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Fired Shell Casings

Just read Jeff's answer to Victor Ylgesias concerning the fired casings packed with new handguns (Q&A August). Thought you might like to know the requirement for a fired casing in New York State under what was called the "CoBis" system had been terminated as of March 31st of this year. After 10-plus years and over \$40 million, they finally figured out it didn't do anything in the way of solving crimes. Too bad it took them so long.

*Doug Spooner
The Armorer's Bench Gunshop
Dexter, N.Y.*

Reloading

I read your print addition monthly and find the articles educational and entertaining. I especially enjoy articles by John Conner. In the August issue he authored two articles on reloading, providing good advice on reading the reloading manuals, checking the online forums, and not listening to information from the guy missing fingers and claims "he likes his loads kinda hot."

One source of information not mentioned for information for reloading is the NRA. They offer numerous publications and courses you can attend taught by NRA-certified instructors on metallic cartridge and shot shell reloading.

Although I have been reloading for 30 years (and still have all my fingers), I still learned a great deal when getting my reloading certification. Go to: www.nratraining.net. Keep your powder dry.

*Gary Schwarz
NRA Certified Instructor
Range Safety Officer*

Pronghorn

In the August issue John Barsness wrote an exemplary piece on antelope hunting. Wyoming game and fish calls them antelope so I will too. I agree with him on everything he said but would add another dimension to hunting these speed demons. I am 68 years old, and have been hunting Wyoming antelope since 1983 when I first became a Wyoming resident. I have done long- and mid-range

shooting virtually the same as John describes. But for the last 15 years, I have, with only one exception, used an open-sight .44 revolver. It really puts fun in the hunt. I am not a trophy hunter but truly enjoy stalking. Not the easiest thing to do but it makes working up on elk with a .30-06 seem mild. Thank you for a great magazine.

*Ray Robinson
Green River, Wyo.*

Grip Matters

I can't remember how many articles I have read over the last few years on shooting the 1911 pistol and every one of them discussed how if you couldn't shoot the 1911 with your thumb on the disengaged safety, you were doing it wrong. My hands are not large and I have to reposition my hand considerably to get the safety off. I was perplexed at how the safety was going to be thrown on while I was shooting. I realize if it happens only once when you have to depend on the gun, it is once too many. Needless to say, I was confused and concerned I shouldn't use the gun as a primary defense. Thanks for a voice of reason in a sea of banter. Massad Ayoob's July 2012 "Handguns" column added considerable peace of mind as I no longer worry my thumb is not in the "approved" position when I am shooting.

*John Weaver
via e-mail*

Push Vs. Controlled Feed

I really learn things when I read John Barsness' articles, and his piece on "Controlled Or Push-Feed" is no exception. But I feel he failed to mention one of the most helpful features of a PF action: the ability to fully load the magazine and then drop another round directly into the chamber—and then still be able to close the bolt. That move could break the extractor on a Mauser action. Even though I'd never give up my trusty Parker Hale bolt, I really like my son's Remington 700, primarily for that reason.

*Kenton Clark
via e-mail*

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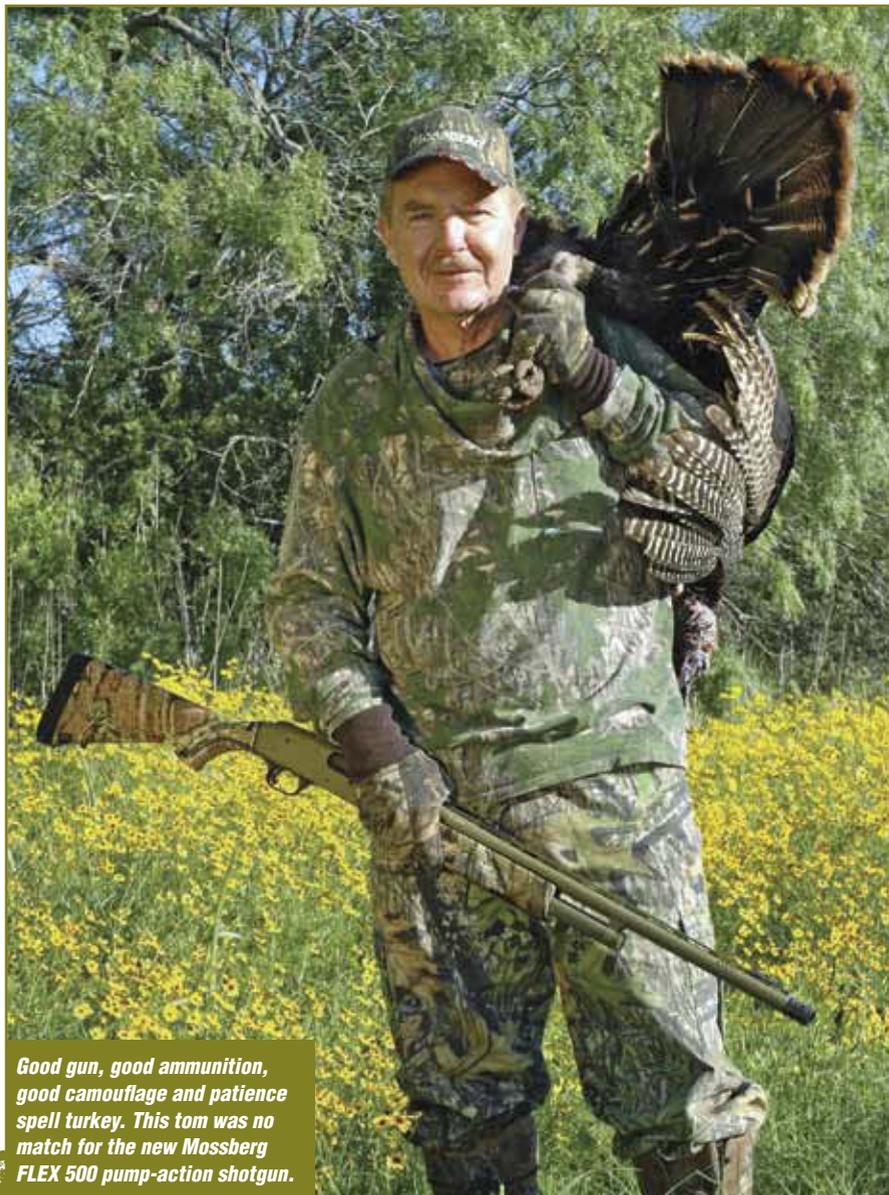
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SHOTGUNNER

STORY: Holt Bodinson

THE FUTURE IS FLEXIBLE Especially with the new Mossberg FLEX 500 12-gauge shotgun.

I was always curious about European arms makers who offered one rifle receiver and interchangeable barrels in a dozen different calibers. Knowing a few sportsmen who bought into the concept, I observed that, most of the time, their one receiver was mated with one favorite caliber barrel while the other barrels languished, gathering dust in the gun safe.



Good gun, good ammunition, good camouflage and patience spell turkey. This tom was no match for the new Mossberg FLEX 500 pump-action shotgun.

Then along came the AR's and, depending upon the mission, both soldiers and shooters began swapping out uppers, buttstocks, handguards, sighting systems, flash suppressors and suppressors willy-nilly. We are definitely headed into a modular world of firearms in which form follows function and right at the head of the flexible shotgunning pack is Mossberg. Modifying their already modular Model 500/590 pump shotgun series, Mossberg has created a fascinating array of low-cost optional assemblies and a unique quick-change system they call "FLEX."

Mossberg's FLEX system was originally developed with a military application in mind. The military had made it known they were interested in a modular shotgun. Mossberg's rugged and utterly reliable Model 590A1 pump gun already was the US military's primary fighting shotgun, as it has been here for the last 25 years and currently in 41 other countries as well, so Mossberg moved vigorously ahead to design a flexible shotgun system that would put them in first place for the next 25 years. Then the climate changed.

For whatever reason, budgetary or otherwise, military interest in the modular shotgun concept waned so Mossberg moved the project to a back burner where it simmered for 7 years.

The Time Is Ripe

Then 2 or 3 years ago, the Mossberg family moved it once again to the front burner with the growing, sporting consumer market in mind. The result is impressive as will be its marketing through major dealers. There are currently 11 12-gauge models being offered in the FLEX system format and 16 complementing accessories with more becoming available based on consumer interest and demand. The models can be sorted out into three groups—all-purpose, hunting and tactical.

The key to the FLEX system is its "Tool-less Locking System," actually systems. Mossberg brands it their "TLS." What the TLS offers



A



B



C

Changing stocks (above) takes seconds with Mossberg's FLEX system by (A) lifting the locking latch behind the top tang safety, then twist the latch (B) and pull off the stock (C). Holt rotated between a 24" turkey barrel and a 24" slug barrel (below) during the hunt with the new Mossberg FLEX 500 shotgun, shooting Hornady's new Heavy Magnum Turkey loads and SST slugs. Both loads excelled as game getters.

the shooter is a quick and convenient way to change a variety of low-priced stocks, recoil pads, fore-ends and, therefore, barrels in seconds, not minutes.

The heavy lifter in the TLS is the coupling connecting the receiver to the buttstock. There is no longer a long through-the-butt bolt hidden under the recoil pad. In its place is a multi-splined stub at the rear of the receiver mated with a female coupling in the pistol grip of the stock and locked into place with a vertical, swiveling key. In practice, all you have to do to change stocks is to lift the TLS key, turn it and pull the receiver and existing stock apart. Insert the new stock, turn the key and push it down. The result is a strong metal-to-metal joint. Try as I



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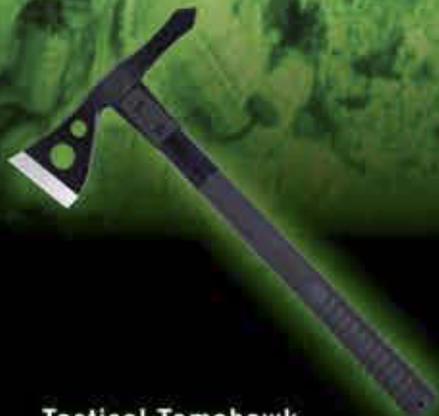
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The Hornady 300-grain SST slug at 2,000 fps proved to be a devastating big-game load.



Hornady's 1-1/2 ounces of nickel-plated No. 5 shot (above) simply hammered the turkey-patterning target. It hammered a tom turkey later, too. The slug barrel (below) generated rifle-sized 1-1/2" groups with Hornady's SST slug at 100 yards.



did to shoot it loose with magnum slug loads and muscle it around, that joint didn't even creak.

Buttstocks include the infamous Mossberg "Cruiser" pistol grip, three standard, black or camo, synthetic stocks with length-of-pulls of 12-1/2", 13-1/2" and 14-1/2"; a 4-position hunting stock adjustable from 12-3/4" to 14-5/8" LOPs and two comb heights; and a 6-position, adjustable tactical stock offering LOPs from 11" to 14-1/4".

The second part of the TLS is a pushbutton system at the toe of the buttstock. Pushing it in permits you to pop off the existing recoil pad and pop on another size. There are three pad thicknesses available—3/4", 1-1/4" and 1-1/2"—allowing you to switch out LOPs for seasonal clothing or for different size shooters.

The third switch in the TLS is located under the fore-end. Pressing it allows you to detach the fore-end from the action bars by simply pushing the fore-end forward and rotating it down. The system sure beats fussing with an ornery magazine cap screw and gives you a choice of standard black or camo fore-ends and a tactical fore-end featuring three Picatinny rails and two protected recesses for mounting pressure switches.

The final, intriguing component to this ensemble is Mossberg's new adjustable shotgun trigger—the LPA or "Lightning Pump Action" trigger—adjustable from 3 to 7 pounds without creep. Similar in design to the earlier Savage Accutrigger, the center blade of the LPA has to be fully depressed to fire the gun. To me, a fully adjustable trigger on a modestly priced shotgun is a miracle come true. I can't tell you how much a light, crisp trigger can mean to all your shotgunning activities.

FLEX Afield

I'm impressed with the concept and the quality of its execution. At the invitation of Mossberg's Linda Powell, I had an opportunity to work with the FLEX systems while hunting turkeys and wild boar with Mellon Creek Outfitters on a ranch near Corpus Christi, Texas. I might add the Mellon Creek guides proved to be exceptionally talented in calling in trophy toms and locating the wily wild boar.

For turkeys, I chose Mossberg's FLEX 500 Hunting model with a 24" ported barrel tubed with a tight .670" Accu-Choke and mounted with fiber optic sights and an LPA trigger. The metal was finished in very pleasing OD green while the stocks were cloaked in Mossy Oak Break-Up Infinity camouflage. My

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turkey load was Hornady's brand new 3" Heavy Magnum Turkey shell packed with 1-1/2" ounces of nickel-plated No. 5 shot at 1,300 fps. At 35 yards, the new shell really hammered the patterning target, and it went on to hammer three early morning toms before the hunt was over.

Boar

Toward mid-afternoon, I would switch out the turkey tube for a 24" rifled and ported slug tube mounted with a quality Swarovski Z6i 1.7-10x42 scope with an illuminated reticle. Swarovski also loaned me a pair of CL Companion 8x30 binoculars that proved invaluable for picking up toms and boars in the dense vegetation of the ranch. My slug load was another Hornady product, their SST label, 300-grain, Flex Tipped slug at 2,000 fps. The Hornady catalog boasts about 2" groups with the SST at 100 yards. My Mossberg/Swarovski/Hornady combination proved capable of cutting 1-1/2" for 3-shot groups at 100 yards which speaks pages about the rigidity of the FLEX models plus the slugger put down two sizable boars at 30 and 50 yards respectfully with no argument whatsoever.

During the off hours of the hunt, I played "change-it" with a variety of FLEX stock and pad combinations Mossberg had sent along. It's a simple and straight-forward system. You know that adage about "Beware the man with one gun." This could be that *one gun* that instills familiarity and confidence and conserves cash. For a family, it could fill a niche for all ages and all purposes from clays to hunting to tactical home protection. Don't be surprised if a 20 gauge isn't added to the FLEX family soon or maybe even an autoloader.

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RIFLEMAN

STORY: Dave Anderson

LONG LIVE THE .22! A family's generations with rimfire rifles.

Around 1918 my grandfather, with help from neighbors, built a big hip-roof barn on the family farm. Grandpa was a highly skilled carpenter. There was no “contractor” involved. He wouldn't have known what a contractor was.

It's just another barn, not at all unusual for its era, but to take a closer look at the quality of materials and workmanship is to marvel. The rafters are of seasoned fir, straight as a rifle barrel and about as hard.

Wood joints (all hand cut, there was no electricity on the farm then) fit

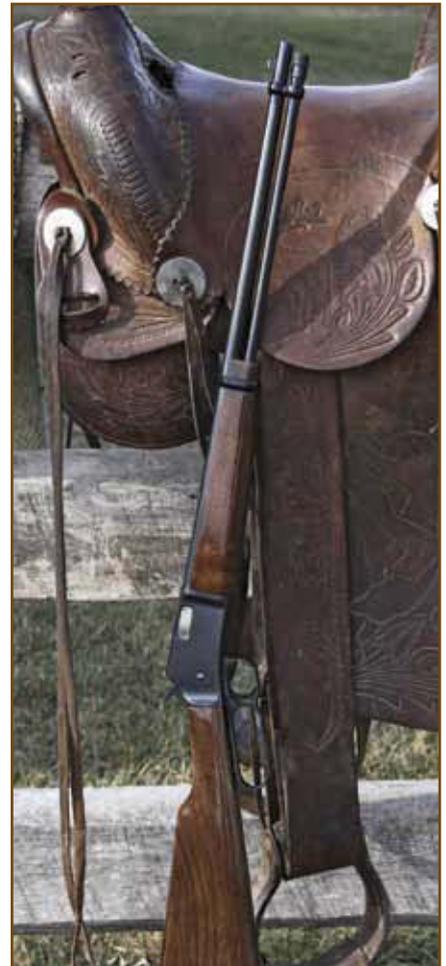
together seamlessly. Nails were driven with hammers, not nail guns, and you'll look long and hard to find any “owl eyes” around the nail heads.

A decade ago, when it came time to reshingle the barn, my wife and I decided to spend the money once and use steel. When the contractor had finished the installation he said, “That is the straightest building we've ever roofed. We didn't have to make a single adjustment as we went along, and the last sheet lined up as perfectly as the first.”

While Grandpa was building his barn, workers at the Savage Arms factory in Utica, N.Y., were making a Model 1914 pump-action .22 rifle. Their skills were different, but their approach was the same. “Do it once — do it right.” It was how they did things back then.

The triggerguard, for example, is machined in one piece with the receiver. Both inside and outside surfaces of the guard are gracefully radiused. Why didn't they just machine it straight and flat? It would have been easier and cheaper. The walnut buttstock is hard, nicely figured, carefully fitted, and with a steel, grooved buttplate. Trigger break is crisp, clean, nearly motionless.

Around 1920, my grandfather bought the Savage rifle. In the '40s he



Dave bought this Browning BL-22 for his wife in 1975, a couple of years after they were married. The BL-22 is still available from Browning in a variety of models, including a dainty little youth model with 12" length of pull. The BL-22 is one of Dave's favorite lever-action .22s, along with the great Marlin 39 and the discontinued Winchester 9422.

gave it to my father, and in due course Dad gave it to me. Like the barn and house it has been part of the farm for 90 years.

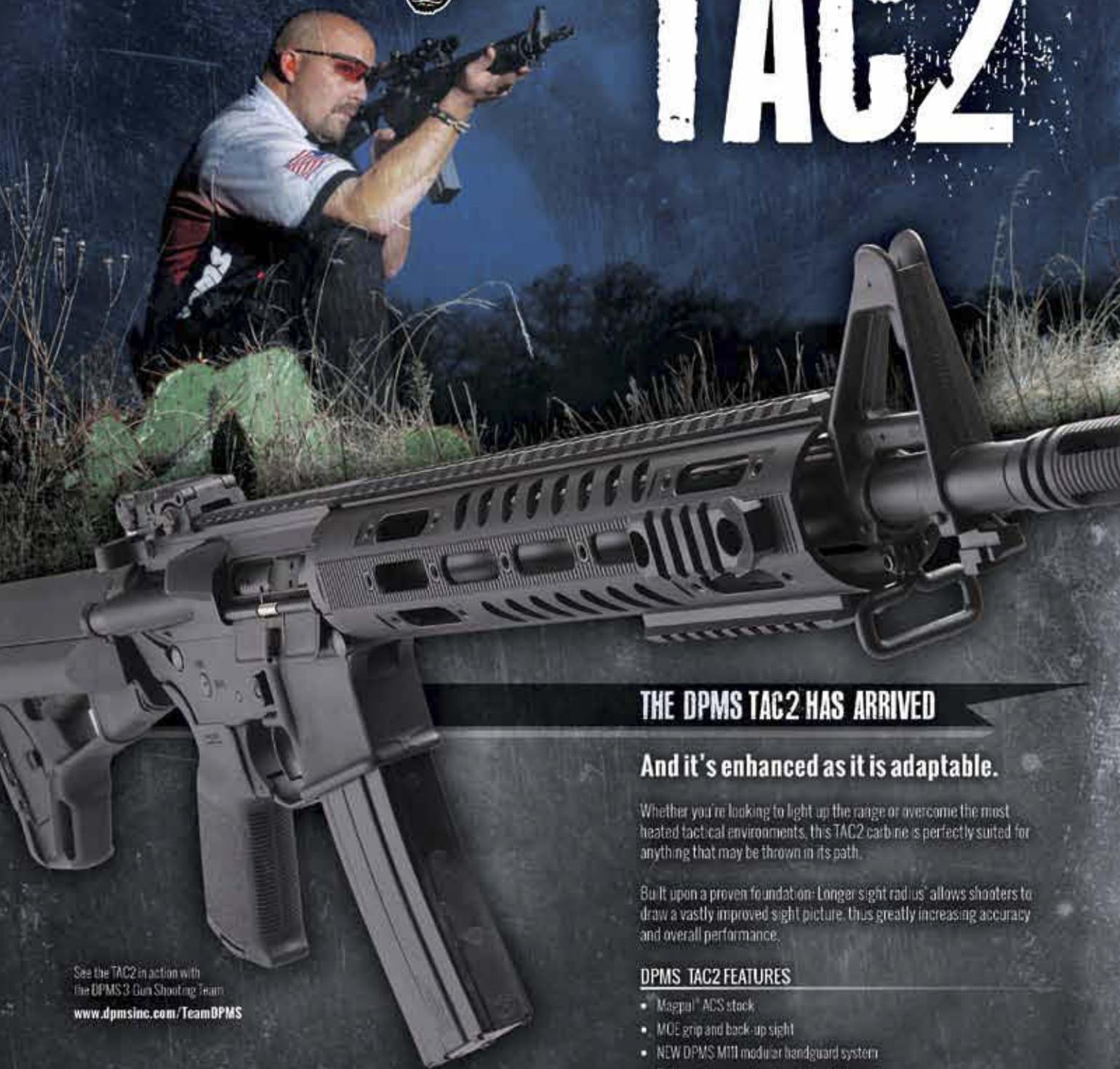
It's been used to shoot rats around the barn and grain bins, ground squirrels in the hay fields, crows, magpies, skunks and weasels trying to steal baby chicks. During the lean years of the '30s, when the farm was on the brink of foreclosure, it put game meat on the table. It was used when the time came to butcher steers and hogs.



Dave didn't really plan it this way, but the family's .22 rifles cover the gamut of action types and include (left) the Savage 1914 pump, acquired by his grandfather around 1920, an Anschutz 64 bolt action Dave's dad gave him in 1965, Browning BL-22 lever action bought for Dave's wife Simone in 1975 and the Browning semi-automatic bought in 1978 and given by Dave to his daughter some years later.



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Grandpa's old .22, a Savage 1914 pump (above), along with a few other tools from nearly a century ago. When Grandpa needed a chest to store and transport his tools, he didn't buy one, he made one. This Savage 1914 .22 rifle and the threshing machine behind it (right) both date to about the same era, around 1918. The threshing machine has been obsolete a long, long time. Except for having no provision for a scope, the Savage hasn't been surpassed to this day and is still accurate and reliable.

Dad used .22 Shorts almost exclusively. They were cheaper, quieter, and since he always shot vermin and small game in the head, worked just fine. There were always a few .22 LR cartridges in the “junk drawer,” used only at butchering time. I can tell you from considerable personal experience, a .22 LR solid from a rifle, at a range of a couple of feet, drops a 1,000-pound steer like a rock. We regarded LR cartridges about the way a .300 Weatherby is regarded today.

Dad didn't practice much but he was a natural athlete. Living in the middle of several thousand otherwise unoccupied acres there was no danger in aerial shooting with the .22. On several occasions I saw him toss up a tin can with his left hand, then hit it two or three times before it hit the ground.

A couple of the best shots I ever made were with the old Savage, on crows, offhand at 35 or 40 yards. Not impressed? Well, the crows were flying at the time.

In the mid-'60s I badly wanted a scoped rifle, and tried to get Dad to have a gunsmith drill or groove the receiver of the Savage. Thank heaven he didn't listen. Instead he bought me the best rifle he could find for sale, an Anschutz sporter built on the 64 action.

Dad and Granddad took care of tools, whether an ax, a hammer, or a rifle. But they bought them to use and used them hard, as they used themselves hard. Today the Savage has lost most of its original finish. There are plenty of dings and scratches in stock and metal. But there's no rust, nothing broken or missing. The rifle is as reliable and accurate today as when it was made nearly a century ago.



I learned from their example; some things are worth stretching the budget, especially for tools you use a lot. Binoculars are one example, .22 rifles another. In the '70s we added two more “family” .22 rifles, a Browning BL-22 for my wife and another Browning, the classic takedown semiautomatic, for our daughter (bought long before she was born, incidentally—it's best to be prepared).

If there hasn't been a tradition of quality .22 rifles in your family it's time to start one.

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HANDLOADING

STORY: John Barsness

THE .41 REMINGTON MAGNUM This inbetween powerhouse endures.

The .41 Remington Magnum is in many ways the handgun equivalent of the .280 Remington and 16 gauge, a cartridge regarded by a relatively few True Believers as a perfect combination of ballistics and recoil. Like the .280 and 16, the .41 refuses to die, but all three rounds lag far behind the popularity of the dominant cartridges in their categories, the .44 Remington Magnum, .270 Winchester and 12 gauge.

While most 21st-century shooters remember Elmer Keith as the father of the .41 Magnum, other notable handgunners also had a part in its 1964 introduction, including Bill Jordan and Skeeter Skelton. The .41 was originally conceived as the perfect law enforcement round, more effective than the .38 Special and .357 Magnum then used by most American police departments, but more controllable than the .44 Magnum, considered the world's most powerful handgun cartridge even nine years after its introduction in 1955.

The public's fascination with the power of the .44 affected the success of the .41. Even the so-called "police" load produced by Remington, a 210-grain cast bullet at 1,050 feet per second, produced about twice the recoil of the typical .38 Special service load. The "hunting" load was a 210-grain bullet at 1,500 fps, developing over 1,000 foot-pounds of muzzle energy, and nearly the same recoil as the 240-grain "Hi-Speed" load of the .44 Magnum.

Too Big And Heavy

Also, Smith & Wesson chambered the .41 in the same large N-frame as the .44 Mag, calling it the Model 57. Instead of being somewhere between S&W's smaller K-frame revolvers chambered for the .38 Special and .357 Mag and the .44 Model 29, the Model 57 weighed slightly more than the Model 29, due to the smaller hole in the barrel, so didn't have any

advantage as a carry revolver.

One of the oldest rules of breechloading firearms is there's only so much space in any given cartridge category, and sales of the .41 lagged far behind the .44. Like devotees of the .280 and 16, the .41's True Believers keep pointing out why this shouldn't be so, citing small advantages in ballistics, including saying it shot

flatter than the .44, a claim that originated with Elmer Keith.

Keith took a Model 57 along on a polar bear hunt, and he and his guide used the .41 to collect meat caribou. His published story pointed out the flatter trajectory of the .41. But if we run the numbers of 1964's full-power 210-grain .41 and 240-grain .44 factory loads through Sierra's Infinity ballistics program, using a zero range of 50 yards, we find the .41 only .3" flatter at 150 yards—a long distance to be shooting at any big game animal with an iron-sighted revolver. With today's factory loads the .44 shoots flatter, given equal bullet weights, even beyond 150 yards.

Please don't take this wrong. My first handgun larger than a .357 Mag was a S&W Model 657, the stainless version of the 57, with a 6-1/2" barrel. It was purchased new in 1989 as an all-around handgun for hunting big game, plus carrying as an emergency sidearm in Montana's backcountry. The 657 shot very accurately, with a couple of loads grouping five rounds into around 2" at 50 yards, not 25,



The two test revolvers were both Smith & Wesson Model 57s, one a blued model with a 4" barrel (above), the other nickel-plated with an 8-3/8" barrel.





Both Model 57s shot very well, partly because they had great triggers.

partly because the trigger broke incredibly cleanly at around 3 pounds. Eventually I ended up owning two other .41s, a Ruger Blackhawk with 7-1/2" barrel, and Thompson/Center Contender with a 10" barrel. Both shot very well too.

New Competition

The 657 served its intended purposes over a decade or so, but

eventually I grew weary of carrying 3 pounds of steel even when riding a horse. It also didn't seem to kick a heck of a lot less than my friends' .44 Magnums. Expanding handgun bullets had also improved enormously, making the .357 Mag a more definite self-defense round, and a number of single-action shooters had started heating up the old .45 Colt in new revolvers, with modern brass and

heavier bullets. The .41 was not only competing with the .44 Magnum but the .45 Colt.

With .44 Magnum and .45 Colt components available in any Montana sporting goods store, I'd also grown weary of trying to find .41 Magnum brass and jacketed bullets. After accumulating a diverse collection of other revolvers, including a Taurus .44 Magnum with a 3" barrel and a Ruger Blackhawk .45 Colt with a 7-1/2" barrel, I sold my .41s and their reloading stuff.

Not too long thereafter, of course, the editor of *GUNS* asked for a handloading column on the .41. After putting an ad for a used .41 in the classified section of the popular Internet chat-room .24hourcampfire.com, but apparently the True Believers had driven up the price of .41s over the past few years.

Luckily, a couple of Montana friends, Kirk Stovall and Billy Stuver, saw the ad and offered to loan me their .41s and some fired brass. Both guns were S&W 57s, Kirk's nickel-plated with an 8-3/8" barrel, Billy's a blued 4" model. Both had the same great trigger pull as my departed 657, testing right around 3 pounds on a Timney trigger scale. Kirk offered the use of his RCBS dies, and Billy also

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PERFECTION

**.41 REMINGTON MAGNUM
HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE
S&W MODEL 57, 4" BARREL**

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
SIERRA 170 JHP	Enforcer	24.0	1,544	2.26
SIERRA 170 JHP	H110	25.0	1,444	3.43
NOSLER 210 JHP	Accurate No. 9	16.0	1,180	2.22
NOSLER 210 JHP	Enforcer	20.0	1,298	1.80
NOSLER 210 JHP	Li'l Gun	21.5	1,348	4.88
KEITH-STYLE 230 CAST	H110	19.0	1,167	4.36
KEITH-STYLE 230 CAST	Enforcer	18.0	1,298	1.80
BRP 270 FP CAST	Enforcer	17.0	1,302	2.48

**.41 REMINGTON MAGNUM
HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE
S&W MODEL 57, 8-3/8" BARREL**

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
SIERRA 170 JHP	Enforcer	24.0	1,792	3.18
SIERRA 170 JHP	H110	25.0	1,665	1.81
NOSLER 210 JHP	Accurate No. 9	16.0	1,418	1.12
NOSLER 210 JHP	Enforcer	20.0	1,552	3.68
NOSLER 210 JHP	Li'l Gun	21.5	1,539	2.51
KEITH-STYLE 230 CAST	H110	19.0	1,360	1.81
KEITH-STYLE 230 CAST	Enforcer	18.0	1,528	1.33
BRP 270 FP CAST	Enforcer	17.0	1,442	2.38

Notes: Remington brass was used in the 4" 57, Winchester brass in the 8-3/8", with CCI 500 primers.

provided some cast 230-grain bullets. Jacketed bullets were accumulated from several companies, and another 24hourcampfire guy, Ed Musetti, sent some BRP 270-grain cast bullets.

After a search through current data, nine loads were selected for testing. The original plan was to stick with newer powders, but H110/W296 turned up so often in the search it had to be retried. (They're the same powder in different canisters.)

The first 25-yard group with Kirk's nickel-plated .41, 16.0 grains of Accurate No. 9 and the 210-grain Nosler jacketed hollowpoint, was very reminiscent of my 657. Five shots went into barely over an inch! Not all the bullet/powder combinations shot as well, of course, but overall both revolvers shot very accurately.

Most .41 Magnums do shoot extremely well. One theory is that since .41s aren't cranked out like .44 Magnums, the chambers, throats and overall alignment tend to vary less. The .41 also recoils slightly less than the .44 Magnum or a hot-loaded .45 Colt, while still providing sufficient power for most revolver tasks. By the end of the tests I was starting to believe again!

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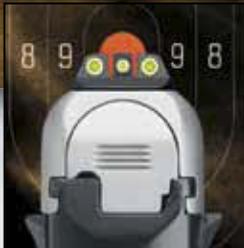
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GUNSMITHING

STORY: Hamilton S. Bowen

SIXGUN FLU

Fine-tuning the double-action revolver.

Most box-stock autoloaders will work pretty well right out of the box fired with the ball ammo most were designed to shoot. Where most go off the rails is with ammo they don't like. Fed properly, and absent undue wear or abuse, they will soldier on forever. Double-action revolvers, on the other hand, will function with virtually anything that 1) has a live, properly seated primer, 2) fits in the chamber and 3) doesn't seize in the chamber or blow the gun up on the first shot. But double-action revolvers, especially big bores, seem more prone to get out of kilter through ordinary use and may, occasionally, require some minor adjustments to remain healthy and happy.

While these remarks are generally applicable to all DA revolvers, they are specifically tailored to the ubiquitous Smith & Wesson guns. There are three major problems that crop up. Typically, the symptoms are the same: the gun develops a 'gallop' or cramp in the action cycle that can vary from chamber-to-chamber. In combination, a couple of the problems can bring the cycle to a halt.

Happily, the condition most responsible is the least troublesome to set aright. It is cylinder endfloat, defined as the back and forth movement of the cylinder on the "yoke" in S&W parlance ("crane" in others) along its center axis. In the extreme cases causing action binding, you can almost always hear a click when you move the cylinder back and forth. If you look across

the barrel-to-cylinder gap, you can see it tighten and loosen when the action is cycled. If the hand tips the cylinder forward enough to drag on the barrel extension, you will often feel a noticeable increase in cycling pressure. It is not unheard of for the gun to simply stop running mid trigger stroke.

The basic cause is usually just using the gun. The basic S&W design is over a 100 years old and did not contemplate magnum cartridges. The small yoke-to-cylinder bearing area simply batters in time and the increased clearance allows longitudinal cylinder movement. The basic fix is to take up the slack. This is done variously through yoke-stretching procedures or shims. I find the Power Custom shims more predictable. Using as many of the .002" shims as is necessary, I'll put



Sorting out yoke fit requires a spot-facing cutter with its guide sleeve and a yoke alignment tool (above). The shims take up any slack. Yoke alignment is checked with this special gauge pin (below). The tip of the tool must enter the receiver center pinhole without hitching or binding.



them in the bottom of the cylinder yoke bore where the yoke bears and try the cylinder. When it closes stiffly, I know we're there. I use a Brownells/Power Custom yoke-squaring tool to remove just enough material to let the cylinder run free with no back-and-forth movement. A side benefit is an increased bearing surface once trued up. This should not materially change the headspace but you must check it to be sure. Feeler gauges will do for an open-back cylinder. A recessed head cylinder will require both feeler gauges and depth micrometer. The barrel-to-cylinder gap may show a small increase but usually it remains in spec.

The next adjustment that may be necessary to cure a galloping action is yoke alignment. The cylinder center pin runs in a corresponding hole in the standing breech. If the yoke isn't in exact alignment with this hole, the center pin will bear on just one side of pinhole and can cause dragging or binding problems, especially if the extractor isn't well centered in the cylinder. Adjustment is pretty simple and requires a simple yoke alignment gauge and an adjusting tool. With the gun held firmly in a padded vise



Getting the best performance from a high-quality revolver may require some fine tuning.

and the cylinder removed, just install the stripped yoke and yoke side-plate screw, making sure the yoke opens and closes freely. With the alignment tool on the yoke, hold the yoke closed at the front and run the alignment tool nose into the center pinhole in the frame. If the tool won't go or rubs on an edge, open the yoke, remove the tool and, with the yoke held in the open position by hand, adjust the alignment with a proper adjusting bar by bending the yoke ever so slightly in the required direction. The alignment tool should run freely in and out of the center pinhole.

For reasons known only to the cylinder gods, S&W ejector rods always seem bent or getting ready to be bent. Once tweaked out of alignment, they are another major cause of the dreaded action gallop. Opening the cylinder and spinning it, any serious misalignment in the rod will be evident. With the yoke removed, you will often see a spot of blue wear on a portion of the rod where it runs out and rubs on the yoke. The bigger problem is out at the end of the rod where it engages the front locking bolt under the barrel. This eccentric movement is felt in the action cycle as varying pressure to run the gun from chamber to chamber.



The yoke alignment is actually set with the adjustment bar (above). Straightening the ejector rod requires a dedicated fixture for best results (below). The actual adjustments are made with the same tool as the yoke adjustments.



Adjusting the ejector rod alignment is the trickiest part of this exercise and requires dedicated tooling to do it at all well and predictably. The excellent Power Custom ejector alignment fixture isn't cheap but it works better than anything else we've ever tried. The tool consists of a cradle which holds the cylinder assembly and

lets you spin it with a dial indicator bearing on the tip of the ejector rod. Again, the adjustment tool is a round bar with a hole in it to accept the rod. Once you determine the direction of the misalignment, you tweak the rod the other way. Sounds easy enough in theory but, in practice, it can be a bit exasperating and can take a few minutes of fussing around to perfect. We figure anything less than .005" or so is about as good as it gets.

This general malady is fairly common and is regular fare for revolver doctors. The condition rarely disables a good revolver but leaves it in a miserable, sickly state. Unlike a lot of basic gunsmithing, unless you have the tools, there may be no substitute for seeking professional help. Still, just recognizing the symptoms will give revolver shooters a fighting chance of curing revolver flu.

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MONTANA MUSINGS

STORY: Mike "Duke" Venturino
PHOTOS: Yvonne Venturino

MITCHELL'S MAUSERS Offering some rare WWII Mausers found behind the former Iron Curtain.

A few days ago a friend said to me, "Duke, you dive into everything full speed." I do. For my entire life when something in the firearms world captures my fancy I delve into it deeply. In the early 1990s it was Civil War rifle/muskets—I bought about a dozen replicas and originals. With time, the passion cooled and I kept my favorite and sold off the rest. That was followed by 19th century lever guns. At one point I owned about three dozen vintage Winchesters and Marlins. Now I'm back to a third of that.

What my friend was speaking of specifically was my current affinity for military Mauser rifles such as written about in this column in the July issue. Someday I might sell or trade the ones gathered so far but right now I'm at warp speed studying and shooting them.

An unexpected acquisition I'm not going to write about yet spurred my newest Mauser purchase—a German K98k 8x57mm. I needed a fine shooter but not a pristine collector's item because my intention is to alter it. K98ks are not uncommon on the used gun market but they can range in condition from relics to unissued. Instead of taking a chance for this project I wanted a sure bet. So I turned to Mitchell's Mausers.

For years now Mitchell's Mausers has had people scouring Europe for rifles. These have been K98ks surrendered by the Germans at the end of World War II and various similar models made in the Balkans both pre- and post-WWII. Literally tons of Mauser rifles were warehoused in various condition and countries for decades. Mitchell's Mausers brought

them to California, refurbished them and have been selling them in various grades. A few years back, I had a sample here for articles and also just a couple months ago a friend bought one, which I have watched him shoot on several occasions. With both I was impressed with their accuracy and also with their restoration quality.

Refurbished

So I called Mitchell's Mausers, told them of my project and asked them to pick me a good candidate. To say I am pleased with my new K98k is an understatement. Not only has it been professionally restored and wears a barrel with bright shiny bore, but it turned out to be an early WWII one.

The German Wehrmacht (armed forces) were fond of stamping all sorts of designations on their equipment. My new K98k is dated 1940 on its receiver ring along with the code AX. Looking that up in the book *Mauser Military Rifles Of The World, Third Edition* by Robert W.D. Ball showed it was made by a firm named *Feinmechanische Werke GmbH* located in Erfurt, Germany.



Duke's new K98k was made in 1940. Note the "7,91" stamp on the barrel ring (above). That's its exact bore diameter in millimeters. Duke doesn't expect to be able to shoot this well with open sights but regardless this was the very first group (below) fired with his new K98k restored by Mitchell's Mausers.



K98ks made early in WWII differed from later ones in some details. For instance, their fore-end caps were milled. Later ones were stamped. Buttplates on early rifles were flat. Later ones are called cupped buttplates. Also front sights on early K98ks did not have hoods or the grooves needed for their installation. All those features are correct on this rifle.

Here's an interesting detail. Early on the Germans also stamped the top of each barrel with a set of numbers. They are that barrel's exact internal diameter in millimeters. This one is stamped 7.91. Another Mauser in my



Duke purchased this Mitchell's Mausers German K98k recently for an upcoming project.

collection from 1937 is stamped 7.9. Other K98ks in my racks dated 1942 and later do not have those stamps.

Here are a few specs of a K98k also taken from Ball's book. Barrel length is 23.62". Overall length is 43.6". Weight is 8.6 pounds. Magazine capacity is five rounds. Sights are a blade front dovetailed to the stud atop the barrel and rear is a tangent ladder type with a simple open notch, graduated to 2,000 meters. K98ks are built on Peter Paul Mauser's very strong Model 1898 action with its three locking lugs and bolt cock-on-opening feature.

The same day my new K98k arrived I had it to my range for sighting in and to determine if it was accurate enough for my proposed project. On hand I had two 8x57mm handloads. Both contained Hornady's new 196-grain hollowpoint, boattail bullet. One load was charged with 47.0 grains of Hodgdon's Varget and the other with 50 grains of IMR4350. I did not chronograph those loads from my new rifle but from another K98k they gave about 2,500 fps and 2,300 fps respectively.

Zeroing on a paper target took but a few minutes because I was armed with a front sight adjusting tool specifically for Mausers from Accumounts. It fits over the barrel and pushes the front sight blade in the direction needed. My rifle started out shooting about 4" to the right. Pushing its front sight very slightly to the right (about .04") moved point-of-impact dead on. For elevation, the slower handload hit at point of aim at 100 yards and the faster one was about 6" higher.

What about group sizes? I almost hesitate to say. The first loads fired were those with IMR4350. A couple of 3-shot clusters stayed inside 2" and I wasn't unhappy with such. Then I started with the Varget load and three shots went into 5/8". I couldn't leave it there because readers would say such a group was fired with a keyboard. Therefore two more rounds were fired. The group still was only 1-1/2". Some follow-up shooting on steel to 300 yards has confirmed that this rifle is finely accurate.

It will be perfect for my project which I'll detail as soon as it's complete.

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HANDGUNS

STORY: Massad Ayoob

DAN WESSON SPECIALIST This timeless .45 ACP 1911 meets modern light rail capability.

CZ's Dan Wesson subsidiary has been manufacturing 1911 pistols for some time now, and have earned many friends in the "1911 fan club." Their latest is the Specialist, with integral light rail on the dust cover portion of the frame. Intended to serve the new renaissance of the 1911 in law enforcement, the maker realizes it's also particularly suitable for home defense.

The M1913 rail configuration will make it unsuitable for most of your old 1911 carry rigs, but holsters for light-railed 1911s are out there. I use one from Elmer McEvoy at Leather Arsenal, which hides well under a concealment vest or un-tucked open front sport shirt. For bedside use, I attached the new Streamlight TLR-4 combined white light and laser unit. It worked fine, as these steel-frame guns don't get picky about functioning with such attachments on, as some polymer models have been known to do. The TLR-4 went onto the Specialist's Pic rail easily and came off the same way, staying secure in between, evidence Dan Wesson has the dimensions down

pat.

A lot of thought has gone into the subtleties of the Specialist's design. For one thing, the stud of the slide stop on the right is flush with the frame, ostensibly to clear the way for the laser beam of a Crimson Trace LaserGrip. This feature also prevents pressure of a tense trigger finger on the frame from moving the slide stop leftward and setting the stage for an unintended lock-up at the worst possible time.

The heavy-duty fixed sights are strikingly reminiscent of Hilton Yam's 10-8 design, with a "tactical ledge" to allow a user with only one working hand to run the slide by



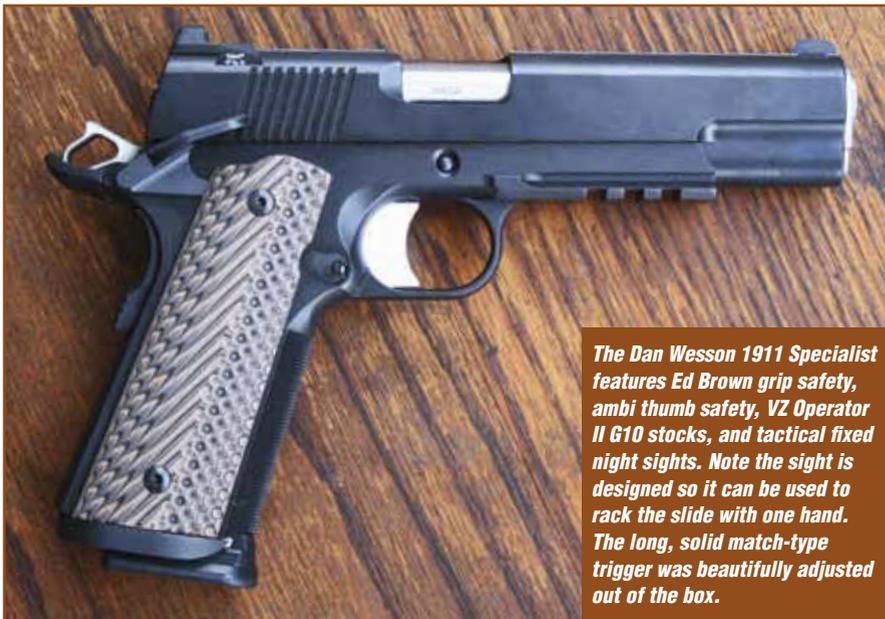
Mas demonstrates controllability of Specialist: arrows show .45 hardball brass in air from fast double-top, but muzzle is still on target.

hooking the rear sight against belt or holster. It contains Trijicon night sight ampoules in a figure "8" shape, the top dot in front bright green and the lower rear dot, a more subdued amber. In daylight, they present a big, blocky sight picture that's easy to quickly pick up. On the hand interface side of things, we have VZ's Operator II G10 grip panels with some fine frame checkering front and back, and a beveled magazine well is added to the butt.

Trigger Time

The trigger is long, solid, and came out of the box with a consistent pull averaging 4 pounds, 1 ounce, barely on the safe side of generally accepted industry spec for "serious" 1911s. Break was clean with no perceptible backlash. Running the slide by hand felt glassy smooth, always an indication of good fitting, and one of those things that just scream "quality!" to serious handgunners.

On a Matrix rest set on concrete at 25 yards, I was able to get a 1.95" group with 230-grain Speer Gold Dots, with the best three exactly an inch tighter, .95" center to center. With "old school" Remington Express .45 ACP 185-grain jacketed hollow point, a single stray shot blew the group out to 2.15", but the other four were in 7/10", and the best three were exactly 1/2" apart. In other words, if the group had been centered on the head of a .45 ACP cartridge, three of



The Dan Wesson 1911 Specialist features Ed Brown grip safety, ambi thumb safety, VZ Operator II G10 stocks, and tactical fixed night sights. Note the sight is designed so it can be used to rack the slide with one hand. The long, solid match-type trigger was beautifully adjusted out of the box.

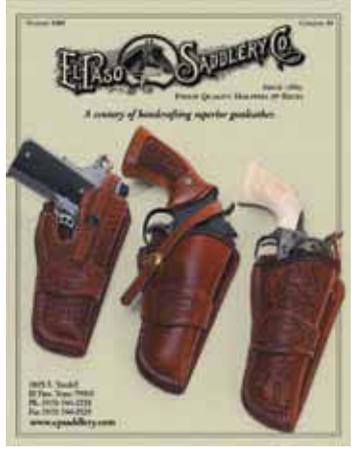


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Ordinary Remington 185-grain JHP (above) delivered this group with the Specialist from a 25-yard benchrest. The Specialist's standard Browning-design recoil spring cap and guide rod (below) are old-school standard while the M1913 rail is 21st century standard.

five shots would have hit it. Since the years have taught me that this “best three” measurement on a hand-held benchrest group is generally about what the same gun and ammo will do for all five shots from a machine rest, I was totally satisfied with the accuracy of the Dan Wesson Specialist.

Reliability And Shootability

About seven of us on the test team shot bunches o’ bullets through this gun, with never a misfire or stoppage. We did experience a temporary lockup of the magazine release, but once we fooled with it and apparently dislodged whatever bit of debris was in there, it went back to working fine. The oversize ambi thumb safety was very positive, and just this side of stiff. The pistol came with two 8-round Checkmate magazines with bumper pads. They worked fine with an assortment of JHP and hardball, and unlike some 8-round 1911 magazines seated cleanly and positively even with the slide forward. Checkmate is earning its way back from the debacle of their low-bid M9 magazines that did so poorly in Iraq and Afghanistan, and for which they’ve already apologized.

As befits its all-steel frame (forged, as is the slide), the Specialist proved mild in recoil and very quick back to target. It shot a whisker left for me at 25 yards, but in closer stayed center for



us all. The big, fixed sights combined with the sure traction of the grip treatment and a truly sweet trigger to make fast hits easy for everyone in the testing group.

The stainless version of the Specialist carries a manufacturer’s suggested price of \$1,558. We tested the more expensive version (\$1,870) with a heavy-duty finish that’s Dan Wesson’s answer to Glock’s Tenifer and S&W’s Melonite. The Specialist contains no MIM parts, and carries some big name components: extractor, ejector, and grip safety are from Ed Brown, and barrel bushing, hammer strut, and guide rod are from EGW, with springs from Wolff and ISM.

GUNS

SPECIALIST

MAKER: DAN WESSON
5169 ROUTE 12
NORWICH, NY 13815
(607) 336-1174

WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/DAN-WESSON

ACTION TYPE: Locked breech, semi-auto, **CALIBER:** .45 ACP, **CAPACITY:** 8+1, **BARREL LENGTH:** 5" , **OVER-ALL LENGTH:** 8.75", **WEIGHT:** 39.96 ounces, **FINISH:** Matte black duty, **SIGHTS:** Fixed tritium night sights, **GRIPS:** VZ Operator II G10, **PRICE:** \$1,870

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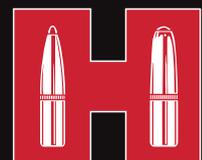
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OPTICS

STORY: Jacob Gottfredson

PARALLAX AND DISTORTION

How to adjust your scope.

I have written about parallax on several occasions in this magazine. Yet, questions still arise, partly because users are seeing other distortions that sometimes make adjusting for parallax confusing. Recognizing these distortions as not belonging to parallax might make the exercise less frustrating.

Parallax is normally described as the image cone entering the objective lens not converging at the reticle. Webster defines parallax as, "An apparent change in the direction of an object, caused by a change in the observational position that provides a new line of sight." A rifle scope may be parallax free at one distance and not another. Rifle scopes that have no parallax adjustment are normally set at some range at the factory. It might be at 100 yards or some slightly longer distance. If the rifle scope includes a parallax adjustment, you can fiddle with the knob or the front adjusting objective until it is parallax free at any distance desired.

The internal cone of convergence from the objective lens becomes shorter or longer as the image moves closer or farther away. Stated differently, the internal cone is not the same length for images at different distances.

Not A Rangefinder

Some refer to the parallax adjustment knob as the focus knob. In fact some people try to use it for ranging. As an example, suppose a deer is located exactly 600-yards away. You turn the parallax adjustment knob until the deer is perfectly focused and is parallax free and then look at the numbers on the knob. You would expect to see the knob positioned at exactly 600 yards. Voilà! Just dial in your 600-yard dope and have at it. Although that seems perfectly logical, unfortunately, it does not always work that way for several reasons.

Some optical designers and



The observer is viewing through the ocular lens from an angled position (above). Note the position of the crosshair. Also note that there is no color fringing at the edges of the white board on the black backer. One sign of a superior optic (a Zeiss ranging rifle scope, by the way). Now the observer is looking through the ocular lens, straight on, with a full view (below). Note the position of the crosshair is in the exact same spot. The reticle is parallax free at 600 yards. If it were not, the position of the crosshair would have moved about 1/2 (or more) the width of the white board from one photo to the next. The telephone post to the left of the target is old and is leaning. However, from one photo to the next there is no pincushion or barrel distortion. Note the clarity when the eye is centered (below).



manufacturers do an excellent job of securing the objective lens as well as ensuring that moving parts move exactly and then labeling the parallax adjustment knob with great precision. Others, well, not so much. Even so, heat and humidity tend to play games with those dimensions. During competition, it is common to have to tweak the parallax a bit throughout the day. As you might now imagine, some scopes are perfectly parallax free and focused well at 600 yards, but a look at the parallax adjustment knob says almost 700 yards or maybe close to 500 yards. To rely on that for ranging could mean missing the shot.

It also depends on the manufacturer's method of adjusting parallax. Some do it by adjusting the objective lens, others by a knob located on the left side of the elevation and windage manifold. Some actually use a portion of the ocular housing. On many European style "fast focusing" ocular diopter adjustments, it must be tweaked a bit to obtain the best focus when the image appears to be parallax free. On occasion, you will find a scope where the image is still a bit fuzzy when it is parallax free, or some small amount of parallax when it is perfectly focused. Such situations can drive you nuts.

On occasion, that will be complicated by another phenomenon. There is a small amount of distortion at the edge of the field in most scopes, sometimes referred to as vignetting. Generally, in any rifle scope, distortion and field curvature are greater at lower powers. Trimming the field of view would reduce this effect, but that consequence is not considered acceptable since the purpose of lower power is generally to increase field of view.

Another phenomenon is related to field curvature or Petzval curvature. With this condition the image of the target at the reticle is actually curved like a shallow bowl. There are two components of field curvature, horizontal and vertical, where the field may actually curve slightly more in one axis than the other. During the optical design, the designer has the flexibility to minimize field curvature, and also the ability to place more

ADJUSTING FAST FOCUS MODELS

There are some important things to remember about fast focus models. First, it is important to understand the role of the two focus mechanisms on a variable scope. The adjustable objective focuses the image of the target onto the plane of the reticle for a given distance. The eyepiece adjusts for your eye's focus on the reticle and the target image if it is focused on that plane. Follow this procedure for best results:

1. Point the scope at a uniform background such as a piece of paper or the sky.
2. Turn the eyepiece to focus the reticle, looking away frequently to allow your eye to relax. Your eye quickly corrects for small amounts of defocus, so quick glances will better tell you how good the eyepiece focus setting is.
3. Now aim at a target and adjust the parallax setting. Move your head up and down across about the middle 1/3 of the exit pupil while turning the objective adjustment ring, concentrating on the center of the reticle. If you scan the entire exit pupil, your adjustment will be tainted by some of the aberrations at the edge of the exit pupil, and it is not likely that you would shoot with your eye at the extreme edge of the exit pupil. Adjust the parallax ring until the crosshair does not move from the aiming point. This adjustment is best done at high power since the parallax is magnified at this setting.
4. You can now go back and refine the eyepiece focus slightly to improve the image since the reticle remains crisp throughout a modest range of adjustment. Concentrate on the center 1/3 of the image. Even with the minimal field of curvature in top-quality scopes, you will see a difference in focus from the edge to the center, and, since you aim and view targets primarily through the center, it's best to optimize in this area of the field.

emphasis on the horizontal or vertical components. However, as with any optical aberration, field curvature can't be completely eliminated.

Optical designers use computers to analyze the optics with the internal erector system tilted as it is at adjustment extremes. They examine the aberrations present at

this position and "tweak" the curves and thicknesses of lenses to correct for these flaws. These corrections are possible only with state-of-the-art computer design tools and the skill of experienced optical designers.

Zoom ratios of 4:1 and larger require larger internal lenses to accommodate the extended axial movement of the lenses in the erector system. Leupold, for example, always makes the internal lenses large enough to pass all of the valuable paraxial light produced by the objective; they never restrict the objective aperture with internal lenses at higher powers. They do trim the aperture at low power where the exit pupil would get far beyond the capability of the eye's pupil to encompass, and image quality is better with this restriction.

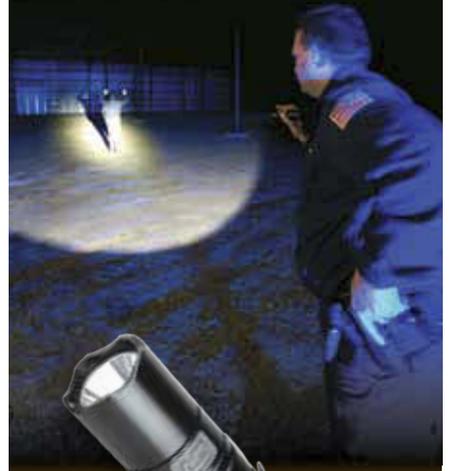
Barrel and pincushion distortion can affect a shooter's ability to find a parallax-free position, thinking it some manifestation of parallax. Rolling distortion may contribute in some rare instances as well.

In some forms of competition and hunting, you do not have the time to fine tune parallax or even mess with the knob. With practice, you can develop a cheekrest that will eliminate parallax. In these instances, you might preset the parallax at some mid-range object because the farther you shoot, the greater the error of point of intention, of a steady hold, and of parallax. But at shorter ranges, the error is reduced and the target has an apparent larger hit zone. A little practice with this problem goes a long way.



This 5-round, .199" group at 200 yards was shot at the Benchrest National Championships in Phoenix, Ariz. The trophy for small group is shown at the bottom. That is almost impossible if the scope is not parallax free. How do you know there were five rounds fired into the group? There is a moving board behind the target. When the targets and boards are brought to the scoring team, there better be five separate rounds in every moving backer board. If a shot is missing, 2" are added to the group size.

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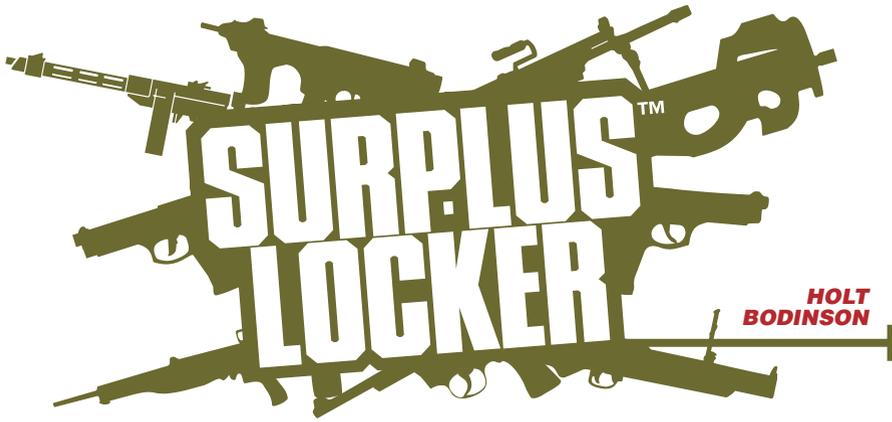
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THE RARE AND REMARKABLE BANNERMANS

These strange conglomerations of parts are perhaps the first platypus milsurps!

Francis Bannerman, later Francis Bannerman Sons, of New York City, dominated the military surplus market from shortly after the Civil War through the Spanish American War and WWI and right through WWII. Along the way, the Bannermans cobbled together some of the strangest mix of parts guns ever assembled anywhere and found a hungry and ready market for cheap bolt actions of questionable ancestry. Few of Bannerman's fantasy rifles have survived, which make them, I believe, some of the more collectable milsurps and surely the least known and the most worthy of study.

The Bannermans were Scotch by origin of the Clan Macdonald. The name? According to their 1955 catalog, "Tradition states that the name originated at Bannockburn, when during the battle, a member of the Macdonald

clan rescued a clan pennant, whereupon King Robert Bruce cut off the streamer part of the flag from the national St. Andrew's Cross and pronounced the banner bearer, a 'Bannerman.'" The name stuck.



Here's Holt's well-thumbed Bannerman wish book from the 1950s. A reprint is available from Cornell Publications.

Maybe we milsurp enthusiasts are all "Scotch," as in, "frugal." Anyway, the Bannermans made millions buying and selling surplus anything from British pith helmets to Hotchkiss mountain howitzers. What they couldn't sell whole, they broke down into parts and pieces for resale.

Smelting Money

David Bannerman, a son, recalls that in the 1880s the backyard of their home in Brooklyn was covered with "hundreds of cases filled with the obsolete Civil War US oval belt plates. These had a brass front and a heavy lead back. They were put in the smelter right there, and the lead run into pigs and the brass in barrels. As I recollect, it was a very profitable undertaking." That was the genius of the Bannermans. Buy government scrap and smelt it into real dollars.



Bannerman's Special '37 (above) consisted of a mix of Springfield, Enfield and Krag components, making for one odd duck of a rifle. Screw an '03 barrel into a 1911 Mauser action (below), chamber it in 7.65 Argentine, stock it with Springfield wood and you have...?



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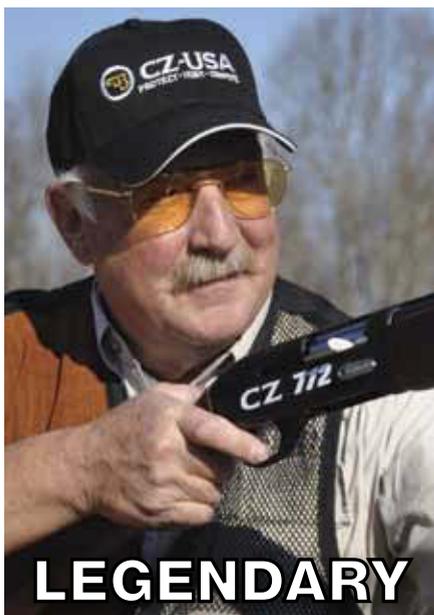


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Hanging on Larry Trial's garage wall were two, old, dirty, Bannerman conglomerates.

Some of the great purchases of the firm were the government's liquidation of Civil War and Spanish American War stores in 1900-1901. Bannerman bought thousands of Civil War rifles, carbines and revolvers and moved them quickly into the public mainstream through large department store chains like Gimbels and Mays. The booty from the Spanish American War contained so much explosive ordnance and artillery that Bannerman built a warehouse in the style of a Scottish castle on an island in the Hudson River near West Point.

Decommission Danger

Val Forgett of Navy Arms was commissioned decades later by the state of New York to decommission Bannerman Island—a dicey task, he found, given the mix of artillery shells and other live ordnance which was scattered helter-skelter across the island and inside the castle.

The Mecca for milsurp collectors right up to the 1960s was the combination Bannerman store and warehouse located at 501 Broadway, New York City. Entering the front door, you came face-to-face with racks of long guns for sale, hundreds of parts drawers, banners and flags from many conflicts and even the pneumatic powered "dynamite cannon" that Roosevelt's Rough Riders used to blow up a block house or two in Cuba. If you couldn't make the store, you could always order a wealth of articles, historically described and illustrated in Bannerman's wish book of a catalog, which fortunately is still available as a reprint.

Around WWI, Francis Bannerman and two other well known milsurp dealers, R.F. Sedgley and W. Stokes Kirk, both of Philadelphia, operated more or less like a cabal, joining forces to outbid other dealers or agreeing not to bid against each other and then splitting up the government loot after an auction. R.F. Sedgley was



When was the last time you saw an Enfield bolt riding in a Springfield action? Who but the Bannermans would think of such a thing? The Special '37s were built on low-numbered Springfield 1903 actions.



The Special '37 had a Springfield sight sleeve fitted to the barrel and mated with a Krag rear sight. The circled "S" is Sedgley's mark (seen on the sight sleeve just under the sight's elevation slider). Was the Special '37 made by Sedgley for Bannerman?

particularly close to the Bannermans, who cataloged Sedgley's well-known sporters for years.

Following WWI, the group bought up tons of Krag, Springfield, Enfield and Mauser parts, and the Bannermans, Sedgley and possibly, Kirk, began making some very ingenious, composite rifles.

I was talking surplus one day with Larry Trial, one of my shooting partners, when the subject of Bannerman came up. Trial worked for years for Val Forgett at Navy Arms and was well acquainted with the Bannerman store in New York City. He asked me if I had ever seen a Bannerman parts rifle. I responded I hadn't seen one in decades. Then Trial volunteered he had two relics hanging in his garage. Brushing away the dust and the rust from the guns, I realized

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they were two classic Bannermans. Since Trial and I were already involved in another trade, we expanded it a bit, and the Bannermans came marching home with me.

The best known, conglomerate model of the Bannermans was their "Special '37," listed in the 1938 catalog with a price of \$18. The Special '37 was a .30-06 built on a low-number Springfield receiver. The Rock Island Arsenal receiver pictured here carries a serial number of 227795 which places its production in the 1912-13 time period. The bolt with a Springfield bolt sleeve, the modified stock and the triggerguard and magazine assembly are from a Model 1917 Enfield! The barrel is of unknown origin but has been turned for a Springfield front sight and adapted for a Springfield Model 1905 rear sight base. Atop that Springfield sight base is a rear sight from a Krag!

One of the interesting features of the rear sight base is a stamped mark at the left rear of the base consisting of an "S" surrounded by a circle. The mark is Sedgley's mark, which may indicate that the Special '37 was assembled for Bannerman by the Sedgley firm.

The second Bannerman fantasy rifle pictured here uses an early, WWI German Carbine 98AZ action



Bannerman must have bought a jillion Krag rear sights. This one rides atop his Mauser-Springfield, which sports a Springfield Armory barrel made in January of 1907 and chambered for 7.65 Argentine.



A Mauser bolt release in a Springfield '03 safety lock cut-out does look a bit odd.

made at the Erfurt Arsenal in 1911. Screwed into that lovely small-ring action is a clearly marked 1903 barrel made at the Springfield Armory in January, 1907. The 1903 barrel is rethreaded and rechambered for the 7.65 Mauser cartridge, commonly referred to as the 7.65 Argentine. At the time, Bannerman was sitting

on about 2 million 7.65 Mauser cartridges so it was an ideal money-making conversion. The barrel sports a Springfield front sight, but the rear elevator sight is from a Krag. The whole kit and caboodle is slapped into a modified 1903 Springfield stock. This model was catalogued as Bannerman's Mauser-Springfield High Power Repeating Sporting Rifle and sold for about \$12.

The House of Bannerman is possibly the greatest story in milsurp history, not only because the Bannermans dominated the market for so long but because they dealt in every conceivable type of military scrap and surplus goods. We will not see their likes again nor their imaginative, conglomerate firearms. I just wonder who designed them. **GUNS**

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OUTTM of the BOX

JOHN TAFFIN

BROWNING BUCK MARK HOLOSIGHT

Light and easy to use, this sight is perfectly at home on a .22.

It was in the early 1950s when I first saw what I considered a most magical instrument, namely a ballpoint pen. At a time when pencils were two for a nickel and a dollar really was a dollar, I spent a dollar for that first ballpoint. It was so expensive I decided to basically save it and cherish it for future use and so tucked it away in my dresser drawer. When I went back to retrieve it I found it had leaked and left its indelible mark all over my clothes. (I think there is a lesson there!) Today, it is possible to buy a whole fistful of ballpoint pens for a dollar, or less, and they not only work perfectly they do not leak. It's the American way of free enterprise always going forward in most cases with better and better products for less and less money.

I am the first to admit I prefer the older classic sixguns, however I must also admit today's guns are stronger, held to tighter tolerances, usually more accurate, and relatively speaking less expensive. We have

seen this same progress in electronic sighting equipment. What used to be fairly large and bulky, prone to failure, and also quite expensive has now morphed into much smaller units which rarely give a problem while



Targets shot with various brands of .22 ammo using the pair of Buck Marks. On the left side of the Buck Mark HoloSight (below) are the on/off switch, which also controls intensity and the windage adjustment. The elevation adjustment is on top of the sight.



at the same time being much more affordable. The latest holographic sight offered by Browning is a perfect example of this being about 1/3 the size of the first holoSight I ever experienced.

A holographic sight is different than a laser sight; the latter places a red dot on the target while the former uses a red reticle pattern. It is also quite unlike a red dot sight which normally looks like a compact scope. The holo instead is a somewhat flat unit which bolts to the top of the firearm and has an aperture lens perpendicular to the front end of the basic unit.

So what we have is a tubeless design with a 33mmx24mm lens aperture with four center reticles of choice. With the Browning Holographic Sight our reticle choices are a 3-MOA red dot, a red dot within a red circle, a red dot in the center of a cross, and the latter two combined. There is also a choice of seven brightness levels. The lens aperture provides a wide enough field of view, approximately 16 yards at 100 yards, to aid in shooting moving targets.

My first introduction to a holoSight was on moving targets. I was at a Winchester Ammunition Seminar varmint hunt in northern Nevada. I was doing fine with my handguns against others rifles, however at lunchtime they pulled out the shotguns and the clay pigeon thrower. I backed off and went to sit down and eat my lunch. I tried to explain to the others I simply was not much of a shotgun



Buck Mark on a Buck Mark: Browning's Holographic Sight on an early Buck Mark .22 Target pistol was easy to install and made shooting very easy, too.

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(801) 876-271
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/BROWNING

MAGNIFICATION: 1X, **LENS DIAMETER:** 33mmx24mm,
EYE RELIEF: Unlimited, **ADJUSTMENTS:** 1 MOA at 100
Yards, **RETICLES:** 4 choices, **PRICE:** \$64.99

shooter but they insisted I try. What I didn't know was the fact that I was also being introduced to a new sight. That funny looking thing on the top of the shotgun was described to me as a holo-sight. OK, I'll try but don't expect much! What happened was just the opposite of what I personally expected. Tracking the targets in that holo-sight made it much easier to get those little birds and I got eight out of 10; needless to say I was sold on the merits of a holographic sight.

Since this sight is a Browning Buck Mark Holographic Sight I chose to mount it on my old Browning Buck Mark .22 pistol with a 5-1/2" heavy target barrel as well as a mounting rail on top. This sight mates up with any Weaver-style rail and gives unlimited eye relief. I mounted it as far rearward as I could without interfering with the rear sight. The aperture lens is at the front of the sight placing it at about 3" forward of the rear sight. Installing the holo-sight was exceptionally easy only requiring the loosening of two screws on the mounting bracket of the sight with the provided Allen wrench. This same generously-sized wrench is also used for sight adjustments. Sighting in was also easy requiring a very small windage adjustment and about 3" of elevation adjustment. Adjustments are 1 MOA at 100 yards.

The Buck Mark Holographic Sight is powered by a 3V lithium battery easily installed in a circular case which is surrounded by the on/off switch and intensity control knob. The unit itself is housed in a shockproof aluminum housing which measures just over 3" in length and weighs less than 4 ounces. A removable rubber cover/dust cap slips over the lens when the unit is not in use. Browning's Holographic Sight is covered by a 1-year warranty.

Remember the ballpoint pen in the beginning paragraph and how expensive and worthless it was and also how good it became? The Buck Mark Holographic Sight is the ballpoint pen of holographic sights. No, you don't get a fistful of them for a dollar, however this sight retails for only \$64.99. Browning won't get this one back as I intend to keep it on my Buck Mark .22.

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Q&A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Got a burning question to ask the editor? Contact him at: E-mail: ed@gunsmagazine.com or postal at: GUNS Q&A, 12345 World Trade Dr., San Diego, CA 92128. Due to the volume of mail received, GUNS cannot offer a personal reply.

M1903A1 Remington

Q: My father served with the Texas 36th Division in WWII. He told me he carried a 1903A1 made by Remington although this was not issued to him. The gun had full pistolgrip and was in new condition, not a rebuilt Springfield. Did Remington build a 1903A1 during WWII? If so, would it be marked as 1903A1? I am told Remington made this gun for England in 1941 or '42.

Ray
via e-mail

A: Remington made US M1903 rifles in many configurations during the war. According to the book *The Springfield 1903 Rifles* by Lt. Col. William Brophy, at the start of WWII Remington made a few 1903A1s with the pistol grip stock, which was designated as the "C" stock by the military. The "C" stock was adopted in 1929 and the arsenals were supposed to replace the straight stock during "repair and rebuild," but only after the large inventory of straight stocks on hand were used. Most of the "C" stocks wound up on National Match rifles, and the vast majority of M1903 rifles issued during WWII had the straight stock. The receivers

of the M1903A1 are marked "Model 1903" and only when the "C" stock is present is the rifle called a M1903A1.

Many Remington-made M1903 rifles were sent as part of the lend-lease program for Britain's use during WWII. Remington cranked out more than 1 million 1903 rifles in different variants over the course of the war.

Health Issues

Q: In the July issue, John Barsness states that lots of recoil can cause serious effects, especially on older shooters. I am 67. Am I in that age where this could happen to me?

I squirrel hunt in the fall shooting 12 to 13 rounds of 2-3/4" shells with No. 4 or 6 birdshot.

How much recoil is too much? I'm also concerned about detached retinas. Have I got anything to worry about?

Bill Sitzler
Madisonville, Tenn.

A: Please consult your doctor for medical information. I bet it isn't hard to find an MD and an optometrist who are also fellow shooters in Tennessee. If you get a headache from shooting, it could be a problem, but please, please, please don't look for a firearm magazine to make medical diagnoses.

GUNS

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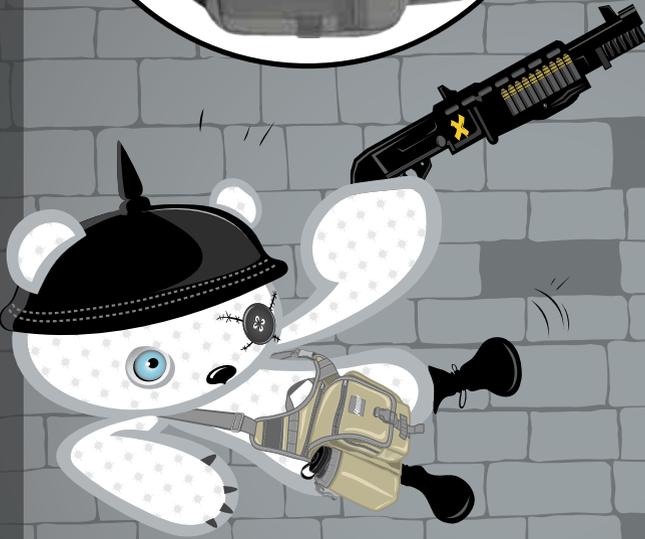


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ACCESSIBLE PROTECTION

Taurus' polymer-framed .22 LR and .25 ACP pocket pistols.

Jeremy D. Clough

One thing never ceasing to amaze me about Taurus is the tremendous number of new models they introduce each year. From the trend-setting Judge .410 shotshell revolver to their well-received M1911 and the 24/7, they are very much a company engaged in pushing forward, ever creating, ever refining. Among the newly-updated pistols in their line are the PLY22 and PLY25.

A pair of polymer-framed, double-action, small-caliber pistols built on the tip-up Beretta pattern, the PLY's are oriented towards those who want a relatively lightweight pistol that doesn't require exceptional hand strength to either operate or shoot. For those unfamiliar with the tip-up barrel feature, guns using it have an open-top slide, a spring-loaded barrel pivoting on the frame near the muzzle, and a lug at the rear held in place with a latch. When the latch (located just forward of the left-side grip panel on the Taurus) is rotated forward, the barrel springs upwards, stopping about 45 degrees from horizontal.

This serves two purposes: it can clear a cartridge from the chamber quickly and effectively, launching the round

clear of the gun in entertaining style. Its real purpose, though, is enabling the gun to be loaded and unloaded without the need to cycle the slide, which is important for those who lack the hand strength to grip a small slide and pull it back against the power of the recoil spring. This is a much more common problem than most people realize. I've known several people who could easily manage the recoil of a compact auto, but didn't have the finger strength to cycle the slide. And if you can't load and clear a pistol, that effectively rules it out as a carry gun.

I was sent both the .25 and the .22 for testing purposes, and, except for the capacity (the .25 holds 9+1, while the .22 thanks to its rimmed case, holds 8+1), the two guns are identical, with stainless barrels and slides, and the rest of the gun a matte black. Sights are cast into the slide and barrel, with the front sight having a line cut down it, which does

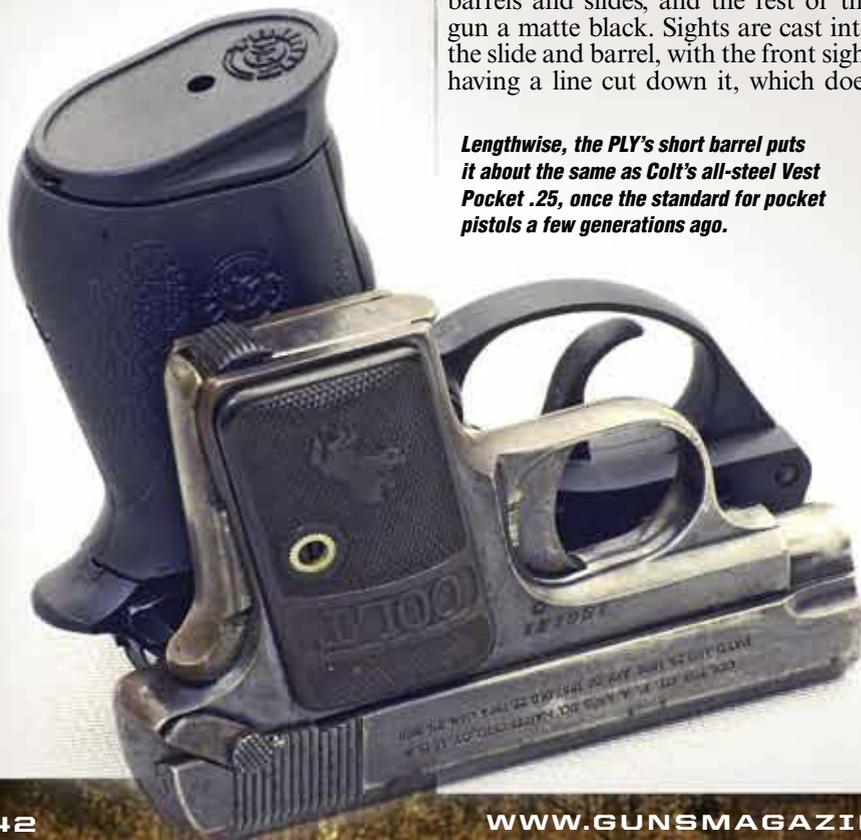
Lengthwise, the PLY's short barrel puts it about the same as Colt's all-steel Vest Pocket .25, once the standard for pocket pistols a few generations ago.

help somewhat to draw your attention to the front sight. Cocking serrations consist of the popular fishscale pattern, and the swept-back triggerguard flows into a frontstrap with two gentle swells serving as fingergrooves. Along with the full-profile magazine baseplate and the well-shaped grip panels, they make the gun fit quite well in the hand, even if the end result is a little large. Controls include a pushbutton magazine release in the M1911 position, where it should be, a downward-pivoting thumb safety (also in the familiar position) and the Taurus Security System safety lockout in the backstrap. Two keys for the lockout come in the hard plastic case the pistol arrives in.

In the course of testing, I fired over 500 rounds of mixed ammo through the .22, and 200 rounds of Fiocchi ball through the .25, with surprising results. Both guns functioned beautifully, and the only malfunctions they had with standard pressure ammunition were light firing pin hits, of which the .25 had three and the .22, two. The double-action-only (DAO) trigger does have second-strike capabilities, and the rounds all fired on the second whack. Otherwise, the .25 had zero malfunctions, while the .22 only misfired with hyper-velocity ammo, which the packaging tells you not to use. Since doubtless someone out there will do it anyway (like I did), this merits some explanation.

Part of what makes the PLY so compact is the absence of a recoil spring coiled around or under the barrel. Instead, two small spring-loaded fingers are held in place by the grip panels, and fit into little recesses on the underside of the slide, pushing it forward, similarly to the system used on some of the old Webley automatics. While this system works well for standard loads, hyper-velocity ammo (such as the truncated-cone Remington Viper I shot through it) can actually dislodge the slide from the fingers connecting it to the recoil spring, as well as the grip panel holding the whole shebang in place. They're not kidding; don't do it. High-velocity, though, is fine, and fed and fired without a bobble.

Not only did the PLY's feed, they also hit: both pistols posted 5-shot



PLY

MAKER: TAURUS
16175 N.W. 49 AVE.
MIAMI, FL 33014
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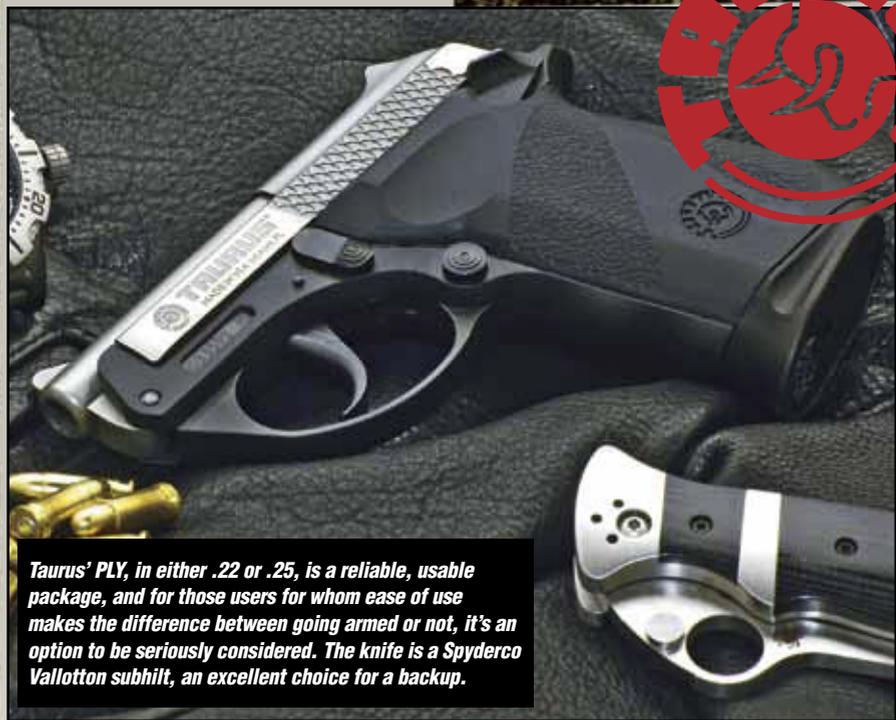
ACTION TYPE: DAO blowback, semi-auto, **CALIBER:** .22 LR, .25 ACP (both tested), **CAPACITY:** 8+1 (.22), 9+1 (.25), **BARREL LENGTH:** 2.33", **WEIGHT:** 11.27 ounces, **FINISH:** Matte stainless steel slide, **SIGHTS:** Fixed, **GRIPS:** Polymer, **PRICE:** \$289

groups around 3" or so at 50', which is well beyond the range I'd expect them to be used, and rang my 4-3/4" steel plate monotonously, even when shot fast. And, despite the DAO trigger, both PLY's could be fired quite fast, thanks largely to the mild recoil impulse.

While this probably won't bother most people—after all, this is not intended as a high-volume shooter—I found the narrow, aggressively-hooked trigger dug into the tip of my trigger finger after a few hundred rounds. Also be aware it's possible to grip the gun high enough to get your hand in the way of the lower corners of the slide. I tend to grip pistols very high, and, shooting both right- and left-handed, was rewarded with a track mark on either hand. I adjusted my grip, and it didn't bite me again.

Note the PLYs are not equipped with extractors, and rely on the recoil impulse of the cartridge itself to blow the slide backwards and expel the empty casing. While it may seem tenuous, the system works quite well. If you do have a malfunction, though the crucial tap-rack-bang drill may not help, as retracting the slide won't necessarily empty the chamber. Instead, hit the barrel release, and let it flip up and clear

The tip-up barrel feature of the PLY pistols serves to both load and clear the pistol without having to cycle the slide manually—important for those who may have hand injuries or other challenges that make it difficult to operate most semi-autos.



Taurus' PLY, in either .22 or .25, is a reliable, usable package, and for those users for whom ease of use makes the difference between going armed or not, it's an option to be seriously considered. The knife is a Spyderco Vallotton subhilt, an excellent choice for a backup.



The front of the triggerguard is well-streamlined, while the PLY's controls are few and accessible: a pushbutton magazine release resides at the base of the triggerguard, and the barrel release lever is above it, which lets the spring-loaded barrel pop upwards.

itself. Combining the two—tipping the barrel, then racking the slide—will likely result in the bewildering sensation of watching the slide come completely off the gun, since it doesn't have the barrel keeping it in place. The tip-up feature is there for a reason: use it.

Of the two pistols I had for testing, the .25 is the pick of the litter. While this may not hold true across the product line, the .25 I shot had a smoother trigger, softer recoil impulse, and held more rounds than the .22. I don't generally talk about "stopping power" with pistol cartridges that start with a "2"—at that low a power level, it's essentially academic—so I'm not likely to pick one based on caliber alone. On shootability, while the .22 was good, the .25 was better.

The only drawback is the gun's size: while the top end of the gun is

appropriately short with a 2.3" barrel, the grip is as tall as that of a Walther PPK, and thicker. Weightwise, the gun is advertised at 11.27 ounces, a click more than the 9.4 ounces of the Ruger LCP .380, but well under the 13 ounces of Colt's all-steel Vest Pocket .25 that was the standard for pocket pistols a few generations ago. So there are smaller, lighter guns shooting more powerful cartridges, but the combination of stronger recoil springs and stouter loads will make the slides of those guns too difficult for some users to cycle, and the recoil too disconcerting to reasonably control.

Taurus' PLY, in either .22 or .25, is a reliable, usable package, and for those users for whom ease of use makes the difference between going armed or not, it's an option to be seriously considered.

GUNS

A MATCHLE

NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM'S 1911 10MM LONGSLIDE.

John Taffin

Photos: Joseph R. Novelozo

Nighthawk Custom is a relatively new company when it comes to the production of 1911s. New they may be but they are certainly not lacking in experience and when it comes to quality and precision they are right up there with the best of them. Experience is not only provided by a staff of 45 but also by being connected with such respected names when it comes to 1911s as Richard Heinie and Bob Marvel. Both of these men provide training for the gunsmiths at Nighthawk. Heinie not only designed the Nighthawk Longslide which is the subject of these words but also has many of his pistols built by Nighthawk under his guidance. When he first saw the results of the craftsmanship built into 1911s by Nighthawk he approached them to build 1911s for him. That speaks highly of the quality of Nighthawk Custom semi-automatics.

The first thing I do with most test guns is call my friend Denis to come and look at it. Denis is a retired engineer with a critical eye and a machine shop set up in his garage. He has built such things for me as a custom crimping die for the Smith & Wesson .44 American cartridge which uses a heeled bullet; a super heavy duty, fully adjustable

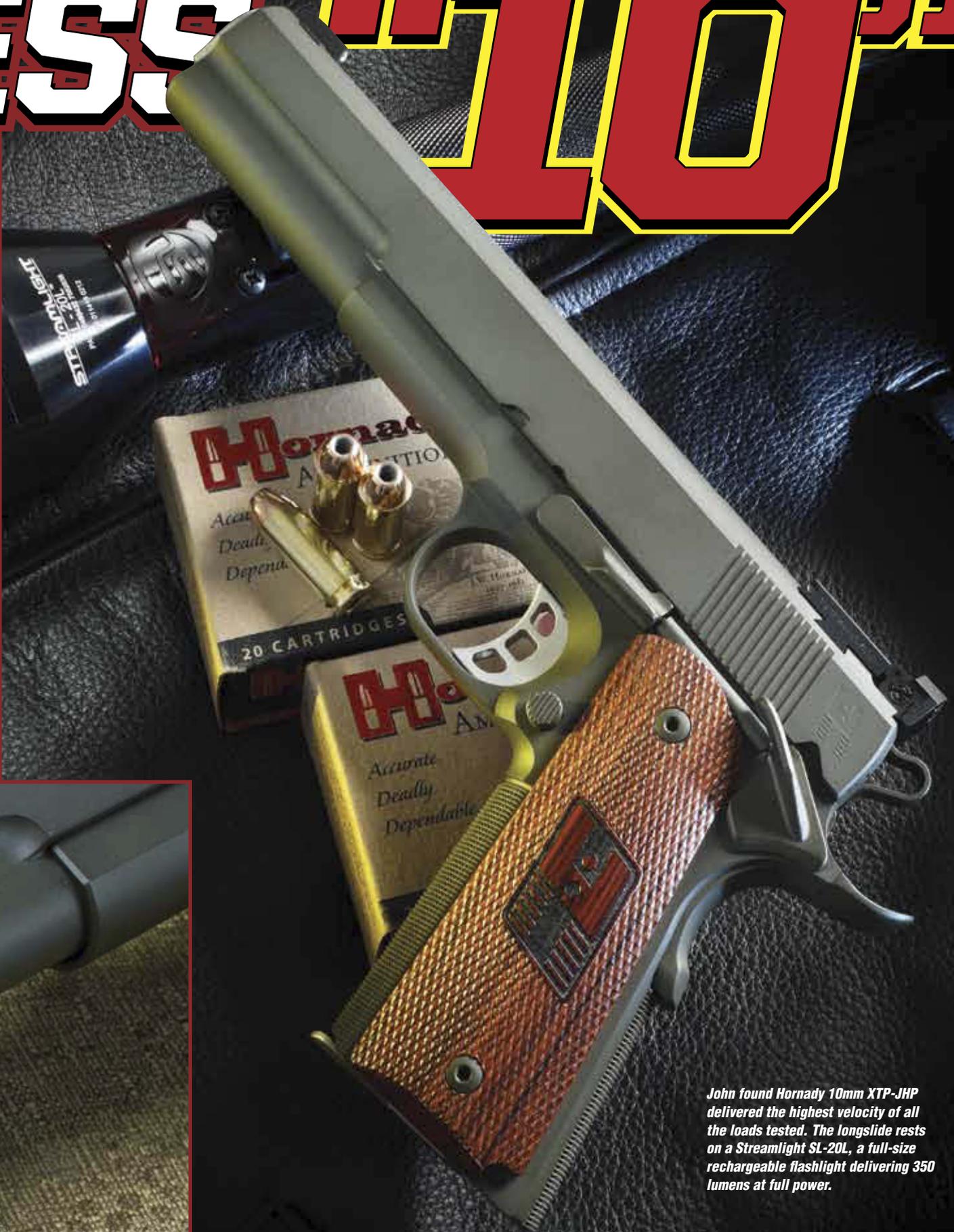


The magazine well is slightly beveled to aid insertion of spare mags (above). Note the frontstrap is finely checkered at 25 lpi. All of the edges on the Longslide have been gently broken (below), so no part of the pistol will be hard on gear. A fully adjustable rear sight has twin yellow tritium inserts. Even the usual sharp corners at the top of the sight have been broken.



The 1911 slide extends another inch beyond the frame of the Heinie Longslide. Note the machined undercut of the slide precisely joins with the end of the frame.

SSS "10"



John found Hornady 10mm XTP-JHP delivered the highest velocity of all the loads tested. The longslide rests on a Streamlight SL-20L, a full-size rechargeable flashlight delivering 350 lumens at full power.



GUNS

MAGAZINE

A MATCHLESS

NIGHTHAWK
CUSTOM'S 1911
10MM LONGSLIDE.

“10”





THE IN-BETWEEN CARTRIDGE

As we sit here in the second decade of the 21st century it is easy to see how handgun cartridges fall into certain categories. The first Magnum, the .357, still remains the best choice for the combination of power, portability, and ease of handling while its bigger brother, the .44 Magnum, is still the King of Sixgun Cartridges. The 100-odd-year-old .44 Special and the .38 Super which is more than 80 years old both remain the thinking man's cartridge, the choice of true connoisseurs, and the .454 Casull is exceptionally popular among handgun hunters.

The .45 ACP and its companion 1911 are still the favorite of big-bore semi-automatic fanciers while the .40 S&W and 9mm continue to be top choices for law enforcement and military use. Two cartridges are still struggling for respect, namely the .41 Magnum and the 10mm. The .41 will probably always be overshadowed by its bigger brother, the .44 Magnum while the 10mm has had a very shaky, up and down path to follow.

10mm The Beginning

Let us take a close brief look at the 10mm cartridge itself. The 10mm has its roots in the old .38-40 WCF cartridge of the 19th century which was found chambered in such legendary firearms as the Winchester 1873 and the Colt Single Action Army. The .38-40 used a 180-grain bullet and even in black-powder loadings had a

muzzle velocity at 1,000 fps in a sixgun. One Whit Collins had an idea for a new cartridge and took it to gunsmith John French who is now a friend and happens to be living in my immediate area. Using the .224 Weatherby as the parent case they came up with the .40 G&A and chambered it in a Browning Hi-Power. This was in 1971 and they achieved 1,100 fps with the 180-grain bullet in the Browning.

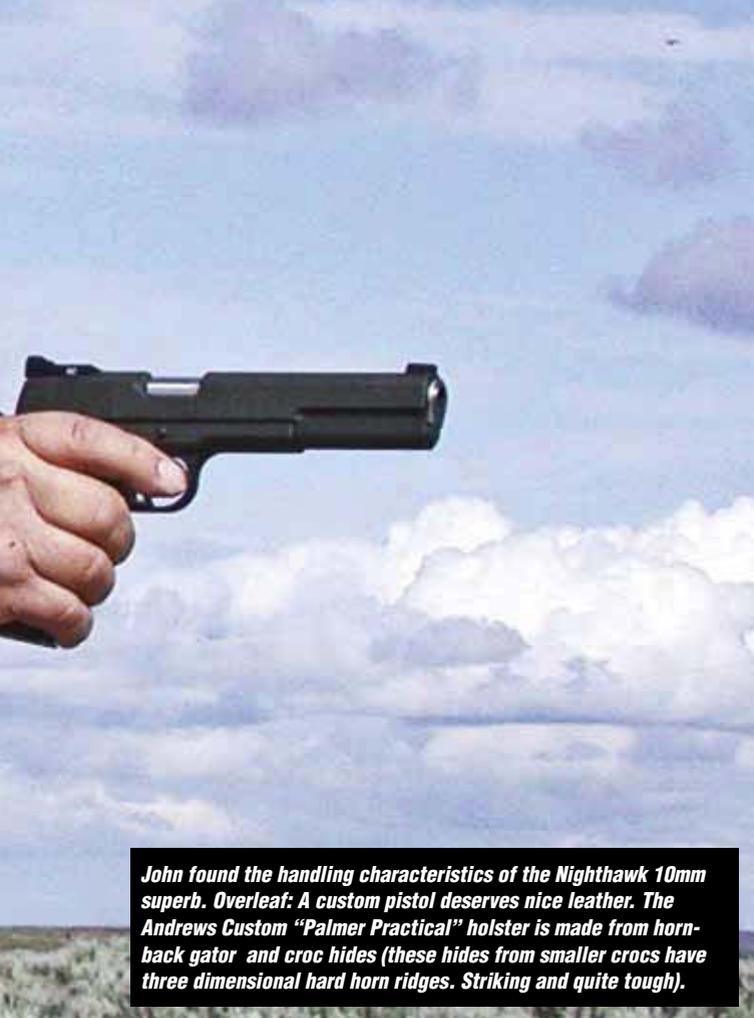
In 1977 the .40 G&A resurfaced this time with the 180-grain bullet up to 1,250 fps and it caught the eye of Jeff Cooper who felt it might, just might replace the .45 ACP. Once it received Col. Cooper's blessing it was not long before we had a new pistol and factory ammunition in the new .40. Norma manufactured the ammunition which was quite warm (hot?) with a 200-grain bullet at more than 1,200 fps. The new gun was the Bren Ten which was an improved CZ-75 produced by Dornhaus & Dixon. This semi-automatic pistol could be carried in double-action mode with the hammer down on a live round and the safety engaged or it could be carried cocked-and-locked.

10mm The End—Almost

Problems soon appeared. Production at D&D was slower than had been expected, ammunition was too powerful causing problems with the Bren, and magazines produced in Europe were not always easy to come by. Dornhaus & Dixon failed and even some who received pistols found they were without magazines. The ammunition remained available, however the semi-automatic pistol which housed it was gone.

pistol rest; a hanging gong for long-range handgun shooting; and even a barrel vise which fits into the trailer hitch of my Chevy 4x4 and allows us to adjust windage on single-action sixgun barrels in the field. Everything he builds is more than just function as he is also an artist when it comes to forming metal and everything from his

hobby shop is basically a work of art. I trust his critical eye and judgment highly. He always wants to know how everything works and normally takes down semi-automatic pistols which come into my hands so he can see firsthand just what they consist of. When he stripped the Heinie Longslide he exclaimed: "Oh my! This is nice!"



John found the handling characteristics of the Nighthawk 10mm superb. Overleaf: A custom pistol deserves nice leather. The Andrews Custom "Palmer Practical" holster is made from horn-back gator and croc hides (these hides from smaller crocs have three dimensional hard horn ridges. Striking and quite tough).



The Longslide is fitted with a generous beavertail grip safety. A large memory pad is present at the base of the grip safety to ensure the grip safety is kept depressed. The early style flat mainspring housing is standard. The exotic checkered wood grips have a stylized "H." A single-side safety is standard.



A comfortable long aluminum trigger (above) with three lightening cuts is present. The Nighthawk 1911 Longslide takes down just like a standard Government Model (below). Note there is but one recoil spring, unlike earlier 10mms which had double recoil springs.



10mm Oh My!

What we found in looking at the interior of the Nighthawk Custom was beautifully polished heavy-duty parts; the same number on frame, barrel, slide and bushing, a well-polished ramp and a fully supported chamber. The bushing is fitted very tightly as is the frame-to-slide fit. The barrel is a 6" Match Grade mated up with a forged frame and slide. Sights are simply superb and of the 3-dot style consisting of a green tritium post front sight matched up with yellow rear sight; both are set in dovetails with the rear sight set low in the slide. The edges of the rear sight are rounded off to protect both hand and clothing. This is carried out in the balance of the pistol in what Nighthawk calls Complete Frame and Slide Preparation. Translation: No sharp edges.

Looking at the exterior of the Nighthawk Custom Longslide we find a matte green PermaKote finish on the frame and slide, a Beavertail grip safety with a prominent memory bump to ensure it is positively pressed when the pistol is gripped, and a skeletonized hammer. This hammer is combined with a superb trigger. By that I mean it is totally creep free with a pull weight of just under 3-1/2 pounds. Perfect! Both the frontstrap and flat mainspring housing are perfectly checkered at 25 lines per inch. The grips are also nicely checkered with the material being a reddish-colored exotic wood. Nighthawk is not a big proponent of ambidextrous safeties so this Longslide features a standard thumb safety with a slightly extended and serrated lever matched up with a slide lock with the same treatment.

There are well over 50 manufacturers, some foreign and some domestic, of 1911s. Some produce what I would call utility-grade 1911s, some are factory standard specimens, while others are highly customized and meticulously

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Hornady ammunition delivered the highest velocity of 1,309 fps (from the 10mm XTP-JHP) and superb accuracy for John at 20 yards. The other loads tested by John from Black Hills, Federal and Winchester all shot very well but didn't deliver the velocity of the Hornady XTP load.



HEINIE LONGSLIDE

MAKER: NIGHAWK CUSTOM
1306 W. TRIMBLE
BERRYVILLE, AR 72616
(877) 268-4867
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/NIGHAWK-CUSTOM

ACTION TYPE: Locked breech, semi-automatic,
CALIBER: 10mm, **CAPACITY:** 8+1, **BARREL LENGTH:** 6", **OVERALL LENGTH:** 9-3/5", **WEIGHT:** 41 ounces,
FINISH: PermaKote, **SIGHTS:** Fully adjustable Tritium 3-dot, **GRIPS:** Exotic checkered wood,
PRICE: \$3,295

PALMER PRACTICAL HOLSTER

MAKER: ANDREWS CUSTOM LEATHER
22610 N.W. 102 AVE.
ALACHUA, FL 32615
(386) 462-0576
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/ANDREWS

SKIN: Horn-back Gator & Croc (These hides from smaller crocs have 3-dimensional hard horn ridges. Very striking and quite tough.), **PRICE:** \$500

assembled works of art. The Nighthawk Custom Longslide falls into the latter category. Some shops are 1-man operations, while others are factories with hundreds of employees. Nighthawk has 45 employees, but basically they operate on the 1-man, 1-gun system. There are no assembly lines. Every pistol is built from the beginning to the final product by one highly talented gunsmith.

Assembly lines may be more efficient, however the Nighthawk Custom system assures each gunsmith takes pride in the total package he has created. Assembly lines are boring; building quality pistols from start to finish results in total pride of workmanship. The test target which came with the Longslide lists the names of 10 Master Gunsmiths at Nighthawk and the name checked off for this particular pistol is Allen Wyatt. Well done, Allen!

Why A Longslide?

It seems like everyone builds a 1911 with varying degrees of quality, however very few offer Longslides. The concept goes way back to one of the most interesting and likable men I have ever had the privilege to know, the late Jimmy Clark. Jimmy began experimenting with longer barrels for the 1911 in the 1950s. He decided the 6" barrel as opposed to the standard 5" length was the most accurate length and also the most efficient when it came to burning powder. He had the barrels, now all he had to do was come up with the slide. He did this by taking two slides, cutting them, and welding them together. The modern longslide from Nighthawk Custom, as related earlier, is a Richard Heinie design.

Just what is gained by that extra inch of barrel and slide? The obvious is a longer sight radius which allows most of us to shoot better than we can with a shorter barrel. The extra weight also helps to cut down on felt recoil, and most assuredly it increases muzzle velocity. This is borne out dramatically by looking at the latest 180-grain 10mm XTP-JHP loads from Hornady. These are rated at 1,180 fps by Hornady from a standard length barrel. However, when fired through the 6" barrel of the Nighthawk Longslide they picked up just over 125 fps clocking out at 1,309 fps. That is a significant increase in muzzle energy. Of course, the extra inch adds to the length and weight of the pistol, however when carried in a proper holster it is not noticeable at all. For me, at least, it is positively exceptionally noticeable when shooting.

My 73rd birthday was spent shooting this superb semi-automatic.

A REMARKABLE REBIRTH

Something remarkable happened when Colt went out on a limb and chambered the Government Model for the 10mm thus saving the cartridge. Not only did Colt save the cartridge it got everyone else's attention and we soon had 10mms from Smith & Wesson, Glock, Springfield Armory, IAI/AMT, L.A.R., Auto Ordnance, Wyoming Arms. Even Ruger came out with a Convertible Blackhawk with two cylinders in .38-40 and 10mm and Thompson/Center provided a 10mm barrel for their single-shot pistol. In 1990, I tested the 10mm extensively with a total of 16 guns with each manufacturer represented with at least one test gun and sometimes three. I definitely gained great respect for the cartridge.

Too Much Too Soon?

It was about this time that the infamous FBI shootout occurred in Miami and the call went out for a more powerful chambering than the 9mm which was in use. It did not take the FBI long to discover the 10mm was way too hot for their use and they specified

a 180-grain bullet at 950 fps. (If that sounds familiar, it is exactly what the .40 S&W delivers.)

The California Highway Patrol called for testing of a new double-action semi-automatic and Colt, Glock, and Smith & Wesson all answered the call. Ammunition used was the 10mm Winchester 175-grain SilverTip Hollowpoints at more than 1,200 fps. It proved to be too much for all the guns tested with extensive firing of thousands of rounds. The testers also determined all handguns tested had excessive recoil for law-enforcement use when used with the Winchester ammunition. Everything was considered unacceptable and the eventual result was the rise of the more easily controllable—and certainly easier on handguns—.40 S&W which continues to be used extensively by law enforcement.

So where does that leave the 10mm? It may not be the choice of law enforcement agencies but it is an excellent cartridge for roaming desert, sagebrush, foothills, and mountains. Just as the .41 Magnum before it,

it is not a great choice for self-defense use by the vast majority of shooters, however it is a grand cartridge for the outdoorsman. In fact the 10mm in a long-barreled semi-automatic is not all that far removed from the .41 Magnum in a short-barreled sixgun.

There are more powerful cartridges, such as the .44 Magnum and .50AE available in semi-automatics, however these are large-framed pistols weighing over 4 pounds. The 10 is the most powerful cartridge available in a standard semi-automatic and certainly the most practical for hunting. Currently I have three semi-automatics, the Colt Delta Elite, the Kimber Stainless Steel Target II, and the Glock 20 all chambered in 10mm. I would not consider using loads of the original specifications for prolonged periods in any of these 10s (I save those loads for the Ruger Blackhawk), however properly loaded they are most comforting to have when roaming off the beaten path as they are all Super Trail Guns capable of handling anything I am likely to encounter. And perhaps best of all is the Nighthawk Custom 10mm Longslide, which improves the existing 10mm ammo by use of the longer slide and barrel.

I feel totally blessed in many ways not the least of which is being able to experience such quality in a firearm but also the fact I can still shoot. The eyes can still see and the trigger finger still works. I have used the words "perfect" and "superb" with this pistol and test-firing testifies to the fact I have understated this Custom 10mm. Ten different factory loads were used in testing the Nighthawk. Bullet weights ranged from 175 grains up to 200 grains while muzzle velocities went from a low of 944 fps to the above mentioned 1,309 fps. Groups are the best five of six shots at 20 yards. At my age I feel I deserve anything which reduces stress and allowing myself one throwaway round is a great stress reducer. The largest groups—largest not smallest—came in at 1-1/4" while the smallest

measured 7/8". Practically speaking 3/8" makes no difference whatsoever. So we can safely say this 10 is definitely a "10" and handles every load equally well.

The Nighthawk Custom Longslide is not cheap. Quality simply costs money and it is obvious many, many hours of hand-fitting go into each one of them. At a price of \$3,295, it is definitely not for everyone, and although I'm not a betting man, I think I can safely say anyone who buys one will be well satisfied with what is provided for the dollars expended. The Longslide comes in a zippered padded bag complete with two magazines and a highly ingenious takedown tool, however don't expect to get one quickly. Nighthawk works on a first-come, first-serve basis and the current

backlog is slightly over 2 years which again speaks highly of the quality of these pistols. The money is well spent and they are worth the wait. **GUNS**

10MM FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
BLACK HILLS 200 JHP	1,039	1-1/4
FEDERAL 180 JHP	952	1
FEDERAL 180 JHP PERSONAL DEFENSE	1,021	1-1/4
FEDERAL PREMIUM 180 JHP	1,042	1-1/4
HORNADY 180 XTP-JHP SUBSONIC	991	1
HORNADY 180 XTP-JHP	1,309	1
HORNADY 200 FMJ	1,091	7/8
HORNADY 200 XTP-JHP	1,077	7/8
WINCHESTER 180 JHP SUBSONIC	944	1
WINCHESTER 175 SILVERTIP HP	1,226	1-1/8

Notes: Group size is the product of the best five of six shots at 20 yards. Chronograph screens set at 10' from the muzzle.

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THE .50-70 GOVERNMENT

NOT AS WELL KNOWN AS THE MORE CAPABLE .45-70, THE .50 GOV'T NONETHELESS SERVED THROUGHOUT THE EARLY POST-CIVIL WAR WILD WEST.

Mike "Duke" Venturino

Photos: Yvonne Venturino

Of all the black powder, single shot, rifle cartridges I've worked with since 1981, the most historical is the .50 Government, aka .50-70, aka 50-1-3/4". It was the primary reason why a few dozen US soldiers defeated a horde of Sioux warriors at what became known as "The Wagon Box Fight" in northern Wyoming in August 1867. When a couple dozen whites were besieged by combined Comanche, Kiowa and Cheyenne, at Adobe Walls in north Texas in June 1874, the .50-70 was one of the most fired cartridges from their Sharps "buffalo rifles."

It was also the caliber of the Remington No. 1, "rolling block" rifle Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer personally carried when he led the famous 7th US Cavalry to disaster at the Little Bighorn Battle in southern Montana in June 1876. In fact it is doubtful if any substantial altercation between the US Army and Plains Indian tribes in the post-Civil War era did not include .50-70

caliber rifles or carbines on one side or the other or both.

All that said it is likely more .50-70 rounds were fired for hunting purposes than in combat. All of the companies making big-bore, single-shot rifles until about 1880 relied on .50-70 as one of their primary chamberings. Remington's No. 1 "rolling block's" introductory caliber was .50-70 and, in the legendary Sharps rifles, .50-70 was

the second biggest selling chambering until 1876. Both models of rifle were prominent in the great slaughter of American bison herds during that time frame. Tens of thousands of Sharps Models 1859, 1863 and 1865 military percussion rifles and carbines were altered to .50-70 circa 1867/1868. Many of those along with ammunition were then handed out to various reservation Indians for hunting purposes. Perhaps not surprisingly, modern archaeology proved about three dozen of those "hunting" .50-70 Sharps were turned on 7th Cavalrymen at the Little Bighorn.

At first glance a .50-70 cartridge will not impress anyone. It is stubby and doesn't look overly powerful when compared to other black powder cartridges that appeared in the decade or so after it. In fact it isn't overly powerful by the standards of those rounds. Military loadings were rated as driving 450-grain bullets about 1,250 fps from the long barrels of various models of "trapdoor" Springfields. Those were three: Models 1866, 1868



To one degree or the other US Models 1866, 1868 and 1870 "trapdoor" .50-70s used parts left over from Civil War musket production. Note the lockplate on Duke's Model 1868 is dated 1863.



During 1867/1868 the Sharps Company converted tens of thousands of percussion Sharps carbines and rifles to .50-70 caliber. This is a converted carbine.



This is a Remington rolling block No. 1 .50-70 designated Model 1871 by the US Government and used briefly by the army.



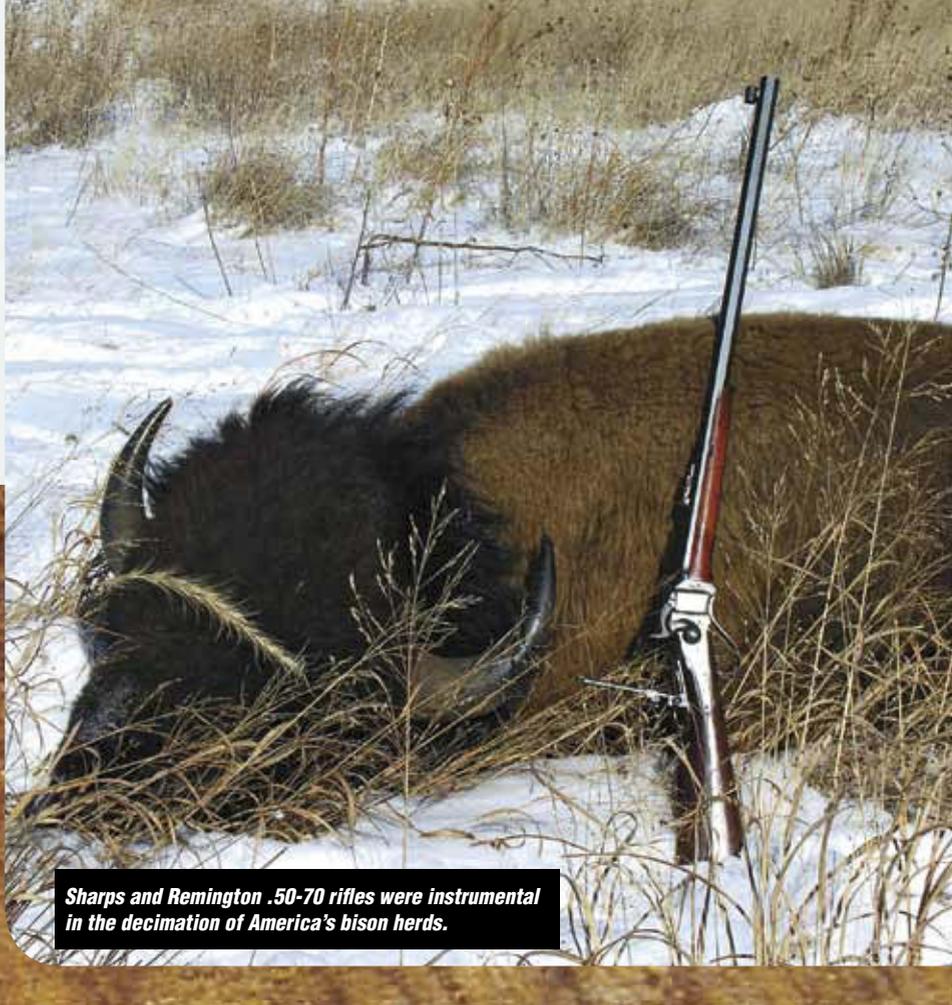
NMENT

and 1870. The first of those were actually altered muzzleloading military muskets. The second two models had newly manufactured receivers but stocks, locks and stock furniture were left over from Civil War musket production.

We all know that gunriters are not infallible, and I proved that in 1981 upon buying my very first Shiloh Rifle Company replica of the Sharps Model 1874. Even then there was a lengthy wait to get a newly manufactured Shiloh, so when I spotted one at a Montana gun show it was grabbed. There was one bump in that road. I wanted a "Big Fifty" which at that time I interpreted as being the .50 caliber with 2-1/2" case, often called .50-90. The Shiloh I came across at a gun show was chambered for .50-70. Coincidentally, at that same gun show I met a gunsmith who said he had a .50-90 reamer and it would be short work to run the Shiloh's 1-3/4" chamber out to 2-1/2". Without ever shooting the rifle as a .50-70 I handed it over for altering.

Big mistake! The gunsmith did a fine job. That wasn't the problem. I had neglected to price the necessary basic brass and reloading dies needed for .50-90. Lyman and RCBS .50-70 dies sold for about the same price as ordinary .30-06 dies. Special order RCBS .50-90 dies cost me about \$150. Basic brass for .50 caliber started as 3-1/4" cases and special order forming dies were needed to get them down to 2-1/2". The cost of those forming dies is now forgotten but it was considerable. The cases themselves were 2-bucks apiece. I could have bought ready-to-load .50-70 brass from Dixie Gun Works for a fraction of that.

The biggest mistake was this: I only wanted to shoot smokeless propellants in my new Sharps. It was an attitude



Sharps and Remington .50-70 rifles were instrumental in the decimation of America's bison herds.

based on ignorance because as I learned with time black powder works best in rifles and cartridges designed for it. That revelation was still a few years in the future for me. Still at my experience level it should have been obvious that if you're going to try to get smokeless powders to burn well in such large volume cases, the best one will be the shortest. In other words, my smokeless powder charges in .50-2-1/2" cases gave hang-fires or complete misfires unless I stuffed some sort of inert filler on top of the smokeless powder. As I learned later, smokeless powder charges can work just fine in the 1-3/4" .50-70 case without such shenanigans.

Then there was the matter of recoil. Because I had the bigger case naturally I wanted to shoot big bullets. That nonsense progressed to bullets as heavy as 665 grains. With the Sharps steel curved buttplate they kicked me silly. Perhaps they actually kicked some sense into me because I began to look hard at .50-70s. As said above, the military load was rated at 1,250 fps with 450-grain grease-groove bullets. Original Sharps catalogs said they had two factory loads. One used 425-grain grease-groove bullets and the other used 473-grain paper-patch bullets. Both had 70 grains of black powder for the charge. An original 1878 Remington catalog listed 400- and 450-grain bullets over 70 grains but

neglected to mention whether grease groove or paper patch for bullet type. As late as 1899 Winchester listed 425- and 450-grain bullets over 70 grains. After my experiences with the .50-2-1/2" Sharps all those figures looked much more comfortable to me.

So at another gun show early in 1985 I bought my first .50-70 rifle. It was a US Model 1868 "trapdoor." Even then not all was smooth sailing. I began to learn even more about this archaic cartridge. Of today's reloading manuals only Lyman's covers .50-70. It specifies .512" for .50-70 cast bullets and modern rifle manufacturers such as Shiloh make their barrels .510" in their grooves. The US Government specs in the 1860s/1870s were different. They used .515" as nominal barrel groove diameter. In fact, in Lyman's early reloading handbooks such as the one I own dated 1927, .515" is recommended for .50-70 cast bullets. Lyman's .50 caliber bullet moulds are still named 515141 and 515142 although the bullets they drop now are about .512" to .513" of 1:20 tin-to-lead alloy.

That's all well and good but somebody forgot to decrease the reloading dies' resizing die to stay in step with .512" bullets. They still size cases for .515" bullets as I found out when seating .512" bullets in them. The bullets were not held tightly and could be plucked out with my fingers.



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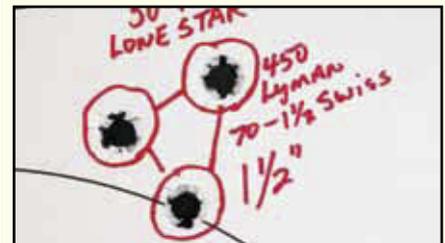
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My remedy was to crimp the case mouth tightly. And so for several years I prepared ammunition for my Model 1868, an original Sharps conversion carbine, an original Remington Rolling Block Model 1871 military musket, and various modern replicas of 1870s single-shot rifles.

Then in 1998 Yvonne surprised me to no end by saying she would like to buy me a "special gun." In turn I surprised her by already having its details in mind. What I wanted was an approximation of the rifle Custer carried to his death at the Little Bighorn. He may have been short on tactical wisdom that June day of 1876, but he had figured out what a good rolling block hunting rifle ought to be. Looking at vintage photos I recreated it as best I could. My new rifle was made by the now defunct Lone Star Rifle Co. with 28" octagon barrel 1.03" across its flats, single trigger, and crescent shaped buttplate. Action, buttplate, and fore-end cap are beautifully color case hardened, barrel, hammer and breechblock are blued, and wood fore-end and buttstock are fancy walnut. Sights are a simple open buckhorn rear coupled with a silver blade front.

Let's return to some details here. Original .50-70s had rifling twist rates of from 1:36" to 1:42". Modern barrel makers have tightened .50-caliber twists quite a bit. My Lone Star has a Badger brand barrel with 1:26" twist rate and Shiloh now uses 1:22" for their .50-caliber barrels. Such tighter twists



Although Duke can't get groups like this every time, his Lone Star rolling block is capable of such precision.



Duke is completely happy with only two cast bullet designs for .50-70 reloading. Bullets from Lyman 450-grain conical mold 515141 (left) are shown in a loaded round and as cast and (at right), a flatnose bullet from RCBS mould 50-450FN and loaded round. Starline makes brand new brass for .50-70, which Duke prefers. Sharps and Remington .50-70 rifles were instrumental in the decimation of America's bison herds.

will work better with heavier bullets but still do well with the 450- to 500-grain ones.

Although my Lone Star .50-70 shot just fine from the very beginning with bullets held rather loosely in the cases, that situation still annoyed me. Then a few years later Lyman began offering an entire line of reloading dies for black powder cartridges; among them a set for .50-90 (2-1/2" case). Also in the interim Starline began making ready-to-load .50-70 brass. On a whim I ran some of the new cases into the new .50-90 resizing die and was pleased to find that case mouths were squeezed down just a mite more. Hence .512" bullets were held tighter than previously.

Only two cast bullet designs satisfy my .50-70 shooting. Both are poured of 1:20 tin-to-lead alloy. They are the already mentioned Lyman 515141 and RCBS 50-450FN, weighing 450 and 477 grains respectively. That latter one looks like a gigantic semi-wadcutter and is devastating on game. The Lyman bullet doesn't look like it would flatten animals with its conical shape but I've shot 1-ton bison bulls and 100-pound whitetail deer with it and never needed a second shot.

Starline .50-70 brass is nearly unique among modern black powder cartridge cases in that it will hold the full 70-grain

charge with which this round was introduced. Therefore, duplicating 1860s/1870s ballistics is a cinch. For instance 70 grains of either Goex FFg or Swiss 1-1/2 Fg black powder under the 450-grain Lyman bullet gives about 1,220 to 1,250 fps from my Lone Star. Because the RCBS bullet seats deeper in cases than the Lyman bullet, powder charges must be reduced by about 10 grains. In turn velocity is about 100 fps lower. Incidentally, although the buttplate Remington designed and Lone Star copied looks like it was meant to make shoulders suffer, this .50-70 is far gentler to shoot than my first Shiloh was as a .50-90.

Although I seldom fire smokeless powder in black powder cartridge rifles anymore, it is feasible to do so with .50-70 *but I would only do it in rifles of modern manufacture*. In my Lone Star a charge of 30 grains of Western Powder's 5744 gave 1,238 fps, essentially duplicating black powder ballistics.

The .50-70 in a good quality rifle is capable of surprisingly small groups at 100 yards. For instance, my Lone Star will often put three bullets into about 2" give or take a fraction. That said: it still should be recognized that .50-70 is not a target cartridge. It just doesn't have the oomph to reach out to distance in the popular black powder

cartridge shooting games. It is a fine hunting round at modest 100- to 150-yard distances just as it was almost 150 years ago. It is a most historical black powder metallic cartridge. **GUNS**

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TRAINING SERIES



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The finished rifle from Dan Dowling (above) features a Schneider No. 5 contour barrel, Robar NP3 coated receiver, and McMillan stock. The rifle carries a Swarovski 3-12x50mm scope with a TDS Tri-Factor reticle. The first animal taken with the .339 Déjà vu was this kudu (bottom, right). The shot was 375 yards as the animal was quartering facing Jacob. The shot went through the front shoulder and existed just forward of the diaphragm. Note that the rifle still carries the original Remington stock from which the rifle was built, and the Robar NP3 finish has not yet been added. The last animal taken in Africa with the .339 Déjà vu was this nyala (bottom, left). The 225-grain Barnes X penetrated just behind the diaphragm as he was running into the bush. It exited through the off side front shoulder. It was the last evening of the hunt, and Jacob took the only shot available.



The .339 Déjà vu

Because today's cartridge choices are so complete, the wildcat cartridge is more a fun ballistics journey than something really necessary to fill a niche.

Jacob Gottfredson

There is little need these days for a new sporting cartridge in my humble opinion, but we see new ones coming out almost every year and people buying them in droves. Isn't that the industry's point? Even so, wildcatting a new cartridge is fun, and I talked myself into the need to build one of my own.

From the mid '80s until the late '90s, I was fortunate enough to be able to hunt nilgai on many occasions here in South Texas. At the time, I started out using my trusty old .30-06. I hit them, but they refused to go down without several follow up shots. I experienced the same problem watching other hunters use similar cartridges. It was not until I had taken my first one and then skinned, butchered, and autopsied him that I began to understand why. Nilgai were

imported from India. They are large boned, have very thick skin from the head to behind the shoulders, and are more tenacious than any other animal I have hunted.

I decided my .30-06 was not going to do the job and set out to find a caliber that would. After some consideration, I decided on a .338. I had used a Remington 700 in .264 Winchester Magnum to hunt deer in Utah during my youth. That gave me the long action I needed. I contacted two people. Dan Dowling of Palisade, Colorado had been doing all my rifles for Benchrest competition at the time. He suggested a Schneider 23", No. 5 contour barrel for the new cartridge. He trued the action, point bedded the original wood stock, and chambered the barrel using a combination of existing reamers. The finished rifle weighed in at 9 pounds. Dan had supplied three fire-formed cases for the project. I got hold of another Benchrest competitor that I knew, Neil Jones, to make custom seater and neck dies and combined that by having Redding build a custom body die.

When the dies arrived, I had to decide on the starting case for my new cartridge and a name. The name came after I pulled the trigger the second time. I figured if Winchester could name theirs using .338 and Weatherby could name theirs using .340, I could split the difference and call mine the .339 Déjà vu, which the dictionary defines secondarily as something unpleasantly familiar. With 43 foot-pounds of recoil, that seemed fitting.

I began by necking down .375 H&H brass, but found that procedure not as effective as necking up 8mm Remington to .338". Blowing out .340 Weatherby cases was another option. The rifle will shoot .340 Weatherby



On the left is a 7mm Remington Magnum loaded with a 140-grain Barnes X bullet. In the middle is the .308 Baer used for years in the Pennsylvania 1,000-yard Benchrest matches, loaded here with a 190-grain SMK. The .339 Déjà vu on the right has been fire formed and is loaded with a 225-grain Barnes X bullet. The latter two cartridges are based on the 8mm Remington Magnum case.



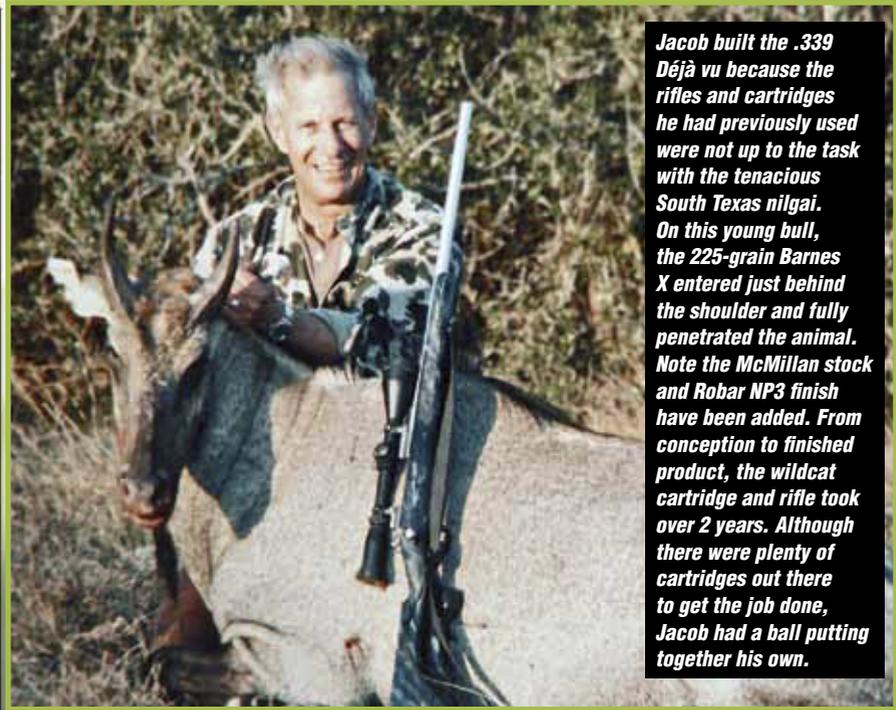
The black seating die (rear) and the neck die were custom made by Neil Jones. The neck expander and turner are from K&M. The body die on the right is from Redding. In front are the neck and shoulder bushings made by Neil Jones. Several bushings were built to give various neck tension and to progressively neck size .375 H&H cases. The 8mm Remington Magnum cases proved much easier to use. The neck expander made by K&M matches the neck turner mandrel and is the reason Jacob uses them.



cartridges accurately, although with a bit less velocity than my new case. I thought being able to shoot .340 Weatherby cartridges might be an advantage since I certainly could not find my cartridge in a store in a pinch but might be able to locate .340 Weatherby cartridges. However they are approaching \$100 for a box of 20. Ouch! But better any price than no rounds for a hunt in Alaska if my rounds were lost in transit.

I set about building a reload for the cartridge and accomplished a rather large amount of what is called SPC or statistical process control analysis, a method used W. Edwards Deming to train the Japanese in manufacturing after WWII. This analysis sets upper and lower control limits and tells you when the process is in or out of control within your specified range. All that data is much too large to go into here. Suffice it to say that I could predict the ability of the rifle to shoot somewhat less than .5" for five shots within the +/- 3sp limit. This was accomplished by shooting more than 100, 5-round groups at 100, 200, 300, and 400 yards. This process is expensive, time consuming, and tedious because of the number of variables involved including your bench technique, the conditions, wind, etc. Nor does it treat a barrel kindly.

Based on Dan's recommendation, I sent the action to Robar for their NP3 finish. That finish not only prevents corrosion, but has a



Jacob built the .339 Déjà vu because the rifles and cartridges he had previously used were not up to the task with the tenacious South Texas nilgai. On this young bull, the 225-grain Barnes X entered just behind the shoulder and fully penetrated the animal. Note the McMillan stock and Robar NP3 finish have been added. From conception to finished product, the wildcat cartridge and rifle took over 2 years. Although there were plenty of cartridges out there to get the job done, Jacob had a ball putting together his own.

lubricating quality as well. I retained the original wood stock for a year or so, but I had Dan mount and pillar bed a McMillan stock a couple of years later. I also ordered the stock with extra glass around the action and pistol grip. A bit of trigger work and the rifle was finally what I had dreamed of.

The results on nilgai were not as sterling as I had hoped. At least not until I switched to Barnes 225-grain bullets driven at 3,100 fps. The bullets

I had been using for years did not have the penetrating power to put these animals on the ground. Yes, I am fully aware of the controversy between full penetration and one that comes apart a few inches inside the animal. This controversy is based on the idea that kinetic energy is what kills coupled with the idea that all the kinetic energy is not expelled in the animal if full penetration results.

First, this viewpoint rests on an invalid premise (information for another article), and second, it only wounds animals in many cases when a quartering shot is the only one presenting itself. I have shot hundreds of animals. They are all different, all affected differently by hits, and there is no sure fire way to put them immediately on the ground save for a brain or spine shot. The chances are most animals hit through the vitals with a broadside lung/heart shot will run 40 yards regardless of the bullet or velocity with which it is hit. But the Barnes bullet or most bonded bullets will retain weight and penetrate

.339 DÉJÀ VU HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)
200 NOSLER BT	RL-22	94	3,350
210 BARNES X	RL-22	93	3,300
210 NOSLER PARTITION	RL-22	93	3,280
225 BARNES X	RL-22	90	3,080
225 BARNES X	RL-22	92	3,140
250 SIERRA MATCHKING	RL-22	89	3,050

Notes: All cases made from 8mm Remington Mag cases necked to .338" and necks turned to .0125". All loads use Fed 215M primers, and a .360" sizing bushing. Velocities were taken 10' from the muzzle at sea level, 29.8 barometric pressure, and temperatures from 45 to 65 degrees F. For comparison, the .340 Weatherby with 210-grain Nosler BT achieves 3,230 fps.

ROBAR'S NP3 FINISH

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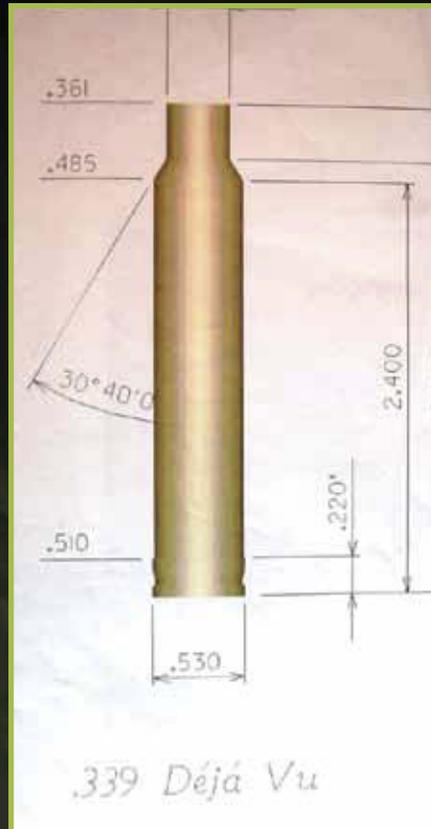
the shoulder or any other bone and continue moving through tissue, destroying it on its way to the vitals.

The .339 Déjà vu and 225-grain Barnes bullet proved effective on nilgai, and I took several bulls and cows with it. I took the rifle to Africa, putting down 5 animals, each with one shot. Each were hit in the heart/lung (although sometimes from a quartering shot) and each, with one exception, ran about 40 yards and expired. The one exception did collapse on the spot.

Nilgai reduction programs are carried out here in South Texas from time to time. They use a .22-250 and a brain shot, which is immediately lethal. But when you only have a chance to hunt the animal once a year for meat, that sort of thing is not always possible. I did try once, and the animal did not fall immediately. Come to find out the brain was not where I thought. It resides in very small cavity far behind the ear.

The .339 Déjà vu produces 4,960 foot-pounds at the muzzle and 3,130 ft-lbs at 500 yards and remains above 2,000 ft-lbs out to 850 yards.

A few people around the country and Canada who have built the cartridge are happy with it. Will several modern cartridges do the same



Shown are the approximate dimensions after measuring an 8mm Remington Magnum case fire-formed to fit the .339 Déjà vu chamber.

thing? Yes, particularly many of the new non-belted cartridges. But I had a ball doing it, and the cartridge will put down anything from impala to moose and grizzly.

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John Barsness

Quite a few shooters still claim, “You get what you pay for, especially in optics,” but this claim is partially a holdover from the days when really good optics were manufactured only in the United States and some other “First World” countries. America, Great Britain, Germany and a few other European countries were the leading industrial nations of the world. They possessed the technological capability to make excellent optics, and their standards of living were higher than in other nations. Anything they produced cost more.

After World War II more of the world became industrialized, especially Asia, as quicker transportation and electronic communication spread new technology. By the 1980s Japanese cameras dominated professional photography, and several American optics companies quit making their own riflescopes, instead importing them from Japan. By 2000, other Asian countries produced very good optics, often aided by American and European companies importing scopes or scope parts.

That’s the way today’s worldwide manufacturing works, and it’s also the way capitalism works. We can rant about unfair competition from China, but Adam Smith’s “invisible hand of the market” always searches for lower-cost labor. The end result is quality goods at lower prices.

Yes, German optics manufacturers still make very fine scopes, certainly among the best in the world, but assuming a direct relationship between price and scope quality is very much like assuming a \$19.99 Reuben sandwich from an upscale

OPES

HOW MUCH DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO SPEND?

AND MOUNTS

Manhattan restaurant is three times as good as an \$6.49 Reuben from a cafe in Casper, Wyo. I've eaten Reubens in both places, and while the New York sandwich was better, it didn't beat Wyo. by much.

Similar assumptions are often made about scope mounts. Many shooters believe mounts must be made entirely of steel, preferably a lot of steel, in order to keep scopes in place, and any mounts costing less than \$100 or even \$200 are suspect. In reality some mounts costing under \$50 hold scopes quite well. You may not be able to pull your scope off the rifle, then replace it as precisely as with a \$500 German detachable mount, but then again you might!

One of the real advances in inexpensive riflescopes over the past decade has been reliable adjustments. Before the appearance of affordable laser rangefinders in the mid-1990s, relatively few scopes had truly repeatable adjustments. They didn't need to, since back then most of us sighted-in our rifles, then left the scope alone. These days many hunters expect to twirl the elevation turret when shooting at longer ranges. As a result, even the adjustments of many "affordable" scopes usually track quite well.

It's relatively easy to test new scopes for optical quality and repeatability of adjustment, but testing for ruggedness isn't so straightforward. I've broken a bunch of new scopes on rifles from lightweight .30-06s up to .375s while shooting less than two boxes of ammo, probably due to factory defects, but how many rounds a scope takes beyond 40 is another indicator of quality. As a result, the scopes

listed here as relative bargains have been around long enough to gather a consensus of toughness from a number of shooters

The first nominee is Burris' Fullfield II line, partly because the Fullfield II line is a perfect example of the modern optics market. For a number of years they were made in Burris' Colorado factory, but several years ago manufacturing switched to the Philippines. Retail prices stayed the same, but profit was larger due to lower labor costs.

Many shooters assumed the quality of the Fullfield II would drop, but I immediately obtained a 3-9X and ran it through a battery of tests. If anything, the "foreign" scope was slightly better finished than my American-made Fullfield II scopes, and the optics and adjustments were just as good. It's held up well now for several years, as have several other Philippine Fullfield II scopes on rifles chambered for cartridges up to .300 Weatherby Magnum, an excellent round both for big-game hunting and breaking test scopes. Among my Fullfield II scopes is a tactical 3-9X with a 30mm tube, and its adjustments track just as well as those on several more expensive scopes.

The reason the foreign-made Fullfield II scopes are just as good: They're made on the same machinery as the American scopes. Instead of contracting with an overseas company to make copies, Burris provided the tooling and trained the workers.

This doesn't mean Asian factories don't know how to make good scopes. Other really good bargains among affordable scopes are the Bushnell Elites, Minox Z3s, the new Redfields, Vortexes



Talley Lightweight mounts were designed by Melvin Forbes for his New Ultra Light Arms rifles. Eileen Clarke sighted-in her new NULA .270 Winchester in 1994, when she took this mule deer (opposite), and never had to sight it in again until the scope broke down a decade later—the reason she used a different scope for this spike elk.

and Weaver Grand Slams. Those are just the new scopes I've tested over the past decade; others appear every year, thanks to our apparently insatiable appetite for affordable optics. In the past few years, I've also tested scopes from Hawke, a long-time European-based firm, now with a branch in the USA, and Kruger, a new company with engineering headquarters in Oregon, where it also assembles some optics. So,

"Few companies make fixed-power scopes anymore, probably due to the variable scope's dominance of the market. Fortunately, Leupold fixed-powers are light, very tough and affordable."

far both the Hawke and Kruger scopes have been very good.

Probably the best scope bargains at any price level are 3-9X or 3-10X models. Shooters buy more of those than any others, so volume production cuts costs. Plus, except for specialized shooting, scopes up to 10X don't require any sort of parallax adjustment, whether a side-knob or adjustable objective, the main reason variables topping out at 12X or more have considerably higher price tags. The simplest Burris Fullfield II 3-9X retails for around \$150, while the lowest-price 4.5-14x42 costs twice as much. The real-world prices for basic 3-9X and 3-10X scopes from the other brands listed mostly run in the \$150 to \$200 range, with a few over \$250.

Another cliché about scopes claims modern variables are just as tough as fixed-powers. While this appears to be true of very expensive and heavy scopes, my experience is "normal" variables (the kind most of us buy and use) still aren't as tough as fixed scopes in the same price range. I've never broken a Schmidt & Bender or a Nightforce, but have seen dozens of variables from just about every other maker on earth go screwy, both on my rifles and those of hunting companions. The number of broken fixed-power scopes during the same period can be counted on one hand, with fingers left over.

Most affordable variables work fine on any normal-weight rifle chambered for the .30-06 or one of the 7mm magnums, but the .300 magnum recoil level increases failures considerably. This doesn't mean a \$500 variable won't work fine on a .300, .338 or .375 magnum, but average scope life will be shorter.

This tendency isn't noticed by most American hunters because relatively few use rifles chambered for .300+ magnums, but it exists, and for a simple reason: Variables have more moving parts, and the parts that move are more susceptible to bending or breaking. The heart of the problem is the erector tube, a smaller tube within the scope, carrying the erector lenses. The erector tube not only turns the image right-side-up (hence its name) but gets precisely moved by the adjustment turrets to change the scope's point-of-impact.

In a fixed-power scope the erector system is 1-piece, but in a variable it's two tubes, one fitting closely inside the other. The outer tube is attached to the scope's outer tube, but the inner erector tube slides back and forth, changing the magnification via a cam on the inside of the magnification ring. One general rule of mechanics is more moving parts weaken the system, and most variable scopes fail due to problems with their more-complicated erector tube.



Both the Bushnell Elite (above, top gun) and Hawke scopes (above, bottom gun) feature very repeatable adjustments, as do so many affordable scopes these days, thanks to the 21st-century trend of cranking up the elevation knob on longer shots. Among the newest really good deals in scopes are the new Redfields (below).



Unless a variable's erector system is made extremely tough (resulting in a heavier, more expensive scope) fixed-power scopes are still tougher, especially the lightweight scopes many hunters prefer. Few companies make fixed-power scopes anymore, probably due to the variable scope's dominance of the market. Fortunately, Leupold fixed-powers are light, very tough and affordable. They're also very good optically, partly because fixed scopes require fewer lenses than variables, resulting in fewer glass/air surfaces. As a result more light passes through the scope without scattering.

Most hunters prefer variables

because of their versatility, though I've noticed most hunters turn their scopes up to sight in, then turn them down to hunt, leaving the scope on a mid-range magnification. The theory is that any quick shot will be relatively close, where the wider field of view of lower magnification helps "find" the animal. On a longer shot there's usually time to crank the Xs higher.

In reality, field of view (FOV) is one of the most overrated aspects of rifle scopes. Modern scopes have plenty of field for most hunting, even at 6X or more. I've shot several running big game animals at well under 50 yards with 6X scopes, and my wife Eileen



Two real deals are attached to the top of John's trusty .338 Winchester Magnum: a 4x33mm Leupold scope in Weaver mounts. The scope and rings have never given any trouble on hunting trips around the world.

(who sensibly refuses to shoot running animals) habitually leaves her hunting scopes cranked all the way up to 9X or 10X, and has no difficulty shooting deer at 50 yards.

Much of our fear of higher magnification is tribal lore, passed down from when most scopes typically had 3/4" or 7/8" tubes, and even many 1" scopes had narrow ocular lenses. Among my collection of old scopes is an old 6X Weaver with a 3/4" tube. The width of the FOV is slightly over half of a modern 6Xs.

If you don't have this tribal fear of FOV, you might try a fixed-power. These days more hunters apparently are, especially Leupold 6Xs, finding them adequate for shots from 10 yards and to over 500. After all, a 6X scope makes a deer at 500 yards appear about 80 yards away.

And no, you don't have to spend \$200 or more on mounts. One of the best bargains around is still "Old Ugly," otherwise known as the Weaver Detachable Top Mount. They've been around forever, it seems, and will hold scopes in place, even on hard-kicking rifles, as long as the scope isn't too heavy. My .338 Winchester Magnum is a lightweight custom rifle, and it's had a 4X Leupold in Weaver mounts for many years with no problems.

Along with being quite affordable (under \$50 for bases and rings), Weaver mounts allow a scope to be taken off a rifle and then replaced, very repeatably, by using a couple of simple tricks. First, after getting the scope on the rifle, but before the final tightening of ring-screws, pull the rings as far apart as possible, pressing the rear ring against the rear surface of the cross-slot in its base, and the front ring

against the front surface of its cross-slot, eliminating slop in the system. Next, when replacing the scope, tighten the side-knob of each ring alternately, a little at a time, just like tightening the lug-nuts on a spare tire. With those two techniques, a scope in Weaver rings will replace pretty darn precisely.

In fixed mounts Talley Lightweights are a really good deal, also costing less than \$50. The design originated with Melvin Forbes of New Ultra Light Arms, who wanted light yet strong mounts for his super-light rifles. He used aluminum to keep the weight down, splitting the rings horizontally, with the bottom half one thick piece of aluminum screwing directly on the rifle's action.

Some theorists don't believe aluminum scope mounts are strong enough to withstand recoil, or even hard hunting, but the design of the rings makes them very tough, even when a pair weighs less than 3 ounces with screws. The first NULA I ever fooled with was a .300 Winchester Magnum weighing just under 7 pounds with a 4X Bausch & Lomb Compact. It never changed point of impact in the year Melvin loaned it to me.

Two years later Eileen got a NULA .270 Winchester, weighing exactly 6 pounds with a 2-7X scope. Every autumn for the next decade we went to the range just before hunting season, and Eileen shot one round at a 100-yard target. A hole would appear 2" high, dead center, every time. The point of impact never varied, even with a lot of hunting across the American West and two caribou hunts involving multiple plane rides. (The rifle only stayed sighted-in a decade because the scope eventually broke down.)

A third bargain is Conetrol mounts. The lowest-price version, the matte-finish Huntur, costs around \$140 for bases and rings, but if you desire some windage adjustment in a scope mount, Conetrols provide it in both the front and rear base and, unlike some windage-adjustable mounts, they're really strong.

On many factory rifles, the scope ends up pointed in a slightly different direction than the bore. Generally it's assumed the cause is off-center scope holes, or a barrel screwed in crookedly, but usually the problem's due to uneven polishing of the top of the action, tilting the mounts. Whatever the reason, Conetrol mounts provide one of the easiest solutions, and bases are available for just about any rifle on earth. Plus, they look better than Weavers!

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STORY: DAVE ANDERSON

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The light-kicking rifle sits squarely on front and rear bags, and is supported and aimed solely with the bags, not by shooter pressure on the rifle itself. Protektor leather bags are beautifully made, allow the rifle to slide smoothly in recoil, and are built for a lifetime of shooting.



If you don't want or need a front rest, a bipod such as this Harris is very effective, though Dave still wants a rear sandbag. An advantage of bipods is they can remain on the rifle at all times and are quick to deploy in field shooting.



BENCH BASICS

Learn to shoot from a rest to qualify the quality of your gun, scope and ammunition.

Developing practical rifle skill requires practice in shooting offhand, sitting, prone, off a bipod or shooting sticks, using improvised rests. You can get too dependent on shooting from a benchrest.

Unfortunately, the message some shooters get is there is no need to ever shoot from the bench. Bench shooting skill helps in testing rifles, optics, and ammunition, and in developing trigger control. Don't be dependent on bench shooting, but know how to do it.

Shooting rests don't have to be expensive. Even after I could afford a proper rest, I resented allocating any of my "gun budget" to non-essentials. For years, I used an old canvas bag filled with beach sand. It must have weighed 50 or 60 pounds. Legs cut from old jeans, filled with sand and tied with twine served as rear bags.

A "store bought" rest won't necessarily achieve better results but certainly is more convenient. "Middle of the road" suits me best. I tried some small, light rests and found they would sometimes tilt during recoil or

if the gun was shifted slightly. But I can't justify the cost of a serious competition benchrest-quality bags.

The Sinclair light rest shown here is moderately priced (\$160) considering its quality. If it is a compromise it is a darn good one, light enough to pack easily, but stable, easily leveled, and precise. The Protektor leather bags allow the rifle to slide smoothly in recoil. Maybe a luxury but dang it, I made do for decades and in my senior years I deserve a bit of luxury. At least those are arguments I made with the Secretary of the Treasury.

The bench technique illustrated here is for a light-recoiling rifle, another reason a .223 is such a great learning tool. Try this with a rifle with any significant recoil and you'll likely get a scope cut, a bruised shoulder, maybe even a rifle on the ground.

Next time, we'll discuss techniques for handling hard-kickers. For now let's work on basic technique. The rifle sits squarely on the rests, and is aimed by moving the rests. Benchrest competitors generally aim with fine adjustments on the front rest. With a conventional rest, stick to old school methods and aim with the rear sandbag.

The shooter should be sitting comfortably, relaxed, arms resting on the shooting table. With our light-kicking .223 we can get away with a fairly low rest, with the body leaning forward. With hard-recoiling rifles we

A high quality benchrest doesn't have to weigh 20 pounds and cost a fortune. This Sinclair light rest weighs just 6 pounds, is both precise and stable, and a great value at \$160. The rifle is a Ruger 77 Hawkeye in .223, scope a Leupold Mark 4 3.5-10X.

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The rifle is aimed with pressure on the rear bag (above), not by shooter contact with the rifle itself. Get the bags positioned so the sight reticle is slightly above the aiming point when sitting freely on the bags, then make final adjustments by squeezing the rear bag. The shooting hand grips the rifle lightly (below), no harder than necessary to keep the trigger finger properly positioned. It is key not to try and "steer" the rifle with the shooting hand, or with the shooter's face or shoulder.

can't be so nonchalant about position. We'll get to that in due course.

It is key to have minimal contact with the rifle, and vitally important never to aim the rifle using body contact, i.e. hands, cheek, or shoulder. If we try to "steer" the rifle, with shooting hand or shoulder, we are inevitably going to be inconsistent.

Some shooters with light rifles won't have the butt touch the shoulder at all, leaving 1/2" or so of space. Personally I like to have at least some contact between rifle butt and shoulder. It's probably a fault, but not a grievous one provided contact is consistent from shot to shot.

Sitting on the bags with no shooter contact, the sight reticle should be slightly above our aiming point. Now get into shooting position, which for me means with the rifle lightly contacting the shoulder. The face, if it touches the stock at all, should touch as lightly as possible. I like to keep my head well back which reduces field of view but also reduces the chances of a scope cut with a hard kicking rifle.

So far the shooting hand (for me, the right) hasn't touched the rifle at all. With the left hand, squeeze the rear shooting bag, which elevates the stock and brings the reticle on target. Remember all aiming is done solely with the left hand.

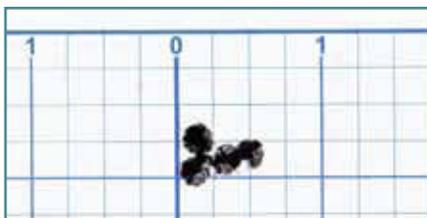


Once satisfied with the sight picture and comfortable, relaxed, and stable, bring the shooting hand to the rifle, keeping a light touch, and taking pains not to steer the rifle. Actually the sight picture will likely move a bit, but don't despair. Get the shooting hand placed comfortably, with the pad of the trigger finger squarely across the trigger face. Maintain the hold so as not to influence the rifle further, and refine the aim with the left hand on the rear bag.

Focus on the sight picture and let the trigger finger smoothly increase pressure until the rifle fires. The focus should be intense enough for the mind to retain a clear, sharp mental picture of the sight picture as the shot broke.

The objective is absolute consistency from shot to shot. For me the key to accurate bench shooting is to avoid aiming the rifle with the shooting hand, or by cheek or shoulder pressure.

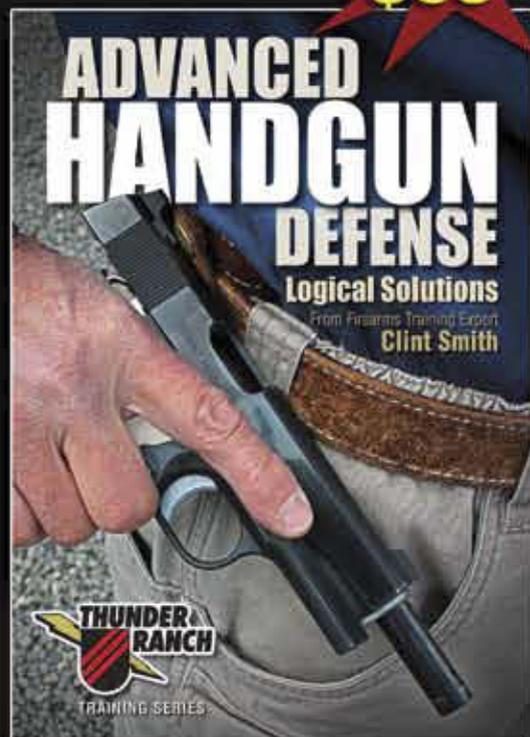
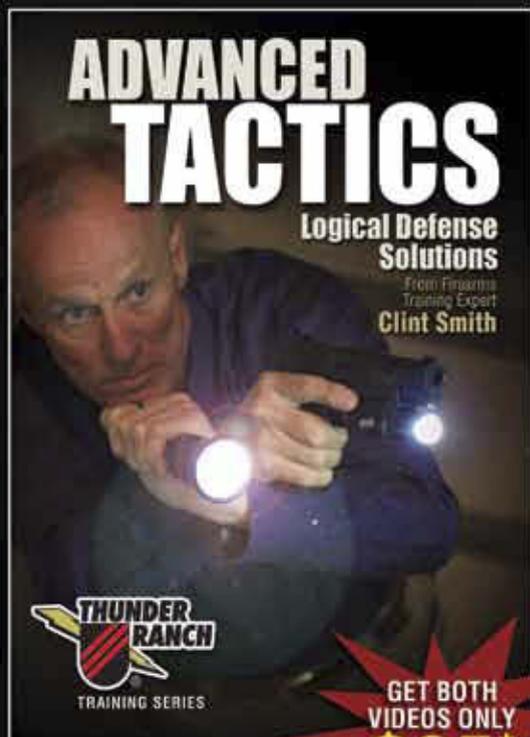
GUNS



Shot from the setup pictured, five shots at 100 yards. Group is just over 1/2" edge to edge, about 1/3" center-to-center. This almost completely stock (Dave changed the trigger return spring) Ruger 77 Hawkeye .223, Leupold Mark 4 3.5-10X, Black Hills "blue box" ammunition with 77-grain match bullets. Dave started shooting in the '60s and finds the over-the-counter accuracy available today is incredible.

“Once the bullet goes down the barrel
you can never bring it back.”

~Clint Smith



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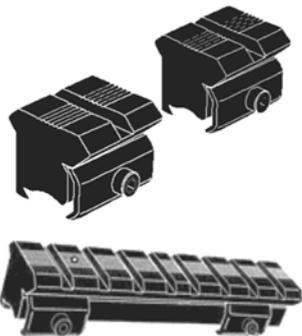
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KNIVES

STORY: Pat Covert

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The Swedish FireKnife will have your back in a bad situation.

In any survival situation two of the most essential tools needed to endure are a knife and firestarter. Swedish company Light My Fire has your back with their Swedish FireKnife. Light My Fire first jumped into the camping/survival market in 1995 selling a fire igniting tinder called MayaSticks, but the company didn't take off until they completed the firemaking circle by adding Magnesium fire rods to their line. Flame on! Since most Magnesium firestarters are used by rapidly scraping sparks off the rod using the back of a knife blade it was only natural to combine these two elements into one, and the Swedish FireKnife does just that.

The knife itself is a Finnish Puukko style designed by Light My Fire and made by Mora of Sweden. The traditional Puukko belt knife is characterized by a straightforward blade with a shallow grind attached to an ample handle. The Puukko design is the basic idea behind the knives used in the popular Bushcraft movement today. The concept is simple: the Swedish FireKnife's pommel twists off to access the fire rod and the back of the blade provides the "oomph" for grinding off sparks. The knife itself has a comfortable high impact plastic and TPE rubber handle, and the 3.75"



Light My Fire's Swedish FireKnife combines a Puukko style knife with the firm's popular magnesium fire rod.

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BLADE STEEL: Sandvik 12C27 stainless, **BLADE LENGTH:** 3.75", **OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.5", **WEIGHT:** 3.4 ounces, **HANDLE:** High-impact plastic/TPE rubber, **CARRY:** Polypropylene sheath with clip, **PRICE:** \$39.99

Sandvik 12C27 stainless steel blade offers good utility. A polypropylene sheath (with clip) houses the FireKnife, which is available in a wide array of vivid colors plus black.

Would I recommend the Swedish FireKnife as a primary survival knife? No. I'd prefer a longer, wider and deeper ground blade that can perform heavy-duty field chores. But at a suggested retail of \$39.99 the Swedish FireKnife is an excellent choice for the young camper or to stash in your gear and truck as a handy back-up knife for emergency situations.

GUNS

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RIGHTS WATCH

DAVID CODREA

Global Norming On Guns Heats Up

“Venezuela bans private gun ownership,” BBC News reported. “Under the new law, only the army, police and certain groups like security companies will be able to buy arms from the state-owned weapons manufacturer and importer.”

It’s presented, of course, as an “attempt by the government to improve security and cut crime.” But opponents of Marxist strongman Hugo Chávez, at least the ones whose voices can be heard when he’s not shutting down opposition broadcasting stations for “media crimes,” question police “capacity or the will to enforce the new law.”

That’s an understatement. Having seen Chávez temporarily ousted in a 2002 failed coup attempt (he’d participated in a failed one in 1992), many Venezuelans may just want to ignore his “amnesty” threat, hold onto their guns and take their chances that a ruler suffering from progressive cancer won’t be around to see that his political edicts become permanent. And, of course, the violence perpetrators causing all the problems won’t obey “gun control” laws any more than they do laws against being criminals in the first place.

What’s clear, as with human rights-violating tyrants everywhere, is that the real reason behind such measures is to create and maintain a monopoly of violence (see “Rights Watch,” Sept. 2010). And speaking of those, China, of all nations, in a tit-for-tat against criticism from the West, condemned US gun ownership as a human rights violation.

“The United States prioritizes the right to keep and bear arms over the protection of citizens’ lives and personal security and exercises lax firearm possession control, causing rampant gun ownership,” the State

Council Information Office declared in a broader criticism titled “Human Rights Record of the United States in 2011.”

“High incidence of gun-related crimes has long ignited complaints of the US people and they stage multiple protests every year, demanding the government strictly control the private possession of arms. The US government, however, fails to pay due attention to this issue,” the Chicoms conclude.

It’s almost laughable, considering the Chinese experience when invading Japanese were able to perpetrate the Rape of Nanking, the genocidal regime of Chairman Mao (who understood that “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun”), the massacre at Tiananmen Square, the ongoing brutal occupation of Tibet... not to mention a booming arms business the PRC enjoys as it destabilizes hotspots around the globe to its own advantage.

Yet such a monopoly is what the global gungrabbers and their US counterparts, both savvy domestic enemies and their useful idiot camp followers, are working toward with every demand for new edicts, always presented as “common sense gun laws” and “a good first step.”

It’s never good enough—not satisfied with current efforts toward establishing worldwide enforceable citizen disarmament edicts, Oxfam, the international “social justice” confederation behind the global “Control Arms” campaign, along with the International Action Network on Small Arms and Amnesty International, says that the sale of ammunition must be included in the United Nations’ Arms Trade Treaty.

But they’ve encountered a stumbling block. It seems China wants ammunition excluded because they make so dang much money off it.

GUNS

Visit David Codrea’s online journal “The War on Guns” at waronguns.com, visit DavidCodrea.com to read his Examiner column.

Due to the importance of this column, GUNS will begin posting “Rights Watch” at www.gunsmagazine.com on the 1st of the month—long before it appears here.—Editor



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NEWS

Self-Guided Bullet

Take two Sandia National Laboratories engineers who are hunters, get them talking about the sport and it shouldn't be surprising when the conversation leads to a patented design for a self-guided bullet that could help war fighters.

Sandia researchers Red Jones and

Brian Kast and their colleagues have invented a dart-like, self-guided bullet for small-caliber, smoothbore firearms that could hit laser-designated targets at distances of more than a mile.

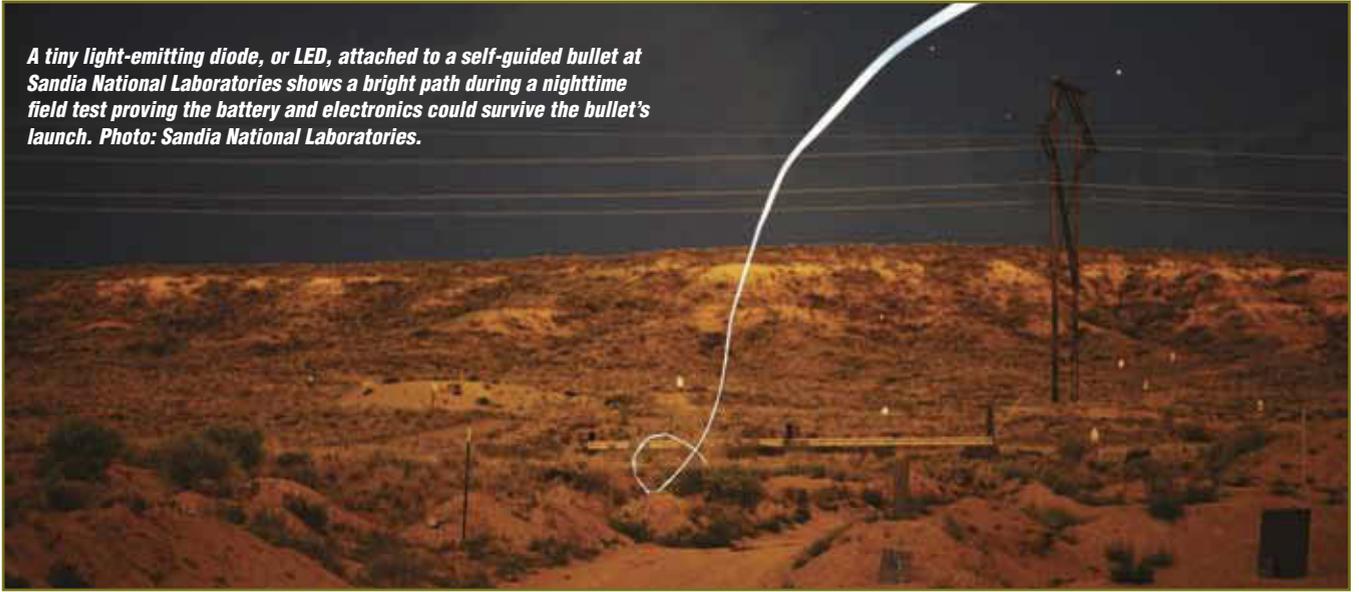
Researchers have had initial success testing the design in computer simulations and in field tests of prototypes, built from commercially available parts, Jones said.

While engineering issues remain,

“we're confident in our science base and we're confident the engineering-technology base is there to solve the problems,” he said.

Sandia's design for the 4"-long bullet includes an optical sensor in the nose to detect a laser beam on a target. The sensor sends information to guidance and control electronics that use an algorithm in an 8-bit central processing unit to command

A tiny light-emitting diode, or LED, attached to a self-guided bullet at Sandia National Laboratories shows a bright path during a nighttime field test proving the battery and electronics could survive the bullet's launch. Photo: Sandia National Laboratories.



electromagnetic actuators. These actuators steer tiny fins that guide the bullet to the target.

Most bullets shot from rifles are spun by the rifling so they fly straight, like a long football pass. To enable a bullet to turn in flight toward a target and to simplify the design, the spin had to go, Jones said.

The bullet flies straight due to its aerodynamically stable design, which consists of a center of gravity forward in the projectile and tiny fins enable it to fly without spin, just as a dart does, Jones added.

Computer aerodynamic modeling shows the design would result in dramatic improvements in accuracy, Jones said. Computer simulations showed an unguided bullet under real-world conditions could miss a target more than a 1/2 mile away by 9.8 yards, but a guided bullet would get within 8", according to the patent.

Plastic sabots provide a gas seal in the cartridge and protect the delicate fins then drop off after the bullet emerges from the firearm's barrel.

The prototype does not require a device found in guided missiles called an inertial measuring unit, which would have added substantially to its cost. Instead, the researchers found the bullet's relatively small size when



The 4"-long bullet has actuators that steer tiny fins to guide the projectile to its target. Photo: Randy Montoya

compared to guided missiles "is helping us all around. It's kind of a fortuitous thing none of us saw when we started," Jones said.

As the bullet flies through the air, it pitches and yaws at a set rate based on its mass and size. In larger

guided missiles, the rate of flight-path corrections is relatively slow, so each correction needs to be very precise because fewer corrections are possible during flight. But "the natural body frequency of this bullet is about 30 hertz, so we can make corrections 30

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times per second. That means we can overcorrect, so we don't have to be as precise each time," Jones said.

Testing has shown the electromagnetic actuator performs well and the bullet can reach speeds of 2,400 fps using commercially available gunpowder. The researchers are confident it could reach standard military speeds using customized gunpowder.

A nighttime field test, in which a tiny light-emitting diode, or LED, was attached to the bullet showed the battery and electronics can survive flight, Jones said.

“Researchers also filmed high-speed video of the bullet radically pitching as it exited the barrel. The bullet pitches less as it flies downrange, a phenomenon known to long-range firearms experts as ‘going to sleep.’”

Researchers also filmed high-speed video of the bullet radically pitching as it exited the barrel. The bullet pitches less as it flies downrange, a phenomenon known to long-range firearms experts as “going to sleep.” Because the bullet’s motions settle the longer it is in flight, accuracy improves at longer ranges, Jones said.

In addition to Jones and Kast, Sandia researchers who helped develop the technology are: engineer Brandon R. Rohrer, aerodynamics expert Marc W. Kniskern, mechanical designer Scott E. Rose, firearms expert James W. Woods and Ronald W. Greene, a guidance, control and simulation engineer.

Sandia National Laboratories is a multiprogram laboratory operated and managed by Sandia Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Lockheed Martin Corporation, for the US Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration. With main facilities in Albuquerque, N.M., and Livermore,

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Calif., Sandia has major R&D responsibilities in national security, energy and environmental technologies, and economic competitiveness.—*Courtesy Heather Clark, Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, N.M.*

Need To Know?

We get a lot of questions saying, “How do I...” here at all of our magazines, so Publisher Roy Huntington has taken the bull by the horns (so to speak) and done a series of short videos explaining many of these common questions. The first of these are available to see free at www.gunsmagazine.com/insider-tips. See

“How to Buy a Used Auto Pistol,” “How to Buy a Used Revolver” and “How to Buy a Used Rifle” available now, with “How to Buy a Used Shotgun” and “How to Be a Good Customer” following soon! Stay tuned for more videos posting on a regular basis.



New Orders

Sturm, Ruger & Co. announced last June it has resumed the normal acceptance of orders from its independent wholesale distributors. In March, the company had temporarily suspended the acceptance of new orders after receiving orders for more than 1 million firearms in the first quarter. Said Ruger, “Demand for our products is very strong, and the current backlog remains significantly above year-ago levels. Our production and shipments in the first quarter of 2012 increased more than 50 percent from the first quarter of 2011 and remain very strong.”—*Courtesy NSSF*

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\$36 Million Ammo Order

ATK has received a \$36 million order from the US Army to produce 120mm training ammunition for tanks. Since 1980, ATK has delivered more than 4 million rounds of 120mm tactical and training tank ammunition to the Army, Marine Corps and allied militaries. The work will be conducted at ATK-operated facilities in Minnesota and West Virginia. —*Courtesy NSSF*

Firearms Industry Jobs

Visit www.nssf.org/jobs for current employment opportunities in the shooting, hunting and outdoor industry. Employers: Log in to post a job opening. —*Courtesy NSSF*

24 Straight

The May 2012 NSSF-adjusted National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) figure of 840,412 is an increase of 20.6 percent over the NSSF-adjusted NICS figure of 696,947 in May 2011. For comparison, the unadjusted May 2012 NICS figure of 1,305,392 reflects a 7 percent increase from the unadjusted NICS figure of 1,219,872 in May 2011. This marks the 24th straight month that NSSF-adjusted NICS figures have increased when compared to the same period the previous year.—*Courtesy NSSF*

Marines, Afghan National Security Put Pressure On Insurgency

During a time in which Marines are continually withdrawing from Afghanistan, Marines and Afghan National Security Forces put continued pressure on the insurgency during Operation Sangin United Horizons, a battalion-sized operation that took place last May 17-20.

Dog Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, was responsible for finding and destroying weapons caches, improvised explosive devices and drug-producing facilities. The Marines focused on two key population centers, Western Wushtan and Zard Ragay, which serve as passage-ways through the mountains between Sangin and Kandahar.

Marines from Dog Company, 1st Bn., 7th Marines, partnered with Afghan National Army soldiers and were inserted by helicopter in the dead of night. By the time the blistering

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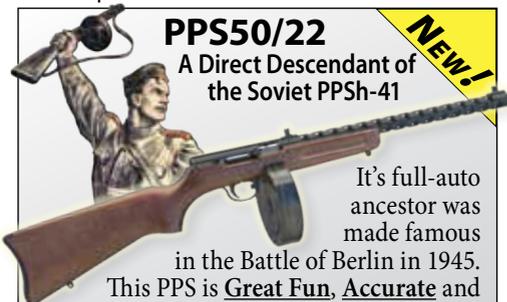
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Roza Shanina, already an accomplished sniper in 1944 at the age of 20, commanded a squad of female snipers, who proved to be the scourge of the German army. These courageous young women used a rifle that was state-of-the-art at the time, the Mosin 91/30 PU.

These rifles performed admirably on the Eastern front, notably at Stalingrad, as you will see in *"Enemy at the Gate"*, which comes free with your Mosin 91/30 PU Sniper rifle.

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"I think at this point in the Afghan war, and in the Helmand province in particular, the ANSF and coalition forces partnered together have done a very effective job in pushing the enemy forces out of the population centers and out into these isolated safe havens," Collins said.

Afghan sun had risen, Marines had started their mission. Within hours they had established a patrol base as a hub for continued partnered operations.

Throughout the next 3 days, the Marines conducted partnered patrolling missions with the ANA. While patrolling, the Marines assessed the area and set up a cordon while the ANA deliberately and methodically cleared compounds in each of the villages. Throughout the operation, Marines along with their ANA partners assessed the population through key leader engagements to evaluate the situation and attitudes of the local populace.

"The ANA was the main effort and the assault force as the Marines provided a lot of cordons and security for them," said 2nd Lt. Kenneth Conover, 1st platoon commander for Dog Company, 1st Bn., 7th Marines, from Fallbrook, Calif. "The ANA

went in and did a lot of compound searches, a lot of local national engagements. They were able to identify some key leaders and sit down and talk with those key leaders in the villages."

During the 3-day operation, Marines along with ANA conducted day and night patrols and searched approximately 50 compounds with the ANA searching the majority of them.

"This operation's purpose was to go into a known enemy safe haven were they bed down," said Capt. John Collins, company commander for Dog Company, 1st Bn., 7th Marines, from Toledo, Ohio. "So our mission was to go into those areas and conduct cordons and searches to disrupt the enemies' ability to wage a coherent fighting campaign."

"The Marines did an outstanding job," Collins noted. "The nature of a night insert followed by a night infiltration means that you're going to be

sleep deprived. Anytime you insert by helicopter you have to take a lot more sustainment supplies so you have a heavier ruck. If you're sleep deprived with a heavy ruck patrolling at night through a potentially improvised explosive device laden area it's no easy task, but the Marines did an outstanding job. They also did an awesome job with the partnered patrols.

"I think at this point in the Afghan war, and in the Helmand province in particular, the ANSF and coalition forces partnered together have done a very effective job in pushing the enemy forces out of the population centers and out into these isolated safe havens," Collins said. "I think by going into these places, it lets the enemy know there's no safe place they can hide. It also builds confidence and increases the capacity of the partnered force as well as the ANSF."—Lance Cpl. Mark Garcia, 1 MEF (FWD) Combat Outpost Tabac, Afghanistan

GUNS

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Hornady's Zombie Max Ammunition is so cool even non-shooters are buying it!

ZOMBIE MANIA! Silly and serious zombie shootin' gear.

Zombie crazes, mostly books and films, have come and gone before, but nothing like the Zombie mania going on today! The latest wave probably began with the publishing of *The Zombie Survival Guide* by Max Brooks in 2003. Written on the premise of global viral Zombie outbreaks, it's actually full of sound tips on surviving many kinds of social disorders and natural catastrophes, well-written with dark humor and wry satire. Sales skyrocketed, and new Zombie movies, TV series and more books followed.

Brownells hosts a "Center for Zombie Awareness," offering an array of Zombie-motif products from engraved AR parts to shotgun magazine extension tubes. Hornady's "Pandemic 2012—Zombies in the Heartland" 3-gun match has massive manufacturer support and promises to be one of the biggest shooting events of the summer. Dozens of companies offer "Zombified" products.

Where will the madness end? Maybe when the last slouching, moaning, brain-eating Zombie is *dead*. Or, "dead-er." Whatever....

To my knowledge, it was Joe Quinlan's iconic paper Zombie Targets which kicked off the "living dead" craze in the shooting industry, and now he makes even more and better targets, including my favorite, featuring Jingles the Zombie Clown. All of his Zombie Targets have subdued scoring zones consistent with those on most law enforcement training targets, and they're high-quality, 23" wide by 35" tall, printed on 60-pound paper.

Zombie Industries rapidly became a major player in Zombieland, offering a full line of paper and cardboard

targets in multiple sizes, "bleeding" and "mutilating" 3-D molded head-and-torso targets—yes, they really *bleed* non-toxic biodegradable liquid—and even exploding Zombie targets! For club shoots, they also make a mural-sized folding target featuring a mob of the undead, each with a place in their foreheads which holds a skeet/trap clay bird. I'm waiting for moaning, wailing motorized Zombies....

Great Ammo Too

Hornady hit it big with their Zombie Max Ammunition, now offered in nine popular calibers from .380 ACP through 12 gauge. It's really their top-flight premium ammo packaged in gaudy Zombie-motif boxes, loaded with ghastly green-tipped slugs. There's a full line of Z-Max slugs offered for reloaders too! We even know of non-shooters who are buying and carefully storing Zombie Max ammo for the future collector's market—how's that for a twist?

And by the way, if you need good storage for your Zombie Max munitions, MTM Case-Gard makes a colorful O-ring sealed lockable .50-caliber-sized Zombie Ammo can. Get one for ammo, and one for an attention-getting lunchbox!

EOTech leaped into the Zombie game with their XPS2 Zombie Stopper Holographic Weapon Sight. No "cheap-o" model, it has all the quality construction and lightning-fast performance of the regular lineup. A special reticle preserves the conventional 65-MOA ring and 1-MOA aiming dot, and adds an unobtrusive bio-hazard symbol surrounding it, plus "Zombified" laser-engraved graphics on the outer case.

Leupold, too, has their own scope for re-slaying the undead, the 1.25-4x20mm VX-R Zombie. I have its fraternal twin, the VX-R Patrol FireDot, and love it; a terrific, affordable multi-mission scope for across-the-alley to "out past Fort Mudge" distances and providing great low-light capability. The differences include external Zombie graphics, which I could take or leave, plus one I wish



Tired of shooting bull's-eyes? Try stopping a Zombie invasion!

I had: instead of the red-illuminated FireDot reticle, the center spot is *green*, which is probably more visible than the red, translating into faster visual pickup!

Yes, There's More!

The first time I saw GSG's Rebel Zombie AK-22 rifle, the word that came to mind was "cheesy." Come on; fake adhesive tape repairs to the handguards and magazine? Simulated finish wear and ground-in dirt and sweat-stains on the wood? An old bandanna wrapped around the stock? I knew GSG .22 LR replicas have a great reputation, but this? Then I looked closer.

They've actually done a heck of a job, taking their highly-regarded AK-47 replica and artificially giving it a well-worn and weathered appearance, making it look like an AK you might pluck from under the wreckage of a swampside shack after a hurricane hits the Okefenokee. The action is slick and sure, wood to metal fit is better than most 7.62x39 AKs, and the 24-round magazine is sturdy and smooth. It's a well-made cool little plinker!

Imported by ATI of New York, the Rebel Zombie and its GSG brothers



The Rebel Zombie .22 LR AK replica by GSG (above) looks old and worn, but it's a bright, cool new plinker. Paper, cardboard, 3-D bleeding, even exploding "undead" targets, all from Zombie Industries (below).



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are the only replicas licensed by Kalashnikov to bear the name on their receivers, and that's a pretty darn good recommendation.

Got a Ruger LCP or LC9, a Kel-Tec .380 or .32 that needs a little Zombification? LaserLyte offers its popular Side Mount Laser in a "Zombie Slayer Edition." To tell the truth, other than its ghoulish-green color and markings, I don't see any difference between the Zombie Slayer and the plain-Jane regular edition, but since it's a light, ergonomic and effective laser with user-programmable steady or pulsing beam and an auto-off feature to prevent unnecessary battery drain at a bargain price, well, why not?

After you've burned up a bunch of Zombie ammo in your Zombified guns shooting at Zombie targets, would you clean your Zombie slayer with a regular cleaning kit? Of course not! That's why Otis Technology offers their Zombie Gun Cleaning System. Packed into the familiar round case are all the tools you need to clean and maintain all 5.56mm rifles, 9mm, .40- and .45-caliber pistols and 12-gauge shotguns, all done properly from breech to muzzle.

If you've used Otis Tech systems, you know the quality of the components and the design work they've done to put big-job cleaning tools into a pocket-sized zippered pouch. A ghoulish-green bore reflector/ flag



Of course you need a LaserLyte Zombie Slayer laser on your pocket pistol! What if a Zombie tries to eat your brain at the ATM?

safety, D.O.A./85 Solvent and a limited-edition Zombie labeled soft case are among many unique components. Otis says the choice is a “no-brainer,” but y’know, if you keep your guns running slick and smooth, when the Zombie Apocalypse comes, you might get to keep your brain!

Who knows where all this Zombie mania is going? I don’t, but I’ll tell you this: If you train to stop an ag-

gressor who knows no mercy, feels no pain, and can’t be stopped unless you bust his structure or punch his cranial ON/OFF switch, you’ve also trained to deal with a body-armored chemically-cocktailed whacko sociopath—and that just makes good sense, right? Connor **OUT** **GUNS**

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AR CHARGING HANDLE

ANDERSON MANUFACTURING

The AR Charging Handle with Zombie Time engraving is manufactured and assembled by Anderson Mfg. The AR



Charging Handle is machined from 7075-T6 aluminum forging, and features a complete assembly including latch. **For more info: (859) 689-4085, www.gunsmagazine.com/anderson**

ULTRA SHOT Z SERIES

SIGHTMARK

The Sightmark Ultra Shot Z Series reflex sight features an illuminated, 4-pattern, green-colored reticle, protective hood and quick-detach mount, preparing any shooter for the zombie apocalypse. Sight features a side-mounted Weaver rail, five brightness settings and is constructed of aircraft-grade aluminum with a matte black finish. **For more info: (817) 225-0310, www.gunsmagazine.com/sightmark**



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ZOMBIEDOWN!

TUFF1

The ZombieDown! gun grip cover is embossed with the signature Death Grip skull pattern in black with a twist of gangrene color. ZombieDown! gun grip covers provide shooters with the same feel, durability and fit as other TUFF1 products, and may be installed on AR-style rifle grips and magazines, shotguns and handguns. **For more info: (888) 998-8331, www.gunsmagazine.com/tuff1**

XPS2-Z

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The XPS2-Zombie Stopper brings users the ultimate in Zombie Stopping Holographic Technology. The biohazard reticle sights in zombies, allowing users to kill them dead (again). A single transverse 123 battery reduces sight length. Shortened base requires only 2-3/4" of rail space. O-ring tethered battery cap offers a tight seal. Average battery life at brightness level 12 is roughly 600 hours. **For more info: (734) 741-8868, www.gunsmagazine.com/eotech**



UNDEAD APOCALYPSE

CROSMAN

Crosman introduces the Undead Apocalypse Airsoft category, which features Zombie Marking BBs and Zombie Fun Kit Targets. The Z71 Zombie Eraser is a metal-barreled AEG rifle with a 500-round, gravity-fed, see-through hopper. The ZT32 Zombie Terminator



shoots at up to 350 fps, and features pistol grip, adjustable hop-up system and high-capacity magazine. The CO₂-powered TACZ11 is a tactical semiauto. The Z11 Zombie Eliminator is a compact, heavyweight pistol with an under-barrel, Weaver-style rail. **For more info: (800) 7-AIRGUN, www.gunsmagazine.com/crosman**

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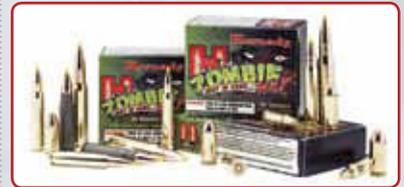
ZOMBIE COAT DURACOAT

DuraCoat introduces Zombie Coat, a new line of colors with a Peel 'N Spray Template. The Zombie Coat treatment protects firearms from scratches, solvents and biohazard-containing substances users may come in contact with during a Zombie attack. Available colors include Blood Red, Zombie Green, Biohazard Yellow, Tombstone Gray, Graveyard Black and Rotting Flesh. **For more info: (800) 830-6677, www.gunsmagazine.com/dura-coat**



ZOMBIE MAX AMMO HORNADY

Zombie Max ammunition from Hornady is loaded with Z-Max bullets. Available cartridges include: .380 Auto, 9mm Luger, .40 S&W, .45 Auto, .223 Rem, 7.62x39, .30-30 Win, .308 Win and 12 gauge. **For more info: (800) 338-3220, www.gunsmagazine.com/hornady**



ZOMBIE RAMP MOUNT WARNE SCOPE MOUNTS

The Warne Zombie RAMP Mount allows users to "set their sights on Zombies." Mount features a 30mm scope tube centerline with two 45-degree Picatinny rails. Warne Zombie steel rings are green-powder coated ideal for letting the infected know to get out of the way. **For more info: (800) 683-5590, www.gunsmagazine.com/warne-scope-mounts**



BIO-ZOMBIE A BREON CUSTOM

Introducing A Breon Custom's Bio-Zombie, an infused pmag creation. All designs are permanently infused into the polymer base. Using this method, the logo/design cannot be removed, and also wear-and-tear or chemicals will not take the design off of the mag. With constant use, you will leave what are called "scars" on the mag, but they will not interfere with the mag itself. The logo is absorbed into the polymer, which creates no change to the original spec of the pmag/polymer. All creations are hand applied, and the process is 25-percent computer graphic work and 75-percent hands on. Each creation is a masterpiece in itself. **For more info: info@abreoncustom.com, www.gunsmagazine.com/a-breon**



ZOMBIE-X HOGUE

Hogue's new line of ZOMBIE-X products is available in OverMolded Glow-in-the-Dark Zombie green soft rubber, Zombie green anodized aluminum and Zombie green pearlized polymer. Also included in the ZOMBIE-X line are the ZX-F01 ZOMBIE-X fixed blade knives, available with 5-1/2" and 7" drop-point blades. **For more info: (800) GET-GRIP, www.gunsmagazine.com/hogue**



ZOMBIE BLASTER LIGHTFIELD AMMUNITION

The Zombie Blaster Ammo is intended for close encounter combat with a Zombie—or several—when the apocalypse happens, and is a non-projectile mega blank round. Zombie Blaster is available in blister packs of five rounds in 12 gauge, 20 gauge and .410. **For more info: (732) 462-9200, www.gunsmagazine.com/lightfield**



C5L-Z ZOMBIE EDITION VIRIDIAN GREEN LASER

If you are serious about stopping an un-dead attack look no further than the Viridian C5L-Z Zombie Edition. Super powerful 5mW green laser with 100-lumen taclight gives you the advantage—day or night—against walkers, miscreants and anyone who wishes you harm. Up to 7 hours of runtime provides the user plenty of time to fend off a hoard of hungry zombies. When preparing for the inevitable zombie apocalypse make sure your pistol is Viridian-equipped. **For more info: (800) 990-9390, www.gunsmagazine.com/viridian**



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Concealed Carry firearms enter a whole new dimension in size and power with the new sub-compact XD-S from Springfield Armory. You get the stopping power of the .45 ACP with superior control and comfort without sacrificing important safety features. The compact grip also makes concealed carry easier, as the shorter frame is less likely to print under your shirt or jacket. At only 1" wide, the XD-S fits as perfectly into your concealed carry strategy as it does in the palm of your hand.

But we have more this month for just one lucky winner! In the spirit of professional collaboration with Otis Technology, Gerber has developed gun-cleaning kits for military and law enforcement applications. Each kit contains: a Multi-Plier 600 in non-reflective black, featuring needlenose pliers; an Ultra Infinity flashlight with red LED bulb; and the appropriate Otis cleaning accessories with an incredible value of \$363.

You'll practice in comfort with a set of Howard Leight Impact Pro Electronic Ear muffs on your noggin. Designed with handgun shooters in mind, the muffs actively listen and automatically shut off amplification when harmful noise levels are reached. You'll need eye protection, too, and the Genesis eyewear features wrap around lenses for uncompromised peripheral vision and protection.

Ammo is expensive! Practice almost free with LaserLyte's new interactive Laser Trainer Target that records where a laser hits the target. We even upgrade your sighting package with the patented LaserLyte RTB-XD rear sight laser for the XD. The high performance laser built into a rear sight features a simple ambidextrous "press and go" activation.

Finally—since ammo is so expensive—turn your progressive press into a bench-mounted ammo factory! The Hornady Lock-N-Load Ammo Plant kit represents the ultimate reloading setup for maximum production in shorter sessions. Value is \$1,330.

All this can be yours for free, so enter to win! Go to: www.gunsmagazine.com/giveaway or send those postcards in pronto. **GUNS**



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ODD ANGRY SHOT

STORY: John Connor

LET US CALL IT “ALTERNATIVE TRAINING” (And downplay the fact that it’s fun, too!)

*Long, long ago, in a galaxy far away...
(Seems like that, anyway.)*

I was training a bunch of high-speed low-drag operators of the Grand Exalted Ninja variety, and wow! were they impressive! Agile as combat monkeys, faster than tactical cheetahs, they poured out full-auto firepower like the USS Iowa. But there were a few piddly little problems.

First, given their gargantuan consumption of munitions, each trigger-puller would require the services of two pack mules to haul their ammo. Second, if they had to make controlled shots, they couldn’t shoot Minute-Of-Manhole-Cover (MOMC). Command staff noticed this aberration amongst their anointed, and lacking any intelligent ideas, they called me.

Fit, But...

These troops were physical prodigies and highly intelligent. Their equipment was first-rate and their initial training excellent. But once they had reached operational level, they were essentially cut loose and set adrift. “Hollywood Effect” kicked in. They shot more and faster in increasingly sophisticated training environments, but they were on their own, with no eyeballs-on critical oversight coaching. Any top shooter can tell you that today’s un-critiqued champion is tomorrow’s last-place loser.

Over time the result was predictable: Unconsciously developed bad habits became pronounced and then ingrained. As their accurate hit ratio fell, they increased speed and volume of fire. While other tactical techniques sharpened, their fundamentals foundered. I tried a technique discovered by some smart Brits.

Their regiment included a ceremonial unit of archers, to uphold tradition and entertain civilians at public events. When several vacancies went unfilled by volunteers, a bunch of

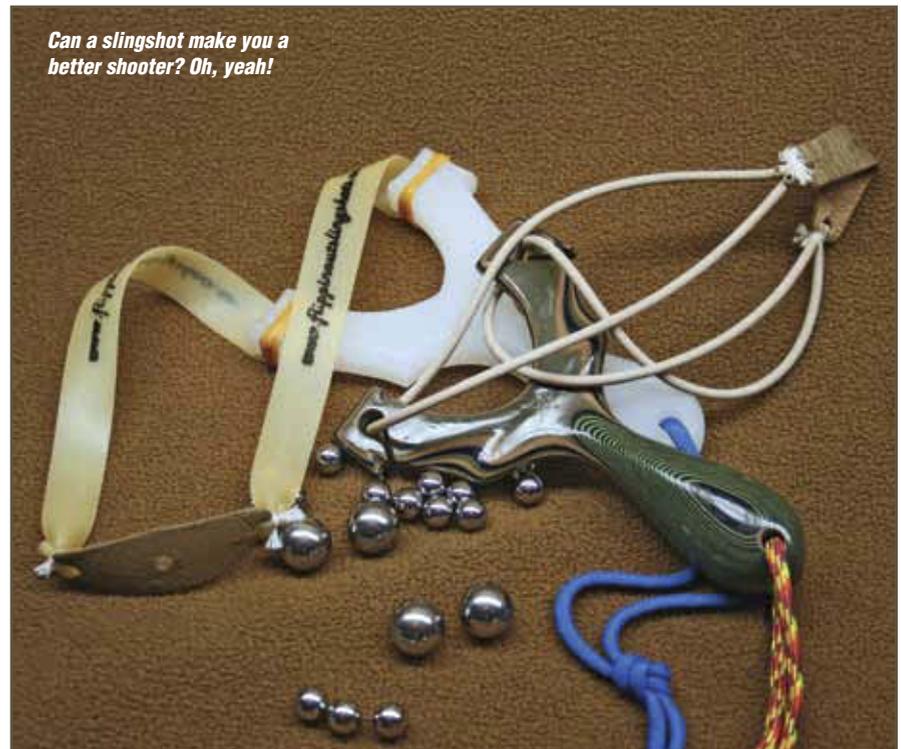
notably poor shooters were assigned. The archery coaches were perfectionists and ferocious disciplinarians. Qualifying with firearms was one thing, but the publicly-witnessed performance of their archers was, as they would say, bristling, with clenched teeth, “*Quite* another matter *entirely*, old man! The regiment’s honour, you know.” When those involuntary archers picked up

their rifles again, they amazed their NCOs—and themselves.

It worked for them, for me, and it can work for you. Three Keys: Fundamentals, Fundamentals, and FUNDAMENTALS!

Just as it is with long guns and handguns, archery demands hand-eye-head coordination, creating a stable platform even under difficult and fluid conditions, consistently repeated positions and points of contact, breathing control, a crisp, clean release, and understanding that “follow-through” is a *moment*, not a *movement*. In practice, and for correcting lapses in performance, the advantage archery holds over live firearms training is the lack of distraction by noise, muzzle blast, recoil and mechanical action movement, which can both induce and conceal faulty technique. Archery is unforgiving, and errors are magnified and clearly apparent.

Shortly after that experience, I ran into a guy who was doing the same kind of thing in West Africa using blowguns, another discipline demanding many of the same honed



skills. "And," he added, "In poor weather it can be practiced inside a big mud-wattle hut or under a tin railway-stop roof. And, the local rat population—filthy beasts—was decimated." Shooting skills skyrocketed.

I learned some good stuff. Then of course, I forgot it—almost. I was talking with Simon Lee, a honcho with Mad Bull AirSoft, makers of premium airsoft handguns and rifles. Due to legal restrictions on and extreme costs of firearms, airsoft is huge in Japan, where many top IPSC competitors train with airsoft, then kick competitive butt with firearms. And lots of Japanese shooters are also avid archers. Hmm....

A few days later, I met Nathan Masters, a dedicated shooter, owner and chief designer of *FlippinOut Slingshots*. I quickly learned how he polished his essential pistol skills—hand-eye-head coordination, breathing and release—with slingshots, and more: He had not only independently discovered the firearms-training benefits of archery and blowguns, but was about to launch a new enterprise and website covering all three disciplines at simple-shot.com. Yeah, I'm getting back into them now—and maybe you should consider them too.

Practical, Fun Alternatives

For many good reasons, airsoft is a low-cost, highly effective alternative shooting sport, and all manner of guns are available. Even very high-end models, licensed by major makers like Daniel Defense, Barrett and Noveske are surprisingly affordable. To minimize ongoing expense, I recommend spring-air powered and rechargeable-battery powered AEG (Automatic Electric Gun) models rather than CO₂ types. Some excellent websites to check out are socomgear.com, echolusa.com, and for IPSC gear and accessories, madbull.com.

If you're considering archery, I recommend you find an archery center with an indoor range, rental gear, and low-cost basic instruction. Tell them you want to try both conventional bows and compound bows. There are lots of good books and videos available on the subject, but nothing beats live instruction and coaching. Typically, archers delight in introducing people to their sport, and those in the business tend to be very patient and supportive.

When my son and I took up archery, after familiarization with recurve bows, we bought low-end Browning compound bows from Gander Mountain. After putting in

lots of time and practice, we considered more sophisticated and far more expensive bows, but in the end, realizing our "cheap-os"—not cheap, but inexpensive—gave us all the capability we needed for both recreational shooting and hunting, we decided to put our money into more and better arrows. You don't have to go overboard to be a well-equipped archer. Browning doesn't offer bows anymore, but PSE Archery made Browning's bows for years, and they're excellent.

"If you haven't flipped a slingshot since BFH—Before Facial Hair—you'll be blown away by today's slingshot smorgasbord."

You don't need Herculean lungs or wads of money to take up blowguns. The variety of blowguns and darts available is astounding, and you can practice indoors or out. Much of blowgunning is intuitive, but the hand-eye-head coordination and breath control involved is terrific training, and as with archery, improvement is rapid and obvious. Generally, I recommend you start with an inexpensive 36" or 48" .40-caliber blowgun, and if that whets your interest, upgrade from there. Their range and power might amaze you. A good website to see an array of gear is targetzonesports.com.

If you haven't flipped a slingshot since BFH—Before Facial Hair—you'll be blown away by today's slingshot smorgasbord. Having looked around, I don't think anybody offers better slingshots than Nathan Masters at flippinoutslingshots.com. His models range from \$25.95 to several hundred dollars, yet all of them pack great accuracy and small game hunting capability. The biggest modern advances in slingshots are in the bands and the structural quality and consistency of the frames, making a huge difference. These ain't your granddaddy's flippers—and they can definitely make you a better firearm shooter!

So give it a shot: sharpen your skills—and have fun! Connor *OUT*



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GUNS

MAGAZINE

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have today I would have to say both of these fellows were as pleasing to my ears as anyone could be; however, they were more than country-western singers. They first caught my attention because they were B-Western stars. When TV first started moving across the country, in the late 1940s, early 1950s programming was much different than it is today. Much of the time was taken up with old movies with a major portion being the B-Westerns from the 1930s and 1940s.

Known By Heart

Every kid in that era could list all the cowboy stars, the names of their horses, and could definitely tell which cowboy was which just by looking at his sixguns and holsters. John Wayne started in B Westerns and it was not until he started making higher-quality Westerns such as *Tall In The Saddle* and *Angel And The Badman* did he switch from the typical Hollywood Buscadero rig to a more practical outfit consisting of a holster slid over a cartridge belt.

All the true B-Western stars stayed with fancy Hollywood rigs such as the double holsters worn by Roy Rogers and Hopalong Cassidy (if you watch Hoppy movies notice how his holsters evolved), and most assuredly Tex Ritter and Eddie Dean. These were our heroes as we were growing up and it sad to me today's kids have very few heroes to emulate. Of course it was all make believe on the movie screen, however we learned straight shootin' honest values from the stars.

Tex Ritter was born Woodward Maurice Ritter in 1905 in a little town called Murvaul, Texas. Edgar Dean Glosop followed 2-1/2 years later in Posey, Texas. Both started out singing in radio and made the transition to Hollywood in the 1930s. Tex starred in more than 60 B-Western films in the 1930s and 1940s and Eddie started out playing bit parts, often non-speaking parts until 1945 when he became a star and would go on to make 18 singing Westerns.

Probably the greatest artist of the Silver Screen Western-style was Roy Rogers. Not only did he provide much entertainment for young kids he also did things offscreen to help children. The song "Happy Trails" is connected to Roy Rogers and Dale Evans and their magnanimous efforts to help children is carried on today with the

Happy Trails Children's Foundation. This is the only children's charity in the country today that supports the Second Amendment and the shooting sports as well as many children. Every year a special commemorative set of sixguns and holsters is commissioned to raise money for the Happy Trails Children's Foundation. This is the 15th year and Silver Screen Legend XV is dedicated to two singing cowboys Tex Ritter and Eddie Dean.

Each year some Western cowboy or cowboys is recognized and honored with the beautiful leather and sixguns which are auctioned off to raise money to help abused children. This

Jim Lockwood who is a master leather crafter specializing in rigs which are duplicates of those worn by B-Western and early TV Western stars.

Jim is a dedicated student of B-Western history and knows more about the sixguns and leather we saw every Saturday afternoon and in the early days of TV than anyone else. He is a virtual walking encyclopedia when it comes to sixgun leather history. One of the early leather makers to the stars was Ed Bohlin, who not only made beautiful belts and holsters but also silver mounted saddles. In the late 1940s Bohlin made the all-black, silver-mounted rig worn by Clayton Moore as the Lone Ranger. In



The Happy Trails Children's Foundation Silver Screen Legend XV raffle this year honors two legendary cowboy singers Eddie Dean (far left) and Tex Ritter.

is the real legacy of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, namely helping children. Over the years the Silver Screens Legend program has raised over \$2 million. It is one of the most worthwhile charities in the country.

Silver Screen Legends XV consists of a matched pair of 5-1/2" nickel-plated Single Actions donated by Colt. They are engraved by master engraver Conrad Anderson who also provided the sterling silver buckle sets, conchos, and spots. The Colts are fitted with elephant ivory grips with the ivory being donated by David Warther and carved and fitted by Bob Leskovec. Ron Love furnished and polished .45 Colt prop cartridges to fill the cartridge loops. That brings us to the man responsible for the original concept, overall theme, coordination and total design. As we go through this world if we are lucky we make friends, real friends. One of my real friends is

the latter years of their careers both Eddie Dean and Tex Ritter acquired exact duplicates of the Bohlin Lone Ranger rig except finished in beautiful rich brown leather instead of black. This is the rig Lockwood has duplicated as a tribute to Eddie and Tex.

Silver Screen Legends XV will be raffled off with the drawing held on Dec. 15, 2012 in Victorville, Calif. The winner need not be present. Tickets are \$10 each or 11 for \$100. Total proceeds go to help abused children. Someone is going to win this beautiful double Buscadero rig complete with matching Colts. Tickets may be ordered by phone or online. **GUNS**

HAPPY TRAILS CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION
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