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APRIL 2011

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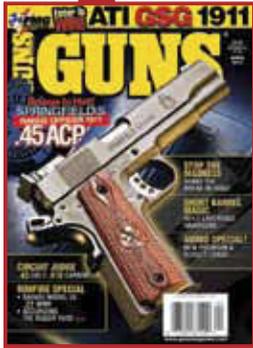
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• **JOHN CONNOR**

GUNS Magazine (ISSN 1044-6257) is published monthly by Publishers' Development Corporation, 12345 World Trade Drive, San Diego, CA 92128. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Diego, CA and at additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS: One year (12) issues \$24.95. Single monthly copies, \$4.95. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Eight weeks notice required on all changes. Send old address as well as new. SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS: For immediate action write GUNS Magazine, Attention: Circulation Dept., 12345 World Trade Drive, San Diego, CA 92128 or call (858) 605-0250. CONTRIBUTORS submitting manuscripts, photographs or drawings do so at their own risk. Material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. PAYMENT will be made at rates current at time of publication and will cover reproduction in any or all GUNS Magazine editions. ADVERTISING RATES furnished on request. Reproduction or use of any portion of this magazine in any manner, without written permission is prohibited. All rights reserved. Title to this publication passes to subscriber only on delivery to his address. The opinions and recommendations expressed by individual authors within this magazine are not necessarily those of Publishers' Development Corporation. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to GUNS Magazine®, ATTN: Circulation Dept., 12345 World Trade Drive, San Diego, CA 92128. Copyright © 2011 by Publishers' Development Corporation.

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CROSSFIRE

LETTERS TO GUNS

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Pressure?

John Barness's Handloading article in the February 2011 issue, while interesting, has me very confused. I've always thought making powder space smaller increases pressure. The words "... any increase in seating depth reduces pressure" in the last paragraph of the article says just the opposite. Have I been wrong all these years?

Since I travel a lot, the availability of your digital issue has been great, and the mechanism for reviewing it works a whole lot better than a number of other magazines'.

*Tim Gales
Flagstaff, Arizona*

In rifles, seating bullets deeper decreases peak pressure because there's a longer "jump" for the bullet until it hits the chamber throat. The bullet has a chance to get going faster before being forced into the rifling, and the increased momentum reduces the pressure rise caused by the bullet being engraved by the rifling.

In revolvers, however, seating the bullet deeper does cause higher peak pressures, because the bullet has to travel further before reaching the cylinder gap, thus allowing pressure to rise longer before the gap relieves some of the pressure.—John Barsness

Two Johns

I don't often write mags or any one else for that matter, but have thought about it several times with your magazines (*GUNS* and *American Handgunner*). I look forward every month to their arrival and read them front to back. Scratch that, back to front. You put out fine magazines but I always find myself rereading the articles time and again by John Taffin and John Conner while I wait for my next issue. Both writers make

me think. Both have put a smile on my face and at times a tear on my cheek. I wish them both the best, and as long as they write for you I will continue to wait each month eagerly.

*Brett Roy
Utah*

Get Well

A get well to one of my favorite writers. John always makes me think, feel, and read. I love his views on the future based on his past. God saved a good one. I can't imagine a life without the big three to look forward to, Taffin, Connor, and Venturino. You all share a commodity I find rare, absolute honesty. Thanks for the opportunity to know you folks.

*Wayne Wilkans
via e-mail*

Got Books?

What an excellent article the January 2011 Campfire Tales "Got Books?" was. I submit it fulfilled its purpose. The reference made to Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt's South American expedition into the wilds of Brazil was for some reason, something I had never heard of and therefore I went to the effort to look it up. It was a fascinating story. After all the adventures and enterprises Theodore Roosevelt enjoyed and endured during his life, to be very nearly brought down by an infected wound, malaria and dysentery speaks volumes about the intensity of the Brazilian jungle. Thank you Mr. Taffin for exposing me to the knowledge. Books are invaluable and I pity those that don't enjoy them.

*Hal Hansen
via e-mail*

The Alessi holster pictured in the February 2011 issue on page 35 should have been named a CQC/S Custom. The 1RH only means "right hand." We apologize for the confusion.—Editor

GUNS

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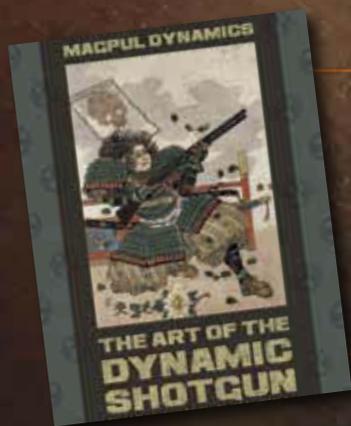
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NO 1911 4 U There are other choices.

It is one thing to pick a pistol out at the gun store, another to actually carry it daily, but even more important is to shoot the pistol well. The polymer guns are all the rage, and I can't and won't say much about them one way or the other. Nor do I care, as even my wife Heidi lets a couple of high-end custom 1911s hang in her gun safe while she sorts through her half-dozen-plus Glocks. She carries them daily at her work here on the ranch and at her part-time job helping the local Sheriff's office as an EMT. People like what they like, even though some carry guns they don't shoot well, just so they can be in vogue or be sort of "hangin' with the big dawg operators"... so to speak.

After using a 1911 for about 40 years, I can tell you why you shouldn't buy one.

It is *big*. Yes, the 5"-barrelled 1911 full-size pistol is big, measuring a nominal 9" long, 6" high and 1" thick. And don't forget the full-size gun is the best and most reliable of its breed. I wouldn't give you spit for the whole bunch of "chopped" 1911s. I own one 1911 Lightweight Commander. To put it bluntly: I was lucky. Made in 1949, I bought it in 1970 for \$100 bucks. I have rebuilt it a lot of times over the years—and it is snippy to shoot well with full loads (as should be carried for defense), as it should at that weight. So there is no misunderstanding and no misquote, the full-size 1911 has the best potential to work well and consistently. There was a reason John built it the way it is.

Don't buy a 1911 because it is big.

Is It Heavy?

Yes, it is 2 pounds and the steel gun is best, as far as long life and durability go. The "buffer thing" for recoil supposedly helps protect the frame while firing, but, trust me, gunsmiths have ruined more 1911s by working on them to "make 'em custom ya know," than are ruined by firing. I have seen issues with the buffer-plastic crap coming apart and locking up the gun. Also, when the gun is shot to slide lock, often the



You should not shoot the 1911 with your thumb under the safety. One good reason to buy a Glock.



A correct position for both hands and thumbs for the 1911—and the Glock also!



Cooper-ish style of handholds and placement. It is good if you can do it, yet requires and does accommodate large hands.

buffer preempts "pulling" the slide to the rear to reload it, rather than using the other slide-release/lock technique.

Don't buy a 1911 because it is heavy and sensitive to issues like rubber rings that aren't necessary.

Mag Capacity

It holds seven rounds and one in the chamber. If I see a 1911 pistol having feeding problems, my first question to the student is: "How many rounds did you load in the magazine?" The 1911 with seven rounds in the magazine is *always* more reliable! You can find 8-round (and even 10-round) magazines that work. If you have some, keep them. They are an overall big-picture oddity. If you want to have more ammo in the pistol, buy a Glock.

Don't buy a 1911 because it doesn't hold a bucket of ammo in the magazine well.

Reliability?

The 1911 works, but sometimes requires a bit of tuning. The reason the custom gunsmiths have succeeded is because Colt got lazy and sloppy. In the late '70s if you bought a 1911 for \$500, you would then need to spend another \$500, or more, to make it work. True works of art like the Pachmayr were the finest, along with others of that sort—Armand Swenson's for example—were big-money guns in those days. Today 1911s are ideal if built by proficient companies; I own flawless guns by Baer, Burton, Morris, Springfield Custom Shop, Wilson and Volkmann.

Heidi also has a Glock that costs \$400 and it is also flawless... hmmm?

Don't buy a 1911 because it might not be reliable.

Meat & 'Taters Of Technique

First and foremost of importance are safety and the placement of the right thumb (for a right-hand shooter). Those who do not keep their thumb on top of the safety while firing need to get another gun. They will "knock" the safety on while firing the pistol under duress situations if their thumb is under the safety. My belief (actually, I know this) is it's the joint

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RANGING SHOTS



Heidi's armor and her Glock. It's her choice for a self-defense handgun.

of the thumb knuckle, which knocks the safety on. The gun quits running, and the shooter doesn't understand why. This can get you killed.

If your response is, "But I don't activate the grip safety with my thumb on top of the safety while firing," then delete it. Yeah, I know all the experts say you are gonna get sued and what not, but as a younger man I was told by Colonel Cooper over lunch, "If you miss the grip safety once out of 100 draws, you should block it." I believe him. There are some versions of a low-lever safety. If you use one, make sure it's a good one; I have seen low-lever "knobs" break off while firing. If the grip-safety block or safety is an issue (personally or legally) for you, get a Glock... it doesn't have a thumb safety. Or a grip safety.

Wrist

Lock your wrists. While training, hold the pistol at "ready," look down to index and lock a correct sight picture. Raise your head and eyes to the target area. When needed, lift the pistol from the shoulders, only until the sights transpose over your target. Also, remember as the muzzle comes up, the safety comes off. You are looking to hard-wire synapses for proper placement of the pistol in your hands and wrists, so the gun will index correctly when brought on target. Back in my days at Gunsite, there was an exercise called "eyes off drill"; I now know what it was for. 1911s are big and heavy, and they recoil.

Another reason not to buy a 1911.

High Holds

Personally, I use a high hold with my thumbs stacked right over left.

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The left thumb could, I guess, drag on the slide, but I don't put pressure on the slide with this thumb. The left thumb (for right-handed shooters) is the most worthless of the fingers, so be careful with its placement while firing.

Cooper-Style

First, the size of Mr. Cooper's hands were very large, which is often not apparent in photos showing his left thumb pointing up, pressing in on the right thumb. The fact is, the heel/inside palm of his left hand pressed in firm contact with the left stock panel. Frequently folks with smaller hands miss this point—or are not able to access this load-bearing point for the left support hand—so the 5" 1911 flips more in recoil.

Don't buy a 1911 because it flips.

So, the 1911 is big, it's heavy, it doesn't hold lots of ammo, it is finicky and it must be held properly in order to access the grip and thumb safeties.

If all the above bothers you, I would readily suggest you buy a Glock, Springfield Armory XDM, S&W M&P or something else comparable.

Well, there you have it; some of my thoughts on why not to buy a 1911.

Now, it's off to the range I go... to shoot my 1911. Go figure. 



A pile of Glocks below the lone 1911, which costs just about as much as the whole pile of Glocks.

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—J. of San Bernardino, CA



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HANDGUNS

• MASSAD AYOUB •

WHY WE APPRECIATE .45s It's not just because of the 1911.

It's the "all-American pistol caliber," and the 100th anniversary of the pistol that made it popular is a logical time to discuss the .45 ACP cartridge.

While the 1911 pistol was adopted in the eponymous year and is now by general consensus celebrating its 100th anniversary, the cartridge it made famous is actually older. When the US Army Ordnance Board made it clear that it wanted a .45 caliber semi-automatic service pistol, the .45 Automatic Colt Pistol cartridge began to take shape on the drawing board

in 1903. The first .45 ACP cartridges came off the production line in 1904, and Colt's ".45 automatic" Model of 1905 was on the market by 1906.

The .45 Colt revolver round had struck a responsive chord with Americans way back in 1873, and it was natural that when autoloaders came on line, the .45 caliber would inherit that trust and goodwill. But it



The .45 ACP makes for narrow girth of pistol (Springfield 1911 shown here), but broad choice of ammo in both bullet weight and style.

didn't depend on an inheritance from the previous generation: the .45 ACP made its own way. In World War I, the .45 dramatically proved itself in the trenches of Europe. Americans of the time could proudly tell you how Sergeant Alvin York of Tennessee had single-handedly wiped out a German patrol with one shot apiece from his issue .45. The legend only grew after the savagery in the Pacific and in Europe in World War II. Audie Murphy, the Alvin York of the second great conflict, wasn't the only one who called the 1911 .45 his most trusted friend when he came back to the States.

Controllable Power

Being a low-pressure cartridge, the .45 ACP generates recoil that is very controllable with modern shooting stances and techniques. When my little girls were 8 years old, they each learned to handle a 1911 .45 with full-power hardball and manage it effectively. One of my proudest moments on a shooting range was when my daughter Justine, then 13, and I won the National Junior Handgun Championship Parent/Child Team at the Second Chance Shoot in Michigan in 1998. Justine was shooting a comped Springfield Armory 1911-A1 with 185-grain +P .45 handloads.

Last year, the Florida Highway Patrol became the fifth agency to adopt the Glock 37 in .45 GAP (Glock Auto Pistol), a shorter version of the .45 ACP that duplicates the latter's standard pressure ballistics in a higher-pressure cartridge. FHP staff told me their female troopers in particular found the .45's recoil easier to manage than that of the .40 S&W Berettas the new guns replaced.

Police are relying on .45s more than ever these days. The .45 ACP is



With full-power 230-grain hardball, the .45 ACP is controllable. Mas has two spent casings in the air (arrows), but Springfield Armory Range Officer is still on target.

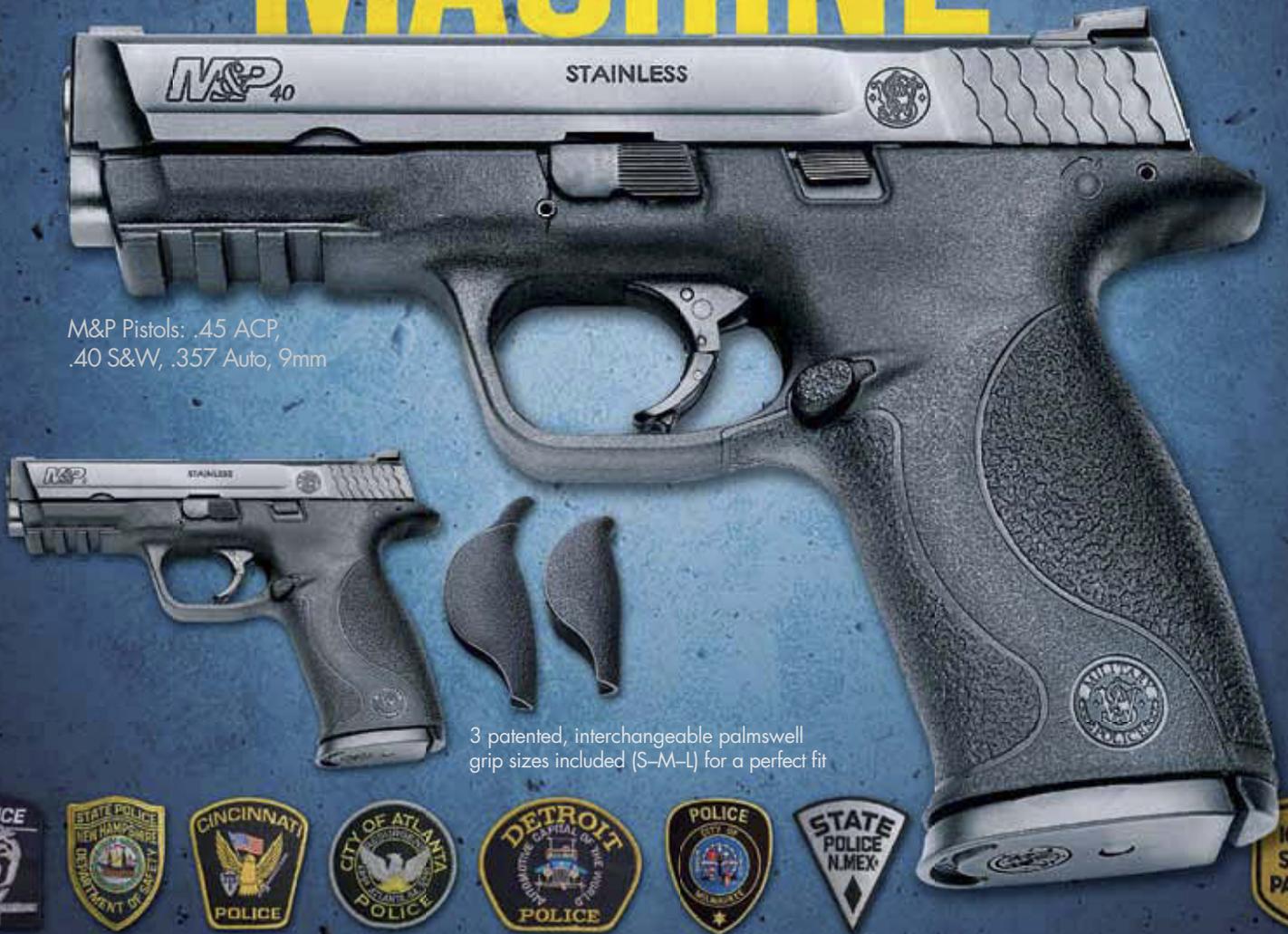


The cartridge started life in 1903 and was first chambered in the Colt M1905, the design of which ultimately evolved into the M1911.



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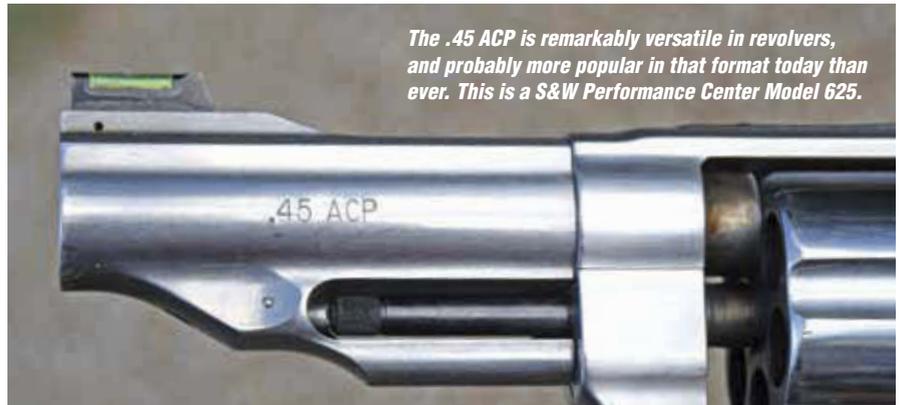
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approved for Chicago PD, Los Angeles PD, Los Angeles County Sheriffs, FBI, DEA and many more. LAPD SWAT has used .45 ACP exclusively in its sidearms since its inception, and FBI SWAT and Hostage Rescue have long since standardized on the .45. El Monte, Calif., PD made news when they adopted the Colt .45 auto in 1966. Their issue gun today is the Springfield Armory XD .45. El Monte may have changed guns, but they darn sure kept the .45 ACP for one simple reason: It works.

Versatility

In just commercial JHP loadings, the .45 ACP runs the gamut from 165-grain to 230-grain bullet weights. You'll find soft-loaded 185-grain bullets a favorite in the mandatory .45 stages at the national bull's-eye championships at Camp Perry. At nearly 1,150 fps, a 185-grain +P JHP will shoot remarkably flat to 50 and even 100 yards. 200-grain bullets, the weight John Browning originally planned on for the cartridge, remain popular. In the Speer hollowpoint it's a proven "man-stopper," and the H&G No. 68 lead semi-wadcutter remains a handloader's favorite for recreational shooting.

The 230-grain bullet has become



The .45 ACP is remarkably versatile in revolvers, and probably more popular in that format today than ever. This is a S&W Performance Center Model 625.

the traditional weight, and we have high-tech hollowpoints in that configuration today, which have been known to expand fully to 1" in diameter in flesh (the Federal HST and the Winchester Ranger-T). Over the course of a century, even its roundnose FMJ GI ball 230-grain slug has earned the title "legendary man-stopper," despite the fact it doesn't reach the .45 ACP's full potential for tissue damage and is prone to over-penetration and ricochet. There's even factory .45 ACP snakeshot, though it can't be trusted to reliably cycle every slide.

The versatility extends to the guns. From the relatively tiny, manually

operated Semmerling to longslides, from Remington-pattern derringers to revolvers, and in subcompact and compact service autos, there's a .45 ACP for every user. The slim 1911 will holster comfortably inside the waistband, and polymer-frame .45s ride lightly on the hip. Introduced in 1917, the double-action .45 ACP revolver is probably more popular today than ever in the commercial sector, and is always a fun garbage disposal for loads that turned out to be too short, light, or blunt to run reliably in an autoloader.

So, why is the .45 ACP so popular? Well, it may sound cliché, but what's not to like?

GUNS

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GUNSMITHING

• HAMILTON S. BOWEN •

ACCURIZING THE FACTORY RUGER 10/22 RIFLE

A little trick does the the trick.

Introduced in 1964, Ruger's 10/22 autoloading rifle is one of the most popular members of the rimfire genre ever. No greater compliment is paid these well-engineered guns than the cottage industries that spring up yearly making accessories and performance parts. Despite all the available upgrades-in-a-box, some of us like doing our own work. The 10/22 is amenable to many simple do-it-yourself modifications.

My sporter model was reasonably accurate but not spectacular. Rather than purchase a new barrel, I elected to see if improved accuracy would be obtained simply from better chamber throat specifications and better headspacing. Many others have written well, and in great detail, before about such modifications but they bear repeating here.

Most .22 target arms are chambered with dedicated match-spec reamers, with shorter chamber body and throat sections than the standard

"sporting" chambers. While more finicky about ammo and function, the match chambers center cartridges and minimizes bullet jump to the rifling, thereby improving relative accuracy. My reamer is of the popular "Bentz" pattern and came from Manson Precision Reamers. The body section is about .100" shorter than the standard chambers.

The first order of business was to tear down the gun and remove the barrel. I'll leave it the readers to study up on this procedure and

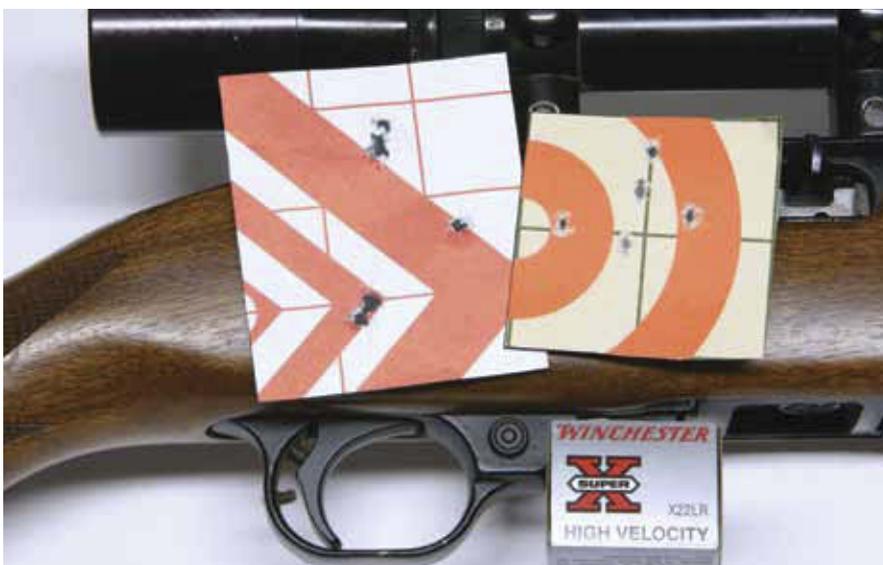


Simply improving chamber specs in a .22 LR can yield improved accuracy.

will recommend the J.B. Woods disassembly guides. On the 10/22, the unthreaded barrel is retained in the receiver by a simple dovetail-clamp arrangement and comes right off.

The machine work for this project is very simple and, if you do not have a lathe, any friendly machine shop could do the work in just a few minutes. Everything else is easily done by hand. All you have to do is face back the barrel shoulder at the receiver shank and shorten the breech face the corresponding amount. .070" to .080" is about as much as you can remove without adding a shim to the dovetail-clamping surfaces. In hopes of maximizing benefits of the improved match-grade throat, I removed around .150" and made a simple shim to take up the slack.

Finishing the chamber can be done by hand if you are careful, since little material is coming out. Cut slowly without lateral pressure and be sure to clear the chips every few thousandths. Whatever you do, do not run the reamer backwards or else you will surely damage it. Just black the breech face of the barrel with magic marker to indicate the stopping point. Lightly chamfer the mouth with a scraper or 60-degree piloted chamfering tool just enough to dull the sharp edge that will grab and shave cartridges. Even a Dremel tool carefully handled will suffice. You will have to re-cut the extractor groove but this is easy to do with a small square needle or pillar file. Just grind two opposite edges smooth to make the edges "safe" so they won't widen the slot. Be sure to leave a small margin between the slot



Typical "before" target on the left and "after" target on the right. A reduction from 1-1/2" to 1" groups is a considerable improvement of accuracy for just a little easy work.

and chamber mouth. It's a good idea to give the slot and chamber mouth a good hard look before diving in.

Headspace

The bolt controls headspace in the 10/22. The main bolt face should bear evenly on the breech end of the barrel. Headspace is then measured from the bolt face, down to the cartridge recess. SAAMI minimum is .043". My bolt headspace was about .050" so I elected to remove .007" from the bolt face. In the interests of expedition, I used a belt grinder and machinist's square. The bolt must be stripped for this procedure. Incidentally, the barrel breechface on my gun appears to be induction hardened to prevent bolt peening, but I imagine it will take a lot of shooting for the softer new face to ever batter, especially with the smoother bolt face.

The factory extractor worked fine after the chamber work but, in the interests of reliable extraction with the tighter chamber mouth, a better extractor—such as those from Power Custom—is a good idea.

Bedding

In my experience with sporter-weight rifles and barrels, a fore-end-tip bedding point with moderate pressure



Two simple cuts on the lathe (above) are all that is need to set back the barrel on a Ruger 10/22. To apply a small fore-end bedding point, just mask off the area with masking tape (below) and remember to use release agent on the barrel.



seems to help accuracy in most guns. I simply routed a small trough at the bottom and sides of the fore-end and applied some Brownells Acra Gel. Shimming the barrel forward of the bedding point with four layers of business cards while the bedding

compound set up gave moderate pressure with the action screw fully tightened.

Was it worth it? I have used Winchester Hi-Speed .22 LR ammo forever since it seems to shoot pretty well in a wide variety of .22s. Some shooters will try every brand of ammo known to human kind to shave that last 1/16" off group size, but that requires enormous time and patience I don't have. Before and after groups showed appreciable improvements, going from an average of 1-1/2" down to less than 1". You could spend some real time and treasure to beat that. **GUNS**

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HANDLOADING

• JOHN BARSNESS •

RIFLE CARTRIDGES IN HANDGUNS

Why they perform so well may surprise you.

A friend has a favorite question he occasionally springs on unsuspecting shooters: "What cartridge do modern hunters considered short-ranged and inadequate in a rifle, but flat-shooting and powerful in a handgun?" The answer, of course, is the .30-30 Winchester.

In the early days of the metallic cartridge many cartridges were used in both rifles and handguns, because most early cartridges were rimfires. Rimfires must use thin brass in order for the priming compound to go off; the reason they're relatively low-powered and short. Soon, however, centerfire priming allowed the use of stouter cases, allowing higher pressures, and rifle and handgun cartridges soon evolved along very different paths.

Due to the endlessly fickle and wondering nature of humanity, however, many shooters still like to shoot rifle cartridges in handguns. Some strange contraptions have been developed for the purpose, including huge revolvers chambered for the .45-70; but these days most handguns chambered for rifle rounds are long-barreled single-shots, either bolt-

action or break-action.

That same friend calls such firearms "hand carbines," but they're a lot of fun to shoot. They're typically very accurate, partly because they're normally equipped with scopes and partly because shorter barrels are stiffer barrels. I once spent a day shooting prairie dogs with my friend Rod Herrett, the handgun stockmaker from Idaho. We used a pair of Rod's bolt-action handguns in .223 and .22-250 Remington, and when shooting over a rest (as most prairie dog shooters do) we hit prairie dogs consistently out to 300 or 400 yards. Rod killed one at around 600 yards. Most rifle shooters don't do any better.

The Thompson/Center Contender has probably done more for the sport of shooting rifle rounds in handguns than any other firearm. The

.30-30 TRAJECTORY COMPARISON, RIFLE VS. HANDGUN 170-GRAIN ROUNDNOSE, 2,100 FPS (RIFLE)

100 yards	0
200 yards	-9.4"
300 yards	-33.6"

125-GRAIN SPITZER, 2,300 FPS (HANDGUN)

100 yards	0
200 yards	-6.5"
300 yards	-23.2"

Contender's interchangeable barrels make experimentation easy, and allow the same action to be used as both a "real" carbine and a handgun. This versatility tempts many shooters who wouldn't otherwise be interested into trying a rifle-cartridge handgun and handloading for their new toy.

Peak Pressure

The biggest misconception of new hand-carbine handloaders is that shorter barrels require faster powders. This is due to the common myth that smokeless powder continues to burn all the way out the muzzle of even long-barreled rifles. Instead, smokeless only continues to burn a short distance past peak pressure, and the peak occurs a short distance in front of the chamber.

The muzzle flash we see in dim light isn't caused by still-burning powder (another common myth), but by hot powder gases reigniting when they hit the oxygen-rich atmosphere. This doesn't mean that unburned powder doesn't get blown out the muzzle, but it's no longer burning. Due to the extreme drop in pressure after the peak, the powder gas is no longer hot enough to ignite any unburned powder kernels. (Remember freshman chemistry? In thermodynamics, pressure and heat directly affect each other.) In fact, if the cartridge develops the pressure the powder was designed for, 99 percent of the powder is consumed not far after the pressure peak.

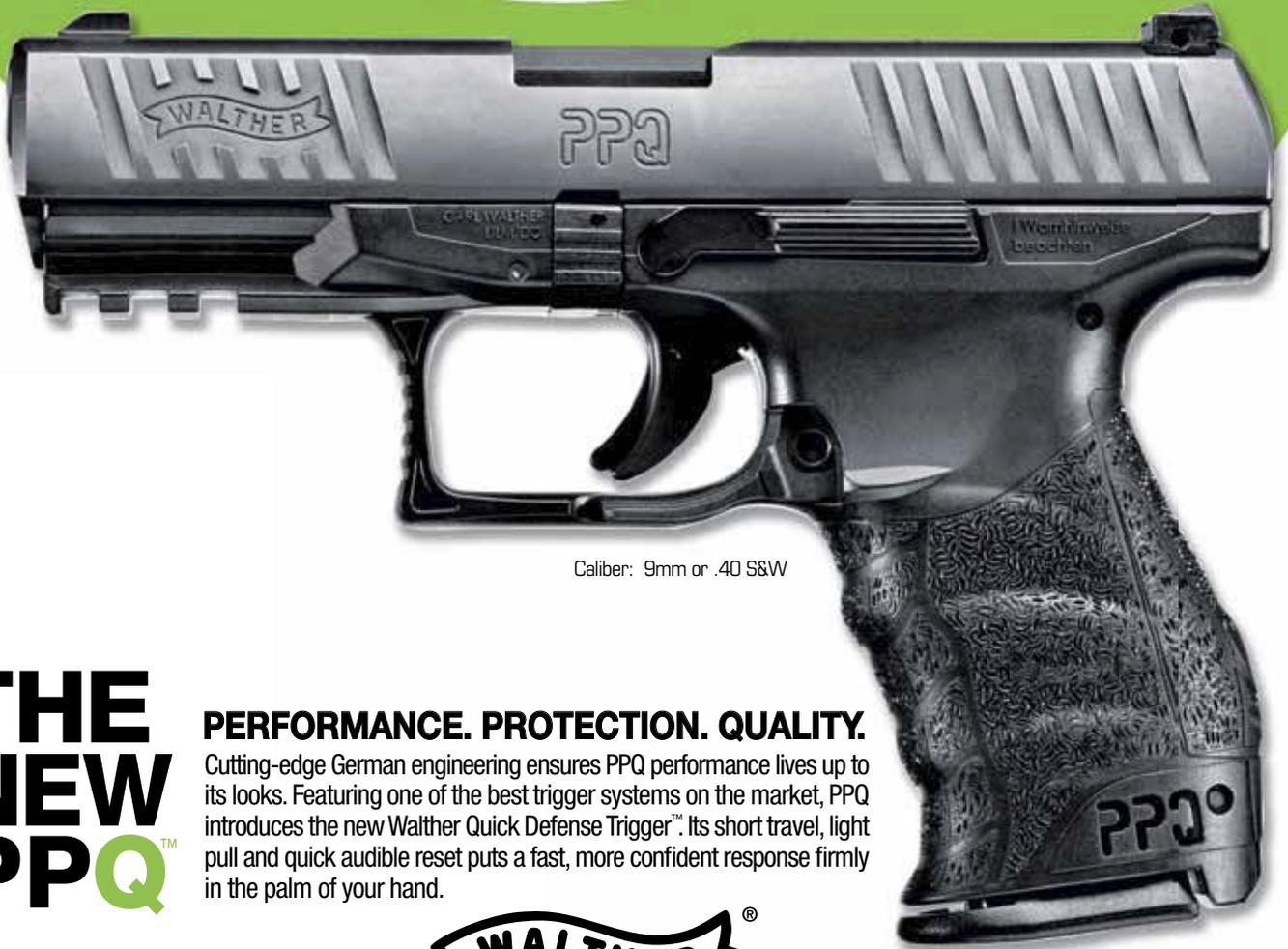
The powder gases in any centerfire rifle round keep expanding throughout the barrel, even after all the powder that's going to burn has burned. This is why longer barrels produce



Handguns chambered for rifle cartridges are fun to shoot, though they often require different shooting techniques than conventional handguns.



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HANDLOADING

A scoped .30-30 handgun often shoots just as well as a scoped .30-30 rifle.



more muzzle velocity. However, the same powders that produce the most velocity in rifle-length barrels also produce the most velocity in typical hand-carbine barrels of 10" to 14" in length, because pressure remains higher throughout the bullet's trip down the bore than with faster-burning powders.

Time To Rethink

Many shooters will doubt this, because we've been told the opposite for many decades, mostly by gun writers who didn't know what they were talking about, or maybe our Uncle Ernest. Ample proof, however, exists in loading manuals. Let's take a look at the .30-30 data from *Nosler Reloading Guide 6*. The rifle data was shot in a 20" test barrel, the common length of lever-action carbines. The top velocity listed for the 170-grain Partition is 2,192 fps, attained with 33 grains of IMR4320, a very slow-burning powder in the .30-30.

When we check out the .30-30 handgun data, taken in a 14" barrel, the highest velocity is 1,988 fps, also attained with 33 grains of IMR4320. The list of powders is the same, and while some change position slightly in the velocity ranking, the overall results are pretty much identical—except for a velocity loss of 100 or 200 fps. While the faster-burning powders don't lose as much velocity, the highest handgun velocity is still attained with the same powder as in the rifle barrel.

The Nosler manual lists eight cartridges in both the rifle and handgun section: .22 Hornet, .221 Fireball, .223 Remington, .22 BR Remington, 6mm BR Remington, 7mm-08 Remington, .308 Winchester

and .44 Magnum. Most of the time, the same powder that produces the highest velocity in the rifle barrel is also the fastest in the handgun barrel. (A small sample of the Nosler data is included in a table here.)

The few exceptions are when the fastest rifle load comes in a very slight second or third in the handgun barrel. With 40-grain bullets, for instance, AA2230 is the fastest powder in the .22 BR in the rifle barrel, but loses out by 19 fps to Reloder 7 in the handgun barrel. In the two "high-pressure" rifle rounds, the 7mm-08 and .308, the fastest rifle powders sometimes weren't tested in the handgun barrels. In the 7mm-08 rifle barrel, Ramshot Hunter produced the highest velocities with 150-grain bullets, but isn't listed in the handgun data—where the 150-grain winner is Reloder 19, a powder with a burning rate almost identical to Hunter's.

Nosler also lists the most accurate powder tested with each bullet weight. This is often the same in both rifle and handgun barrels, but not always. This only proves that all barrels are individuals.

Caliber Choice

Some far-gone handgun shooters use very large rifle rounds, but most of us can't take that much recoil. This is why the .30-30 and similar rounds are the most popular for hunting deer and similar game with hand carbines. In fact, one cartridge that started off as an improvement of the .30-30, the 7x30 Waters, now survives primarily as a handgun round. (Its "opposite equivalent" might be the .221 Fireball, originally a handgun round, but now far more often chambered in rifles.)

HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE .30-30 WINCHESTER, THOMPSON/CENTER CONTENDER 14" BARREL

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
Nosler 125 Ballistic Tip	H4895	36.0	2,351	1.29
Hornady 130 Spire Point	Reloder 7	31.0	2,312	1.83
Federal 150 roundnose (factory ammo)	N/A	N/A	2,080	2.56

RIFLE/HANDGUN DATA, NOSLER RELOADING GUIDE 6

CARTRIDGE & BULLET (TYPE, GRAINS WEIGHT)	FASTEST RIFLE LOAD		FASTEST HANDGUN LOAD	
	(POWDER/CHARGE)	(VELOCITY FPS)	(POWDER/CHARGE)	(VELOCITY FPS)
.22 Hornet 40	13.0 Li'l Gun	2,979	13.0 Li'l Gun	2,779
.221 Fireball 40	18.0 IMR4198	3,259	18.0 IMR4198	2,992
.223 Rem 55	25.0 Benchmark	3,302	25.0 Benchmark	2,996
6mm BR Rem 70	34.0 Varget	3,450	34.0 Varget	3,139
7mm-08 Rem 150	49.5 Hunter	2,869	48.8 Reloder 19	2,482

(Hunter not tested in handgun)

The velocity loss in handgun barrels is normally compensated for by using lighter bullets. In the .30-30, for instance, 125- or 130-grain bullets are most popular among deer hunters, rather than the 150- or 170-grain bullets favored by rifle hunters. In a single-shot handgun there's also no problem with using spitzers rather than roundnosed bullets. A 125-grain spitzer started at 2,300 fps in a 14" handgun barrel shoots a lot flatter than a 170-grain roundnose at 2,100 fps from a rifle barrel.

Controlled-expansion bullets aren't commonly used for deer

hunting in rifle-round handguns, mostly because they aren't needed at the modest muzzle velocities possible. Instead easy-opening bullets, such as Nosler Ballistic Tips, are favored in order to insure expansion at the lowest velocity possible. Nosler suggests that Ballistic Tips will open reliably down to 1,600 fps, so a 125-grain bullet started at 2,300 fps from a 14" .30-30 barrel will still be traveling fast enough to expand at 300 yards. Along with a much flatter trajectory, this is why many people regard the .30-30 as a better deer cartridge from a handgun! **GUNS**

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MONTANA MUSINGS

• MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO • PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO •

"THAT'S AN AWESOME WIFE!" And she is.

About midway through 2010, I was working away at this word processor when Yvonne came into my office. Without preamble she said, "If I cash in some of my stocks would you invest the money in more machine guns?" Yvonne remembers my response as an excited "You bet!" I remember it being more sedate like, "Well, if that's what you really want to do I could probably help you find some good collectible ones."

Yvonne and I are not rich, but back in the 1990s she inherited a modest amount of stocks from the estate of a great aunt. A couple of years ago when the stock market did its big flip-flop, her portfolio (I'm not even sure exactly what that is) lost about half its value. When it climbed back to where it had been, she surprised me with the above question. Her idea was to invest in something a bit more tangible than stocks.

With an offer like that on the table I did not waste time! Internet websites with ads for full-autos were browsed intently. To me "collectible" means historical: not Uzis, ARs, AKs, HKs, etc. Those things might be interesting to some folks, but my current focus is on building a collection of World War II firearms. Once I hit the website of Ohio Ordnance Works the search was over. In their "Curio and Relics" section was listed one of the very famous 7.92mm Kurz caliber German MP44s also known as the "Sturmgewehr."

That's not all: OOW also had in stock a Lewis Machine Gun. But this wasn't just any Lewis Gun. It was a Japanese one in 7.7x56mm Rimmed caliber. How an American designed machine gun, licensed for manufacture to the British, came to be built in Japanese naval arsenals is interesting. I'll be writing about both of these guns in the future.

While making arrangements with a fellow there at OOW I mentioned that it was actually my wife buying these machine guns for me. He paused for a second and then exclaimed, "Oh, that's an awesome wife!" Indeed she is.

My luck at games of chance is nil but that's OK because I gladly will trade an entire lifetime of gambling luck in exchange for finding my wife. About the time this is printed we'll have been married 33 years. We met in 1977 while both of us were working in Yellowstone National Park. Yvonne was raised on a farm in Missouri and I hailed from a small town in the coal



Duke says that while Yvonne may not be an "avid" shooter, she does have her own assortment of firearms. This Glock 23 .40 S&W is one of them.

mining area of southern West Virginia. Despite our disparate backgrounds, from day one it seemed like our relationship was perfectly natural.

A Start

At the time of our meeting, I had had published a half dozen articles in various gun magazines but hadn't touched a typewriter in four years. With a wife to support I had to get serious about a career. The very first month we were married in 1978 I got out the old portable typewriter and started again. Yvonne was 100-percent supportive of my dream of writing about guns. Her folks never commented on that, but they probably considered the idea about as goofy as my own folks did. Consider it this way: their wonderful young daughter was going to live in Montana and marry this fellow whose worldly possessions consisted of a pick-up truck, his clothing, a few guns and a dog.

Times were lean for us in the early years. To keep us fed, clothed and the bills paid I worked seasonally on a National Park Service road maintenance crew there in Yellowstone. Evenings and weekends I worked on producing articles. Yvonne picked up whatever work was available in our little Montana town of about 800 people. She never once complained that I wasn't bringing in enough money.

Eventually my career grew to a full time occupation and we were able to move to our present home with enough acreage to have my own private shooting ranges. Yvonne's love of animals evolved into a part time job at the Stafford Animal Shelter in Livingston where she works on special projects and does all their photography.



Yvonne bought her own Bobcat. Here, she and her stepfather Frank Eggers are building a fence with its post pounder mounted.



Yvonne isn't in the least intimidated by firearms. When a friend showed up at Duke's place to shoot his WWII MG 42 machine gun, Yvonne jumped right in for her turn.

At the time of this writing we are foster-home to three litters of kittens, an adult female cat recovering from a leg amputation and of all things a burro. That's all in addition to our own vast array of cats, dogs and horses.

Back in the 1990s, Yvonne had me teach her basic camera operation and dark room procedures so she could do black & white animal photos for the local animal shelter's newspaper ads. She developed such a talent for photography that soon I was begging her to do my mine also. Many readers have sent messages saying how much they appreciate her firearms photos. (Some with postscripts saying something like, "Tell Duke, his article was OK, too.")

While I wouldn't call Yvonne an avid shooter, she has her own small array of guns and has attended several Thunder Ranch classes. Last spring when a friend brought his German MG42 machine gun over, Yvonne jumped right in to give it a try. Although she has never wanted to pull the trigger on an animal, she often hunted with me. On our trip to Africa in 1985, she followed in my footsteps every day of the hunt.

My lady is multi-talented. Those include things such as horse handling to sewing ball gowns. She made the suit Clint Smith wore when he and Heidi were married and she has made several of the outfits Hank William Jr. used on stage.

Recently a friend pulled up the driveway and commented, "I see you bought a Bobcat." He meant not the critter, but one of those skid-slider pieces of machinery. I said, "No. Yvonne bought that for herself. I don't even know how to start it."

When I told Clint Smith about the OOW fellow saying I had an awesome wife he said, "That's nothing new. We already knew that!"

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OPTICS

• J A C O B G O T T F R E D S O N •

THE CAMERA SIGHT An innovative use of the simple camcorder.

I have never had an original thought in my life. And if I did, I wouldn't know what to do with it. That is not a problem for Chris Self of Selma, Ala. He is not only an innovator, he has the ability to make his ideas reality.

Some months ago I reported on a Variable Gantry Mount (VGM) built by Chris Self. Instead of using clicks on the riflescope or hashmarks for holdover, the base mount has a small handle that moves from one position to another. The positions are aligned by screws along the mount to which the small handle is moved. For a big-game rifle with a long-range, flat-shooting cartridge, you might have 10 positions, each sighted in at 100-yard increments out to 1,000 yards. Sliding the handle to the 10th position takes only a fraction of a second, and it doesn't wear out the scope's internals. It works! While that is only

an example of the mount's many uses, Chris has had great success with it on shooter's competitive guns, high-powered pistols, thunderbooming rifles, you name it.

Failing Eyes

As it turns out, Mickey Coleman, a benchrest shooter, machinist and rifle builder, whose eyesight is failing, is a friend of Chris'. Another of Chris' friends has developed macular degeneration, restricting his vision to just a few inches. Chris Self is an idea man and an innovative inventor. Give him a problem and he will not only solve it, but build it. His friends



Although this model is no longer available, the new little cameras are even more sophisticated and retail starts at around \$329. A small memory disk is mounted on the right side near the bottom. The camera will take single photos or movies of the animal, the shot or whatever you might want to record.

having problems seeing got Chris' brain churning on their plight.

Chris and Mickey found a small, inexpensive video camera and set to work. They located the image center of the camera's lens and then marked the spot on the screen with a small triangular piece of electrical tape.

They worked out the details of the camera and mount for a test run. They discovered some interesting things along the way. The camera can be used to shoot around corners, as well as some fun shooting over their shoulder, the target being behind them. The possibilities seem endless and an inexpensive way for some people to resume hunting or simply to have loads of fun.

The prototype that Chris sent me uses Chris' VGM mount. He built a camera mount to fit on top of the VGM to hold the camera and that allows windage for sighting in. That gave him an expedient way to accomplish his test run. He is currently working on another mounting system.

On A .308

Chris and Mickey had been using the camera and mount on a .22 rifle and were astonished at the variety of things it would do. I wanted to see the effects of mounting it on something larger and chose one of my .308 tactical rifles. Mounting the VGM on the Picatinny rail of the Nesika action took only seconds. I gathered up some Black Hills 175-grain match rounds and drove to the range. I stapled a 6" diameter bull on the backer,



Chris Self of Selma Alabama is the inventor of the Variable Gantry Mount (the black base mount on the Picatinny rail). In the rear of the mount is a small, knurled screw. That screw is loosened and then moved to the positions shown as white dots, representing 100 yards, 200 yards or any other yardage you set it up for. To this, Chris machined a mount (shown still in the white) to which the Sony Handicam is mounted. The screw on top of the mount is loosened and the screw on the side used to adjust windage. Chris is working on a better system, but this one proved his concept.

wondering as I did so if it would be difficult to sight the camera in. The small Sony Handicam is turned on by opening the screen. At lower powers, I could easily see where the camera was pointing, and I found the target immediately. The little camera has a 60X optical zoom. At that power, the target was very defined.

I removed the bolt and, looking through the barrel, found that when the triangular tape Chris had placed on the screen was on the target, the barrel was pointing about a foot to the left. Chris had provided windage screws on the mount, using them moved the camera to center over the rifle's bore. Chris' gantry mount provides elevation and both the camera and the bore were now on the target. The first 3-shot group was about 3/4" and low on the bull in the 5 o'clock position. That thoroughly amazed me. The rifle shoots BH 175-grain match rounds a little better than that, but even so that is with a high-power scope, a very fine crosshair and using a normal shooting technique. In this case I was using the top of Chris' little piece of tape and my head above the rifle, looking at the screen!

I readjusted the camera and shot another 3/4" group, this time a bit above the bull's center. One more adjustment



Shown above is the top of the triangular tape centered on a red dot Jacob painted on a LaRue steel target placed at 200 yards. The silhouette is 12" wide and 24" tall. The camera is still on 60X. A hunter could have the power lower, scanning for deer, then zoom to 60X for the shot—just one example of many uses. This is a 6" diameter bull (below) with a 1/2" red dot in the center at 100 yards. The camera is on 60X. Chris had placed a small, triangular piece of electrical tape at the lens' center. Jacob put the triangle's apex in the center of the small red dot and began firing.



and the next round centered the bull. I sat there looking at the camera, the bullet hole in the bull's center and thought about the possibilities of this system. The first, of course, was how this simple, inexpensive sighting system would allow many who have given up hunting because of failing eyesight, to once again put meat on the table with assurance.

Only your imagination would restrict its use. The camera's screen can be maneuvered 360 degrees. Think about the soldier wanting to keep his body behind a bunker out of direct fire but continue to place accurate rounds downrange. He could lay the weapon on the wall, tip the screen, and place the crosshair on the target and fire. He could, as well, fire around corners without exposing himself. He could have fun shooting steel plates over his shoulder, facing away from them—he could just have a lot of plain old fun.

I moved the rifle and camera system to longer ranges and found I had no problem clearly seeing targets. With the Variable Gantry Mount, it would only be a matter of moving the little handle forward to each pre-sighted-in position and voilà!

Chris thinks of his prototype as conceptual. He is working on providing a better aiming point,



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OPTICS



Jacob mounted Chris' camera sight on a .308 tactical rifle. Group No. 1 formed at about 5 o'clock on the black ring. He adjusted the windage and elevation and shot group No. 2, which formed 1-1/2" above the red dot. After a third adjustment, shot No. 3 was in the red dot. This may allow a hunter who is going blind to continue hunting at a very affordable price. The possibilities are almost endless.

crosshair or something similar. He is thinking about hooking the system to a PC to which an integrated ballistics program could be used, and he is tinkering with a more useful mounting system. Knowing Chris, I am sure he will come up with all three.

Chris and Mickey are trying to locate camera makers that might be able to incorporate a crosshair. The concept works very well, and the assumption is, the system will be relatively inexpensive and suited for sporting rifles.

Chris has already made a few of these units available to sight-impaired individuals and a group that sponsors hunting for the handicapped.

The unit will allow people to record their hunts, shots, whatever or take single pictures of them. Many cameras incorporate NVDs. Image stabilization might prove helpful. What are the effects of the camera on mirage? The concept brings up myriad questions and possible answers.

While such systems have been introduced to the military and others, they are often priced above the average person's income. What Chris and Mickey envision will be both affordable and useful. Chris says he will respond to the public to produce the mounts if there is a need. Give him a call or e-mail him through the website. I am willing to bet you will be as captivated by the usefulness of the system as I am.

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RIFLEMAN

• DAVE ANDERSON •

CLASSIC RIFLES & CARTRIDGES

Some cartridges just belong in certain rifles.

I'm more a rifle guy than a cartridge guy. Debates over hair-splitting differences between cartridges I find tedious. I'm more interested in rifle/cartridge combinations (which I'll admit is another form of hair-splitting).

The Winchester 94 rifle and .30-30 cartridge go together. So do the 1903 Mannlicher-Schoenauer and the 6.5x54 cartridge. On the other hand, pre-'64 Winchester Model 70s in .35 Remington are valuable collector's items today. They're valuable because they are scarce, and they are scarce because together, they made a stupid combination no one wanted.

The .35 Rem is a splendid short-range hunting cartridge in a light, fast-handling Marlin lever or Remington pump-action rifle. In a long, heavy bolt-action rifle it makes no sense whatsoever. I suspect the recent Winchester 95 reproductions in .270 Win will be valuable collector's items someday. Here are a few combinations, which just seem right to me:

Savage 99/.300 Savage

For at least 40 years the 99/.300 combo was tremendously popular, providing adequate power, moderate recoil and smooth operation.

Winchester 88/.284 Win

The .284 was specifically designed to give the most case capacity available in the Model 88 (and semi-auto Model 100) Winchester rifles.

Of the post-'64 rifles with basketweave checkering, 32,405 were made in .284; 35,733 were made in .308

and the same number in .243. The cartridge didn't really fail, lever-action rifles for modern cartridges failed as hunters decisively switched to bolt-actions.

Winchester 70 Featherweight/.270 Win

From the pre-'64 models through the push feeds, Classics and the current models made by FN; the Model 70 Featherweights have been outstanding rifles, with excellent handling and handsome appearance. The .270 seems right with this rifle. Actually, I love my Featherweight .30-06s about as much.

Remington 700 Mountain Rifle/.280 Rem

My Mountain Rifle is an early model with hinged floorplate and, to me, is the best of the many variations on this illustrious rifle. Certainly it would be just as good in .270 or .30-06 but the Remington cartridge in the Remington rifle just seems right.

Ed Brown Damara/7mm-08

I was surprised when Ed Brown suspended (temporarily, I hope) rifle production to focus on the 1911 line. The Damara is light, compact, perfectly balanced, accurate and reliable and is an ideal match for the 7mm-08 cartridge.

Ruger Carbine/.44 Magnum

The .44 Carbine was and is ideal for whitetail deer



The Winchester 88 in any of its four calibers is a classy rifle but Dave has always felt the .284 cartridge is a perfect match for it. The scope is a Bushnell 3-9X. The trigger moved with the lever making it impossible to pinch your trigger finger—or to get a really good trigger pull.



The 7mm-08 is a most excellent cartridge. Dave never found a better rifle for it than this Ed Brown Damara with Leupold 2.5-8X scope. Ideally balanced, light and accurate, it is mighty close to perfect.

in heavy cover, where shots come suddenly at relatively close range, either while still-hunting or on drives. It is light, short, easy to carry and adequately powerful at moderate ranges.

Today it seems everyone hunts whitetails by sitting in tree stands. Still-hunting is becoming a lost art. For its intended purpose nothing beats the .44 Ruger, but not enough hunters today want or need its capabilities.

Sako Vixen/.222 Rem

The .222 Rem is a truly classic cartridge and was wildly successful for at least 25 years after its 1950 introduction. The Sako L461 action is just right for the .222 cartridge, and Vixens, with the light sporter barrel are ideal for a walking-around varmint rifle.

Browning BLR/.358 Win

It can be argued that with modern bullets (Barnes TSX, for example) in .308 Win we don't really need the .358. Maybe so, but a heavier bullet at moderate velocity worked 50 years ago and still does today.

Currently, the Browning BLR is the only lever-action still available in .358, and a very fine rifle it is. I could do with a more subdued stock finish but these are well-made, reliable and good-looking rifles.

Weatherby Vanguard/.300 Weatherby

The Vanguard today is an amazing value. How a rifle of this quality can be sold at prices currently advertised



A few of Dave's favorite combinations include (from left) Savage 99/.300 Savage, Winchester 88/.284 (Redfield 6X), Ruger .44 (Kollmorgen 2.5X), pre-'64 Winchester 70/.270 (B&L Balvar 2.5-8X), Ed Brown Damara (Leupold 2.5-8X), Sako Vixen (Leupold 4.5-14X), Browning BLR .358 (Weaver 3-9X), CZ-550 FS 9.3x62 (Pentax 2-7X), Ruger 77 Hawkeye Compact Magnum .300 RCM (Leupold 3-9X).



Dave's Remington 700 Mountain Rifle in .280 Rem (Swarovski A-line 3-9X scope) is as nice a mule deer rifle as you can find. He shot this buck at a measured 269 yards, one shot with a 140-grain Barnes XLC. Including antlerless deer, Dave has shot maybe 25 deer with this rifle including four or five bucks around this size. Darned if it doesn't kill whitetails, too.

is beyond me. I've always felt its weight is just right for the .30 magnum cartridges.

While smaller-case .30 magnums huff and puff to shoot 180-grain bullets at 3,100 fps, the Weatherby .300 is just coasting, with another 150 fps or so available if you want it.

Ruger Hawkeye Compact Magnum/.300 RCM

This one is a gem. The rifles are, in my view, the best-handling factory rifles currently available, ideally balanced, light but not too light, short but not too short and attractive to boot.

The .300 RCM is ideal in this rifle. I see it criticized as being "only a bit more powerful than the .30-06." So it is, which is exactly what I want. With Hornady ammunition it gives around 2,900 fps with 180-grain bullets and 3,050 fps with 165-grain bullets. Using Alliant RL-17 powder I can approximate these velocities with handloads. And this in a 20" barrel, with moderate recoil.

Friends, I don't often nag but this

combo is truly exceptional and one which really needs to be recognized. At least pick one up from the shelf at your gunshop and see how nicely it handles.

Kimber Montana/.308 Win

The .308 Win has been chambered in such a wide range of rifles it is presumptuous to say it's "best" in any one model. But as a hunting rifle, the Kimber Montana just may be the one. Weighing just over 5 pounds out of the box, with scope, mounts, cartridges and sling, the weight will still be in the 6- to 6-1/2-pound range.

In any of its cartridges, the Montana is a great rifle. For all-around big-game hunting, the .308 Montana gives the most power in the handiest package.

CZ 550FS/9.3x62

The CZ rifle with full-length stock is a handsome rifle and really needs a European cartridge to go with its European styling. The ancient, time-proven 9.3x62 (similar in ballistics to the American .35 Whelen) fills the bill admirably.

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BUCK & BALL

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Combining buckshot and a bore-sized ball in a single charge is a historical and very effective answer to improving the lethality of the smoothbore in combat. It was a common load during the Revolutionary War and was the standard musket load during the War of 1812. According to Dean Thomas' 4-part opus, *Round Ball to Rimfire—A History of Civil War Small Arms Ammunition*, 69-, 71-, 72-, 73- and 75-caliber buck & ball loads were widely loaded and supplied to both sides of the struggle.

One unit, the 12th New Jersey Infantry, was so effective with their smoothbore .69 Springfield muskets so loaded, that they became known as the "Buck & Ball Regiment." The typical 69-caliber, paper-wrapped musket cartridge of the day contained three buckshot over a single roundball and was not a load you wanted to be facing if within 200 yards of the shooter.

Well, thanks to Winchester Ammunition, which must be home to some historically minded ballisticians, the famous buck & ball load, is just beginning to make a modern comeback. I suspect this reintroduction won't be the end of the buck & ball saga in our time. It's just too good of a load not to attract some

competitors' attention.

Under the Winchester Supreme Elite PDX1 label, Winchester has unveiled two very different approaches to the buck & ball load with two distinct end users in mind. The 12-gauge load is a universal load for all of us who like to have a 12 gauge handy at home or in the car just in case. The other load is a 2-1/2" .410, designed specifically to maximize the effectiveness of the Taurus Judge series of handguns and the new Circuit Judge (see the feature in this issue) revolving carbines, although the load is equally useful and effective in any .410.

Winchester's Supreme Elite PDX1 loading for the 2-3/4" 12 gauge is composed of three, copper-plated 00



Winchester's box art is not only graphic, but is accurate too.

buckshot layered in Grex buffering media over a 1-ounce Foster-type, Power Point slug—a real hammer load, clocking 1,150 fps.

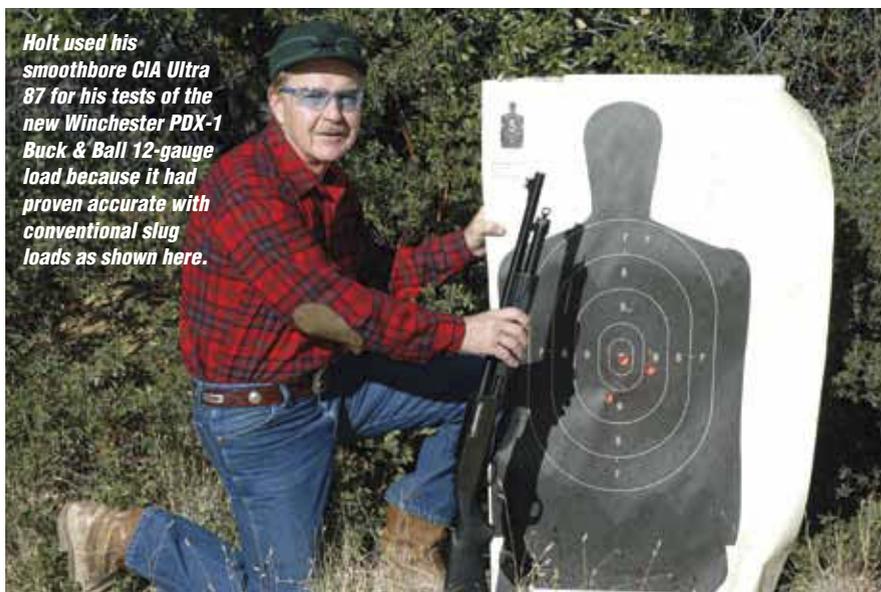
Hmm, three .33" buckshots arranged in a triangle over a .73" slug, sounds just like a Revolutionary War loading for the Brown Bess or any of the large-caliber buck & ball cartridges supplied during the American Civil War. Who was it that said "There is nothing new under the sun"? We are truly reliving ballistic history.

Something should be said about the wad column in the 12-gauge PDX1 loading because when shooting the load on paper at close range, the wads become secondary missiles and target looks like it was hit with two or three slugs. There is a 1/4" hard-plastic over-powder wad, followed by a 5/16" fiber-cushion wad, followed by a hard 3/16" card wad—three wads, three secondary missiles, which the perp unfortunately won't have the time to feel.

Odd Shape

Winchester's PDX1 personal-defense loading for the .410, and particularly for the "Judge" series of revolvers, is a bit different when we think in terms of buck & ball. The buck consists of 12 plated BBs stacked in four levels of three BBs each *under* the balls (velocity to be announced). The balls, slugs, or discs (or whatever you want to call them) are three plated, 70-grain projectiles that look like miniature flying saucers. Whoever came up with the design is a genius because the bore-size, saucer-shaped projectiles fly true and deliver lethal patterns.

For testing the new Winchester

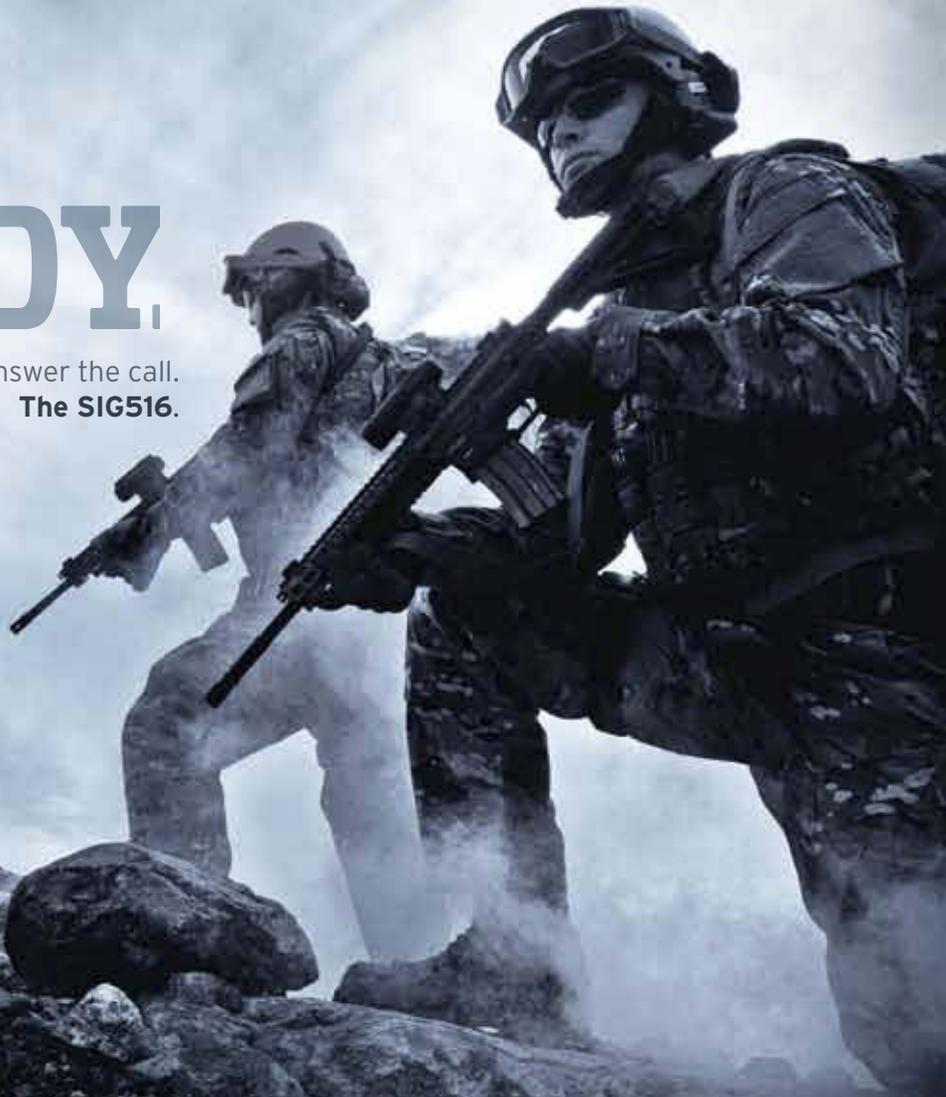


Holt used his smoothbore CIA Ultra 87 for his tests of the new Winchester PDX-1 Buck & Ball 12-gauge load because it had proven accurate with conventional slug loads as shown here.

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12-GAUGE PDX1

At 15', (left) the slug and three buckshot formed a centered group of 3-1/2" with the wads flying out into the 9 ring. Note the triangular shape of the buckshot pattern.

At 30', (middle) the slug is still

centered, the three buckshot have formed an evenly distributed triangular group of 6" around the slug, and the wads are still punching through the 9 ring.

At 50', the slug is just shy of the 10 ring at 3 o'clock and the buckshot

continues to deliver a perfect triangular group of 13" centered on the slug.

Seeing these groups, and particularly the consistent triangular dispersal of the buckshot, I can appreciate how feared the buck & ball loads were in the days of yore, plus they would double as very effective hunting loads in a smoothbore.



load, I selected a Century International Arms Model Ultra 87. The Ultra 87 is a cylinder-bore knock-off of the Remington 870 with some needed improvements which include a tang safety, a chrome-plated bore and chamber, a set of highly visible, fiber-optic open sights and a

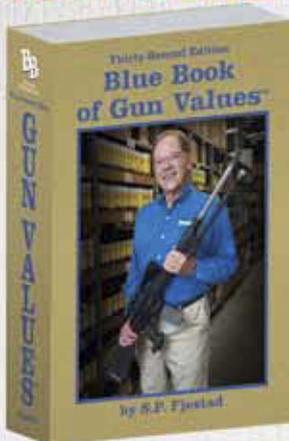
factory installed Weaver-style base for additional optics. It has proven to be the most accurate, smoothbore, slug gun in my battery.

The only "Judge" I had on hand was the Circuit Judge, Rossi's remarkable 18-1/2" barreled revolver. It's set up exactly like its shorter barreled cousins

with a 45-caliber rifled barrel and a straight-rifled choke tube that stops the shot column's rotation in the direction of the rifling. The Circuit Judge also features a set of excellent, fiber-optic open sights.

For testing the 12-gauge and .410 PDX1 loads, I selected standard

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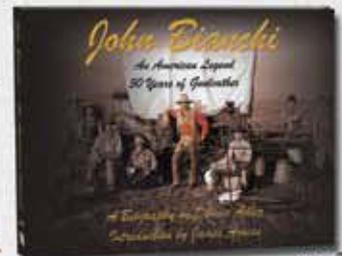
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.410 PDX1

At 15', (left) the slugs and BBs form a perfectly centered, tight group in the X and 10 rings, measuring 3-3/4" with the wad popping through in the 8 ring.

At 30', (middle) the slugs are centered in the X and 10 rings while all BBs are in or touching the 9 ring. The overall group size is 9-1/4".

At 50', two slugs cut the 10 and 8 rings while the third is a scratch hit outside the 7 ring at 9 o'clock. Eleven of the BBs impact within or touch the scoring rings and seven of those hit within the 8 ring or 9 ring. Eliminating three scratch hits, overall group size is 12".

With a cylinder full of these loads, the Judges could really drop their gavels on some miscreants. The PDX1 is an impressive self-defense loading for the .410.



B-27 profile targets and set them up arbitrarily at the distances of 15', 30' and 50'. The resulting targets pretty well speak for themselves.

Winchester's Supreme Elite PDX1, personal-defense shotgun loads should be on your dealer's shelves now. Also be looking for Winchester

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OUTTM of the BOX

JOHN TAFFIN

VARMINTS BEWARE

The Savage Model 93 .22 WMR is here.

With all the options we have today in .22 Long Rifle ammunition, as well as varmint loads for the .223 Remington and the .22-250, is the .22 Winchester Magnum Rimfire still a viable choice? The .22 Magnum is certainly a better hunting cartridge for larger varmints and small game than the .22 Long Rifle. It is not only more powerful, but it also bucks the wind better than its little brother.

Wind is something I always have to factor into the equation in my hunting areas; still days with no wind are absolutely rare. A look at both the .22 Long Rifle and the .22 Magnum from CCI reveals the latter is almost 600 fps faster at 1,900 fps. If you hunt in an area where wind is not a factor and the distances are close, the .22 Long Rifle is a real bargain as more than three boxes can be purchased for the cost of one box of .22 Magnums. The .22 Long Rifle is definitely the plinker's cartridge, however, the Magnum version wins out with the serious hunter.

For long-distance shooting the .22 Magnum doesn't even come close to the .223 or .22-250. However, at 100 yards or less, the .22 Magnum will do everything the other two will do (we

are speaking here of hunting varmints and small game). However, the Magnum has two distinct advantages. For one thing, it is much quieter and this can be a real plus in settled areas. The other advantage is cost, especially if you don't reload. Looking at the current price list from Midway, I find 100 rounds of .22 Magnum runs \$20 to \$24. For the same number of .223 and .22-250 hollowpoint varmint loads the cost is north of \$90 and more than \$100. That is a huge difference, if distances are such, the .22 Magnum will suffice.

OK, the .22 Magnum is much more powerful than the .22 Long Rifle and definitely a lot cheaper to shoot than centerfire .22s. So what rifle is a good choice? For the past summer I have

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ACTION TYPE:
Bolt action
CALIBER:
.22 WMR
CAPACITY:
5
BARREL LENGTH:
21"
OVERALL LENGTH:
40"
WEIGHT:
7.5 pounds
FINISH:
Stainless steel
SIGHTS:
None, scope bases provided
STOCK:
Brown laminated thumbhole stock
PRICE:
\$476

been using a Savage 93BTVS .22 Magnum. I went with the Savage as I had experienced such excellent results with the Model 14 Savage chambered in .250-3000 (see October 2008). Savage catalogs listed several .22 Magnum bolt-action rifles, however, I was interested in a heavy-barreled varmint rifle. I naturally went to the Model 93. This version has a heavy stainless steel button-rifled barrel and the action is bolted into a man-sized brown laminated stock. Both stainless steel and lamination are good choices for heavy-duty and/or wet weather shooting.

The stock has a generous pistol grip, thumbhole and high cheekpiece for easy scope use. The stock has a wide forearm with three relatively large ventilation slots under the barrel. The stock also has a rubber buttplate and sling swivel studs. Two studs are found at the forearm allowing for both the use of a sling, and with a weight of 7-1/2 pounds a sling is desirable for any situation requiring much walking,



John found the Savage Model 93 was pleasant, the .22 WMR chambering reasonably inexpensive for the power and very accurate.



The Savage Model 93 bolt-action .22 WMR features a laminated stock, heavy stainless steel barrel and the Savage AccuTrigger.

and also a detachable bipod. This Savage comes with no sights, however scope bases are provided. So far I have been using an older K4 Weaver scope pulled off of another rifle, but by next season I expect to have a higher-powered variable scope in place.

The detachable magazine holds five rounds and the Model 93 has the excellent Savage AccuTrigger, which is not only great in its own right, but it also has resulted in other manufacturers putting decent triggers in their bolt-action rifles. The pushbutton safety is located behind the bolt on the right side of the receiver. I find it much easier to operate with the trigger finger rather than unwrapping my thumb from around the thumbhole in the stock and then having to put it back in place.

As per my usual practice, test firing was done with the Savage Model 93, which allowed me one throwaway

SAVAGE MODEL 93 BTVS .22 WMR/WEAVER K4 SCOPE .22 WMR FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES, 50 YARDS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES, 100 YARDS)
CCI Maxi-Mag	1,767	3/8	2-1/4
CCI Maxi-Mag HP	1,891	1/4	1-3/8
CCI Maxi-Mag TNT	2,283	7/8	1-7/8
CCI Maxi-Mag +V HP	2,151	3/8	1-3/8
Winchester HP	1,825	7/8	2-1/4

Notes: Chronograph set at 10' from muzzle.
Accuracy measurement is the best 4 of 5 shots.

round. That is, five shots were fired, but only the best four shots were measured for groups. This relieves stress on me. I find it a lot easier to concentrate if I know I can mess up one shot without being penalized, even by myself. Five different .22 Magnum Rimfire types of ammunition were tried, four from CCI and one from Winchester.

It is easy to see the effect the wind has in moving from 50 to 100 yards. The highest velocity was attained

with CCI's Maxi-Mag TNT at just less than 2,300 fps. The best shooting load at both 50 and 100 yards is CCI's Maxi-Mag HP at 1/4" and 1-3/8", respectively with a muzzle velocity of the just less than 1,900 fps. It is followed very closely by CCI's Maxi-Mag +V HP at 2,150 fps and 3/8" and 1-3/8", respectively. With a retail price of \$476, I consider the Savage Model 93 a real bolt-action .22 Magnum Rimfire bargain.

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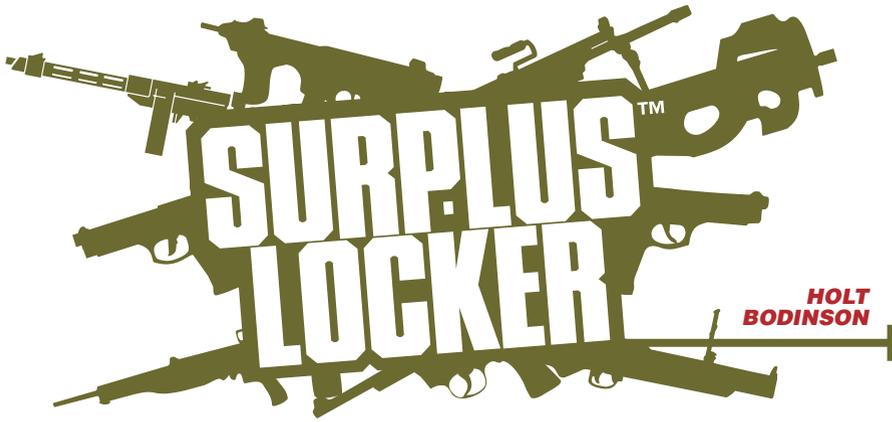


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THE GENERAL'S TOMMY GUN

The Auto-Ordnance M1.

Known as the “Chicago Piano,” “Chopper,” “Thompson,” “Tommy Gun” and the “Gun that Made the '20s Roar,” General John Taliaferro Thompson’s submachine gun shot its way into history in the hands of soldiers, sailors, policemen, G-men and the likes of Pretty Boy Floyd, John Dillinger, Machine gun Kelly, the Baker gang and—let’s not forget—the silver screen of Hollywood.

While it still endures on the wide screen as the classic American “gangster” gun, the Tommy Gun took good care of its legitimate handlers from WWII through Korea and into Vietnam. Now, thanks to the work of Kahr’s Auto-Ordnance Corporation, we, too, can enjoy owning and shooting this American military icon.

“Our boys in the infantry, now in the trenches, need a small machine gun, a gun that will fire 50 to 100 rounds, so light that he can drag it with him as he crawls on his belly from trench to trench, and wipe out a whole company single-handed,” wrote General John T. Thompson in the closing days of WWI.

Thompson was a West Pointer, a distinguished small-arms ordnance officer at the Springfield and Rock Island Arsenals, earning the unofficial title, “Father of the Springfield Rifle.” After conducting the famous Thompson-LaGarde handgun ammunition tests in 1904, Thompson championed the development of the .45 ACP cartridge and the adoption of the Colt Model 1911.

He was an outspoken advocate of putting greater automatic firepower into the hands of front-line troops—a position that did not endear him to his more conservative ordnance associates, who remembered that Thompson was responsible for



Holt found the notch on top of the fixed rear sight (above) provided a better sight picture than the peep. The Thompson’s oddly shaped buttplate (below) is not easy to shoulder. It’s better under the armpit!



enabling 2nd Lt. John Parker to sneak a battery of Gatling guns over to Cuba for use in the battle of San Juan Hill.

So in November 1914, Thompson suddenly announced his retirement and went to work for the Remington Arms Company to design and supervise the construction of the famous Eddystone arms plant for the production of the Enfield Pattern 14 in



The Auto-Ordnance M1 handles just like the real deal except for the longer 16-1/2" barrel.



Just like the wartime model, the new Auto-Ordnance M1 accepts stick magazines only, no drums.

303 British and later to build another new plant at Bridgeport, Conn., for the production of the Russian Mosin-Nagant. But his burning ambition was to build a small automatic weapon.

Auto-Ordnance Formed

His break came in 1916. With financing from a wealthy businessman, Thomas Fortune Ryan, and the engineering talent of John Blish, who had developed the "Blish lock" for retarded blowback actions; Thompson established the Auto-Ordnance Corporation with his son, Mercellus Thompson. Soon thereafter, Thompson hired a chief ordnance engineer, Theodore Eickhoff, a self-taught mechanical genius, Oscar Payne, and a general mechanic, George Goll.

After developing and refining a long series of prototypes, by 1921 Auto-Ordnance had developed what it branded as a "submachine gun" with the features and distinctive appearance of what would thereafter be known as the Tommy Gun.

Not having any production capability, Auto-Ordnance contracted with the Colt's Patent Manufacturing Co. to manufacture 15,000 Model 1921s. The selective-fire Model 1921AC incorporated a finned, 10-1/2" barrel, a Cutts compensator, a Lyman ladder sight adjustable to 600 yards, a top-mounted cocking handle or actuator milled open through the middle so the sights were visible, and a cyclic rate of 800 rpm. It was neither a commercial nor a military success with only 10,300 guns sold by 1928, most being purchased by local police departments and civilian users, including the rogues' gallery of



Auto-Ordnance's Thompsons are properly stamped in the right places.



Prohibition-era gangsters.

The first US Government purchase of the Tommy Gun was, strangely enough, by the US Postal Service in the late 1920s, which issued them to the US Marines who were assigned to guard the country's mail trains. The Marines liked the Thompsons and went on to use them with great effect in jungles of Nicaragua and streets of China, but requested that the cyclic rate be reduced to 600 rpm. The resulting model was branded the Model 1928 and was also adopted in limited numbers by the Army for its motorcycle scouts and armored car personnel.

By 1940, 24 years after the Auto-Ordnance Company was formed, total production of the Thompson was limited to Colt's original 15,000-gun contract. WWII changed that overnight. Colt ceased making the Thompson, and Savage was selected

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to undertake production in 1939, later to be supplemented by a new Auto-Ordnance plant in Bridgeport, Conn.

While the classy looking Model 1928A1 was adopted by Britain and the United States in the early years of the war, it proved too complex and expensive to make in the numbers needed on the front lines. Consequently, a wartime production model was designed by 1942 that eliminated the finned barrel, Blish lock, Lyman adjustable sight, Cutts compensator, fine walnut stocks, vertical handgrip and drum magazines.



Shot from the hip at 25 yards (above) the Thompson proved it's more than just a spray-and-pray rig. The Thompson M1 is superbly accurate at 50 yards (below) with the right sight picture.



In their place were a smoothly profiled barrel, a simple blowback action with the cocking handle moved to the right-hand side of the receiver, a fixed "L" shaped rear peep sight, a horizontal forearm, sling swivels and 20- and 30-round stick magazines. It was branded the Model M1. A few months later, its floating firing pin and hammer system was eliminated and replaced by a fixed firing pin machined into the face of the open-firing bolt. It was christened the Model M1A1. Military production ceased in 1944 with approximately 1,500,000 Thompsons having been manufactured.

Following the war, Numrich Arms Co. acquired all the Auto-Ordnance patents, trademarks and tooling for the Thompson lines. In the 1990s, Kahr Arms, owned by Kook Jin Moon, acquired all rights to the Auto-Ordnance line from Numrich, and today Kahr's Auto-Ordnance company manufactures standard, lightweight, short-barreled rifle, short-barreled pistol and display models of the 1927 A-1 semi-automatic Thompson, plus standard and short-barreled versions of a semi-automatic M1.

WWII Classic

The new Auto-Ordnance M1 pictured here is an incredibly fine rendition of the WWII Thompson classic. It looks, feels, functions and shoots like the real deal. The receiver is CNC machined from a solid billet of steel. The barrel is hammer forged. All the wood is an upgraded quality of walnut. The markings are in the right places, and there's even the famous "Thompson bullet" trademark on top of the receiver. It just shouts "quality."

Weighing 11 pounds, 4 ounces with an empty 30-round stick magazine, the M1 is just about 7 ounces heavier than the WWII M1A1; the extra ounces being in the M1's barrel which is 6" longer than the WWII version. The weight of the Thompsons in general is a primary reason the Tommy Gun was so easy to shoot in full-auto mode, particularly from the hip with the butt snuggled up under your armpit. Auto-Ordnance also makes an aluminum receiver for some of its models, which reduces the corresponding weights considerably.

The "L" shaped, fixed rear sight of the M1 is wartime correct. It has an aperture for 100 yards and a small notch at the top for a 200-yard zero. Given the sizable drop of the Thompson buttstock that eliminates the possibility of obtaining a firm spot weld, and the overly generous size of the aperture; I found that using the

THOMPSON MODEL M1

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ACTION TYPE:
Straight blowback

CALIBER:
.45 ACP

CAPACITY:
30

BARREL LENGTH:
16-1/2"

OVERALL LENGTH:
38-3/4"

WEIGHT:
11 pounds, 4 ounces

FINISH:
Black oxide

SIGHTS:
Fixed "L" type rear, blade front

STOCK:
Walnut

PRICE:
\$1,334

rear notch, rather than the aperture, produced tighter groups at 50 yards—much tighter, in fact, from 2-1/2" to 1" and about 6" above the point of aim.

For the rattle guns, I buy the biggest, cheapest boxes of .45 ACP 230-grain FMJ available, and locally that means Remington's 250-round "Mega Packs" under the UMC brand. It's excellent ammo, feeds perfectly and averaged 915 fps over my PACT Professional chronograph.

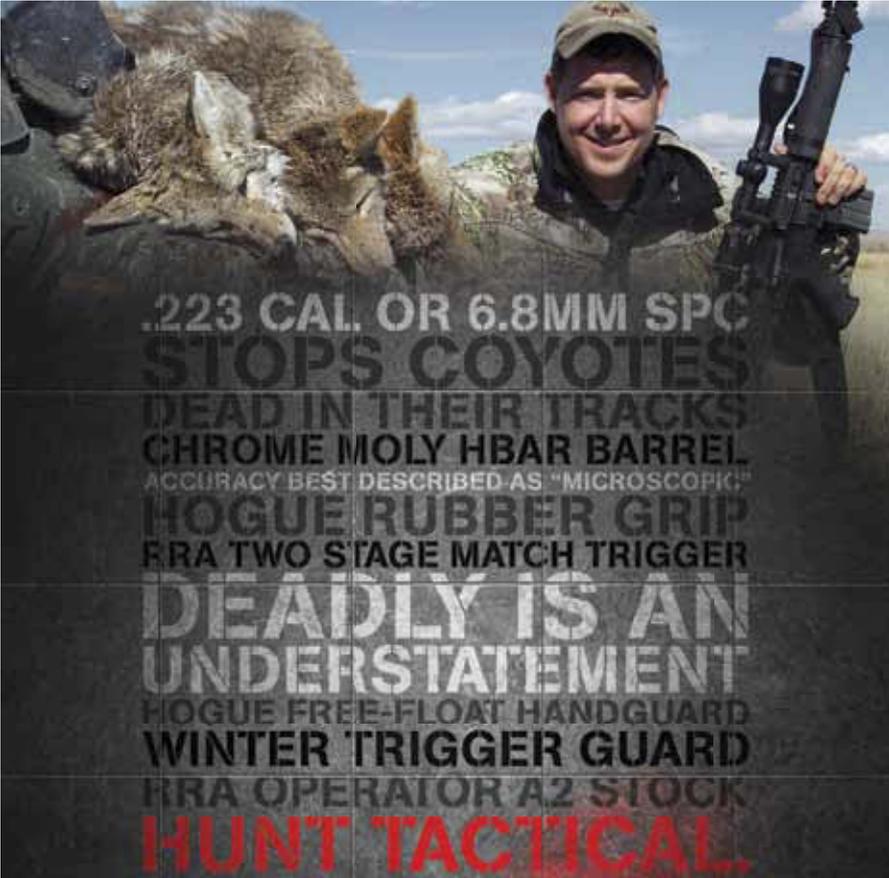
After doing some group shooting at 50 yards, I thought I'd try some hip shooting. In the truck was an M16A1 feedback target sporting a rather nice body profile. Set up at 25 yards, it absorbed the best part of 20 rounds fired with the butt tucked into my armpit. Given the odd reverse slope of the Thompson butt plates, I have a hunch more Thompsons were fired from the hip than the shoulder.

Tommy Guns are simply the coolest looking milsurps around. Auto-Ordnance's current models are historically correct, superbly built and a hoot to own and shoot. And if you haven't been to the movies lately, be sure to check out *Public Enemies* at your local video store. It's Hollywood's latest Tommy Gun extravaganza! **GUNS**

FURTHER READING

THE GUN THAT MADE THE TWENTIES ROAR BY WILLIAM J. HELMER, HARDCOVER, 286 PAGES, ©1969. OUT-OF-PRINT. TRY ABE BOOKS FOR USED COPIES (WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/ABEBOOKS).

THE THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN BY MARTIN PEGLER. SOFTCOVER, 80 PAGES, ©2010, \$17.95. OSPREY PUBLISHING. WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/OSPREYPUBLISH



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Q&A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

• JEFF JOHN •

Too Hot

Q: I shoot and reload for both the .44 Remington Magnum and the .44 S&W Special. Both are S&W, one a Model 29 and the other a short-barreled M624. Recently while shooting the .44 Special I inadvertently loaded one round of .44 Mag (180-grain JHP). The round fit fine. I tried a 245-grain LRNFP which did not go all the way in the chamber. The overall length on the 180-grain round was 1.595", while the 245 was 1.616". If I accidentally shoot one of the .44 Mag rounds will I blow up the .44 Special?

Evan Hamilton
via e-mail



The .44 Magnum (left, foreground) has a maximum case length of 1.285" compared to the .44 Special's length of 1.160". It is possible for a .44 Magnum to be crimped heavily enough to chamber in a .44 Special especially if the Magnum's case length is on the shorter side of the tolerance. Such a mistake could lead to dangerously high pressures. Note the position of the .44 Magnum case in the S&W's .44 Special cylinder. Properly crimped, the .44 Mag will not chamber in a .44 Special.

A: S&W has been heat treating the cylinders on all its N-frame revolvers since well before WWII. Elmer Keith liked the S&W .44 Special for his heavy loads, which led to the creation of the .44 Magnum. The problem you will run into is the case length of the .44 Magnum is greater than the .44 Special's (as you know) and a .44 Magnum round *should not* chamber in the Special's cylinder. I suspect the 180-grain load has too

heavy of a crimp, which has allowed the round to chamber. If you inadvertently shoot this round, the brass will not be able to open up enough to release the bullet. This could lead to dangerous pressures that could be high enough to damage the revolver. Do your best to keep your ammo segregated.

Savage 99 Hi-Power

Q: I have a Savage Model 99 in the .22 Hi-Power caliber and no longer can find ammunition for it. I thought you might be able to point me in the right direction.

Jeff Wood
via e-mail

A: The .22 Savage Hi-Power is still loaded by Norma of Sweden as the 5.62x52R. It has the proper 71-grain, .227" softpoint bullet and the stock number is 15604. Although the importer, Black Hills Shooters Supply, does not sell directly to the consumer, they can provide a list of stocking dealers if your local store won't order it for you. As an aside, I'd save the brass if I were you and plan on reloading the cartridge. Hornady still offers the proper 70-grain .227" bullet (stock number 2280). Sometimes ammo like this is only loaded seasonally due to limited demand, although it is still popular in Europe.

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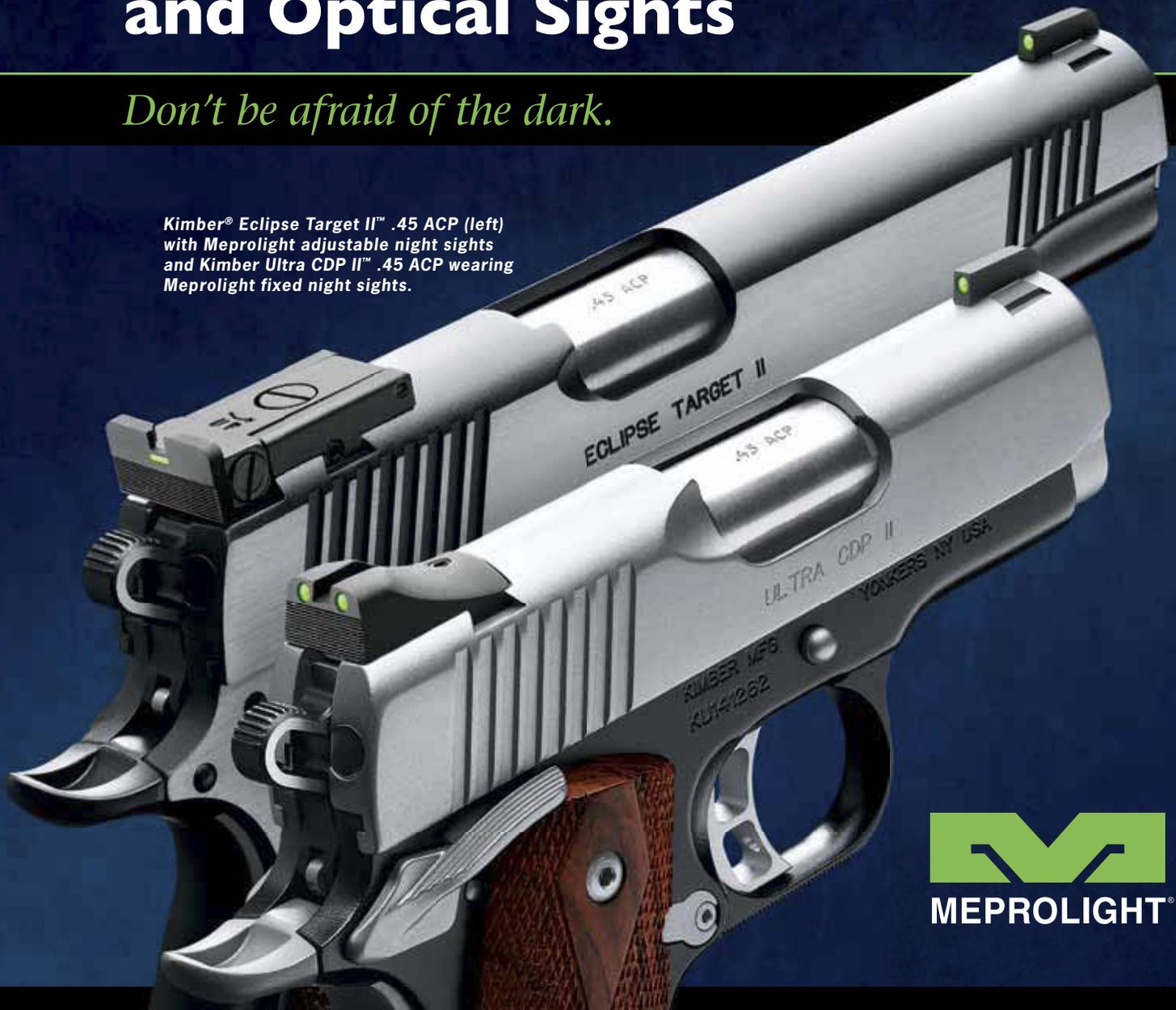
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As a dual-caliber, revolving carbine, the versatile Circuit Judge can fulfill many roles (above) in the hunting and self-defense arena. Out of the box on the day of its arrival, Holt shot a limit of doves with the Circuit Judge.

The Circuit Judge Arrives

And quickly renders a decision on doves.

HOLT BODINSON

If anyone had told me I could unpack an awkward looking, .410/.45 Colt revolving carbine, grab two boxes of 7-1/2s, head for the field and shoot a limit of 10 doves that same afternoon, I wouldn't have believed them for a moment. Yet, that's exactly the way it happened. I came away from that unique introduction to Rossi's Circuit Judge with a profound respect for this new model, and the more I wring it out, the more I admire the design and its overall concept.



To comply with game laws, a factory plug limits the loaded cylinder to three shells.

The concept of a revolving cylinder rifle, carbine or shotgun is not new. In fact, it dates back to the flintlock era. By the time the percussion period rolled around, numerous makers, both here and abroad, were manufacturing a variety of revolving long guns. Probably, the best known were the Remingtons and Colts. The Circuit Judge strongly resembles a Remington, which was introduced as a percussion and later converted to cartridge.

The Circuit Judge is a 5-shooter. It functions just like a conventional double- or single-action revolver and is enhanced with the Taurus Security

System, permitting the owner to lock the gun with the turn of a key. The sighting system is a bit more elaborate with both a factory installed scope ring base, as well as adjustable, 3-dot open sights.

The stocking, particularly the pistol-grip butt, is unconventional and looks like that of a T/C Contender or Encore, but overall it's comfortable and makes up in performance what it lacks in esthetics. The stretched cylinder accepts .45 Colt cartridges and 2-1/2" and 3" .410 shotshells. Its 18.5" barrel is rifled and is fitted with two essential choke tubes, which have to be changed

out depending on whether you're shooting .45s or .410s.

The shotshell tube sports deep, straight rifling lands and grooves. When a shotshell is fired, the plastic wad is seized by the rifling in the barrel and rotates down the barrel in right hand or clockwise direction. The purpose of the straight-rifled tube is to stop the wad's rotation, to straighten it out and assure the shot charge is delivered straight ahead. If the tube was not there, the rotating wad and shot charge would fly off to the right and down, as many early Judge revolver owners found to their dismay.



Light, handy, versatile and safe, the Circuit Judge is a serious fun gun for the whole family.

The shotshell tube delivered great patterns on doves and on paper. The 3" loads I was using on doves included Federal, Remington and Winchester brands stoked with 11/16 ounces of No. 7-1/2 shot. Out of the 10 doves taken that afternoon, two fell at 41 and 43 yards respectively. That's a stretch for a .410, but the Circuit Judge hammered his gavel.

The Federal shells were a tight fit in the chambers and difficult to extract. I would recommend shooting the Remington and Winchester brands. Another interesting point about the Federal is that they have a roll crimp rather than a star crimp. On patterning paper, the roll crimped Federals delivered a thinner, more open pattern than the star crimped Remington and Winchester.

The most intriguing .410 load I tested was Winchester's new personal-defense loading consisting of 3-plated, 70-grain, disk-like projectiles and 12-plated BBs. The Supreme Elite "PDX1" ammunition delivered tight patterns with the straight-rifled tube and chopped the heart out of B-27 silhouette targets at 15', 30' and 50'. The PDX1 loading really makes the

.410 a reasonable and easy-to-shoot, personal-defense firearm. (See Holt's "Shotgunner" column, this issue.)

The only exception I can think of to using the straight-rifled choke tube for .410 loads would be when shooting rifled slugs. In that case, the .45 Colt tube is the one to use.

One modification I would find useful would be the addition of a secure compartment in the buttstock to store the alternative choke tube and choke-tube wrench. Otherwise, you're up a creek when in the field and you want to change from .410 to .45 Colt or vice versa and don't have those little parts jingling around in your pockets.

The company wisely supplies a game-law compliant "plug," which blocks off two chambers in the cylinder, to make the Circuit Judge a 3-shooter.

Reverse Threads

Be warned. The choke tubes are cut with a left-hand thread without any reference to that fact in the early owners' manuals whatsoever. To loosen the tubes, you must turn them clockwise with the supplied choke-tube wrench.

The .45 Colt tube is simply a full-diameter extension of the bore. It's there only to protect the choke-tube threads. I had two .45 Colt loads on hand—the Winchester 225-grain Silvertip HP and my standard handload consisting of 8 grains of Unique and a 255-grain Keith-type, cast bullet. Before firing .45 Colt ammunition, after a run of shotshells, it's essential to thoroughly clean the barrel to remove plastic-wad residue scraped off by the rifling. Shooters Choice and the nylon bore brush supplied with the Circuit Judge made quick work of the job.

At 25 yards from a rest, the Winchester Silvertip would spread out to 4" to 5", while my handload would cluster five shots nicely into 1-1/2" to 2". Other factory loads may improve groups a bit, but the old, standard 8 grains of Unique handload is hard to beat in any .45 Colt.

So what's the Circuit Judge good for? On one level, it's a great fun gun. Because it's light, safe and handy, and churns up a minimum of recoil,



The old, standard .45 Colt handload assembled around 8 grains of Unique and a 255-grain SWC is hard to beat.



The Circuit Judge threw excellent patterns with the 3" shell and 11/16-ounce of No. 7-1/2 shot.



it would be a neat gun for family outings. On another level, it's perfectly adequate for hunting birds and small-to-medium-size mammals. On another level, loaded with either .45 Colt or PDX1, it's a serious personal-defense arm and rather imposing to look at from the muzzle end.

A second model of the Circuit Judge has just been introduced. It's a .410 smoothbore only, fitted with a Briley choke tube. Frankly, I favor the versatility of the .410/.45 Colt model.

Overall, the Circuit Judge would be a useful survival tool, but my emphasis would be on the fun end of the spectrum! I'll never forget that last day of the dove season when the Circuit Judge arrived in town—never.



CIRCUIT JUDGE

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IMPORTER: BRAZTECH, INT'L

16175 N.W. 49TH AVE.

MIAMI, FL 33014

(305) 474-0401

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ACTION TYPE:

Double-action revolver

CALIBER:

.410 2-1/2" or 3" shotshell, .45 Colt

CAPACITY:

5

BARREL LENGTH:

18.5"

OVERALL LENGTH:

36"

AVERAGE WEIGHT:

4.45 pounds

FINISH:

Blue

SIGHTS:

3-dot adjustable

STOCK:

Hardwood

ACCESSORIES:

Choke tubes, tube wrench, safety keys, hammer extension, bore brush

PRICE:

\$618



MASSAD AYOOB
PHOTOS: ROBBIE BARRKMAN

It's geared for maximum performance at minimum price, particularly for competitive action-pistol shooting. Match-tested and bench-tested, it lived up to its promise.

Lots of 1911 makers are offering commemorative guns this year, some in the original format of 100 years ago. Springfield Armory has just introduced one that's a retrospective, not all the way back to the years before WWI, but to the golden years of this pistol's renaissance in the latter 20th Century.

In the '70s, "the hot setup" in a 1911 had evolved into the following: The chamber would be throated to feed a bull's-eye shooter's stubby semi-wadcutter, or the Hensley & Gibbs

No. 68 200-grain lead bullet favored by the "martial artists" of the 1911.

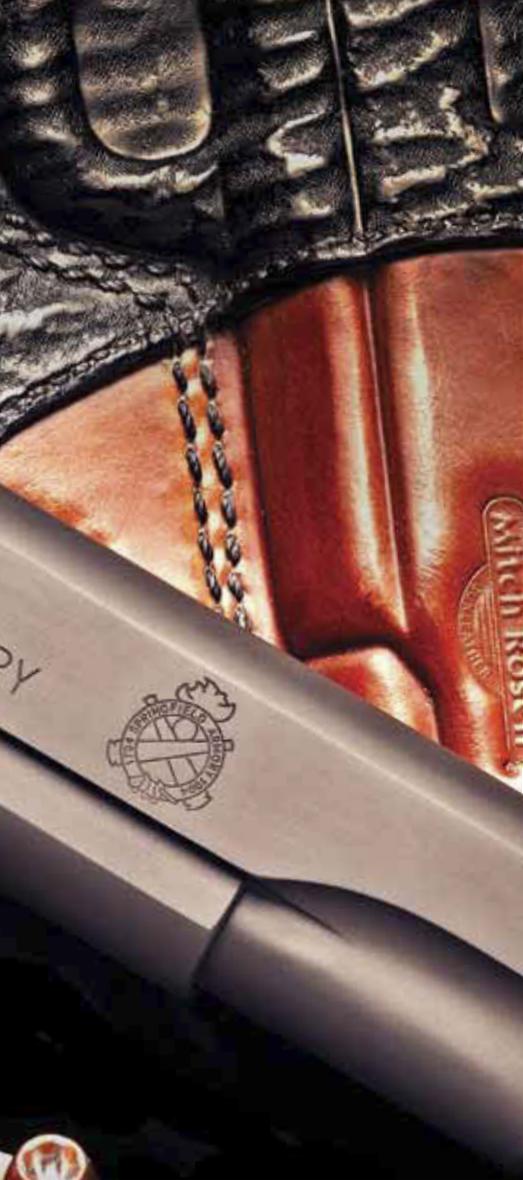
There would be the big, easy-to-see sights that Jeff Cooper mandated, fixed on a combat gun; and for competition, probably the fine adjustable BoMars that were already established on "hardball guns" in the bull's-eye game. A decent trigger pull, a manual safety easy for the thumb to find and maybe the beavertail grip safeties that were gaining popularity, and you were good to go. If you'd paid to have it customized to those specs (and how

else were you going to get it?), you felt cheated if it wouldn't group five shots in 2" at 25 yards. If "combat shooting" was on the menu, the magazine well would probably be beveled, too. That pretty much describes the newest Springfield Armory 1911-A1.

"I believe you're the first one outside the company to get one," Springfield Armory's Chad Dyer told me in October 2010. Chad added, "We have nailed down everything for the 1911 you have. We are calling it the Range Officer (RO). It was designed to be an affordable 1911 that would be perfect for people interested in getting into competition. It is designed to the same specifications and tolerances as our Trophy Match and TRP models. We removed all of the 'extras' to keep the costs down and the quality up. It will

The Range Is

RO



The new Range Officer uses a conventional recoil-spring system (right) rather than a guide rod and a 16-pound spring is provided.



The signature feature of the new Springfield Armory Range Officer is a BoMar-style, fully-adjustable rear sight. A single-side speed safety, beavertail grip safety, lightened hammer and aluminum trigger round out the package.



be available by the time your article is published and the retail will be \$939.”

It was available sooner than that, advertised as ready to ship by mid-November 2010. Chad sent me the specs: “PI9128, .45 ACP Model, Parkerized. Full-size carbon steel frame w/beveled mag well. Premium 5” stainless steel barrel with bushing. Beavertail-grip safety, extended thumb safety, dovetail-target front sight, low-profile adjustable rear sight. Aluminum speed trigger, flat-checked mainspring housing, Delta hammer, Cocobolo checkered grips with cross cannon logo. Two, 7-round magazines and gear package.”

The gun arrived fitting that description. Full-length guide rod and forward slide serrations, popular these days, were both absent. I for one was fine with that. Trigger pull was crisp

and averaged just over 4 pounds on a Lyman digital gauge from Brownells. There was a lot of trigger “backlash,” but an Allen wrench applied to the RO’s adjustable trigger fixed that quickly.

Accuracy

I took the RO to the concrete bench on the 25-yard line with my new Caldwell Matrix rest from Battenfeld Technologies, and with three brands of ammo that encompassed the three most popular bullet weights in .45 ACP.

For 185 grain, I used the Remington 185-grain JHP from their green-and-yellow box Express line. This load has been around since the 1970s, tweaked to expand better and proven to be pretty effective “on the street.” It has about the same ogive as hardball,

and earned a reputation early on as feeding in any .45 ACP that would feed hardball.

None of that has changed. Off the handy Matrix rest, with the sights just as they came from the factory, it plunked three of the Remingtons tight atop the .70” diameter aiming dot on the target, and two in a double just below it. Total 5-shot group measured 1.70”, with the best three of those hits in a near-cloverleaf that went a mere .65” center to center.

To represent the 200-grain weight range, I used the new Wilson Combat brand XTP-HP, loaded to a nominal 975 fps velocity from a 5” barrel like the one in the new RO. The 5-shot group measured 1.55”, with four of those shots in a hair under an inch, and a mere .65” separating the best three of those hits, measured center

Springfield Armory’s new Range Officer 1911 .45 ACP.

The Range Is

HOT



MODEL 1911-A1
CAL. 45

American Made Export
FACTORY

Performance

SPRING



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GUNS

MAGAZINE

to center to the nearest .05". Recoil was mild.

Finally, I loaded the RO with one of today's police-world standards in .45 ACP duty ammo, Speer's bonded 230-grain Gold Dot LE round. This one shot a group 2.70" wide by just a tad over 1" high, centering just under the aiming dot. Four of those rounds were in a bit under 1.5", and the best three of them (including a tight double), in .85".

The reason I include those "measurements within measurements" is that over the years, I've become convinced if an experienced shooter fires five shots from a bench rest without feeling a bad one go, and measures both all five and the best three, the latter measurement generally comes very close to what the same gun/ammo combination is likely to do with all five shots from a machine rest. By that standard, the "best three" group measurements were .65" for 185-grain Remington JHP, an identical .65" for the Wilson Combat 200-grain XTP-HP, and .85"

for the Speer Gold Dot 230-grain, an average of under .75". The hand-held groups when measured for all five shots were 1.70" for Remington, 1.55" for Wilson ammo and 2.70" for Speer, averaging just less than 2". This, of course, included unnoticed human error on the part of the shooter, the element the "best three" measurement hopefully factors out.

As an afterthought, I tried it with a much-favored bullseye load, Federal's 185-grain Gold Medal Match mid-range round, running at such low velocity Camp Perry shooters colloquially call it "softball." As a rule of thumb, you need a lighter recoil spring than standard for this low-impulse load to work the slide, and sure enough, the one malfunction of the test occurred with this cartridge; a failure to eject that was quickly cleared with a rack of the slide. The five shots went into 2.45" center to center, with the best three in 1.40".

Any way you look at it, the Springfield Armory RO showed us

decent accuracy for a sub-\$1,000 1911.45.

The logical way to test a gun designed for practical shooting competition is to run a match with it. Unfortunately, I couldn't fit any into the schedule until two days before this magazine's deadline. For starters, I shot a couple of timed courses with it.

One was the IDPA Classifier, an excellent test of a pistol's "shootability." The barely beveled magazine well slowed down reloads, and rushing the shots to make up for that—never a winning strategy—I wound up dropping 18 points over the course of 90 shots, which added 9 seconds to my time. That put me out of Master classification, but solidly into high Expert. The Classifier course can be found in the IDPA Rule Book on their website.

NRA Course

The next thing I ran was NRA's Police Service Auto course. One-handed in close, six shots in 8 seconds (accomplished with the Range Officer in under 5) resulted in all center-X hits. At 7 yards, 6-reload-and-6, 2-handed in 20 seconds put 11 shots in the X-ring and one in the 10. The same drill at the same speed from 15 yards found me rushing my last shot to make the time, and pulling it into the 9 ring, my first point down. The 25-yard stage went great for the six shots from kneeling and the six from right-hand barricade, all 10s and Xs. Alas, with my non-dominant hand running the Range Officer .45 on the left side barricade, I got sloppy and didn't get enough of my left index finger into the triggerguard. That caused me to push four more shots into the 9 ring.

The result was a 475 out of a possible 480, or roughly 99 percent. I've seen that win Police Service Pistol matches at the local level, though that score won't get you the National Championship. This past year, that honor was won with a 480 out of 480 possible—with 46 of those hits in the tie-breaking center-X ring—fired by Kevin Worrell of the US Border Patrol. I didn't come close to that with 475. The point is, those five 9-point hits were my fault, not the gun's. The Range Officer was definitely capable of a national championship score, even though the tester wasn't.

Complaints? In shooting, I found the manual safety a little sharp around the edges, and the square edges of the BoMar-clone adjustable sights will dig your side and tear up your coat linings in concealed carry, just as much as the originals did when many of us carried them a quarter century ago. A bit of time with a Dremel and some





The Federal 185-grain Match "softball" shot a little low at 25 yards, fed fine, but didn't always cycle the slide due to low velocity. A switch of recoil springs is all that is needed.



Mas found the sights "on" right from the box at 25 yards with the RO and 185-grain Remington JHP.



Street-proven, 230-grain Speer Gold Dot grouped well from RO at 25 yards. Note double in low center hole.

cold blue can fix that. I would also add a magazine-well funnel if I was using this pistol seriously for IDPA or similar competition.

The sight dimensions duplicate what I remember from the real BoMars of my younger days. Over the years, we learned to make the rear notch deeper and wider, and the front post narrower. I'd like to see Springfield do the same with the sights on the RO.

In the testing at my range, the Springfield RO perked reliably with everything except the light load it wasn't "sprung for," and even then only malfed once out of five shots. According to Dave Williams, head of the Springfield Armory Custom

Shop, the Range Officer comes with a 16-pound recoil spring. Most 1911s find this just too much to compress with light-load recoil. Dave recommends a 14- or 15-pound spring for the Federal Gold Medal mid-range load. With that in mind, I can't blame the pistol for a single failure to eject when I fed it a load I knew would probably be too light to operate the recoil spring.

Match-Tested

As deadline approached, I hit Lance Biddle's monthly IDPA event at The Gun Shop in Leesburg, Florida. Lance is well known in IDPA for creating devilishly difficult scenarios, and two days before deadline I was there making headshots 10 to 15 yards away in total darkness with a Springfield Range Officer mated with my ever-present SureFire Aviator flashlight. They worked together well enough for me to win that stage overall.

There was firing in light dim enough to require photo-flash, from 25 yards, and other challenging stages. The RO got the hits for me, (there were more moments I wished for a truly funneled magazine well) and I had my one and only malfunction with a service load. After the last shot of one stage, the slide failed to lock back on a Wilson magazine when the gun ran dry, and the hammer followed the slide forward. Had a reload been required, I could have simply shoved a fresh mag in, racked the slide and gone back to work.

When I got home, I was unable to duplicate the malf. Ammo was full-power Remington UMC 230-grain .45 hardball, running at around 194,000 power factor, based on the last time ammo from the same lot was chronographed at an IDPA state championship. (Minimum power factor in IDPA Custom Defense Pistol division, where 1911 .45s compete, is 165,000.) Since it happened on the last shot of the run, it didn't cause any problems. By that time, the gun was at somewhere around 500 rounds, and had not been cleaned (though it had been lubed) since the start of shooting.

I finished the match as winner in the Custom Defense Pistol (.45 auto) division, and second overall in both speed and accuracy with the RO. The only guy I couldn't beat on either count was Five-Gun Master Jon Strayer, firing another Springfield Armory product, the 9mm XD, to win Enhanced Service Pistol division and the overall match. Jon's a better shot than me anyway, so from my point of view, the Springfield RO had delivered.

Let's put this in perspective. Twenty-five-years ago, a gun with these features, that shot like this would cost

RANGE OFFICER

MAKER: SPRINGFIELD ARMORY
420 W. MAIN ST.
GENESEO, IL 61254
(800) 680-6866
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/SPRINGFIELDARMORY

ACTION TYPE:

Locked breech, semi-auto

CALIBER:

.45 ACP

CAPACITY:

7+1

BARREL LENGTH:

5"

OVERALL LENGTH:

8.5"

WEIGHT:

40 ounces

FINISH:

Parkerized

SIGHTS:

Low-profile adjustable rear, dovetailed front

GRIPS:

Cocobolo

PRICE:

\$939

you a good \$1,000 to \$1,200 or more counting the custom work, the BoMar sights, etc. With its cloned "BoMars," the Springfield Armory Range Officer pistol is giving you all that for under a grand, in today's dollars.

In 1986, a new house cost \$89,463 on the average and average annual income was \$22,339. Gasoline was 89¢ a gallon and a first class postage stamp was 24¢. By contrast, this particular pistol, with its built-in features, costs about the same in "2011 dollars" as it would have cost to have it built for you by a pistolsmith 25 years ago. Sounds like a heckuva good value to me. **GUNS**

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For many shooters, bench time is rare and precious. It should be used for shooting, not for barrel cleaning.

STOP THEM

JOHN BARSNESS

It happens fairly frequently at my local rifle range. A guy gets all set up at one of the 100-yard benches, fires one shot, then grabs a cleaning rod and furiously brushes the bore of his new elk rifle for a minute or so. Afterward he pushes a patch or two through the barrel, then fires another shot before grabbing his cleaning rod and brushing the bore all over again.

What these guys *think* they're doing is "breaking in" their new rifle barrel. What they're *actually* doing is wasting time, powder and bullets. The only benefit might be a minor aerobic workout, since some of them do scrub pretty hard.

The modern notion that a rifle barrel simply must be broken-in before shooting any groups started with benchrest shooters. The boys who attempt to put them all in one hole noticed that most barrels shot a little better after some shooting

and cleaning. This wasn't exactly a classified secret, but benchresters search for any tiny edge possible, because benchrest matches are often decided by microscopic differences in group size. They want their barrels to be performing as perfectly as possible before their first match, so came up with a routine to quickly break-in a new bore.

The most common variation is to shoot one shot, then clean the bore, then repeat this shoot-and-clean routine for at least 10 shots. After

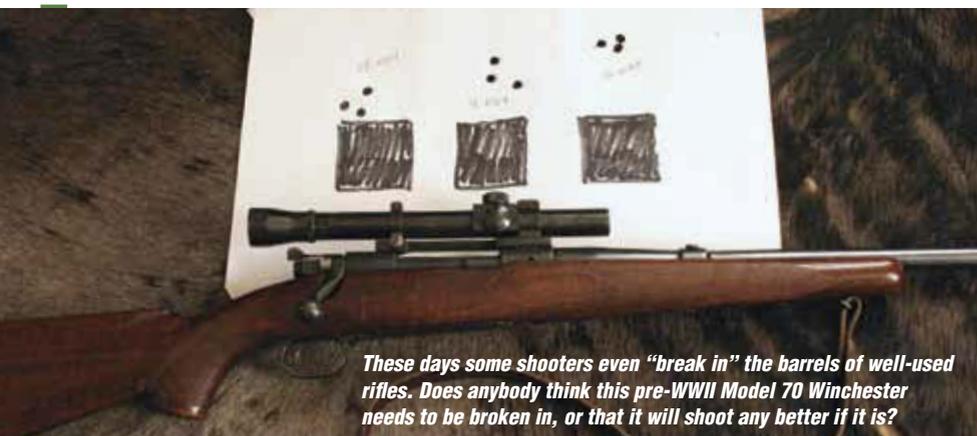
that the routine varies, depending on current advice and the shooter's tolerance for boredom. Occasionally somebody will shoot-and-clean for 30 rounds before feeling confident that his barrel is all it can be, while other folks only shoot two or three times between scrubblings after the initial 10-shot string.

The theory behind all this shooting and scrubbing is that each bullet's passage will "burnish" the bore. The word burnish is almost always used, rather than polish, though why is a mystery, since major English dictionaries firmly state that burnish means polish. (In manufacturing, however, burnish means "the plastic deformation of a surface due to sliding contact with another object," while polishing means knocking off the high spots with abrasives or chemicals. But bullets don't "plastically deform barrels. Instead barrels deform bullets.)

Jacketed bullets aren't particularly abrasive, but shoot enough of them through a barrel and they do have a slight polishing effect. To polish steel, however, each bullet must actually contact the steel. This means that the bore must be very clean, with no trace of jacket material. Otherwise the bullet isn't burnishing/polishing anything except the copper-fouling from previous bullets.

The View

This is where 99 percent of the shooters who "break in" their barrel waste time. The guys observed at the



These days some shooters even "break in" the barrels of well-used rifles. Does anybody think this pre-WWII Model 70 Winchester needs to be broken in, or that it will shoot any better if it is?

The shoot-and-clean method of barrel break-in was started by benchrest shooters, who wanted their rifles to be shooting their best before their first match. But most of us aren't benchrest shooters.

MADNESS!

local range, scrubbing furiously with a bore brush, aren't coming anywhere near cleaning their new bore to bare steel, regardless of the solvent used. I know this because I've looked through a Hawkeye bore scope while cleaning many barrels.

Fifty passes with a bore brush doesn't get rid of anywhere near all the copper in a barrel. Especially where jacket fouling tends to build up the most, right in front of the chamber, where the bullet is deformed by the rifling. Pressures of 60,000 pounds per square inch suddenly shove a perfect bullet into steel lands that cut deeply into the bullet's jacket. Some of the jacket is shoved aside into the grooves of the rifling, but some is stripped off onto the steel of the bore.

After that initial deformation and abrasion, the bullet tends to travel down the bore relatively unharmed. If the dimensions of the bore are consistent, and the surface pretty smooth, relatively little jacket material is stripped away during the rest of the bullet's passage.

Another reason most jacket-fouling occurs just in front of the chamber is that's where the chambering reamer leaves tool-marks on the rear angle of the lands. In a bore scope these can look like tiny saw-teeth. They're also at a right angle to the bullet's path, so they tend to rip away jacket material.

Now, in a hand-lapped custom barrel, installed by a top-notch gunsmith with an expensive new reamer; both the chamber and bore will be really smooth, and any tiny

RETHINKING HOW TO BREAK IN A RIFLE BARREL.

imperfections will indeed tend to iron out with the passage of a few bullets. But 99 percent of rifle barrels are mass-produced in factories and hence aren't nearly as perfect. The bore of the average factory barrel has tool marks that vary in size, up to ginormous.



These rifles need to be shot and enjoyed, not left sitting behind the firing line soaking in solvents.

Smaller scratches will be slightly burnished during break-in, but you could shoot and scrub from now until the next presidential election and not make any headway on the ginormous gouges. So unless a new barrel is pretty smooth anyway (in which case a little break-in does help), shooting and scrubbing is a waste of time.

Also, barrel break-in happens anyway during the normal process of working up handloads. Most of us don't need to have our rifle shooting its absolute best to work up a handload. Instead, the first few shots can be used to sight-in the scope and detect any major problems the rifle might have.

If we then go home and actually clean the barrel down to bare steel (easy to do with an overnight soaking with several modern solvents), then take it to the range again and shoot another 10 or 15 rounds, the bore will be broken in a little. Clean it down to bare steel at home between each range session, and the first shot or two afterward will indeed start polishing

the bore, unlike bullets traveling over well-scrubbed copper fouling. By the time 75 to 100 rounds go down the bore, your new rifle will be broken in—or at least as broken in as it's going to get with a typical factory barrel. You'll also have a handload or two worked up, well ahead of the next deer season.

Also, other techniques are far more effective for polishing a factory bore. One is to scrub the barrel 100 times with a tight bore brush wrapped in a cotton patch that's been daubed with J-B Compound, or any similar light abrasive bore cleaner. This polishes the bore much quicker than 30 repetitions of shoot and clean, and is a lot cheaper as well, since you're not wasting 30 rounds of ammo. I've used this technique on several factory barrels with good results, though it still doesn't eliminate ginormous tool marks.

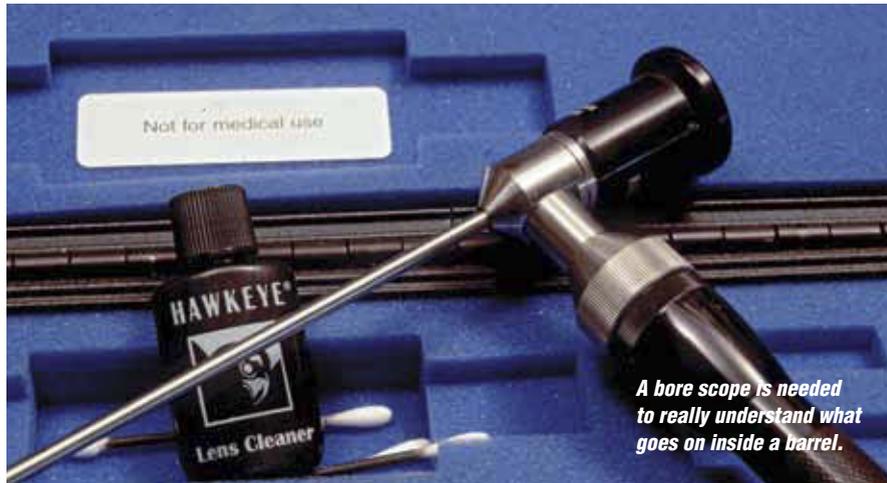
Another trick is to shoot a half-dozen lapping bullets through a new barrel. Contrary to popular belief, however, this won't smooth the entire bore.

A few years ago "fire lapping" was all the rage, since it supposedly turned even the roughest factory barrel into the equivalent of a custom hand-lapped barrel. However, a custom barrel is already very smooth before somebody starts pushing and pulling a lead lap through it, and also slightly undersized, just enough that lapping will bring the inside diameter up to specs.

Most factory barrels are already full diameter, or even slightly over sized, so lapping them larger often harms accuracy. Second, fire lapping is done with a bullet embedded with a gritty abrasive. Most of the grit comes off in the first few inches down the barrel, so has little effect on the rest of the bore.

Fire Lapping

This doesn't mean, however, that fire-lapping isn't useful. A half-dozen fire-lapping rounds smooth the reamer marks in the throat—and a lot faster than any amount of shoot-and-scrub. The most accurate factory rifle I've ever owned is a heavy-barrel Remington 700 in .223 Remington, purchased new at Capital Sports & Western Wear in Helena, Mont. It shot OK without any modifications, 5-shot groups averaging .8" or so at 100 yards, but I've owned sporter-weight .223s that would beat that. So you can set about "tuning" the rifle by epoxy-bedding the action, and free-floating the barrel, etc. The next range session was also started by firing half-dozen rounds loaded with bullets rolled in abrasive paste from a kit sold by NECO. These polished out the reamer marks in the throat, as a



A bore scope is needed to really understand what goes on inside a barrel.

look through my bore scope proved.

Now, this may simply be an exceptional factory barrel, but the fire lapping drastically cut down on copper fouling in the throat area. Not only did the rifle prove superbly accurate, capable of averaging 1/4" for 5-shot groups of its favorite handload at 100 yards, but it essentially refused to copper-foul.

It's now my wife Eileen's primary varmint rifle, and we almost never clean it. Oh, once in a while, after several days of prairie dog shooting, I'll push a few solvent-soaked patches through the barrel—but there's never any copper inside. The rifle just keeps shooting sub-1/2" groups, even after several thousand rounds, though it won't quite shoot 1/4" groups anymore.

Aside from the half-dozen lapping bullets, this barrel was never "properly" broken-in. I never slaved away for half a day, shooting-and-scrubbing, in order to burnish the bore. Instead the bore was simply cleaned every 50 or 75 shots—until I realized that there wasn't any need to clean the darn thing.

The word "properly" is put in quotes because that's what many shooters say these days when talking about barrel break-in. Trouble is, apparently nobody agrees on break-in. Many barrel companies and custom gunsmiths have suggestions how to break in a barrel, but the techniques vary considerably, putting into doubt the concept of "proper" break-in.

Some barrelmakers and gunsmiths, however, don't believe in break-in—and some of those who do provide a procedure have privately confided that the only reason they do is their customers insist. Today's shooters heard from all their buddies about barrel break-in, so now it must be done! Some even believe breaking-in a barrel will turn a factory .30-06 into a benchrest rifle, though they've never actually encountered such a beast.

Coating the bullet or the bore to



Rifle bores vary in smoothness. Rough barrels don't really benefit all that much from break in, because their faults are too large to be smoothed by the passage of a relatively soft bullet.

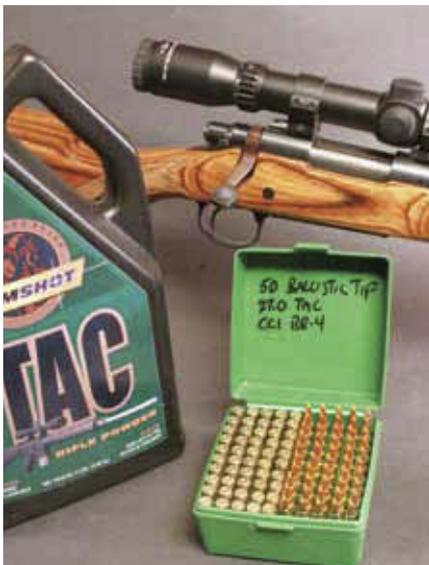


In a typical rifle barrel, jacket fouling tends to build up most just in front of the chamber, because that's where the bullet goes through the most trauma.

reduce bullet fouling and enhance accuracy has been around even longer than the concept of barrel break-in, and these days is sometimes combined with break-in. The big rage for a few years was molybdenum disulphide, usually applied to bullets but sometimes to the bore itself. As with breaking-in a barrel, all sorts of magic was ascribed to moly, including increasing the ballistic coefficient of the bullet itself. Lately relatively few shooters seem to be using moly, perhaps because it's kind of a pain to coat every bullet you shoot, or pay for moly-coated bullets. Moly also tends to leave its own fouling in the bore, and sometimes this fouling causes its own problems, even though it prevents copper fouling.



A deer hunter doesn't need to spend an afternoon at the range breaking in the barrel. By the time a good handload is worked up, the bore will be broken in anyway.



Shooting 50 rounds of ammo while scrubbing the bore with a brush in between doesn't do as much good as going home between 10- or 15-round range sessions and cleaning the bore down to bare steel.

It always made more sense to some shooters to coat the bore rather than thousands of bullets. This is the principle behind Ultra Bore Coat, a ceramic coating that fills rather than smoothes the imperfections in a rifle bore. It's a liquid glue containing microscopic ceramic particles. The glue is slopped into the bore just like any cleaning solvent, then left to dry for a little while. When a few rounds are shot through the barrel, the bullets force the ceramic particles into any tool-marks, and the heat of hot powder-gas melts the ceramic, turning the coating into a permanent part of the bore. (Contrary to what was originally believed, a wire brush will not harm bullet-cured Ultra Bore Coat.)

I've been fooling with UBC for several years now, and mentioned it previously in a *GUNS* article on the Savage Predator varmint rifle. One \$45 kit lasts for a lot of barrels; my kit has treated a half-dozen bores, and there's enough left for several more. Ultra Bore Coat is cheaper, quicker and more effective than shoot-and-scrub, as more shooters learn every year. Yet, lately I've been hearing from shooters who first do the entire laborious, expensive shoot-and-scrub routine and *then* apply UBC to their bores. This is like taking a shower right after taking a bath. (In fact, some shooters are so obsessive that they shoot and scrub the barrels of used rifles. I somehow doubt the bore of, say, a pre-'64 Model 70 Winchester is going to be improved much by the process.)

Despite very few people understanding barrel break-in or doing it correctly, the concept is now a permanent part of our shooting culture. All true rifle loonies know it simply must be done, and that proper break in will somehow turn a 2" rifle into a 1/2" rifle. Most shooting fads come and go, but apparently barrel break-in is here to stay, sort of like in-laws who come for Thanksgiving and never leave. They're a lot of work and you can't quite remember why they're still here, but every morning they show up at the breakfast table.

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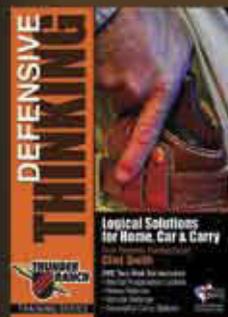
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SELF-LOADING INFANTRY RIFLES OF

WWII

THERE WERE MORE THAN OUR GARANDS.

**MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
PHOTOS BY YVONNE VENTURINO**

It is a simple fact of World War II history that the vast bulk of infantrymen involved in combat between 1939 and 1945 carried bolt-action rifles whose basic designs dated from around the turn of the century. None offered a truly significant advantage over one another. Although some of those rifle designs were revamped after hostilities began, mostly the changes involved sights and manufacturing techniques not the rifles' basic modes of operation.

That said, it is also a fact that three semi-auto infantry rifles were fielded in significant numbers. Of course the best known one was the US M1 Garand, named after its chief designer John C. Garand. The

US Army officially adopted it as early as 1936 but took until mid-1943 before enough were available to arm virtually all frontline American troops. Only in that latter year did Germany even adopt a successful

design of semi-auto infantry rifle. At first it was given the designation G43, meaning *Gewehr* (rifle) 1943. Later that was changed to K43, meaning *Karabiner* (short rifle or carbine) 1943. The Soviet Union actually had their semi-auto developed prior to Germany's attack in June 1941. It was named the SVT40, meaning in Russian "samozaryadnaya vintonka Tokareva obrazets 1940." That translated to English is "Tokarev self-loading rifle Model 1940." Russian firearms designer F. V. Tokarev was to the SVT40 as Garand was to the US M1.

Although all three of the above semi-automatics served in their respective nations' infantry forces



The three semi-auto rifles the USSR, Germany and the United States issued these during World War II included (from top) the Soviet SVT40, German K43, and US M1.

and were gas operated and wooden stocked, their resemblance to one another ends about there. They were the alike in that gas from fired rounds was bled from a small hole drilled in the barrel to power a piston arrangement. It carried the bolt rearward extracting and ejecting the empty cartridge case and chambering a new one from a magazine as springs returned it forward.

They were different in that the M1's gas system was located under the barrel and the SVT40's and G/K43's were above. From a field soldier's standpoint the top-mounted gas system was an advantage: it was exposed for cleaning when the handguard was removed. With the M1, cleaning required the barreled action be removed from the stock.

Neither did these three rifles resemble each other outwardly. The SVT40 was long at 48" with a 25" barrel. It actually had a "futuristic" look with perforated handguard and muzzlebrake. The M1 Garand was 43.5" long with a 24" barrel. The G/K43 was 45" long but only had a 22" barrel. Despite being so much longer than Garands, Tokarevs were about 1-1/2 pounds lighter: approximately 10 and 8-1/2 respectively. The G/K43 weighed likewise to the Tokarev.

Fits And Starts

None of these three semi-auto rifles sprang full-blown from engineers' minds to workmen's machines. They evolved through other failed ideas. In the early 1930s John C. Garand's idea of a new rifle was almost perfected as chambered for a new .276 cartridge when US Army chief of staff Douglas MacArthur decreed it had to be chambered for the .30-06. With that everyone literally had to return to the drawing boards.

Even so the first few tens of thousand M1 rifles were built as the so-called "gas trap" version. With them the necessary gas for piston operation was "trapped" by a fixture at the muzzle. In 1939 that was changed to the barrel port and early



Both the Soviet SVT40 and the German G/K43 could have their 10-round box magazines loaded from the top (above) by means of 5-round stripper clips. Duke feels the German K43 and Soviet SVT40 offered an advantage in cleaning their gas systems because the entire barreled action (below) did not have to be removed from the stock.



M1s were recalled and converted. By war's end Springfield Armory and Winchester Repeating Arms together made over 4 million M1s, with the former facility out producing the latter by a factor of about 7-to-1.

Interestingly, the development of a German semi-auto was greatly delayed because their army's high command forbid armament engineers to use a gas port in the barrel. First was tried a gas trap version but then experience on the Eastern Front revealed that the Soviet's gas-ported SVT40s were successful. So German

military minds finally accepted a gas port in the barrel. That decision resulted in the G/K43. Because so many German records were lost or destroyed at war's end exact production figures are unavailable. Best guesses put them from about 400,000 to a 500,000 produced by three firms: Carl Walther Waffenfabrik, Gustloff Werke, and a third to be mentioned later.

Too Complicated?

A very interesting fact is the Red Army wasn't all that thrilled with their own SVT40. They considered it too fragile in the field, too intricate in manufacture and too complicated for the minds of their peasantry soldiers. Therefore, when WWII's emergencies were upon them they limited production of SVT40s to only two state-owned factories located at Tula and Izhevsk. Their primary resources went into making more Mosin-Nagant 91/30 bolt actions to the tune of about 10 million during the wartime years. Only somewhere between 1-1/2 to 2 million SVT40s were made. They were mostly issued to special operations



The upper handguard of SVT40s were perforated for barrel cooling, there was a metal barrel shroud likewise perforated and a vented muzzlebrake. All that gives SVT40s a futuristic look even by today's standards.



The German G/K43 had a rail machined integrally on the receiver so a ZF4 4X scope could be mounted.



When the Soviet SVT40 was fitted with scopes for sniper use their official designation became SNT40.

troops and NCOs plus a significant number were equipped with PU 3.5X scopes for sniper use. These were named SNT40, although a single milled cut for scope mounting was the only difference from a regular SVT40.

On the other hand German troops on the eastern front in 1941/1942 were greatly smitten with SVT40s, having captured many thousands plus millions of rounds of 7.62x54mm

ammunition. In the beginning they picked up SVT40s off the battlefield and used them unofficially. So many got into German circulation that on December 1st 1942 they were given the own Wehrmacht designation 259(R). The sniper version was accepted as 260(R).

Although the M1 Garand is by far the most famous infantry rifle of any sort used in WWII, it can't be

said it was perfect in all respects. For instance, the M1's internal magazine was fed by means of an 8-round "en-bloc loader" most commonly called a clip. There was no way to "top off" the magazine after firing. If American soldiers lost track of how many rounds they had fired, they had to eject the partial "clip" and start over again. Modern metal detecting done on some European battle sites has turned up



Duke firing his Winchester M1 Garand. If you look closely the ejected cartridge case is at about one o'clock near the edge of the window, and the ejected en-bloc loader is at 12 o'clock directly above the rifle.

many partially loaded M1 en-bloc loaders in old foxholes.

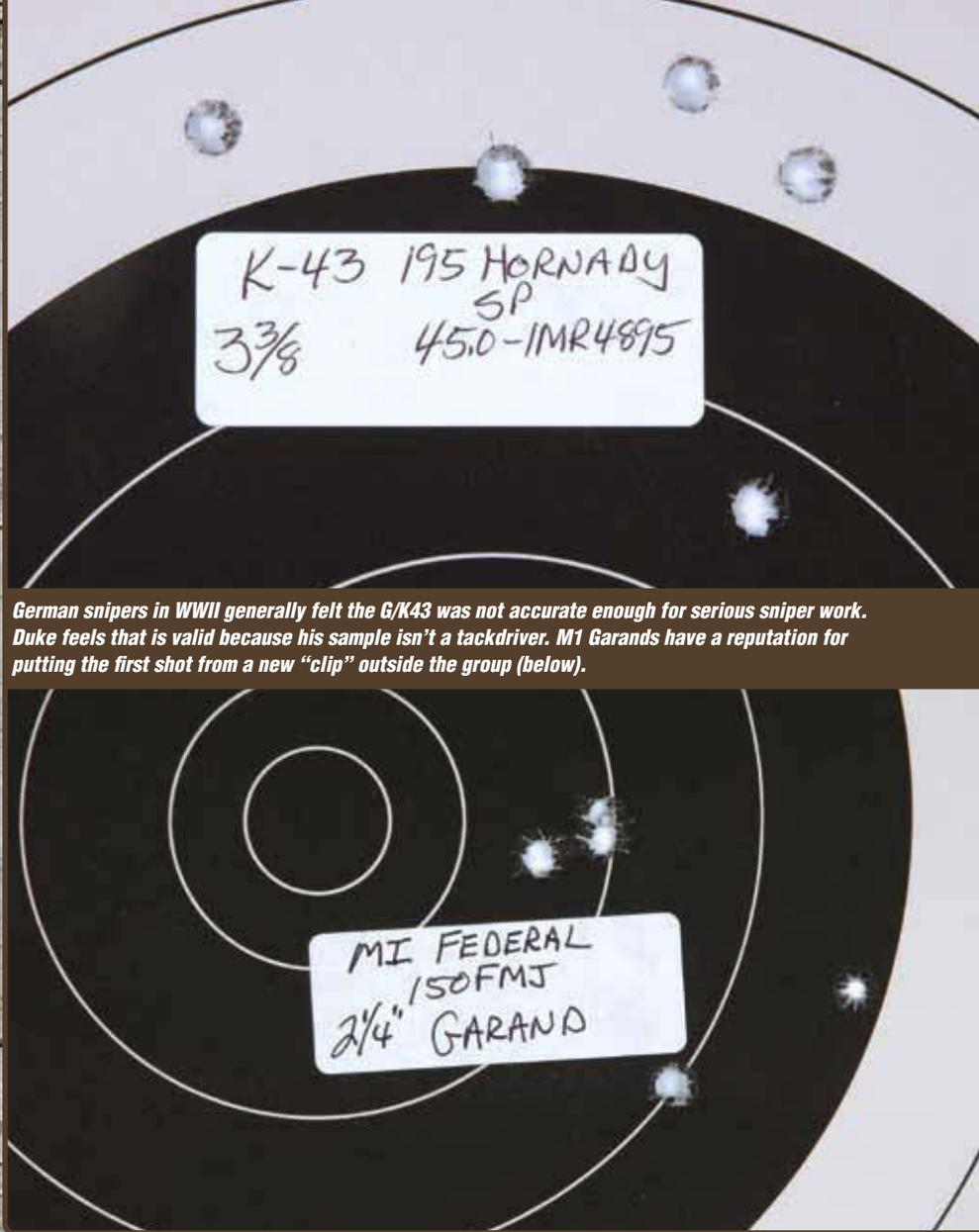
German and Soviet semi-autos had 10-round detachable box magazines. They could be charged by means of 5-round stripper clips or with individual rounds while still in the rifle. If soldiers could scrounge more magazines they could be kept loaded for instant replacement.

Also the M1 Garand was not easily turned into a sniper rifle. Because it loaded from the top, mounting a scope directly over the barrel was not possible. A side mount had to be developed with an offset scope and a cheekpiece to hold the shooter's head to the side. From the very beginning the Germans intended for G/K43s to be useful as sniper rifles. Standard on all was a machined rail on the receivers' right sides so a ZF4 (4X) scope could be fitted in quick detachable mounts. Regardless, experienced German snipers preferred bolt-action K98k sniper rifles, with the general consensus being that the semi-auto G/K43 was not accurate enough for sniper work.

In regards to iron sights the M1 Garand had it all over the other two rifles. Its rear sight was a fully adjustable peep mounted on the rear of the receiver. Front sight was a wide post protected by two curved wings on each side. Both Soviet and German semi-autos had barrel mounted open



Whereas selected Soviet SVT40s were fitted with scopes and the US eventually developed a scoped version of Garand called the M1C, all German G/K43s (above) had a rail machined integral to the receiver. Therefore all were capable of scope mounting. Duke feels the US M1 Garand's rear peep sight (below) was the best used on all military rifles of its era.



German snipers in WWII generally felt the G/K43 was not accurate enough for serious sniper work. Duke feels that is valid because his sample isn't a tackdriver. M1 Garands have a reputation for putting the first shot from a new "clip" outside the group (below).

sights only adjustable for elevation. Their post front sights could be drifted in their dovetails in order to obtain a windage zero.

Since the turn of the century I've been amassing a collection of WWII firearms, with the number on hand hitting 60 as this is being written. In this assortment are Springfield Armory and Winchester M1 Garands, a 1940-dated SVT40 made at Izhevsk and a K43 made in 1945 by the third manufacturer: Berlin-Lubecker Maschinenfabriken of Lubeck. Naturally all are being fired with factory loads and handloads in their respective .30-06, 7.62x54mmR, and 8x57mm calibers. All rifles have their standard issue iron sights in place but I was lucky enough to find a ZF4 scope and proper mount for the K43.

One of the charges leveled at all three of these WWII semi-auto infantry rifles was their accuracy did not equal that delivered from their nations' respective bolt actions firing the same

cartridges. German and Soviet snipers as a group preferred their K98k and Mosin-Nagant M91/30 sniper rifles and many American Marines balked about giving up their '03 Springfields. From my experience with both genres of rifles essentially remaining "as-issued" I feel that is a fair statement. Groups fired with the semi-autos usually are about 50 percent to 100 percent larger than the bolt-actions.

In fact, unaccurized M1 Garands have a well known and very annoying tendency to toss the very 1st shot from an en-bloc loader to a slightly different spot as the rest of its rounds. This would be an especially poor trait from a sniper rifle. In a practical sense as regards iron sighted weapons for regular riflemen the bolt-actions' edge in precision was more than offset by semi-autos' firepower. Hence, many German infantrymen dropped their issue K98k bolt-actions and picked up Soviet SVT40s. And there are no shortages of stories of American



The US M1 Garand chambered the .30-06 (left), the Soviet SVT40 chambered the 7.62x54mm (middle) and the German K43 chambered the 8x57mm.



These are some of the components Duke uses in his reloading for these three WWII semi-autos. Notice the white box of CCI mil-spec No. 34 primers that will help prevent slam-fires.



Because slow burning propellants can damage the operating rod of M1 Garands, both Federal and Hornady have now introduced factory loads specifically intended for them.



The damage to the 7.62x54mm case rim at left was caused when Duke's SVT40 slam-fired. The case at right is undamaged sample.

US M1 GARAND (WINCHESTER) 24" BARREL .30-06 HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)
Hornady 150 Spirepoint	Varget	48.0	2,686
Sierra 168 HPBT	IMR4895	46.5	2,555

.30-06 FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)
US Military Surplus LC69 150 FMJ	2,524
Federal M1 Garand 150 FMJ	2,759
Hornady M1 Garand 168 A-Max BT	2,563

USSR SVT40 25" BARREL 7.62X54MMR HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)
150 Sierra 150 Spitzer (.311")	Varget	47.0	2,699
Hornady 174 FMJ (.312")	IMR4895	45.0	2,505

7.62X54MMR FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)
Winchester 180 FMJ	2,646

GERMAN K43 22" BARREL 8X57MM HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)
Hornady 195 Spirepoint	Varget	47.0	2,538
Speer 200 Spitzer	IMR4895	45.0	2,300

8X57MM FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)
Hornady 195 Spirepoint	2,348

troops dropping their '03s and picking up Garands whenever possible.

There are a couple of factors in reloading for these semi-autos of which shooters should be aware. Most manuals warn about using slow burning propellants in reloading .30-06s for M1 Garands. Doing so results in higher pressures at the gas port and that can cause the Garand's operating rods to bend. Only medium burning ones should be used.

Because the SVT40 and K43 are so rare reloading manuals don't concern themselves with this problem when discussing 7.62x54mm or 8x57mm. However, since both rifle types' operating systems use gas ports and pistons I prefer to err on the side of caution. So my rifles also get medium burning propellants. Namely those are Hogdgon's Varget and IMR4895, the latter having been developed for M1 Garands in the first place.

Also for the same reason given above for powders, bullet weights should be held near to what the various nations' military organizations issued for the rifles in question. For the M1 such would be from 150 to 173 grains, for the SVT40 that would be 147 to 185 grains and for the K43 it would be

about 195 to 200 grains. I've used most spitzer bullets available in those weight ranges with fine results.

One factor of note could be varying barrel diameters with 7.62x54mm rifles. Some shoot fine with .308" bullets but others require .311" ones, which is what I've settled upon. Sometimes in the M1 it seems as if a crimp in a Hornady bullet's cannelure helps with the errant first shot problem.

A third caution is about slam fires. That's when a cartridge fires unintentionally as the bolt slams shut. It is a very disconcerting experience. I know because my K43 and SVT40 have done so one time each. Never has a Garand yet done that in my hands. A help if not complete cure for this is to use the special military spec No. 34 Large Rifle primers available from CCI.

It is doubtful if the German or Soviet semi-auto infantry rifles made much impact on the outcome of battles fought by their armies. There just were not enough of them in use. The story is different with the Americans' M1 Garand. There were enough in troops' hands and their firepower gave infantry troops a decided advantage.

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WEIGHT:

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SCALES:

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SHEATH:

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\$128.05

rust protection you need. Unlike many of the new-age stainless steels which require a diamond stone, the Potbelly's 1095 blade can be sharpened on a traditional Arkansas stone or, in a pinch, a rock.

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Card courtesy of James Italiano, Mission Viejo, CA



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When Enforcers Have An Agenda

“President Obama announces more key administration posts,” the mid-Nov. 2010 White House press release declared.

Included among the president’s nominations was “Andrew Traver, Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives...”

ATF has been operating under acting directors since 2006. Whoever is selected to fill the top slot will have his hands full, what with the bureau’s troubled past and current problems; including a National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record riddled with errors, lack of clear standards, conflicting rules and accusations of incompetence and corruption by agency insiders anonymously posting grievances at the CleanUpATF.org website.

So who is Traver and what does he bring to the table?

His most recent position has been Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Field Division, having risen from the ranks since he first joined ATF in 1987 as a Criminal Investigator. The thing is, rank and file agents at CleanUpATF have described him as “a marginal performer” and—worse—but one who knows how to play the political game.

He’s also been closely affiliated with “gun control” advocacy, serving as an advisor to the International Association of Chiefs of Police/Joyce Foundation Great Lakes Summit on Gun Violence alongside noted anti-gunners from the Violence Policy Center and Legal Community Against Violence.

So naturally, the Brady Center thinks he’s just what we need.

“We are pleased that President Obama is moving forward with a nominee to lead the ATF. This long-needed appointment is welcome news,” Brady President Paul Helmke wrote. “[W]e are hopeful that he will be a strong voice for the strengthening and effective enforcement of our gun laws.”

The key word they’re pinning hopes on is “strengthening.” In a hit piece by NBC News, Traver helped perpetuate the conflation between semi-automatic firearms and machine guns, an old tactic of those hoping to reinstate and expand the federal “assault weapons” ban.

“Traver says the power and randomness of the heavy caliber, military-style weapons make them so dangerous not only to people, but to police,” the report claimed. “They’re so powerful, body armor can’t withstand a hit, and they’re so difficult to control, their bullets often get sprayed beyond the intended targets, striking innocent victims even when they’re in their own homes.”

At least he’s learned the right buzz words and talking points to gin up hysteria.

The “gun lobby” was quick to recognize the dangers an anti-gun activist in the top ATF slot would present.

“NRA strongly opposes the nomination of Andrew Traver to head BATFE. Calls on President Obama to withdraw the nomination,” a statement from ILA Executive Director Chris Cox began.

“Obama nominates rabid anti-gunner to head the ATF,” the less subtle Gun Owners of America announced.

I’ve noted before that lead times make magazines poor places to discuss developing news. By the time this reaches you, it may be a done deal. Obama may even bypass Senate confirmation and make a recess appointment. But while the outcome of this particular development may be hazy, one thing could not be more clear: We don’t want a fox in charge of minding the henhouse. **GUNS**

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

NEWS

Afghan Soldiers Help Save Marines

As the sun started to slowly rise over Sangin district, Forward Operating Base Jackson, Afghanistan, and the nearby Helmand River last Oct. 23, Marines with India Company received intelligence a local compound was filled with improvised explosive devices. The squad searching the compound found three IEDs when Lance Corporals Shane Preston and Jason Hallett, both infantrymen, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 2, triggered one of the booby traps.

Hallett was severely wounded and Preston suffered a concussion and was bleeding from both ears. Petty Officer 3rd Class Mitch Ingoglia, a corpsman with the Marines, instantly began treating Hallett, while Preston’s comrades treated him.



Lance Cpl. James Hallett was wounded Oct. 23, 2010 and is currently recovering at Bethesda Medical Center. Despite having three limbs amputated, Hallett’s life was saved under intense fire from the enemy. The fast actions of the Afghan National Army and fellow Marines saved the lives of Hallett and comrade Lance Cpl. Shane Preston. Photo: USMC. Afghan National Army soldiers with the 2nd Brigade, 215th Corps (below), stand ready as the brigade’s Quick Reaction Force. The QRF are trained and prepared to employ at a moment’s notice, and are on call to respond to emergencies. Photo: 1st Lt. Barry Morris, RCT 2



“When I got there they had just finished digging Hallett out of the rubble and I immediately started working on him,” said Ingoglia, a 26-year-old native of Dyer, Ind. The next step required them to move the two Marines out of the area and to

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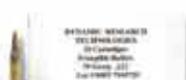
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the pre-appointed casualty evacuation site. Hallett's life hung in the balance and the Marines had two issues. The first was their vehicles were too heavy to cross a newly constructed bridge in the road and the second was an imminent attack on the evacuating Marines.

The Marines had planned with their local Afghan partners on crossing the bridge. Master Sgt. Ismael Sagredo, staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge, a 42-year-old native of Lansing, Mich. said, "This was not our original plan, more like 'Plan C,' but it's what we had to do. We would use the ANA's pickups to transport the casualties across the bridge and then move them to our vehicles."

The Afghan soldiers rapidly responded, but as the group carrying the wounded Marines began to move, a massive ambush began. The Marines and ANA came under fire from AK-47s and heavy machine guns.

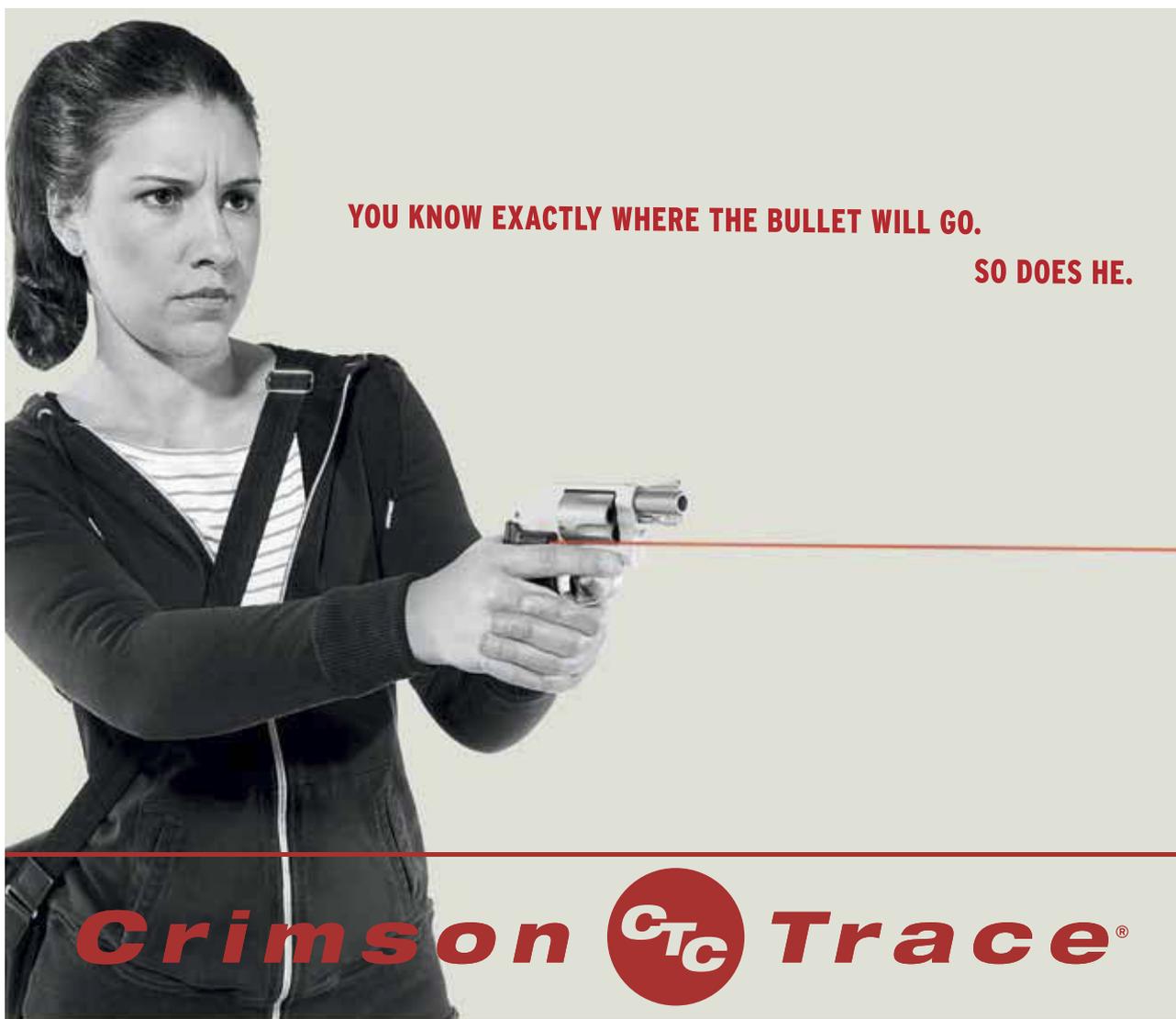
"The ANA saw the insurgents first and started firing," Sagredo said. Marines quickly assessed the situation and countered the attack with a volley of rockets and heavy machine gun fire. The Marines evacuating the casualties were under heavy fire in an open field without cover.

"I was helping Preston, who had some shrapnel and a concussion, when Sgt. Gilio and I got pinned down," said Sagredo, who had been awarded the Silver Star for his actions in Iraq.

"We had to cover about 200 meters through a field to get to the trucks."

At the trucks, the Marines loaded the casualties. Because of the heavy fire, the decision was made to use the ANA vehicles to return to the base. Hallett's life was still on the line as Marines on the forward operating base called for a helicopter to rush the young Marine to a hospital.

Sagredo, Ingoglia and Petty Officer Third Class Del Reyes rode in the back of the two Ford Rangers with the wounded Marines, under fire the entire trip. Del Reyes and Ingoglia continued to provide care. Within minutes, the vehicles were on base and the Marines safely on emergency helicopters. The medical evacuation



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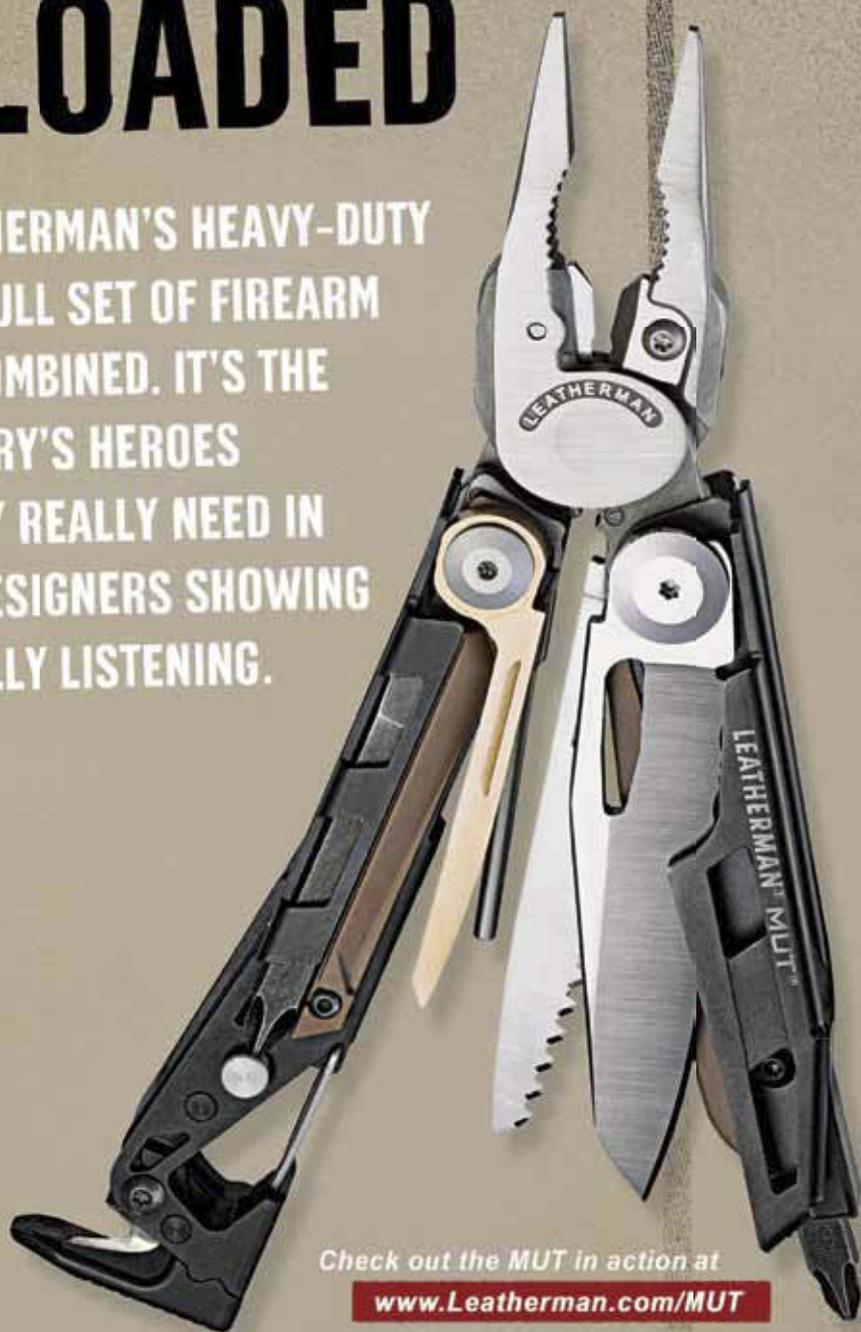


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was complete.

The Afghan soldiers are heroes too, according to Sagredo. "Even with the language barrier, nothing was missed and the Afghan soldiers performed phenomenally," Sagredo said. "We couldn't have done it without them."

The Marines suffered no other casualties that day, even though the firefight continued for several hours before nine rocket artillery rounds silenced the insurgents.

Hallett is recovering at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. Preston is recovering at Balboa Naval Medical Center in San Diego. —Cpl. Ned Johnson, RCT 2

Kimber's Edelman Receives Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation Award

Leslie Edelman, owner and president of Kimber Mfg., was presented with the 2010 Eagle Globe & Anchor Award by the Philadelphia Chapter of the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation. Edelman was selected due to his leadership of Kimber, and for his company's commitment to excellence in providing law enforcement and Marine heroes with the firearms needed to prevail against those who threaten both safety and freedom.

The recipient of the Globe & Anchor Award traditionally heads a business which exemplifies, by way of its corporate culture, a dedication to the law enforcement community through either products or overall general support.



Leslie Edelman (left), owner and president of Kimber Mfg., was presented with the 2010 Eagle Globe and Anchor Award by Joseph O'Hara, Philadelphia Police Captain (ret.) representing the Philadelphia Chapter of the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation.

Commenting on the selection, Detective Jack Cummings of the Philadelphia Police Homicide Unit and Chairman of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation stated, "Leslie Edelman and Kimber have



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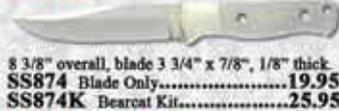
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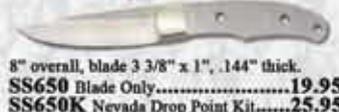
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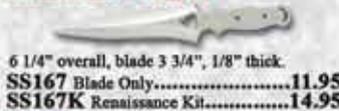


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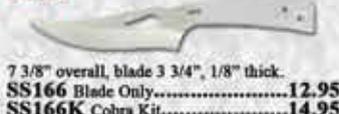
440C Stainless Steel Blades. Kits include blades, pins, dymondwood handle material and instructions.

Renaissance Dagger



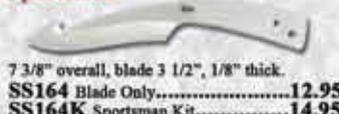
6 1/4" overall, blade 3 3/4", 1/8" thick.
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SS167K Renaissance Kit.....**14.95**

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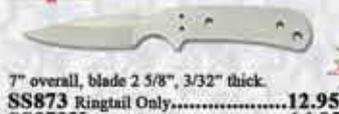
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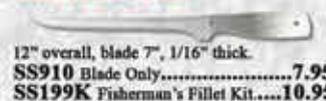


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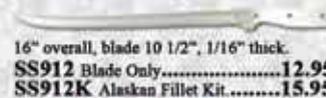
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Reflecting on the award, Edelman stated "I accept this award with great pride, not only for myself but on behalf of all 425 Kimber employees. It serves to remind us all that what we do every day really matters, that it helps the good guys come out on top." — Dwight Van Brunt, Kimber

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Royal Marines Destroy Pirate Vessel

Royal Marines based onboard the Royal Navy warship HMS Montrose destroyed a boat last Nov. 24 used by pirates off the coast of Somalia to attack merchant ships.

The Marines, from Plymouth-based frigate HMS Montrose, fired their machine guns at the pirate vessel as they hovered above it in the warship's Lynx helicopter.

The incident took place during a routine patrol off the Somali coast Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2010, when the helicopter identified the suspect boat as the whaler from MV Aly Zoulfecar, which had been acting as a pirate "mother ship" since it was hijacked on Nov. 3, 2010.



The pirate vessel destroyed by Royal Marines from HMS Montrose was itself hijacked earlier in November. Photo: Crown Copyright/MOD 2010

The whaler was anchored off a known pirate camp and, once permission had been given to take it out, the Royal Marines marksmen fired their M3M .50 BMG machine guns and destroyed it.

HMS Montrose's Commanding Officer, Commander Jonathan Lett, said:

"HMS Montrose has been patrolling off the Somali coast for some time and we know how the pirates operate.

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“Our destruction of the whaler close to a known pirate camp has sent a message to the Somali pirates that NATO and other coalition forces are willing to take the fight to them in order to prevent them from attacking merchant ships.”

HMS Montrose is operating off the Somali coast as part of NATO’s counter-piracy operation, OCEAN SHIELD.—*Courtesy MoD*

NICS Black Friday Outage

An outage of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) adversely affected many retailers and consumers on Black Friday. NSSF has been in contact with FBI-NICS staff, who explained the outage was attributable to a computer glitch that overloaded the system.

A short-term fix has been applied to the system and once the holiday season is over, a long-term fix will be completed. Black Friday was the second highest day for NICS activity for non-point-of-contact states and partial-point-of-contact states. It was the third busiest day overall for NICS with more than 87,000 checks being conducted. Though NICS was down for approximately 3-1/2 hours, eCheck and point-of-contact states were only down for one hour—perhaps another reason for dealers to consider using eCheck. NICS officials were exceedingly apologetic for the unscheduled outage.—*Courtesy NSSF*

Knife Rights Lobby Making Strides

Knife advocates are hoping a recent move by Arizona legislators to end knife restrictions will lead more states to take up the cause. “Arizona is now the model when it comes to knives,” said Arizona lobbyist Todd Rathner. “We’re now going to be moving to other states, probably in the Rocky Mountains and the Southeast.

There’s probably half a dozen or more places that are ripe for this.” Last year, the federal Customs and Border Protection agency issued a proposal that would have reclassified many pocket knives and pocket tools as switchblades and thus made them illegal for import or sale across state lines. Congress, following a strong grassroots campaign by the American Knife and Tool Institute—an effort supported by NSSF—intervened and blocked the change.—*Courtesy NSSF*



Weatherby continues to support the National High School Rodeo Association with rifles the organization can put up for raffle. Although the one pictured was raffled off last year, a similar Mark V as well as a Vanguard were again raffled this year.

Weatherby Helps National High School Rodeo Association

A custom-made, limited-edition Mark V rifle and a Vanguard rifle donated by Weatherby helped raise more than \$100,000 to support scholarship and leadership development programs of the National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA).

The NHSRA conducted a national drawing for the Weatherby rifles. The Mark V was valued at \$14,000, and the Vanguard was part of a Texas deer hunt package. The drawing, held this summer at the National High School Finals Rodeo in Gillette, Wyo., gave participants the chance to win the rifles with each \$10 donation.

“The NHSRA is thrilled with the success of the benefit,” said Austin White, NHSRA marketing director. “The money raised supported our state and provincial scholarship programs, the national college scholarship program and other valuable leadership development programs. Having Weatherby play such a major role as a sponsor of the benefit for the past nine years means so much to our association, membership and benefactors.”

“Weatherby is proud to help support the NHSRA and the high school athletes who represent their sport so well,” said Brad Ruddell, Weatherby’s vice president of sales and marketing. “We very much appreciate the opportunity to partner with the NHSRA in helping these youngsters further their education and develop their leadership skills.”

“NHSRA Scholarship Rifle 2010” is engraved on the Mark V’s barrel, while the NHSRA logo is engraved on the floorplate. The NHSRA logo is also embossed on the strap of the rifle’s walnut-tone leather case.

The Mark V is a .300 Weatherby

Magnum with a low-lustre blue metal finish and engraved 24-karat gold and silver selective plating, mounted with a Bushnell Elite 4200 2.5-10x40mm scope donated by Bushnell.—*Courtesy Jeff Patterson, Swanson Russel & Assoc.*

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Sarbi Meets Local Media

After a much anticipated arrival, Sarbi and her handler Sgt. “D” met with local media at the Explosive Detection Dog (EDD) Section, Steele Barracks Moorebank NSW, Australia.

Sarbi went missing in Afghanistan for a year after an attack and was recovered last year (see April 2010 issue). And she’s still got it—taking an enthusiastic run around the EDD Obstacle course.



Sarbi mugs for the cameras after being released from a 30-day quarantine at Eastern Creek in Sydney. Photo: ADoD

“We’re very pleased to have Sarbi back home,” her handler Sgt. D said, “from here, we will assess her speed, agility and explosive detection skills over the next few weeks, and make a decision about her future.”

In the meantime, Sarbi will enjoy a well deserved break in the EDD kennels, getting reacquainted with her handler and Army life.—*Courtesy ADoD*

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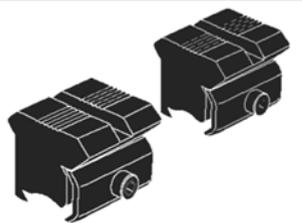
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Mortarman Awarded Bronze Star

He's a calm individual. His voice is barely above a whisper. Maybe because waiting for the enemy to attack in a hastily built fighting position in the Hindu Kush Mountains makes everybody whisper. Maybe because he doesn't get that excited anymore. Whatever the reason, he rarely raises his voice when asked about his three combat tours during his seven years in the Army. Rarely. Except when he talks about blowing things up.

"I don't like troops in contact, but I enjoy dropping rounds and knowing that most of the time I hit the enemy," said Spc. Joshua R. Wood. "It's awesome to fire. It's just a thrill to drop explosives. The enemy stops firing after you drop your rounds and that's just a great feeling." Wood, a mortarman from Pontotoc, Miss., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, comes alive when asked about his job firing mortars all over eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province.

"Out here we play a pretty big role," Wood continued. "Usually when the troops get in contact the mortars are there. They call us in to provide indirect fire on enemy locations to either destroy or disrupt them so we can move or gain fire superiority."

Just then, he got a call and began preparing fuses on the mortar rounds and punched numbers into his handheld computer. Next, he fired a few rounds at the enemy, listened for impact and plunked back down into his fighting position to wait for more instructions from his forward observer.

"I've had bullets crack around my face, around my cover. I mean, we all have. We've all been in some crazy firefights," Wood explained. But not everybody has done what Wood did one day while in one of those "crazy firefights" a few months ago.

"We were walking through the Ghaki Valley," Wood said. "Our group took contact and, as we bounded back to hard structures, my platoon leader fell. I was about a 100 meters ahead of him. I turned around and saw that he fell. I ran back under heavy fire, picked him up and took him to safety."

He didn't raise his voice talking about the incident. It was almost like he was explaining what he had for lunch: jalapeno cheese with crackers, poppy-seed pound cake and beef stew. Just like that. Then he continued.

"Later, another Afghan National Army soldier was walking around in



Spc. Corey C. Canterbury, a mortarman (above), kneels down after firing a mortar round on a mountainside overlooking the Ganjgal Valley in eastern Afghanistan, last Dec. 11. Photo: Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell. Spc. Corey C. Canterbury (below, right) from Ocean Springs, Miss., and US Army Spc. Joshua R. Wood (below, left) from Pontotoc, Miss., both mortarman assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, check their mortar tube and coordinates before firing mortar rounds on a mountainside overlooking the Ganjgal Valley, Afghanistan, last Dec. 10. Photo: Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell



the middle of the firefight with a bullet wound to his head," explained Wood. "I ran out with another Soldier and we picked him up and put him behind some vehicles to let the medic patch him up."

He didn't seem especially impressed that he was awarded a Bronze Star with Valor for these actions. For Wood, it was just another day deployed.

"The (platoon leader) I saved said that, as I was running, he could see bullets bouncing around my feet and around my head on the mountainside," Wood recalled. "I really wasn't paying attention to it, but it was pretty effective fire. It was pretty close. It was ricocheting off the vehicles and across the ground. You could hear it whizzing by your head. I don't know, I just remember running and picking him up. I wasn't thinking about the bullets. It was pretty heavy fire, though."

The forward observer called to Wood and his crew. It was time for another fire mission to quell the enemy. Wood perked up and started hollering coordinates back and forth. Well, not hollering, but definitely there was a little excitement in his voice.—US Army Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, Task Force Bastogne PA

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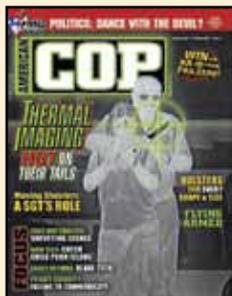


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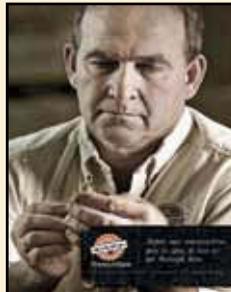


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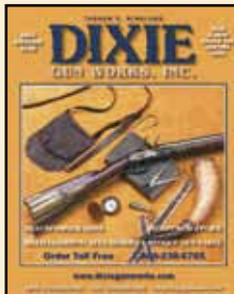
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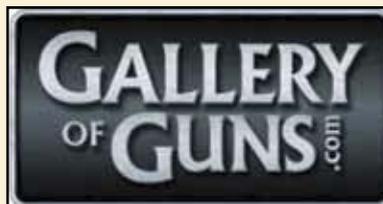
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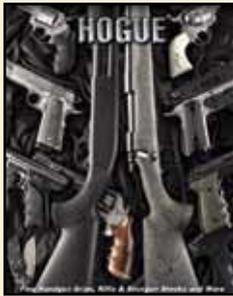
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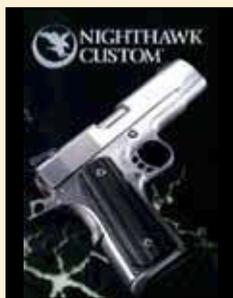


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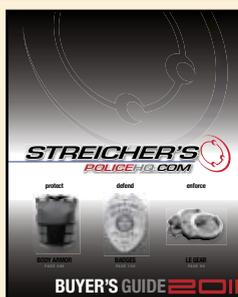


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Not so many decades ago, if you went into almost any gun shop anywhere in the country and asked for a box of cartridges for your Model 94, the clerk would likely slap down one of two brands, both virtually identical. Not so many years ago, if you asked for .380 ACP ammo, you might have had your choice of either 90-grain hollowpoints or 95-grain FMJs. Just a year ago, you might have come up completely empty-handed trying to get *any* kind of ammo, and if you got it, you compared the price to a tank of gas.

While the big-name, major ammo producers are still scrambling to meet market demands, new manufacturers are poppin' up like daisies, "bargain brands" are blooming, shelves are steadily filling and the best part is, the quality, consistency and overall performance of ammo is improving daily. Here, for your perusal, are some picks from the litter.

Spanky-New & Growing Strong

The paint's barely dry on the doors of K&A Ammunition in Medina, Tenn., but they're already cranking out inexpensive, solid, quality ammo. Initial offerings include three 9mm loads and four each in .40 S&W and .45 ACP. Their dealer network is growing, and by the time you read this, they should be selling online and shipping straight to your door, too.

Alliance Ammunition is an



Tennessee-made K&A and Allegiance are promising new ammo brands (top, middle), while Double Tap keeps growing like gangbusters.

offshoot of Extreme Shock, makers of specialized counter-terrorist ammo. Customers wanted lower priced, copper-plated lead-core rounds for training and general self-defense, and Allegiance delivers that. It's also ideal for long-term storage, featuring sealed primers and case mouths for a 20-year shelf life.

DoubleTap Ammunition is a relatively new maker, but they're rapidly becoming a "1-stop ammo shop" for happy customers; listing over 300 loads in dozens of calibers for handguns and long guns, sold by the box or in bulk lots. Components are the highest quality, like bullets from Nosler and Barnes, and they offer variations you would otherwise have to handload. Visit them online and look for them at your dealer.

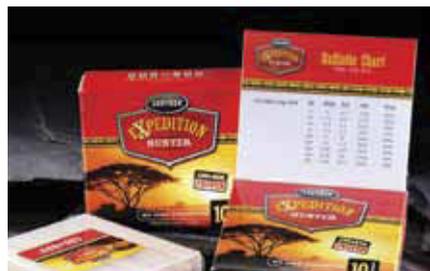
Better Game Getters

Winchester Ammunition offers something for everyone, and specialized loads for just about every hunter's needs. The latest in their Power Max Bonded line includes rounds designed specifically for whitetail deer, delivering tailored terminal performance and of course, superb accuracy.

Hunters of dangerous game who've been hand-feeding classic calibers like the .416 Rigby, .505 Gibbs and .577 Nitro Express should check out CorBon's new Professional Series



Winchester recently expanded its Power Max Bonded lineup, and CorBon (below) has introduced Expedition Hunter rounds for classic dangerous game rifles.



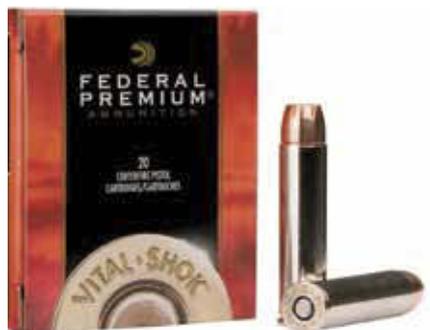
Hunter Expedition ammo, featuring solid DPX lead-free X-panding slugs or the legendary Woodleigh slug. All ammo in this line is packaged in resealable plastic, 5-round packs with a field-ready ballistics chart.

Deep Penetration

Nobody knows more about .44 Magnum and .45-70 rounds than Randy Garrett of Garrett Cartridges. He's spent a lifetime refining the science of optimum penetration with those calibers, and they're the only ones he loads. The NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Services exclusively carry Garrett's Hammerhead rounds, for protection from coastal grizzly attack. The +P



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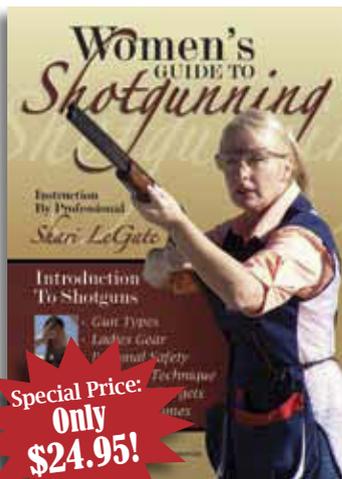
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Exiters shown above, with 500-grain Hornady Copper Clad Steel Jacketed flatnose bullets, are just one of his five .45-70 offerings.

Federal Premium now loads the highly regarded Swift A-Frame bullet in their Cape-Shok Safari rifle rounds and six Vital-Shok handgun hunting loads from .357 Magnum to .500 S&W Magnum, assuring deep penetration and impressive expansion, every time.

Serious Self-defense

Just take a look at the ballistic gelatin in the tube shown below. It shows the typical explosive penetration of MagSafe's hyper-velocity, pre-fragmented, epoxy-stabilized ammo. Using No. 2 or No. 3 large lead shot suspended in an



Some of the most effective defensive handgun rounds come from MagSafe, Winchester and Grizzly Cartridge Company.

epoxy matrix inside a copper alloy jacket, the resulting lightweight slugs can be driven at very high velocities and deliver tremendous energy while almost entirely eliminating ricochet. MagSafe rounds are available in 18 popular handgun calibers from .25 ACP to .50 Action Express and .500 S&W Magnum, with several loads made specifically for compact guns and in-home defense use.

Winchester has won two recent contracts to supply the FBI with 9mm and .40 S&W ammo, which ought to serve as a terrific recommendation. Their Premium PDX1 Personal Defense rounds have proven to be a screamin' success. Expansion of that line now includes a 225-grain bonded hollowpoint .45 Colt load, and a 95-grain JHP .380 Auto load. Slick nickel cases, low-flash propellants and smokin' slugs add up to smooth loading and hot shooting.

Grizzly Cartridge has built a solid reputation on the excellence of their hunting rounds, like the 170-grain Hawk Flatpoint that'll breathe new life into your old .30-30, and thoughtfully-engineered loads for trusty game-getters like the .444 Marlin, and rarities like the .500 Wyoming Express. But when a friend who carries a .44 Special Bulldog Pug challenged Grizzly's owner Mike Rintoul to come up with a deadly, reliably-expanding slug for his Pug's relatively low velocity, Mike virtually locked himself into secluded research for over a year.

The result is Grizzly Xtreme Premium Self-Defense Ammunition. The deeply scored solid-alloy slugs are stable and accurate though essentially hollow, ripping open and expanding after penetration to as much as four times their diameter! That's not a radiator fan blade shown on the box, folks; that's a mushroomed Xtreme slug!

Bargain Blasters

Ammo makers are feeling the same financial squeeze you are in this tight economy and many have taken steps to loosen the pinch. We've already mentioned K&A Ammunition and Extreme Shock's new lower-priced Allegiance brand. If you want Federal Premium performance for significantly less money, check out their Fusion ammo. Friends who've shot a lot of it have said the only differences they see are less highly polished cases and cheaper packaging; all the power and precision is still there.

Hornady has responded by importing Russian-made, coated-steel cases and filling them with



Here are just three ways to stretch your ammo-buying dollars: Hornady's Steel Match line (top), American Tactical's Turkish imports (middle) and Federal's Fusion line.

the same high-quality components used in their domestic products, resulting in excellent performance at hefty savings. The only thing the shooter then lacks is reloadable brass boxer-primed cases. Their Steel Match ammo is already proving very popular.

Another avenue to explore is bargain-priced imported ammunition like American Tactical's Turkish-made ammo. I've shot a bunch of their 62-grain 5.56mm loads, and they compare very favorably with Serbian Prvi Partisan ammo—another good choice—and even American military-issue M855 rounds. In addition to their 5.56mm ammo, they also offer 7.62x51mm, and about a dozen target and tactical 12- or 20-gauge and .410 shotgun rounds.

Shop around, folks, and don't forget—you can order most ammo shipped directly to your door (unless you live in one of those unfriendly states, in which case you'd better talk to your local dealer)! Connor *OUT*

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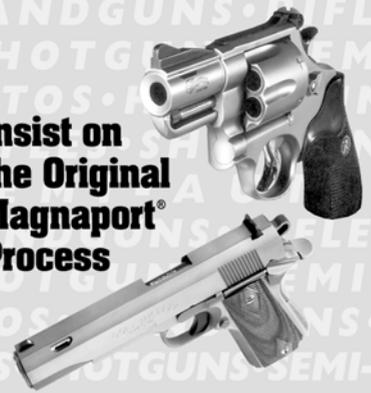
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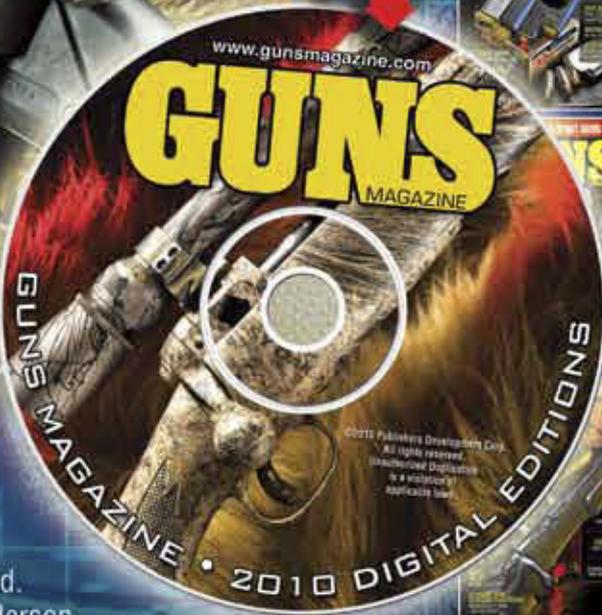
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The Subcompact V3 laser is the most state-of-the-art, versatile rail-mounted laser to date. It needs less than 3/4" of Picatinny rail space to easily mount onto even the smallest firearms. Constructed of T6 aluminum for extra strength and durability, this unit offers an auto-off feature. The V3 easily mounts with a hex-drive crossbar screw and features windage adjustment, elevation adjustment and programmable constant-on and pulse modes. LaserLyte, (928) 649-3201, www.gunsmagazine.com/laserlyte



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The popular SR750 scale from SmartReloader is now delivered in a great package for measuring powder. Included in the SR750 package is the SR55 universal anti-static powder funnel, the Baby Powder Trickler made of steel (1 pound) and two powder measures (2.5cc and .7cc). Weighing modes are grams/ounces/grains/carats; accuracy is 50g/.01g (771 grains/.1g); and is powered by two AAA batteries. SmartReloader, fax: (828) 471-3310, www.gunsmagazine.com/smartreloader

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Altus Brands' new, slim, lightweight Rifleman ACH electronic hearing protection series offers a high NRR of 21 and a crisp, natural sound quality. Each



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The RDZ Case Trimmer is quick and easy to use and produces reliable and repeatable case dimensions. It gives you more time for loading and less time preparing. It is to be used on any 3/8" or larger drill press and is designed to be used with standard-universal shell holders. The set includes the RDZ Case Trimmer, a set of nine pilots for the most standard bullet calibers, the cutter head and arbor. RDZ Products, (860) 601-1222, www.gunsmagazine.com/rdzproducts



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Cobra Firearms "Gun Luxe Jewelry" by designer Brianna Chamberlain, a new line of jewelry designed to capture the attention of the female shooting enthusiast. The jewelry is crafted with ideas and influences that reflect the shooting sports and will provide women with the ability to express their hobby or passion in their style. All pieces are element rich with semi-precious stones, freshwater pearls, crystals, genuine bullet casings, turquoise, quartz, silver, copper and gold. The collection includes: earrings, bracelets, rings, necklaces and several select designer sets. Cobra Firearms, (801) 908-8300, www.gunsmagazine.com/cobrafirearms

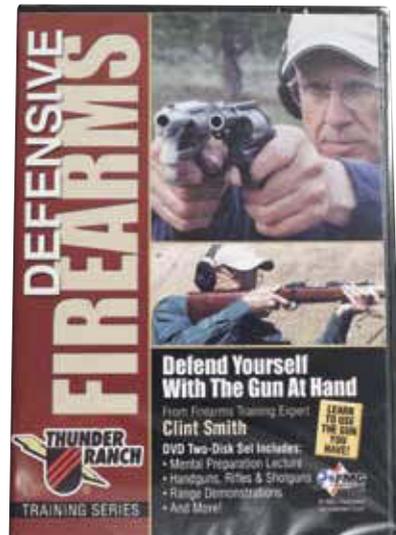


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(B) Yes, there's always room for a rimfire rifle.

(C) Yes, I plan on buying a handgun and a rifle.

(D) No, I don't want a rimfire.

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GUNS MAGAZINE APRIL 2011

GUN GIVEAWAY!

FOR WEB LINKS, GO TO WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/PRODUCT-INDEX

YOU CAN WIN THIS FREE AMERICAN TACTICAL IMPORTS GSG 1911 .22 LONG RIFLE!

You might remember reading in last month's issue the enthusiastic words of our own Holt Bodinson and Mike Cumpston about this fabulous rimfire understudy to the venerable 1911 Government Model made by German Sport Guns and imported by American Tactical Imports. We thought it was so cool we chose to give one away this month

to just one of you lucky readers. Just to make the whole pot a little sweeter, we're also including a Katz Alamo Bowie with Cherrywood scales and 10" full-tang blade made from 440C+ hardened to 58-59 on the Rockwell C scale. You can't win if you don't enter, so send those postcards in pronto or take the survey and enter online at www.gunsmagazine.com. 

GUNS MAGAZINE GUN GIVEAWAY!

ODD ANGRY SHOT

• JOHN CONNOR •

SERIOUS SUMMER SLACKIN'-OFF STUFF

Like reading.

For most of the country April is a muddy, muddled mess of a month. Winter and Spring don't know if they're comin' or going, and lots of outdoor shooting-sports folks don't know either. You can only clean your guns so much before it constitutes "firearm abuse," and reload so many rounds before the ammo cabinet creaks and threatens to collapse. But here are two things you can do during April's doldrums:

First, get into the garage rafters and pull down your hammock or loungin' chair. Check all the lines, webbing and hardware for need of repair or replacement. You don't want to wait until the first warm, sunny Sunday afternoon to discover the hard way that time, strain and solar effect have conspired to unceremoniously dump you right onto the deck like a box a' rocks.

Next, you'll need *props*; essentially, excuses to be reclining in regal splendor soakin' up sun instead of rooting out dandelions or painting the porch. I highly recommend *books*. If you doze off, you don't have to hit "replay" or press a "mute" button to shut 'em up; and if suspicious familial forces interrogate you, you can always plead the need to better inform yourself, expand your interests and broaden your mind. That sounds noble enough, doesn't it? Here are some suggestions for you:

Great Thoughts, Deep Thoughts

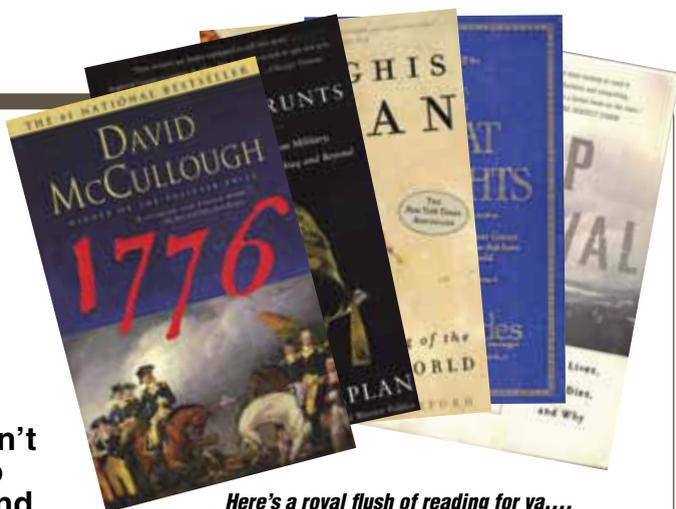
The Great Thoughts, compiled by George Seldes. As the subtitle reads, "From Abelard to Zola, from ancient Greece to contemporary America," it's filled with bite-sized morsels—the ideas that have shaped the history of the world. Break off a chunk of Cato, team a slice of Socrates with a slab of steamin' Spinoza and you've got a philosophy sandwich supreme. The best part is, it's arranged so you can browse and nibble, from half a minute

to hours at a time, changing century, civilization and course from moment to moment.

I've purchased and given away more copies of *The Great Thoughts* than any other book, often following up on those gifts. In every case I've found them well-used, dog-eared and margin-noted. I keep two copies on board; one for myself, and one for "loans"—which tend to become permanent.

Hey, here's a sorta-modern selection: "Written laws are like spiders' webs and will, like them, only entangle and hold the poor and weak, while the rich and powerful easily break them." Anarcharsis the Scythian said that around 600 B.C. Wow, times have sure changed, haven't they? Hmmmm....

Deep Survival—Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why by Laurence Gonzales. The author came by his life-long interest in human survival naturally. Before Laurence was born, his father, Federico Gonzales, was a B-17 pilot assigned to the 8th Air Force, flying bombing missions over Germany. His 25th B-17 mission took him 27,000' over the rail yards at Düsseldorf, where a German flak battalion 88mm round blew his right wing off. The aircraft rolled over in an inverted flat spin and then broke in half amidships. Lt. Gonzales passed out from hypoxia. A witness described "... boys falling out of the sky." Gonzales fell more than 20,000' to the ground without a parachute. He survived.



Here's a royal flush of reading for ya....

In *Deep Survival*, Gonzales' research of avalanches, floods, sinking ships, aircraft crashes and peoples' reactions, survivable and not, is distilled in highly readable form. Going far beyond the tools and techniques survivors used to save themselves and others, he probes the assets in their brains which made the critical difference—and comes up with some compelling theories, including one called "memories of the future." No novel can compare with the true stories recounted—and none could prepare you better to survive your own emergency.

The World, Then And Now

Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World, by Jack Weatherford. At its zenith, the Mongol Empire stretched from Siberia to India, from China and Vietnam to Hungary and from Korea to the Balkans, covering over 12 million contiguous square miles. In 25 years, Genghis Khan conquered more people and territory than the Roman Empire did in 400 years. He did this with the resources of a poor, arid country with a population of perhaps one million people, and his army—which defeated literally millions of Asian, Persian, Arab, Slavic, Turkic and European knights and soldiers—never numbered over 100,000 Mongols.

Genghis established and enforced freedom of religion, smashed the feudal inheritance of aristocratic privilege, replacing it with merit-based systems; abolished torture, established the first international postal service and much, much more.

If you've ever wondered how Temujin, a hungry kid from a dirt-

poor Mongol clan became history's greatest conqueror—and perhaps history's most beneficent ruler—or, why Genghis Khan and the Mongols have gotten such a bad rap and been painted as monsters in Western history, Professor Weatherford can answer your questions and tell the story in smashing style.

Imperial Grunts by Robert D. Kaplan. The public eye has become fixed on our military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan and the televised pronouncements of high-ranking dignitaries in soft suits. But, as Kaplan explains in a narrative filled with “spit and grit,” the interests of freedom are served worldwide by mostly very small units of quiet professionals, serving without the thanks or even the knowledge of the society they represent.

“ ONCE YOU START READING 1776, YOU WILL NEED AND DEMAND UNDISTURBED TIME, AND YOU’LL CHAFE AT DISTRACTIONS.”

From Yemen to Colombia and Sierra Leone to the Philippines, corporals make “handshake treaties” with khans, lieutenants teach tribesmen to fight terrorists and majors make diplomacy with sheiks, all the while hoping their own government won’t sell their successes down the river. Kaplan, who is a consummately factual reporter and a sorta modern Marco Polo, won’t disappoint you.

The Last, Perhaps The Best

1776 by David McCullough. Maybe I saved the best for last; you can be the judge of that. But this one comes with a warning: Once you start reading *1776*, you will need and demand undisturbed time, and you’ll chafe at distractions. McCullough’s research into the darkest, most perilous period in our fledgling nation’s history, and his delving into the personal and many times previously unpublished letters and papers of our patriot forefathers is incredible and richly rewarding.

For me, the best thing about *1776* is that it does not define George Washington, Nathanael Greene, Henry Knox and others by their own words so much as it does by the personal observations of our common kin who left their farms and forges to follow them into battle; folks like 10-year-old Israel Trask, who describes how General Washington broke up a brawl on Harvard Yard. Buy two copies—you’ll need ‘em! Connor *OUT*



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APRIL 2011

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Until recently.

It is obvious to me manufacturers have changed something drastically. A few weeks ago I spent time shooting two of the new .44 Special Ruger Flat-Top Blackhawks being distributed by Lipsey's; another pair of .44 Special Custom Rugers built on the .357 Magnum 50th Anniversary Blackhawk; and a 5th sixgun, a .44 Magnum 50th Anniversary Blackhawk. All my loads were semi-heavy .44 Specials and .44 Magnums. At one time in the late 1980s, I fired over 800 rounds of .454s in one session; this time it was 400 much lighter loads and something occurred I have never experienced before. The bottom of my trigger finger was bruised to the point it required more than a week to heal up. What in the world are firearms manufacturers thinking to change the recoil of their sixguns to the point of doing something like this?

No See'um Sights

I have also noticed a great change in sixgun sights lately. The classic sixguns of the 1950s all came with well-defined, sharp, crisp, easy-to-see sights. Manufacturers have made a great change here also. Currently produced sixguns do not have those same wonderful easy-to-see sights. Why would they do this? It simply makes shooting tight little groups on paper much more difficult, not to mention how fuzzy sights also play havoc with long-range shooting.

Even into the 1980s sights were very clear, making long-range silhouetting a great shooting game. Why don't they still make these sights? But that's not the worst of it. There seems to be some type of black magic involved, perhaps some supernatural virus. I have noticed recently that newer sixguns have infected my older sixguns while they are all stored in the same safe. Somehow the sights on the old classic sixguns have degenerated to the same point as those on the new sixguns. This is not right! Why are manufacturers doing this to us?

The Wiggles

I've noticed something else manufacturers have built into their sixguns and I was just complaining to Bob Baker at Freedom Arms about this. I got my first .454 Casull from Freedom Arms in the mid-1980s. I soon found without a doubt it was the finest revolver every produced by a factory. Whether I shot it offhand or from a rest, it was dead solid. The sights were not only easy to see they stayed right on target. Now

there seems to be a built-in wiggle factor. This wiggle factor seems to be even more prevalent among scope manufacturers.

Over the years I have used LER pistol scopes from Burris, Bushnell, Leupold and Simmons. The crosshairs on all of these scopes used to stand still. Now they dance all over the place even off sandbags. My scope-sighted .454 Casull was rock solid even though I knew I would experience heavy recoil when the trigger was pulled. Now when I try to shoot my brand new 10" Freedom Arms scoped .327 Federal with no anticipation of any heavy recoil the crosshairs wiggle all over the target. Why is this?

It's bad enough to have to put up with these changes from manufacturers, but I find myself experiencing way too many changes in Natural Law. An enormous amount of time and money is spent over the fallacy of man-caused global warming. Instead of wasting resources over global warming they should be investigating the real temperature change—that is, the change in how temperature now affects us. For example, a quarter century ago I could shoot the .500 Linebaugh in 15-degree F weather. Even before that, in the 1950s, I worked outside in the dead of the winter in my shirtsleeves. Now I find if the temperature doesn't at least equal my age I'd just as soon stay indoors. What has happened to temperature?

Grave Gravity Matters

Even stranger than the change in temperature is that found in gravity. At least temperature only changed in one direction but gravity works both ways. For more than 50 years I have been shooting sixguns and have accumulated a pretty good collection of cartridge belts. They are all hanging vertically by the buckle in a peg on the wall of one of my rooms. Some of these belts date back to the 1950s.

Now one would expect, if the law of gravity remained natural, if there was any change at all the belts would grow longer; instead I find just the opposite. Every time I buckle one on, instead of it being longer, I find it has become shorter and tighter and in some cases won't even buckle. This is unnatural. Now this is bad enough, however I have also found a case of gravity working the other way. In the 1950s, I could pick up 500 pounds. Now I find it difficult to get out of my Lazy Boy recliner. This is definitely change I don't need!

In recent times we have heard much of hope and change. I still believe in hope, but you can keep the change.

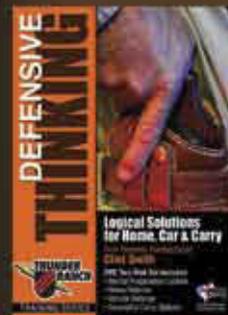


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CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

KEEP THE CHANGE It must be a conspiracy.

Change. It is always with us from the time of conception until we leave this life. As this is written I have spent 25,575 days on this earth and have experienced change every single day; it has been both my best friend and worst enemy. The first parts of our lives are controlled mostly by positive changes, until we reach a certain point and then things begin to change negatively. Not only do our bodies change, but also we are constantly surrounded by change. You can't ever go back to how things used to be, and this is found to be true for someone who moves away from their hometown then returns many years later only to be startled by changes that have occurred.

The first house I remember living in doesn't exist anymore; that whole neighborhood is now a parking lot. My first grade school was within a quiet little well-kept neighborhood with several candy stores. The stores are long gone; the neighborhood is now rundown, with the long abandoned school building surrounded by a fence topped with barbed wire, to prevent vandalism. It hasn't worked.

During the six years I attended that

grade school we lived in a housing project which had been built mostly for returning veterans of WWII. It was a wonderful place to grow up with lots of kids and playgrounds. It covered several blocks with three streets, and although the rental homes were small, they were well built of all brick construction and well cared for by the proud inhabitants. When I went back in the 1970s, I found a ghetto with paper and trash in the streets.

Change had worked its damage.

The house we moved into in January of 1950 was a grand place backed up to a wooded area. Here is where I lived as I finished my school years, got my first job, met Diamond Dot, and then moved when we married in 1959. It no longer exists. It burnt to the ground in the 1970s and was never rebuilt. My childhood is totally gone. I literally cannot go back. My past surroundings have been wiped out and only memories of wonderful times remain.

Every reader can probably look back and experience the same things I have. Change happened very slowly prior to the Industrial Revolution, however, since then great change has happened faster and faster until today's generation hardly notices it. I can usually handle these changes, however, I have a tough time with changes that have secretly and subtly been foisted upon us by the firearms industry. They make no excuses for what they have done, in fact, they will not even admit the changes they have forced upon us.

Inhumane Changes

As one example let us look at recoil. My first experience with a .44 Magnum was as a teenager in 1956. It was a Smith & Wesson and the recoil was horrendous! So much so, I instead purchased a .44 Magnum Ruger Blackhawk. It was even worse. At the first shot the muzzle flipped skyward and the hammer took a hunk of skin out of the back of my hand. Both Ruger and Smith & Wesson must've realized how bad the recoil was and changed something, as by the 1960s I was shooting both sixguns with no problem. Then came the .454 Casull in the 1980s and I fired hundreds of rounds per session. The .500 and .475 Linebaughs were a challenge, however I even survived them. All was well.

continued on page 89

Keep the change!



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