reloading component prices came up. He said he used to shoot cast bullets in his handguns, but they leaded the barrels so much he now just buys jacketed bullets. I thought about trying to explain what he obviously doesn't know about cast bullets, but he'd worked himself into such a snit I decided to do it here instead. Maybe he'll read this after he calms down!

Casting your own handgun bullets is a great way to fight the component price rises of the past couple of years. It's also not as complicated as many shooters believe, and doesn't require nearly as much equipment. Despite my friend's opinion, it's also relatively easy to find a bullet recipe to keep bores lead free.

### Leaded Bore Begone

There are three reasons cast bullets lead bores: The bullet is too fast, too soft or doesn't carry enough lubricant. Luckily, bullets don't have to be pushed very fast to work well in handguns, an adequately hard lead alloy is easy to find

and lubing is cheap and easy to do.

All you really need to cast adequate handgun bullets is a bullet mold, a pot for melting lead and a ladle to pour the liquid lead into the mold. Any more equipment, whether an electric casting furnace or an expensive lubricator sizer, isn't really necessary for making adequate handgun bullets. This doesn't mean the extra equipment might not help, it just isn't necessary.

Let's start with the alloy itself. Most bullet casters use wheelweight metal, partly because wheelweights are relatively cheap. Tire stores used to give old wheelweights away, but today



*It doesn't take a lot of money or equipment to get started casting bullets.*

most places require some payment. I've never paid more than a \$1 a pound for wheelweight metal, about 1/4 of the price listed for casting lead in the most recent MidwayUSA catalog.

At \$1 a pound, I can cast 150-grain bullets for a .357 Magnum for a little over 2¢ apiece. The cheapest price I could find for cast 150-grain bullets in the same MidwayUSA catalog was about 10¢ apiece. At a savings of about 8¢ a shot, it doesn't take long to pay for some basic casting equipment.

### Lee Furnace

These days you can buy the least expensive electric Lee melting furnace for less than \$35 from Midway USA, about the same price as a pot and ladle. A 2-cavity mold will run anywhere from \$20 to \$100, depending on the brand. I've used about all brands, and they all can produce good bullets. One my own favorite rifle molds, for instance, is a Lee costing \$20 or so, for 405-grain .45-70 bullets. It will cast bullets accurate enough to group into 1" at 100 yards—from an iron-sighted rifle.

Cast bullets must be lubed. The easiest way to do this is to dump 100 into a used margarine tub, then squirt a dab of Lee Alox Liquid Lube into the tub. Snap on the plastic tub cover, roll the tub gently back and forth in your hand for a minute, and the bullets will be perfectly lubricated.

Actual diameter and weight of any cast bullet varies with the alloy used,



*This looks like a miserable day at the range, but it was actually quite pleasant for Montana in February. Gun is an HK USP .40 S&W.*

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 66, 4"				
BULLET (CALIBER, BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
.38 SPECIAL LYMAN 149 SWC	Unique	5.0	967	1.91
.357 MAG LYMAN 149 SWC	2400	12.0	1,050	1.56
HECKLER & KOCH USP, 4"				
BULLET (CALIBER, BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
.40 S&W SAECO 153 SWC	True Blue	6.5	997	2.17
.40 S&W SAECO 153 SWC	Blue Dot	10.0	1,103	1.91

Note: Accuracy is the product of 5-shot groups fired at 25 yards.

but most handgun molds are designed for use with wheelweight metal. Wheelweight bullets come out of my old Lyman 358156 mold at .358" in diameter, .001" larger than the nominal bore diameter of a .38 Special or .357 Magnum, and .40 S&W bullets cast in my SAECO 040 mold average .401". Many shooters consider 1/1000" over bore diameter ideal for cast bullets, so no, these bullets don't need to be sized. Roll them around in the margarine tub with a little Lee lube (about \$5 a tube, which lasts a long, long time), and they're ready to shoot.

### Speeds

Wheelweight bullets can be driven up to 1,000 fps or a little more without leading most bores. The loads listed were shot with unsized bullets lubed with Lee Alox Liquid. The accuracy is right in there with jacketed bullets from the same guns, so no, you don't have to invest several hundred dollars to get started in casting good handgun bullets.

With MidwayUSA's latest prices, the cost for tooling and lube runs from about \$60 to \$130, depending on the cost of the mold. At 8¢ a bullet in savings, this means the casting equipment will be amortized in 750 to 1,600 rounds. All that's required is some cheap lead and the time spent casting. With everything set up and me cranking away with a two-bullet mold, I can cast 400 to 500 bullets an hour, so 2 or 3 hours of casting time will pay for the equipment.

That's with \$1-a-pound lead. I sometimes still buy wheelweights from tire shops, but these days I find most of my lead at gun shows and through Internet advertisements. The most recent score was 65 pounds of Linotype metal (harder than wheelweights) for \$65, shipped across the country from a guy in the East in a single Priority Mail flat-rate box. (I also pick up every escaped wheelweight found lying on the street.)

### Hardness Matters

If you buy unknown lead, another eventual tool investment is a hardness tester. Mine is a SAECO. These indicate the hardness of the alloy, so they provide a precise idea of how fast the bullets can be pushed. While it's relatively

easy to harden bullets made of softer alloys (especially wheelweight metal) by knocking hot bullets out of the mold into cold water, even a single droplet of water can cause a pot of molten lead to erupt like liquid lava. Even if we put a can of water several feet away from the casting station, I get very nervous when there's *any* water nearby. Plus, heat-treated bullets tend to soften somewhat over time. Since harder Lintoype can be purchased just as cheaply, if not quite as readily, I tend to use it when harder bullets are required.

This brings up casting safety. First, molten lead gives off fumes that are bad for us, so casting should only be done in a well-ventilated room, preferably with a fan moving the air past our casting pot and away from our nostrils. Second, we should wear clothes that cover our arms and legs, sturdy footwear, and leather gloves and protective glasses. Molten lead is *hot*.

Still, I have been casting bullets for several decades now and remain unscarred. Done correctly, casting is no more dangerous than crossing the street—as long as we look both ways—and saves a lot of money.

**GUNS**

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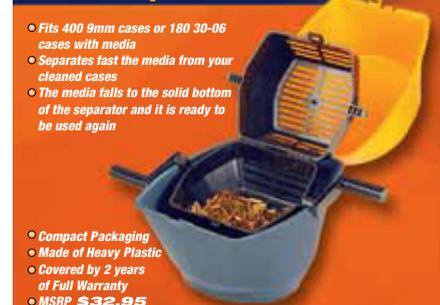
- Fits 600 cases 9mm or 250 .223R
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### SR787 Spare Bowl



- Ideal for reloaders who like to use different media types to clean or polish their cases
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- Fits 400 9mm cases or 180 30-06 cases with media
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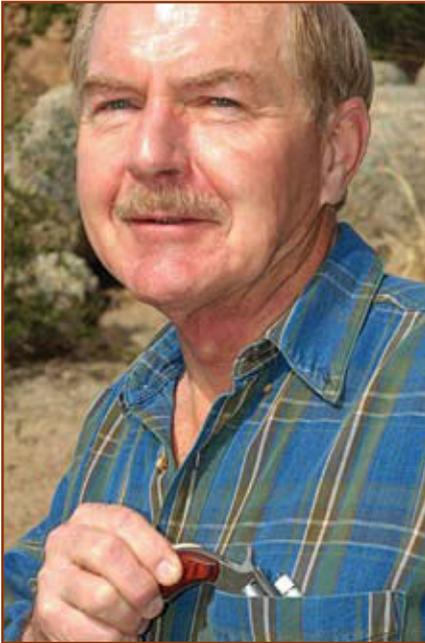
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# HANDGUNS

• HOLT BODINSON •

## DEEP COVER MAGNUMS

The NAA .22 WMR Mini Revolver and LaserLyte Mini Laser create a serious self-defense gun.



*Big guns are often difficult to manage in the heat of Southern Arizona so Holt often "picks small" (above). Carried in a pants or shirt pocket, the mini-revolver is unnoticeable. The NAA .22 WMR (below) is smaller than "hand size" and the LaserLyte unit adds little to its mass.*



**M**ost of the CCW stuff I read is great for off-duty cops and wannabes, but pretty irrelevant for us working stiffs. It just doesn't apply to the real world of the average man or woman.

Belt holsters and shoulder holsters? Forget it! The minute your coat is off, all is revealed. In fact, the minute you put both hands on your hips, reach for your wallet or push your jacket accidentally aside, all is revealed. In my part of the country, we don't wear jackets in the summer anyway.

Ankle holsters? Get real! They don't go with skirts. They don't go on or come off easily. Cross your legs when seated or pump the accelerator or brake with a client in the front seat, all is exposed.

Fanny packs? Only when you're in a jogging suit or hiking the trails, and even then, everyone assumes you're "packing."

Special gun purses? "Sorry," says my lady. "Absolutely no style and the wrong color or material if it does have style."

Holster bras, holster undershirts, holster underwear? Maybe if the temperatures are moderate and you are of modest size. But if stuffed with anything larger than a very small handgun, they still reveal big bulges in the wrong

places and are slow to access.

Service-sized 1911s, Wondernines, .40 S&Ws and their worthy compact clones? Too big and too heavy. Why all the self-defense schools and combat competitions design their courses around this type of handgun, or even lightweight versions thereof, continues to confound me.

### North American Mini

Nope, for real world CCW work, make mine a North American Arms (NAA) mini-revolver in .22 Winchester Magnum Rimfire (WMR) with a 1-1/8" barrel. It may not be the biggest ballistic bull on the street, but it will be there when I need it and not resting peacefully at home. And now, LaserLyte has even given us a miniature laser sight for the little critter.

The first petite .22 WMR revolver I ever fired was the Freedom Arms (now discontinued) 1" barreled model carried fully exposed clamped in the middle of a handsome Freedom Arms trophy belt buckle. I remember the first shot out of that runt as if it were yesterday. Aiming it at a tin can on the ground, I focused intently on the fuzzy sight picture and slowly pressed the trigger. It was the mouse that roared.

"Wham!" The noise was deafening, but even more impressive were the gyrations of the little gun itself. It flew out of my grip, turned a complete somersault and returned to my hand as I reached out and caught it in thin air. I couldn't do that again if I tried a thousand times.

Lesson one: The 1" barreled .22 WMR revolver makes a lot of noise (which is good since it's so small), and you have to remember to grip it firmly.

My introduction to NAA's .22 WMR was the result of a casual conversation I had with Jerry Anderson, a retired highway patrolman living in Tucson, Arizona. We were discussing CCW, and I asked Jerry what he carried. It was an

Arizona summer and both of us were wearing shorts. Jerry reached into his pocket and pulled out a NAA .22 WMR. That was a long time ago. Since then, I have carried a 1-1/8" barreled NAA .22 WMR more than any other handgun I own. It's a remarkable CCW gun and its intriguing lineage and history can be found on the North American Arms' Web site.

The NAA mini-revolver is a blend of something old and something new. Let's see, single action, spur trigger, bird's-head-style grip, .22 rimfire. Hmm, sounds and looks suspiciously like an 1857 Smith & Wesson No. 1 in .22 Short, which was so popular during the Civil War as a concealed handgun. And new? Well, the NAA is made from 17-4 Ph stainless steel and chambered for the modern .22 WMR cartridge, plus it's a bit smaller and more compact than a S&W No. 1.

In fact, with a 1-1/8" barrel, the NAA mini-revolver is only 4-3/4" long, 7/8" thick over the cylinder and weighs a mere 5.9 ounces. Stuffed in a pocket, it doesn't print, and dropped into a handbag, it simply disappears.

### Loading

The NAA mini-revolver is very simple in design and operation, which adds to its rugged reliability. The cylinder accepts five magnum cartridges.

#### .22 WMR MINI-REVOLVER

**MAKER: NORTH AMERICAN ARMS, INC.**  
**2150 SOUTH 950 EAST**  
**PROVO, UT 84606**  
**(800) 821-5783**  
**WWW.NORTHAMERICANARMS.COM**

<b>ACTION TYPE:</b>	Single-action revolver
<b>CALIBER:</b>	.22 WMR
<b>CAPACITY:</b>	5
<b>BARREL LENGTH:</b>	1-1/8"
<b>OVERALL LENGTH:</b>	4-3/4"
<b>WIDTH:</b>	7/8"
<b>WEIGHT:</b>	5.9 ounces
<b>FINISH:</b>	Stainless
<b>SIGHTS:</b>	Fixed
<b>GRIPS:</b>	Laminated wood
<b>PRICE:</b>	\$214

#### NORTH AMERICAN LASER

**MAKER: LASERLYTE**  
**101 AIRPARK RD, SUITE C**  
**COTTONWOOD, AZ 86326**  
**(928) 649-3201**  
**WWW.LASERLYTE.COM**

<b>LENGTH:</b>	1-5/8"
<b>WEIGHT:</b>	.4 ounces
<b>BATTERY:</b>	3x392
<b>BATTERY LIFE:</b>	1.5 hours
<b>ACTIVATION:</b>	Toggle switch
<b>MOUNTING:</b>	Top strap clamp
<b>FITS:</b>	NAA .22 LR & .22 WMR
<b>PRICE:</b>	\$99.95



*As you cock the NAA's hammer (above), your thumb contacts the toggle switch, turning on the laser. One of the first successful revolvers firing a cartridge launched the firm of S&W in 1857. The S&W No. 1 (below, bottom) and a NAA mini are very similar in design.*

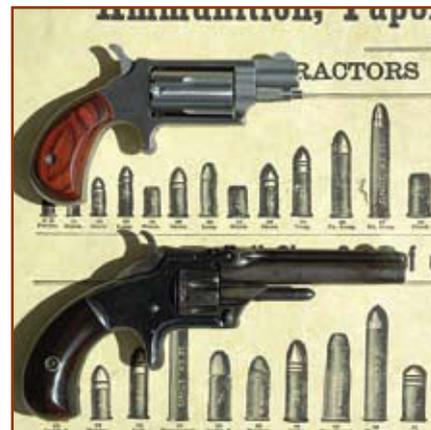
To load them, you place the hammer at half-cock, pull the cylinder pin out and remove the cylinder from the frame. If there are spent cases in the cylinder, you eject them by tapping them out with the cylinder pin.

Once loaded, the cylinder is returned to the frame and locked in place with the cylinder pin. Next comes the important safety drill. Between the chambers are safety slots that accept the nose of the hammer. The hammer is lowered into one of the safety slots, locking the hammer and the cylinder in place and ensuring the nose of the hammer is not in contact with a cartridge rim. That's the safe "carry mode" for the little gun, and it permits you to carry all five chambers loaded. The system reminds me of the safety slots in the cylinder of most Civil War cap-and-ball revolvers.

NAA recommends CCI and Winchester ammunition, and I concur, although you have to test various loadings by both companies for accuracy and stability. Even with its 1-1/8" barrel, the mini-revolver is surprisingly fast, averaging 1,082 fps with CCI Maxi-Mag +V, which turned in 1-1/4" 3-shot groups at 15' over open sights. CCI Maxi-Mag Gold Dot was equal in accuracy, but a bit slower, averaging 808 fps over the PACT Professional chronograph.

### Laser Accuracy

NAA offers a complete catalog of mini-revolver accessories, but the neatest accessory of all is LaserLyte's new clamp-on laser sight. Only 1-5/8" long and weighing .4 ounces, LaserLyte's fully adjustable NAA-1 laser sight is a study in miniaturization, and provides the shooter with the smallest laser and handgun combination in the world. It also brings out all the potential accuracy and range a NAA mini-revolver has to



offer while not compromising the mini-revolver's qualities as a CCW.

Outside in full sunlight against a neutral-colored object, I can clearly see the red LaserLyte dot at 25'. If the same object is in open shade, the dot is visible at 50'. Inside a house or at night, the dot is visible to the limits of your vision.

Clamped to the top strap of the mini-revolver, the laser is switched on by the tip of your thumb as you cock the hammer. LaserLyte has a neat video on their petite laser on their Web site. In the menu, it's listed as "North American Laser." It's well worth watching.

Yes, I would rather be packing my Glock 36 in .45 ACP, my S&W Model 60 or even one of the new .380s, but when it comes to day-in-and-day-out concealed carry, more often than not, I'll be packing my deep cover NAA Magnum and I'll feel confident carrying it.



# UP ON ARS

• GLEN ZEDIKER •

## BARREL BASICS

It all starts here.

### Some things never change. Here's one.

The barrel is truly the make-or-break component in any rifle, and I'm talking about accuracy. Of course, other elements have to be correct and fully functioning to see small groups on target (and of these, the nut holding the stock factors mightily), but the difference between a rifle that shoots well and one that shoots outstandingly well is in the barrel.

The standard for "shoot well" is ultimately subjective. I expect my across-the-course rifles to group no bigger than 4" at 600 yards, and that's a 10-shot group fired prone with a scope. There's little doubt the use a rifle is put to and the distance the bullet covers helps each shooter set his own standards for accuracy. There's also little doubt hold quality factors heavily. A High Master class competitor is going to think his barrel has gone bad sooner than a Marksman will.

### Snob?

In years past I've taken an admittedly snobbish stance on barrel quality, saying you really do get what you pay for in a match-grade barrel. One reason is there's not really a definitive standard for "match-grade," beyond those established by the barrelmaker. I say a match barrel



*There is an increasingly available supply of ready-to-go barrels of truly match quality. Here's one from Sater Custom. It's a cut-rifled, stainless steel NRA Service Rifle barrel, and ships with a bolt for no headspace worries and a front sight housing modified to provide windage adjustment. Lots of twist rate choices and a "Wylde" chamber. It hammered.*



*This is as good as it gets, Glen says. Ordered from Krieger, this barrel arrived ready to install. Gas port hole drilled, chambered, extension installed and even a gas manifold to fit. Glen chose the length, contour and twist rate. This isn't cheap, but it's worth every penny to him because he has yet to get a bad one.*

is one that wins matches. Experienced competitive shooters become aware of this because we will go through several barrels, and, therefore, see a performance pattern develop barrel to barrel. We want that pattern to be a flat line.

Admittedly, it's also been hard to continually tell people to spend \$500 on one (turned, fitted, chambered and installed).

Guess what? It still stands. If you are building an AR-15 for competitive use, regardless of the venue, and you want

to see it shoot just as well as it can, you dramatically swing the odds in your favor by purchasing a Krieger, Lilja, Obermeyer, Schneider or other similar barrel. Those barrels, as is true with many from custom barrelmakers, aren't graded. There's only one standard: sell or trash.

The next tier of barrels are those graded, after manufacture, and segregated by their quality. Again, different standards apply and none are universally followed, but dimensional consistency, correctness and straightness are the leading indicators. Pac-Nor, Shilen and Douglas come to mind. The best of those are frequently as good as custom barrels, but the safe route is to go with those known as good.

### Measuring Quality

As I said, distance really shows the differences in barrels. Take a rifle with a decent barrel and one with a great barrel to the firing line, and then keep moving farther and farther from the target. There will be less notable difference in these barrels at 100 yards. There will be more at 200. More still at 300. Way more at 600. And night and day at 1,000. I've seen this too many times to respect it with a "maybe." It is also, therefore,



*Stainless steel doesn't necessarily shoot any better than chrome moly, but usually shoots its best for a longer time. Chrome moly, though, will shoot out-and-out longer after both have passed their peak due to the nature of throat erosion. Glen recommends stainless because after a barrel is pulled from an AR-15, there's nothing more you can do with it.*

## DO THE TWIST

why many people may be entirely happy—and for good reason—with a less expensive barrel.

There are differences in barrel manufacture methods, and the leading is how the lands and grooves are formed. Most rifling is done via a button pulled through the drilled blank. It's a swaging process. Another style is cut rifling, a machining operation whereby a single-point cutter is driven through the drilled blank, cutting one groove at a time. There will always be arguments about which is best, and I like cut rifling. Done to its limits, cut rifled barrels should exhibit uniform twist rate and also undergo a little less stress.

As with any metal working, though, finished quality ultimately comes down to tool precision and operator standards. Other perks in a custom barrel usually (and certainly should) include hand lapping and stress relieving. The lapping smoothes the interior surface and improves dimensional consistency. The stress relieving helps ensure the barrel "looks" in the same direction after it gets hot. That, by the way, is how we can get a barrel with a smaller diameter to shoot as well as one that looks like a Red Bull can.

### Stainless Or Chrome Moly?

Material? Go with stainless steel. Stainless will not shoot one bit better than chrome moly, but will shoot its best for a little longer. That's usually to the tune of another 10- or 15-percent longer gilt-edge accuracy. The reason is in how the steel "wears" as throat erosion progresses. Chrome moly tends to get rough (like sandpaper) whereas stainless steel tends to form cracks with still-smooth areas between them (like a dry lake bed). If, however, we were going to shoot each barrel beyond the point of its best accuracy, chrome moly will probably shoot best past either's prime. While stainless groups tend to open up abruptly, chrome moly group sizes cone outward more slowly.

How long a barrel lasts has to do with the load you shoot the most. If we plot out propellant gas pressure

The correct twist rate (expressed as how many inches it takes for a bullet to make a full rotation, or "turn," as it travels through the barrel) matters, and especially when bigger bullets are in your plans. Bullet length, not weight, determines the twist rate needed for reliable stability. A longer bullet needs a faster twist. The most popular twist today is 1:9". I think the best "all around" twist is 1:8". That works with anything up to and including a Sierra 80-grain MatchKing. It will also work for a Sierra 77 MatchKing, Hornady 75 Match or other similar heavier bullet designed to be loaded to magazine-box length. If you won't use anything over 70 grains, then 1:9" is fine. If you won't use anything over 55 grains, then 1:12" is not only fine, but wise. Looking for an "ultimate" small group with a particular bullet does mean compromise with another, very different bullet, but there is no getting a longer bullet to shoot through a too-slow twist.

GUNS

*Here's an extreme, but extremes are pervasive in .224" bullets. On the left is a 35 grain, on the right is a 90. The itty-bitty one can function perfectly well through a 1:14" twist, but the big bad boy will hit the target sideways unless it's launched from a tube with a 1:6.5" twist.*



levels against the progression of bullet movement through the bore, we get a "pressure-time curve." Pressure levels are associated with respective levels of flame cutting in the chamber throat area. A steep p-t curve (slower-moving bullet) means more cutting, or at least it's more concentrated. Clearly, lighter bullets will do less damage than heavier bullets, even though the lighter bullet loads contain more propellant. A steady diet of 77-grain bullets, for instance, will shorten barrel life compared to using mostly 55-grain bullets. Fortunately, .223 Remington is one of the kindest-to-barrel-steel rounds in use in competition. I expect about 4,000 good rounds from a good barrel (about the same as .308 Winchester). In contrast, something like .243 Winchester provides about 1,200 rounds of X-ring accuracy.

Are there any cures for a barrel not grouping up to your standards? Maybe,

but not likely. The cause for the poor performance determines the answer, and sometimes that's hard to know until some tricks have been tried. One is a recrown. That's not terribly expensive, and bad crowns are prevalent on factory barrels and fixing one can be like a miracle. Next is trying some sort of bullet-lapping product and procedure, such as FinalFinish. I have seen that work wonders, again, especially on a factory barrel. It polishes the bore. I would not advise a cryogenic (deep-freezing) treatment in hopes of seeing much influence. Those can sometimes make what's there a little better, but won't fix anything that's wrong.

*This material was specially adapted from The Competitive AR15: Ultimate Technical Guide, a book soon available from Zediker Publishing, P.O. Box 1497, Oxford, MS 38655, (662) 473-6107, [www.zediker.com](http://www.zediker.com).*

GUNS

KRIEGER BARRELS, INC.  
2024 MAYFIELD ROAD, RICHFIELD, WI 53076  
(262) 628-8558  
[WWW.KRIEGERBARRELS.COM](http://WWW.KRIEGERBARRELS.COM)

OBERMEYER  
23122 60TH STREET  
BRISTOL, WI 53104  
(262) 843-3537  
[WWW.OBERMEYERBARRELS.COM](http://WWW.OBERMEYERBARRELS.COM)

PAC-NOR BARRELS  
P.O. BOX 6188, BROOKINGS, OR 97415  
(541) 469-7330, [WWW.PAC-NOR.COM](http://WWW.PAC-NOR.COM)

LILJA PRECISION RIFLE BARRELS, INC.  
P.O. BOX 372, PLAINS, MT 59859  
(406) 826-3084, [WWW.RIFLEBARRELS.COM](http://WWW.RIFLEBARRELS.COM)

SHILEN RIFLES, INC.  
P.O. BOX 1300, ENNIS, TX 75120  
(972) 875-5318, [WWW.SHILEN.COM](http://WWW.SHILEN.COM)

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(806) 323-9488  
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# SURPLUS LOCKER™

• HOLT BODINSON •

## THE “PATCHETT” 9MM SMG Century’s remarkable Type II Sterling.

**I**t was called the “Patchett.” In the hands of Britain’s 6th Airborne Division, 100 or so “trial” Patchetts saw action at Normandy and Arnhem. The troops liked it, but with the close of WWII, there were so many Stens in the supply chain, there was little immediate demand or interest in underwriting the development of a new submachine gun.

Yet, in 1944, the British General Staff had published a set of standards for the design of a new submachine gun. It was to chamber the 9mm Parabellum; weigh no more than 6 pounds; have a cyclic rate of no more than 500 rounds per minute and be capable of placing five rounds consistently within one square foot at 100 yards.



Century’s Sterling is mostly made of original parts like this magazine housing (above). Patchett’s improved roller magazine follower (below) is ingenious and slick working.



Working at the Sterling Engineering Company in Dagenham, Essex, England, George William Patchett wasn’t about to let a good submachine gun design end up in the dustbin of history. He knew he had a more accurate and reliable design than the Sten, which had indeed acquired some derogatory aliases during the war such as “Stench Gun” and “Woolworth Gun.”

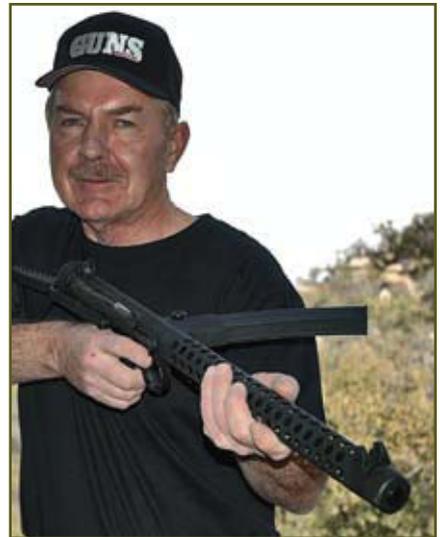
The Sterling Engineering Company was a good place to work. In 1941, another engineer there, George Herbert Lanchester, patented the Lanchester submachine gun, which was essentially an improved version of the German Schmeisser MP-28. The Lanchester Mk I featured a side feeding, 50-round magazine, a perforated barrel jacket and was produced during the war by Sterling Engineering exclusively for the British Navy. So, with the support of Sterling, G.W. Patchett continued to refine his design and kept submitting improved models to the trials committees of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

### Self Cleaning

One of the key features that kept bringing the Patchett to the head of the line in design was its self-cleaning action. The bolt body was machined with four sharp-sided, curved ribs along its circumference. As the bolt reciprocated, the angled ribs sheared away and cleared any fouling, dirt, dust, sand or mud that might have entered the tubular receiver.

The early designs of the Patchett used either the 50-round Lanchester or the 32-round Sten magazine. There is no question the side-feeding magazine system has proved reliable and handy when hosing down the enemy. Patchett wasn’t satisfied with existing magazine designs though, so he came up with an improved one of his own.

Patchett’s 34-round, staggered box



The “Patchett” saw limited use in WWII and went on to become one of the most widely used SMGs worldwide post war.

magazine dispensed with the common sheet metal, fixed follower. In its place, Patchett substituted two robust, steel rollers, much like the rollers on a motorcycle chain. The rollers reduced friction and provided a more positive feeding system. Patchett also incorporated pressed-in grooves along the body of the magazine that functioned as spaces where dirt could collect and not contribute to a jam. It’s a tough, heavy-walled magazine and weighs just shy of 3/4 pounds on my Sunbeam scale, and it’s a joy to thumb 9mm rounds into.

Patchett’s persistence and Sterling’s support paid off. In 1953, the design was officially adopted by Britain and most of the British Commonwealth. Ironically, the design from WWII to 1952, through all the trials, had always been officially referred to as the “Patchett,” but once it was adopted as the model L1A1, it was from that day forward called the “Sterling.”

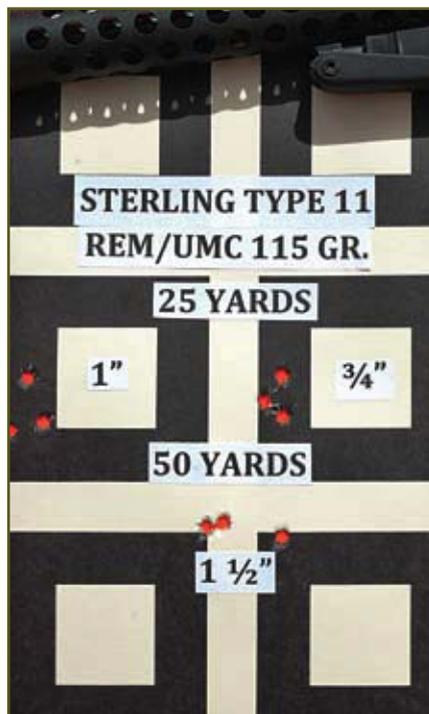
The Sterling was made by the Sterling Engineering Company, the Royal Ordnance Factory at Fazakerly, and manufactured under license by the Canadian Arsenals, Ltd. The standard military model was adopted by Britain, Canada, India and New Zealand, sold to

40 or 50 other countries, and was widely marketed to Kenyan farmers during the Mau-Mau conflict.

### Not Cheap

The Sterling was not a cheap gun to make. It was finely machined and finished. Tolerances were held to a minimum. For its intended purposes, some were to say it was too finely made. Looking at its components, the Sterling was a combination of machined steel forgings and sheet metal stampings. Century International Arms has done an exceptionally fine job of blending original Sterling parts kits with newly machined barrels and receivers to give us a semi-automatic version of the last model in the line of classic military Sterlings, the Model L2A3.

Over its lifetime, the Sterling was offered in a variety of configurations and as a selective-fire weapon as well as semi-automatic only. The standard Sterling military submachine gun evolved through a series of minor modifications known as the L1A1, L2A1, L2A2 and L2A3 models. There were two very effective suppressed models with the designations L34A1 (selective fire) and Police Carbine Mark 5 (semi-auto). Closely resembling Century's L2A3 was a semi-automatic with a 16" barrel called the Mark 6 Carbine, and a closed bolt version of the same design labeled the Single Shot Mark 8. Like the Uzi, they finally squeezed the Sterling down into a family of 4"- and 8"-barreled pistol configurations known as the Mark 7 Para Pistol series.



*The 9mm Sterling turned in a sterling performance on the range.*

## DISASSEMBLY/REASSEMBLY

**F**irst, remove the magazine, clear the chamber and fold the stock. Depress the end cap lock, push in the end cap, turn it counterclockwise and remove it slowly since it's under pressure from the mainspring. Remove the springs and entrapped parts. Remove the operating handle by pulling it out fully to the rear. Remove the bolt. Remove the firing pin from the bolt. The gun is now fieldstripped. Reassemble in reverse order.

**GUNS**



By necessity, Century International Arms' L2A3 is a bit longer and heavier than the original. The original Sterling had a barrel only 7.8" long, fully encased in its perforated barrel shroud and fired from an open bolt. By law, the Century configuration calls for a barrel with a minimum length of 16", so Century produces two 16-1/4"-barreled models with closed bolt firing systems: a Type I with a short handguard receiver and a crinkle-type finish, and a Type II with a perforated receiver/handguard extending all the way to the muzzle and a Parkerized finish. Both models are fitted with the Sterling's exceptionally rigid, under-folding metal stock.

Century's Sterling incorporates original surplus Sterling parts as well as newly manufactured components, namely the perforated receiver and barrel. The fire control system has been altered, of course, from selective fire to semi-automatic fire, but the original incorporated trigger housing still carries the letters "S" for safe, "R" for repeat or semi-auto fire and "A" for fully automatic fire. The selector switch on the Century moves only between "S" and "R" though.

The sighting system consists of a "L-type," flip-over rear aperture calibrated for 100 and 200 meters. The front sight consists of a threaded blade adjustable up and down for elevation, and a dovetailed base driftable right or left for windage. The long, 23-1/2" sight radius of the Type II design, in particular, provides a clean, crisp sight picture and certainly helps to extract all the accuracy the Sterling has to offer, which is considerable.

Century's Sterling is a fun gun that demands to be fed copious amounts of 9mm. Knowing that, I headed for the range with a 250-round box of Remington's UMC brand 115-grain FMJ and went to work. At 25 yards,

### STERLING TYPE II SUBMACHINE GUN

**MAKER: CENTURY INTERNATIONAL ARMS**  
**430 S. CONGRESS AVE., STE. 1**  
**DELRAY BEACH, FL 33445**  
**(800) 527-1252**  
**WWW.CENTURYARMS.COM**

**ACTION TYPE:** Semi-automatic, blowback

**CALIBER:** 9mm Parabellum

**CAPACITY:** 34

**BARREL LENGTH:** 16-1/4"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 27" folded, 37-1/4" extended

**WEIGHT:** 9.15 pounds

**FINISH:** Parkerized black

**SIGHTS:** "L"-type, flip over rear. Front blade adjustable for elevation and windage

**STOCK:** Metal, under-folding

**PRICE:** \$550-\$575

the Sterling can keep three shots within 1" and at 50 yards, 1-1/2". Frankly, it doesn't get much better than that with a submachine gun.

Other than its increased length and weight, Century International Arms' Sterling Type II is a sensational reconstruction of one of the world's finest post-war submachine gun designs, as well as being a very affordable milsurp. Just be sure to stock up on those 250-round bulk packs of 9mm Parabellum.

**GUNS**

### FURTHER READING

**THE WORLD'S SUBMACHINE GUNS, VOL. 1**  
**BY THOMAS NELSON AND HANS LOCKHOVEN.**  
**HARDCOVER, 740 PAGES, ©1964,**  
**OUT-OF-PRINT, BUT WORTH LOOKING FOR**

# OUT of the BOX™

• MIKE CUMPSTON •

## AMERICAN TACTICAL AT 92 COMPACT

This Turkish copy of the Beretta 92 is affordable and accurate.

In November 2009, American Tactical Imports announced the availability of a compact version of their AT 92, which is a close copy of the Beretta 92 FS. Overall dimensions are the same as the full-sized pistol, except the barrel and overall length are about 6/10" shorter. Except for very minor design changes stipulated by ATI, it is the MKE Yavuz 16 Compact manufactured by Girsan Industries for the Turkish state arms company, Mechanical and Chemical Industries (MKEK).

According to the Girsan concern, the pistol is manufactured on state-of-the-art CNC machinery and subject to NATO specific testing and evaluation. Among other criteria, the pistol must survive 8,000 rounds with no failures and exhibit accuracy not exceeding 8cm mean radius for 10 rounds at 25 meters. Girsan data indicates the (full-sized) pistol made it through the various hostile environment tests, the extended firing component and produced groups of 6cm mean radius—or about 4.7" diameter by Western count. The Yavuz is used by some elements of the Turkish military.

American Tactical advises potential buyers to have local dealers canvass distributors and warns it is the nature of imports that availability may be

sporadic. My "sample" AT 92 came from Ellet Brothers Distributors by way of Hewitt Gun Shop in Hewitt, Texas. My request for a T&E sample from ATI had disappeared in the maze of a new and complicated media relations system.

I obtained it through ordinary consumer channels, which is something I like to do fairly often. It serves to confound and confuse the geniuses who insist we gunwriters receive special treatment and above-standard samples in return for positive reviews. I would rather spend a little money every now and then if it will help me avoid the label of "Industry Ho." It also demonstrates ATI did not announce the pistol before it was actually available, and has gotten busy and placed the Compact with domestic distributors.



*The American Tactical Imports AT 92 is a near-exact copy of the Beretta FS/M9 pistol made in Turkey for domestic military applications. The Compact model is 6/10" shorter than the standard pistol. Both retain the original steel guide rods and total steel, plastic-free triggers.*



*Disassembly is the same and just as simple as a Beretta 92. Shooters who have fumbled with the new-tech plastic guide rods, causing them to snap in two, will appreciate the Turkish/ATI decision to reject the trend toward plastication of load bearing parts. The guide rod is steel.*



*Casual bench rest shooting at 25 yards produced groups in the 3" range. The best four rounds from each group averaged a consistent 2".*

Upon examination, the AT 92 Compact does exhibit unimpeachable standards of construction and finish inside and out. There are no shortfalls or shortcuts in construction and, as advertised, the AT retains the original steel, rather than plastic, guide rod. Likewise, the trigger is all steel with no plastic constituent. Like many imports, the slide, barrel and frame are literature-heavy with American Tactical and Turkish provenance prominent on all surfaces.

Since this is a "reverse engineered" copy of a Beretta, the implication is Beretta parts will work in the import. The AT 92 is completely compatible with Beretta Magazines but the gunsmiths at ATI have not yet determined if other parts are interchangeable. The locking

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**CALIBER:** 9x19mm

**CAPACITY:** 15+1

**ACTION:** Traditional  
double action

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.89"

**BARREL LENGTH:** 4.33"

**WEIGHT:** 32.6 ounces

**SIGHTS:** Fixed 3-dot

**FINISH:** Blue

**PRICE:** \$549.95



*Mike fired these 15 rounds single action rapidly at 25 yards. The AT lends itself to fast target acquisition. The group is 6x6-1/4". Mike fired 25 rounds at this target from 50' beginning each five round string from double action. Rate of fire was about two rounds per second for the single-action shots. The AT 92, like the Beretta is a very easy pistol to use in its intended role as a military and self-defense arm.*

block in the AT resembles the first generation part rather than subsequent variations intended to extend service life of the part.

The operational smoothness of the AT, combined with the straightforward Beretta feed sequence, creates the expectation of perfect functioning. The Beretta design is right at the top of the short list of pistols likely to function right out of the box without a "break-in" period or extra attention from the owner or a gunsmith. The AT 92 does, in fact, demonstrate complete reliability regardless of bullet shape. The sights are very visible—an important consideration during my primary shooting session as it took place during a flash flood and in twilight conditions.

My casual 25-yard bench groups tended to validate the results reported by the Girsan. My first and largest group was 3.9" fired with Independence ball. I settled down and shot another that came in at 2.9". Single 5-shot groups with Speer 124-grain Gold Dot and Remington 124-grain Golden Saber measured 2.8" and 3.4". All three of



## 9MM FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
INDEPENDENCE 115 FMJ	1,123	2.9
REMINGTON GOLDEN SABER JHP 124	1,125	3.4
SPEER GOLD DOT 124 JHP	1,164	2.8

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*The owner's manual is quite easy to understand, although the translation produces some interesting spelling and syntax. This does serve to hold the reader's attention and foster greater comprehension.*

these groups placed the best four rounds in 1.9" to 2.1". My bench groups were centered as to elevation and about 2" right of point of aim. Overall, the level of accuracy and the four in, one out syndrome resembles results I have gotten with the full-length Beretta FS.

The double-action trigger pull is long and stacks toward the end—more like the old Walther P38 than some of the newer DA pistols. My early tendency was to place the initial double action round lower on target than subsequent single-action releases. Practice moderated this to some extent. I did my 25-yard free standing shooting single action, isosceles firing upon reacquisition of the front

sight. Estimated interval between shots was about 1 second, perhaps a bit more. This produced 15 solid center mass hits in a 6" group. I fired 25 rounds from 50' in 5-round installments shooting double action for the initial shots and delivering the single-action shots at about 2 per second. Twenty-three rounds clustered center-right in a 5-1/2" spread with the two outlying shots expanding the group to 7".

The overall size of the 92 Compact, the visible sights and the very moderate recoil of the 9x19 cartridges make this a very easy pistol to use in its intended role as an arm for service applications or self-defense.

**GUNS**

# OUT *of the* BOX™

• JACOB GOTTFREDSON •

## NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM TACTICAL RIFLES

It's hard to imagine a .308 getting any better than this.



*Typical of tactical rifles, Nighthawk uses an extended bolt handle with a large knurled knob at the end. It also uses a lever at the leading edge of the triggerguard for quick magazine release.*



*A 20 MOA Picatinny rail was supplied with the rifle. Note the bolt release on the rear of the action on the left side.*



*The Nighthawk incorporates a Manners MCS-T4A stock with an adjustable cheekpiece and Accuracy International magazine. The bolt is spiral fluted.*

**S**ometimes you're good and sometimes you're just plain lucky. Terry Cross exemplifies what it means to be good. His record proves it; he wins many of the sniper matches he attends. Recently, he won the Sniper's Bash at Rifles Only. His 1st place prize was a Nighthawk Custom Tactical .308 Rifle and Nightforce scope, all in an expensive case. Great shooting! I, on the other hand, exemplified plain luck. I won, by way of a raffle, a Sako TRG 42, .338 Lapua Magnum courtesy of Euro Optics. Terry was kind enough to loan me the Nighthawk rifle for this article.

Long-range tactical rifles typically have several things in common. Nighthawk has included most of them in this beautiful, rugged and functional rifle. While opinions differ on how this is accomplished, advances in technology and new field requirements have flushed out some of what works best. For short-, mid- and long-range targets in a rich field of fire, whether on the battlefield or assaulting a prairie dog town, the rifle should be stable enough to allow the shooter to see splash, make corrections and do so quickly.

The action, barrel and bedding should be crafted well enough to deliver effective and productive accuracy. The trigger should be positive with no creep or over travel, light enough for accurate shooting, yet heavy enough for safety. The stock should be stiff, bedded properly and the correct and ergonomic shape to enhance accurate, fast fire. The scope has to be top quality with a functional reticle. A detachable magazine capable of holding 10 rounds

for longer sustained fire should also be available. The bolt should allow quick access, efficient, leveraged function and work like glass. Nighthawk has spared nothing to accomplish these requirements.

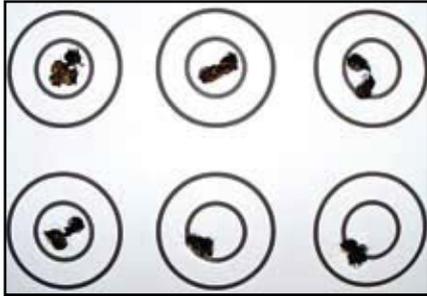
Starting with a new and rather innovative action, Nighthawk attached a .308 Broughton 5C, 1:12" twist, match-grade barrel. This was married to a Manners MCS-T4A stock with adjustable cheekpiece. A Jewell trigger was used on the bottom and a Nightforce scope on the top. The stock was coated in a desert camo pattern and the metal coated with Perma Kote. Badger bottom metal was coupled with an Accuracy International magazine.

Nighthawk is a custom shop and will build a chamber to your specs. For a few extra dollars they will also build the rifle around a Surgeon action. The tactical rifles come with a 20 MOA Picatinny rail and the firm offers a lifetime warranty on the action.

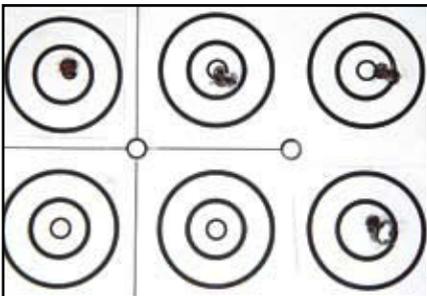
I had several different brands of



*The Nighthawk Custom Tactical rifle combines a Manners stock, Jewell trigger, custom action and Broughton 5C barrel. The rifle shoots with extraordinary accuracy, with a cold or hot barrel. The magazine is a 5-round from Accuracy International.*



Six 100-yard, 5-shot groups (above) include (top row, left to right) Federal 168-grain match, an old reload from another rifle, Federal 175-grain match and (bottom row, left to right) Federal 168-grain match, Samson 168-grain match and Remington 168-grain match. It astonished Jacob that five different loads, using the same identical aiming point, would not only shoot so small, but also hit almost the same place. The six 5-round groups were fired quickly to test the rifle and bolt's ability. The exercise began on a cold, clean barrel and ended with a hot barrel. No break was taken to cool. Groups are .450", .441", .516", .428", .281" and .281" for an aggregate of .3995". Extraordinary for five different manufacturers' factory ammo, plus an off-the-wall reload tuned for another rifle. Jacob's handloading efforts (below) found 43 grains of H4895 shot well. (The initial 43-grain load is taped to the target at left.) Loading 10 rounds with 43 grains and returning to the range several days later, Jacob shot the two groups on the middle and right. They measure .071", .166" and .168" for an aggregate of .135". Velocity is right at 2,715 fps with a velocity spread of 38 fps and a standard deviation of 11, which might cause a bit of vertical stringing at 600 yards. The 175-grain Sierra MatchKing bullet (group taped at bottom right) responded to 41 grains of H4895.



match .308 ammo on hand and began running them through the rifle at 100 yards. I was astonished. I shot seven brands of ammo. Each shot well—less than .5" well—for 5-round groups. What was even more amazing is each shot to nearly the same point of impact. I was shooting at 60' elevation, 29.93 barometric pressure and 65 degrees F in a mild wind switching from 9 to 12 o'clock. The first target of six groups, fired with five different brands of factory ammo and one handload developed for another rifle, gave an overall aggregate of .39". I held the same point of aim for all 30 rounds.

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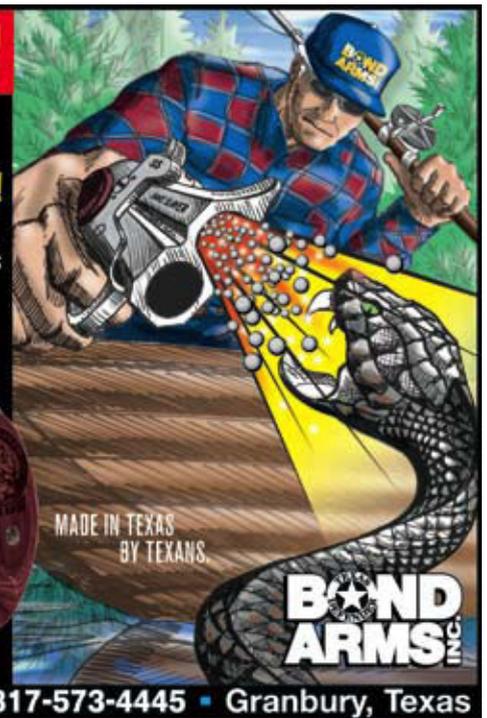
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OUT OF THE BOX

Prior to this, I had shot 5 groups as fast as possible. Each group was fired in about 15 seconds. I wanted to see how the bolt reacted when trying to shoot quickly, as well as whether the rifle would allow me to see splash and continue to shoot through either a cold or hot barrel. The results were the same with groups running about .4". I began with a cold, clean barrel and finished with a hot barrel. The rifle gave me the same result, cold or hot.

All this got my heart rate going, wondering what a tuned reload would do. I've had great luck in the past with Vithavori N150, Federal brass and Federal 210M primers, which I used for the short course in competition. However, N150 powder does not give me the velocity I was after for an across-the-course load. I had many Black Hills cases in the garage I'd loaded more than once for a different rifle. I am anal about prepping cases, but since the factory stuff was doing so well, I decided to simply run 20 of those cases through a Redding body die and use as is (was?). I loaded 168- and 175-grain Sierra MatchKings to magazine length. That was the lazy reloader's method I will admit, but hey, it consumed little effort. I was eager to see the results anyway.

### Long-Range Accuracy

I loaded 42 through 45 grains of H4895 just because I had a lot of it staring me in the face saying, "Try me!" There are other possibly better powders for the .308, but 4895 meters well, and in this rifle, like *everything* I've tried, it shot extremely well, velocity being from about 2,650 to 2,800 fps. I was shooting again at 60' elevation, 95 percent humidity, and about 43 degrees F. I settled on 43 grains because I was confident it would not crater the brass here in the south in August with temperatures hovering around 100.

The above gave me a velocity spread of 38 fps and a standard deviation of 11. Yet the Black Hills factory ammo resulted in a spread of only 13 fps and a standard deviation of just 6. Go figure. Unless I can find another powder that will give results like BH, what do you think I'm going to shoot? Then again, all the factory ammo I tried was shooting groups in the .3 to .4" range. I'm not talking one or two groups, more like 30 groups. I shot one group at 600 yards using Federal's 168-grain match ammo and the 5-round group was 2.47" in the bull. That's F-Class material.

In any case, after seeing how 43 grains of H4895 seemed to be the best load between 42 and 45 grains, I loaded 10 rounds with 43 grains and went to the range. They gave me groups of .168" and .166". The best group I got was .071", which made me think 43 grains was

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<b>SIGHTS:</b>	None, 20 MOA Picatinny rail provided
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<b>WEIGHT:</b>	31 ounces
<b>OVERALL LENGTH:</b>	15.1"
<b>RETAIL:</b>	\$1,810

best and gave me an aggregate group of .135". That is Benchrest quality. I think I might just take the rifle to the next 100/200 yard Benchrest match and leave my fancy 6mm PPC Benchrest rifle at the house, and use the bipod I have been shooting from to boot. Of course, at 16+ pounds, it is too heavy, but hey....

Groups with the 175-grain MatchKing were not as good, so I dropped the load a bit. At 41 grains of H4985, it began to almost one hole again. Five-round groups were in the .3" range. It is satisfying indeed to watch the bullets continue to go into the same little round hole.

If I were shooting the small dot event in a sniper match, I would have scored 100 percent and could've shot it with a different factory cartridge/bullet on each dot!

After several years of testing, owning and shooting .308 tactical rifles in competition, I have to admit this Nighthawk Custom rifle is the most stable and accurate of the lot. The most extraordinary thing is no matter what I put in it, it seems to punch holes in almost the same spot. Cheat, steel, beg or pay—this rifle is not going back to its owner. Nighthawk has done a fabulous job!





• JEFF JOHN •

### Stevens Favorite

**Q:** I have enjoyed shooting a J. Stevens Favorite in .32 Long Rimfire for many years. However, I'm having difficulty finding ammo, and when I do it is very expensive.

Therefore, is it possible to sleeve the barrel to .22 Long Rifle? Is there an alternative method or something better?

Edward Byrne  
Tynsboro, Massachusetts

**A:** While sleeving a .22 barrel with a .22 liner is a fairly straightforward job for most gunsmiths, because your rifle is a .32 RF, more work, perhaps too much, is necessary.

Brownells' .22 rimfire barrel liners sell for less than \$35, but they have an outside diameter of 5/16" — smaller than the .318" case head of the .32 RF — so the liner is small at the chamber end. That's not the best place for the liner to be too small, even if it's "only a .22." Track of the Wolf offers a 7/16" .22 liner, but the cost is \$4.49 per inch, so the liner is now more than \$100 and it's not installed yet. Plus, you still have to modify or make a new extractor and the firing pin needs to be moved to hit the much smaller head of the .22 LR.

Considering the good shooting, Savage Model 30 .22 LR retails for

\$358 (\$374 for the takedown and both are sometimes on sale) and an average original Favorite with little finish runs in the \$250-\$350 range, I'd say don't do it. You don't say what condition your Favorite is in, but Favorites are collectibles and someone will want yours as it is; or keep yours and buy the Savage. Maybe someone will import .32 RF again.

The Savage Service Dept. notes none of the new parts will fit the old Favorites and emphatically say *no* to fitting one of their barrels to an original — no matter what the original caliber.

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### Inexpensive 9mms

**Q:** Fiocchi's ad in April's issue prompts my question. Is their 9mm 115-grain JHP rated at 1,250 fps from a 4" barrel at standard pressure, and is this as effective as a +P round for self-defense? I'm aware I might not get as much velocity from the 3.625" barrel of my Jimenez JA-Nine and my JA-Nine is not rated for +P ammo, but will I get enough velocity to ensure expansion?

Robert Z. Allen  
Pennsylvania

**A:** Jimenez Arms only warrants the JA-Nine for 9x19mm standard pressure full metal jacket ammunition. Fiocchi belongs to SAAMI, the Sporting Arms & Ammunition Manufacturer's



**Fiocchi loads standard pressure 9x19mm in both FMJ and HP loads with the same bullet weight and velocity. Both loads should shoot to the same point of impact, making practice cheaper. Since the JA-Nine is not warranted to feed hollowpoint ammo, be sure the gun feeds well with JHPs before betting your life on it.**

Institute, and Fiocchi 9mm is loaded to the Institute's established cartridge pressure specifications when made in the USA. The good news is Fiocchi is able to squeeze a little more speed out of the 9mm at standard pressures in both FMJ and JHP loads. The firm offers +P ammo, so be sure you buy the standard stuff.

Faced with a threat, the last thing you need to obsess over is expansion. Today's jacketed hollowpoints work very well, so make sure the load you choose feeds reliably and you can put your shots on target.

**Q:** I've fired only 1,150 rounds through my Jennings Nine pistol in the 11 years I've owned it. Although I've never had any problems, I'd like to know what springs to replace to prevent problems. I only keep 10 rounds loaded in each of the 12-round magazines it came with. At a price of \$145, it has been a good gun for me, since I'm retired and on a fixed income.

Byers O. Servic  
New York

**A:** Sadly, Jennings went into bankruptcy in 2004. Jimenez Arms bought Jennings and can still do some service on the old Nine. Contact them for pricing. The Jimenez service department said if your Jennings works well, then leave it alone, but added keeping the magazines loaded all the time might cause the mag springs to take a set. Those springs, you may want to replace.

GUNS

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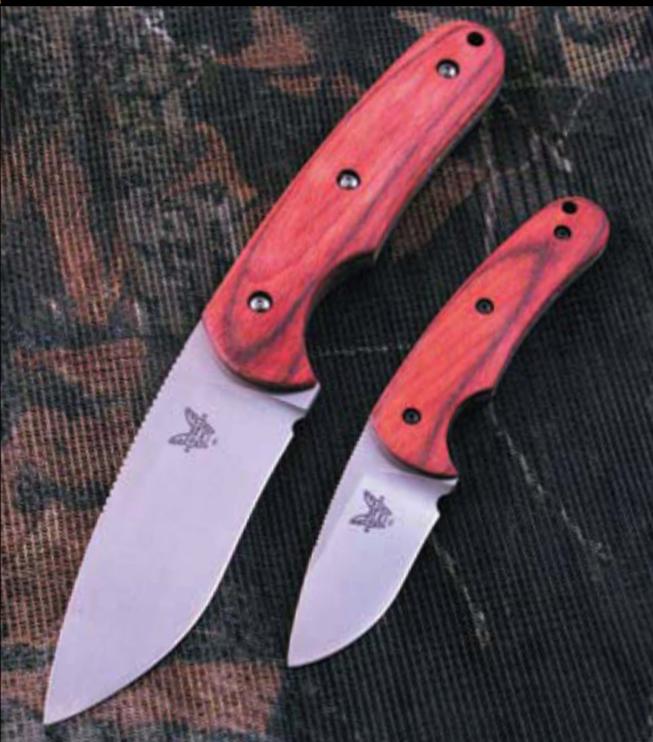
The cost of sleeving a .32 to a .22 may exceed the value of the gun, especially if the old Favorite requires other repair. Navy Arms imported .32 Long and Short Rimfire some years ago and existing stocks have all but dried up. Savage's new 30G Favorite in .22 Long Rifle is very accurate (bottom) and much cheaper in the long run than converting a .32.

# HUNTING STEEL

## How to choose the perfect knife for the hunt.



Blades for the hunter are diverse in both style and length, and good choices include (above, from left to right) the Bob Dozier Pro Guide, the DiamondBlade Knives Pinnacle I and Benchmade Knives' small Activator. This pair of large and small Benchmade Activators (below) can pull double duty as both hunting knives and practical tacticals.



Pat Covert

**W**ith the overwhelming majority of press focused on tactical knives in the past decade, you'd think knives for outdoorsmen had crawled up in a cave somewhere and died. Fortunately, this is not the case. Truth is, there are plenty of hunting and sporting knives to be had—and the same technology infused into the tactical knife arena is there for the outdoorsman's taking.

Making your selection even more bountiful, some of the tactical knives available crossover nicely into the outdoor field. Some offer the same characteristics you would look for in a hunting knife. The key is to know what your personal needs are. Selection varies according to the type of hunting you do and which other outdoor sports you participate in, such as camping, fishing and hiking.

The two biggest factors in choosing a knife are picking the right blade style and length to best suit your needs. These two elements will affect your ability to perform the chores you do the most. Once you choose the right blade, selecting the other traits you want in a knife will be the icing on the cake. To keep it simple, we'll look at fixed-blade knives here, but the same applications apply to folding knives as well. Keep in mind folders aren't available in the large sizes available in fixed-blade knives.

### Start With The Blade

The blade is the heart of the knife from which everything else revolves. Get the blade right and you're halfway home. Two blade styles proven to be great choices for the hunter are the drop point and clip point. The reason is two-fold. First off, these are good all-around time-proven working blades and can handle multiple field chores.

Secondly, both are effective at skinning because when turned upside down they glide under the flesh without snagging internal organs that can contaminate meat. A knife with a turned up tip, typically call a trailing point or "Persian" style, points downward when skinning, increasing the chances of piercing organs. These blades can be used to skin game, but it requires pinching the flesh and pulling it upward during cutting to clear the blade of the viscera below.

The length of a blade determines its ability to perform various field chores. If you want an average-size knife for executing a wide variety of field chores and dressing game, a blade in the 4" range is an excellent choice. A blade this size can be used to prepare medium-size game, like whitetail deer, and though it may not be your preference, can also be used to skin larger and smaller game as well. Many hunters prefer a shorter blade for skinning, but the shorter the blade, the less versatility it will offer for doing other duties around the camp. This is where you need to adjust the length of the blade to suit your particular situation. If you are hunting out of a comfortable camp setting and most of your efforts will be cleaning game, you may only need a 3" or 3.5" blade. If you are camping in the wild you'll need a 4" blade or longer to

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**"Clintism" No. 3:**

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



*Dozier Arkansas Made Knives covers the bases with the large Pro Guide clip point hunter (above, top knife), and the Personal drop point model (above, bottom knife). Buck Knives' ErgoHunter line has been a smash among hunters. Shown here are the larger ErgoHunter Select (below, top knife) and the Small Game Pro Select (below, bottom knife).*



perform a wider range of duties.

A 2-1/2" to 3" blade is all you need for skinning small furry critters like squirrel, plus a blade this size can also serve extra duty as a bird and trout knife. On the other end of the spectrum you'll want something much larger in the 6" to 8" range for skinning and butchering large game like elk and moose. Because the preparation of large game often requires a combination of both heavy-duty chores and delicate work, especially if a trophy is in the offing, many hunters carry two knives—one large and one small—to suit the task at hand.

### Specialty Blades

Noted California knifemaker Bob Loveless is credited for popularizing the drop point blade among hunters back during the 1970s, and his design is most likely the most copied by other knifemakers of all time. Loveless also designed a blade called the "semi-skinner," a drop point with a humped tip, worthy of note in its own right. While his wasn't the first knife to have such a tip, Loveless refined it for the hunter. This lesser known design has also proven to be popular.

The semi-skinner works exceptionally well because it lifts flesh as it cuts, which makes for easier slicing. Other skinner designs work the same way and are not necessarily relegated to the drop-point blade design. Another advantage the semi-skinner has is it retains all the common traits necessary to perform well as a field knife.

Many hunters prefer small skinning knives because they are easier to manipulate when preparing game. Blades for these knives average in the 3" range and are typically added to the hunter's arsenal, in addition to a larger field knife. Smaller yet are blades made especially for caping when precision cutting is needed

## THE "GRIND" AND STEELS

Once you have determined what blade style and length suit you best, there are other considerations. There are two basic types of blade grinds on knives, the "hollow grind" and the "flat grind," which is also referred to as a "V-grind." A hollow-ground blade is, the most common type used on modern hunting knives. It has a concave cutting surface, which gives it a superior slicing advantage over its flat-ground brethren simply because the concave surface makes it thinner. The so-called double-edged sword to this equation is that by virtue of being thinner the blade loses its edge faster and requires more frequent sharpening.

A flat ground blade is beefier, so can

handle tougher field chores for a more extended period of time. If you do more fieldwork and less game processing, this could be a prime consideration in your choice of blade grind.

### Steels

An excellent blade steel adds to the effectiveness of a knife, and the good news here is there are plenty of choices for all budgets. One of the most common is 440C. This time-proven stainless steel will do just about anything you ask it to do, and it's very affordable. From there, you'll have a wide selection of more expensive steels to choose from including D2, 154CM, CPM 154, S30V and a host of others. It would take a full

article to review all of these, but they are all solid performers worthy of your consideration.

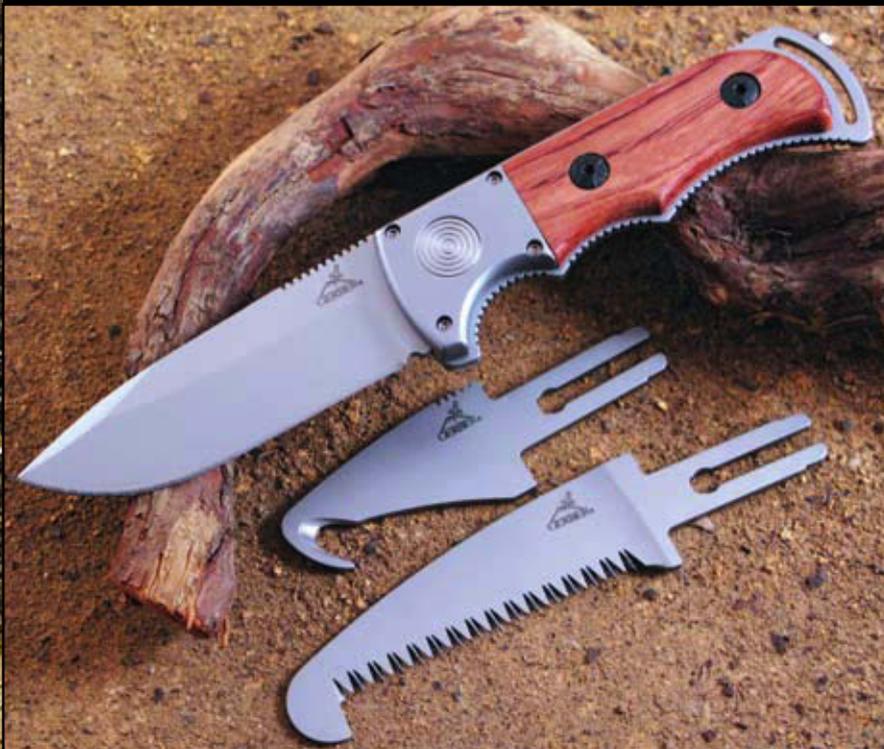
Finally, never underestimate the benefits of a comfortable handle, especially if you do a lot of cutting. This is where visiting a retail store or gun and knife show can really make a difference because you can handle knives first-hand to get a feel for how they fit your hand. Comfort is an esoteric thing, and the shape of a handle is important, as well as the material used in its construction.

Today, many synthetic materials such as Micarta, G10 and carbon fiber are tough enough to last a lifetime. For the traditionalist, there are a wide range of organic materials like stag, bone and wood to choose from, and these may not have the sheer endurance of a synthetic, but have all served knife users well over long periods of time.

GUNS



Every hunter deserves a little luxury now and then. This Boker Arbolito Salida Fuerte set (above) includes a multi-use stag handled drop point hunter with a matching full-size fork. Looking for flexibility? Gerber's Freeman Exchange-A-Blade (below) is a sturdy fixed blade with swappable options: A drop point main blade, a gut hook and a bone saw.



for doing detail work on trophy game. Capers can have any length handle, but blade sizes are generally 2.5" in length and scalpel-like in blade design.

Some knives are offered with an angled gut hook on the backside of the blade for zipping up flesh. More recently, tools with the sole purpose of opening up game have hit the market. A knife with a gut hook is a useful edged tool. But if you're doing a lot of fieldwork, other than dressing game, you should be aware

the slicing détente might take away the effective use of a portion of the blade's cutting surface. It can also be snag prone when used to perform other chores, so it's wise to consider these factors in your choice.

Bottom line? A little education goes a long way for helping the hunter make a wise decision on purchasing a knife tailored to their needs, and a little hands on experience to get a tactile feel for a knife never hurts, either.

GUNS

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# POCKET PISTOL

## Kahr PM9 & Crimson Trace Laserguard.

JOHN TAFFIN

PHOTOS: JOSEPH R. NOVELOZO

Lightweight and good stopping power has arrived in the Kahr PM9. While it is the same basic pistol as the earlier all-steel K9, the PM9 is better suited for comfortable pocket carry as it is 40-percent lighter and 1/2" shorter, and the grip frame is 1/4" slimmer, and 1/2" shorter. To arrive at the much smaller grip frame it was necessary to cut the flush-fitting magazine by one round, however the PM9 comes with a second magazine with a grip extension and also with an additional 1-round capacity. Carrying the standard magazine for ultimate concealment with the extended magazine stashed on the body gives you 14 rounds of 9mm ammunition carried in a most comfortable fashion.



Sights for the PM9 consist of drift adjustable front with white dot and square notch rear with a white bar at 6 o'clock.

Let's take a closer look at the Kahr PM9. Life is full of trade-offs. Scientifically speaking, this equates to, "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." This is certainly true when coming up with the best pocket pistol. Slimming and shortening the grip frame to arrive at the PM9 results in a much different feel than the larger grip frame of the original K9. I also expected the reduction in weight to result in much more felt recoil. The question in my mind was, how would increasing the portability and concealability affect performance?

### The PM9 And K9

To satisfy my curiosity the newer PM9 was run side-by-side with the older K9. Despite dealing with 10 ounces less weight and a shorter sight radius, I could discern little if any significant difference in felt recoil or accuracy. The double-action-only pistols are both relatively easy to shoot as their double action pulls—6-1/2 pounds for the PM9 and 8-1/4 pounds for the K9—rival most double action revolvers. My latest S&W .44 Special, an old classic 1950 4" Military, has an exceptionally

## THE ORIGINAL K9

Life used to be so simple. Whether it was as a backup gun for law enforcement, an easy to carry gun for plainclothes use, or for civilian concealed carry, the choice usually came down to a .38 Special. From Smith & Wesson there was the 5-shot Chief's Special while Colt offered the Detective Special, which held one more round. As time passed, both companies offered lightweight versions and, in the case of S&W, concealed hammers. For those who preferred semi-automatics, about the only thing available was the Walther PPK, if one could be found. I lusted over Skeeter

The Kahr PM9 is fitted with Crimson Trace Laserguard sights, which are easily attached around the triggerguard. By the time you read this, Kahr will be offering the PM9 factory-fitted with the Laserguard unit.

# PERFECTION



*The Kahr PM9 fitted with Crimson Trace Laserguards is an excellent candidate for the title "Perfect Pocket Pistol," according to John. The Kahr Custom Shop offers a variety of upgrades including the "Black Rose" (far right) available exclusively from the distributor Camfour Inc. The knife is a 5.11 Scout Folder with 3-3/4" blade, liner lock and G10 handle.*

Skelton's Walther in those days and never, ever saw one for sale.

Fifteen years ago Justin Moon, of the then newly founded Kahr Arms, began offering pocket pistols with a punch. Instead of just a .38 Special revolver or a .380 semi-automatic, Moon stepped the concept up to 9mm. The first Kahr I had experience with, which I believe was their first product, was the all-steel Kahr K9. I'm not sure why that model designation

was chosen; perhaps it was because this little puppy has a serious bite.

Weighing in at 25 ounces, the K9 was a little heavier and larger than the S&W Chief's Special. However, its 8-round capacity made it especially appealing. In advertising, Colt once claimed an advantage of their Detective Special was it held one more round than the S&W Chief's Special. But Kahr now had a pocket pistol that exceeded the Chief's by

three rounds and the Colt by two.

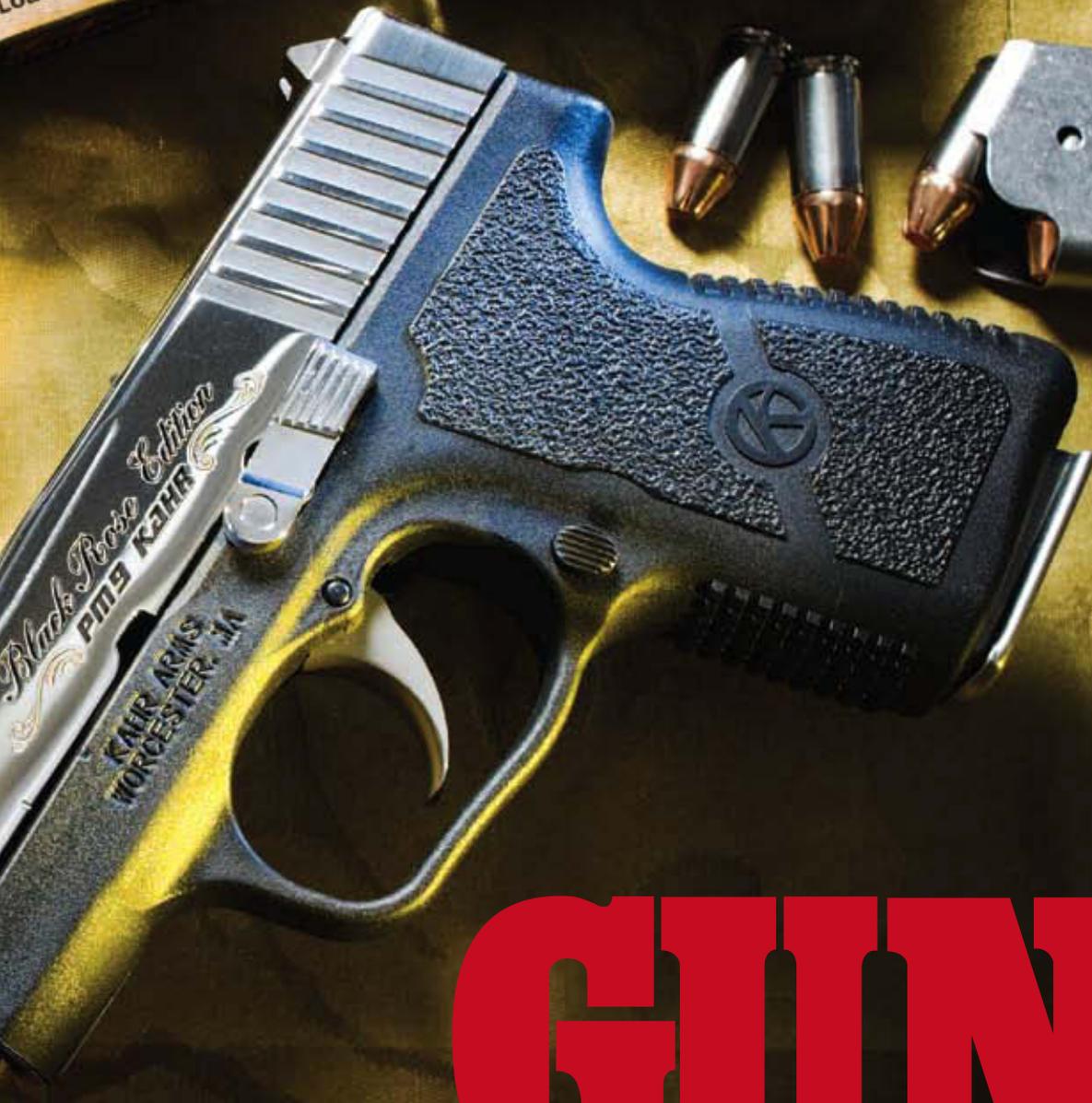
The 9mm may not be as effective as the .45 ACP, however it was—and is—just as effective, possibly more so, than the .38 Special. With its 3-1/2" barrel and closed breech the Kahr's 9mm generates higher muzzle velocities than the .38 Special from a 2" revolver. In fact with 9mm 115-grain bullets, the muzzle velocity is slightly less than 1,150 fps from the Kahr.

# POCKET PISTOL



# PERFECTION

**DEFENSE™**  
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# GUNS

MAGAZINE

## PM9

**MAKER:** KAHR ARMS  
130 GODDARD MEMORIAL DRIVE  
WORCESTER, MA 01603  
(508) 795-3919, WWW.KAHRARMS.COM

**ACTION TYPE:** Semi-auto,  
double-action-only

**CALIBER:** 9mm Luger

**CAPACITY:** 6+1 or 7+1

**BARREL LENGTH:** 3"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 5.3"

**WEIGHT:** 14 ounces

**FINISH:** Black polymer frame,  
stainless steel slide

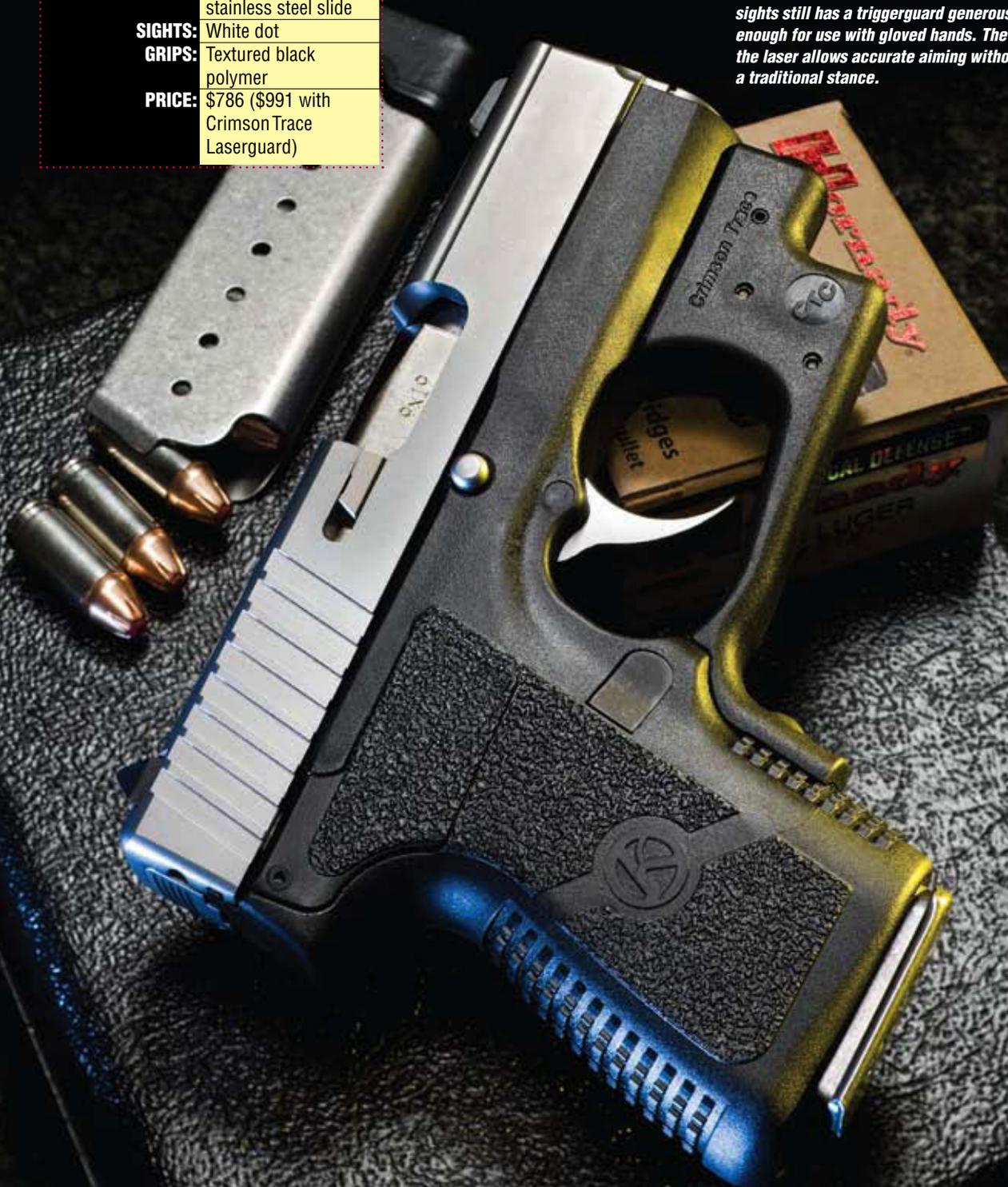
**SIGHTS:** White dot

**GRIPS:** Textured black  
polymer

**PRICE:** \$786 (\$991 with  
Crimson Trace  
Laserguard)



*The Kahr PM9 with Crimson Trace Laserguard sights still has a triggerguard generous enough for use with gloved hands. The use of the laser allows accurate aiming without using a traditional stance.*



smooth double action trigger pull and it measures 10 pounds. Considering this, the Kahrs appear truly exceptional.

To shave 40 percent of the weight from the original all-steel pistol, Kahr has combined a stainless steel slide with a polymer frame. The polymer frame not only allows a significant reduction in weight, but it also provides a much slimmer profile. The front and back of the grip frame are not serrated in typical fashion. Instead, very small raised rectangles are used to provide a secure gripping surface. This is also carried out by the pebble grain surface on both sides of the grip. The triggerguard is also generous. It allows the largest finger to fit comfortably and also accommodates a gloved hand. The trigger itself is smooth-faced and very easy to reach. This is a double-action-only pistol and, if for some reason it should fail to fire, pulling the trigger a second time accomplishes nothing. The trigger must be reset, by working the slide at least halfway backward.

### Easy To Handle

The stainless steel slide has large positive grooves in the area behind the extractor to behind the rear sight, which allows for easy manipulation of the slide to chamber a round. There are no sharp edges anywhere on the slide or grip frame. The slide is in fact "melted" on both sides of the top, as well as behind the rear sight and in front of the front sight. The only place on this pistol, which even resembles a sharp edge, is the top of the slanted post front sight and the notch in the rear sight. The sights are excellent providing a large square sight picture with a white dot embedded in the back of the front sight and a white square below the rear notch. They are very easy to pick up and are part of the overall package that make this pistol shoot so well. Both sights are set in a dovetail for ease of windage correction. The sights are pretty much dead on with my eyes and hold with most ammunition selected for testing.

There are no external safeties on the Kahr; in fact, the only controls on the exterior are the slide stop lever and magazine release, both found on the left side. (Other models are available with a thumb safety and/or Tritium night sights.) The slide stop automatically engages when the last round is fired and the magazine releases easily when the button is pushed in. When a loaded magazine is inserted, the slide is pulled back and released to chamber a round; the striker is automatically held under partial tension and is fully secured by a passive striker block until the trigger is fully depressed. As the trigger is pulled, the striker block is released as a protrusion on the cocking cam lifts the striker block so it no longer blocks the striker from moving forward.

### 9MM FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
BLACK HILLS 115 JHP	1,074	7/8
BLACK HILLS 147 JHP*	873	1
CCI BLAZER 124 JSP	990	7/8
CCI BLAZER 124 TMJ	977	1-1/8
FEDERAL 115 HI-SHOK JHP	1,054	7/8
FEDERAL 124 FMJ	973	7/8
HORNADY 90 XTP-JHP	1,195	1-3/8
HORNADY 115 XTP-JHP	1,012	1
HORNADY 115 CRITICAL DEFENSE	1,001	1
HORNADY 124 XTP-JHP	1,017	7/8
REMINGTON 147 JHP	895	1-1/8
SPEER 147 GOLD DOT JHP	846	7/8
WINCHESTER 147 SILVERTIP HP	795	1-1/2

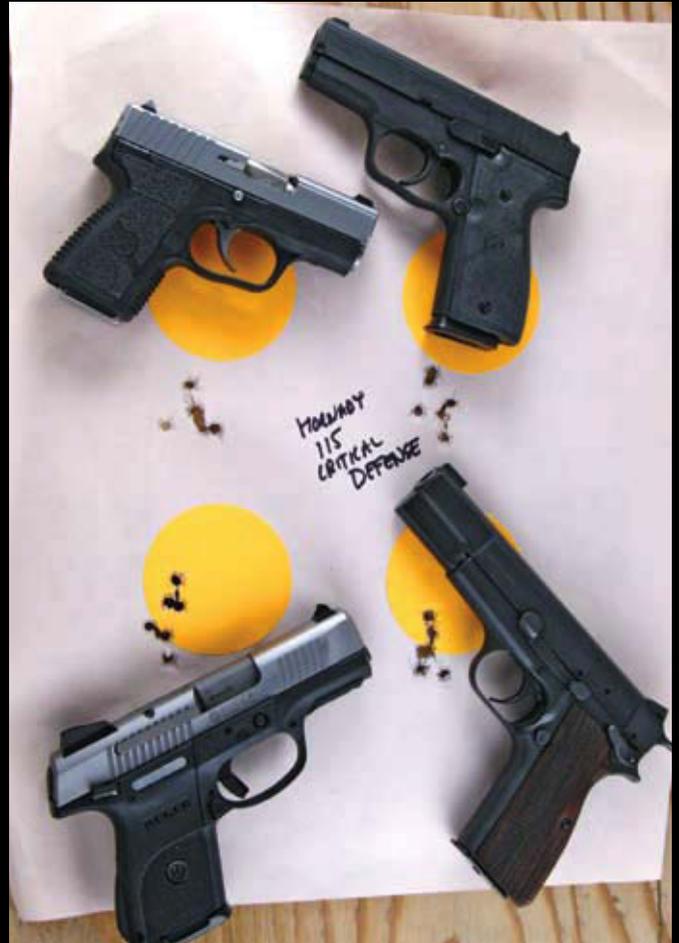
Notes: Groups the product of 5 Shots at 7 yards.

Chronograph screens set at 10' from muzzle.

\*Also shot at 25 yards with 5 shots in 2".

## HORNADY'S CRITICAL DEFENSE 9MM AMMUNITION

Hornady offers a new line of self-defense ammunition known as Critical Defense. Two boxes of 115-grain 9mms arrived just in time for me to use with the new Kahr PM9. This little pocket pistol clocks out at 1,001 fps and puts five shots in 1" at 7 yards. I also ran it through the older Kahr K9, Ruger's new SRC9C Compact and a Browning Hi-Power. It performed flawlessly in all four 9mms and also shot in 1" or less at 7 yards.



Groups with Hornady's 115-grain Critical Defense 9mm at 7 yards were shot with (from above, top left clockwise) Kahr PM9, Kahr K9, Ruger SRC9C, and Browning Hi-Power. Hornady's Critical Defense worked flawlessly in the Kahr PM9.

The cocking cam also pulls the striker from its partially tensioned conditioned to a fully cocked position under full spring tension. As the trigger pull is completed, the cocking cam releases the striker allowing it to move fully forward, contact the primer and fire the cartridge. The energy from the fired cartridge moves the barrel and slide backward. After approximately 1/2" of rearward movement the camming action of the recoil lug of the barrel and the slide stop/locking pin in the frame pulls the rear of the barrel down to unlock it from the slide. The slide continues fully to the rear, the fired cartridge is pulled out of the chamber by the extractor, and the slide moves forward chambering a round from the magazine. Simultaneously, the barrel moves forward and upwards and locks with the slide. And that's about as technical as I ever get!



*The Crimson Trace Laserguard is activated by a small button on the front of the triggerguard (above). The compact unit does not add much to the weight or the bulk of the PM9.*



*Taffin's grandson Brian Panzella (above), age 17, likes the fit and feel of the Kahr PM9, here "dry-firing" in John's study. John fired these groups (below) at the more traditional self-defense distance of 7 yards with the Kahr PM9 using the iron sights.*



The Kahr PM9 was test-fired with 13 different versions of factory 9mm ammunition in weights from 90 to 147 grains and in both full metal jacket and hollowpoint forms. The PM9 preformed flawlessly with no hesitation, no stutter and no failure to feed or eject with any of the ammunition tested. Loads were chronographed with the temperature at 35 degrees and then moved indoors for more comfortable shooting. Groups were fired at an "across the room" distance of 7 yards using the iron sights. Results were most gratifying and are found in the accompanying table.

### **Crimson Trace Laserguard**

I am a big fan of Crimson Trace. Several of my carry guns are equipped including the lightweight .38 Special always in my jacket pocket. My test gun came with a set of Crimson Trace Laserguard sights which attach around and in front of the triggerguard on the Kahr PM9. This two-piece laser snaps over the triggerguard and attaches together with two small screws. Both installation and sight-in are very easy. After my initial testing at 7 yards, the Crimson Trace Laserguard was installed for shooting at 25 yards. Using the red

light, I was able to keep Black Hills 115-grain JHPs in a 2" group centered in the X- and 10-Ring of a reduced size silhouette target, which is excellent performance from a pocket pistol. Simply put, the Kahr PM9 is Pocket Pistol Perfection.

By the time this goes to press, the factory will offer Crimson Trace Laserguard sights installed on the PM9. To satisfy ATF rules, Kahr will move the serial number to a new location on the frame. Those who already own a PM9, can self-install Crimson Trace Grips without worry.

**GUNS**

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SS166K Cobra Kit.....14.95

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

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# Oldies REBORN

## Clones, Copies & Reproductions.



*The Uberti/Cimarron Model 1876 lever gun is a replica Duke once predicted would never happen. That's not the only time he has been wrong about such things.*

**Mike "Duke" Venturino**  
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

**If any of you gun guys or gals are 60-years old or younger, then you have grown up in the firearms era I call "clones, copies and reproductions." That alone should say something about the American gun industry—namely many of us want the firearms available 50 years—and more—ago.**

First, let's look more closely at those terms "clones, copies and reproductions." By my standards, a firearm clone is a precise copy of one produced before—meaning all parts will interchange right down to the screws. That is probably the rarest of the three types.

For examples pro and con, let's look towards Colt. Their current Single Action Army is not a clone of the original SAAs of the late 1800s. Why? The barrel's threads are different in current ones as opposed to those made before 1974. The same is true with the hand revolving the cylinder and its mating ratchet at the rear of the cylinder. Otherwise, the parts do interchange. Conversely, those Colt 1873-1973 Peacemaker Centennials were indeed clones because all parts could be used in original Colt SAAs.

Again, by my standards, copies are just that. They resemble the originals but are made differently, parts don't interchange, and they may not even function in the same manner as the originals. In my book, the word "replica" could be interchanged with "copy" in regards to firearms. I would



**Duke considers the Colt Model 1911A1 (left) made early in this century as a perfect clone of the original ones (right) made during WWII.**

use Ruger Vaqueros as examples here. They are intended to look like a Colt SAA but, other than resembling them, they are totally different revolvers. A good rifle example would be the current Marlin Model 1895s. They are no where close to original Marlin Model 1895s except both rifles were lever actuated big bores. The new Marlin Model 1895s are actually remodeled Model 336s.

As for reproductions, I say such guns are close to the originals but not exact. They function in the same manner, are mostly reproduced in the same calibers and their parts may even interchange to a degree with the originals. A good example here would be the new classics coming from Smith & Wesson. In the last few years S&W has redone many of their



*Colt is now making a copy of its own CAR-15 .223 (top) and a licensed copy of a Colt M4 in .22 Long Rifle (bottom) is made by Walther.*

early revolver models such as the Models 21, 22, 24, 27, 29 and even the Model 1917. Their internal parts are not “drop-in” replaceable to the originals of those Model numbers, nor are the grips, and, of course, things like lawyer mandated locks are ever present.

If one person can be credited with starting the era of “clones, copies and reproductions,” it would be the late Val Forgett who founded Navy Arms Company in the late 1950s. Forgett was a Civil War history buff. With the centennial of that great conflict coming up, starting in 1961, Forgett began trying to get various American gun companies to reproduce the black powder type rifle-muskets and handguns standard to both the Northern and Southern armies of 1861 to 1865, and he failed. American companies saw no profit in such an endeavor.

Forgett then went to the Italian gun industry located in the north. They did see a profit potential. Thus, the replica firearms industry was born. And, it spread. Anyone reading gun magazines back in the early '60s will remember advertisements for an Ohio outfit named Replica Arms. They too got their guns from Italy. I also remember one called Centennial Arms importing a nice reproduction Colt Model 1860 Army percussion revolver from Belgium.

### Up To Par?

That was the good news. The bad news was many of the replicas coming over from Europe were sub-standard. I learned that the hard way with a brass frame, Spanish-made .36 caliber cap-and-ball revolver given to me by my folks on my 18th birthday. I shot it avidly for a few months and in doing so the brass frame stretched to the point of uselessness. Today, the quality control of replicas coming from abroad is much better, but still not perfect. In the last decade or so I've received test samples of foreign-made replica handguns with no rifling in the barrel or the front sight departed with the first shot.

Conversely, my Pedersoli Sharps Model 1874 .45-70 is darn near a minute of angle rifle with my home-made black powder handloads, and I count myself a great fan of the Uberti-made Model 1873 lever guns. They will often outshoot the original Winchesters upon which they are based.

Although the “clone, copy and reproduction” era was born in Europe, during the last few decades it has spread to Asia.

Japan has produced a great many of John Browning's lever gun designs, even his Model 1885 Single Shot. This movement began with the Browning Arms Company but since US Repeating Arms and Browning are affiliated, these Japanese firearms can be stamped with the Winchester name, because US Repeating Arms is able to use it under license. Hence in recent years there have been new “Winchester” Models 1885, 1886, 1892 and 1895.

### American Made

Even better is the fact “clones, copies and reproductions” are now commonly made here in the United States. In my opinion, one such company deserving special mention is US Firearms Company of Hartford, Connecticut. They began back in the 1990s by importing single-action revolver parts from Italian companies and then assembling them here. A good start, but evidently not enough to satisfy company president Doug Donnelly. Shortly after the turn of the century, USFA (as most of us refer to the company) built their own new factory



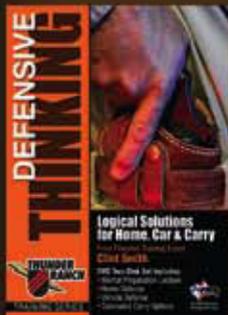
*While these two single-action revolvers look the same, they are not. At left is a Colt and at right is a USFA copy.*

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OLDIES REBORN

and began turning out guns right here in the USA. To this point, they have focused on making new versions of guns Colt put out in previous times. They started with the good old Single Action Army, and they have copied it in many versions. Note I used “copied” and not “cloned or reproduced.” USFA’s single action parts do not interchange with Colt SAAs—neither early ones nor modern ones. Their cylinders are a bit wider and internals, such as hands and bolts, differ dimensionally.

That said, the USFA single actions are exquisite. Their fit and finish are nigh on perfect, and the color case coloring is so beautiful, it can be recognized from across a room. Also, the critical dimensions such as barrel groove diameters and cylinder chamber mouths are dead nuts on in regards to good shooting, as are the handguns’ timing and cylinder lock up. I have bought myself two USFA .44-40s and one for Yvonne. Uniformly, the barrels on these three .44-40s measure .427" in the grooves and the cylinder chamber mouths match perfectly at .428". My two .44s group very nicely but Yvonne’s will often produce those mostly fabled one-hole groups—and that’s for 10 shots not a measly five.

Not satisfied to rest on their single-action laurels, USFA has also recreated Colt 1911 semi-auto handguns in both .45 ACP and .38 Super. And also, after

some detailed developmental work, they got their copies of pump action Colt Lightning rifles and carbines on the market. I had the very first carbine .44-40 they shipped out, but let a friend talk me out of it.

Speaking of 1911 semi-auto pistols, that model has to be the most copied, cloned, recreated and reproduced handgun in the world. It is absolutely amazing how many different 1911s exist now. In no particular order, I can list them being made by Colt, Kimber, Springfield Armory, Smith & Wesson, Para Ordnance, Taurus, Les Baer, USFA, Wilson, STI, Nighthawk, Dan Wesson and I’m sure several other outfits of which I’m not aware. They have been, and are being, made in normal lengths, extra long lengths, short lengths and extra short lengths. I’ve never counted myself among the 1911 fanatics of the gun world, but even so, I have Colt, S&W, Kimber, Les Baer and USFA samples here.

### The Sharps

For someone with a lifelong fascination with the old Sharps “buffalo rifles,” I’m very fortunate to live only a half-hour’s drive from two companies making reproductions of them right here in Montana. They are Shiloh Rifle Manufacturing and C. Sharps Arms Company, both located on Centennial Drive in Big Timber. Their rifles are



*One of the newest reproductions to hit the market is the Gibbs Rifle Company’s US Model 1903A4 (above, bottom gun) shown with an original US Model 1903A4 (above, top gun). Not only firearms are being copied, cloned and reproduced. The scopes on these rifles are (below, top gun) a Leatherwood copy of the Lyman 5A on a US Model 1903 Springfield and (below, bottom gun) a Numrich Arms copy of the German Zf41 on a Mauser K98k.*





The new USFA replica of the Colt Lightning pump action carbine (bottom) compares favorably with an original Colt Lighting carbine (top).

different, but the same. The same in that they are both based on the historical Sharps Model 1874, but different in that they are both produced in their own factories. While their barrel's threads are the same, few if any of their internal parts interchange. But get this, both company's parts, with some work and knowledge can be used to rebuild original Sharps Model 1874s. And, both companies not only chamber their rifles for virtually all the original cartridges offered by the original Sharps Rifle Company of the 1870s, but each also sees fit to add a few "newer" calibers like .30-40 Krag, .38-55 and .40-65.

Do those reproductions of the legendary Sharps shoot well? In 23 years of trying at the NRA's BPCR Silhouette national championships, I've only made it into the top-10 scorers on two occasions. First was with a Shiloh .45-70, and the second time was with a C. Sharps .45-70.

## WWII

In the pages of this magazine these last few years, I've made no secret I'm building a collection of good, shootable World War II firearms. You might think with the vast number of those guns produced in the past there would be no market for "clones, copies and reproductions." Not so! For example more than 6 million M1 Carbines were made between 1941 and 1945, yet there has been a passel of M1 Carbine reproducers over the last 40 years, and Auto-Ordnance is making them right now—even to the point of copying the M1A1 "paratrooper" model with its folding stock.

Although most of my WWII firearms collection consists of original weapons, a few "clones, copies and reproductions" sit in my racks. My clone is the Colt US Model 1911A1 Colt put out after the beginning of this current century. It is a dead nuts ringer for the WWII Model 1911A1s, right down to the cardboard box it is shipped with. Another copy is my US Model 1903 equipped with a 3X Leatherwood scope. In 1942, the US Marine Corps built up 40 '03 Springfield

mounted with Lyman 5A scopes, pictures of which are shown in Peter Senich's book *US Marine Corps Scout Snipers In World War II And Korea*.

I also have two military rifles I consider "reproductions." They are the Gibbs Rifle Company's US Model 1903A4 sniper rifle I wrote up in April's issue, and an Ohio Ordnance Works US Model 1918A3 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). Here's the deal. I do have an original US Model 1903A4 sniper rifle. It is not overly accurate and its scope is becoming a little dim. When the "test rifle" from Gibbs arrived I was delighted to find its Chinese-made scope was bright and clear and the rifle itself was finely accurate. So I bought it and retired my original from service.

As for the BAR, after buying six original WWII submachine guns, I simply had no more money to buy an original US Model 1918A2 BAR. The only difference between the original WWII BARs and the Ohio Ordnance Works reproduction is the latter are semi-auto only. So, the OOW version fills the gap in my WWII collection.

One copy firearm I've been having plenty of inexpensive fun with, is the Colt M4 .22 Long Rifle. It is built to closely resemble the US military's M4, right down to the collapsible buttstock. It has a 16-1/4" barrel and detachable carrying handle containing a peep sight. Available magazines come holding 10 or 30 rounds. My advice is to buy many extra mags because shooting that little carbine is so much fun you'll otherwise spend more time loading magazines than shooting.

I have one friend who staunchly refuses to enter the world of "clones, copies and reproductions." He will only shoot original, historical firearms. I don't fault him. After all, I do plenty of shooting with originals too. But when I see an opportunity to put the wear and tear on a clone, copy or reproduction, I just don't see how I'm cheating myself. And for that reason, I'm happy my entire shooting career has been during the era of "clones, copies and reproductions."

GUNS

R. Lee Emrey, USMC Veteran, TV Show Host, Film Star

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**Taffin shooting his long-barreled Smith & Wesson 8-3/8" .357 Magnum.**

# 75 YEARS YOUNG

## Happy Diamond Jubilee .357 Magnum

**John Taffin**

**To come up with a better revolver for city, county and state police officers, Smith & Wesson took their 3rd Model Hand Ejector .44 Special and chambered it for .38 Special in 1930. This was no ordinary .38. It was loaded heavier and renamed the .38/44 with a muzzle velocity of around 300 fps more than the standard .38 Special. Smith & Wesson offered two basic models of the .38/44, the fix-sighted Heavy Duty for law enforcement use and the adjustable-sighted Outdoorsman for hunters and target shooters.**

It wasn't long before experimenters came up with even heavier loads for the .38/44. In 1932, Ed McGivern had high praise for both the revolvers and the new cartridge. He spoke of shooting the Outdoorsman out to 500 yards and called it the finest gun ever turned out by anybody at any time. The .38/44 Heavy Duty was considered "... the finest, strongest, all around general-purpose gun, coming from all angles, that has ever been given to the shooting public." Experimenters like Elmer Keith and Phil Sharpe came up with much heavier loads and Keith's .38/44 load is still a standard today among sixgunners.

### **The Beginning**

The S&W .38/44 Outdoorsman made the .357 Magnum possible and the latter really started in the hunting fields. Sharpe, in his monumental work, *Complete Guide To Handloading*, published in 1937, said, "The .357 Magnum cartridge was born in the mind of the author several years ago. On a hunting trip with Col. D.B. Wesson, Vice-President of Smith & Wesson, a

pair of heavy framed Outdoorsman revolvers was used with a large assortment of handloads developed and previously tested by the author. In the field they proved entirely practical, but Col. Wesson was not content to attempt the development of a Magnum .38 Special cartridge for ordinary revolvers, and set to work on a new gun planned in the field."

In 1935 their work with the .38/44, as well as, by ammunition companies, resulted in a new cartridge. The .38 Special case was lengthened and a new name was needed. Wesson, of Smith & Wesson, used the diameter of the bullet, .357" and the French word for a large bottle of champagne, Magnum, and the .357 Magnum arrived. The original load was 15.4 grains of Hercules 2400 under a 158-grain lead bullet and ignited by a large—not small—primer.

The first Magnum sixgun, known appropriately as "The .357 Magnum" was born. The .357 Magnum sixguns were more than simply production guns. Each of the new .357s were specially fitted and finished, and given a registration number in addition to a serial number. In 1935, in the midst of the Great Depression, the new sixgun and cartridge were so popular Smith & Wesson soon dropped the special registration, as they could not keep up with the demand. Back then, \$60 was a lot of money, but many shooters were more than willing to pay it to get the finest revolver ever made up to that point.

Remember, 1935 was long before the age of instant communication or even gun magazines, except the *American Rifleman*. Elmer Keith wrote up the .357 for the latter, but opined the barrel was too long and he still preferred the .44 Special. Wesson promoted the new gun and cartridge using both a 6-1/2" and 8-3/4" .357 Magnum-taking elk, antelope and black bear. He even went to Alaska with the hopes of taking a brown bear, but was unable to find one. After contemplation, he felt it was a good thing he had not done so. In later years both of



**Bill Jordan checks out the trigger pull on his "Peace Officer's Dream Gun," the Smith & Wesson .357 Combat Magnum. Jordan was instrumental in its development.**

these early .357 Magnum, revolvers were owned by Col. Rex Applegate, and it was my privilege to be able to handle them. After his death they were sold, so they now belong to a Smith & Wesson collector somewhere.

Keith's .38/44 load used his 173-grain 358429 hardcast bullet, which proved too long for use in the .357 Magnum cartridge due to the length of the Smith & Wesson cylinder. Sharpe designed a 158-grain bullet with a shorter nose and less bearing surface for use in the new cartridge, and published extensive reloading data while warning reloaders not to take this cartridge for granted. In the early 1950s it was left to Ray Thompson to come up with the ideal bullet for the .357 Magnum with his gas-checked 358156. Leading was always a problem with both factory and reloads for the .357 Magnum until Thompson solved the issue. I have never been able to get really good accuracy using plain-based bullets in full-house .357 Magnum loads, but the Thompson gas-checked bullet works perfectly. I consider it the number one bullet for standard weight loads in the .357 Magnum.

### The FBI Gun

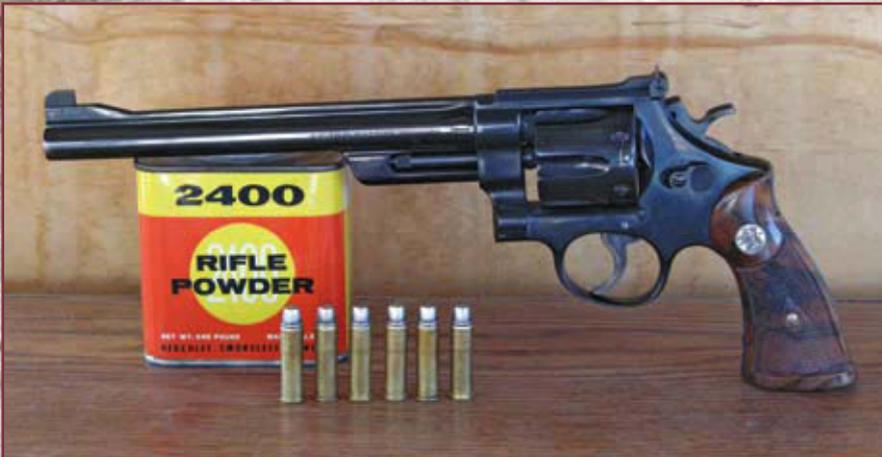
Smith & Wesson advertised the .357 Magnum as the most powerful revolver ever made, far above any .44 or .45 available. It was not only promoted by Col. Wesson, but Smith & Wesson was also wise enough to present one of the first production 8-3/4" .357 Magnums to the then head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover. That barrel length was, of course, too long for law enforcement use, however, 4" and 3-1/2" .357 Magnums soon became very popular with FBI agents.

Soon-to-be General George Patton purchased a 3-1/2" .357 Magnum in Hawaii in 1935 and carried it in tandem with his Colt Single Action .45 during World War I. He called the Smith & Wesson .357 his "killing gun." Even though both his Colt and Smith & Wesson wore ivory grips, contrary to popular belief, they were not finished the same. The Colt was engraved and nickel-plated, while the Smith & Wesson was plain high-polish blue.

Those early .357 Magnums may very well be the finest revolvers to ever come from the Smith & Wesson factory. From 1935 to 1939 approximately 5,200 "Registered Magnums" were manufactured. These guns were basically handfitted, beautifully polished and, in addition to a serial number, had a second number, a registration number, placed on the yoke cuts. Patton's .357 Magnum carried registration No. 506. Registration No. 1 went to Hoover and No. 2 to Sharpe.



**Gen. Patton and his .357 Smith & Wesson were featured on the cover of the December 1986 issue. Patton purchased this Smith & Wesson 3-1/2" Registered Magnum .357 in Hawaii in 1935 and referred to it as his "killing gun." The ivory grips had his initials on the right grip panel.**



Early advertising by Smith & Wesson about the .357 Magnum proclaimed it to be the most powerful revolver ever offered. The first factory .357 loads were assembled with Hercules 2400 powder and 75 years later it is still a favorite propellant. Custom stocks are by Keith Brown.



Taffin is a firm believer in the philosophy of a "Pair and a Spare" as exhibited by these 5" Model 27s. The 5" is one of the handiest barrel lengths. Custom stocks are by BearHug and BluMagnum.



Before 1957 Smith & Wessons were known simply as the ".357 Magnum" and these two from the early 1950s are pre-27s. Custom stocks are by Keith Brown.

75 YEARS YOUNG

Barrel lengths in order of preference were 6-1/2", 5", 6", 8-3/4", 3-1/2" and 4". In 1939 Smith & Wesson dropped the registration procedure and barrel lengths were standardized at 3-1/2", 5", 6", 6-1/2" and 8-3/8", not necessarily in order of preference. All of these guns had a beautiful high bright-blue finish (nickel was an extra option) with a fine-line checkering on the barrel rib, top strap and rear sight assembly. Both the backstrap and the frontstrap were serrated and the first grips/stocks were the small old-style found on all N-frames since late 1907. The .357 Magnum was the first Smith & Wesson to be fitted with Magna stocks, which were soon offered as an option. These filled in on both sides of the grip frame to the top of the backstrap.

Of course, production of the .357 Magnum and all other firearms stopped at the beginning of WWII as machinery was geared up for wartime production. After the war, it would be December of 1946 before another .357 Magnum would be produced, and only 142 were manufactured through 1949. One of these went to President Harry Truman. Obviously, .357 Magnums were hard to find.

### Debut Of The Short Action

In 1950 the long action of the .357 Magnum was changed to the current short action, which allowed a shorter distance for the hammer to travel. Skeeter Skelton often remarked how hard it was to find a .357 Magnum in the 1950s. When I started really getting interested in gunshops in 1956, I don't recall ever seeing any. In fact, I saw the .44 Magnum first.

In 1956, the upper sideplate screw was deleted and the "5-screw" .357 Magnum became a "4-screw" with three screws in the sideplate and one in the front of the triggerguard. One year later, this magnificent revolver, which had been known only as the .357 Magnum since its inception, now became a number instead of a name: the Model 27. Four years later, the screw in the front of the triggerguard was eliminated and the Model 27 became a "3-screw" sixgun.

In 1994 the unbelievable happened, and the .357 Magnum, the Model 27, was dropped from production. However, it was not forgotten and just before the end of the 20th century a new Model 27 appeared. This Performance Center gun bears little resemblance to the original with an 8-shot cylinder and a heavy tapered underlugged barrel. It is a good sixgun, but simply not the same. Just recently, in their Classic Series, Smith & Wesson reintroduced the Model 27 in time for its Diamond Anniversary.

The .357 Magnum, as mentioned, was a beautifully finished revolver, so beautiful in fact, some were reluctant to

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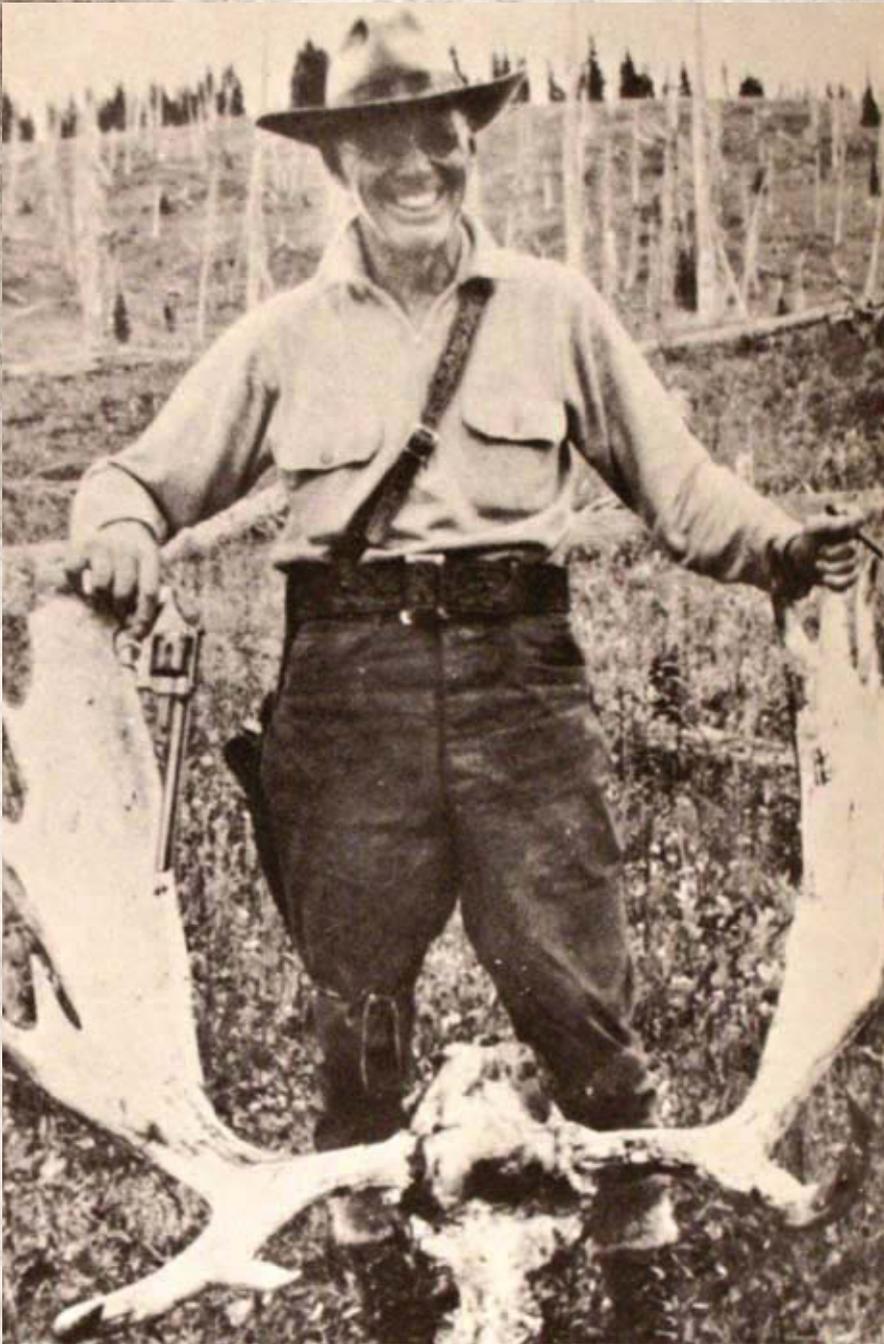
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*In the beginning, the .357 Magnum was considered the ultimate big-game revolver. Here, Col. Doug Wesson of S&W and the moose he took with his .357 Magnum in 1935.*

75 YEARS YOUNG

carry it as a duty gun. In 1954, to answer this "problem," Smith & Wesson brought out a special version of the .357 Magnum known as the Highway Patrolman. This was a basic no-frills .357. No high polish here as the finish was a matte blue, and also gone was the fine checkering on the top strap. Barrel length was 4" or 6" and Magna stocks were standard. The first new Smith & Wesson I ever purchased was a 4" Highway Patrolman. In 1957 the Highway Patrolman became the Model 28.

Now we had a less fancy .357 Magnum for duty and outdoor use. What's next? Bill Jordan began petitioning Smith & Wesson to produce a lighter weight

.357 Magnum using the Military & Police .38 as the basic platform. In 1955 Smith & Wesson unveiled the .357 Combat Magnum. Using the K-frame .38, a full-length .357 Magnum cylinder was installed matched up with a 4" bull barrel. The result was a revolver Bill Jordan called "The Peace Officers Dream." Weighing a full 1/2-pound less than its older brother and with a smaller cylinder diameter, the Combat Magnum was much easier to carry all day.

In 1957 the Combat Magnum became the Model 19. Somehow, .357 Magnum, Highway Patrolman and Combat Magnum stir the sixgunning soul a whole lot more than 27, 28 and

19! In 1963 a 6" version was introduced for the Model 19, followed by a 2-1/2" in 1966. In 1970, the Model 19 was produced in stainless steel with the same barrel lengths, and was called the Model 66. In 1999, the Model 19 was dropped, and the Model 66 received the same fate in 2005. Long before they disappeared, they had basically been replaced by the stronger L-Frame, heavy under lugged-barreled Models 586 and 686.

Prior to World War II, Colt chambered their New Service, Shooting Master and Single Action Army in .357 Magnum. Production ceased in 1940. However, in 1954 Colt introduced their .357 Magnum followed by the Python, their Cadillac of revolvers, in 1955, and in 1956, the Colt Single Action Army returned in .357 Magnum.

Ruger's first centerfire sixgun was the .357 Blackhawk in 1955. This was a true outdoorsman's sixgun with adjustable sights, a heavy top strap and a Colt-sized grip frame. Since that time, both companies have introduced several other .357 Magnums, including the underrated Ruger GP100 and Colt King Cobra, and we have also seen .357s from manufacturers such as Freedom Arms, Dan Wesson and Taurus.

The .357 Magnum remains extremely popular and is probably the most powerful revolver most shooters can handle really well. We have a long list of revolvers chambered in the original Magnum available today. However, my heart still belongs to the old classics, and especially to the original .357 Magnum. With the Lyman/Thompson 158-grain gas-checked bullet over 14 to 15 grains of 2400 loaded in any of the above, life is quite pleasurable. Happy 75th anniversary to the Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum.

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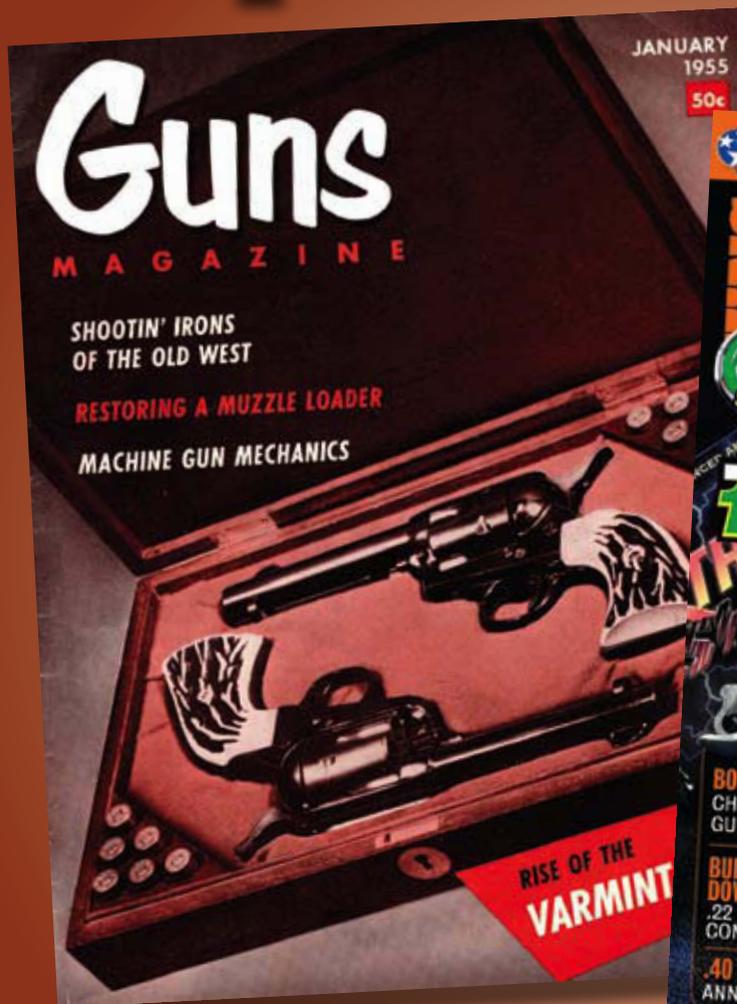
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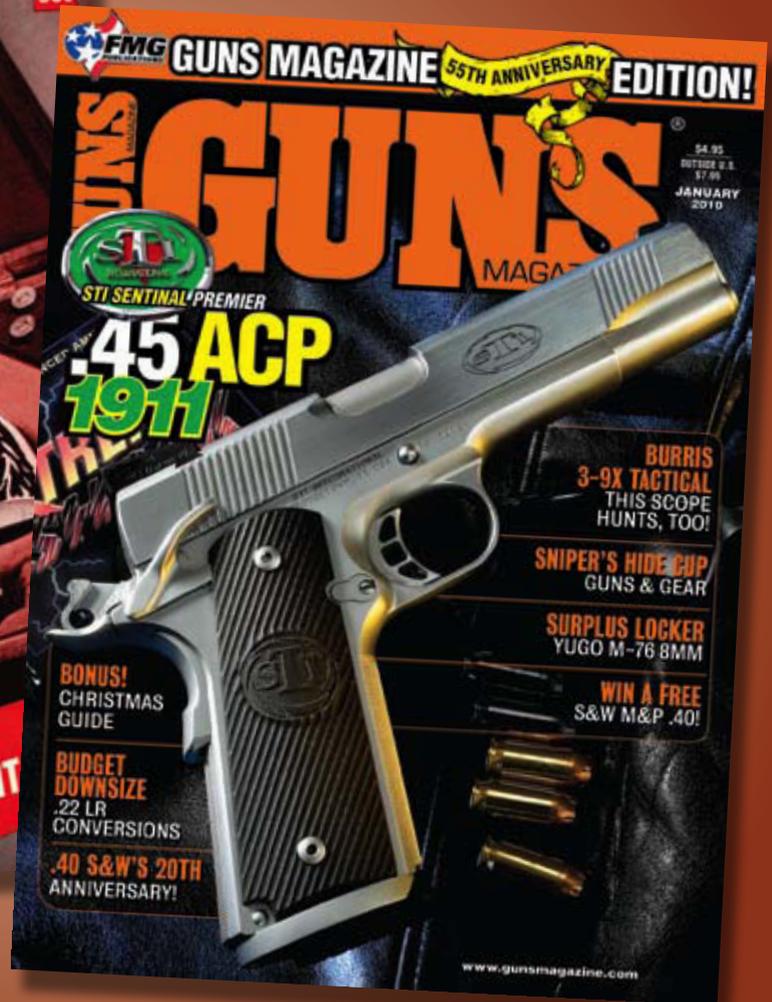
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Issue 1 • January 1955



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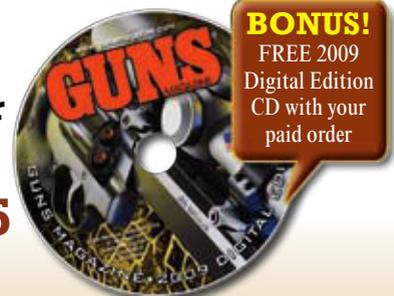
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*The Browning Citori is one of the most popular over-unders ever made. This little 28-gauge was nice to carry in the hills of western Idaho after huns and chukars.*

# TWIN BARREL

John Barsness

**L**et's get the irrational part over quickly, by repeating the cliché, "A side-by-side shotgun is 'better' because our eyes are side-by-side, not one on top of the other." Innocent shotgunners will giggle when they hear that one, while serious side-by-side snobs will look impossibly wise and start nodding their head. I just roll my eyes—while tilting my head so one eye is on top of the other.

Before World War II the side-by-side shotgun predominated both in hunting and in competition, and not just in Great Britain and Europe, but the United States. All the top American-made shotguns were side-by-sides: Fox, Ithaca, L.C. Smith, Lefever, Parker, Winchester Model 21, etcetera.

After the war the over-under took over. By the 1960s, when baby boomer kids became teenagers, and had the typical yearning to conform to a peer group, over-unders were the shotgun to own. A short-barreled 20-gauge with 3" chambers

was the supposed ideal for most upland bird hunting and the odd round of skeet, while a heavier, longer barreled 12 (also with 3" chambers) was better for waterfowling, a practice round of trap and when pheasants flushed in from North Dakota while you were hunting in South Dakota.

Exactly why an over-under was so superior was never explicitly stated, but the real reason was a Browning Superposed cost half as much as a Winchester Model 21. Also unsaid (but implied), was the notion side-by-sides were grandpa's technology. They might have been OK when the Model A Ford was everyman's automobile, but by the late 1960s every man was driving a Ford Mustang, if only in his mind.

However, some serious shotgunners have proposed serious reasons why the over-under took over—aside from eye-orientation, that is. The most common involves the increased precision of the single sighting plane of the over-under.

"Sighting plane" is an interesting choice of phrase, considering a shotgun is pointed, not aimed. When we shoot a shotgun we're not supposed to look at the barrel, but of course most of us see it as a fuzzy blob somewhere near the target. And many shotgunners do shoot better when using an over-

# Side-By-Side Vs. Ov



pre-mounted gun—even (sadly) a lot of Sporting Clays. So the muzzle is either haphazardly inserted into our field of view, or already there, waiting for the target to appear when we call “pull.” The broader muzzles of a side-by-side are much more visible, hence distracting, to our eyes, especially if they start moving faster than the target.

This is one reason Gil and Vicki emphasize mounting a shotgun slowly, so the muzzles don’t pull our eyes away from the target. This is exactly the opposite of what many shotgunners do, especially when they start missing. A couple of years ago a friend and I were doing some informal clay shooting on his country place. He missed a couple of targets, not typical of him because he shoots a lot. Instead of slowing down, he tried to speed up. He whipped his shotgun to his shoulder on the next target, long before he was going to pull the trigger, and naturally missed. On his next shot he tried to be even faster—and missed again. After half a dozen misses he was getting madder and madder, with no clue why he was missing. I wasn’t going to suggest anything, but luckily he finally decided he was having a bad day, and quit. Here the broad muzzles of his fine side-by-side probably were a handicap.

### A Good Day

On the flip side, if we practice our mount enough to have it grooved, and slow down when we start missing, good work can be done with either a side-by-side or an over-under. I shoot 16-yard trap every summer as a tune-up for hunting season. A couple of summers ago, I took both a Beretta Onyx over-under and an old Fox Sterlingworth side-by-side to the range. I used the Beretta during the first 25-shot round, and broke 25 straight. This isn’t usual for me, but isn’t abnormal either. Then, I picked up the Fox and did it again.

Obviously I was having a good day, but part of the reason for the good day was both shotguns, while pre-mounted on my shoulder, were held slightly below my line of sight just before saying pull. When the clay appeared the trigger was pulled

# MYTHS

under (or a single-barrel shotgun) than a side-by-side.

My theory involves the way we perceive moving objects, a subject close to the hearts and minds of the noted shotgunning instructing team, Gil and Vicki Ash. One basic point of the Ash’s teachings is the human eye is naturally attracted to the fastest-moving object in sight. This is why they teach their students to start the shotgun low, below the line of sight, and to start moving the muzzle along the target’s line of flight as the shotgun is mounted: Our eyes are focused on the moving target, and the blurred muzzle of the shotgun enters our view only at the last moment, just before we pull the trigger.

This accomplishes two good things: The muzzle is never moving faster than the target, thus pulling our eyes away from the target, and it doesn’t appear so early we attempt to fine-tune our pointing, thus slowing our swing.

Here, I believe, is where the broad, twin muzzles of a side-by-side can “confuse” some shooters. Most shotgunners don’t shoot as often as they’d like to, and most don’t have a real understanding of perception and shotgun mounting. Thus, our mount is either erratic or accomplished before the target even appears, because most clay-bird shooting is now done with a



*Some shotgunners say they prefer the “superior balance” of a side-by-side for quick shooting in thick cover, but over-unders can be made to balance just as nicely.*

# er-Under.



*One supposed advantage of an over-under like this Browning Cynergy, is it aligns the shooter's hands with the barrels.*

while the muzzles swept up and past the rising bird, and the clays all broke. It didn't matter whether the barrels were oriented "OO" or "8" because they never appeared near the target until it was too late to make any difference. A week later I shot another 25 straight with a German drilling, also a side-by-side. (Are drillings designed for shooters with three eyes?)

My theory of the distraction of the broad muzzles of a side-by-side is backed

up by a couple "observed phenomena." First, many shotgunners, who claim they can't shoot a side-by-side, do pretty well with small-gauge side-by-sides such as a 28-gauge, possibly because the muzzles are so much smaller. Second, shotgunners who don't shoot clay birds very well with a side-by-side often do well on wild birds, possibly because they mount their shotgun more instinctively, hence naturally, than when shooting skeet or trap.

The noted British shotgun writer Gough Thomas suggested one reason why a few shotgunners can't shoot an over-under as well as a side-by-side. Perhaps, Thomas suggested, the left eye of some shotgunners is drawn to the broad side of an over-under's barrels, rather than the muzzle of the upper barrel. This makes some sense, particularly if the shooter doesn't have a strong dominant eye. Weak eye-dominance, or true cross-dominance,



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is a real problem for some shotgunners, and an over-under might make it worse.

Another difference between over-unders and side-by-sides involves the relative position of our hands. Theoretically, if the level of both our trigger and fore-end hands are parallel to the barrels of our shotguns, it's easier to point the shotgun at some flying object. Supposedly, the deeper fore-end of an over-under allows this alignment, while the shallow fore-end of a side-by-side doesn't. Hmm. It has always seemed to me pointing anything held in our hands is more a result of repetitive practice than a fraction of an inch in "hand height."

### Recoil

A less nebulous difference involves recoil, and is probably the major reason over-unders are so frequently seen in any kind of serious target competition, while side-by-sides have almost completely disappeared. Both barrels of an over-under cause the shotgun to recoil along its vertical centerline, while the barrels of a side-by-side cause the shotgun to recoil a little to each side of the centerline. Thus, when shooting the barrel on the near side (the left barrel for a right-hand shooter), a side-by-side tends to recoil into our face.

I noticed this after shooting that round of trap with the Fox, because the



*This Franchi 28-gauge is built on a 20-gauge frame, a minor crime according to some shotgun loonies—but it still only weighs 6 pounds.*

entire round was shot with its tighter-choked left barrel. After 25 shots with 1-1/8-ounce trap loads my right cheek was sore, due to the shotgun recoiling into my face. Now, competition guns tend to be heavier than that 7-pound Fox, but multiply the effect over hundreds of shots rather than just 25 and it's easy to see why today's competitive shotgunners prefer the over-under—or a gas-operated semi-auto.

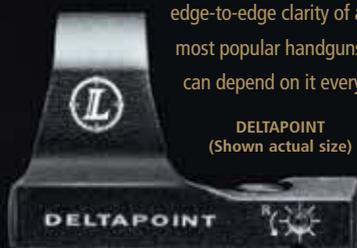
One difference between over-unders and side-by-sides doesn't really involve the orientation of the barrels, but still affects our choice. One theoretical advantage of hunting with a double-barreled shotgun is the instant choice of two different chokes, and two triggers are the fastest way to choose one barrel over the other. Yet, it's almost impossible to find a two-trigger over-under anymore, so anybody who actually prefers two triggers is pretty much limited to a side-by-side. Exactly why is a mystery, but there it is.

Yes, modern single-trigger shotguns usually feature some sort of barrel-selection device, most often located in the safety, but darn few of these actually allow the shooter to switch barrels easily and consistently. Most hunters tend to use a single-trigger shotgun as a two-shot semi-auto, almost never changing the barrel selector.

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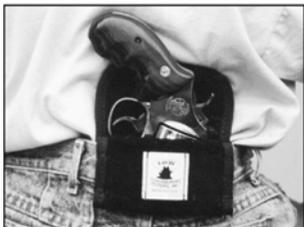
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OLDIES REBORN

Many also claim they simply can't get used to two triggers. This has always seemed weird to me, perhaps because I grew up with my grandfather's two-trigger double. It's also relatively easy to get used to two triggers. My wife Eileen, for example, didn't even start shooting shotguns until her 30s. She also suffers somewhat from dyslexia, the perceptual cross-wiring that normally manifests itself in reading difficulties but often affects other things as well. Eileen doesn't have any trouble reading (and is in fact a professional writer) but occasionally has difficulty in certain small physical tasks. Yet her favorite shotgun is a 28-gauge side-by-side with two triggers. She mastered the triggers during a few rounds of Sporting Clays shooting.

Also like two triggers because they're simpler and more foolproof than single triggers. Despite the reliability of many single triggers (the trigger on my Beretta Onyx has never failed me in thousands of rounds), some still go whacky. I used to own a nice little Italian 28-gauge over-under, which fit me so perfectly I shot it extremely well, both on clays and wild birds. But its single trigger every once in a while refused to fire the second shot, despite gunsmithing both by the factory and a very knowledgeable shotgun smith. I work hard for shots at wild birds, whether Hungarian partridge, ruffed grouse or pheasants, that when a shotgun goes "click" instead of "bang" it upsets me some, even if it happens only once or twice a hunting season. Eventually I got to so upset at my nifty little 28, it went down the road.

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Many woodcock hunters like a small-bore side-by-side for its quick handling and broad, visible muzzles in dim light.



Left-handed shooters, however, are often better off with a single-trigger over-under, both because twin triggers are set up for a right-handed shooter and because more side-by-sides are set-up with cast-off buttstocks for right-handers. Some over-unders can be found with straight stocks, or the cast can be modified. (By the way, it's a myth a straight grip's main purpose to allow the trigger hand to shift back and forth between two triggers. Both triggers can easily be reached by the average shooter without any major hand-shift.)

Really far-gone side-by-side loonies sometimes point out it's easier to load a side-by-side, because a side-by-side doesn't need to be opened as widely. Supposedly this can really make a difference in a tight duck blind. A few years ago I went on a duck hunt in the Mississippi Delta with several friends, and we all agreed to use "classic" shotguns. I took my Fox, and one morning a buddy and I were sitting in a box-blind in a flooded rice field while bunches of mallards poured into the decoys. The blind was narrow and had a roof, and the shooting was done through a foot-tall slit in front of our faces.

I found if I kept the muzzles of the Fox poked through the slit while reloading, any shells inserted into the chambers slid back out, due to the muzzles being up-tilted. The only way to reload my "easily reloaded" side-by-side was to bring the muzzles back into the blind and point the barrels at the floor while reloading. Then I had to reverse the process to get the muzzles pointed through the shooting-slit again. I can't imagine an over-under being more of a pain to reload. (Meanwhile, my buddy was shooting an old Model 97 Winchester pump, and simply had to slide more shells into the loading port—the reason a repeater is the real solution to a tight duck blind.)

These days the side-by-side is making

*Aside from being simpler and more reliable, two triggers allow an instant choice of barrel and choke (above). The broadness of a side-by-side's muzzles (below) bothers some shooters, but people with eye-dominance issues can have trouble shooting an over-under.*



a comeback. Whether this is due to its practical advantages for some hunting, or because more people are turning into shotgun snobs who believe in the "superior esthetics" of the "OO" gun, I don't know. Personally, I own and hunt with both types of double gun, though more often with side-by-sides because those guns provide an instant choice in chokes, something handy both in the grouse thickets and on the pheasant prairies. **GUNS**

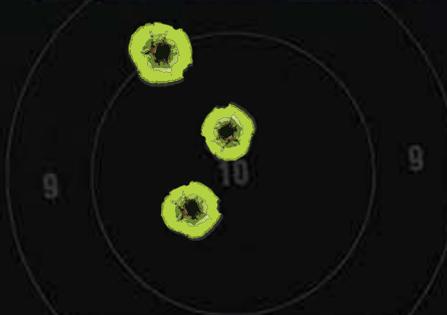
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# VIEWS NEWS AND REVIEWS

## RIGHTS WATCH

• DAVID CODREA •

### DUE PROCESS FOR SECOND AMENDMENT?

**M***cDonald v. Chicago* (see “Chicago Gun Ban Heads to Supreme Court” in the Feb. 2010 issue), challenging the Windy City’s handgun ban, is being considered by the US Supreme Court. Oral arguments were heard on March 2, and a decision is expected sometime in June.

The case has not been without controversy, and not just from anti-gunners. The National Rifle Association, which had been promoting a parallel case, was granted time to address the high court in oral arguments, a request and decision that did not please lead attorney Alan Gura. It’s not the first time the two have clashed over competing cases and approaches. NRA had previously been rebuffed in the *District of Columbia v. Heller* case (see “The Heller High Watermark”: Oct. 2008).

At issue is determining if, and how, the Second Amendment should be applied to the states, that is, via the 14th Amendment’s “privileges and immunities” clause or using the “due process” clause that the court has applied in the past. The first would require overturning “settled law” from the *Slaughterhouse Cases*—an approach favored by some and feared by others due to what other edicts might fall. In the end, based on the oral argument transcripts, the justices appeared to offer fewer challenges to NRA counsel and former Solicitor General Paul Clement’s due process arguments.

The general consensus? SCOTUSBlog, the go-to resource on Supreme Court activities, noted, “[A] number of news sources reported that the justices’ questions suggested that the Court would extend Second Amendment protection to individuals subject to state and local gun-control ordinances. [They] all report that the Court seems ready to expand the Second Amendment’s reach significantly.”

This did not sit well with Chicago’s mayor and notorious anti-gunner Richard M. Daley. In what can only be described as a media tantrum documented by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, city hall reporter Fran Spielman wrote, “In fact, he’s ridiculing the high court for affirming the Second Amendment right to bear arms while sitting in a protective bubble.”

Like Daley should talk, with his retinue of armed police bodyguards giving him a taxpayer-funded protective bubble of his own, all the while demanding “ordinary” citizens are disarmed.

Still, it’s appropriate to ask just what will change if the court rules as anticipated.

“*McDonald v. City of Chicago* ruling may prove a hollow victory for gun lobby,” wrote the Brady Center’s Dennis A. Henigan in “Hotline Buzz,” a University of Pittsburgh School of Law blog. “[C]omments by members of the *Heller* majority appear to embrace the position argued in the amicus brief filed by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence and several national police groups that, regardless of whether the Second Amendment applies to the states, it should be read to allow for reasonable gun regulations.”

As much as we might hate to admit it, he may have a point. The justices spent much time talking about just what might be considered “reasonable.” And the concept “shall not be infringed” did not even receive a passing mention. **GUNS**

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*Dott. Franco Gussalli Beretta (middle) presents President George W. Bush with a Beretta SO10 EELL Shotgun. They are joined on stage by Peter Horn VP of Beretta's US Retail Corporation.*

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Along with the shotgun presented by Dott. Beretta, a custom Italian leather gun case with handmade gun accessories, and a Damascus steel knife with engraving and wood matching the gun, were presented to Bush by Peter Horn, Vice President of Beretta's US retail sales corporation.

For additional information, contact Beretta USA, 17601 Beretta Drive, Accokeek, MD 20607, (800) 237-3882, [www.berettausa.com](http://www.berettausa.com).—*Courtesy Eveland & Partners*

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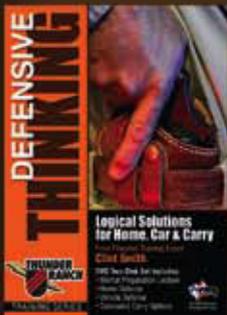
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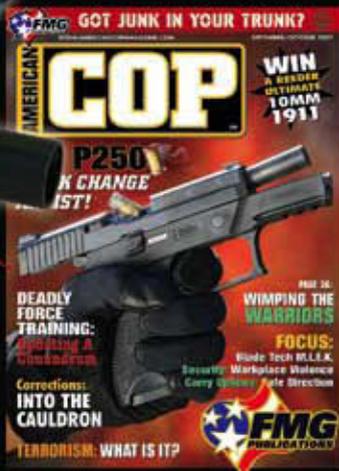
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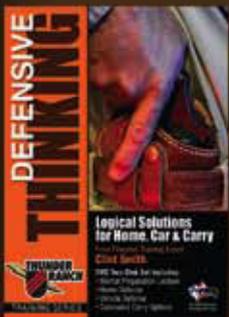


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IEWS NEW AND REVIEWS

Forward Operating Base (FOB) Wishtan, near Sangin, searched an outhouse in a derelict compound.

Inside was an IED pressure plate, along with a gas bottle and magazine boxes for a PKM Soviet machine gun. While extracting the cache, the British soldiers were aware they were being closely observed by suspected Taliban informants, but they returned to FOB Wishtan without incident.



British soldiers (above) use a ladder to scale a compound wall during a joint patrol with the Afghan National Army near Sangin, Helmand, Afghanistan. Insurgents, watching the patrol, would later try and set an IED at this point. Photo: Sergeant Keith Cotton, Crown Copyright 2010. An image from an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV, below) shows the successful strike on the insurgent IED-laying team. Photo: Crown Copyright 2010



The British soldiers kept the compound and outhouse under surveillance, though, and within two hours a man was seen entering the compound and making his way to the outhouse from which the IED-making equipment had been removed.

The suspected bomber was soon joined by another three men, completing the 4-man team typical of the IED-laying units, which traditionally operate in the Wishtan area.

From Patrol Base Chakaw, 1 kilometer to the east, soldiers from B Company, 1 SCOTS, were able to watch as the suspected insurgents began digging at the base of a compound wall.

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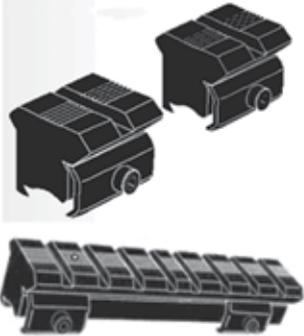


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IEWS NEW AND REVIEWS

here is not solely to kill insurgents, we should not underestimate the positive influence a strike like this can have on the local population," Maj. Graeme Wearmouth said. "They are the victims of a cruel oppression and the insurgent killed by this precision strike was confirmed as an IED-facilitator and commander, and he was certainly responsible for previous attacks in the Wishtan area, likely including the deaths of a bride and two children since Christmas, as well as attacks on ISAF and ANSF (Afghan National Security Forces).

One of the techniques used by 1 SCOTS to avoid the IEDs littering Wishtan's narrow streets and alleyways is "Grand Nationaling," which involves the soldiers using ladders to get up and over the high compound walls.

The suspected insurgents were digging where the patrol's ladders had been placed when crossing into the compound that morning. An obvious trail of soldiers' boot prints had marked out the exact entry point, and the bomb-layers were setting a trap for a future patrol, hoping they used the same route again.

After another two hours of careful observation, to ensure the area around the compound was free of civilians, and the men within were indeed laying a device, the soldiers called in indirect fire.

The resulting precision strike, launched from a Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System by a Royal Artillery unit 48 kilometres away, successfully neutralized the insurgents.

Intelligence reports afterwards confirmed one of the men killed in the strike was an IED-facilitator and unit commander responsible for attacks on FOB Wishtan and other ISAF IED-inflicted casualties in the area.—*Courtesy MoD*

## US IMPORTS UP

NSSF's research department reports US imports of sporting arms and ammunition were up 31 percent in 2009 to \$1.28 billion, compared to \$974 million the previous year. Imports of handguns were up 53 percent, while imports of ammunition increased 40 percent during 2009. In the fourth quarter, imports of all sporting arms and ammunition increased 22.3 percent compared to the same period in 2008.—*Courtesy NSSF*

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# QUARTER MASTER

## LANSKY FOLDING RAT TAIL DIAMOND KNIFE SHARPENER

Mike Cumpston



The tapered 3.5" diamond-impregnated rod is a good fit to the large and small serrations on this blade.

Serrated knife blades are quite popular. First responders find them useful for cutting through synthetic material used in seat belts and shoulder harness. They are well-suited for slicing cuts—particularly on tough material such as rope—and do the job effectively even when they are not particularly sharp. Their proclivity to slice through tendon and bone as well as ordinary, everyday flesh leads me to think of them as “hurt-yourself” blades. (As in, “You are going to hurt yourself really bad with that!”)

The serrated blade is a two-edged sword of sorts. On one hand, it requires sharpening less frequently than the standard knife blade. Conversely, when it does need sharpening, it does not respond well to the various traditional rectangular sharpening systems in common use. Enter the Lansky Rat Tail Diamond



The Lansky folding Diamond Sharpening Rod is an effective and economical tool for sharpening serrated knife blades.

folding sharpening tool retailing for \$14.99. Lansky is the big frog in the tool sharpening pond and is well-known for producing elaborate and somewhat labor-intensive blade-honing systems. In welcome contrast, the diamond stick is simplicity itself. It consists of a fine diamond-impregnated tapered rod folded within two plastic handles. Use is completely straightforward: Address the strong side of the blade pushing the rod into the broad and narrow serrations until no longer amused. Actually, just a few strokes are sufficient to establish and/or restore the edge. Then flip the knife over and use the rod to remove the wire edge.

For my first project, I attacked a serrated kitchen knife with the Lansky. This is part of a set etched with the slogan: “Never Needs Sharpening.” As with its companion knives, it started out dull and became much duller with use. I then applied the diamond rod to the hurt-yourself blade of my Gerber Multi Tool. In short order, I had both operating at optimum sharpness.

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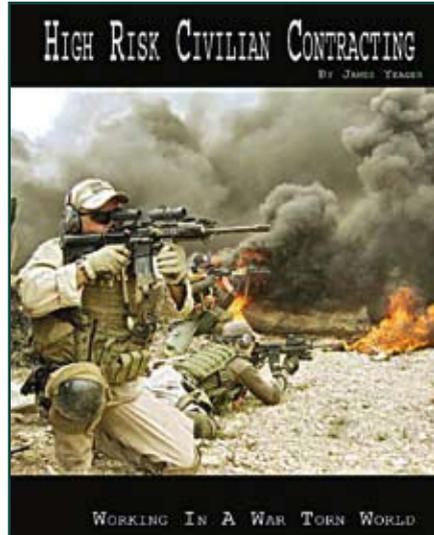
## MANUAL: HIGH RISK CIVILIAN CONTRACTING

Clint Smith

I have been told by some in the gun industry James Yeager is controversial and that may well be the case, but in my contact with him, he has been well-spoken, knowledgeable of his subject, gentlemanly and—an all-endearing quality in my opinion—courteous.

That said, I was intrigued to read his manual *High Risk Civilian Contracting*. I am senior enough I can’t—or won’t—travel outside the USA for work, but I am interested in the work conditions for those who do. The manual is a nominal 100 pages and well-written for the likes of me, as it bluntly cuts to the chase on the whole contracting gig.

If you want to do this work, the manual serves as a good foundation. It also serves as a good foundation for anyone looking for any kind of job here. Yeager has done this work and, more importantly, he remembered and documented



High Risk Civilian Contracting—Working in a War Torn World offers good advice on how overseas contracting works.

what he did. Contracting can be financially viable, but along with the wheelbarrow of money you’ll make, Yeager points out subtle nuances like retention of passports, medical aid in case of injury and the fact not everyone in the contracting business has scruples... funny, just like other jobs in life.

The entire manual is good, but what was most interesting to me were two points. One, the manual serves as a good guideline to enforce that magic is not the reason for success in life, fighting, training and gun stuff. Hard work and the application of fundamentals in gun handling, training and fighting are the keys to success.

Two, the last section, “Run and Gun,” has quite a bit of common sense stuff. It was interesting to read the comparisons between what the contractors do now, and how we did it 40 years ago in Vietnam. There are stunning parallels.

This manual is good advice for someone who wants to be a contractor, but more importantly, it is good advice for anyone simply wanting to care of themselves—whether in Los Angeles, Alabama or Baghdad. Good read, good stuff.

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## FAR MORE THAN WORDS

Best bets for summer reading.

I was just a kid, camped with a coupla pals on a little island off the tip of our “home” atoll. It was just far enough away by outrigger canoe we could pretend we were marooned there after a shipwreck. Unlike the other fried-coral lumps in that chain, this one hosted a wild, tangly mass of spooky-dark jungle—a perfect place for a boy to read Robert Leckie’s Pacific-combat classic *Helmet For My Pillow*. I remember waking one morning to realize I had used *Helmet For My Pillow* as a pillow....

In combat, a decade later, I reprised that act with the same book, and perhaps a decade after that, a third time, halfway ‘round the world. On that occasion I used a borrowed copy, found in a pile of moldering paperbacks in a sandbagged bunker. I did it knowingly, maybe just to honor my personal “pillow history” with that book. I had, and have used, many other books for pillows, before and since.

In fact, I can’t remember a single time I’ve ever “deployed forward” without a book stuffed in my ruck or carried in a cargo pocket, and virtually all of them have done pillow-duty. Believe me, the worst of ‘em beat the heck out of sleepin’ on a helmet. The best, I think, was a collection of Kipling—*comfy!*

None have ever stopped a bullet for me, but they’ve cooled my mind and shaded my head in sun-hammered heat, diverted my thoughts from creepin’ frostbite and sharp rocks in the gumbo mud of my

“beds”; done double-duty as distraction from—and the instrument of destruction of—countless nasty blood-suckin’ insects. Books have salvaged my soul after losses of comrades, and reminded me why I was wherever-it-was and what I was fighting for. They’ve even pulled me away from the

edge of darkness a couple of times when I wondered if I would ever see my red-headed angel again, outside of heaven. You can’t ask much more from an object of pulp, glue and ink, can you?

Over the past two years they’ve served again, as painkillers, post-surgical soothers, boredom-busters and “recovery stimulants.” Several of ‘em were sent or recommended by *you* folks. So, let me return the favor and spread the wealth, OK?

### History, Past & Future

*Common Sense* by Thomas Paine was without doubt the most influential literature written, justifying the American Revolution. It did not urge war or violence, but rather, *thought* and *courage*. Paine’s examination of the sources of power and their validity—or lack of validity—is as timely today as it was in the 1700s. The galvanizing effect it had

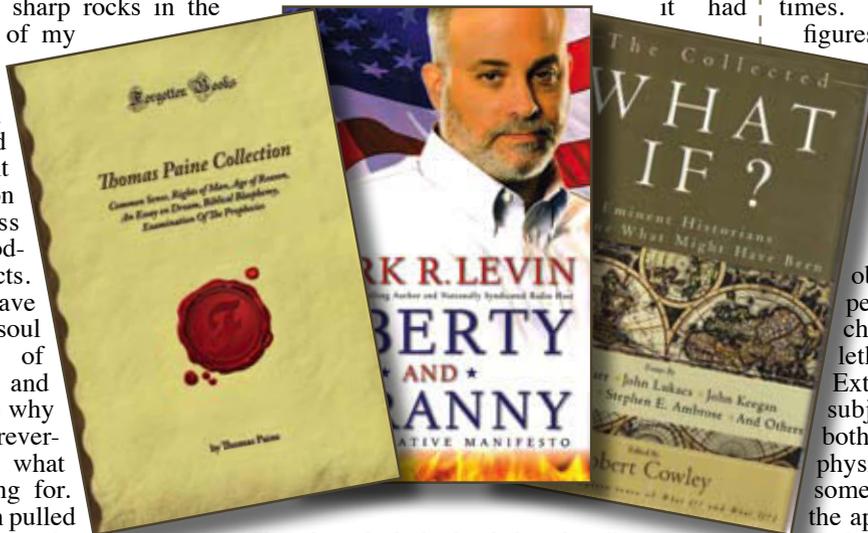
on American colonists was so profound, some scholars believe our Revolution may not have occurred without it—or, the French Revolution, without their *Rights of Man*. My copy, from *Forgotten Books* contains both.

If there is a modern Paine, it might be Mark Levin, author of *Liberty and Tyranny*. No less a scholar than Paine, Levin’s writings bring into sharp focus the erosion of rights won with blood and sacrifice, and illustrate how freedom can not only be lost, it can be stolen or casually thrown away—perhaps never to be regained. No hot air; no volatile but empty rhetoric; it’s more Plato’s *Republic* than a campaign bumper sticker. The biggest difficulty with this book may be an overwhelming compulsion to get sidetracked by his extensive sources, references and footnotes. Try reading it through once, then go back with highlighter and notepad.

*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* reveals, in his own modest words, how an unlettered indentured boy rose to become one of the most influential men of his time—worldwide—not just in his own country. Scientist, linguist, inventor, writer and revolutionary, his enormous impact and enduring wisdom has been sadly minimized in modern times. Simply put, the “towering figures” of our national scene today couldn’t bench-press Ben’s brain, or even lift his massive moral compass, much less carry it as a shield of honor, as he did. *Please* read it.

### The Whys & Hows

Throughout my life I’ve observed, studied and researched people’s reactions to the challenges of combat and other lethal-threat stress situations. Extensive academic work on the subject requires a background in both stress psychology and stress physiology, and manages to give something visceral and intriguing the appeal of kibbled yak dung. *The Unthinkable: Who Survives When*



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*Disaster Strikes—and Why*, by Amanda Ripley, is eminently readable, and possibly the best study ever published about people who froze, failed, fled and fought in a myriad of do-or-die situations; people just like you and I—under circumstances any of us might face tomorrow.

Just as the actions—or inactions—of individuals determine their fate “under fire,” whole societies in effect *choose* to succeed or fail, and with failure often comes virtual extinction. Dr. Jared Diamond is one of our few living scientist-philosophers, and thankfully, one who can weave together historical geography, climatology and sociology and present it clearly, as he does in *Collapse—How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*.

Dr. Diamond examines both ancient and modern collapsed and collapsing societies, finding they rarely fail due to sudden natural catastrophes, but frequently, via simple denial of clear warning signs, dangerous sociopolitical fads, and one-upmanship—even without violent struggle—between egotistical rulers. I guarantee you'll find some startling surprises.

*Death by Government* is not fun to read—but fascinating, and something everyone who thinks of themselves as a free, thinking citizen *should* read. Author R. J. Rummel, again, a scholar rather than a rhetorician, coined the term “democide” to define genocide-by-government, and lays out the dirty secrets *all* governments—including democracies—would rather keep hidden from you. The only reason his book hasn't been widely condemned is because his facts can't be refuted. You'll never think of our “fellow members” of the United Nations the same way again.

**Now For A Snack!**

Finally, here's a hefty box o' brain-candy: In *What If?—Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*, essays by Stephen Ambrose, Caleb Carr, John Lukacs and others (edited by Robert Crowley) answer questions like, what if Alexander the Great had not died at 32, but lived—and conquered—to an old age? What if the Persians had beaten Greece at Salamis, and strangled democracy in its cradle? If the Franks had not turned back the undefeated Muslim armies at Poitiers? What if Operation Overlord had failed on the beaches of Normandy? This one's gonna make your head spin with your own *what ifs?*—and, it's absolutely delightful reading.

So make a selection, grab some iced tea and head for the hammock! That's why God gave us shady summer Sunday afternoons, ain't it? Connor **OUT!**

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# GUNS

MAGAZINE

JULY 2010

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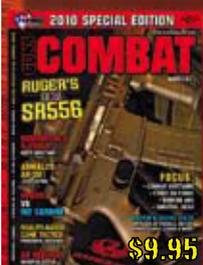
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up at Boyle's Gun Shop. Boyle's was a wonderful place. Every Saturday, three of us got off work at noon and my '49 Ford Club Coupe headed to the combination gunshop/shooting range, with a stop on the way at the local pizzeria. Boyle's was a mom-and-pop operation, although mom-and-pop in this case were not very old with three young kids, and my teenage heart was somewhat smitten with the mom side of the operation.

There was no such thing as credit cards in 1956 and who would give a credit card to a teenager if they did exist? My, how times have changed! Credit was available at Boyle's and we all had an ongoing charge account. That 7-1/2" Colt .45 added \$125 to my account. Fast Draw soon arrived, and I ordered an Arvo Ojala Hollywood Fast Draw rig finished in black basket weave. The first date I had with the blond teenager now known as Diamond Dot was in November 1958 as we went to Boyle's Gun Shop to pick up my new Ojala leather. Both are still around, and in fact, that belt and holster is hanging in the room she uses for woodcarving.

I wish I could say I still had that .38-40, but dumb teenager that I was, I let it get away. I also wish I had the first Colt .45, however, it also got away, but at least for a more noble cause. By 1963 I was in college and Dot was a stay-at-home mom with three young babies to take care of. The Colt .45 went for tuition and groceries. I knew if I dropped out of school it would be awfully hard to get back, so the .45 had to go. I did graduate in 1965, started a teaching career lasting 31 years and took an early retirement to write full-time. By 1968 I was on the road to spending much of my life with Colt Single Actions. The first of my new batch of Colts was a 4-3/4" .44 Special. To this day, it is hard to choose between a .44 Special or .45 Colt when it comes to Single Actions.

### Colt's Return

Over the years I added examples of both .45 Colt and .44 Special Colt Single Actions from all three generations, as well as both 2nd and 3rd Generation New Frontiers. I carried them, plinked with them, fast drawn with them, hunted with them, wrote about them, reloaded for them, and enjoyed countless hours just holding and appreciating them.

When I first started reloading for both the .45 Colt and .44 Special, I was not very smart. I thought everything had to be loaded heavy, so the .45 Colt was loaded with 260-grain Keith 454424 bullets over 10.0 grains of Unique or 18.5 grains of 2400, while for the .44 Special I used Keith's 429421 over 17.0 grains

**“We are living in a time of many problems, but coming up with an excellent traditional single action is not one of them.”**



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of 2400. All of these loads are heavier than needed for normal everyday use, and I have wised up to the point of using 8.0 to 8.5 grains of Unique or Universal in the .45 Colt and 7.5 grains of the same two powders with the .44 Special; loads are in the 850 to 900 fps range.

Great Western was the first to replicate the Colt. They were totally American built, however, they could not compete with the resurrected Colt Single Action and disappeared in the early 1960s. Over the years I have managed to pick up several Great Westerns, especially in .44 Special and .45 Colt, though I made a major mistake: I wrote too much about them and now the price has gone up to where what used to be \$125 a few years ago is now closer to \$500.

After Great Western disappeared, we started seeing Italian replicas. Many of the earlier ones were not just bad, they were very bad. The steel was too soft, the actions were rough, the bluing was poorly done, and the less said about case colors, the better. Then to complete a poor package, the grip frames were brass. Colt Single Actions did not come with brass grip frames. That has all changed now, with a lot of the credit going to Cimarron and Navy Arms, as Mike Harvey and the late Val Forgett worked hard to get the Italians to not only produce authentic replicas, but also use stronger steel. I have several sixguns from both of these companies that will

shoot alongside the best original Single Actions ever produced. No one has to be embarrassed anymore by shooting Italian Single Actions. They are even being offered in stainless steel.

Most sixgunners will agree the 1st Generation Colt Single Actions were the finest ever produced, at least until now. Today, if I want the best possible traditional single action, I look no further than United States Firearms, better known as USFA. They are not only turning out beautifully finished single actions, but they are also perfectly timed, with cylinders as tight as revolvers costing two to three times as much. In addition to beautiful blued and case-colored versions, USFA also offers less expensive finishes, such as the satin nickel or all blue Cowboys and the matte blue finished Rodeo. Mechanically, these less costly sixguns are the equivalent of the standard Single Action. And for the traditionalist desiring adjustable sights, USFA even offers a Flat-Top Target, as was offered back in the 1890s.

We are living in a time of many problems, but coming up with an excellent traditional single action is not one of them. I just wish I had another half-century to spend shooting the grand old designs. William Mason did it right in 1873. The Single Action will always be a tribute to his genius or whatever supernatural force helped him along.

# CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

## A HALF-CENTURY WITH SIXGUNS Traditional single actions.

**D**ecember 1954. The Senate censures Senator Joe McCarthy; Bing Crosby is starring in *White Christmas*; Davy Crockett is fighting Indians on *Disneyland*; RCA introduces a 21" color TV; and I am 15 and a junior in high school. I had a paper route with 103 customers and collected 35¢ from each one on Friday evenings. I had to ride the bus downtown within the next three days to pay my bill. Every weekly trip would also see me visiting two large newsstands looking for anything about guns. There were no gun-specific magazines being published yet—or so I thought. However, companies like Fawcett regularly published gun-related 6x9" paperbacks selling for 75¢ (which I still have a large stack of), and I was looking for the latest edition.

This trip would prove to be different than any other. I made my way past the lunch counter to the back of the store to see what I could find. Suddenly, something catches my eye; I see the word *GUNS* on the top left corner of a magazine. Could it actually be a new magazine?

My heart rate increased considerably as I reached up and retrieved the first issue, dated January 1955, of this magazine. No way could I know what an effect this publication would have on my life. The first cover was what I thought to be a cased set of a pair of 4-3/4" Colt Single

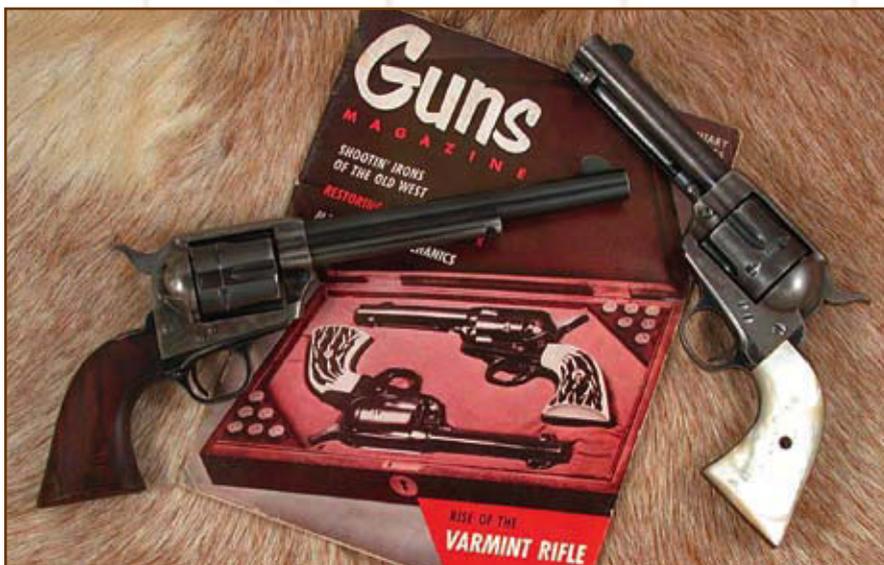
Actions. They instead turned out to be two relatively new single actions from Great Western, a new company that had just started production in Los Angeles, Calif., turning out replicas of the Colt Single Action.

### Great Westerns

From that day forward I had to have a Single Action Army. Being a high-school junior and paperboy from a non-gun family, that wasn't likely to happen very quickly. However, by December 1956 I had graduated from school, gone to work and had my first Colt Single Action. It was a 4-3/4" 1900s-era .38-40 in excellent condition with faded case colors, thin bluing and worn gutta percha stocks. It was gorgeous! Fifty years after seeing that first cover, I was awarded the privilege of shooting those same two .45 Great Westerns for the 50th anniversary of this magazine. You can bet a lot of personal single-action history happened in between those two events.

Great Western had started producing replicas of original Colts in 1954. (They actually used pictures of genuine Colt Single Actions in their advertising.) When Colt ceased production of the Single Action Army on the eve of WWII, they said they would never produce it again. Not only was the machinery worn, but sales had been going down steadily as shooters discovered Smith & Wesson .357 Magnums and Colt 1911s. Great Western had received a letter from Colt in the early 1950s reiterating their plan to never resurrect the Colt Single Action Army, and Great Western even bought some parts from Colt. Never say never, as by 1956 Colt was back in the Single Action business.

By 1956 the .38-40 was basically a dead cartridge, so perhaps that's why I was able to pick up my first Colt at reasonable price. A few months after finding my first Single Action, a brand-new 7-1/2" .45 Colt now known as a 2nd Generation Single Action showed



*It all started with that first January 1955 issue of GUNS. Taffin's first two Colts are long gone, but they have been replaced by this 7-1/2" 2nd Generation .45 and 4-3/4" pre-War .38-40.*

*continued on page 81*

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