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GUNS

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ON THE COVER

THE FNH SCAR

Special Forces combat assault rifle.

STORY:

Dave Douglas

PHOTOS:

Dave Douglas

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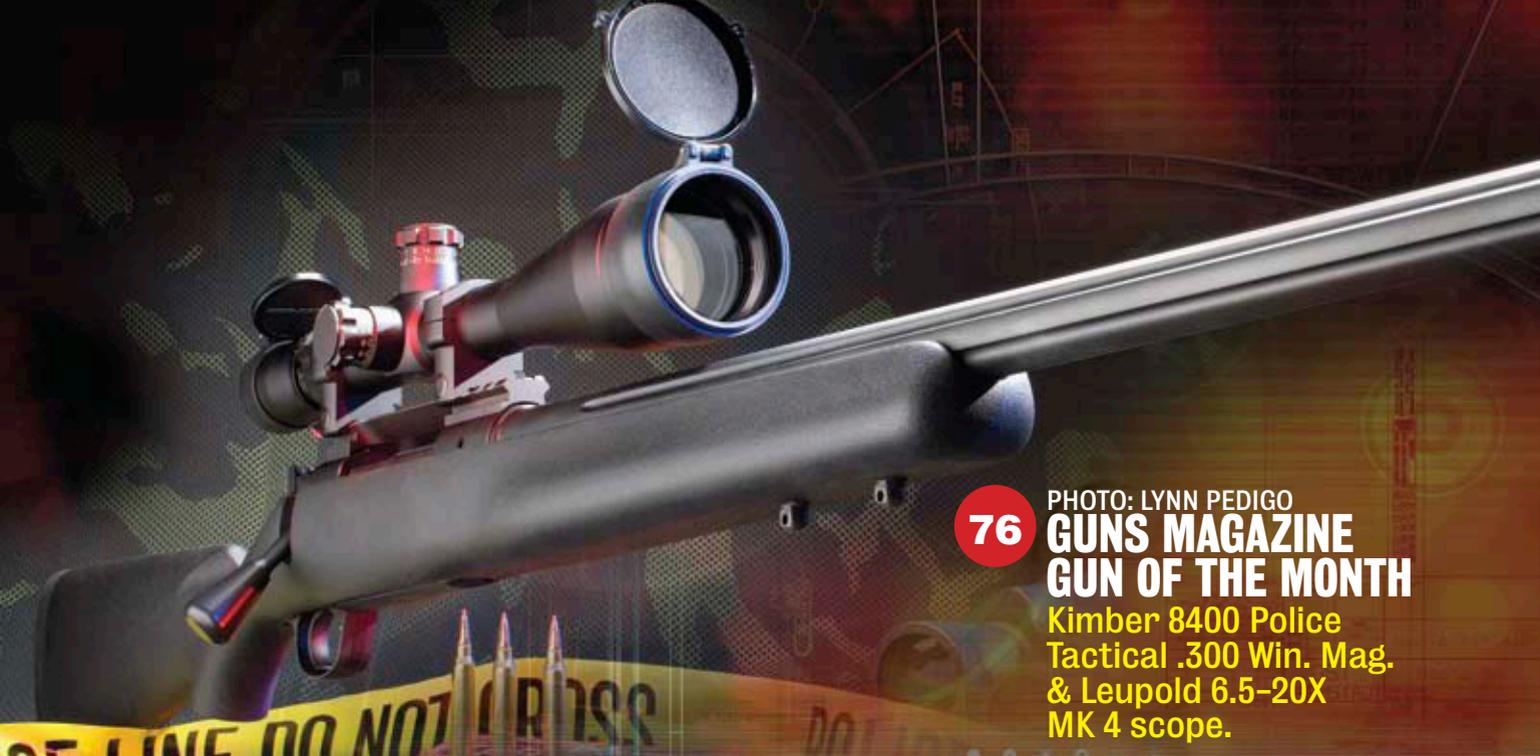
Ruger fields their own .22 LR AR



"They" tell me I need one...



Glock 22 RTF .40 S&W



76 PHOTO: LYNN PEDIGO
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FEATURES

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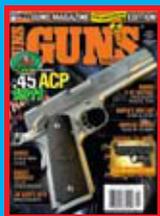
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JANUARY 2010

CROSSFIRE

LETTERS TO GUNS

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

Stop Military News!

I'm glad you printed the letter from Mr. Leon Linderwell in "Crossfire" in January. It may come as a total shock to you, but some of your subscribers don't support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I think every American life lost, and every drop of American blood shed in these two wars is utterly wasted. I know firsthand what it's like to serve in our armed forces. I have expressed my opposition to these wars at the voting booth by voting Libertarian in the last two presidential elections.

I subscribe to *GUNS* and *American Handgunner* because I like the gun reviews, 2nd Amendment rights, Clint Smith and John Connor.

In my opinion you should drop the "copy and paste" military propaganda, and use the space for alerts to threats to our gun rights.

Daniel K. Lapp
NRA Life Member & Subscriber

Keep Military News

I have never written to any magazine ever, however, I felt compelled to write once I read the "Stop Military News?" letter in the January issue.

I am sorry, but Leon is all wrong. This is one of the reasons I read your magazine. I have never skipped any of those articles. This is the only way to even begin to understand the trials and tribulations our brave men and women face on a daily basis.

Not only does the mainstream media not tell these stories, but no other media I have read or viewed covers these stories. It is great to hear about how bravely and honestly those in the armed forces handle themselves in the most extreme conditions. Without these stories we could easily forget that our comfortable lives are paid for by their sacrifices.

Leonard Meyer
via e-mail

The responses for keeping the military news ran 4 to 1 over stopping. Thank you all for taking the time to respond. You can read all the e-letters at www.gunsmagazine.com/weblast.—Jeff John

No More Tactical Guns

What's up with all these articles on tactical guns, and self defense? I have been a subscriber for several years and have no interest in reading about snipers, cops, or self defense. I get your magazine to read up on the latest in guns for hunting and target shooting. I also like to read about classic guns from yesteryear. I was in the military for 24 years, so enough of that.

Ray Wilson
Chesapeake, VA

Codrea Wrong

It seems to me *GUNS* and the larger shooting sports community are poorly served by the faulty logic on display in the January "Rights Watch" column by David Codrea. After establishing MSNBC's Rachel Maddow likes to shoot and encourages others to do so he quotes her as saying "I like making liberals shoot guns. I just don't think we should be allowed to bring them home."

He then labels this position as being "not far from one of the gungrabbers dreams." "Not far from" is a long way from being the same as "identical" — it is the rhetorical trick of linking someone to Hitler because he wears a moustache. Codrea then claims, "What Maddow is talking about is nothing less than the complete evisceration of the Second Amendment." He makes this assertion based on no evidence whatsoever, merely his disapproval of someone storing a weapon at a range in Manhattan.

Shouldn't a goal of this magazine be to encourage participation in legal gun use by anyone who so chooses? Not every shooter is going to be making a lifelong commitment to the sport, but they should be encouraged to engage at whatever level they choose, not be subject to a litmus test of "purity."

In his last line, Mr. Codrea seems to be skating pretty near the legal edge of making threats of violence. Regardless, he might try to be a little more welcoming to new shooters. Rock on Rachel, and keep them heading downrange!

Justin Wolf
Spartanburg, SC



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RIMFIRES

• HOLT BODINSON •

RUGER FIELDS THEIR OWN .22 LR AR

The old favorite 10/22 serves well as the platform.

Ruger's on steroids these days. Just weeks after they introduced their centerfire SR-556 comes Ruger's rimfire version, appropriately labeled the SR-22. Unlike Colt and Smith & Wesson, who had to design a rimfire AR from scratch, Ruger looked at their 10/22 action and yelled, "Eureka!" The rest was easy.

I think Ruger finally realized everyone and their brother were making a fortune selling 10/22 barrels, stocks, fire control systems, magazines and other custom accessories, and they might as well enjoy the financial ride by offering some neat variations and accessories of their own. The end result is a classy, cool looking little AR-type heavy on styling and heavier still on performance.

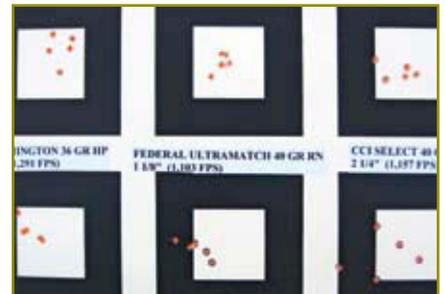
To achieve their end, Ruger has taken the 10/22 action and married it with an aluminum outer that pretty well disguises what we've come to know as a 10/22. There's the new receiver box itself to which are attached a Picatinny rib, tubular

handguard, a telescoping buttstock, pistol grip and Ruger's successful V-block mounting system for the barrel. The resulting receiver has some resemblance to that of the SR-556, but what's missing is the deep magazine well of an AR which is so handy as a support for your leading hand when firing.

The SR-22's bottom receiver line is flat and flush with the bottom of a 10/22 magazine. I think the stylists at Ruger could have had a bit more fun with that line to give the SR rimfire more of an AR look. It would not have been hard to have incorporated a deep magazine well in the design that would accept an extended 10/22-type magazine. Colt and Smith & Wesson pulled it off. Of course, you can fit an after market 25- or 32-round magazine, even a 50-round drum magazine, to the SR-22, but it just won't have that same AR panache or utility.

On the other hand, the SR-22 does have a unique style of its own. Between the straight buttstock and tubular handguard, the high line-of-sight offered by the Picatinny rib, the pistol grip and the position of the trigger relative to the pistol grip, the SR-22 feels a lot like an AR when it's mounted and fired.

Ruger has incorporated some interesting components into the SR-22. The M4-type telescoping buttstock with



The SR-22 will hold 1" at 50 yards with most brands of Long Rifle.

attached sling swivel offers the shooter 6-positions between fully folded and fully extended. The military design actually rides on a full diameter, Mil-spec tube. What's particularly nice about a telescoping buttstock is that it permits shooters of all ages and physical size to adjust the rifle to their physique. Also, when the stock is fully collapsed, the SR-22 is a compact 32-1/2" package, easy to store and easy to handle in close quarters. The stock functioned perfectly. It slides smoothly and the locking pin engaged fully and held the stock firmly in position. The pistol grip, made by Hogue for Ruger, has a pebbly, tactile, rubber surface and is comfortable without being soft.

The 8" Picatinny rib covers most of length of the receiver and offers 17 slots for the adjustment of optics. As an accessory, Ruger offers a full-length Picatinny rib for \$39.95 that is screwed into the tubular handguard. Strictly for testing purposes, I mounted the SR-22 with a full-size 3-9x40mm Burris



The secret to the SR-22 is an AR-looking aluminum receiver shroud over the 10/22 receiver. The SR-22's Picatinny rib offers unlimited options for mounting optics.



Ruger's SR-22 uses the venerable, versatile 10-22 for a unique conversion to an AR-15 look-alike.

SR-22

MAKER: STURM, RUGER & CO.
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NEWPORT, NH 03773
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ACTION TYPE: Semi-auto blowback**CALIBER:** .22 Long Rifle**CAPACITY:** 10**BARREL LENGTH:** 16-1/8"**OVERALL LENGTH:** 32-1/4" (folded),
35-1/4" (extended)**WEIGHT:** 6-1/2 pounds**FINISH:** Matte black**SIGHTS:** Picatinny rail**STOCK:** 6-position, telescoping**PRICE:** \$625

Tactical Scope in 30mm high rings. With the straight comb of an AR stock, my face requires high rings to position a scope perfectly.

Both in size and in weight, a 30mm tactical scope is a bit much for an SR-22. In a rimfire-type AR, I would favor one of the smaller red dot or reflex type sights. They're compact, lightweight and don't overpower a rimfire, yet they provide all the optical horsepower needed at average rimfire ranges.

The 2" in diameter tubular handguard is as showy as it is functional. It's mounted to the receiver with a standard AR thread barrel nut, but I wouldn't think about changing it out. The factory handguard provides critical support for the barrel with a small V-block positioned near the end of the handguard. That extra support is necessary given Ruger's V-block method of attaching the barrel to the receiver.

The handguard is drilled and tapped with numerous 10-32 holes along all flats, giving the owner endless options for adding lasers, lights and what have you. Ruger offers a number of handguard accessories including the Crimson Trace vertical forward grip and the CAA forward folding and flashlight grips. The 2" handguard is functional, but it's a handful.

The Ruger barrel is 16-1/8" long, and it's hammer forged like Ruger's centerfire barrels. It turned out to be an accurate barrel, and for styling, it's even fitted with a business looking SR-556/Mini-14 flash suppressor.

How'd the SR-22 shoot? The 50-yard target tells the story. The SR-22 will average about 1" for five shots with most brands of ammunition. That's shooting! It really liked Federal's bulk packed 36-grain HP, putting five shots into 5/8", and it really disliked CCI's 40-grain RN Select, throwing them out to 2-1/4".

Like all the rimfire AR-type clones, Ruger's SR-22 is a real fun gun. It's 10/22 reliable, accurate, cool looking and it's cheap to shoot. It's a welcome addition to the Ruger line.

GUNS

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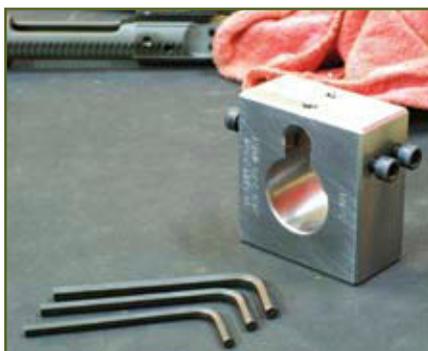
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UPON ARS

• GLEN ZEDIKER •

TROUBLESHOOTING Bringing back the bang.

If an AR-15 won't work, well, it has to work. Here are a few places to look and a few things to try if yours goes on the fritz. The first question is always, "What changed?" But before then we have to determine, or at least I do, whether we're talking about: a "fresh" rifle going through its shakedown period or a (previously) trusted gun that's suddenly decided to stop running. If it's the first, a longer list of possibilities includes original parts' condition and installation quality. In other words, there's a long list of suspicious items and it's a chore checking it.



Here's the tool that does it, a MOACKS Plain.



It's simple to use. The tool uses the key screws to index itself and then hardened screws thread in to produce the staking. Here's what the carrier looks like after staking.



The Mark Brown Carrier Scraper from Brownells is a must have. A few turns each cleaning will prevent carbon build up from ruining your fun. The volume of grunge emerging from the use of this tool on a dirty carrier will amaze.

If a once fine working AR-15 starts having problems, and these problems are exclusively failures to cycle correctly (fire, eject, reload), the first question is, what changed? If different ammo was used, it ought to be clear to check it with previously used ammo. Reasons range from clear to cloudy, but not all loads function the same in all rifles. If you're a handloader, double-check your current cartridge dimensions to make sure nothing changed in your dies, and certainly look again at the charge settings, etc. This is a reason to keep loaded samples handy.

If it's a failure to eject a spent case, weakened gas flow or grime come first to mind. Or a broken extractor spring. Or a broken ejector spring. These two springs, by the way, usually break rather than weaken.

Most often a heretofore reliable rifle starts short-stroking. A "short stroke" happens when the carrier doesn't get far enough to the rear to pick up a cartridge from the magazine to chamber the round, and the bolt also won't lock back because the bolt stop can't engage. The cause for this is either not enough "oomph" from the gas system (a leak) or too much friction or resistance in operation (grit and grime).

One of the most overlooked and also more common causes for abated gas action is a loose bolt carrier key. There will be your leak. If it's installed correctly it should not come loose. Should not. Installed incorrectly, it probably will come loose, and I've seen many incorrectly installed.

The key is held fast by two screws. These screws have knurled heads. Most



A gas manifold should be seated fully flush and securely against the barrel.



Loctite "blue" on the set screws is a good idea but Glen doesn't like the risk of gluing the manifold to the barrel. Glue and gas ports don't agree.

specs I've seen call for 30 to 40 inch-pounds of torque, and I say that's not enough. They need to be tighter than that. Most of the better builders I know don't use a torque wrench for this op. Just tight.

Now, the trick is these screws also need to be staked in place. Here's the stem for the problem. There seems to be an increasingly growing number of carrier key screws installed using thread-locker (the "red" high-strength) in lieu of staking. I've been seeing this from major makers as well as carrier assembly suppliers. Glue is a fine extra if someone wants to use it but if the keys aren't staked they are not going to stay put.

Staking carrier key screws is best done using a specialty tool but can be, for effect, done with a prick punch and hammer. It's not always going to be a pretty job using hand tools, but as long as some metal is displaced inward from the key to the screws to secure the screw heads from rotating, it will be functional (that's why the screw heads are knurled, by the way).

The series of MOACKS specialty tools available pretty much mistake-

proof the operation. It's tough to strictly recommend purchasing such a tool because even the lower-level version is a tad pricey, but point remains these provide the sano way to stake screws. And the screws must be staked!

The area inside the bolt carrier where the tail end of the bolt goes will—not can—get caked with carbon. That fouling is tough to remove, and it's also the source of many malfunctions. The bolt gets “sticky.” There's a specialty tool I prefer but GM Top Engine Cleaner (Mr. Goodwrench has it at the Chevy dealer) and some brushing can dissolve the majority.

The gas rings on the bolt won't last forever and do break. Here's an obvious cause for a malfunction, and a very easy fix. Keep spares. The 1-piece aftermarket ring normally holds up better.

Another leaky spot can be around the gas manifold or block (where the gas tube fits into the barrel), especially when there's an aftermarket gas block installed. Fit issues are common enough when there are incongruencies between block inside diameter and corresponding barrel area exterior dimension. It doesn't take much to provide an outlet for gas under the sort of pressure generated. You can usually see the blow-by firing the rifle from the hip, or look for streaks.

About all you can do here is make



Gas rings don't last forever and a broken one, or well-worn set, can let too much gas slip by. Replacement is easy and Glen thinks they should be part of anyone's maintenance plan.

sure the screws retaining the block in place are tight, and thread-locker on the screws helps keep them that way. Very sparing, very careful application of thread-locker on the manifold/barrel contact surface might be extra assurance, but there's a big risk of the glue getting into the gas port. That's a sure way to cap the flow.

Misalignment between the gas port in the barrel and the corresponding inlet in the block can easily cause abated flow, but most blocks have sufficiently oversized inlet holes so perfection isn't nearly necessary.

Last, for now, and decidedly not least, is keep the daggone rifle clean and lubricated. Clean the barrel chamber! This area is often so neglected in

rifles that have otherwise meticulously maintained barrel bores. Thread a .357-caliber pistol brush on a short rod and scrub it during each barrel cleaning. I use the stiff synthetic bristle brushes from J. Dewey. Keep the bolt carrier heavily lubed and keep changing the oil: lube it, shoot it, clean it, lube it, shoot it. Rinse and repeat.

(This material was specially adapted from The Competitive AR-15: Builder's Guide, a book soon available from Zediker Publishing.)

Correction

*I made a mistake identifying the fore-end pictured on page 21 in the January issue. The one pictured is from **Troy Ind.**, 128 Myron St., West Springfield, MA 01089, (866) 788-6412, www.troyind.com. My apologies for the confusion.*
—Glen Zediker

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• CLINT SMITH •

“THEY” TELL ME I NEED ONE...

Do I?



Sundance and the Daniel Defense M4 on a nature walk to test the reliability of the standard “old school” .223 gas-operated AR-15.

The amorphous “they” is an interesting group in the firearms industry. I think “they” are people who of course wish to sell us their products—which is duly and correctly noted. Then again sometimes I wonder if this is on the verge of being a bit too much? This past year an industry manufacturer brought out an AR platform with a piston/tappet gas system. It was delivered to the consumer like it was just short of an epiphany or something when in reality it is at best a copy of someone else’s idea. This product is probably part and parcel to a quest for the Holy market share—which I understand—or in search of a “new” product for the never-satisfied American consumer.

We’ve been assured the “piston driven AR is better than the gas AR system” over the last few years. Yet watching these two-rifle types work on a firing line together over the last few years, I can tell you I have zip-tied more than one of those piston end plug adjustment things back onto the front of a piston rifle so the class could go forward... and that of course leads me to this discussion.

Usually verbalized is the claim, “Piston guns are more reliable.” This could be, but the interpretation of “reliable” leaves some open ground to discuss. First, what is the AR platform being asked to do? I mean what does the owner—most of us reading this

being civilians—expect? Researching to a degree (admittedly not a scientific study), I found one Army trooper who said he fired 12 30-round magazines during a 30-minute fight and the most I can find is a Navy SEAL who said he fired 17 30-round magazines in one fight.

My E-6 friend, just back from a Special Forces Operation Detachment A-team in Afghanistan for the 3rd time, said his team carried five magazines per man as a load out and had others in the Hummer pre-loaded to the tune of 10 more per man. So this would mean they would be in a big fight, shoot five magazines, go to the unscathed truck, dismount more magazines and shoot

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CALIBER: 5.56mm NATO

CAPACITY: 30

BARREL LENGTH: 16"

OVERALL LENGTH: 32-1/2" (collapsed), 35-3/4" (extended)

WEIGHT: 7 pounds

FINISH: Aluminum: hardcoat anodized; steel: phosphate

SIGHTS: DD A1.5 Fixed rear

STOCK: MagPul MOE

PRICE: \$1,699



The Daniel Defense M4 comes with a stout rear sight of their own design. The lightweight, streamlined sight works well with reflex optics and is easy to install to the flattop upper receiver.

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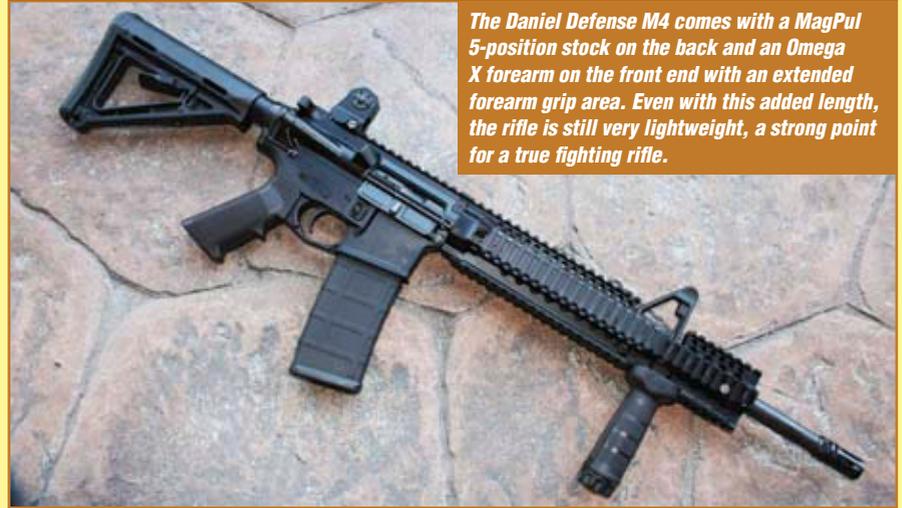


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The Daniel Defense M4 comes with a MagPul 5-position stock on the back and an Omega X forearm on the front end with an extended forearm grip area. Even with this added length, the rifle is still very lightweight, a strong point for a true fighting rifle.

THE DANIEL DEFENSE RIFLE

The test rifle for the 15 magazines fired for the questionable theoretical reliability issue (which wasn't an issue) was a personal rifle I hold in high regard and I could defend my family with.

The Daniel M4 is a lightweight gas-operated AR rifle with some solid true innovations like the Omega X forearm and their version of a fixed backup rear sight. The M4 Omega has far-forward-mounted rails that allow for support systems, lights and the like to be set in an extended forward position which better allows for proper hand placement on the vertical fore grip. The Daniels M4 is delivered with a MagPul rear stock and

the 5-position setting good for everything from shooting in a T-shirt to body armor to something less sophisticated like letting the rest of the family and the kids shoot the now short-stocked rifle at the range.



The first five rounds fired from the Daniel Defense M4 rifle all touched during zeroing at 25 yards.

As an encouraging and auspicious start, the first five rounds I fired through the rifle all cut the same hole when fired from the bench at the 25-yard base zero range, and the rifle has continued to uphold that quality downrange. Daniel Defense has lots of good products and their gas operated rifle which belongs to me, works as smooth as a buttered doorknob. If you want an AR platform the Daniel is a good choice for a rifle... even if it is a gas gun.

GUNS

10 more? And this is being in the Army in the war fight... not in my house in San Diego fight. So, apparently some would like for us to think or believe from a reliability—read marketing—standpoint, the gas driven rifle won't last as long in a fight.

So with these totals and information I took my clean and properly lubricated Daniels Defense M4 rifle to the range. Before this it had sat in the rack unfired for at least for two weeks. Once there we fired 15 magazines of Federal 55-grain FMJ ball ammunition in 11 minutes and the rifle functioned flawlessly. If you're doing the math, it was about 375-plus rounds. The first three magazines had the smoke rolling lightly from the barrel as the oil burned off. After that the rifle with iron sights just shot and stayed on targets at 100 and 200 yards without effort.

If "we" gas-operated AR rifle people shoot 375 rounds in a fight inside our house, I think it is going to be big fight, but more importantly I also think our gas-operated rifle will work. The gas AR platform has been around for three or four decades and is a good rifle to defend the family with.

So this doesn't turn into a rodeo, I never said there were not better calibers or rifles available. I never even said the "reliability" claims of the piston rifle people are not true, at least from their perspective. Then again, if a rifle works well when taken care of correctly, it is not inadequate to defend your family with. Maybe instead of a new market share rifle purchase, what is needed is a clean rifle, and for money to be spent on ammunition to practice with and learning how to work the rifle we already own.

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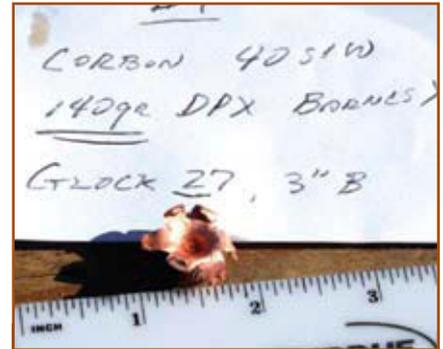
Even in short barrel handguns.

Subcompact pistols and revolvers are short in both barrel length and ballistic performance, but with today's ammo choices, they don't come up too short.

Reader Greg M. writes, "Do the new rage of short-barreled handguns, even in potent calibers of .40 to .45 or 9mm, have the velocity to penetrate to the vitals from a distance past 7 yards? Some of the shootings I have seen even by off-duty police using a Glock 27 do not penetrate but about 3" to 4" behind the shoulder blade using hollowpoints." Greg is an EMT with a decade of urban experience.

Any .40 S&W jacketed hollowpoint that only penetrates 3" to 4" into flesh has either been fired from a very long distance away, or had to have gone through something solid in its path between muzzle and intended target to slow it down. In a hollowpoint projectile, it could be said velocity opens the bullet and more velocity opens it more. The "mushrooming" of the bullet creates a parachute effect slowing it down and retarding its penetration, since more frontal surface is meeting more tissue. It has long been known a bullet traveling too fast for its design envelope can mushroom so wide and so prematurely its penetration is severely retarded.

The shorter the barrel—other things being equal—the lower the velocity. Therefore, other things being equal, the shorter barrel pistol launching a somewhat slower bullet is likely to result in more penetration, not less, since it is probably going to mushroom less and therefore meet less resistance.

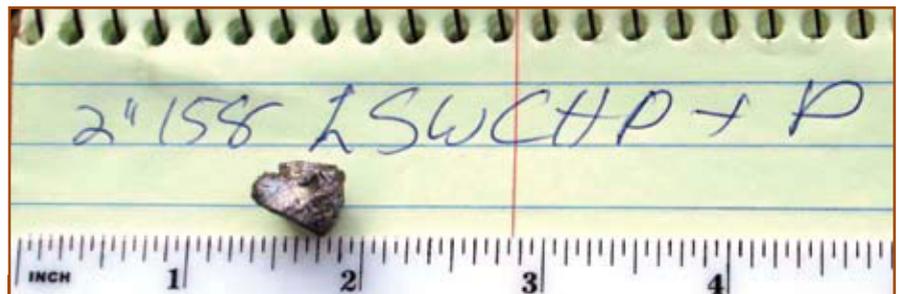


This 140-grain Cor-Bon DPX .40 S&W was fired from a stubby Glock 27 and recovered from a hog. It worked well.

Counterintuitive, but true as a rule. If that wording sounds like a writer hedging his bets, you heard it correctly: nothing can be counted on to a 100-percent absolute certainty when bullets meet flesh.

In days of yore, "old school" copper-jacketed hollowpoints tended to open better from long barrels than short ones. Those are the bullet designs you'll find in today's economy ammo lines. Some years ago, I had occasion on the same day to shoot three hogs with Federal's accurate Classic line 185-grain .45 Automatic Colt Pistol jacketed hollowpoint, from three different Colt .45 1911s.

The bullet from the 5" Government Model mushroomed very impressively. The one from the 4.25" barrel Colt Commander could be said to have "deformed," but certainly not into the classic mushroom expansion shape. And the bullet from the 3.5" barrel subcompact Officers ACP could have been reloaded and fired again once you got the blood



Fired from a 2" S&W .38, this Federal all-lead hollowpoint instantly killed a hog.

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and meat off it. Interestingly, all three pork critters immediately fell down and died from a single brain shot apiece, but it showed the .45 ACP has a very critical velocity floor with conventional copper-jacketed lead hollowpoint bullets.

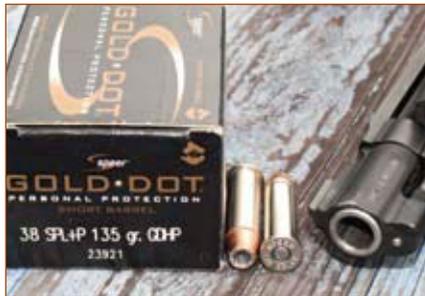
The lead semi-wadcutter hollowpoint 158-grain .38 Special +P load introduced by Winchester's in 1972 was a classic "man-stopper" in its caliber, and remains so. Known variously as the "FBI load," "Chicago load," "Metro load," etc., for all the law enforcement agencies that had great success with it, this load worked pretty well even in "snubnosed .38s" because the all-lead bullet didn't have any tough copper jacket to peel back when it hit. Departments adopting it saw the unions stop complaining about "feeble .38 stopping power." The unions would later drive them to auto pistols because they wanted more bullets, not more effective ones.

One lesson from the epoch of the "FBI load" is bullet composition is important. The three major brands each made the LSWCHP projectile of all lead, but Winchester's was harder than the others, Remington's was the softest, and Federal's was in-between. I learned in 1990 that DEA had discovered this and specified Remington for their .38 Special ammo then, in part because so many of their agents carried that caliber primarily in hideout snub revolvers. It seems to remain true today, and Remington is my personal choice of lead hollowpoint for a .38 Special for a 4", and it's good for a steel or aluminum snub.

I honestly think you're a lot better off using modern high-tech bullets by the same makers in your short-barrel guns. Think Federal HST, Speer Gold Dot, Remington Golden Saber, and Winchester SXT, Ranger and PDX1 series. All have projectiles expressly designed to open up in tissue at the lower velocities expected from shorter barrels.

CCI/Speer has a Short Barrel line of ammo in several calibers, optimized for expansion and overall performance from the stubbier handguns. Testing in gelatin looks great so far. This line is generally credited to Ernest Durham, who also led the Speer design team in creating the current NYPD .38 Special load, the Gold Dot 135-grain +P. Intended especially for 2" barrels, it performs well out of service length too, and NYPD is delighted with its impressive real-world street performance.

Unlike 158-grain lead +P, this Gold Dot's bullet won't pull loose from recoil force in ultra-light Scandium and Titanium snubs, and "prairie dog" the bullet forward out through the front of the cylinder, locking up the gun. Because I carry the super-lights sometimes, I've largely switched to the 135 +P Gold Dot as my



NY's mean streets have proven this Short Barrel Gold Dot load in the .38 Special works.

.38 Special snubby carry load all around.

The .38 isn't very "Special" out of a short barrel, and the .357 isn't too "Magnum" out of one either, but the .357 will still be a lot hotter than the .38 out of a snub. I've found if 125-grain Magnums break 1,400 feet per second out of a 4" service revolver, they will run more like 1,220 to 1,250 fps out of a 2". Interestingly, the .357 SIG auto round fares better from subcompacts. The chronograph tells me I'm getting over 1,400 fps from 125-grain Speer Gold Dot or Remington Golden Saber out of my 4.5" barrel Glock 31, and 1,330 to 1,340 fps from the stubby 3.6" tube of my "Baby Glock" G33. The bullets still open impressively, and penetrate optimally, from the smaller gun.

Faster .40s

In short-barrel .40s, faster seems better: 155 or 165 grain, or even 135 grain. The latter weight in the CorBon brand, running 1,300 fps from a full-size service pistol, will still open up and tear a hellacious wound channel at somewhat slower velocity from a Baby Glock G27. Ditto with their DPX load with the 140-grain all-copper Barnes X bullet.

In a 3.5" .45 auto, 185-grain +P will kick hard, but will also send the bullet out of the muzzle at about 1,070 fps according to my chronograph, considerably beyond a standard-pressure .45 JHP of the same weight out of a full-length gun. Federal's EFMJ (Expanding Full Metal Jacket) opens in flesh out of short barrels, but doesn't seem to do as much corollary damage around the wound track as, say, Federal's HST. A friend of mine shot two armed robbers with this load out of a subcompact Para-Ordnance. One, hit in the head, went down dead. The other, hit in the chest, ran a long ways and survived, but at least stopped trying to hurt decent people.

Shorter barrel handguns are easier to "pack," but they charge a price in reduced velocity. Careful ammunition selection can help you balance that trade-off, and give you the smack you need if you ever have to use your defensive carry gun for its intended purpose.

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"WRINGING OUT" GUNS

You do and you may have to hang them up.

While lurking on a Web site I read a posting saying today's modern gunwriters don't do the readers justice because they don't "wring out" test guns enough. One fellow even stated you had to shoot about 50 rounds through any gun every week for a year to really come to know it.

I disagree with both the purpose for "wringing out" guns and the knowledge you might receive in doing so. First, there would be no end to "wringing out" a rifle or handgun. The variety of components today is too vast. Take, for instance, primers. Being made here in the USA are CCI, Federal, Winchester and Remington. From abroad are Wolf from Russia, Lapua from Finland, and MagTech, which I think, come from Brazil. Then there are the options in some of those brands of magnum or standard strength primers and some even are benchrest types.

Even being conservative we would need to try at least a dozen different primers. Then we get to propellants. By my count there are easily over 100 smokeless powders now. Of course all of them would not have application to any given cartridge but it would be a rare cartridge if a handloader couldn't find at least a dozen or so to try.

I wouldn't even begin to try counting the different suitable bullets available. There are jacketed, commercially cast, and home cast varieties and dozens perhaps scores of weights and shapes to choose from. With lead alloy types there are also variables in sizing diameter, bullet lubricant, and alloys. Let's not forget cartridge cases too. Besides brand there are different mechanical ways cartridge cases can be handloaded. For instance, neck sizing as opposed to full-length sizing, primer pocket uniforming, neck turning, roll crimping, taper crimping, or total lack of crimp. And don't forget seating depth. All those different bullets would have to be "tested" for optimum seating depth. Now I am no mathematician, but I'm seeing possible load combinations here totalling millions.

And now consider this fact. Barrels wear. Lead alloy bullets don't wear

barrels much, but many competitive shooters feel a high-quality .308 Winchester barrel will begin to lose its top accuracy potential after a few thousand rounds. So as thousands of rounds are fired in "wringing out" a barrel, it changes interior dimensions, which in turn negates all the work just put into the process.

"Wringing out" any firearm in the true sense is just an old fallacy. What is real, however, is the practice of "working up



One of the great fallacies of "wringing out" a rifle is to try to make a firearms design perform at a level for which it was never intended. For instance, if Duke's M2 Carbine (above) will group inside about 3" at 100 yards in semi-auto mode, then it has plenty of precision for his purposes. Duke is shooting at a BPCR Silhouette match after working up an accurate load. After he has found a suitably accurate load for competition he will not shoot the rifle for group again. Photo: John Worthington.



a good load." That doesn't encompass trying every possible handload combination under the sun. It means making some intelligent component picks and arriving at a handload that suits your shooting purpose.

Let me give some examples. My own chosen type of competitive shooting is the NRA's Black Powder Cartridge Rifle (BPCR) Silhouette. I have no fewer than seven rifles dedicated just to that sport. Five are .45-70s, one is a .40-65, and one a .45-90. After years of experience, there are a few components on which I am dead set. One is the lead alloy for cast bullets. I only use 1-20 tin to lead. It always works for me.

Another is powder. The imported Swiss brand is consistent from lot to lot so I don't need to do development work with each new powder lot purchased. Furthermore I've settled on the 1-1/2 Fg granulation for all my rifles so only one type is kept in stock. And lastly, my best shooting has been done with CCI-BR2 (benchrest) primers. So when a new rifle falls into my hands, such as the Lone Star rolling block .45-70 bought in 2009, there isn't a lot of dust raised by trying every component possible. Using the above mentioned ones a few different bullets designs are tried and the best performing one chosen for match use.

What Works

Have I found the very best handload combination possible for all my silhouette rifles? No, what I have done is find a *suitable* combination delivering the 1.5 minute of angle (MOA), groups which I feel make me competitive. Then I take that rifle and load to as many BPCR silhouette matches as possible and learn to shoot it with some finesse.

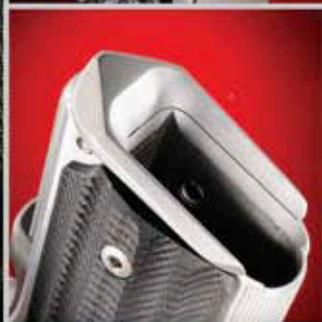
And to me that is the bottom line—learning to shoot a particular firearm with proficiency. You can "test fire" one from bench rest until the next ice age and still not be a decent marksman with it once the sandbags are removed from the equation.

A natural question at this point is "What is a suitable level of precision for a rifle, pistol, revolver or whatever?"

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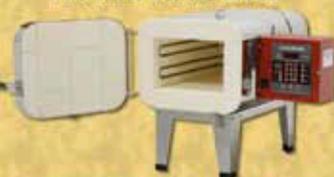
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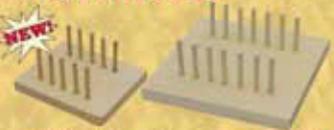
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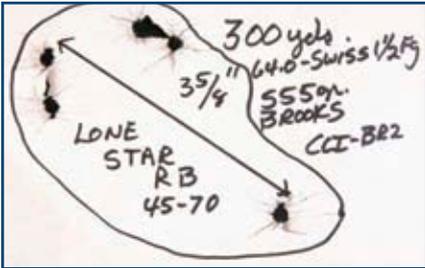
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Duke's expectation for his BPCR Silhouette rifles is a group (above) like this at 300 yards. Once achieved, he does not worry about "wringing out" that rifle for improved performance. Shooting groups from benchrest as Duke is doing here (below) with a Shiloh Sharps Model 1874 .45-70 is merely preparation for its intended purpose.



The purpose to which that firearm will be put or more precisely the purpose for which that firearm was built, should be the determining factor. A varmint rifle used on prairie dogs at 400 yards needs a higher level of precision than a .30-30 lever gun for relatively close range deer hunting. A self-defense handgun for personal protection at 10 yards need not deliver groups as tight as a bull's-eye competition pistol firing at 50-yard targets.

My attitude is shooters should develop a load compatible to the purpose for which the specific firearm was designed. For instance, on an Internet site I read where a fellow wanted to get his World War II vintage M1 Carbine shooting minute of angle (roughly 1") groups at 100 yards. He's in lala land. M1 Carbines were never designed to do that and at 60-plus years of age and wear they simply will not do that.

Conversely my good friend Kirk Stovall stopped by my range a couple months back with a newly purchased pre-64 Model 70 .257 Roberts. I forget what scope the rifle had but he's a believer in quality glass. His handloads put five shots into about 1.25" at 100 yards several times consecutively. He was happy because that was perfectly adequate for his purposes: deer and antelope hunting out to about 300 yards. Trying to refine his handloads to sub-1" groups would net him not one bit of improvement in the real world. It would just add wear to his barrel.

"Wringing out" a gun for its ultimate potential sounds good. In reality it is meaningless. What needs "wringing out" is the shooter and only time at the trigger does that.

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HANDLOADING

• John Barsness •

BULLET SEATING DEPTH On both ends.

Most handloaders have heard more than one “rule” about rifle bullet seating. One is rifle bullets need to be seated close to the rifling for the finest accuracy. The standard advice is .03”, or around 1/32”. Not bad advice, but it isn’t the whole story.

First, we must understand the reason for seating the bullet so close to the lands. It’s simple, really: The bullet should enter the rifling aligned with the bore. If the bullet is tipped slightly it enters the rifling at a slight angle, and exits the muzzle at a slight angle. This cockeyed bullet takes longer to settle down after leaving the muzzle, and also is slightly deformed. Neither helps accuracy. Seating the bullet out until it almost touches the rifling theoretically helps prevent the bullet from tipping before it’s shoved into the lands.

However, obvious exceptions exist, including the free-bore (long throat) in Weatherby rifles. In any Weatherby-made rifle chambered for a Weatherby cartridge, there’s no way to seat the bullets out near the lands and have the cartridge fit in the magazine, yet today’s Weatherbys shoot remarkably well. There are three in our house, a Mark V Ultra Lightweight and two Vanguards, chambered for the .240, .257 and .300 Weatherby Magnums. All shoot very well, because the freebore is just large enough to allow the passage of a 6mm, 25- or 30-caliber bullet. This “tight” throat doesn’t allow the bullet any room to tip slightly, even though it makes a relatively long journey before encountering the lands.

Another good example is my CZ 550 in 9.3x62mm Mauser. Even though the magazine allows a cartridge overall length of 3.48”, the throat is so long no bullet I’ve yet tried can be seated anywhere near the lands. Yet this rifle consistently shoots about any bullet into much less than an inch at 100 yards. The reason, again, is a throat just over bullet diameter.

Also, some bullets will shoot more accurately (or at least as well) when seated farther from the lands. In my experience both long-shanked and relatively “hard” bullets can be seated well back from the lands, especially in a throat of the proper diameter. The most accurate loads I’ve found in those three

Weatherby rifles have all featured either monolithic bullets such as the Barnes Triple-Shock X-Bullet and Nosler E-Tip, or heavier lead-cored bullets with long shanks, whether heavy Hornady Interlocks, Nosler Partitions or Sierra GameKings.

Softer bullets, especially in lighter weights, can vary considerably in their reaction to seating depth. One of the softest bullets on the market is the Berger VLD. Often these shoot best when actually touching the lands, but in some rifles they prefer considerable jump.

In fact, some experimentation in seating depth often results in better accuracy with almost any bullet. A change of .01” in seating depth can result in dramatic changes in some rifles. Just be aware seating bullets closer to the lands normally results in higher pressures. This increase usually isn’t enough to be dangerous, but it’s a good reason to start with the bullet seated as close to the lands as possible, then backing it off .01” at a time to see if accuracy improves.

Another common notion is longer bullets take up too much powder room in short cartridges, because the base of the bullet pokes too far below the neck. There are several problems with this theory. First, a longer bullet doesn’t decrease case capacity very much. For instance, a 200-grain .308” Nosler Partition bullet is 1/10” longer than a 180-grain Partition. A typical .300 WSM

case holds about 75 grains of water with a 180 seated. A little math shows us that the extra 1/10” decreases case capacity about 2.5 percent. Wow!

A little research into various loading manuals shows when a 200-grain bullet is loaded in a .300 WSM case, the powder charge has to be reduced about 2.5 percent. This isn’t because the longer bullet takes up more room, but because a 200-grain bullet creates more pressure than a 180. So the “loss” in case capacity doesn’t mean a thing, the reason a 200-grain bullet works just fine in the .300 WSM.

In fact, if we do a little more math we find out a 200-grain Partition sticks way down below the neck of long 30-caliber magnums. If seated to normal overall cartridge length a 200-grain bullet extends just as far below the neck in a .300 Weatherby Magnum as it does in the .300 WSM—and even further below the neck in a .300 Winchester Magnum. This also applies to a bunch of other cartridges. A 175-grain Sierra GameKing, for instance, actually protrudes less below the neck of a 7mm Remington SAUM case than it does into a 7mm Remington Magnum’s much longer case.

If we’re really worried about long bullets taking up powder space, we should be equally worried about both short and long cartridges, but the fact is it doesn’t matter, even if we decide to use an ultra-long monolithic such as the Barnes TSX, Hornady GMX or Nosler E-tip. These bullets penetrate so deeply that dropping down a weight or two leaves plenty of room for powder. A 168-grain Barnes TSX or Nosler E-Tip, for instance, is only slightly longer than a 200-grain Nosler Partition.

A little more reflection reveals



This 95-grain Nosler Ballistic Tip is seated to longer-than-standard factory overall length in this .243 Winchester case because of the long throat in a single-shot rifle.



These .308" bullets (above) all weigh 165 to 170 grains, and each requires a different seating depth because of difference in ogive. Many shooters think long bullets (below, left) won't work in short cartridges, because the base of the bullet takes up too much powder room. Guess what? The base of a 175-grain Sierra boattail sticks further below the neck in a 7mm Remington Magnum case (right) than in a 7mm Remington Short Action Ultra Magnum case (middle) when seated to standard overall cartridge length.



another basic truth: A bullet's base takes up just as much powder room inside the case neck as it does below the case neck. One handloader I know is so obsessed with the sin of a bullet extending below the neck that he's developed several wildcats by pushing the shoulder back on a standard case, resulting in a longer neck, so the bullet's base will never intrude into the case body. He thinks his special rounds should result in more velocity, but all he's doing is losing the extra powder space around the base of the intruding bullet.

Yet another factor is today's denser powders. We have an enormous selection of finer-grained powders to choose from, ranging from Alliant's Reloder series to Hodgdon Short-Cut Extremes to Ramshot's clean-burning ball powders. Some of these powders are even specifically designed to work in short, fat magnums.

The one real concern with some newer bullets is whether the bullet can be seated to the optimal relationship with the lands. Bullets like the Berger VLD and any of the sleeker plastic-tips have very long ogives. When seated so the rounds will work in a conventional magazine, they often end up a long way from the rifling, so there's no way to experiment with seating depth. Sometimes the bullet will even end up with the rear of the ogive inside the neck. A little way inside doesn't matter, but sometimes there isn't enough neck contact to hold the bullet firmly. **GUNS**

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RIFLEMAN

• DAVE ANDERSON •

TWO SUPER VARMINTERS

It's time to think about pest season.

If winter comes, can prairie dog season be far behind? It's not too early to start getting ready. New rifles and scopes need to be prepared, old favorites checked over, ammunition loaded.

If there are better out-of-the-box varmint rifles than those from Cooper Firearms I haven't seen them. It may seem silly to call a rifle priced well into four figures a "best buy," but for the quality delivered, Cooper varminters are indeed an exceptional value.

Cooper Arms, located in Stevensville, Montana, was founded in 1990 by Dan Cooper, who had previously worked with Kimber for a time. Controversy arose around the 2008 presidential election when Cooper (the man) donated to the Obama campaign.

Considering the candidate's history of opposing gun rights, shooter reaction was swift and strong. Shortly thereafter Dan Cooper resigned as president/CEO, subsequently sold all his financial interests in the company, and no longer has any relationship with Cooper Firearms. Happily, we can once again focus on the considerable merits of the rifles.

Cooper rifles use a 3-lug bolt action made in different lengths to fit different cartridge classes. The M21 shown here fits the .223 Rem. and similar size cartridges. The M22 is for slightly longer cartridges, from .22-250 Rem through .308 Win. The M38 is for the .221 Fireball and similar cartridges.

These are all single-shot actions. Since there is no magazine cut, the action is more rigid. With no magazine constraints on cartridge overall length, handloaders can easily adjust seating depth to provide the best accuracy.

Cooper Firearms also has two repeating actions. The 57M is for rimfire cartridges (e.g. .22 LR, .22 WMRF, .17 HMR). The newest action is the M52, for .30-06 length cartridges. The M52 rifles are magazine-fed and are very classy-looking hunting rifles indeed.

The rifle shown here is called the "Phoenix." It is built on the M21 action. The stainless-steel barrel is chambered



The Remington 700 SPS model has the time-proven Remington 700 action and barrel, matte finished, in a synthetic stock. This short-action model is in .223 Rem. With its moderate weight (7-1/4 pounds for basic rifle) it makes a fine all-around rifle for hunts requiring a lot of walking, or for shooting from a bench. The scope is the new 3-9X Redfield now manufactured by Leupold.

in .204 Ruger with a 1:12" twist. Stock is a Kevlar-reinforced synthetic and incorporates an aluminum-bedding block.

The basic rifle (without scope, bases, and rings) weighs 7-1/2 pounds. It is portable enough to carry on walking hunts, such as winter hikes when calling coyotes. Actually I prefer a repeating rifle for coyotes as quite often more than one will respond to a call.

I used this rifle on a prairie dog shoot in northeast Wyoming. Trophy Ridge Outfitters provides prairie dog shooting, plus antelope and mule deer hunts in fall. I've been there for a couple of prairie dog shoots as well as a pronghorn hunt, always with excellent success. The ranch is located in beautiful country, just a few miles from the Devil's Tower monument (used as a location in the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*).

I've also shot several other Cooper varmint rifles in .223 Rem., both wood and synthetic stocked models. Invariably quality of workmanship and materials has been outstanding, and accuracy spectacular. Cooper guarantees 1/2-MOA accuracy at 100 yards, and every rifle I've shot has met their standard.

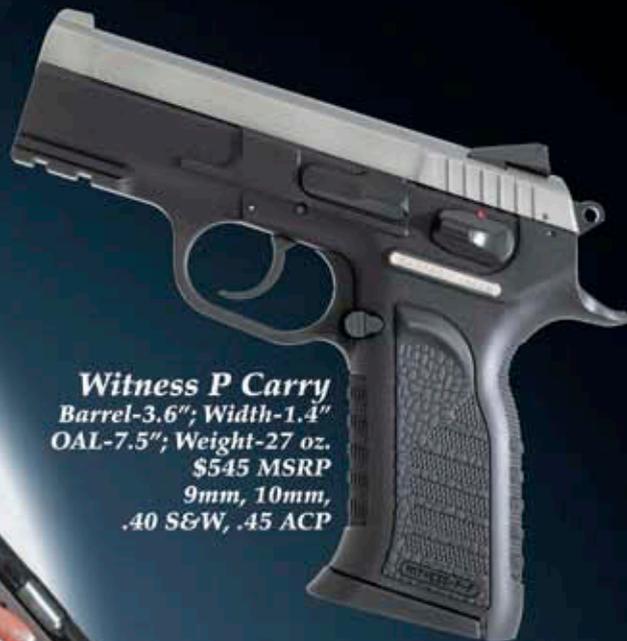


The Cooper Phoenix model (above) features a Kevlar-reinforced synthetic stock. Slots in forearm help cool the 24" stainless steel barrel, featuring a medium contour. Quality of materials and workmanship on these rifles is outstanding. Custom loads by Nosler with the 40-grain Ballistic Tip bullet gave consistent groups in the 1/2 MOA range. The scope is a Leupold VX-3 4.5-14x40 Long Range model with 30mm tube and focusing knob on left side.

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|---|--------------------------|---------------------|
| ACTUAL POWER: | 4.9X to 14.7X | 3.3X to 8.5X |
| MAIN TUBE DIAMETER: | 30mm | 1" |
| LENGTH OVERALL: | 12.6" | 12.3" |
| CLICK VALUE: | 1/4 MOA | 1/4 MOA |
| WEIGHT: | 15.1 ounces | 12.6 ounces |
| EYE RELIEF: | 4.4" (4.5X) 3.7" (14X) | 4.2" (3X) 3.7" (9X) |
| INTERNAL ADJUSTMENT RANGE (ELEVATION & WINDAGE): | 116 MOA | 56 MOA |
| RETICLES: | Duplex | 4-Plex |
| PRICE: | \$849.99 | \$149.99 |

The scope on the Phoenix rifle is a Leupold 4.5-14x40 VX-III with 30mm main tube and side focus adjustment, very clear and sharp. I didn't have my trigger scale with me but the trigger felt to be around 3 pounds, clean and crisp. I like a bit lighter pull (1-1/2 to 2 pounds) on a varmint rifle. Fortunately the Cooper trigger is readily adjustable.

Either right or left-hand actions are available, in a choice of many commercial and several popular wildcat cartridges. The Phoenix, the walnut-stocked Varminter and the Varminter Laminated all have a current suggested retail of \$1,495—a substantial amount, but reasonable for the quality received.

Regardless of value many shooters aren't going to lay out such sums for a varmint rifle. The Remington SPS (Special Purpose Synthetic) is another rifle providing excellent value.

Every rifleman should have at least one accurate, portable, bolt-action .223. To appreciate the capabilities of a centerfire rifle you have to shoot—a lot. These days even .223 ammo isn't really cheap, but whether you buy loaded ammunition or reload, .223 is still a better buy than most.

Other virtues are light recoil and flat trajectory. An accurate .223 is a rifle you'll actually shoot. The first time you shoot a sub-moa group at longer range (say 4" or 5" at 500 yards) you'll have a better understanding of the capabilities of the equipment, and yourself.

The Remington 700 is one of the all-time great actions and its merits hardly need discussion. The SPS .223 model has a matte-finish action and 24" barrel, in a molded synthetic stock. A hinged floorplate allows fast unloading. Weight of the basic rifle is 7-1/4 pounds. Quality of the adjustable trigger is quite good, free of creep and overtravel, though a bit heavier than I like at around 4 pounds.

Twist is 1:12" which has long been the standard in .223. This is suitable for bullet weights in the 40- to 55-grain range. At the velocities provided by the 24" barrel I would expect it to stabilize

| 700 SPS | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| MAKER: REMINGTON ARMS COMPANY 870 REMINGTON DRIVE P.O. BOX 700 MADISON, NC 27025-0700 (800) 243-9700 WWW.REMINGTON.COM | |
| ACTION: | Bolt action |
| CALIBER: | .223 Rem (tested), many others |
| BARREL: | 24" matte carbon steel |
| CAPACITY: | 4+1 |
| LENGTH OVERALL: | 43-5/8" |
| STOCK: | Synthetic |
| WEIGHT: | 7-1/4 pounds |
| RETAIL: | \$639 |

| M-21 PHOENIX | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| MAKER: COOPER FIREARMS OF MONTANA P.O. BOX 114 STEVENSVILLE, MT 59870 (406) 777-0373 WWW.COOPERFIREARMS.COM | |
| ACTION: | Bolt action |
| CALIBER: | .204 Ruger (tested), many others |
| BARREL: | 24" |
| CAPACITY: | 1 |
| TRIGGER: | Adjustable single stage |
| STOCK: | Synthetic, aluminum bedding block |
| WEIGHT: | 7.5 pounds |
| RETAIL: | \$1,495 |

most bullets in the 60- to 64-grain range as well.

For shooting ground squirrels with the .223 I like 40-grain bullets such as the Nosler Ballistic Tip and Hornady V-Max. They can be wound up to rather impressive speeds and on impact provide a most satisfactory hang time. 55-grain bullets handle most varmint and informal target shooting needs quite well.

Current retail of the 700 SPS is \$639. You're getting a lot of performance and it's offered in many popular cartridges, with left hand and stainless-steel options available, too.





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GUARDIA CIVIL'S 7.62 SHORT RIFLE Spain's long-serving Mauser.

Unit-marked Mausers are among the more interesting of the breed. Being able to associate a particular Mauser with the personnel who carried it breathes some life into our old warhorses. It enriches what otherwise would be just another collectible. One model in particular is highly collectible, often appears on show tables and is very affordable. It's the 7.62x51 chambered short rifle of Spain's famous Guardia Civil.

To anyone who remembers Franco's rural Spain, the mere sight of a Guardia Civil 2-man patrol wearing their black, Napoleonic era, tricorne hats and often carrying 9mm Bergmann "Destroyer" carbines was imposing indeed. Those patrols *were* the law and order of rural Spain as they had been ever since their formation in 1844.

Today, an expanded Guardia Civil under the Interior Ministry fulfills the role of a paramilitary national police force, stationed with their families in garrisons, and assigned with responsibilities ranging from highway patrol, border security and customs to Internet crime prevention, anti-terrorism and UN peace keeping missions.

Except for ceremonial purposes,

their tricorne hats are gone, but not their esprit de corps, expressed in their mottos of "Honor is My Emblem" and "Everything for the Fatherland."

Unique Crest

The official crest of the Guardia Civil consists of the Royal Crown together with a Roman fasces crossed by a sword. It is the Roman fasces and sword that embellish the front receiver ring of the Guardia Civil's short rifles. It's an attractive and unique firearm crest and symbolic of the role the Guardia Civil plays in civil society.

The Roman fasces, a bundle of rods typically surrounding an axe and bound together with straps, symbolizes the power and authority of the state.



Symbolizing the power of the state, Guardia Civil short rifles are marked with the Roman fasces.

In ancient Rome, fasces were carried by retainers in front of governmental officials as they moved about to signify the power of their office. A little closer to home, images of the Roman fasces appear in the Oval Office, the Senate, the House of Representatives, on the Capitol and Supreme Court buildings, as the front arms of the chair in the Lincoln Memorial, in the crests of our own National Guard and Army Military Police and in many other official domains. Once you begin to look for it, you'll find the Roman fasces is a widely used symbol within governmental circles.

Designated the Model 1916, the Guardia Civil short rifle follows the pattern of the 1893 Spanish Mauser. This was a breakthrough in Mauser design history because it was the first Mauser model to feature the modern, clip-fed,



The M1916 Guardia Civil (above) is chambered for the lower pressure 7.62 NATO, not .308 Winchester as the importer marked them. With its 21" barrel, the compact 1916 short rifle (below) was ideal for the multiple missions of the Guardia Civil.



staggered column, flush-box magazine.

The Model 1916's double-lugged bolt cocks on closing and, while the bolt design lacks the larger bolt sleeve gas shroud of the Model 1898, there is generous gas port cut into the left side of the front receiver ring matching a large gas port in the body of the bolt.

The Guardia Civil Model 1916s imported by SAMCO were produced in quantity by the Spanish arsenal of Fabrica de Armas at Oviedo from 1916 to 1951. It's important to note that even though these rifles are designated as Model 1916s, they could have been made with all the improvements in steels, manufacturing processes and heat treatment as late as 1951. Like the Swedes, the Spaniards found the Mauser 1893-95 designs perfectly adequate for their needs for over a half century.

The Model 1916 short rifle evolved from the Model 1916 rifle and was introduced to replace Spain's Model 1895 carbine. With its turned down bolt handle, 21" barrel, an overall length of 41-1/2" and a weight of 7 pounds, 15 ounces, the short rifle is a handy gun. I can understand why the Guardia Civil adopted it.

The original Model 1916s were chambered, of course, for the 7x57 cartridge Spain had adopted in 1893. The Guardia Civil model pictured here



A distinctive characteristic of the Spanish short rifle is its turned down bolt handle (above). The checkered front sling swivel retainer (below) is also the release button for the cleaning rod.



was later rebarreled in 7.62 NATO and arsenal refinished. I suspect the conversion was done in the 1960s when Spain was converting their Model 1916 and Model 1943 Mausers into FR-7s and FR-8s chambered for the 7.62 NATO.

There has been some difference of opinion in milsurp circles as to whether the Model 1916 short rifle was chambered for the 7.62 NATO or an earlier, experimental less powerful loading of the 7.62x51.

Spain experimented with a variety of cartridge designs before selecting the 7.62 NATO. Dr. Voss, who worked at the CETME plant, designed the 7.62x40 (also referred to as the 7.62 CETME) in 1953. This cartridge was less powerful than the 7.62x51 NATO, consequently generating less recoil in full-automatic fire and was characterized by its unusually long pointed, aerodynamic, aluminum-cored bullet. The Voss cartridge was ultimately rejected. Spain then did produce some slightly light-loaded 7.62x51 ammunition for two, early models of their CETME, but in the end, the country officially adopted the full-powered 7.62x51 NATO round.

SAMCO does make the mistake in its advertising and on its barrel import stamp of equating the 7.62 NATO round exactly with the .308 Winchester cartridge. The .308 Win is loaded to an

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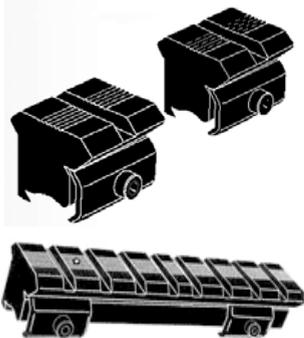
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| IMPORTER: SAMCO GLOBAL ARMS, INC. 6995 N.W. 43RD ST. MIAMI, FL 33166 (800) 554-1618 WWW.SAMCOGLOBAL.COM | |
| ACTION TYPE: | Bolt action |
| CALIBER: | 7.62x51 NATO |
| CAPACITY: | 5 |
| BARREL LENGTH: | 21" |
| OVERALL LENGTH: | 41-1/2" |
| WEIGHT: | 7 pounds, 15 ounces |
| FINISH: | Blue |
| SIGHTS: | Tangent leaf rear, barleycorn front |
| STOCK: | Walnut |
| PRICE: | \$129.95 |

industry maximum average pressure of 52,000 CUP. The 7.62 NATO is loaded to 50,000 CUP.

To identify genuine 7.62 NATO ammunition, look for the small cross-within-a circle stamp on the head of the case. That symbol indicates the ammunition meets NATO standards. Shoot 7.62 NATO in the Model 1916, and you'll be quite content with the results. If NATO ball ammunition is unavailable, I would suggest a mid-range .308 Win. handload consisting of a 150-grain bullet (Sierra's MatchKing would be ideal) pushed by 42.0 grains of IMR 4895 or IMR 4064.

How did the Guardia Civil's short rifle perform? I tested three brands of 7.62 NATO military ball—1982 Portuguese (2,747 fps), 1981 South African (2,746 fps) and 2007 Federal (2,809 fps). In light of the short sight radius and rather coarse sights of the rifle, I fired 3-shot groups at 50 yards. The South African ball was the least accurate, averaging 2-1/4". The Portuguese FNM was the most accurate, averaging 1-1/4" and the Federal was not far behind at 1-1/2". In short, the Guardia Civil short rifle proved very accurate when fed quality 7.62 NATO. At their lowest 300-meter setting, the military sights were dead on for windage, but the impact of the rounds was 9" high at 50 yards.

The Guardia Civil Model 1916 short rifles in 7.62 NATO were imported originally by SAMCO Global Arms. SAMCO's Spanish Model 1916s in 7.62 NATO are now on backorder, but with an advertised price of \$129.95, you might keep an eye on their Web site to snap one up if they become available again.

As of the moment, SAMCO doesn't know when or where they might find additional stocks, so I would suggest tuning in to Web auction sites to find one of the Guardia Civil's attractive, unit marked Mausers. They're worth the hunt.

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• DAVE ANDERSON •

IMPROVING THE GRIP

Glock 22 RTF .40 S&W.

Currently the autopistol completely dominates the police market. One make—Glock—has, by far, the lion's share of this market. Estimates suggest more than 65 percent, or two out of three, of many private citizens purchasing handguns are influenced by what they see their officers use. They assume rightly if it is good enough for police it is also good enough for personal and home defense. Of the various Glock models the one most commonly seen on police duty belts is the Model 22 in .40 S&W.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the movement to autos was taking its first tentative steps. After the Glock appeared in 1985 the shift to autopistols really took off. Gaston Glock and his design team must have made a real effort to understand the police market.

Cops didn't stick with revolvers all those years out of tradition, or from being unaware of alternatives. Revolvers had real and important advantages. A big advantage was simplicity. No slides to cycle, safeties to manipulate, no hammer drops, no transitions from double-action

to single-action. Point gun, pull trigger.

Reliability was another advantage. Today's autopistols are so reliable we hardly consider it a factor anymore. Not so 40 years ago. Yes, we had reliable autos, but mostly only with jacketed roundnose bullets. It was routine to send 1911s to gunsmiths for reliability tune-ups, so they would function with semiwadcutter or hollowpoint loads.

The Glock people understood cops didn't hate their revolvers. They just wanted more rounds in the gun. They wanted to be able to reload more quickly. And they didn't want to give up what revolvers already provided: simplicity, reliability, ease of maintenance.

Glock also understood something armchair gun experts never seem to consider. The pistol had to be affordable. Whether for individual officers or police departments, changing handguns is a big deal. It isn't just the gun, even holsters, spare magazines and carriers, ammunition, spare parts, armorer training, officer training, all need funding.

The Glock was an innovative design, even though taken individually, the design elements of the Glock aren't particularly revolutionary. Even the use of polymers in the frame had already



The G22 RTF upheld Glock's reputation for reliability with 100 percent functioning. It also proved slightly more accurate than Dave's older Glock .40s.

LaserLyte Rear Sight Laser

Laser sighting systems continue to become smaller, more user-friendly, and less expensive, such as the innovative RL-1 from LaserLyte. The laser, along with adjustment screws, battery pack, and on-off switch are neatly built into a rear sight which fits the dovetail slot of Glock slides (models for other handguns are forthcoming).

Mounting is as simple as tapping out the regular rear sight and tapping the RL-1 in place. After sighting the iron sight portion of the gun by drifting the sight left or right as needed to roughly adjust windage, an Allen head set screw locks the sight in place. The laser sight

can then be sighted by using an Allen wrench on the elevation and windage screws on the sight.

An on-off button is located on the rear of the left tube, which is also the battery housing. Press once for continuous beam, twice for pulsing beam (easier to spot in moderate to bright light), and a third time to turn off.

Fitting the sight on the Glock 22 RTF was straightforward, using a plastic mallet and supplied brass rod. Sighting also presented no difficulties. The sight picture, with the tubes on either side, is a bit "different" but the sight notch with white outline is a conventional square



The LaserLyte RL-1 replaces the standard rear sight. The right side tube (above, shown from the front) houses the laser and adjustment screws, while the left tube houses batteries and on/off switch. The sight offers a conventional square notch with white outline (below) for aiming in adequate light.





The Glock 22 has become what the K-frame S&W revolver was for generations—the handgun most commonly seen in American police holsters. Both these fine handguns are simple, reliable and easy to maintain. With both fully loaded, the Glock weighs a bit less than the revolver—and it holds 16 rounds instead of 6. The Glock is in an Uncle Mike’s paddle holster, S&W 19 in a Don Hume Jordan holster. Knife by Spyderco, light by SureFire.

been tested by HK. The Glock operates on the well-proven barrel tilt-lock system, with a square abutment on the barrel locking into the front edge of the ejection port. It’s a simplified version of the Browning-designed system dating back over a century.

What Glock did was incorporate proven elements in a package appealing to the needs of police officers. A key element is the Glock Safe Action trigger design. There is no manual safety on a Glock, though there are multiple passive safeties to prevent firing should the pistol be dropped. Point gun, pull trigger, and

the gun fires.

Glocks generally have smooth and consistent trigger pulls resembling the DA pull of a good revolver; but heavy compared to a cocked autopistol. This isn’t a bug, it’s a feature. In a defensive situation adrenaline levels are likely high and fine motor skills compromised. The long, heavy pull of a revolver—or a Glock—provides additional insurance the pistol will only fire with deliberate intent.

Glocks (or rather, Glock shooters) have amassed a remarkable record in competition as well. The Glock trigger

notch and matches the standard Glock front sight.

Activating the “on” button during the draw is easy and reasonably fast, using the thumb of the shooting hand (right hand, for me). Using the support hand to depress the button is actually a bit quicker, at least for me, but I like the capability of bringing the gun into action with just the shooting hand. With practice it should become almost as quick and natural as releasing the safety on a 1911.

The RL-1 adds virtually no weight to the gun, doesn’t interfere with holstering and is hardly noticed in regular carry and use. In dim light, in which the sights are hardly visible, the laser is so superior there is no comparison. The RL-1 was on the test Glock for all the shooting (about 300 rounds) and was unaffected by recoil. **GUNS**

| RL-1 | |
|----------------------|---|
| MAKER: | LASERLYTE |
| | 101 AIRPARK ROAD |
| | COTTONWOOD, AZ 86326 |
| | (928) 649-3201 |
| | WWW.LASERLYTE.COM |
| FITS: | All Glocks (others planned) |
| POWER OUTPUT: | Class III, 5mw |
| BATTERIES: | 4x377 |
| WEIGHT: | 1.2 ounces |
| LENGTH: | 0.85" |
| WIDTH: | 1.05" |
| HEIGHT: | 0.35" |
| BATTERY LIFE: | Constant on, 1 hour; pulse mode, 2 hours |
| RETAIL: | \$199.95 |

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| 8" | | Ball Bearing & Hardened Pivot Pin Slide Safety & 3 Position Pocket Clip ROTON USA Airwolf Auto \$259 8.7" Open |
| 8.6" open | | Gerber Covert Auto \$159 |
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| 7.9 Front open" | | 2 Sizes 5 Colors Piranha 7.7" Bodyguard \$129 Piranha 6.6" Mini-Guard \$129 |
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| 7.5" | | Tanto Drop Point S&W OTF Auto \$49 2/\$95 |
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(by tuning and/or replacing components such as the trigger bar and trigger return spring) can be adjusted over a broad range of pulls. I've handled competition-tuned Glocks with impressively light, smooth pulls.

The Glock 22 featured here is the RTF (Rough Texture Finish) version. Compared to the original model of 1985 the differences are primarily cosmetic. Glocks have changed very little in the last 1/4 century, for the very good reason no major changes were needed.

The major Glock changes in the grip frame included the "grenade" style checkering on the frontstrap of the 2nd variation, the finger grooves of the 3rd, and now the stippled grip frame of the RTF. Functionally, the only major changes were the accessory frame rail of the 3rd models and the introduction of "drop free" magazines.

I have Glocks from all four "eras." Comparing the RTF to my 2nd generation G22 and 3rd style G35, my first impression wasn't so much about the grip as it was the slide. The RTF slide has a smoother and (to my eye) much more attractive finish than my old Model 22. The cocking serration pattern is different, and it works, which is what matters.

The finely stippled RTF pattern on the grip frame works just fine. The finger

| G22 RTF | |
|--|--------------------------|
| MAKER: GLOCK, INC. 6000 HIGHLANDS PARKWAY SMYRNA, GA 30082 (770) 432-1202 WWW.GLOCK.COM | |
| ACTION: | Locked breech, semi-auto |
| CAPACITY: | 15+1 |
| CALIBER: | .40 S&W |
| OVERALL LENGTH: | 7.32" |
| BARREL LENGTH: | 4.49" |
| SIGHT RADIUS: | 6.49" |
| WEIGHT: | 22.92 ounces |
| PRICE: | \$599 |

grooves seem a bit smaller than those of my 35, and the grip feels marginally slimmer. I can't say it's a dramatic improvement over older styles, but it felt very secure even when my hands were sweaty and wasn't uncomfortable in long shooting sessions. Glock has done a really nice job of integrating the accessory frame rail without increasing bulk or obsolescing older holsters.

Appearance is one thing, performance is what counts. Reliability was 100 percent as expected. I never had a malfunction with any of my own Glocks,

although I'm sure it has happened to someone. Over the years I've seen a lot of rounds fired through a lot of Glocks, and as the Glock people say, "They mostly work all the time."

Trigger pull (a bit over 6 pounds, smooth and consistent) was superior to the pull on my older 22, though not as light as the competition Model 35. The RTF 22 was a bit more accurate than either of my current Glock .40s. Both my older .40s average around 4" groups at 25 yards. The RTF shot into 4" or better with several types of ammunition with several groups around the 3" mark. Not a dramatic difference (and probably an "individual pistol" thing) but still nice to see.

Groups were shot with the LaserLyte RL-1 sight illustrated. Glock offers several sight styles, with and without night sight inserts. Because Glocks are so popular there are a lot of aftermarket accessories. Many sight styles are available and are readily installed.

Would I sell my older Glock 22 in order to get the new RTF? Probably not just for the grip stippling, though getting the accessory frame rail is a worthwhile upgrade. On the other hand if I were in the market for a new Glock I'd certainly grab the RTF. It looks good, handles well, shoots well, and has no disadvantages compared to earlier models.

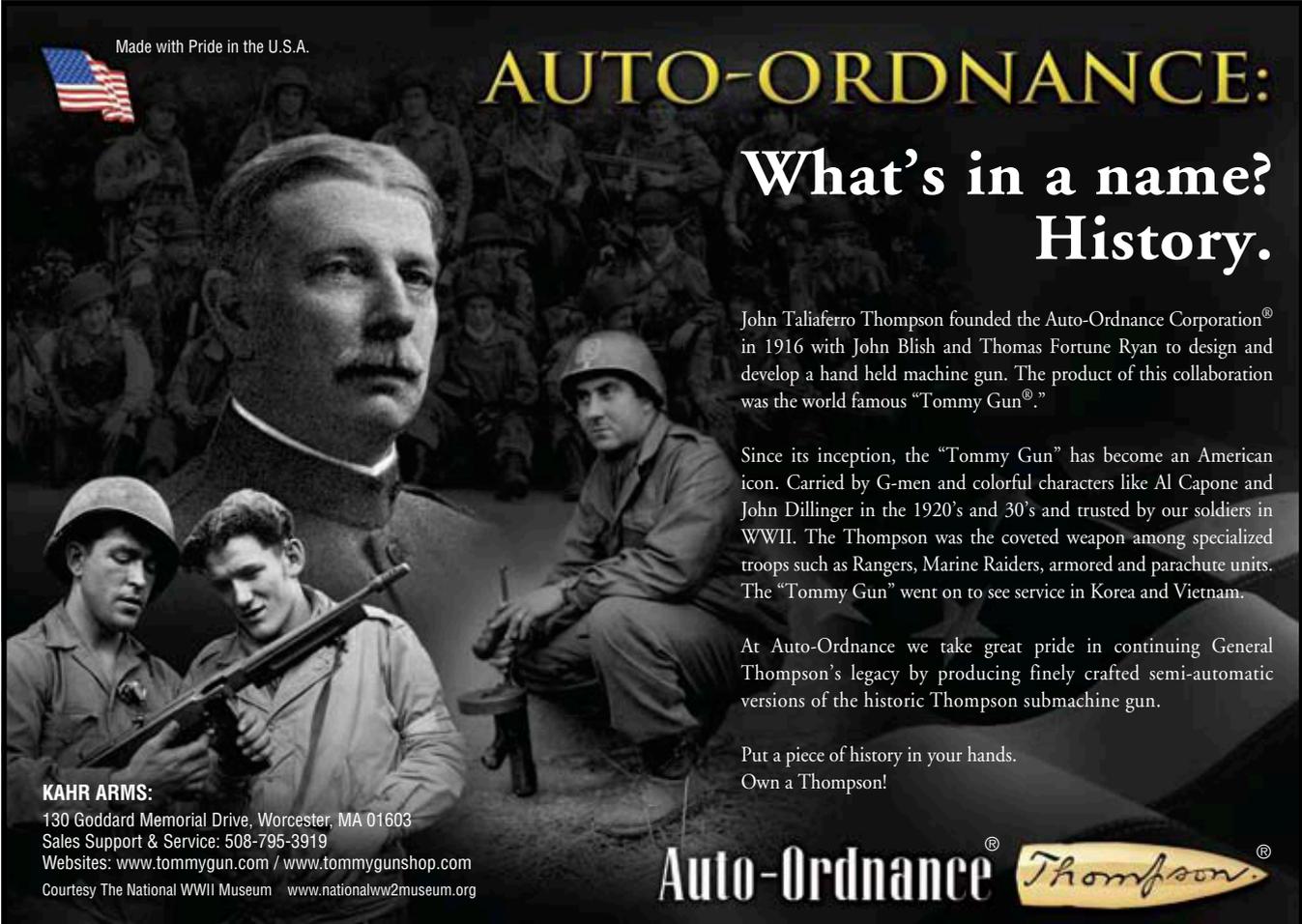
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• JEFF JOHN •

Chamber Length

Q: I recently read John Barsness's article "Ahh, Sweet 16" on handloading the "middle" gauge in the August 2009 issue and recently acquired a 16-gauge Hunter Arms "Fulton" SxS with 2-9/16" chambers. I have gotten conflicting reports on whether it is safe to shoot modern 2-3/4" shells. Most sources seem to say this is not much of an issue in 2-9/16" chambers, but can be in shorter 2-1/2" chambers developing dangerous pressures.

Isn't the difference between 2-9/16" and 2-3/4" shells only 3/16"? I have seen 12-gauge shells with seemingly more variation than that. However, I've seen vintage 1960s boxes of 2-3/4" 16-gauge loads state "Danger—do not use in chambers shorter than 2-3/4!"

Mr. Barsness says, "While some pressure tests show no real danger in shooting 2-3/4" loads in such chambers..." he does suggest reloading to shorter length for guns so chambered. I am interested in buying factory loads for my gun and other publications specializing in double guns and wing shooting seem to support Mr. Barsness's statement about it not being dangerous.

I'm not sure if it is worth the trouble and expense of getting the chambers lengthened if I don't have to for safety reasons. The gun is in otherwise good working order and I don't plan to put anything but regular lead field loads through it.

Adam D'Amico
via e-mail

A: Let's ask John Barsness: The problem with short chambers and modern ammo is it's filled with variables. While all the pressure-tests I've found (including those made by major ammo companies) indicate there's either no pressure rise—or maybe 1,000 psi—when firing 2-3/4" shells in 2-1/2" or 2-9/16" chambers, that doesn't mean there never could be.



John loads 16-gauge ammo to fit the rather wide variety of chamber lengths found in his guns which include (from top) a British Army & Navy SxS, German combination gun with a 9.3x72R rifle barrel, Ithaca Model 37 and the Winchester Model 12. Photo: John Barsness

I've done considerable measuring in trying to figure out why such a pressure rise would occur. In modern shotshells one issue is the "hard" rear end of a plastic wad. This isn't easily compressed, and when forced through a "short chamber" forcing cone already partly filled with the front end of a plastic case, obviously can result in higher pressure. Also, the rear diameter of different wads varies considerably, mostly due to whether they're designed to be used in molded cases with tapered interiors, or Reifenhauser cases with straight-walled interiors. The smaller diameter of a tapered-case wad might not cause any pressure rise at all, while the larger diameter wad from a straight-walled case might. These various factors are probably the source of the 1,000 psi pressure rises seen in some gun/ammo combinations.

A mitigating factor is many "short" chambers are actually longer than stated. I've measured the chambers of a bunch of old American shotguns, as well as many British and European guns, and I don't recall *ever* measuring one actually 2-1/2" long. Most so-called 2-1/2" chambers in British guns have measured 2-9/16" to 2-5/8", and often the two chambers in a double are slightly different lengths. The supposed 65mm (2.55") chambers on one of my old German drillings actually measure around 2.7", which is darn close to 2-3/4". Obviously such longer chambers are less of a potential problem.

And yes, there are considerable differences in the actual length of fired shotshells. When loading for my German drilling I simply select Federal cases measuring 2.7" or less.

I've also measured a lot of shotgun bores, and most European 12-gauge bores are smaller than the nominal American

.730", while most European 20-gauge bores are bigger than the nominal .615" used in American guns. Obviously a smaller bore with a short chamber will probably cause higher pressures. Sixteen-gauge guns from anywhere are all over the place.

The last factor is the quality, age and condition of the shotgun itself. This can also be all over the place, whether we're talking about an old American double used with black powder ammo and not cleaned often enough, or a quality British double that's had the bores repolished so often the barrel walls are almost paper-thin.

Yet another factor is European and British ammo is normally loaded to lower pressures than American ammo.

All of which is why many of us suggest either shooting shotshells that match the chamber, or having the chambers lengthened. While shooting longer shells won't cause any problems 99.9 percent of the time, the slight chance of a *real* problem isn't worth the minimal cost of buying or loading shorter shells, or having the chambers lengthened. Aside from possible damage to a useful shotgun, our forend hand is right where most barrels blow out.

If you don't want to load your own shotshells, I would suggest having the chambers in your Fulton lengthened. This isn't expensive, and a normal (and pleasant) side-effect is lighter recoil.—
John Barsness

GUNS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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THE Classic WINCHESTER 1894

An American favorite returns
in a commemorative issue.

John Taffin

Civilization has been saved, at least for the time being. In 2005 the unthinkable happened when Winchester closed their doors and both the Model 1894 and the Model 70 disappeared. FN is now manufacturing the new Model 70, and the Model 94 (at least in a special issue) is now offered by the trio of Browning/Winchester/Miroku. It bears the Winchester logo, and is manufactured by Miroku of Japan. It is a most beautiful and excellent shooting rifle as we shall soon see.

The 1894, as the Model name indicates, arrived in 1894 chambered in two black powder cartridges, .32-40 and .38-55. One year later the .38-55 was basically necked down to 30 caliber and loaded with the new smokeless powder as the .30-30. Today it is easy to neglect the .30-30 in favor of all the other more powerful cartridges, however millions upon millions of .30-30 leverguns have

been produced over the last century-plus and are still used especially by woods hunters after whitetail deer and black bear.

When I was in grade school in 1951 I even wrote a poem about the .30-30 and I still remember the beginning:

"Twas back in '97 as it is in my ken.
"Their names were Tuck and Shut up; they were flat countrymen."

That's all I remember except for their being on a trip after black bear; I got an "A" for my effort. Over the past several decades I have written about reloading and using the .30-30 as well as about leverguns made by Marlin, Mossberg and Winchester. It is one of my favorite cartridges.

It may be difficult for us here in the opening decade of the 21st century to realize what a tremendous technological step forward the .30-30 was in the last decade of the 19th century. As far as I know, the first person (at least the first person I have encountered) to write about the .30-30 Winchester levergun was Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore was the real deal but he must be read in the context of the last quarter of the 19th century. Hunting was certainly different when he was ranching in the Dakotas as it was strictly open sights and black powder; the object was simply to get a bullet in the game pursued and then chase it down on horseback if necessary.

Teddy Roosevelt Connection

While in the Dakotas TR's number one rifle was the Winchester model 1876 chambered in .45-75. He writes: "I had thus tagged one prong-buck as the net outcome of the expenditure of 14 cartridges. This was certainly not good shooting; but neither was this as bad as it would seem to the man inexperienced in antelope hunting. When fresh meat is urgently needed, and when time is too short, the hunter who is after antelope in an open, flattish country must risk many long shots."

Things changed for TR 10 years later: "In the fall of 1896 I spent a fortnight on the range with the ranch wagon. I was using for the first time one of the new small-caliber, smokeless-powder rifles, with the usual soft-nosed bullet." That new rifle was the Winchester .30-30. This became Theodore's rifle of choice for antelope hunting. "I did not have a close shot, for they were running about 180 yards off. The buck was rearmost,



Oliver Winchester's signature (above) is found in gold on the top of the bolt. Instead of the reviled cross-bolt safety found on the last Winchester 1894s, the High Grade (below) has an unobtrusive and easier to use tang safety.





The new recreation of the 1894 by Winchester/Browning/Miroku (above) was tested with seven different factory loadings. A belt full of .30-30 cartridges and Winchester's new 1894 High Grade rifle (right).



and at him I aimed; the bullet struck him in the flank, coming out of the opposite shoulder, and he fell in his next bound. As we stood over him, Joe shook his head, and said, 'I guess that little rifle is the ace'; and I told him I guessed so too."

Things definitely change and most hunters strive for 1-shot kills these days and it's a rare hunter with an antelope tag who would go forth with an iron-sighted .30-30 Winchester. Ten years after the arrival of the .30-30, the .30-06 arrived in a bolt-action rifle and we soon had quality scopes to take advantage of the long-range possibilities now inherent in a sporting rifle. Over the past century plus we have had dozens upon dozens of highly efficient sporting cartridges introduced. In spite of this the .30-30 remains a favorite of millions of deer hunters. It has always done the job when used appropriately.

By the time Winchester closed their doors in 2005 the Model '94 had lost much of its classic persona. Neither the finish nor the wood was all that exceptional and a whole lot of shooters had a hard time swallowing the cross-bolt safety. I look at some of my special Model '94s, the Chief Crazy Horse and Legendary Lawman Commemoratives and the Big-Bore 94AEs, and wonder why all of the 1894s in the closing days of the 20th century could not have been built as nicely as these. Well now they are and then some. Miroku has been building "Winchesters" for a long time; sometimes bearing the Winchester name, other times they have been Brownings. The Models 1886, 1892 and 1895 have all been beautiful examples of Japanese-made Winchesters.

The return of the .30-30 Model '94 is not as a standard production item but rather a Limited Edition consisting of

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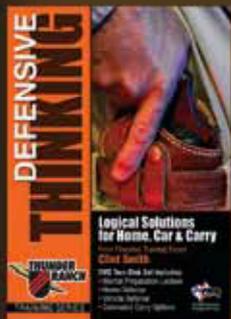
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The Winchester .30-30 High Grade produced excellent accuracy at 50 yards on a cold November day. Remington Extended Range delivered outstanding accuracy (above, top target) as did Winchester Power Points (below, right target).



both a Custom Grade and a High Grade, differing only in finish. My test gun is one of the latter. When my FFL holder, Buckhorn Gun & Pawn, called to tell me the Winchester had arrived, they also remarked on what a pretty rifle it was. When I saw it I too had to say, "Oh, my!" At first glance I was struck by the beauty of the total package. The more I

examined it the better it looked. This is one of the very first of the new Model 1894s in the country and it looks so nice I had to call Browning to make sure it was OK to shoot it. It was, but I had to get it back fairly quickly as it was going to be taken on a hunting trip.

Once you make it through the beautiful embellishments it is obvious the cross-bolt safety is gone and replaced by an unobtrusive tang safety. If a levergun needs a safety this is the only way to go. The lever, hammer, and barrel are beautifully blued and the latter is half octagon/half round for its 24" length. Sights are a traditional Buckhorn rear matched up with a bead front sight which centers in the notch of the rear sight perfectly for my eyes. The front sight is too low for my hands and eyes and even with the rear sight set as low as possible, this 1894 shoots about 6" high at 50 yards. This is an easy fix as the front sight is in a dovetail making it easy to replace. It also shot about 2" to the right for me. However, I did not move the rear sight, as I did not want to take a chance on scratching someone else's rifle.

Both the forearm and buttstock are fancy walnut with a classic checkering pattern and are not only beautifully

WINCHESTER MODEL 1894

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IMPORTER: WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS CO.
275 WINCHESTER AVENUE
MORGAN, UT 84050
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| | |
|------------------------|---|
| ACTION TYPE: | Lever action |
| CALIBER: | .30-30 |
| CAPACITY: | 8+1 |
| BARREL LENGTH: | 24" |
| OVERALL LENGTH: | 42" |
| WEIGHT: | 8 pounds |
| FINISH: | Silver nitride receiver, blue barrel |
| SIGHTS: | Buckhorn rear, bead front |
| STOCK: | Fancy walnut |
| PRICE: | \$1,469 (High Grade), \$1,959 (Custom Grade) |

FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

| LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE) | VELOCITY (FPS) | GROUP SIZE (INCHES) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| FEDERAL CLASSIC 150 HI-SHOK SPFN | 2,454 | 1-1/2 |
| FEDERAL PREMIUM 170 NOSLER PARTITION | 2,216 | 1 |
| REMINGTON 160 EXTENDED RANGE | 2,285 | 3/8 |
| REMINGTON 170 CORE-LOKT SP | 2,214 | 1-1/4 |
| SPEER NITREX 150 | 2,398 | 3/4 |
| WINCHESTER 150 HP | 2,419 | 1-3/4 |
| WINCHESTER 150 POWER POINT | 2,419 | 3/8 |

Notes: Chronograph set at 10' from muzzle. Accuracy the result of 3 shots at 50 yards.

finished but also fitted perfectly to the receiver. The receiver itself is embellished on the left side with engraving around an early WRA (Winchester Repeating Arms) logo while the right side bears the likeness of Oliver Winchester and is marked "Two Hundred Years, Oliver F. Winchester" and "1810-2010" commemorating the 200th anniversary of his birth. The balance of this side of the receiver is also nicely engraved. The receiver, as well as the forearm tip, has a silver nitride finish which contrasts nicely with the blued barrel and lever. The bolt is also blue with Oliver F. Winchester's signature in gold lettering on the top.

Weighing in at 8 pounds with a heavy 24" barrel tends to make the .30-30 very pleasurable shooting, however in a long string this is undone by the curved metal buttplate. It is not punishing but it will start to talk to you over a long string of factory .30-30 cartridges. The magazine capacity is 8 rounds and, as expected, loads through a King's Patent loading gate on the right side of the receiver—a feature originally found on the first official Winchester, the Model 1866. Cartridges load easily which is much appreciated in cold weather. As luck would have it, it was cold weather when it came time to test this new Model 1894.

I will admit I am mostly a fair weather shooter and November in the Northwest is not normally what I would call fair weather. When I sat down at my handgun shooting bench the temperature was in the 40s with a mild breeze. Neither the low bench designed to use a pistol rest nor the coolish weather is the best way for testing rifles, however the outcome was most gratifying. With the open sights of the 1894, targets were set at 50 yards.

My targets for open sighted rifles are normally 5" bright orange circles and with the front sight this left just a slight orange ring around the bead making it easy to maintain a consistent sight picture. With the first rounds fired on target I knew I had an excellent rifle in my hands. I did the chronographing first to settle everything in and then those first three Winchester 150-grain Power



The left side of the silver nitride receiver of the High Grade Winchester 1894 carries engraving and an old-style Winchester Repeating Arms logo. The forearm of the High Grade .30-30 Winchester 1894 is beautifully finished and checkered.



The left side of the Silver Nitride receiver of the Winchester High Grade carries engraving, a likeness of Oliver Winchester and 1810-2010 celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Oliver Winchester. The 1894 High Grade has a magazine capacity of eight .30-30 rounds.



The buttstock of the High Grade Winchester .30-30 is fancy wood with a rather user unfriendly but traditional curved buttplate.

Points went into a group of three shots touching for 3/8". I didn't think I could shoot this well, but I got the same results with Remington's 160-grain Extended Range. Seven different factory rounds were tried, all with iron sights, with the average being 1" at 50 yards. Complete results are in the accompanying table.

The High Grade test levergun sells \$1,469 while the Custom Grade is offered at \$1,959.

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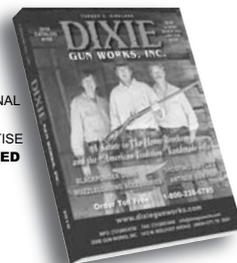
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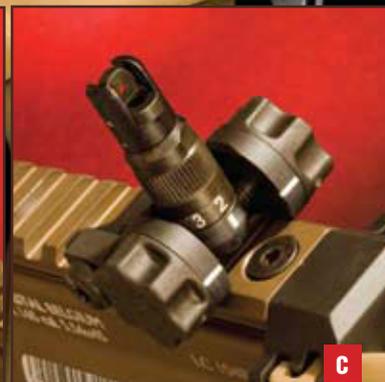
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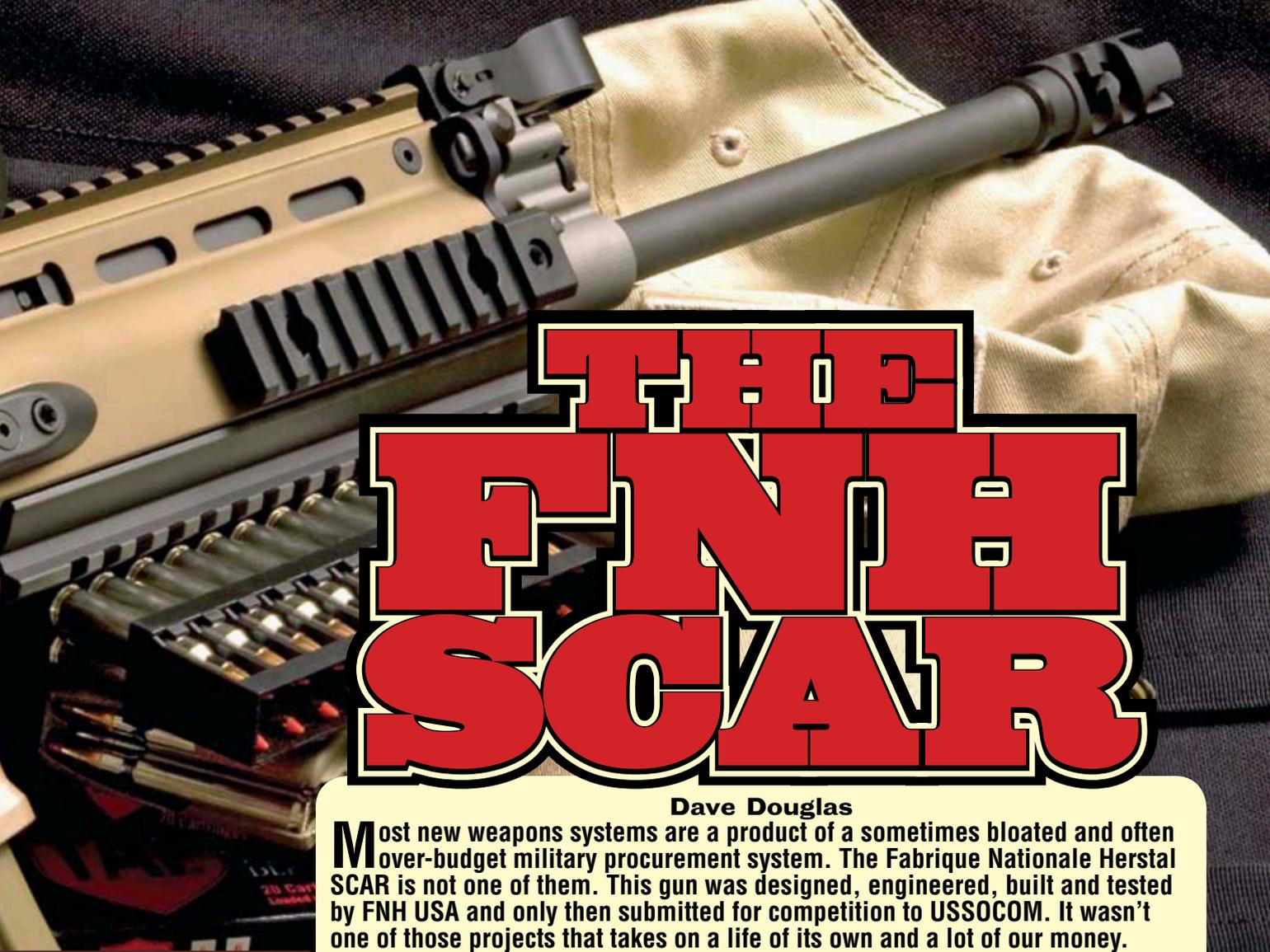
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A The gas regulator housing is mounted to the front of the SCAR and contains the short-stroke gas piston. **B** FN uses a proprietary hooded folding front sight mounted atop the Gas Regulator housing. **C** FN's proprietary windage and elevation adjustable rear sight folds flat for the use of optics. **D** The SCAR features a side-folding stock, adjustable for length of pull and cheek weld.

SPECIAL COMBAT ASS



THE FNH SCAR

Dave Douglas

Most new weapons systems are a product of a sometimes bloated and often over-budget military procurement system. The Fabrique Nationale Herstal SCAR is not one of them. This gun was designed, engineered, built and tested by FNH USA and only then submitted for competition to USSOCOM. It wasn't one of those projects that takes on a life of its own and a lot of our money.



USSOCOM needed a new battle rifle. It had to be simple to use and require little if no difficult transition for the end user. The end-users in this case are Special Operations soldiers.

You could say the military has been through weapon systems transition before. The transition from the M1 Garand to the M14 was a piece of cake. But, transitioning from M14 to the M16 was an absolute nightmare.

In this case, special attention was paid to keep some of the valuable ergonomics, sighting systems, ammo and magazines of the familiar M4 weapon systems while creating a completely new gun. That's no small task. FN's SCAR rifles are not based on any previous weapon. They're designed from scratch.

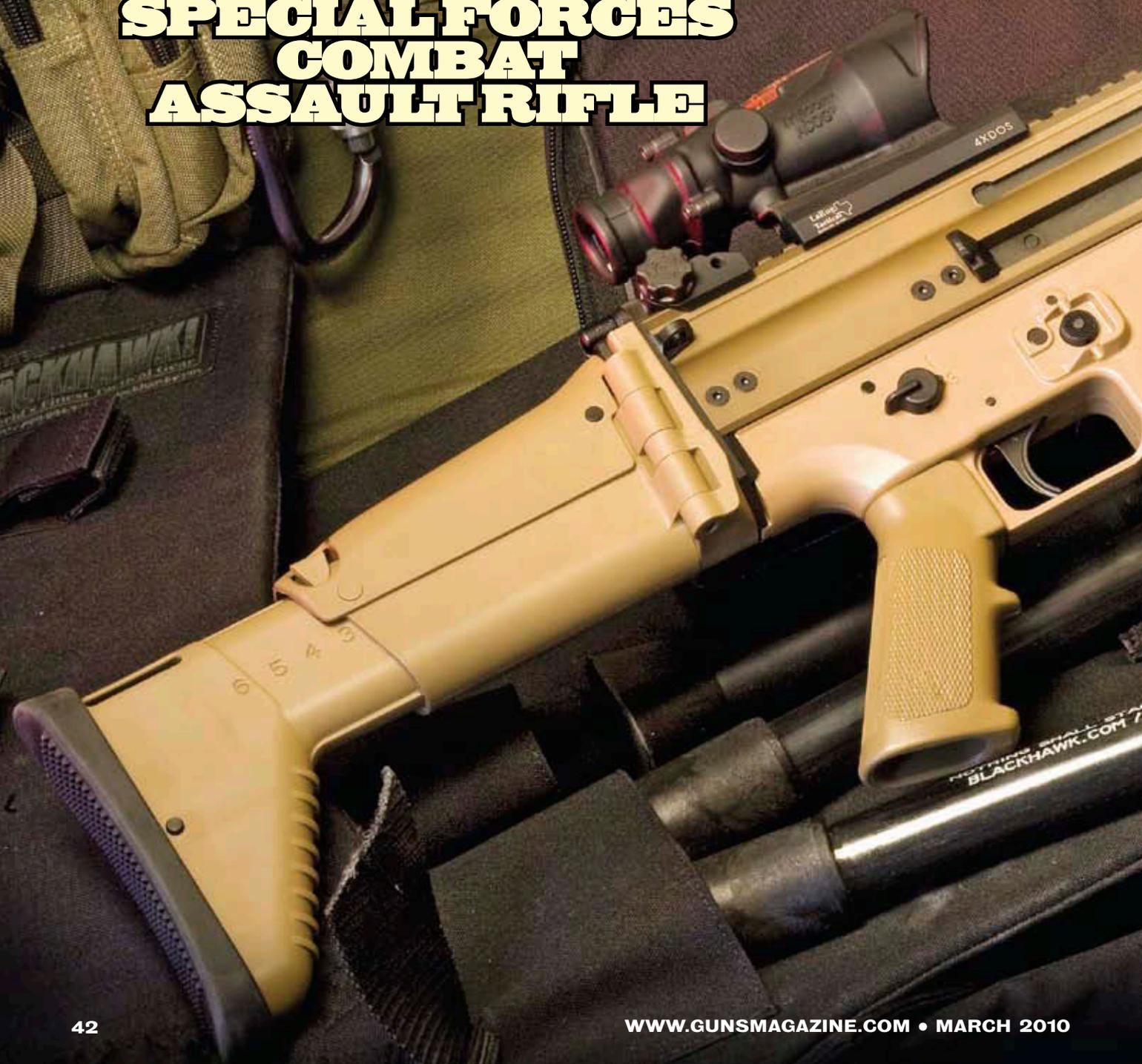
The gun is gas operated with a short-stroke piston action and rotating locking bolt. The bolt system is similar to the one used in FN's M249 SAW machine gun. Its operation is less sensitive to a fouled receiver, fine sand or dust. The receiver module is two parts: an upper constructed from extruded aluminum alloy and a polymer lower connected with two cross-pins.

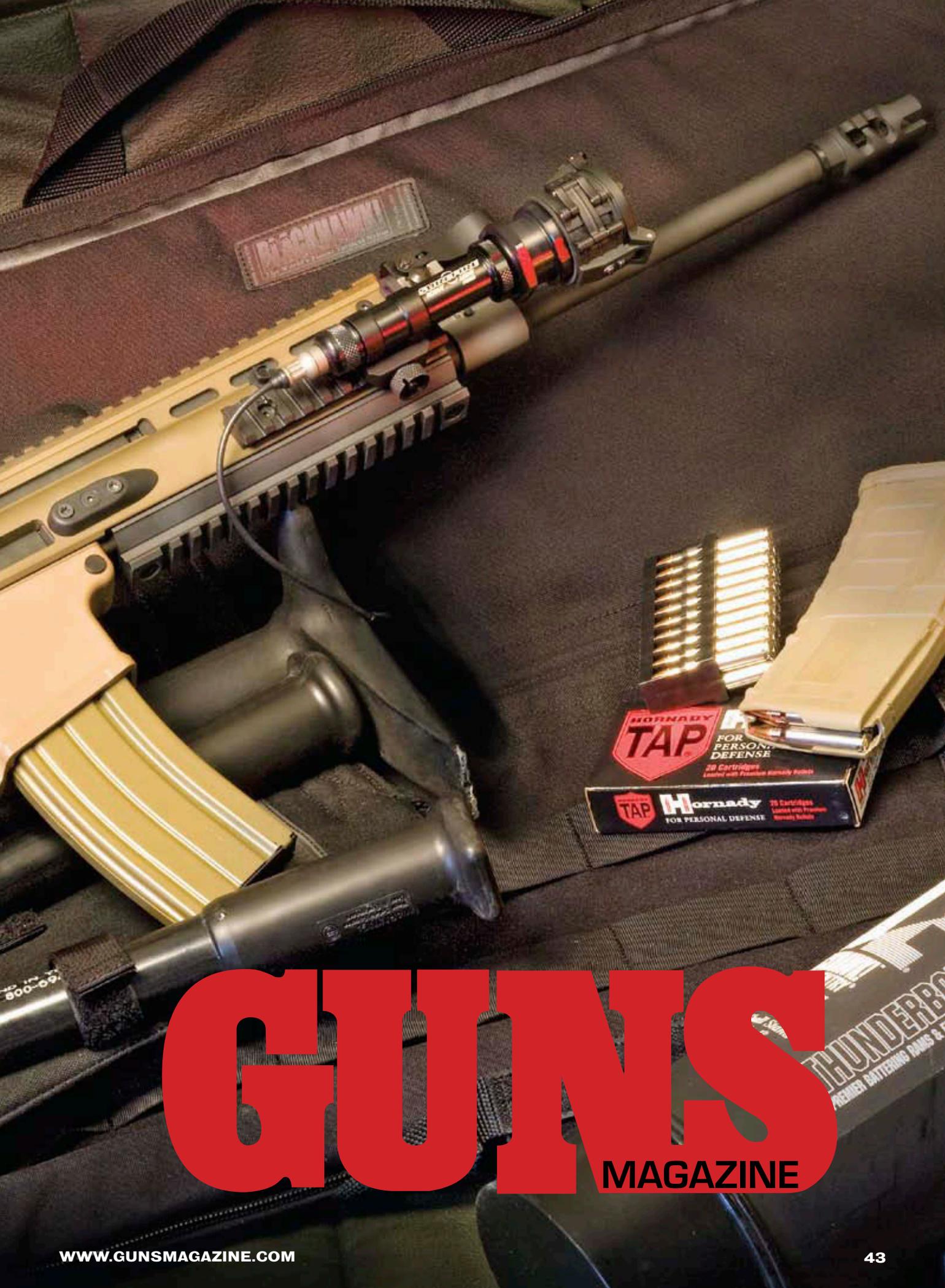
The civilian legal, semi-auto-only version of the US Special Operations Command's newest service rifle is chambered in 5.56x45mm NATO, which accommodates .223 Remington. A 7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Winchester) version is said to be available as well—although I haven't seen one yet. The SCAR 16S (5.56) and 17S (7.62) feature free-floating, cold hammer-forged

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GUNS

MAGAZINE

SCAR 16S DISASSEMBLY



A



B



C



D



E



F



As always, first ensure the firearm is unloaded. Remove the magazine, charge the bolt and inspect the chamber. Let the bolt go forward and place the weapon on safe.

Push the takedown pins from the left side of the gun and pull them from the right side until they stop in their detent. Push the trigger module forward to release it from the back plate and pull down to remove the trigger module **A**.

Push the butt stock module down and remove it from the receiver **B**.

Pull the charging handle to the rear while applying downward pressure to the guide rod retaining plate. When the retaining plate is clear, pull the charging handle all the way to the rear and remove the charging handle. Pull the return spring to the rear and remove it. The moving parts assembly can be removed from the rear of the receiver **C**.

Use the end of the charging handle to push the firing pin retaining pin from right to left and remove it from the bolt carrier. Tilt the bolt carrier and remove the firing pin **D**. On the left side of the bolt, remove the bolt cam pin and remove the bolt **E**.

To disassemble the gas regulator and piston, first assure the front sight is in the "up" position. Turn the regulator to the 12 o'clock position. Use the charging handle to push in on the regulator detent, turn the regulator to the 4 o'clock position and remove it toward the front. Place the upper receiver muzzle down, and through the receiver lightly tap the gas piston with a .223 cleaning rod (make sure a bronze-tip jag comes in contact with piston). Remove the gas piston from the front **F**.

After cleaning, reassemble the SCAR 16S in opposite order.

Mil-Spec barrels with hard-chromed bores. In the case of this civilian version of the SCAR, there are no plans to offer extra barrel assemblies as there are with the military version. The assembly is removable, but not recommended, as the proper installation requires a special torque setting.

Operating controls are fully ambidextrous making the SCAR easy to use for right- or left-handers. The receiver has an integrated Mil-Std M1913 rail for optics mounting plus three additional forward mounted accessory rails enable use of a wide variety of tactical lights and lasers.

The authentic USSOCOM Flat Dark

Earth side-folding polymer stock is fully adjustable for comb height as well as length of pull.

The iron sights on the SCAR will be familiar to those used to the M4/M16 series of weapons. In this case they can only be described as robust. The front sight is fully shrouded and adjustable for elevation. The rear is adjustable for windage. Adjustments are accomplished in the same manner as the troop-familiar M4 system.

Recognizing the probability most users will mate the SCAR with some kind of optic, FN decided to provide fold-down iron sights as standard equipment on the gun. The M1913 rail system

| SCAR 16S | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| MAKER: | FABRIQUE NATIONALE |
| HERSTAL: | BELGIUM |
| IMPORTER: | FNH USA |
| | P.O. BOX 697 |
| | MCLEAN, VA 22101 |
| | (703) 288-1292 |
| | WWW.FNHUSA.COM |
| CALIBER: | 5.56x45mm, .223 Remington |
| ACTION TYPE: | Short stroke gas piston, semi-auto |
| CAPACITY: | 30 |
| BARREL LENGTH: | 16.25" |
| TWIST AND DIRECTION: | 1:7", right-hand |
| OVERALL LENGTH: | 27.5" |
| LENGTH OF PULL: | 10" to 37.5" |
| WEIGHT: | 7 pounds, 4 ounces |
| PRICE: | \$2,994 |

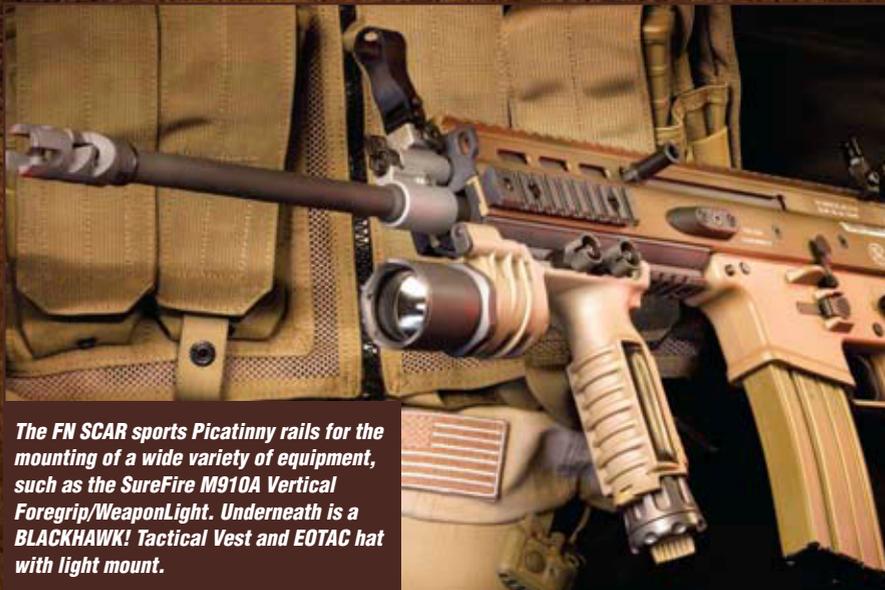
accepts red-dot, long-range precision, laser integrated, tritium activated, night vision add-ons, thermal imaging and even photo taking accessories. You simply mount the glass and fold down the iron. But, when the balloon goes up and you forgot to change out your batteries or you smack the glass on a doorway so the scope points half-way to Edinburgh, you simply pop the iron sights up and continue to march. (The moral to that story is you must master the iron before you play with the glass.)

Simplicity

I can't remember the introduction of a completely new weapon where the simplicity of use was so evident in a first production run. The SCAR is easy and fun to shoot. Practically every facet of the gun is adjustable to the user's preference. The folding stock adjusts for length of pull as most adjustable AR stocks are nowadays, but it also adjusts for cheek weld.

Controls are fully ambidextrous. The charging handle can be located on either side of the gun; duplicate safety levers on the left and right are large and easily controlled. Even the magazine release can be operated on either side and small raised walls built into the polymer receiver protect the release from an inadvertent activation by an indexed trigger finger or a strike on a doorframe while hunting down evildoers.

Some guns out there demand the user bring along extra tools to aid in the disassembly process—not necessary with the SCAR. You can take the gun apart for maintenance with just fingers. The economy of parts—moving and structural—are well thought out making for fewer things to break and fewer yet to be lubricated and cleaned. Perhaps the most complicated area requiring



The FN SCAR sports Picatinny rails for the mounting of a wide variety of equipment, such as the SureFire M910A Vertical Foregrip/WeaponLight. Underneath is a BLACKHAWK! Tactical Vest and EOTAC hat with light mount.

cleaning is the gas regulator and short operating piston assembly. The only thing complicating the procedure is you'll need to push in a detent and FN even designed the charging handle to accomplish that task.

Yup, it shoots. The SCAR 16S has a specification of 1-MOA and FN states during testing they shot groups as small as .230" with match ammo. I didn't experience that with the SCAR. However, I can't really say I had the time to try, either. I only had a week with the gun for photos and some testing before it had to go back to the company.

Conditions during my tests were less than optimal with wind and being rushed. After seeing the quality of product put out by FN, I'm confident that with some time and more cooperative weather, I'd have a better chance of matching their specs. But, even with the time and condition constraints the gun shot pretty darn well as evidenced in the target photos.

The SCAR was designed to function with M855 62-grain ammo. You can use both 5.56mm and .223 Remington. FN tested the 1:7" right hand twist standard issue barrel with ammunition ranging from 40 grain up through 77 grain and it performed very well.

For those taking the gun into harm's way reliability is over-riding compared to the "does it shoot 1-MOA or 1.5-MOA" question. FN completed a full 10,000 round endurance test with a random production sample. The cleaning schedule was after the first 1,000, after the next 2,000, after the next 3,000, and then after the final 4,000 rounds. There were no malfunctions. By the way, FN's product manager is currently using that same rifle in competition and it's still able to maintain sub-minute groups after 10,000 rounds.



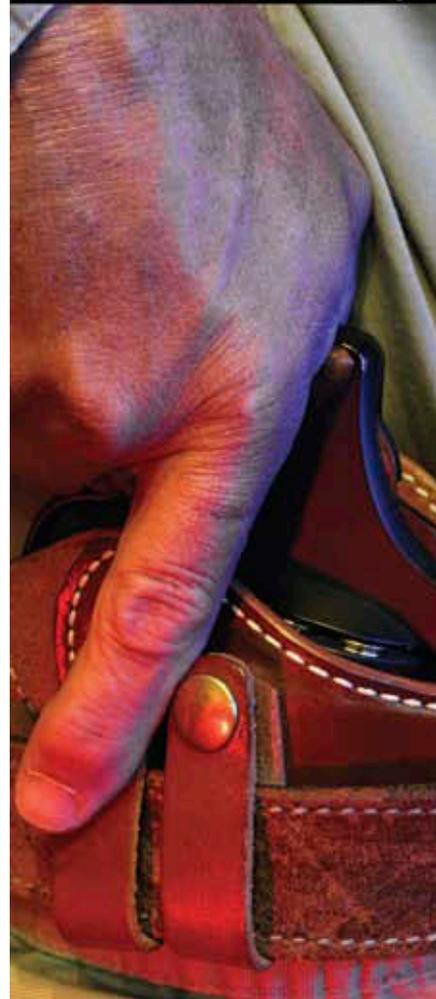
Accuracy nods went to Hornady ammo which delivered decent groups despite high wind. The 75-grain Hornady TAP (above), better suited to the 1:7" twist barrel delivered four shots into little more than 1/2", spoiled by one flyer, while Hornady V-Max 40-grain ammo delivered a group of 1-1/8" vertical with some wind stringing (below).



The civilian semi-auto variant of the USSOCOM model is slightly different. The muzzlebrake has been changed and the full-auto components have been removed. The rifle comes to you in cardboard military packaging—no case is included. As a note to FN, with all due respect to an unbelievably well manufactured product, for a price bumping \$3,000, for crying out loud take out a crowbar and loosen up your wallet and include a case. You also get the manual, cable lock and one 30-round magazine. They will configure it with a 10-round reduced capacity magazine if that's what you need. They recommend the use of FNH USA magazines and only warranty function with their magazines. But, the SCAR 16S will operate with any Mil-Spec M16-style mag.

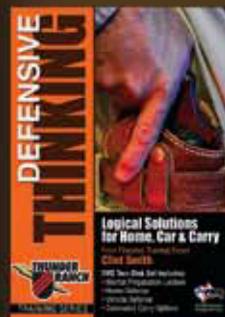
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JUST ONE

SINGLE-SHOT HUNTING RIFLES.

John Barsness

Some hunters have been predicting the death of the single-shot centerfire rifle ever since the invention of the self-contained cartridge. Yet the “single-loader” (as the Brits call it) keeps trucking along, even these days when every other shooting magazine has a story about using autoloaders in the field.

In fact, single-shots have made quite a comeback over the past 40 years or so. I started buying *Gun Digest* in the late 1960s, when the money took a yearly bite out of my paper route income. The catalog in the back lumped single-shots and muzzleloaders in the same category, and the 1966 edition listed a total of four single-shots and three muzzleloaders (if we count the “kit” version of one of the muzzleloaders as a separate firearm).

The single-shots were break-actions by Harrington & Richardson and Savage, plus a Navy Arms model built on old Remington rolling-block actions. Only five chamberings were available: .22 Hornet, .30-30, .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum and the soon-to-die .22 Remington Jet. You could just about hear “Taps” being played softly in the distance.

Things started to change in 1967 when Bill Ruger introduced his No. 1 falling-block, though a lot of people thought he was nuts. Who in the heck would buy an expensive single-loader?

It turned out quite a few people bought the No. 1, and today it probably sells a lot better than it did in 1967. Not only that, but a bunch of other single-shot centerfires have appeared. The 2008 issue of *Gun Digest* lists 12 pages of single-shot centerfires, ranging from the inexpensive New England Firearms Handi-Rifle to semi-custom models costing several thousand dollars. At around \$1,000 the Ruger No. 1 is merely “mid-priced.”

So why the resurgence of an antique design? Partly it's due to black-powder-cartridge target shooting, but an awful lot of single shots are used by hunters. Their slow second shot really doesn't amount to much in a lot of hunting. Probably 90 percent of the big-game animals taken in North America are white-tailed deer, the majority taken from some kind of stand, where a shot can be precisely placed on a stationary animal. Most pronghorn and caribou, too, can be easily hunted with a single-shot rifle, and the same can be said of

mule deer in open country and many African plains game species.

Unethical?

Some big game hunters suggest the lack of a quick repeat shot could be considered unethical, but I've noticed the anti-single-shot argument is almost always made by hunters who use bolt actions. If a quick repeat shot is considered “more ethical,” then the logical extension of that argument would be all hunters should use pump or semi-auto rifles. Even the fastest bolt-turners will only get off an aimed shot once every second or so, and a good shot with a pump or autoloader can cut that in half.

Plus, just because a single-shot doesn't have a magazine doesn't mean it can't be reloaded fairly quickly. Any single-shot with an ejector can be shot again pretty quickly. In fact, a practiced hand with a Ruger No. 1 can often get aimed shots off as quickly as the average guy with a bolt.

In fact I'd be willing to bet a case of .30-06 ammo the average big game hunter with a single-shot takes fewer chances and thus wounds less game than a hunter with a repeater. This is partly because hunters carrying single-shots tend to hunt more carefully in order to get standing shots in sure range. Single-



Single-shots are highly practical hunting rifles. This .375 H&H Ruger No. 1 took six animals on a safari in Botswana.

shot users also tend to be experienced hunters, who don't make the same sorts of mistakes as beginners.

A lot of varmint shooting is easily done with a single-shot rifle. My favorite prairie dog rifle is a Ruger No. 1B in .22 Hornet, partly because it's so easy to catch the empties and put them back in the ammo box. In fact, a lot of prairie dogs guides (yes, there are a lot of them!) insist their clients only load one round at a time for safety reasons.

Easy To Feed

There are other advantages to single-shots, especially for the really enthusiastic shooter who typically handloads his own ammunition. Because there isn't a magazine to limit the overall length of cartridges, even really long bullets can be seated close to the lands—and a lot of bullets are really, really long these days. Bullets can even be seated out to engage the lands with no problem, a technique often used by black powder cartridge shooters.

A single-shot is also easily chambered in about any cartridge. I've owned the Ruger No. 1 chambered for cartridges from the .22 Hornet and .257 Roberts to ultra-long rounds such as the .300 Weatherby Magnum, .375 H&H and .450/400 Nitro Express, and all worked just fine, no matter the shape of the cartridge or what kind of bullet was used in the ammunition. If there's no magazine, there's no feeding problem.

Uptown, Downtown

Another advantage specific to break-action single-shots is interchangeable barrels, one reason the Thompson/Center and New England Firearms single-shots are so popular. Not only can they be fitted with other rifle barrels for a fraction of the cost of a separate rifle, but they also work with shotgun barrels, and the Encore can also be converted into a muzzleloader or even a rimfire.

You go can also go upscale and buy European break-action single-shots, the sort known as kipplaufs in German-speaking countries, with more than one barrel. This of course costs a lot more than a Handi-Rifle, but another barrel for a Merkel K1 still costs only about a third of another Merkel K1.

Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of single-shots is when the antique design is paired with real black powder. One reason black powder falling-blocks are so popular is they're so easy to clean compared to, say, a lever-action Winchester. The fouling is confined to the bore itself, instead of also gunking up the action, and can be pushed out from the chamber end of the barrel. In fact it doesn't take much time to knock out most of the fouling between shots, resulting in finer accuracy.



A single-shot doesn't have a magazine, so it easily handles about any size and shape of cartridge (above). Single-shots are perfectly suited to hunting open-country big game. This Wyoming mule deer (below) was taken with a Ruger No. 1 in .257 Roberts. Any hunt becomes something special with a single-shot. This mule deer doe was taken with a Winchester High Wall reproduction in .30-40 Krag.



If my middle-aged memory is correct, I've personally taken at least a dozen species of big game with single-shot rifles, ranging in size from pronghorn to Cape buffalo. Here I must admit only the first shot on the buffalo came from my single-shot .375 H&H. This was a double-lung shot, but buffalo are normally shot more than once if they don't fall immediately, and darn few fall immediately.

This one did not, but there was plenty of time for me to grab my bolt-action .416 Rigby from one of the trackers, and professional hunter Russell Tarr to use his .458 Winchester. Russell had seen where the .375 bullet hit and knew the buffalo was fatally hit, so he tried to break down its hips while I put another shot into the chest with my .416—but

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by that time the buffalo had already slowed down considerably, due to the first .375 bullet.

Almost all the other animals were taken with one shot, at ranges out to nearly 400 yards. This might seem to be stretching the capabilities of a rifle design that doesn't have a very good reputation for accuracy, but the fact is single-shots can be extremely accurate, whether of falling-block or break-action design.

Ruger No. 1s have a reputation for being erratic, but in my experience with a couple dozen No. 1s this reputation is highly exaggerated. When a No. 1 doesn't shoot all that well, the fault doesn't lie with the No. 1 design as much as barrel quality. The first No. 1s had Douglas barrels and shot very well. The earliest reviews in journals such as *Gun Digest* reported fine accuracy—and I have owned a couple of early Douglas-barreled No. 1s. Both shot very well, especially a 1S in .300 Winchester Magnum that would put five shots (not three) into an inch or less at 100 yards with about any ammunition.

After the first few years, however, Ruger started using barrels from another maker, apparently because Douglas couldn't supply the number needed for both the No. 1 and Ruger 77 bolt action. The quality of those barrels varied more. I have owned both No. 1s and 77s

Not many people hunt dangerous game with a single-shot, but the first shot is by far the most important.

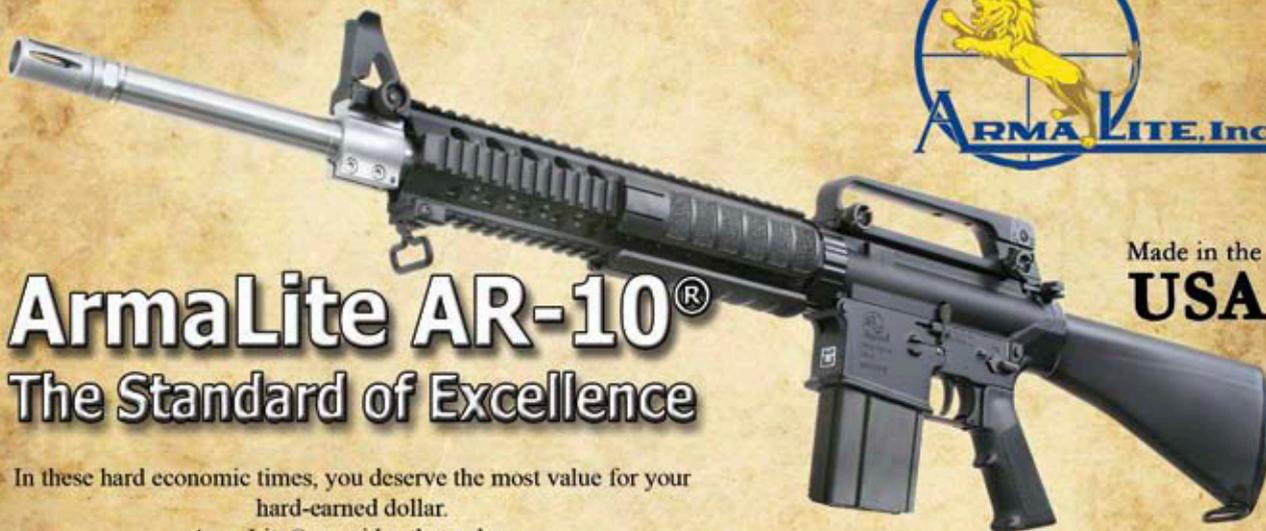


from this era, and some would shoot marvelously and some wouldn't keep three shots inside 2".

Part of the problem during this era was Ruger rifles also tended to have long chamber throats. My very first No. 1, for instance, was a 1A in 7x57 with a throat so long only spitzers of 160 grains or more could be seated out anywhere near the rifling. A .257 Roberts 1B also had a similarly long throat, and simply refused to shoot any bullet under 115 grains. Between the variable barrels and long throats, No. 1s eventually got the reputation of being erratic shooters, and an entire sub-industry grew up around "accurizing" No. 1s.

Today, however, I haven't found much needs to be done to the No. 1. In the early 1990s Ruger started making their own hammer-forged barrels and within a few years also started shortening chamber throats. I have owned about a dozen No. 1s made since then and most have shot well out of the box. My Ruger 1B .22 Hornet, for instance, is as accurate a Hornet as I've ever seen. Five-shot groups at 100 yards almost never measure more than 3/4", and many go 1/2" or less, and aside from a little stoning of the trigger surfaces, it is right out of the box.

Another good example is a 1H in .25-06, one of a small run offered by



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Lipseys, a distributor that's made a specialty of offering limited-edition No. 1s. My .25-06 has a slim 24" barrel and the Alexander Henry fore-end, and the wood is nicely-figured European walnut. The first two handloads tried, using Barnes TSX and Nosler Partition bullets, averaged between 1/2" and 3/4" for three shots at 100 yards.

About the only accurizing I've done with a new No. 1 in many years involves bedding the tip of the fore-end with a little Brownells Acraglas Gel. This stabilizes the fore-end and, at least so far, has made every post-1990 Ruger No. 1 it's been applied to shoot at least as well as the average factory bolt-action in the same chambering.

Other falling-blocks shoot just as well. A Browning Low Wall in .243 Winchester would put 55-grain Nosler Ballistic Tips into the same hole so consistently I shot the barrel out on prairie dogs. The various black-powder rifles offered by different firms also tend to shoot very well, especially the rifles from firms like Ballard Arms and Shiloh Sharps. I got into black-powder cartridge shooting for a little while a few years back and a Ballard .45-70 High Wall would group five shots into an inch or a little more at 100 yards—with a tang aperture rear sight, a globe front and real black powder.

Most of the break-action single-shots I've shot in the past decade or so have also shot very well. My Thompson/Center Encore will group three shots into an inch or less with either its 6mm Remington or .30-06 barrel, and a New England Firearms Handi-Rifle in .243 Winchester will do better with some loads. The NEF is among the most "affordable" centerfires on the market, so in theory it shouldn't shoot very well. But my Hawkeye bore-scope revealed one of the smoothest factory barrels I've ever seen, almost as pretty as a hand-lapped Lilja or Krieger. The trigger also breaks very cleanly at 3-1/2 pounds. No wonder it shoots so well.

At the high end of the price spectrum, my Merkel K1 in .308 shoots just as well as most bolt-action .308s (and that is saying something) despite weighing only 6-3/4 pounds with a 12-ounce scope. It also breaks down without tools in less than a minute, including removal

of the scope, and goes back to shooting the same way when put together again. This may not seem like such a big deal but to a traveling hunter (especially one fond of take-down cases) it is a real virtue.

All three of these break-action rifles, by the way, will handle handloads loaded to loading-manual maximums without a problem. One of the objections to break-action rifles in the past is they tended to allow cases to stretch excessively, something handloaders really don't like. This doesn't occur with the Encore, Handi-Rifle or Merkel.

So yes, single-shots have made a big comeback since they just about died in the 1960s, and for very real reasons. One thing that hasn't changed, however, is the feeling that comes over many rifle hunters when they carry a single-shot into the field, and these days it looks like it never will, since we now have many more good single-shots to shoot. **GUNS**

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The long, graceful Jim Chambers Kentucky 50-caliber pistol kit has a full octagon swamped barrel, points nicely, hangs steady and "shoots strong." The bag is by October Country and patch knife with stag antler handle is by Matt Lesniewski. The 13-star Colonial American flag is by the Valley Forge Flag Co.

FREEDOM PISTOL

JIM CHAMBERS' 50-CALIBER
KENTUCKY FLINTLOCK PISTOL KIT.

Story and Photos: Jeff John

While the Pennsylvania longrifle is most often associated with our traditions of individualism, liberty and the assurance of freedom, today the pistol more ably confronts the threats we civilians face. Handguns only rose to prominence with the repeater, but a good brace of pistols or even one could be a Godsend before a battle fell back to knives, teeth and nails, especially since a pistol's butt is often finished with a whale of a skull cracker.

I searched far and wide for a Kentucky pistol with the grace and beauty inherent in the longrifle and found it embodied in the kit by Jim Chambers. The pistol features a long, graceful 12-1/2" 50-caliber swamped barrel by Ed Rayl and a finely-made petite Chambers flintlock.

The long, slender pistol can be fired one handed, but a strong grip is necessary to hold it steady, aided by a single trigger break of a crisp 2-1/2 pounds. A 2-handed grip is very steady and the weight distribution is similar to a heavy-barreled 6" .357 such as the S&W 686 or Ruger GP-100. I choke up



The kit (above) as it comes from Jim Chambers. Everything is included except the sweat and love. The kit (below) is finished and ready for assembly. The Lyon's palm chisels were the biggest help in the inletting. The lock mortise and barrel channel were sealed with Permalyn wood sealer from Brownells and the external was given a linseed oil finish.



The 50-caliber Chambers pistol is just a little longer overall than this USFA 7-1/2"-barreled Single Action Army. The flint pistol has power on par with the .45 Colt cartridge.

on the grip shooting 1-handed and feel is similar to shooting a Ruger Mk I .22 or a Luger. Recoil isn't strong and ends in a long roll.

The 50-caliber frontloader is "in between" and rifles or pistols can usually be loaded with either FFg or FFFg powder with good results. I started with Swiss FFFg powder for the main charge and Swiss FFFFg for the pan powder.

Shooting a muzzleloader for the first time has a lot in common with working up a load for a cartridge gun, you just get to do the work-up at the range. I began with a 30-grain charge and got ho-hum accuracy. I set the measure to hold 35 grains by volume and groups tightened so much I wasn't sure I believed what I saw, so I cleaned the gun and put out a fresh target. It's not common in load development to discover the pet load on the 2nd try, but I did.

Projectiles included a Hornady .490" roundball wrapped in .010" Ox Yoke

NOTES ON BUILDING

The brass furniture is well cast with few pits and cleaned up easily with a little hacksaw and file work. Being cast from soft yellow brass, it polished easily (and bent easily where needed) and is aging with a nice mellow glow.

The fully assembled lock comes with a bead-blast finish externally, ground square and flat internally, but had one big burr on the sear's screw hole, which I stoned away. The tumbler (which comes with a fly) and bridle were hard and nicely finished. All the screws were long and had to be shortened. Some parts still had mold lines, something I've loathed since my youth building model airplanes, but cleaned up easily. I found the frizzen was already well hardened when a file just skidded off it. Its mold line was removed with a stone. Since all the main parts were going to be browned, I stopped after a good 220-grit finish, blending any scratches.

First, the barrel was carefully inlet to ensure the breech was square in the wood (per the instructions). This is important for accuracy. The inlet for the lock and

sideplate was close and little time was needed to scrape it in. An advanced kit, access to a drill press and the ability to drill, tap, make countersinks and install pins in the stock are mandatory. I sent mine to John King for the machine work.

Since I hadn't built a sidelock before, the tool chest needed beefing up. The tech staff at Brownells helped me choose some useful tools including the very handy set of Lyons Palm chisels (wonderfully sharp and easy to keep sharp, they are quite helpful removing small slivers of wood for the inlets), skew chisels (aid in marking out the areas to be cut, especially around the tang and triggerguard). Being a weekend project, I didn't time the building, but there's likely about 40 hours involved. The browning took only a few days (about 1 hour per day) using the Zischang formula as made by my friend Roger Renner. It is available again from Track of the Wolf and they call it "Tried and True Brown." The heat bluing was completed in a few hours with the parts on a cast iron stove lid over a gas stove.

KENTUCKY PISTOL KIT

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ACTION TYPE: Flintlock

CALIBER: .50 (.45 and .54 optional)

CAPACITY: 1

BARREL LENGTH: 12-1/2"

OVERALL LENGTH: 18-5/8"

WEIGHT: 2 pounds, 10 ounces

FINISH: Brown

SIGHTS: Fixed Patridge

STOCK: Extra fancy maple
(\$100 upgrade)

PRICE: \$535 (base kit)



The soft yellow brass of the “skull cracker” buttcap, triggerguard and rod pipes gently mellow with age. The upgrade to fancy maple is worth the extra tariff.

patches pre-lubed with Wonder Lube and a 245-grain Buffalo Ball-et over an Ox Yoke 50-caliber pre-lubed Wonder Wad. Both shot exceptionally well. Accuracy nods went to the Hornady 180-grain roundball, swaged from pure lead, which delivered an outstanding 3/8" 25-yard group.

The Buffalo Bullet Ball-etts were less problematic to load (you don't have to center them over a patch), but it's hard to argue with the Hornady roundball group. The Ball-etts still delivered a 1" group and I'm hard pressed to shoot any handgun that well.

I began habitually cleaning the pistol every three shots, mostly because I could only load and fire three shots before the Rangemaster called a ceasefire. Hoppe's No. 9+ was the go-to juice for cleaning up during and after. Since fouling "toughens" during the ceasefire, life was easier if I just kept a modestly clean gun. I fired a total of 18 shots; a pleasant and relaxing day, changing the flint once.

I took the targets home, "did the math" and filed the sights. I returned to the range, but my shooting wasn't as good. I know I felt pressure to shoot the pistol as well as I did when I didn't know what to expect. Still, the Hornady roundball delivered a nice, centered 3-shot, 1-1/4" 25-yard group, while the Buffalo Bullets



The rear sight (above) is dovetailed in right ahead of the tang for a long sight radius. The notch was filed in before heat bluing. The crown of the barrel comes nicely recessed by barrelmaker Ed Rayl. The front sight (below) is a Ted Cash with a nickel silver blade, here filed to the correct height. The pan brush and vent pick are a nice Colonial era repro from Track of the Wolf.



.50 KENTUCKY FLINTLOCK PISTOL PERFORMANCE

| BULLET (BRAND, WEIGHT, TYPE) | POWDER (BRAND) | CHARGE (GRAINS, WEIGHT) | VELOCITY (FPS) | ENERGY (FT-LBS) | GROUP SIZE (INCHES) |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| HORNADY 180 ROUNDBALL* | Swiss FFFg | 39.5*** | 1,083 | 469 | 3/8 |
| BUFFALO BULLET 245 BALL-ET** | Swiss FFFg | 39.5*** | 949 | 480 | 1 |

Notes: Groups are the product of 3 shots at 25 yards off a sandbag rest. Chronograph screens set at 6' from the muzzle. *Ox Yoke .010" Wonder Lube patch. **One Wonder Lubed felt wad under Ball-et.

***The volumetric powder charge was set at 35 grains, which is correct for FFFg.





Some of the necessary shooting accessories for shooting a flintlock include (clockwise from left) a ball starter, powder horn or flask (flask shown), adjustable measure, pan primer, ball bag, patch knife (this one by Matt Lesniewski) and roll of patch material (usually pillow ticking), vent pick and brush, ball puller, patch puller and fouling scraper. In the center (from left), ammo choices include Buffalo Ball-ets and Wonder Wads (if you want to throw a heavier ball accurately from a roundball-twist barrel), Hornady swaged roundballs and pre-cut Wonder Lube patches.

TIPS ON LOADING

Wipe the bore dry of any preservative oil before loading. Make sure the flint is delivering a good shower of sparks before loading. If it isn't, change the flint. Try and do each action the same way each time. Consistency aids accuracy. *Don't let yourself be distracted during loading!*

Half-cock the hammer and leave the frizzen open. Pour from the powder horn or flask into a powder measure and then into the bore—never directly from the flask. If there is a lingering spark in the bore, only the charge you're pouring will ignite. (Nasty enough, but far better than a whole pound going off.) Now give the gun a rap on the sideplate with your palm to settle the charge.

Place a patch squarely over the muzzle and place the ball over it, sprue facing up or down (if using cast) and use the ball starter to initially start the ball down. A natural lazybones, I prefer Ox Yoke patches pre-lubed with Wonderlube and swaged roundballs. Traditionalists still use spit for lube, placing a roll of patch material over the muzzle, pressing the ball down and cutting around the material with a patch knife.

Seat the ball firmly against the powder. *Make sure you leave no air space between powder and ball or you can bulge the barrel.*

Prime the pan. Too much powder is wasteful and may prevent the frizzen from closing. I use a Tresco Pan Primer for a consistent priming charge. October Country has 'em. Brush off the pan every three shots or so.

Cock the hammer and shoot. Be prepared to change the flint when ignition gets spotty. I've been using English gun flints by Tom Fuller bought from Track. I get about 12 to 18 shots out of each flint and save 'em. Some lonely winter's night I'll take a stab at knapping them.

After the shot goes off, blow down the muzzle to help keep the powder fouling soft and extinguish any embers. Repeat and enjoy!

If the shot fails to fire, keep the muzzle *downrange*. Wait a few seconds and ensure it's not a hangfire (delay between priming ignition and main charge ignition). Use a vent prick to clear the vent, prime the pan and try again. Didn't go off? Hopefully, you weren't distracted and forgot the main charge. If all else fails, you'll have to pull the ball. Make sure your kit includes a ball puller. But I don't feel bad if you do—we've all done it.

Ball-ets delivered a respectable, 1-1/2" group at the same distance. I'm still very happy, next time I can relax and enjoy the shooting.

Chambers designed the kit with a barrel this long so the pistol is legal for hunting in some states. After seeing how accurate the pistol is and considering the power is on par with a .45 Colt, I'm sure I could take a turkey and maybe even the smaller deer under the right conditions.

The big pistol is quite eye catching with its chocolate brown metal, heat blued screws and highly figured maple stock. I'd drifted away from muzzleloaders, but I'm glad I tried it again. Shooting smokepoles costs pennies and results like this just add to the fun. If the cost of ammo is leaving you in shock, try a muzzleloader once in a while to keep your eye sharp and your wallet a little more full. **GUNS**

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The final 25-yard group shot before regulating the sights was an outstanding 3 shots in 3/8" with Hornady .490" roundball. Some centerfire target pistols Jeff has don't shoot this well. In fact, the 1" group from the Buffalo Bullet Ball-ets is nothing to sniff at.



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THE **.45 ACP** IN WORLD WAR II.

Mike "Duke" Venturino
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

In looking back over the articles under my byline in these pages for the past year or so you'll see many of the military cartridges used in WWII have been covered. I've enjoyed working with and writing about 9mm Luger, .30 Carbine, 8mm Mauser and .30-06. However, I intend to correct herein one glaring omission—the **.45 ACP**, the standard issue pistol and submachine gun cartridge for the American military.

Furthermore, it's not a stretch to say virtually anyone who served in our armed forces between 1911 and 1985 (and beyond) was exposed to one or another .45 ACP firearm during their time in service. No wonder it is still one of the most popular cartridges among American handgun shooters to this day.

Also in looking over my growing collection of WWII firearms, I note all of the significant .45 ACPs used by our military in the 1941-1945 timeframe are there. That's with one exception, which we'll talk of further along. (Technically, there could be another exception, which will also be mentioned.)

Mostly when someone says ".45 ACP" the instant mental picture is of a Colt US Model 1911. That's correct but not complete. When America was drawn into WWII not enough 1911s were on hand, so the government moved in two directions. The most important one was to have more made, so contracts

were given to Colt, Remington Rand (previously a typewriter manufacturer), Ithaca and Union Switch & Signal Co. Over 1,800,000 new .45 ACP pistols were made between 1941 and 1945. Interestingly, no more were ever made for the US Government before the switch to 9mm NATO in 1985.

Most of us today simply use "1911" to denote this entire genre of autoloading handgun. But to be exact, the US military had two designations for them. Originally they were US Model 1911s with the majority made by Colt but with some also having been made by government-owned Springfield Armory and Remington Arms Company.

In the 1920s after serial number 700,000, the government required some minor changes to the basic design. Most noteworthy was an arched mainspring housing, a longer tang on the grip safety, a bevel on both sides of the frame behind the trigger and slightly larger sights.

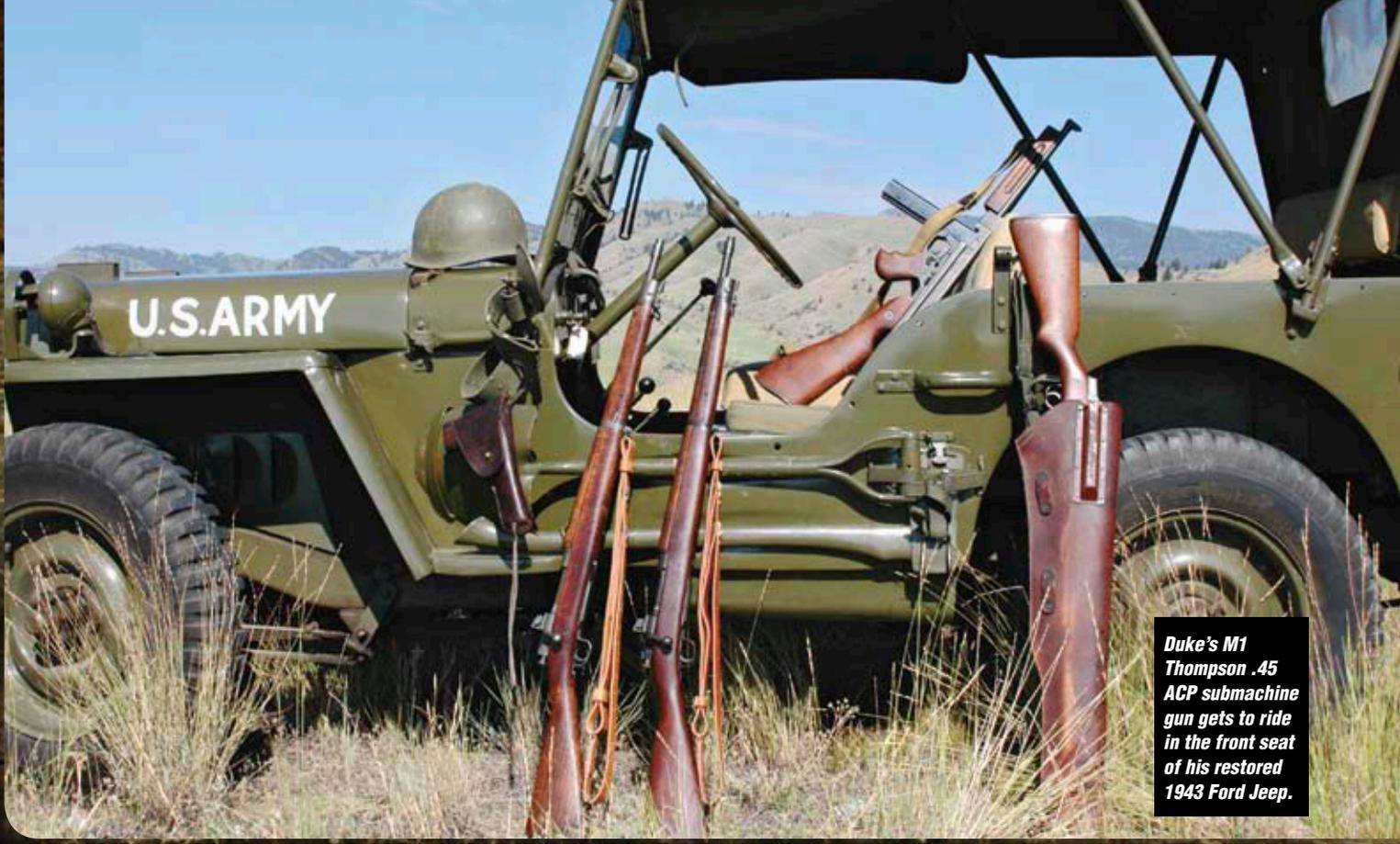
This version, named US Model 1911A1, was the only version produced in WWII. Both 1911 and 1911A1 versions had 5" barrels and 7-round magazines. Grips started out as checkered walnut and progressed to checkered plastic during wartime production.

The second path taken by the US Government to fill the void for .45 ACP handguns was to draw thousands of US Model 1917 revolvers from storage. During the First World War, .45 ACP pistols were also in short supply so double action revolvers were pressed into service. In order to accommodate the rimless .45 ACP, case engineers at Smith & Wesson developed little spring-steel "half-moon" clips holding three rounds each. That gave the star-type extractors of double action revolvers something to push against during the reloading process. An incidental benefit was the half-moon clips also made reloading faster.

Therefore, the government bought over 300,000 such revolvers combined from both S&W and Colt. Regardless of brand name the butts were stamped: "U.S. Model 1917." Again, both brands of revolver have 5-1/2" barrels, 6-shot capacity and smooth walnut grips. Sights were a simple groove down the topstrap for a rear sight and a front one either machined integral with the barrel (Smith & Wesson) or silver soldered to



The Reising Model 50 .45 ACP submachine gun was used by the US Marine Corps early in World War II, but was soon replaced by the Thompson.



Duke's M1 Thompson .45 ACP submachine gun gets to ride in the front seat of his restored 1943 Ford Jeep.

the barrel (Colt). After the First World War the surviving Model 1917 revolvers still in government hands went into storage only to be called upon again at the beginning of the WWII. They saw service in both the Pacific and European theaters of operations.

My own uncle, the late James Virse of Belfry, Kentucky, served in the 3rd Marine Division in its 1944 invasion of Guam. Before his death in the early 1990s he related to me that after Guam was declared secure all Marines were ordered to still go armed due to the number of Japanese stragglers roaming around. My uncle said besides his M1 Garand he had a Model 1917 revolver. Often he left the 10-pound rifle in his quarters and only packed the handgun. He never had occasion to use it. When telling me of this nearly 50 years after the fact he couldn't remember if his "1917" was a Colt or Smith & Wesson.

The Liberator & Reising

At this point someone has to be thinking, "Ahha! I caught Duke in a mistake. There's no mention of the little .45 ACP Liberator." That's a single-shot, smoothbore, stamped-metal pistol. These were made to drop into occupied Europe so resistance forces could use them to shoot an enemy soldier at close range and arm themselves with his weapon. Well, I can argue back our military never carried them—they just gave them away. (I wonder if there was ever a documented case of any resistance



Duke's WWII firearms chambered for .45 ACP include (from left) the M1 Thompson submachine gun, S&W Model 1917 revolver, Colt Model 1911 pistol, M3 submachine gun, Colt Model 1917 revolver and Colt Model 1911A1 pistol.

fighter using one of those Liberators for its avowed purpose?)

Besides the .45 ACP handguns, American military forces could have been issued three types of submachine guns. One was a stopgap measure and saw only limited use. It is also the only one of America's military WWII .45 ACP firearms I don't have a sample of. That's the Reising submachine gun, which was actually made by Harrington & Richardson.

There were two basic versions of the Reising and it was unique in two ways.

The versions were Model 50 and Model 55; differing in the former model has a wooden shoulder stock and the latter has a folding wire stock for paratrooper use. Mechanically, it's unique in being the only American submachine gun to fire from a closed bolt. In usage it was unique in that it only saw action early in the war with US Marines during the early Solomon Island campaigns. According to all sources the Marines universally detested the Reising. The main complaint being it was unreliable in the field.

Nominal specs for a Model 50

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Reising list an 11" barrel, 6.75-pound unloaded weight, 12- or 20-round magazine capacity and select fire mode of operation, meaning it can be switched between semi-auto and full-auto mode. Its nominal rate of fire is 550 rounds per minute (rpm) and in my experience those 12-round magazines are good for about a 1-second burst of fire.

The most famous American submachine gun was, of course, the "Tommy Gun." WWII saw one of four basic versions: Model 1928, Model 1928A1, M1 and M1A1. They were all different, yet they were all the same. Most pertinent to this article they all were .45 ACP, all had 10.5" barrels, all fired from an open bolt and all were select fire. They differed in sights, finish, having or not having a Cutts Compensator at the muzzle, and much more. For example, Models 1928 and 1928A1 had a quick-detachable walnut buttstock, could be fitted with vertical or horizontal walnut foregrip, and could take either 20- or 30-round sticks or 50- or 100-round drum magazines.

Models M1 and M1A1 had fixed buttstocks and foregrips and could take only 20- or 30-round stick magazines. Tommy gun rear sights differed from beautifully machined, flip up, adjustable peep-types on the early Model 1928 to a simple L-shaped piece of steel on later versions. But, they were the same in that Lyman Gunsight Corporation made all of them. Thompsons were surprisingly heavy at 11-1/2 pounds unloaded. Sources vary about a Tommy Gun's rate of fire. Some say 700 rpm and others say in excess of 800 rpm.

World War II Thompsons could have been made in two factories: Savage in New York or Auto Ordnance in Connecticut. However, all were stamped Auto Ordnance because that company owned the patents. Those made by Savage were stamped with a small "s" either in the serial number or on the frame. Interestingly, before WWII, Colt had made all Tommy Guns but only to the tune of about 15,000 since the beginning, circa 1921. From 1939 to the end of production in 1944, about 1-1/2 million were made by Savage and Auto Ordnance.

The reason production of Tommy Guns ceased in 1944 is because the US military adopted the M3 .45 caliber submachine gun. Today the M3 is called the "grease gun" after the automotive accessory it so resembles. When the Model 1928 Thompson submachine gun was being sold to the US Government around 1940 they cost in excess of \$200. By 1943 the adoption of the M1A1 whittled that down to around \$44. By going to stamped and welded construction, grease guns were being sold to the government for about \$21

and were being shipped by the thousands from the Guide Lamp Division's Indiana factory.

The M3 is all metal construction with an extendable wire buttstock. Weight is about 8 pounds with a barrel length of only 8". Magazines are stick types with a 30-round capacity. Rate of fire is very slow by submachine gun standards—450 rpm. Also, the select fire feature was dropped and M3s are only full-auto. They also fire from an open bolt but the cocking feature is unique. A crank on the right side of an M3 is pulled back to cock the bolt for the first shot. Between 600,000 and 700,000 grease guns were made during WWII and saw their first action in France on D-Day in June 1944.

Of the seven basic models of firearms in .45 ACP caliber used by the US Armed Forces in WWII, I've managed to add an example of six to my shooting collection. I've ignored the single shot Liberator for reasons detailed above, and haven't felt the need for a Reising because a good friend owns one. Otherwise, I have an M1 Tommy Gun and an M3 Grease Gun, Colt US Models 1911, 1911A1 and both Colt and S&W Model 1917s.

Feeding this bunch of .45s is easy. America's standard military .45 ACP load during WWII (and before and after) was a 230-grain full metal jacket



The 1911 and 1911A1 pistols served the American armed forces faithfully for almost 75 years as "standard issue," although shortages in both World Wars caused the issue or reissue of Colt and S&W revolvers.

(FMJ) at approximately 830 fps. I buy whatever 230-grain FMJ bullets can be found most cheaply and load them over 5.4 grains of Hodgdon's HP38 and more recently 5.0 grains of Bullseye. Also, I don't hesitate to use Oregon Trail's super hard 230-grain roundnose cast bullet, or pour my own cast ones in a 4-cavity Lyman mould 452374 and load them over the same powder charges. All of this handloading is done with the aid of

one of Dillon Precision's Square Deal B presses.

Here are some of my personal thoughts on this batch of .45 ACPs. My 1911 pistols both hit point of aim with the above handloads and I shoot them pretty well if I do say so myself. I'm hopeless with the 1917 revolvers in double action firing but can do OK in single action, especially firing two handed. Interestingly, the S&W absolutely refuses to shoot cast bullets point on and all cut sideways profiles in the targets. It does shoot nicely with 230-grain FMJ bullets though.

The Colt 1917 shoots both cast and jacketed bullets just fine, as well as the submachine guns. In fact I've not yet been able to get my Tommy gun to jam. The grease gun is a little more finicky about feeding—overall cartridge length has to be right for it. These .45 ACP submachine guns are indeed a bit difficult to handle in full-auto fire. Having owned the M1 Thompson for about 18 months now I'm getting a bit more practiced in holding it on target. The M3, however, is still fairly new to me so I've got a lot to learn about shooting it.

Five years ago if anyone had told me that the .45 ACP would become one of my most fired cartridges I would have laughed. Now that it is, I am enjoying it immensely.

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• DAVID CODREA •

THE PERFECT STORM

"The folks at United Nations... must be rubbing their hands with glee," former congressman Bob Barr wrote in his *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* editorial "Perfect Storm" for UN Gun Control Agenda."

Why would that be?
"The United States reversed policy on Wednesday and said it would back launching talks on a treaty to regulate arms sales," Reuters reported. "US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the United States would support the talks as long as the negotiating forum, the so-called Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, 'operates under the rules of consensus decision-making.'"

Still, even this polar shift wasn't good enough for the globalist gun-grabbers. An Oxfam/Amnesty International press release complained "Governments must resist any US demands to give any single state the power to veto the treaty as this could hold the process hostage during the course of negotiations."

Conversely, the Heritage Foundation warned "The US cannot ensure that the conference will operate on such a basis, nor can consensus guarantee that the US' export controls... will form the basis for an arms trade treaty."

This is just the most recent in a series of international attempts to give foreign governments a say in US gun policy. We also have a US/Mexico joint gun control effort co-chaired by the former head of the US Drug Enforcement Administration and the Customs and Border Protection agency. Among their goals, per the Associated Press, "The US should do more to stop the smuggling of firearms and ammunition into Mexico by stepping up investigations of gun dealers and more strictly regulating gun shows."

"The Binational Task Force on the United States-Mexico Border listed the assault weapons ban as a step the US

should take immediately to improve security in both countries."

This is echoed by Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, stumping for the UN Firearms Protocol in *The New York Times*.

"We especially encourage the debate on the issue of reinstating the 1994 US ban on assault rifles that expired in 2004. And we support further debate within the United States on whether to close the gun show and private sale loopholes in existing US laws, which create boundless opportunities for criminals to acquire illicit weapons," he wrote.

"These legislative changes do not affect law-abiding hunters and sport shooters in any way," he added reassuringly, if not truthfully.

Then there's... well, I'll let *The Washington Post* tell you: "Obama announced that he will push the US Senate to ratify an inter-American arms-trafficking treaty."

All, ultimately, working toward the goal of the International Action Network on Small Arms' that "(M)any States already prohibit the civilian possession of light weapons...."

Factor all of these squalls in with Article VI—"This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land"—and that perfect storm on the horizon may well be building strength.



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MARINES CLEAR PASS

Marines from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment conducted Operation Germinate to clear Taliban insurgents out of a pass through the Buji Bhasht Mountains last Oct. 6-10, 2009. The pass is the most direct route from the southern plain here to the center of Golestan District in the mountains, where part of 2/3's Company F is located.

The first element of 100 Marines left here by convoy the evening of Oct. 7 headed for the southern entrance to the pass. Hours later, a second airborne contingent of 100 more Marines and Afghan soldiers flew into previously identified positions in the pass to keep the enemy from escaping into the mountains. The Marine and Afghan National Army forces aimed to push the enemy out—one way or another.

"I figured it was either going to be a ghost town or it was going to be a significant battle," said Capt. Francisco X. Zavala, Co. F commanding officer, "Unfortunately, there was some battle, but it was nothing my Marines couldn't handle."

As the groundside element rolled through the pass, the rest of the Marines and ANA soldiers who had been inserted via helicopter blocked the eastern and northern exit routes. Their supporting mission was to stop and search Afghans fleeing the area and prevent any possible insurgent support from reinforcing their comrades.

It didn't take long for them to attract the wrong kind of attention.

"We saw spotters throughout the hills, and we were just waiting for something to

happen," said Staff Sgt. Luke N. Medlin, the engineer platoon sergeant and part of the eastern blocking position.

A few hours after they assumed these blocking positions, the Marines and Afghan soldiers started receiving fire from machine guns, rifles and mortars from enemy positions in the surrounding hills. The Marines quickly dispatched the initial attackers and called in a UH-1N Huey, an AH-1W Super Cobra and an F/A-18 Hornet to destroy the enemy position further uphill.

"We were attacked from a well-fortified fighting position in the hills," Medlin said. "My Marines quickly returned fire, giving us time to maneuver and overwhelm the position with fire until air support got there."

Once the sound of gunfire died away, the Marines began searching the mud-brick buildings scattered throughout the pass to ensure they hadn't missed any hidden insurgents and introduce themselves to the people living there.

The Marines spent the next two days moving from compound to compound, working with the people and maintaining a visible presence in the pass to keep the enemy from trying to move back in. They did receive some small-arms fire, but it was quickly dealt with.

"During the clearing of one compound, a woman drew a pistol, aiming it at one of the Marines," said 1st Lt. Shane



Marines from 2/3 and Afghan National Army soldiers move across a wheat field in the Buji Bhasht Mountains of Afghanistan during Operation Germinate. Photo: Lance Cpl. John P. Hitesman



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Harden, weapons platoon commander, F. Co. "Lance Cpl. (Justin B.) Basham demonstrated extreme composure and great fire discipline not to shoot her. Within a split second he realized he could use a non-lethal method to disarm her."

At first the people in the Buji Bhasht pass were skeptical and nervous when the Marines came into their villages, Harden said, but after explaining why they were there, the people accepted their presence.

"Luckily the people still in the compounds cooperated with us, once

they seemed to understand why we were here and what we were doing. It really helped speed things along," said Lance Cpl. David W. Parrotte, an infantryman with Co. F.

During the searches the Marines collected not only weapons and grenades, but also large supplies of IED-making materials, like batteries, connector wires and open radios. They also found 2,000 pounds of ammonium nitrite and 1,500 pounds of sugar, which are both primary components of homemade explosives, according to Zavala.

Lance Cpl. Tim A. Persons, of 2/3 Weapons Co., scans the surrounding countryside (above) for possible threats against a shura involving the battalion commander and local village elders. Note the scoped Big-Bore AR-10. Lance Cpl. Alexander B. Shaver, of 2/3 Weapons Co., holds security during Operation Germinate (below). Photos: Lance Cpl. John P. Hitesman



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Lance Cpl. Cody R. Adams, of 2/3's Co. F, practices Pashto with some locals waiting to get medical attention.

IEWS NEW AND REVIEWS

In some of the compounds, anti-International Security Assistance Force propaganda was found and confiscated. Some of the contraband was linked to two men who were taken into custody.

On Oct. 10, the last day of the operation, male and female corpsmen were brought in to treat the locals (treating around 300) while battalion commander Lt. Col. Patrick J. Cashman held shuras with elders in the villages. These meetings gave the residents a chance to ask questions and put in reimbursement claims for any goods or property damaged during the searches.

At each of the meetings, Lt. Col. Sakhra, commander of the Afghan 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 207th Corps, talked to elders about actions they should take to keep insurgents out of their towns and the pass. He talked about the power of unity against the Taliban insurgents who threaten their way of life and stressed they need to trust the Marines and help them eliminate the threats.

"Lt. Col. Sakhra did a fantastic job pointing out the responsibilities of the elders," said Cashman. "He has the cultural knowledge to tell them where they are wrong and how they need to change to save the lives of their people."

Cashman added that most of the problems in these small, isolated towns result from the younger men having no way to provide for a family or find legitimate work. So, some of them pick up a gun and take what they want. It is the responsibility of the elders to guide their people and help them prosper without using violence as an easy way to make a living.

After the meetings, the people were given food and water to take home, and instead of leaving immediately, the Marines and corpsmen stayed to give as much time as possible for the villagers to bring their sick and elderly for a checkup.

This 4-day operation to clear insurgents out of the Buji Bhasht Pass promises safer travel for Afghan people and coalition forces alike. But equally important are the first building blocks of trust laid down between the Marines and ANA and the residents of the pass.—Lance Cpl. John P. Hitesman, RCT 3

GUNS

MARINES UNCOVER WEAPONS, DRUGS



Cpl. John Mensch with Combined Anti Armor Team 1, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, uses an axe to break open a hidden compartment after discovering illegal drugs and improvised explosive device-making material while searching a compound to rid commonly traveled roads of IEDs. Photo: Lance Cpl. John McCall, RCT 7

Combined Anti-Armor Team 1 and Marines with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, uncovered weapons and drug caches during a two-day mission in Nawa District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, last Oct. 19-20. The cache consisted of weapons, more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition, 50 pounds of heroin, cocaine, homemade explosives and IED-making materials.

The mission was to deny the enemy the ability to use compounds in the area to launch attacks and plant IEDs in nearby roads, said 1st Lt. Travis C. Onischuk, 26, the CAAT-1 platoon commander.

"We're going to hit them where they think they have safe haven," said Onischuk, from Edina, Minn.

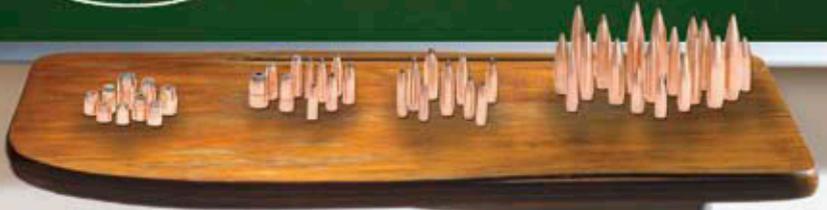
Marines throughout Weapons Co. gathered together to clear the roads and villages of enemy interference, and established hasty vehicle checkpoints and route-clearance teams comprising one line. The line pushed forward in one direction and acted as a giant net to sweep through the area.

Searching house to house for weapons and IED-making material

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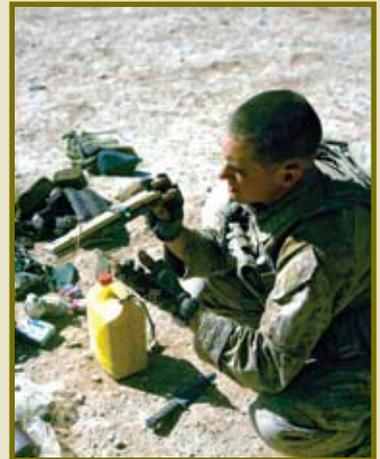


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VIEWS NEW AND REVIEWS

with the help of Afghan National Army soldiers, Marines found three loaded magazines belonging to an assault rifle nowhere in sight. At first it seemed the magazines were the only suspicious items discovered.

"There were mostly women and children there so no one was real suspicious of anything," said Cpl. Martin Galvan, a machine gunner with CAAT-1, 1/5. "I was tapping on a wall and it sounded real hollow in one spot. I punched it and my hand went right through."



Cpl. John Mensch with Combined Anti Armor Team 1, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, inspects a homemade detonator after discovering illegal drugs and improvised explosive device-making material while searching a compound last Oct. 19. Photo: Lance Cpl. John McCall, RCT 7

"Once Cpl. Galvan found the first fake wall, we went back through the house and started to search everywhere," said Cpl. John Mensch, an assaultman with CAAT-1, 1/5. "A lot of the stuff we found was hidden behind false walls, or wrapped inside piles of clothing."

Marines detained an Afghan man for questioning, believed to be a member of the Taliban.—*Lance Cpl. John M. McCall, Regimental Combat Team 7*

AUSSIE GUNNERS SUPPORT BRITS

British troops are working with a variety of coalition partners in Helmand province, including Australian Gunners, who over the summer have been supporting 19 Light Brigade in the Upper Gereshk Valley.

The Gunners, from the 105th Medium Battery, 1st Field Regiment,

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IEWS NEW AND REVIEWS

Royal Australian Artillery, have been based at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Armadillo supporting British and Danish ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) troops as well as Afghan National Security Forces.

The Aussie Gunners joined up with 19 Light Brigade in early April, and in the first four months of their deployment, the Australian Artillery troop engaged in 42 fire support missions and laid on numerous others, totaling 1,008 rounds fired in anger in support of Danish and British infantry units.

On a regular basis multi-national patrols were conducted to re-sight the field defenses and ground-dominating patrols by day and night were also sent out to deter and observe local support for the Taliban and identify depth firing positions used by the Taliban to engage the FOB from maximum range.



Gunners from 105th Medium Battery, 1st Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, known as the "Diggers," pose at FOB Armadillo, Afghanistan. Photo: ADoD

During the deployment the troops have also been involved in some large-scale operations as well, including Operation PANTHER'S CLAW, designed to increase the ISAF area of influence.

For the Australian Gunners, one incident in the operation stood out—a high value target was identified and engaged with high explosive rounds from the troop, 500-pound bombs from F-15 aircraft and 120mm rounds from Danish Leopard 2 tanks simultaneously.

The bombardment was then topped off when the troop fired a 60-round smoke screen to allow the tank troop to disengage from the contact.

On one occasion during their deployment, the FOB was subjected to small arms fire around the gun position from five different firing points as well as coordinated indirect fire (IDF). This fire included rocket-propelled grenades, which detonated

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behind and within the walls of the FOB.

During the contact the troop received a counter-battery fire mission on the IDF point of origin given by the counter-IDF detachment. The IDF was silenced after 14 high explosive proximity rounds from the troop.

Another highlight of the tour for the Australians included the involvement in an incident which required the FOB to launch a hasty multi-national Quick Reaction Force (QRF), commanded by elements of the Aussie Troop, to assist a British Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team patrol under heavy accurate and sustained fire.

The QRF consisted of all elements from within the FOB and utilized Danish vehicles for transport and fire support.

According to the Australian Department of Defense, the deployment has been an extremely rewarding and humbling experience for the "Diggers," as the Australian Gunners are colloquially known.—
Courtesy MoD

IT'S LAW!

The President signed the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2892) for FY 2010 last (Oct. 28, 2009) that includes a permanent "fix" so any folding knife with a bias toward closure cannot be declared a switchblade by US Customs.

The significance of the legislative victory, led by AKTI and supported by several other organizations, can't be overstated. If US Customs had succeeded in broadly redefining a switchblade, domestic manufacturers and all owners of folding knives would have been in jeopardy. That's because an import restriction becomes an issue for interstate commerce. And where local law enforcement might be uncertain about how to correctly apply their state law, they often turn to US Customs to provide guidance.

However, knife owners should realize they are still bound by the knife laws of their state. And if you travel to another state, you are bound by their state laws.

AKTI continues to monitor federal and state laws and to work to protect knife rights for all, introducing reasonable and responsible changes. American Knife & Tool Institute, 22 Vista View Ln, Cody, WY 82414, (307) 587-8296, www.akti.org. 

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Jeff John

The relatively new 8-shot .357 Magnums by S&W offer considerable firepower over conventional 6-shot revolvers in a full-size all-steel revolver or in a lightweight albeit large 2" concealable revolver. My brother, who retired from the LAPD, has been packing the 2" variety for sometime, with 8-shots and a pocketful of spare ammo.

Now, thanks to Clint Smith, 8-shot speedloaders are here (only for use in these new N-frame S&Ws). The project wasn't easy because the volume of ammo takes up a lot of space in the cylinder. The speedloader has two flat surfaces to get past the frame and the grip and may not work with oversize rubber or wood stocks.

Dropping these huge loaders into the cylinder takes some concentration and practice. While not as quick as using the old 6-shot variety, it is certainly



The new 8-shot speedloader gives users of the S&W 8-shot .357 Magnum an effective way to carry spare ammo.

faster than fumbling with loose ammo. The instructions advise you to test the loaders with the ammo you use for self defense. There are large variations in rim thickness in .38/.357 brass and some may not release as easily as others. I found this to be true with Blazer ammo, but Black Hills ammo loaded in Starline brass, Federal and Winchester released fine. Those were the only brands I had on hand. Others may work fine—but test them first.

My initial practice in loading with my brother's 2" showed if I picked up the speedloader from the table with my index finger on a round part, middle finger on one flat and third and pinky on the last flat I could insert the speedloader relatively trouble free. Loading from the pocket (Comp-Tac will be making pouches called simply the Kydex pouch for these soon, but weren't available in time for this test), my fingers weren't sensitive enough to find the flats. I was able to place the speedloader in and align it by rotating the cylinder with my left thumb for a sure release. There is just enough wiggle in the ammo when the speedloader is locked to make starting the rounds easy. Cast lead semiwadcutters were the hardest to start in the cylinder and ammo loaded with Speer Gold Dot bullets the easiest.



The 8-shot speedloader (left) is quite a bit bigger than the old HKS 10A for the S&W Model 10. Both speedloaders are charged with .38 Special ammo.

These speedloaders, machined from 6061 aluminum and a knob made of Delrin aren't going to take practice well if repeatedly dropped to concrete or similar hard surfaces. While practice is necessary for a sure, quick reload, it would be prudent to do so over grass or carpet. Don't put the fear of damaging it while dropping it in the back of your mind—if doing so saves your life, it's a cheap buy at \$60. Warranted free of defects for one year, abuse won't be covered.

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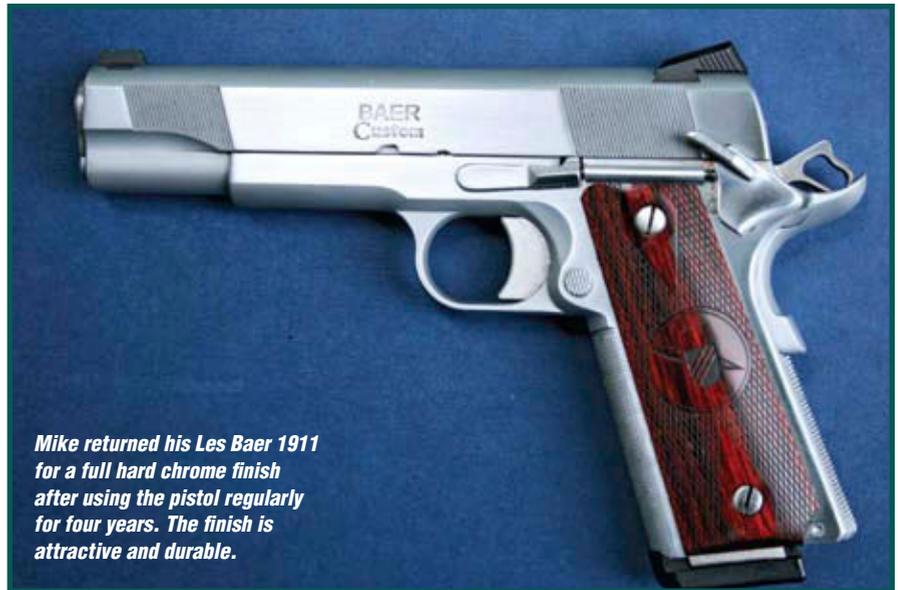
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HARD CHROME FINISH FROM LES BAER

Mike Cumpston

After four years with my Les Baer Thunder Ranch Special, I became convinced this particular pistol merits the best possible surface treatment. Hard chrome plating stands out from all other finishes in terms of wear resistance and while it does not grant license to neglect basic gun care, it does effectively resist rust, corrosion and other environmental gremlins. Les Baer offers hard chrome as one of the finish options on existing Baer Pistols as well as new orders. I opted for complete coverage with the only visible non-chromed elements being the sights. Current base price is \$300 not including return shipping and incidental parts replacement at Baer's discretion.

Demystified, hard chrome plating is not an arcane and esoteric "bonding" process but traditional electroplating optimized for firearms application. Internet background chatter suggests hard chroming might lead to "hydrogen embrittlement," turning the pistol into your basic bag of metallic pretzels. Master Pistolsmith Alex Hamilton and Hard Chrome Guru, Vergil Tripp put that one to rest. They conferred and told



Mike returned his Les Baer 1911 for a full hard chrome finish after using the pistol regularly for four years. The finish is attractive and durable.

me the metal hardness of firearms and the brief time in the plating bath are far below the threshold that would produce any negative effect from the process.

My pistol was finished within the estimated eight weeks. It displays its original surface treatment-glass bead blast on the curved aspects and satin brush on the frame and slide flats. It is most professionally executed and extremely attractive. Various small parts including the front night sight were

replaced. Some Baer owners express reservations about adding a layer of plating to the already tight pistols. Mine is as smooth functioning and reliable as before the process with no extra effort required for routine disassembly.

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MARCH 2010

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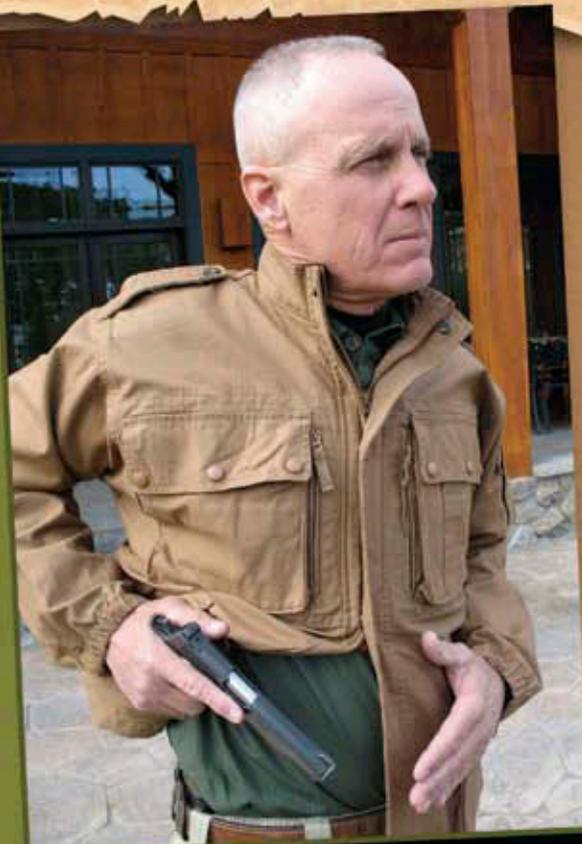
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The Drag Bag holds two full size rifles (max 46"). It has plenty of external pockets and one internal pocket for storing extra gear like binoculars, spotting scope, tripod, laser rangefinder, log book, extra ammo, etc. There are reinforced shoulder straps, drag straps, and carry handles throughout for carrying the case in a variety of ways. Available in 4 colors. NcSTAR, 18031 Cortney Ct., City of Industry, CA 91748, (866) 627-8278, www.ncstar.com.



RAMP FROM WARNE SCOPE MOUNTS

Warne's all new RAMP (Rapid Acquisition Multi-sight Platform) is a versatile mounting system that provides the ability to use multiple optics and/or accessories on one weapon platform. It fits all small/large frame flattop AR platforms and is available for 1" and 30mm scopes. It's 9.6 ounces, and is 7.125" long, providing 3.1" of ring spacing. Scope 'em out at Warne Scope Mounts, 9500 SW Tualatin Road, Tualatin, OR 97062, (800) 683-5590, www.Warnescopemounts.com.



SUPERIOR FIREARMS FROM SUPERIOR FIREARMS

Superior Firearms has been chosen to be the custom builders for the 2009 International Sniper Challenge. They manufacture high quality firearms for military/LE individuals as well as serious civilian users. They also specialize in top tier gear as well as hosting the world's top trainers in various training classes. Go to www.superiorfirearmsllc.com for more information.

ULTRA SHOT FROM SIGHTMARK

The Sightmark Ultra Shot is one of the most versatile reflex sights on the market, 5.3 ounces and deadly accurate. With Interlok internal locking system it automatically locks into place as adjustments are made. It has great features like adjustable reticle brightness, parallax correction, a Limited Lifetime Warranty, and adjustment tools to facilitate sighting and unlimited eye relief. Check it out at www.sightmark.com, or call (817) 225-0310.



MICRO SIGHT FROM ADVANTAGE TACTICAL SIGHT

Now available for the hot, new SIG SAUER P238 in .380 ACP, the Advantage Tactical Micro Sight for is a fixed sight adjustable for both windage and elevation, has good low-light visibility as well as a green, yellow, red, orange and white interchangeable color system for personalized color preferences. Advantage Tactical Sight, 7 Avenida Vista Grande B-7, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508, (310) 316-6413, www.advantagetactical.com.



SHOOTING GLASSES FROM ELVEX

Elvex's new line of Shooting Glasses features Vo impact protection and meets the highest standard in the industry. XTS provides an excellent fit for all face shapes, stylish design, is lightweight and comfortable, and has a soft rubber nose bridge and temple tips. Lenses available in blue, silver mirror coated (with red frame) and gray polarized sunglasses. From Elvex, P.O. Box 850, Bethel, CT 06801 (203) 743-2488, www.elvex.com.

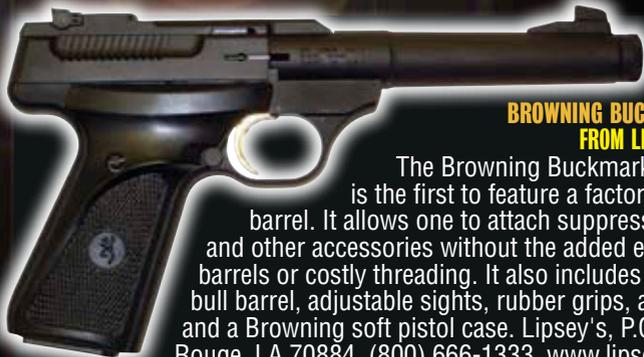
TACTICAL FLASHLIGHT MOUNT FROM GG&G

GG&G has developed a dependable flashlight mount for the Mossberg 500/590 shotgun. The kit includes a unique mounting bracket that securely attaches to the factory fore-end tube using the factory forearm-retaining nut. GG&G also has a new factory Mossberg Police synthetic forearm precision cut to clear the 500/590 flashlight mounting bracket, an assembly tool, and an M1913 rail. GG&G, 3602 E. 42nd Stravenue, Tucson, AZ 85713, (800) 380-2540, www.gggaz.com.



PRODUCTS

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BROWNING BUCKMARK WHISPER FROM LIPSEY'S

The Browning Buckmark Whisper .22 LR pistol is the first to feature a factory threaded 1/2x28 barrel. It allows one to attach suppressors, muzzlebrakes, and other accessories without the added expense of aftermarket barrels or costly threading. It also includes a matte black 5.5" bull barrel, adjustable sights, rubber grips, a thread protector cap, and a Browning soft pistol case. Lipsey's, P.O. Box 83280, Baton Rouge, LA 70884, (800) 666-1333, www.lipseys.com.

M&P TRANSPORTER FROM TRUCKVAULT

TruckVault is proud to announce the M&P Transporter from Smith & Wesson, the perfect handgun security solution for the law enforcement professional. It features heavy duty 14-gauge cold roll plate steel construction, hinge assisted opening, keyless combination lock entry, padded foam insert, and a built in retractable cable tether, and can be attached securely virtually anywhere inside or outside your vehicle. For more info: (800) 967-8107, www.truckvault.com.



RED HERRING SERIES FROM CONSOLE VAULT

This new wall safe not only uses high security, it uses deception. It looks like an electrical panel with warnings like "Danger High Voltage," "Warning Authorized Personal Only," etc. The idea is that the user enters his combination and turns the locks but is then forced to touch something that they normally wouldn't touch to actually open it. Console Vault, 5000 West Oakey Blvd, Suite E2 Las Vegas, NV 89146, (800) 878-1369, www.consolevault.com.



EL SWAROVISION 42 SERIES FROM SWAROVSKI OPTIK

The EL Swarovision 42 provides improved comfort in viewing the entire wide-angle field of view and unique edge sharpness. It has sturdy, removable twist-in eyecups making it easier to adapt to the distance between the lens and eye. The new focusing wheel is non-slip, sturdy, easily and accurately operated. This unrivalled close range is particularly beneficial for the macro observation world. Learn more at www.swarovskioptik.com.



PROFESSIONAL SERIES FROM HI-LUX

The Hi-Lux "Professional Series" models are built with a heavy-duty 30mm 1-piece tube, featuring new patented easy to reach top-angle focusing. Available in 3-12X, 4-16X and 7-30X models, all feature a big and bright 50mm objective lens for \$299. Hi-Lux, 3135 Kashiwa Street, Torrance, CA 90505, (888) 445-8912, www.hi-luxoptics.com.



TACTILITE GEN-3 FROM ZEL CUSTOM MANUFACTURING

The TacLite Gen-3 achieves a significant upgrade in accuracy and durability through engineering and manufacturing improvements, notably machining the upper receiver from a single piece of steel. Zel Custom Manufacturing also announced the TacLite is now available for the .338 Lapua cartridge, adding to existing lines of .50 BMG and .416 Barrett version kits. Zel Custom, 11419 Challenger Ave., Odessa, FL 33556, or (303) 353-1473, www.tactilite.com.

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KIMBER 8400 POLICE TACTICAL

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Chambered in potent .300 Winchester Magnum, this is one hot, accurate package for just one of you lucky readers. Dave Anderson wrung this combo out in the August 2009 issue and found it is one great shooting rifle. You can't win if you don't enter, so send those postcards in pronto! Don't have a postcard? Enter online at www.gunsmagazine.com.



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

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| ACTION: | Bolt action |
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| BARREL: | 26" heavy barrel, fluted, carbon steel |
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| WEIGH: | 9 pounds, 9 ounces |
| SIGHT: | Picatinny rail, 20 MOA elevation |
| FINISH: | Matte blue |
| STOCK: | Laminated wood |
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| MARK 4 LR/T M1 SCOPE | |
| MAKER: LEUPOLD & STEVENS 1440 NORTHWEST GREENBRIAR PARKWAY BEAVERTON, OR 97006 (503) 646-9171, WWW.LEUPOLD.COM | |
| MAGNIFICATION RANGE: | 6.5X, 20X |
| LENGTH OVERALL: | 14.5" |
| TUBE DIAMETER: | 30mm |
| OBJECTIVE LENS: | 2.3" |
| EYE RELIEF: | 4.4" (6.5X), 3.6" (20X) |
| WEIGHT: | 22 ounces |
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The CrossFire Extreme Sling offers multiple hands-free positions, sling swivels for carry to shoot in one motion, 20 positions for firearms, with 1-1/4"-wide nylon webbing. Altus Brands, LLC, 101 RidgeLine Dr., Westcliffe, CO 81252, (719) 783-4146, www.pro-ears.com



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QUESTION OF THE MONTH: Do you think you will purchase or have you purchased an AR style 22 caliber rifle like the Smith and Wesson M&P 15-22 or Colt's .22 Tactical Rim fire M4 & M16?:

- (A) **Yes, I have purchased an AR style .22 caliber rifle recently**
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- (C) **No, I do not plan on purchasing a tactical 22 caliber rifle**

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ODD ANGRY SHOT

• JOHN CONNOR •

BLACK RIFLE BUFFET

Gussy 'er up.

One reader wrote and said, "I'm a turn-bolt rifleman. I never had any interest in ARs until it became clear our current rulers (the politicians) didn't want me to have one, and wouldn't trust me with one. So, I bought *two*." What a great reason to buy an AR! Several similar messages followed. A couple dozen other e-mails were from readers, both experienced AR users and those new to the platform, asking for recommendations on everything from magazines, backup iron sights and collapsible stocks to single-point sling.

In the interest of saving my sausage-fingers from Terminal-Tappin' Syndrome, and presuming even more of you might have the same questions, let me answer you here, OK? I'll give you a Web site list too, but in many cases you'll need to get on the Internet and fire up search engines to find the best deals—and there are some great bargains to be had!

In polymer magazines, *MagPul* mags are superb, top-quality, tough and reliable. There are 20- and 30-round *Standard PMAGs*, my choice, the 30-round *MagLevel PMAG* with transparent round-count windows, and the *EMAG*, which is optimized for non-AR platforms like the HK-416, FN SCAR, British SA-80 and others, but absolutely compatible with ARs too. All have self-leveling anti-tilt followers and premium springs. You can order direct from the Web site or lots of dealers stock them.

In metal mags, *Brownells* has a current US military contract, and their mags are terrific. They're available in 20- and 30-round, gray or SOCOM tan, with your choice of a mil-spec stainless spring or Brownells' own chrome silicon spring which is coated with a dry lube and is highly corrosion resistant. Order 'em direct from Brownells. I've used good mags from Colt and Fusil, among others, but I don't think Brownells mags can be beaten.

Note: These are the *only* "30-round" mags I recommend loading with a full 30 rounds—many others suffer binding and feeding problems when loaded with more than 28 rounds. Also be aware

you can stuff 31 rounds into a 30-round *MagPul* mag, but load only 30! Properly loaded, your top round will be on the right (cartridge pointing forward) with about 2mm of "push" play.

Sights, Slings And Other Things

There are scads of decent backup iron sights (BUIS) out there, from Midwest Industries, LaRue Tactical, GG&G, and Troy Industries to name a few. For a solid, adjustable non-folding



Premium Filet of PMAG, drizzled with spicy MS2 Sling sauce—yum!

aperture rear sight which co-witnesses with most optics, check out *Kiser Munitions*. For fast-orienting foldable front and rear sights, you'll have to see and read up on *Diamondhead Sights* to appreciate the advantages this new sight set can provide. I've been tracking them since their first prototypes, and the current design is absolutely outstanding. Quicker and more certain on close-range snap shots and more accurate on longer ones, *Diamondhead Sights* are based on geometry so simple that like me, you'll ask yourself "Why didn't I

think of this?"

Choosing optics for ARs depends heavily on what you want it to do at what distance. There are multitudes of makers and lots of junk, so I'll mention just a few electronic CQB sights I've used and trust.

Aimpoint red dots are the Army's choice, with unlimited eye relief, long battery life, and you don't even have to center the dot in the glass: If your dot is on target, your round is too. Their *CompM4* is the newest, but there are lots of fine used *CompM2s* and *M3s* out there which will serve you well at about half the price. Note: The M-series sights are compatible with NVDs—Night Vision Devices—and the ML-series sights are not.

EOTech's HWS—Holographic Weapon Sight—projects a 65-MOA ring and 1-MOA center dot combination on its screen. It's a superfast close-quarters unit, proven in combat. Even if the screen is broken, the holograph will appear—and be functional—in the unbroken area! As with the Aimpoints, many older units are available and still very effective. Note: If you have a flattop carbine, I recommend mating the *EOTech* HWS with a Rock River Arms *Dominator2* mount. It includes an A2 rear sight, and places the *EOTech's* center dot just above your front iron sight post.

If you're concerned about battery failure and you're "Leupold-loyal," check out the *Prismatic Tactical*.

It features a bright red illuminated circle imposed on crosshairs, and if your battery is off or dead the reticle is etched in the glass in black so you'll always be good-to-go. Typically superior Leupold glass is encased in the thickest, toughest tube Leupold has ever made; virtually bombproof.

All three above are extremely rugged and allow you to move and shoot with both eyes open—a huge plus!

Slings... Individual tastes are so picky-particular, I'll just tell you about one I came across recently that I really like: *MagPul's MS2 Multi-Mission Sling*.

It's versatile, adaptable to single-point or two-point application, allows quick transitioning from strong to offside shoulder, and lies close to the body without sloppy loops to get hung up or tangled in. In single-point use, releasing your AR suspends the rifle muzzle-down in a quick-grab position, and an emergency release lanyard detaches the rifle with one pull. It's comfortable too, and doesn't require a full-semester class to figure out; an all-around great sling. Mate it with MagPul's ASAP Receiver End Plate for maximum efficiency.

Those "Other Things"

During the post-election frenzy lots of you grabbed any AR you could get; not necessarily in the upper receiver or barrel configuration you wanted. Go to www.ar15builder.com and use Brownells' cool drag-and-drop system to find what you want. I just checked and they had nine choices in complete AR uppers ranging from an M4 type with chrome-lined 16" barrel to a flattop "slick" with 20" stainless bull barrel. Remember, you can buy anything except a lower receiver without an FFL.

Collapsible buttstocks? The best include models like the Vltor EMOD, Command Arms Accessories' CBST, TAPCO's T6, and the MagPul CTR and MOE stocks. Beware of collapsible stocks labeled "M4 style," "military style," "commando model" or crap like that with no manufacturers' info. They collapse, all right—and fall apart like old Soviet space stations....

This is far from comprehensive, but ought to keep you busy for a while. If you spend a little time searching the net, you can take a plain-Jane AR way beyond basic black and fit it precisely to your build, needs and tastes. *Bon appétit!* Connor OUT.

GUNS

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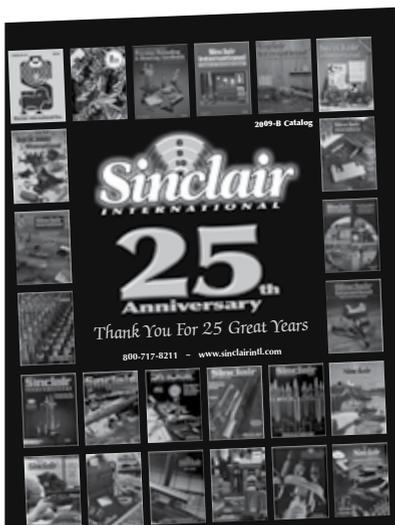
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GUNS

MAGAZINE

MARCH 2010

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have their first firearm. Acquiring the first gun is almost like a rite of passage, a symbol of growing up. Mine was the Marlin 39A .22 levergun. I learned to shoot with that rifle, my wife learned to shoot with it, all my kids followed suit, and yes my grandkids did the same. I don't shoot it much anymore, but it has been joined by two more just like it and the grandson trio spent a lot of time, and a lot of ammunition, shooting that nearly 55-year-old Marlin and its partners this summer.

Each grandson gets one and none will ever know which one was the original. Every time someone shows me a firearm and tells me it was grandpa's gun they get the same advice: "Don't ever sell grandpa's gun; someday many years from now some other young boy should be showing his friends his grandpa's gun and you will be that grandpa." There is something very special, very emotional, about family firearms.

Sometime in late 1956 or early 1957 I bought my first .44 Magnum which was a 6-1/2" Ruger Flattop Blackhawk. It was soon cut to 4-5/8" and logged many miles during Idaho hunting seasons. In the early 1970s it went back to Ruger to be re-barreled to 7-1/2" and remains so today. About the same time Diamond Dot, even though we couldn't afford it at the time, insisted I buy the 10" Flattop .44 Blackhawk we found at the Gunhaus when I returned from my final summer classes for my Masters Degree at the University of Montana.

It was my first dedicated hunting handgun. I was wearing it in a Goerg shoulder holster when I saw the biggest Idaho muley buck ever. It surpassed everything I had ever been seen before or since. I sat there at way too many hundreds of yards in the waning light of the day and simply watched him. I did not feel sorry I could not get on him and that day became a true handgun hunter with all its limitations. How could I sell either one of these sixguns? I haven't shot either one for several years and I won't put full-house loads through them anymore. However, I just loaded up some 1,100 fps loads with 200-220-grain bullets and hopefully next spring they will get another workout.

I was deeply involved in long-range silhouetting in the 1980s. I have so many wonderful memories of matches and one thing that stands out is how rivals would help each other by spotting. My first real silhouette sixgun was the Dan Wesson .357 Magnum. Dan Wesson was the first manufacturer to actually listen to competitors and the result was the 10" Heavy Barrel .357 Magnum with excellent sights. Most of us used 180- or 200-grain bullets loaded to less than

1,000 fps in .38 Special brass. They took forever to get to the rams but they never failed to take them down. It was fun to actually wait for the bullet to hit the target and watch the ram silhouette change color in the sun as it slowly toppled over. I can feel the excitement all over again just typing the words.

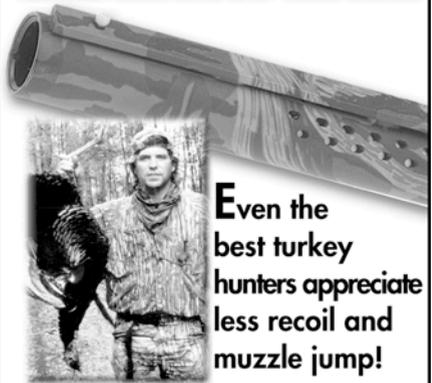
Ruger soon joined up and started producing sixguns especially for silhouetters, the first being the 10-1/2" .44 Magnum Super Black Hawk. The best they ever offered for any kind of long-range shooting was the 10-1/2" Ruger Blackhawk .357 Maximum. Now we had a sixgun that would deliver those same 200-grain bullets at .357 Magnum velocities. The best shooting I ever did with a revolver in silhouettes was with this Ruger. Neither one of these, I'm sorry to say, has probably been fired within the last 15 years. Still they are not for sale as I'm too emotionally attached to them. Maybe, just maybe I'll dig them out next spring and warm them up again. I wonder if I'll be able to shoot them as well as I did way back then? Probably not.

Several others have been fired for too many years. There is the Super 14 Thompson/Center .30-30 which was my Unlimited silhouette pistol and the 10" .357 Contender which I used in the Production class. Both were superbly accurate and probably still are even if I'm not. My first Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum was an early Model 29 with a 6-1/2" barrel and I spent too many years shooting nothing but full-house loads in it. Today it never sees anything heavier than Keith's Heavy .44 Special load and unlike the others mentioned, it did get a workout last summer. I've got to spend more time with it.

My old hunting handguns are mostly retired today. The SSK Contenders in 6.5 JDJ and .375 JDJ as well as the 7-1/2" Freedom Arms .454—all of which went to Africa with me—haven't been shot for way too long. That 6.5 and my 7-1/2" Freedom Arms .44 Magnum both have identical records, namely 24 straight 1-shot kills. With the 6.5, it's all manner of game from Africa to Colorado to Texas to Oregon to Idaho, while the .44 Magnum has been mostly used on Texas Whitetails. I'm tied to these guns as emotionally as it is possible to be. I just hope none of my grandsons ever sell grandpa's guns, and more importantly, somehow they receive as much pleasure as I have from them and also pass them on to their grandsons.

Some may say I become too attached to what they see simply as working tools. To me they are much more than that. They aren't simple and they aren't just tools. They fill me with pride of ownership and also celebration of Freedom.

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CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP

If you have it, you know.

Jack Pender was a very special friend who died of lung cancer in the '90s when he was much too young. If we are blessed we make a few very close friends as we travel through this life; Jack was such a friend. We "met" when he was in Colorado visiting another friend of mine, the late Deacon Deason of BearHug Grips. He called me from Deac's place just to say hello and I wound up visiting him in Georgia the following year.

He made arrangements for me to meet all his shooter friends at the Savanna Rifle & Pistol Club and it was a memorable experience. The reason it was so memorable is the fact we were both shooting pop cans offhand at 100 yards with Jack's 7-1/2" Freedom Arms .454. We could not miss. The other shooters were very impressed, however the fact is we just happened to be "on" that day and any other time could easily have missed with every shot.

Jack had his own business designing fancy homes for well-to-do customers. He took me to a special section to show me some of the homes he had designed. I felt like I should be trimming the lawn or something not just driving around and looking. I guess I didn't feel comfortable being surrounded by so much wealth. Jack told me about one of his customers who was a hunter. Every year he took a trip to some exotic



Taffin is too emotionally involved with his first true hunting handgun to ever sell it.

location and his house was filled with trophies from all over the world. What was strange was the fact he did not own a single firearm. Before leaving on each trip he would buy a new rifle, sight it in, go on his special safari of choice, gather in his trophies, return home, and sell

the rifle. To me that was something so strange it belonged in Ripley's *Believe It or Not*. I simply could not understand how anyone would not want to hang onto special rifles which he had shared so many hunting trips with. It wasn't as if he needed to sell them to get his

money back.

I just couldn't understand why he didn't want to run his hands over the rifle as he looked at his trophies and recalled the hunting trips. It seemed to me he was just driven to somehow go through the motions without any emotions. Something was surely causing him to hunt every year but for some reason he just saw the rifle as a useful tool which had no use after the trip. I suppose he probably bought a new car every year also. Something is missing without pride of ownership. Even if I could afford it I would not buy a new truck every year.

My 4x4 is now 13-years old, with 69,000 miles and still in excellent shape. I take pride in it and care for it. I basically use it only to go shooting. I can't imagine replacing it just because something is newer.

I know very few shooters who only see firearms as simple tools like a chainsaw or a lawn mower. I've been accumulating firearms for 55 years so there is no doubt there are some which are rarely used, if at all. But that does not negate pride of ownership nor personal attachment as there are pleasant memories attached to every one of them. Good times with friends and family, hunting trips, silhouette shoots, cowboy action matches, just plain woods bumming, plinking, long-range shooting at rocks, wandering around sagebrush, foothills, forest, and mountains. Even though they may never be used much anymore, pride of ownership prevents me from selling them, at least at this point

of my life, and I hope most of them will someday be enjoyed by my grandsons and their grandsons.

If I were a betting man I would wager most reading this right now still

continued on page 81

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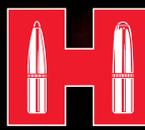
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