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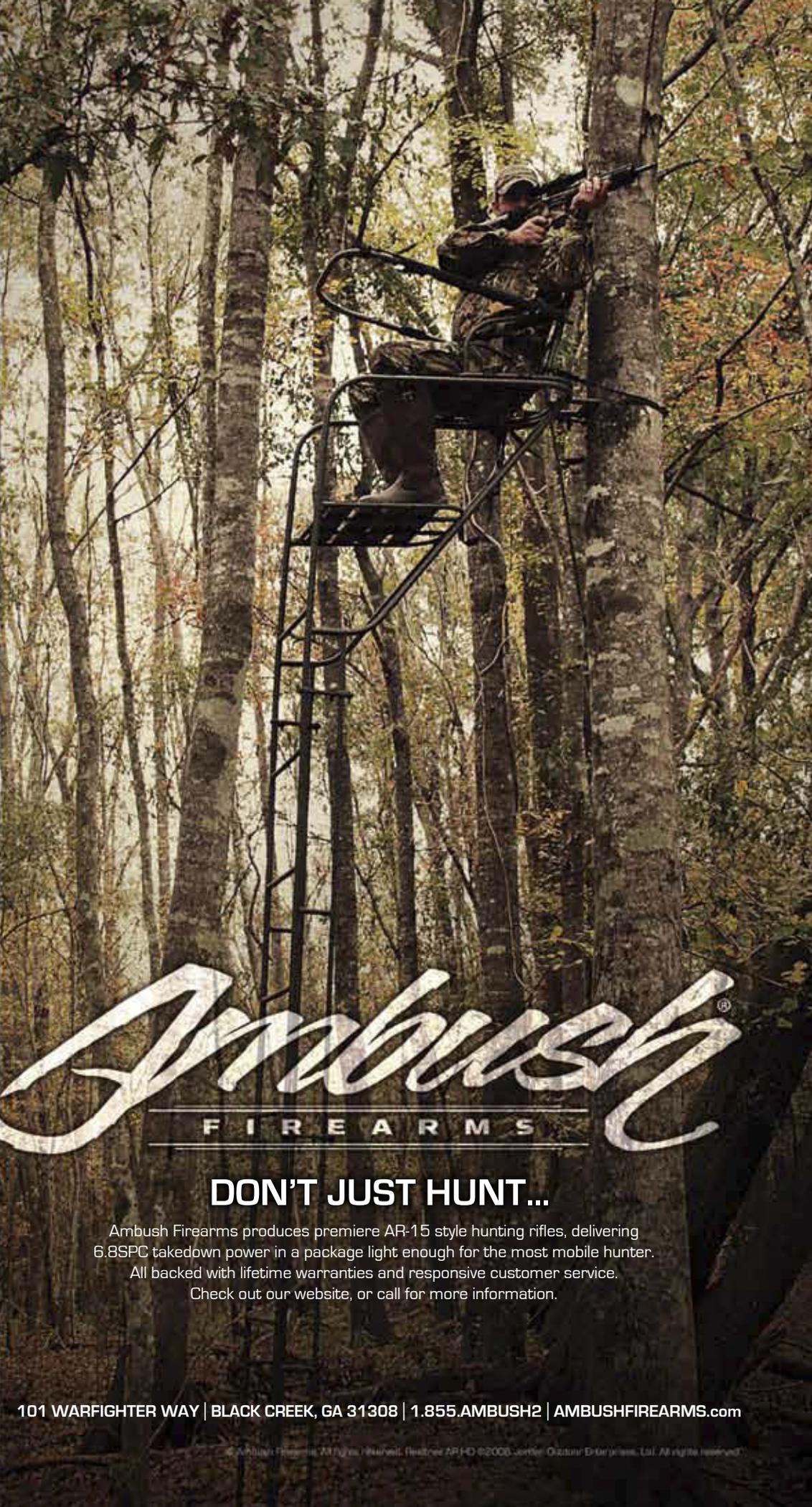
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**MAY 2012**  
Vol. 58, Number 5, 676th Issue



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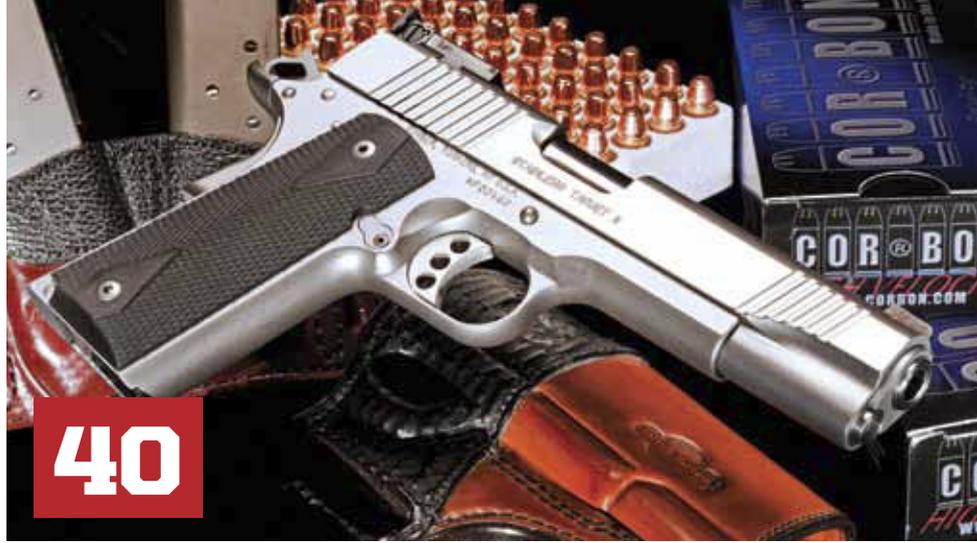
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# CROSSFIRE

## LETTERS TO GUNS

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### Dangerous Data

I was reading my January 2012 issue, in specific the "Perfect Powders" article by John Barsness in the Handloading column. In the included table in that article, Mr. Barsness lists a .35 Whelen load for 225-grain bullet of 65.0 grains Varget with a pet load of 60.5 grains.

I have been loading .35 Whelen for years, and Varget is my powder of choice. The 65.0-grain load is a dangerously overcharged load, a full 10 grains over Hodgdon's recommended maximum charge for a 225-grain bullet.

*Douglas Holland  
League City, Texas*

*Somehow, John's data—which was correct—got corrupted when it was reformatted for production and I didn't catch it. The maximum charge listed in John's data was 60.5 grains for the 225-grain .35 Whelen bullet. This is why good reloaders never trust a single source for data and always cross-reference data before starting. It was my fault and I apologize.—Jeff John*

### Forklift Drop

OK, the caption for the top photograph on page 82 of the March issue was written by an ignoramus who knows nothing about airdrop procedures if this person believes "[A] crew pushes the forklift platform out of a C-130 aircraft." As an Air Force Reserve C-130 airdrop-qualified Navigator with over 5,000 hours airborne in the C-130 airframe I can unequivocally tell you two things:

1. The only crewmembers in the cargo compartment of that C-130 during the airdrop were the loadmasters. Most of the crew (Aircraft Commander, Co-Pilot, Navigator, and Flight Engineer) were in the cockpit, couldn't even see the forklift, and did nothing physically with that forklift—only the loadmasters, not the generic "crew," were working in the back of the airplane during that airdrop.

2. That forklift platform is classed as "Heavy Equipment" and requires an extraction parachute to exit the aircraft (literally, a drag chute attached to the platform yanks it out of the aircraft where the main parachutes deploy to lower it to the ground). Under no circumstances does anyone, including the loadmasters, "push" a load with an extraction parachute attached to it out of the aircraft because if that person becomes entangled with the load they will be pulled out of the aircraft with it, likely to their death. *No one* was "pushing" on that forklift at any point during the airdrop.

*Lt. Col. Elliott Stoffregen III  
357th Airlift Squadron  
Maxwell AFB, AL*

### Taurus 24/7

I enjoyed John Taffin's article in the April issue about the Taurus PT 24/7. Being a happy owner of a PT 709 and Model 669, I couldn't agree more with his assessment. They are quality design and manufacturing. One other thing John could have mentioned regarding the 24/7 is it also has an ambidextrous slide release. Keep up the good work and great magazine. Your style is factual, concise and good reading.

*L. Zimmer  
Brighton, Mich.*

### Tommy Fun Gun Bummer

I think a lot of your readers are going to be justifiably furious after they order a Scottwerx Chicago Thompson kit for Ruger 10/22s based on your March 2012 article and photos, only to find it doesn't match the Auto Ordnance Thompson photograph you have misnamed on page 38 as their Chicago version. I was ready to order one before I realized your mistake.

*W. McCants  
via e-mail*

*Yes, it was my mistake and I apologize. Sorry to hear you're going to take out on Scottwerx.—Jeff John*

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# RIMFIRES

STORY: Holt Bodinson

## ISSC'S MODERN SPORTING RIFLE

### The MK22 recreates the FN SCAR in .22 LR.

One of the endearing qualities of .22 rimfire firearms is they can be fabricated to replicate just about any centerfire model. Some of the outstanding rimfire examples we've covered recently include the Colt M4, HK MP5, Browning 1911-22, S&W M&P 15-22, SIG SAUER P229 and GSG's 1911. With the lines, dimensions, weight and controls of the real deals, these rimfire clones are invaluable understudies to their centerfire brethren plus they're inexpensive, cheap and fun to shoot.

While they label it with the generic moniker, "Modern Sporting Rifle," ISSC has cooked up the coolest rimfire clone of an FN SCAR imaginable. Just like the SCAR, it's right on the cutting edge of modern firearm design.

### The FN SCAR

The US Special Operations Force Combat Assault Rifle (SCAR) program is the most intriguing small arms development of the post-9/11 world. In 2003, the Special Operations community set forth a set of requirements for a new weapons system to replace the aging M16 platform, which has been in service since 1962. Nine vendors submitted their designs in 2004, and only FN's submissions for 5.56, 7.62 and 40mm grenade models were given further

development approval and support.

Today, the SCAR family consists of the MK 16 (5.56), the MK 17 (7.62x51), in both selective-fire and semi-automatic versions, and the MK 13 Enhanced Grenade Launcher Module (EGLM), which can be fitted to either of the rifle platforms or configured as a stand-alone launcher.

Some of the advantages of the FN SCAR family are that the models have an 83-percent parts commonality, reducing logistical support requirements, a 99-percent maintenance commonality, reducing maintenance training and a 100-percent ergonomic commonality, reducing user training time.

More importantly from a user's point of view, the models are ambidextrous with ambidextrous



Even the MK22 magazine is scaled up to 5.56 dimensions. It comes with a 10- or 22-round capacity.

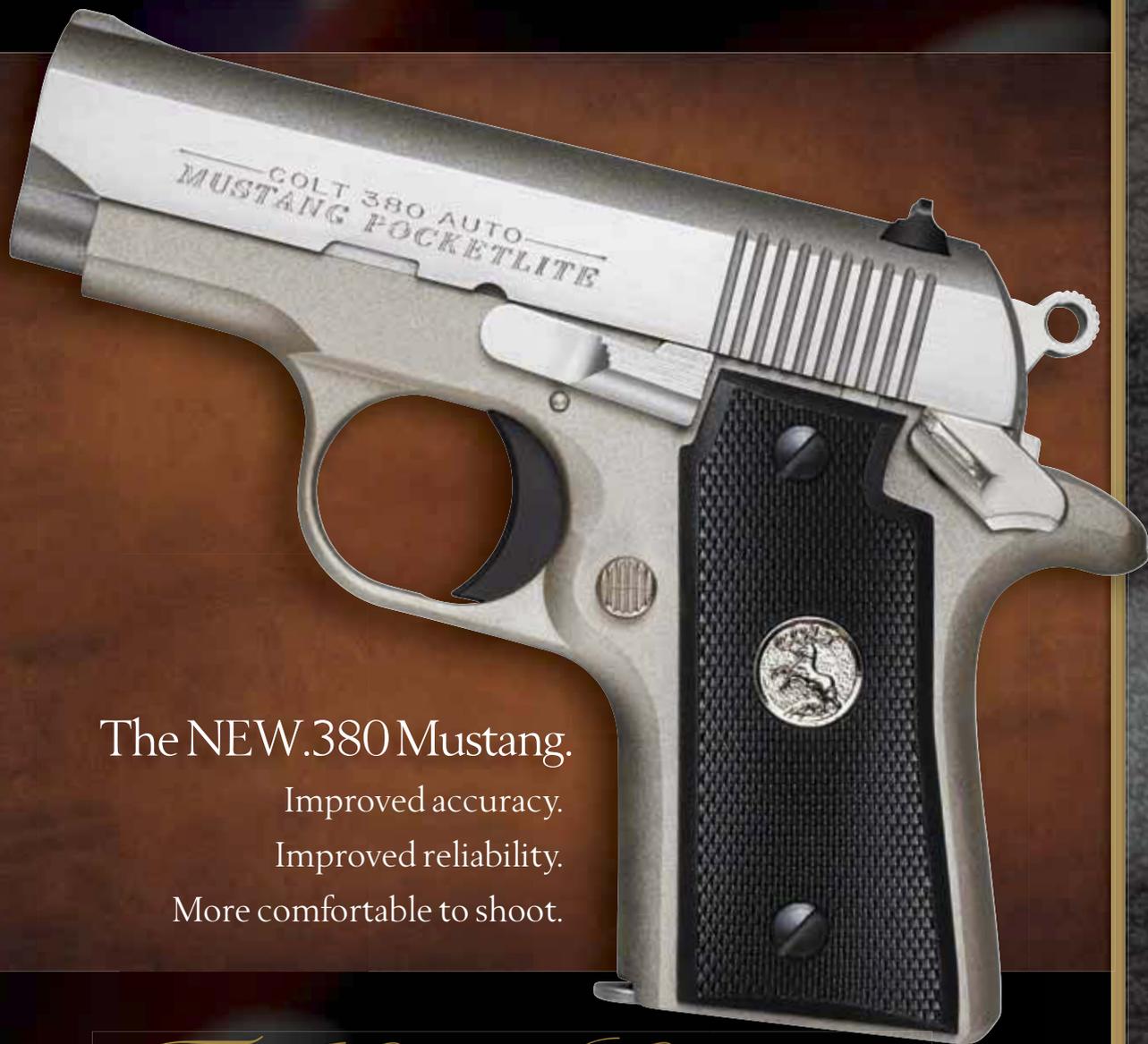
selector switches, magazine releases and an operating handle that can be switched from side-to-side. The MK 16 and MK 17 are modular. By merely changing out the free-floating barrels, a user can configure their rifle for missions ranging from close-quarter combat to long-range sniping with a deviation of less than 1 MOA between barrel changes.

The side-folding, polymer buttstock is adjustable for both comb height and length-of-pull. The operating system is a short stroke, gas piston, eliminating the fouling issues associated with the direct gas impingement system of the M16. The



The MK22 profile (above) is unmistakably that of the FN SCAR. The side-folding buttstock is adjustable for comb height as well as length-of-pull. With its stock folded, the compact MK22 would prove useful in vehicles and tight places (inset).

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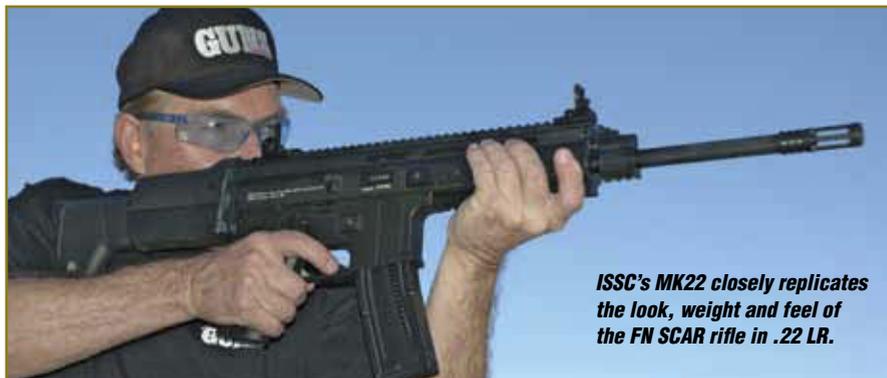
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*ISSC's MK22 closely replicates the look, weight and feel of the FN SCAR rifle in .22 LR.*



*In looks and feel the MK22 comes pretty close to the real FN SCAR Holt is shooting here.*

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top-mounted optical rail incorporates folding front and rear backup sights plus there are three additional Picatinny rails for accessories.

And the best part of the story is ISSC's "Modern Sporting Rifle" incorporates most of the SCAR's overall design and features. With a weight of 7-1/4 pounds, the ISSC even weighs the same as the standard MK 16 SCAR.

### ISSC

The driving force behind ISSC product line is Wolfram Kriegleder, who designed the Walther P22 pistol. Recently, Kriegleder struck out on his own and formed his own company, "International Shooting and Security Consultants" (ISSC) in Ried, Austria, and is importing and marketing his line of advanced rimfire pistols and rifles through Legacy Sports International of Reno, Nev.

I'm no stranger to the military SCAR family, having had the opportunity to test the complete line of selective fire models on FN's range. Opening the box holding ISSC's MK22 and hefting the rifle for the first time, frankly, I was dumfounded how well ISSC had cloned the SCAR in .22 LR.

The overall configuration of the MK22 is very similar to the SCAR. It has an aluminum receiver and a polymer, side-folding stock. The ambidextrous safety and magazine release are positioned correctly. In fact, on the MK22, there are three

safeties. There is the thumb-activated safety lever above the pistol grip, a disconnect safety when the magazine is removed and a trigger-activated, firing pin drop safety that prevents an accidental discharge should the MK22 be dropped.

Like the SCAR, the operating or cocking handle of the MK22 can be switched from side-to-side plus the MK22 offers three optional mounting positions for the operating handle on either side of the receiver.

The side-folding, polymer buttstock is adjustable for both comb height and a length-of-pull from 12.5" to 14" and when folded, it is locked firmly into position. There are multiple options molded into the stock for the attachment of a sling.

The top optical rail is mounted with detachable, flip-up front and rear sights that I found very useful. Both sights offer two sighting options, either an aperture or a 3-dot open sight. The rear sight is adjustable for windage and the front post sight for elevation. One of the interesting features of the FN SCAR is the front sight of each barrel is adjustable for windage and elevation. Once the front sight is zeroed, the SCAR barrels can be switched back and forth without any material change in the point-of-impact.

Speaking of Picatinny rails, the MK22 offers more rail surfaces than the FN itself, and there's even a small rail on the ersatz gas block of the MK22, which brings up another

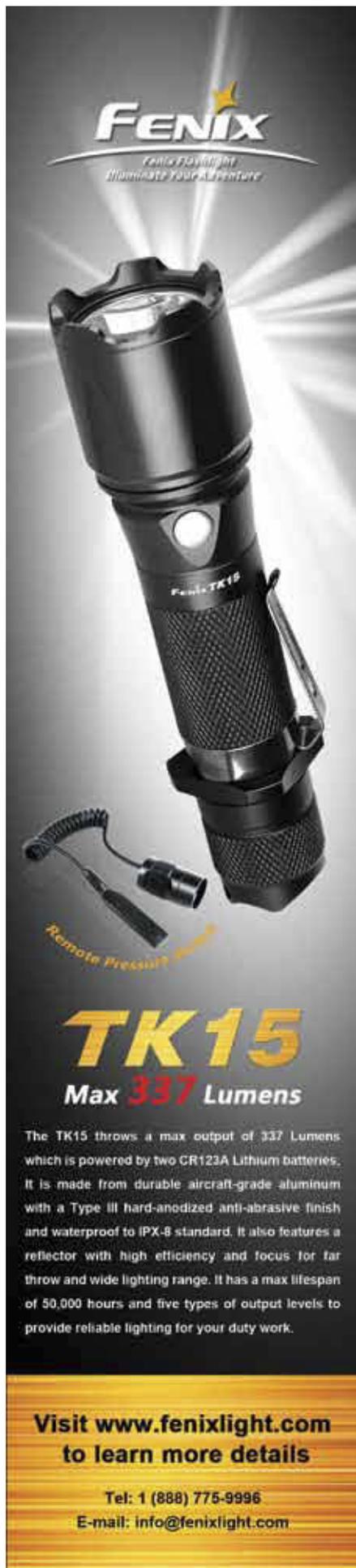


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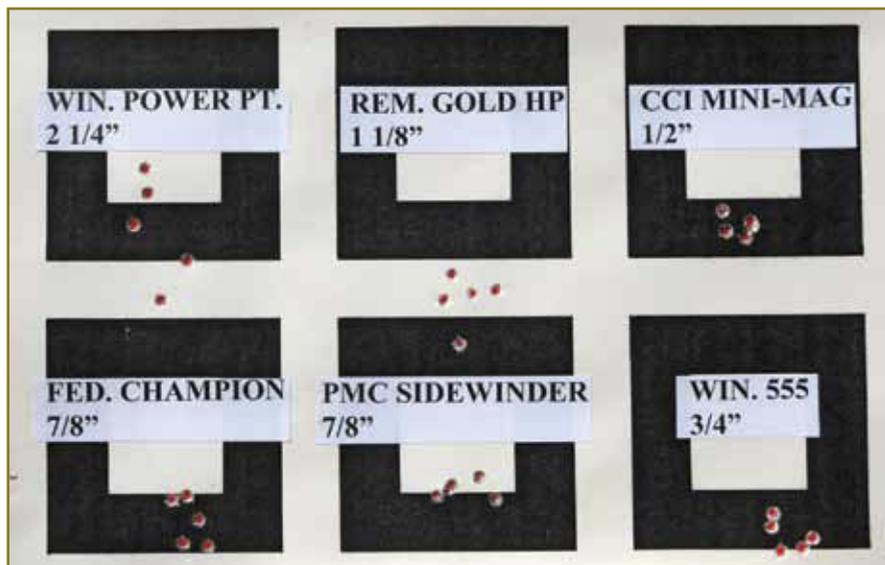
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point about the FN. The cyclic rate of an automatic firearm increases when fired with a suppressor due to back-pressure. On the gas block of the FN, there is an adjustable gas regulator to maintain a consistent rate of fire when the rifle is fired with a suppressor.

Either a 10- or 22-round magazine is available for the MK22. The magazines are scaled to dimensions of a 5.56 round! They also incorporate a visible cartridge window and cartridge counting scales.

How does the MK22 handle and shoot? It mounts and feels like the real SCAR. The slightly creepy but thoroughly manageable, double-stage trigger measured 5 pounds, 7 ounces on a Lyman electric scale. The well written and illustrated owner's manual recommends the use of high speed LR. I tested the rifle with five brands of high speed ammunition and the target velocity, Federal Champion brand. The MK22 functioned fine with the Champion, which turned in one of the three smallest groups.

Based on 5-shot groups at 25 yards



*The operating handle (above), here on the left side, can be switched from side-to-side as well as forward or aft. With rails at 3, 6, 9 and 12 o'clock positions, the MK22 offers more rail surfaces than the SCAR. The folding backup sights (below) offer both an aperture and a 3-dot option.*



### MK22 MODERN SPORTING RIFLE

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**ACTION TYPE:** Blowback, semi-automatic, **CALIBER:** .22 LR, **BARREL LENGTH:** 18" with flash hider, **OVERALL LENGTH:** 34-1/4", 36", **LENGTH FOLDED:** 26-1/2", **WEIGHT:** 7-1/4 pounds, **FINISH:** Black, **SIGHTS:** Folding backup, Picatinny rail, **STOCK:** Side-folding polymer, **RETAIL:** \$577 (black), \$609 (desert camo)

using the aperture sight, CCI Mini-Mag was the overall champ at 1/2", followed by Winchester bulk 555 at 3/4" and Federal Champion at 7/8". Much to my surprise, the MK22 did not like Winchester Power Point whatsoever, stringing it out into a vertical group of 2-1/4". Honestly, the more I shoot CCI Mini-Mag, the more impressed I am with this sterling CCI product. The MK22 is fitted with a precision Lothar Walther barrel and that helps a bit, too.

Offering the look, feel and function of an FN SCAR, ISSC's MK22 Modern Sporting Rifle is a hoot to shoot. It's bound to be a classic in the world of rimfires.



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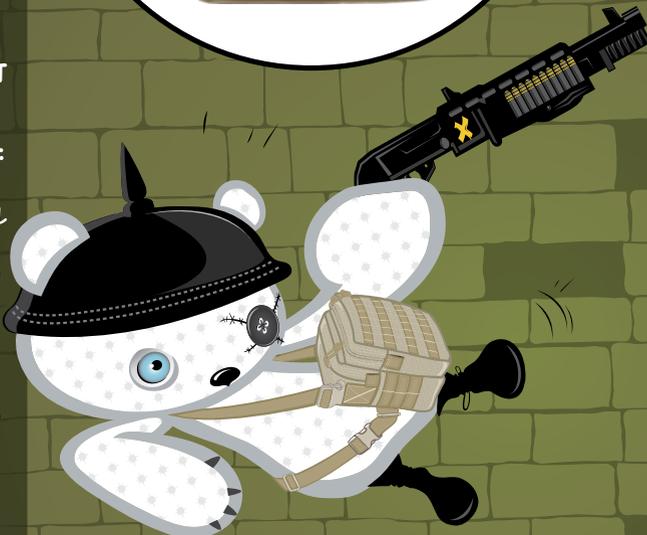
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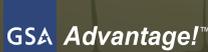
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# UPON ARS

STORY: Glen Zediker

## PIN IT Making triggers better.

**I've said many times the only real way to improve a trigger on an AR-15 is to replace it with something from the aftermarket. There used to be a scant few, now there are a many**

Anyone who's read my books knows those I favor, so this work here isn't a buyer's guide. I have found no matter which aftermarket trigger you choose, there are ways to make it perform better, and keep it performing well.

Some come supplied with their own proprietary trigger and hammer pin sets. Pin quality matters. Think about how the system functions, and how much room there is for imperfection considering receiver hole sizes and locations and trigger pieces-parts hole locations, and it's clear the pins that fit into these holes have a say in how well the truly functional trigger parts (hammer hook and sear) establish a consistent connection, which means a consistent disconnection.

When I can, I push through a set of KNS brand trigger pins. These are true and dimensionally precise. A set of locking-style pins is a nice addition. These usually have an external locking arrangement. If the pins can't rotate then at the least the trigger and hammer will be rotating on the same spots each cycle. Unless it's an external lock, then the snugness of the fit with the receiver holes determines whether they stay put.

### Oversize Pins

To this end, "oversized" pins might help. Blueprint-type pins are, or should be, .154". Oversized is a scant more at .155" (usually). KNS offers a set bigger than that, and these come with a corresponding reamer to provide an exceedingly concise fit. I'm not convinced that's the perfect magic as it sounds because I see it more as a "last resort" to get a precise match, or for use on a well-worn receiver hole. Another .001" in pin diameter usually does it anyhow.

Speaking of pin sizes, some of the aftermarket trigger sets that provide



***This is a KNS locking pin arrangement. The trigger pin has threads and a hammer pin and locking stud (above). The locking bar fits over the hammer pin stud and screws down over the trigger pin (below). Works great.***



***This receiver block from Brownells greatly aids trigger installations because you keep both hands free. And whatever you do, do not let the hammer fall freely when you're doing your checks. It will—not can—crack the receiver. Block it!***

pins make a distinction between trigger and hammer pins, and the hammer pin is larger diameter. Normally, as-supplied GI parts have no difference between trigger and hammer pins. If

there are pins installed in the trigger system you should pay attention to and then maintain each in its original place.

The reason the hammer pin might be oversized is the same reason I routinely install an oversized hammer pin: It's under a great deal more pressure than the trigger pin, especially as many of the competition-type AR-15 triggers have an extra stout hammer spring to speed up hammer fall. Getting the fit closer to start will help keep it closer over use. If there's a little slop to begin, it will get worse in a hurry.

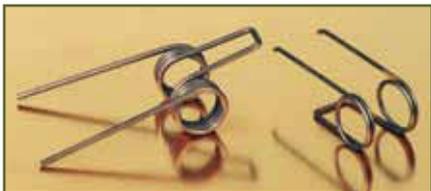
Speaking of springs: trigger performance and consistency can be enhanced with better springs. If you're using a 2-stage trigger, the trigger spring can be changed or altered, or both, to likewise change first-stage pull weight. If it's a single stage, then the trigger spring has a decided influence on the break-weight of the trigger.

The hammer spring, as mentioned, can have a decided influence on the speed of the hammer fall, which is lock-time. That's the one—well, one of the ones—main disadvantage shooting an AR-15 against a bolt gun. AR-15s are slow. There's a limit to how much tension a hammer spring can have. Some of our government competition shooters have experienced broken hammers and radically accelerated wear from getting a little too far over the top. Function problems can also result from a too-stout hammer spring. Remember: the carrier has to set the hammer.

I like and use (coincidence) chrome-silicon (CS) springs. This material is world's better than the standard music wire because it just doesn't change. A CS spring, if manufactured exploiting this material's potential, will last the lifetime of the firearm without any notable degradation in performance. It also rebounds faster at a (measured) lighter weight than music wire. That means the spring compresses easier and releases harder. All good.

Not all aftermarket triggers can use standard-form springs, but if yours can I think it's a wise investment to upgrade to CS.

I guess by now this next won't surprise you but keep the trigger components lubed. I'm a big advocate of slicking up all the operational pieces-parts. Moly grease is great for



**CS springs (above), like these from Superior Shooting Systems go a long way toward keeping your trigger functioning consistently, and better. For Service Rifle competitors who must meet minimum weight requirements, the trigger spring "feet" can be bent downward to increase first-stage resistance in a 2-stage trigger, or they can simply be doubled up (correct—install two springs) for extra resistance. Here's a set of KNS precision-made pins (below). I use these whenever I can. Whether or not your aftermarket trigger came with its own set of pins, these are what they should be. Oversized is also available and can be wise at least for the hammer.**



hammer/sear and hammer spur (the part the bolt carrier slides over) and a good quality oil does the rest. I'm partial to boron-nitride grease and oils anymore. By the way, if anyone doesn't think that a "super lube" like molybdenum disulfide doesn't help, trigger pull weight will—not can—change with or without it.

I also keep the insides of the lower receiver lubed. This doesn't make anything work better, just provides a little "flytrap" for debris, such as might result from a primer failure, and helps keep it away from the carefully fitted, shiny—and expensive—parts.

Installing a trigger isn't hard, but it needs to be done carefully. It can take a lot of force to set the hammer in place. Mechanics gloves can help. Don't tap pins! There is never a time when either of these pins should need a hammer to seat. Get alignment right. Use an alignment punch to secure the hammer or trigger prior to installing the pin. It might take a push, but never a rap. If it does, there's no harm in slightly radiusing either the pin or its hole, and use lube on these parts. The lube has zero influence on pin security.

*Shameless Self-Promotion: The preceding is a specially adapted excerpt from The Competitive AR15: Builders*

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# RANGING SHOTS

STORY: Clint Smith PHOTOS: Heidi Smith

## TIME SPEED AND TARGETS!

### How to hit quickly, and with accuracy.

**H**aving been in the training business for a while now, there are a few things which might prove helpful to the average or new shooter in regards to practice techniques.

The goal in training, of course, is to approximate as closely as possible the realities of conflict without actually killing off the client base during training. Without starting WWII for the editor, the “shooting past people’s heads” and “run and gun flaming death” stuff is of course exciting, but then again arguably it can often be dangerous—especially if not done correctly by trained people.

“Trained” here is subject to interpretation like, “I was in the Army for 10 years.” It’s cool, but it doesn’t mean they can teach anymore than it means if you’ve got a car you can drive. Not to be ugly, but lots of folks have been killed in “fake” ammo drills that were not, and think back to all the people you have heard of killed by unloaded guns that weren’t.

A tremendous issue in shooting, like in self-defense is speed. Speed defined in shooting is hard to clarify because it means so many different things to different people or applications. Speed is probably most often thought of purely in a timed, “I am faster than you” gig. Rightly so, in competition we reward the person who shoots fast but historically, and, correctly so, speed needs to be balanced with accuracy. In layman’s terms, if you shot first or a lot and don’t hit zip, who cares? If all you needed was noise, you can chunk firecrackers at a threat. If you wanna scare them, get a big dog.

We need to hit stuff we shoot at. In a war, shoot a lot or as much ammo as you have or as long as supplies last, your call. Today so far, there is still an accountability for rounds fired, so I would try to ensure my hits are on



*The MGM Lolly Popper set is a grouping of two to create bystander or “now shoots” and turns into a good mover to work with after the first hit on the plates.*

target. You’re gonna be sued by the bad guys you shot or the remaining family pukes, and just imagine the furies if you shoot bystander kids.

The “tried by 12, carried by six” is a cute concept unless you wind up in court. Bluntly, as I advance in age personally and as I continue to train and teach others, I work and teach people to shoot as quickly as they can and yet hit the target.

It sounds stupid but it is true: “If you miss don’t shoot faster, shoot better.” And I admit it will be hard, stressful and more. When I get in an “at-ease comfort zone” or a student gets in the “shoot small groups zone” I press them and myself to go a bit quicker or increase range or decrease target size. Skill, size, distances all affect marksmanship. If I could give my students one “gift” it would be the gift of timing; how long does it take you to hit that target as quickly as possible with the first round?

Anything that moves as a target in training is a good thing. Balloons, anything is good to press the issue home that most often the threat is moving and we may have no other choice but to move also, move to contact, move to break contact, move to cover or concealment. Up front most people don’t like shooting stuff that moves because they don’t hit stuff that moves. The proper response is, “I didn’t hit it, I am going to keep



*Excellent for developing shooting skills. The solid MGM plate (above) resets after being hit, which we’ll need using the GAP TR .308 bolt-action rifle.*



*Lots of options for targets are available (below) so you need to pick what works best for you.*

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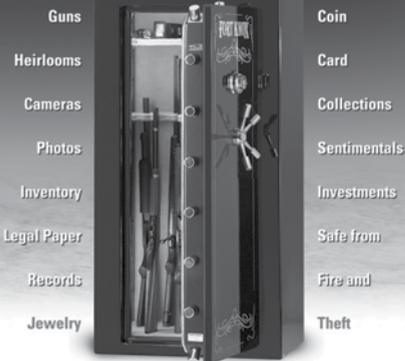
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shooting until I do hit it *and* be able to do so with two hands, one hand, left-handed"—yeah, you get it. You're getting better by doing stuff you can't normally do by doing stuff you can.

I worked with a guy once who said that the wobbler like targets weren't realistic as they sway sort of back and forth. Duly noted. But it is still better than stationary and if the swaying can be interrupted into a lean or lean out from behind a representation of concealment it is better. We used to have a system called the Charger Deck in Texas. The targets ran directly at you and you better back up or you'd get run down or over.

It was clearly the most dangerous system I ever designed, and the darn thing was quite a training aid. But if you jumped up on that deck you had better be wired up to shoot and move. It morphed through several stages to get it to where we could use it without our peeing our pants while it was working—an example of a client-base killer. If you ever shot on the deck as a student, you loved it, but it was a wa-a-a-y big pay attention time.

I use Action Targets and Salute targets and homemade targets of every size and shape. Another good source with some cool stuff to help me get my work done is the MGM line. All are good targets and these good people make just a couple of targets I like. This thing is slick as the targets discs move and you know what I think about moving targets. It has several different sizes of plates and the shafts are available in rigid or flexible versions. Both are good but the flex one is the real get your money deal. After the initial hit, the plates move kinda wherever it wants if you successfully hit it again ASAP, the movement simply increases. I like it a lot for partners or team drills were one person hits it and the other needs to pick up their first target while it is moving.

It does what it says, so it is moving and we discussed moving. I set the spinner so only one plate is visible then off color the low plate. When the top plate is struck the low bright-colored "flashes" to confirm a hit. Using handguns if you stay behind the sights and continue to hit the top plate you can roll the spinner completely over, and it is moving the whole time.

Pretty simple, yet effective when hit, it rolls back and then resets itself, the higher the hit the quicker the plate "drops."

So with the use of either simple targeting or some stout affordable steel like the likes of MGM you can increase your skills. If you need a stop watch/timer, good for you, but



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remember you need to hit stuff first then add speed and then add distance.

You can never go wrong working timing and movement shooting exercises.



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# RIFLEMAN

STORY: Dave Anderson

## WANT TO GROW OLD? Safe gun handling skills may help.

**S**ome of the shooting-related stuff I see and read on the Internet fills me with despair. It appears many gun owners either (a) don't know the rules of firearm safety, or (b) know them but think they are silly.

A common thread is resentment against the old geezer at the range who criticizes their gunhandling. That old geezer would be me. I'm shy and retiring by nature, soft spoken, diffident to a fault, and willing to overlook much. If I get really bad service at a restaurant I teach them a lesson by tipping just 15 percent. I'm the sort who apologizes when someone else steps on my foot.

But anyone who points a firearm at me, intentionally or unintentionally, loaded or unloaded, is going to get corrected, immediately and loudly. I won't tolerate it; nor should you. If I sweep you with the muzzle you need to let me know about it in no uncertain terms. And my reaction should be to apologize and thank you—sincerely—for pointing it out.

There are four basic, inviolable, unbreakable rules:

1. All guns are always handled and treated as though they were loaded.

2. Never allow the muzzle to point at anything you are not prepared to see destroyed.

3. Finger off the trigger unless sights are on target.

4. Be sure of your target, along with what is behind and in the vicinity of the target.

Why am I so adamant about Rule 2? Because it is the last line of defense. You can do everything else wrong and still not kill or injure anyone provided you control where the muzzle is pointing. Not most of the time. All of the time. It's a concept that is hard to grasp in a society that gives second, third, twentieth chances.

You didn't learn the material taught in Grade 5? What the heck, we'll promote you anyway. Fail your drivers' written test? Keep trying it until you pass. Commit cold-blooded murder? Well gosh, it's a first offence and the murderer is a "youth" of 17, so why ruin his whole life because of

one mistake?

But firearms are tools, and tools don't forgive. They'll kill you—or your best friend, your child, your spouse—the first time you make a mistake. Many shooters have no real understanding of what a bullet can do, especially a bullet fired from a hunting rifle.

A while back I watched an episode of *Sons of Anarchy*. In the episode an old man gripped by dementia wrongly concludes one of the bikers is assaulting his wife. He uses his deer rifle to shoot the biker in the shoulder at a range of about 3'. In the show the man shot reacts about as dramatically as if he'd been stung by a wasp.

Then we get the usual solemn, "We've got to get the bullet out" discussion. Following the bullet-digging scene he's up and around in a day or two and within a couple of weeks has apparently made a complete recovery.

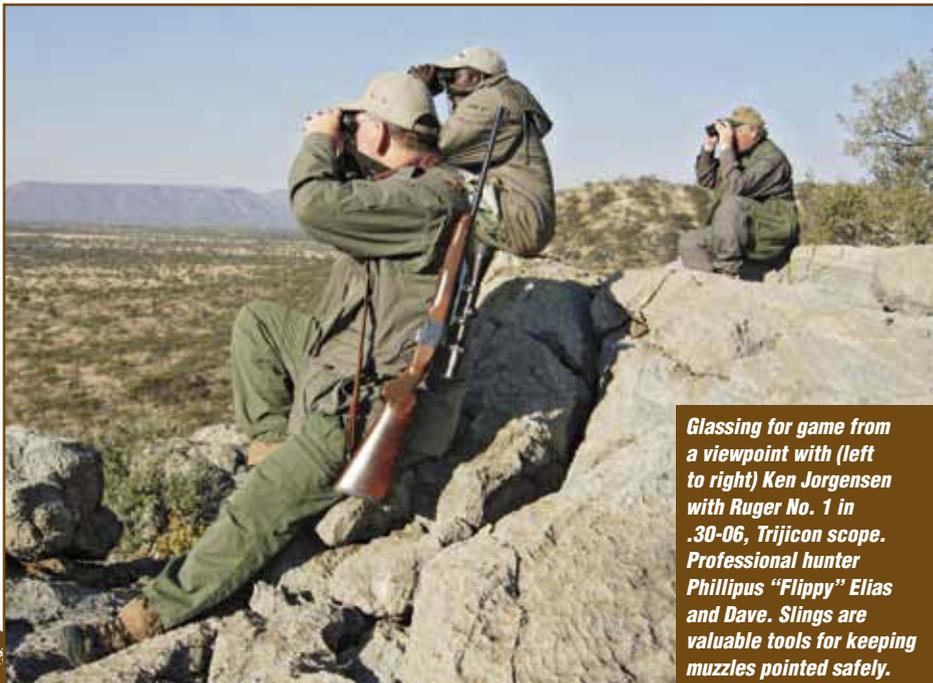
### It Ain't Hollywood

Based on personal experience of having shot, field-dressed, skinned and cut up some hundreds of game animals, let me describe what would actually happen. The bullet would drive through the body expanding and fragmenting as it goes, smashing blood vessels, shattering bone, and sending secondary missiles over a wide area to cause additional damage. There would be a huge bloodshot area full of bone fragments and mangled muscle.

How badly the bullet fragmented would depend on bullet construction, but the bulk of it would exit, leaving a gaping exit wound. If you feel the need to "dig out the bullet" you'll be digging it out of a wall, likely in an adjacent house.

Blood loss would be immediate and massive, with a catastrophic drop in blood pressure. Without immediate assistance to stanch blood loss the person would almost certainly lose consciousness in a matter of seconds, and bleed to death within minutes.

If there is assistance available to stem the blood loss, and with very prompt emergency medical care, the victim has a chance of survival. He



*Glassing for game from a viewpoint with (left to right) Ken Jorgensen with Ruger No. 1 in .30-06, Trijicon scope. Professional hunter Phillipus "Flippy" Elias and Dave. Slings are valuable tools for keeping muzzles pointed safely.*



**Dave, professional hunter Naftali Amoolongo, springbok. Dave was excited because this was the first game animal he ever took in Africa. Not too excited to forget where the rifle is pointed. Rifle is Ruger 77 Mark II .300 Win Mag, scope a (now discontinued) Zeiss 2.5-8X.**

would need blood transfusions along with emergency surgery to stop the bleeding. Then after some weeks of recovery he would need extensive reconstructive surgery.

With good treatment, months of painful therapy, and good luck, the person might recover some limited use of the arm on the affected side, though it will never again be the same. Being shot often causes long-term problems. My best buddy, a LEO, was shot in the body with a .357 Magnum. He survived thanks to immediate first aid from fellow officers and prompt excellent medical care. Yet, he still had to have additional surgery some 20 years after being shot.

When people carelessly let guns point at you they are saying they don't care if you live or die. I won't wait until someone has been shot. I'm not interested in hearing tearful remorse, or a bunch of chin-stroking experts discussing how to make sure this never happens again. I want to make sure it never happens once. I know, others just see a crabby old timer making a big deal about nothing. I see mental images of lungs and heart pulverized into a bloody soup.

People might say, you could at least use some restraint. There's no need to get loud and critical. You could compromise by leaving, or saying something later on in private. In fact being loud and critical *is* my compromise position.

Of course all this applies if someone points a gun at me. Now if someone points a gun at my wife—well, then it's going to get ugly. **GUNS**



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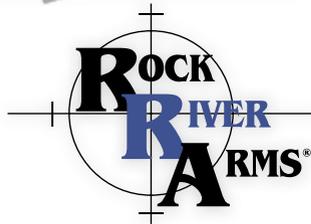


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# MONTANA MUSINGS

STORY: Mike "Duke" Venturino  
PHOTOS: Yvonne Venturino

## GUNS & MONEY They aren't exactly the same.

**R**ecently, I received a long, rather incoherent letter from a reader. Finally, in his last sentence he got to the point, which was that my friend and I "were out of our minds" because I wrote we actually fired his father's general officer's Colt 1903 .32 Auto pistol. His father retired from the US Air Force as a 4-star general.

The reader felt shooting it degraded the value of that little pistol. Let's see: the article included a photo of the general carrying the Colt during the Korean War and it had been fired previously by the general and his son. It was not a 100-percent pristine, unfired handgun.

So this is my answer to the reader: *Shooting it a couple dozen more rounds took not one cent off its value!*

Some people get confused about guns and money. They think just

because a gun has been unfired, it's automatically worth a bundle. Here's an example. A good friend told me about going to a party in his town. When the host found out he was a "gun-guy" he brought out two handguns still new in the box. One was a Colt Python .357 Magnum and the other was a S&W Model 29 .44 Magnum. The fellow proudly said both "had never been fired and never would be fired."

Huh? What's the point? Neither

of those handguns is especially rare so neither will ever be (at least in his lifetime) especially valuable. Why not shoot them and enjoy them? After all that's what they were built for.

Most certainly it is possible to make some money on guns. How else would dealers specializing in used guns stay in business? But, what I'm talking about are us ordinary Joes who buy ordinary guns to shoot, compete with, or hunt with. If you have visions of getting rich off of common, mass-produced, still in production or recently in production firearms you're going to be disappointed. With very astute buying and then wise selling someone might make a couple hundred bucks but definitely not a couple thousand on such a gun.

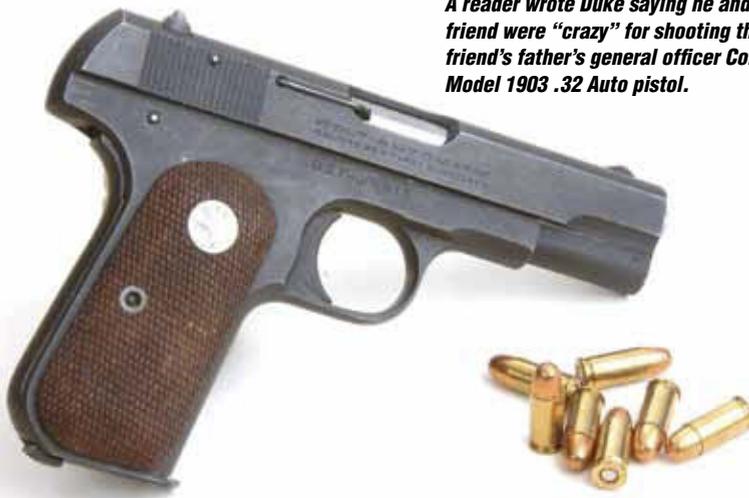
For a gun to be especially valuable it has to have one or more of the following points. It must have been made long ago, not made in large numbers, belonged to someone famous and have documentation thereof, or been featured in a popular movie or movies. If a firearm possesses some of these attributes and then is still unfired, new in the box that might add a little more to its value. I have a 3rd Generation Colt SAA .45 with my name engraved on the backstrap. Its factory letter says it was ordered with my name on it by Hank Williams Jr. Someday after I'm gone perhaps that letter with the .45 will bring Yvonne a few more bucks.

### Appraising

Back in the 1990s, a recently widowed woman asked me to put a value on her late husband's guns. I don't like to do such things but felt sorry for her loss as her husband had a reputation as a fine human being. His couple dozen rifles, shotguns and handguns were all "using" guns, neither rare nor antique collector's items. I spent some time going over them using various reference books to ascertain basic values.

Upon showing her my results she was instantly hostile. I could tell she thought I was trying to cheat her. So I said, "Look lady; I'm not trying to buy your guns. I'm not interested in any of them. Take a look at these

*A reader wrote Duke saying he and his friend were "crazy" for shooting the friend's father's general officer Colt Model 1903 .32 Auto pistol.*



*Guns are made for shooting. They don't necessarily exude money!*





The only gun in Duke's collection likely to make much of a profit for Yvonne someday is this Colt SAA .45, ordered by Hank Williams Jr. with Duke's name inscribed on it.

reference books. Their information isn't carved in stone but they can provide a guideline for you to sell your guns by." She relaxed then. I never heard how things went when/if she sold those guns but she wasn't sitting on the gold mine she thought she owned.

The only firearms jackpot I ever hit was an original Sharps Model 1874 .45-70. With its brown finish and worn condition it was worth about what I paid for it. That is until I had it documented with a letter from the owner of the Sharps Rifle Company's factory records. In the 1870s, it had been shipped to a hardware store in Dodge City, Kan., during the time when Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday walked the streets of that town. With that letter the value of that rifle essentially tripled.

I have one friend who for sure has a good handle on the concept of guns and money. His favorites are late 19th century firearms, especially Winchesters. He is very discerning about buying them and never shells out bucks except for a great deal. Then he handloads for and shoots the gun until he sees another just like it but in better condition or with some other desirable feature. Then he will sell the one he has: usually for a small profit and invest that money into the more desirable specimen. Here's an example: for a while he had a nice but ordinary Winchester Model 1886 .40-65 with which he even shot a Montana mule deer. Then he happened upon another in comparable condition and same caliber, but which was stamped on the barrel "Browning Brothers, Ogden UT." The first one went and the second one came home with him.

By that method of upgrading, over the years he has assembled a valuable assortment of vintage American firearms and along the way shot them for fun and even successfully hunted big game with them.

That fellow understands guns and money.

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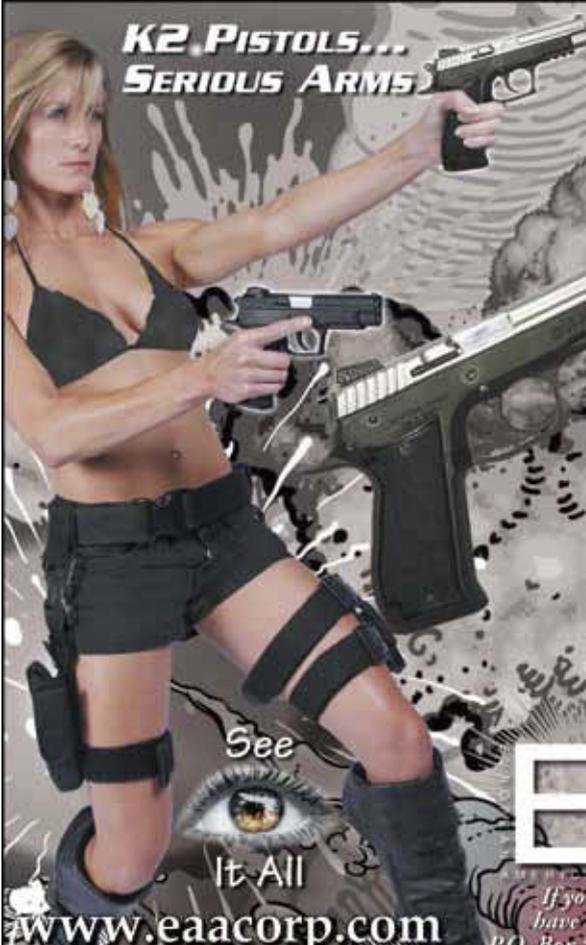
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# HANDLOADING

STORY: John Barsness

## PULLING BULLETS

Not like pulling teeth. Done right, you can reuse the bullet.

**H**andloading's a fascinating hobby, but once in a while we need to "deconstruct" ammunition by pulling bullets. The reasons are almost endless, but probably 75 percent of the time the powder charge is wrong: We made a mistake in setting the scale, or forgot to test a new lot of powder before loading up a batch of new ammo. A couple of times I've worked up a new rifle load, then put together a box or two of ammo only to discover, a week or month later, that some of the new rounds won't fit in the chamber of the same rifle. The reason? The powder charge was a little too compressed, and either pushed the bullets slightly out of the neck, or bulged the brass, or both. Sometimes we just want to break down factory ammunition or somebody else's handloads to salvage the bullets and brass.

The two traditional methods for pulling bullets are with an impact puller or a collet tool. Both have advantages and disadvantages.

Impact pullers are essentially hollow-headed hammers. After inserting a round into the hammer-head, the hammer is whacked on a hard surface. After a few whacks the bullet pops loose, along with the powder. The handloader then empties the hammer-head and inserts another round.

Impact pullers only cost about \$20 and work on almost any handgun or rifle ammunition, since they normally

come with a universal chuck (shell-holder). They're also slow and noisy, and don't work very well with really light bullets.

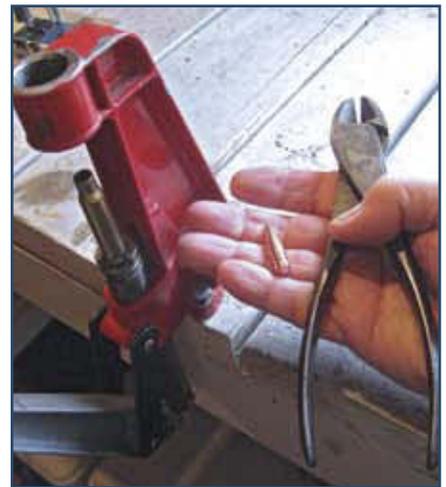
They can also damage bullets. Most handloaders don't realize this, because bullets normally come out of an impact puller appearing unscathed except for the tiny scratches from the case neck. However, lead-cored bullets need to have the core firmly seated inside the jacket to shoot accurately, and the whacking required to knock a bullet loose from a case can also knock a bullet's core slightly loose from the jacket. And no, you won't be able to hear the damaged bullets rattle, because the core isn't that loose.

Obviously, this won't happen with monolithic bullets, whether made of lead or copper, or bonded-core bullets. But it's common with standard cup-and-core bullets, especially if they're light enough to require several whacks to dislodge, such as the small-bore rifle bullets used for varmint and target shooting.

Nevertheless, the majority of handloaders use an impact tool, because they're cheap and universal. One common problem involves the shell-holder, normally a 3-piece chuck



*A wire cutter works as a quick, multi-caliber bullet puller, especially on harder bullets with cannelures, while causing minimal bullet damage.*



held around the head of the case by a small rubber band. This isn't super-secure, and getting it around the case-head slows down an already slow process. Here's a really handy alternative: Substitute a standard loading-press shell-holder. This is a lot faster, believe me, as well as more secure. (Sadly, I didn't think of this on my own, instead reading it somewhere. Thanks very much to whoever thought it up!)

Collet pullers fit into the die threads of a typical loading press. A round is run up into the puller just like a case going into a die, and a collet of the correct diameter is tightened around the bullet. Lifting the press handle



*Collet pullers are most useful for soft, thin-jacketed bullets, such as .22-caliber varmint bullets.*



**One trick in using impact pullers is to substitute a reloading press' shell-holder for the rubber-banded collet usually supplied.**

pulls the case off the collet-held bullet.

The advantages of a collet puller are speed and relatively little bullet damage. Oh, the collet can leave tiny marks, and sometimes there isn't enough bullet shank for the collet to grip. But generally they work pretty well.

The disadvantage is cost. The basic puller costs about as much as an impact puller, but then you've got to buy a collet costing around 10 to 12 bucks for every caliber of bullet you reload. Personally, I load for cartridges that shoot bullets of .172", .204", .224", 6mm, .257", 6.5mm, .277", 7mm, .308", .311", 8mm, .338", .348", 9mm, .357", .358", 9.3mm, .375", .410", .416", .429", .452" and .458" diameters—and will probably come up with more in the future. To own a collet in each diameter would be a serious outlay of cash.

All of which is why I came up with another really cheap and universal bullet-puller: a typical wire-cutting pliers. After starting to handload many years ago, I eventually ran into some bullets that needed pulling, but didn't own an "official" puller and really couldn't afford one. One of my early loading manuals suggested using standard pliers to pull bullets, by running a round up through the hole in a press, grabbing the bullet and raising the press handle. This worked, but of course ruined the bullets.

A wire cutter doesn't ruin bullets except cosmetically, leaving a little dimple-cut on either side of the bullet. Often you won't even be able to see these without a magnifying glass, especially on cannelured bullets. I've shot hundreds of wire cutter pulled bullets over the years and haven't been able to see any difference in accuracy, because on most bullets the little cuts are where the rifling ends up carving into the bullet anyway. A wire cutter isn't all that great for small, soft bullets, the reason I still have impact and collet pullers on my loading bench, but the wire cutter's always there too.

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# HANDGUNS

STORY: Massad Ayoob

## TRIGGER FINGER PLACEMENT

Part II in the continuing series, "Back to Basics."

**S**ubtleties matter. Individuality matters. And for both of those reasons, exactly how you place your finger on the trigger matters. We've all heard the old saying, "The devil is in the details." I try to balance that with the classic statement widely attributed to the great architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "God is in the details."

To get good hits with a handgun, I have long believed a controlled trigger press is "the heart of the beast." But the heart of anything is made up of that organ's valves and chambers and synergy with the lungs and the circulatory system. In the same (no pun intended) vein, telling folks to "just bring the trigger straight back without pulling the muzzle off target" doesn't cover all of the little elements involved in making that possible.

And one of those elements is, exactly what part of the trigger finger should contact the face of the trigger in the first place?

### Tools And Techniques

We must adapt the tool to the task. Some people forget we must

also adapt the technique to the task. Traditionally, we have looked to target shooting champions for techniques allowing us to shoot well in tasks that might be the same as theirs—target shooting in the given champion's same discipline—but also might be starkly different, such as hunting or fighting. We have to remember different tasks might require different techniques as well as different tools.

Since the dawn of organized "target pistol shooting" in the 19th century, trigger finger placement assumed a heavy pistol that hung steady on a still target, with a very light trigger pull a layman might even call a "hair trigger," and ample time to aim and release the shot. The classic example is NRA bull's-eye,

where Rapid Fire means five shots in 10 seconds, and a 2.5-pound trigger is allowed in everything but the Distinguished event and President's Hundred competition. If "Rapid Fire" suddenly becomes five shots in 1 second before an onrushing psycho can reach you with his knife, and you're an NYPD cop with a light Glock 19 pistol and the department-mandated "New York Plus" (NY-2) trigger system requiring nearly 12 pounds of pressure, the task and the tool have both changed profoundly. So, therefore, must the technique.

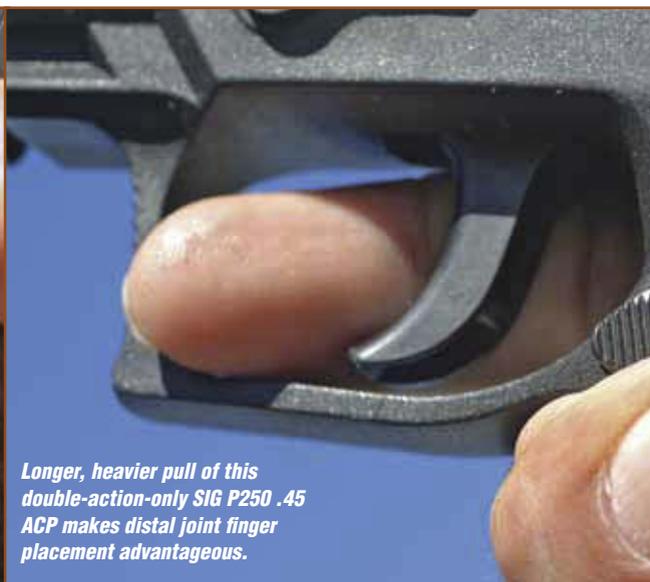
### Leverage

Leverage gives power, and power controls. The more we go toward "lighter gun with heavier trigger pull," the more leverage we need if we're going to hold the gun steady on target as the shot is fired. There are three trigger finger "sweet spots" generally recommended: the tip of the finger, the "pad" of the finger, and the distal, or farthest, joint.

"Tip" of finger is an old theory, based on the presumption it is the most sensitive part. That might be true if the task is to determine the roughness of the trigger's surface, but it does little to "control" the trigger. In fact, using the very tip of the digit tends to push the gun left for a right-handed shooter, and vice-versa for a southpaw. Fingertip



*Finger "pad" placement works well with the short, light trigger pull of this High Standard .22 Target pistol.*



*Longer, heavier pull of this double-action-only SIG P250 .45 ACP makes distal joint finger placement advantageous.*

placement pretty much demands a very light pull if you're going to have good control of the trigger.

"Pad" is best described as the center of the whorl of the fingerprint. It's where most top competitors with auto pistols having short trigger pulls place their fingers. It is also where the designers of many handguns, notably the Glock and the long-trigger versions of the 1911, assumed

the index finger of an average-size adult male hand would rest when the gun was held straight in line with the forearm. It doesn't give a whole lot more leverage than the fingertip, but in many or perhaps most hands it aligns the bone structure of the hand to permit a natural straight-back pull.

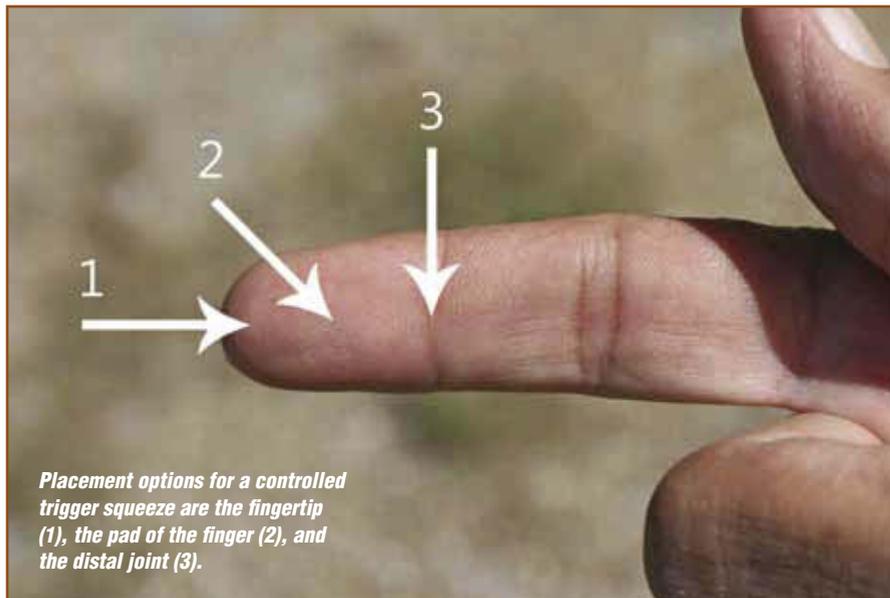
"Distal joint" placement was known to double-action revolver

masters as "the power crease." The reason is, this finger positioning allows you to exert *much* more power pulling the finger back toward yourself. Stiffen up your support hand index finger and pretend it's a resistant trigger, put your trigger finger on it as if it was a trigger, and see and feel for yourself. This remains the most effective way for *most* people to bring *most* heavy triggers straight back without deviating the muzzle off target.

Of course, there's a lot more to good shooting than just trigger finger placement. I wouldn't twist my hand into an awkward position to get trigger leverage if the trigger was too far forward to fit my hand, because that could compromise my grasp, reducing recoil control and even weakening the hold enough to induce a malfunction in some auto pistols. Each of us has to adapt our hand to the gun... but if the gun is not mandatory issue for police or military service, we have the option of buying a gun that fits our hand, in terms of trigger finger placement and other respects.

Of course, there is much more to trigger control than just finger placement, and we'll get into that next month.

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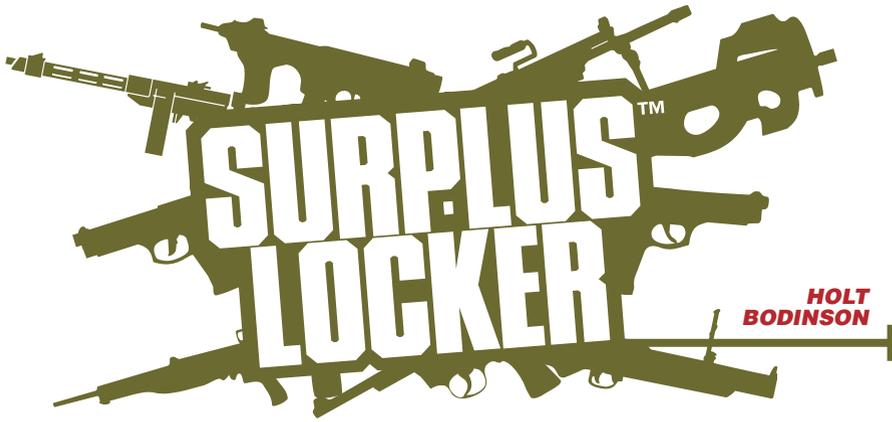
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## SWISS TAC

### The SIG551-A1 Carbine

**T**he Swiss are a shooting culture, and as much as we have recently enjoyed their milsurp K-31s, Switzerland's modern tactical rifles are gaining traction in the shooting sports. The advanced designs generated by Switzerland's indigenous firearms industry, Schweizerische Industrie Gesellschaft (SIG), in Neuhausen am Rheinfall, has insured Switzerland's long standing reputation for finely crafted and exceedingly accurate arms. SIG's new 551-A1 civilian model is an outstanding example.

In the 1950s, Switzerland fielded their radical looking Sturmgewehr 57 (StG 57), known also as the SIG 510 in commercial form, which replaced all of those lovely Schmidt-Rubins that have washed up on our milsurp

shores. The StG 57 featured a retarded, roller-lock mechanism, based on an earlier Mauser design, which Heckler & Koch successfully incorporated into their MP5, P9, G3, HK91 and HK 93 models.

A few years later, SIG introduced the Model 530 series chambered for 5.56 NATO. While the model still retained the roller-locking bolt, the advanced stocking and outward profile of the SIG 530 family set the pattern carried on in the SIG551-A1 today.

The next SIG generations to make their debut were the SIG 540 (5.56 NATO) and SIG 543 (7.62 NATO) in the early 1970s. The significance of this development with regard to the current SIG551-A1 is the earlier roller locking system was replaced by a long-stroke, gas piston that activated a bolt carrier and a rotary locking bolt.

In principle, the new locking system resembled the familiar Kalashnikov design—and many have made that comparison—however, according to the recent research conducted by Gary P. Johnston and Thomas B. Nelson and documented in their excellent book, *The World's Assault Rifles*, the SIG/AK system first appeared in the Czech ZK420-S rifle in 1942. The SIG system exhibits the refinement of the Czech system while the Kalashnikov system is a simplified version of the gas piston, bolt carrier design.

The SIG551 was introduced to military and law enforcement circles as an tactical carbine with a folding stock, shortened barrel and selective-fire control system, offering semi-automatic, 3-shot burst and full-automatic modes of fire. In fact, the



*The SIG551-A1 handles very well. The ventilated handguard is ergonomically shaped as a deep "U" and stays cool.*



*If all sighting systems fail, there is a pop-up, backup aperture folded into Picatinny rib.*



*SIG's diopter sight offers four apertures ranging from close combat to 300 meters.*



*The 551's multi-purpose gas block sports an adjustable gas valve to increase gas flow due to hard extended use or poor quality ammunition.*



excellent owner's manual accompanying the 551-A1 is written as if the carbine was furnished with a selective-fire capability. The manual also contains the technical specifications for two, extremely compact versions of the 551-A1, featuring 10" barrels and designed for special operations deployment.

### Features

The SIG551-A1 is a well-balanced, compact arm weighing 7.8 pounds unloaded. With the folding stock extended, it measures 37" overall and 27" when folded. I might add the side-folding stock is utterly rigid when extended and locks securely into a stud in the lower handguard when folded. Its hollow pistol grip with a locking bottom cover serves as a useful storage compartment for spare parts and cleaning gear.

The polymer, ventilated handguard is formed as a deep, hand-filling, ergonomic "U" shape. In feel, it reminds me of the stock of a Springfield '03 or a Garand, which are two of the finest offhand stocks ever designed, and that quality carries through to the SIG. There are also ample vent slots and air space between the barrel and the handguards of the 551-A1, minimizing heat build-up in rapid and automatic fire.

The SIG551-A1 upper is composed of corrosion resistant, stainless steel in which the 16" hammer-forged barrel is threaded into a massive, hardened steel monoblock that also incorporates the locking recesses for the bolt. The top of the receiver is mounted with an 8-1/2" Picatinny rib. SIG supplies two sights with the carbine. The first, an adjustable, emergency, aperture rear sight flips up from a seat inside the rear of the Picatinny rib. The second is a rotary diopter sight incorporating a close-quarters combat open "V" notch and rotating apertures for 100, 200 and 300 meters.

The lower is forged aluminum and carries the fire control system, the magazine well and the folding buttstock. The magazine well accepts SIG 550 series, transparent, 10- or 30-round magazines or standard AR-15 magazines. The magazines rock into the magazine well just like those of an

*With its 16" barrel and side-folding stock, the SIG551-A1 (above) is classified as a carbine. Folded, the buttstock locks into the handguard (below), reducing the overall length to a mere 27".*



### SIG551-A1

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**ACTION TYPE:** Gas-piston, rotary bolt, semi-auto,  
**CALIBER:** 5.56 NATO and .223 Rem, **BARREL LENGTH:**  
**16", OVERALL LENGTH:** 37", **LENGTH FOLDED:** 27",  
**WEIGHT:** 7.8 pounds, **FINISH:** Matte black, **SIGHTS:**  
 Emergency folding diopter. 4-position rotary  
 diopter; square front post, **STOCK:** Polymer, side-  
 folding, **PRICE:** \$1,599

AK, and the bolt is held open after the last round is fired. I find the SIG magazines particularly attractive since they are designed so that two or three can be snapped together, giving the shooter 60 to 90 rounds of impressive firepower.

The carbine's 2-stage trigger averaged 7 pounds, 5 ounces on a Lyman electronic scale. All the 500 series SIG triggers seem to be adjusted to 7 pounds or so. The first stage is heavy and creepy in the take-up, but the second stage of the pull is moderate with little discernable movement as the shot is taken. It's a fine tactical trigger for a selective-fire rifle but far from ideal for target shooting, hunting or simply plinking.

I'm not picking on SIG, but if you're paying a grand or more for a modern, semi-automatic tactical rifle, it's about time AR manufacturers begin giving us some decent factory triggers—smooth, crisp triggers with pull weights in the 3-1/2- to 4-pound range—triggers that don't make you grit your teeth as you



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press through their stages when making precise shots on small targets.

Appropriately, the triggerguard is hinged so the trigger is accessible to a shooter wearing gloves.

The 2-position, ambidextrous safety is in the right position, but it's a stretch to operate with your thumb while holding the pistol grip firmly. It should be lengthened and re-contoured.

### **Gas System**

SIG's long-stroke gas piston system is simple and easy to maintain. Approximately 6-1/2" back from the muzzle, a multi-purpose gas block positions the gas tube and operating rod, houses an adjustable, 2-position gas valve, mounts the front sight and supports the front handguards.

In the vertical position, the gas valve normally delivers sufficient gas volume to operate the system. If cycling problems develop due to excessive fouling or substandard ammunition, the valve can be rotated clockwise to a mechanically indexed position that provides maximum gas flow to the piston until the functioning issues are resolved.

The full-length operating rod, wound about with a coiled mainspring, extends from the gas block to a recess inside the bolt carrier where it is captured and secured to the carrier by the operating handle that passes through a slot in the end of the operating rod.

The double lugged, bolt housed inside the bolt carrier is rotated in-and-out of battery by a cam system. Two integral steel rails inside the upper retain and guide the bolt and bolt carrier as they reciprocate.

Overall, the SIG551-A1 is a remarkably clean, streamlined design. The upper and lower can be separated quickly by pushing out the rear takedown pin and the forward pivot pin. From there on, disassembly for cleaning is a snap. Compared to the carbon generating AR-15/M16 direct gas impingement system, the long stroke piston design of the 551-A1 is a marvel of cleanliness. The only other difference I perceive is a bit more felt recoil with the piston drive system as compared to an AR-15's direct gas impingement design.

Accuracy? With its 1:7" NATO twist, the SIG551-A1 leans toward bullets in the 62- to 77-grain range. On hand were Black Hills Ammunition's 77-grain HP match loads, both "factory new" and "remanufactured," Hornady's 75-grain HP TAP FPD load and PMC's 62-grain FMJ "Green Tip" load. When testing the SIG, I was curious whether there would be any accuracy difference between Black Hills factory new (new brass) and its remanufactured (salvaged



*The safety lever (above) is just out of reach for most thumbs if you have a firm hold on the pistol grip. One of the neat qualities of SIG's magazines (below) is that they can be clipped together.*



brass and cheaper) ammunition.

I really like SIG's tactical diopter sight. It provides a clear, crisp sight picture. At 100 yards from a rest, my typical 5-shot groups ran from 2" to 2-1/2" with the Black Hills ammunition. There was no discernable accuracy difference between the factory new and remanufactured lots and that speaks volumes for Black Hills quality control. Hornady's TAP and PMC's NATO Green Tip ranged from 2-1/2" to 3". Good optics mounted on the Picatinny rib might squeeze out a bit more accuracy from the short-barreled carbine. Unfortunately, I don't have any velocity data for this report since my chronograph suffered a cataclysmic event.

Formerly available only to the military and law enforcement communities, the SIG551-A1 carbine is a neat addition to SIG's civilian lineup. Hopefully, we'll see more SIG military-to-civilian crossovers. **GUNS**

#### FURTHER READING:

*THE WORLD'S ASSAULT RIFLES*, BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON AND THOMAS B. NELSON, HARDCOVER, 1216 PAGES ©2010, \$74.95 FROM: A&J ARMS BOOK SELLERS, 2449 N. ORCHARD AVE., TUCSON, AZ 85712, (520) 512-1065, WWW.AJARMSBOOKSELLERS.COM AND OTHERS.

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RICK STAPLES

## THE CARACAL 9X19mm

### The striker-fired pistol continues to evolve.

**It's called a... what...? That was my first reaction when a long-time law enforcement colleague, Casey Flack, mentioned the "Caracal," which is a new polymer-framed pistol.**

Casey had retired before me and is now working for a local law enforcement equipment company, OMB GUNS, in Olathe, Kan. Casey knew I was a fan of the Glock pistol and had carried one as a working street cop for many years. New striker-fired polymer-framed pistols have exploded

on the market. Few arms makers don't have one in their product line up.

While Casey and his associate Tim Wind worked at getting a Caracal sample for me to try out, I did some research. The pistol isn't really new to the world, just to the USA. The pistol is made in the UAE, United Arab Emirates. It has already been put through some stringent tests in Europe to validate its suitability as a military arm. From all that I have read, it passed with flying colors. Some middle-eastern nations have purchased large quantities of this pistol for issue.

The same engineer who designed the Steyr Model M designed this



**Rick took his Caracal F to the Polite Society Tactical Conference in Tulsa, Okla. and shot it through the range courses with no problems.**

pistol. This lineage is apparent in the grip angle and the great low-bore axis. The factory literature indicates the pistol has only 28 parts, simpler is better. Intrigued, I waited for a sample.

Tim called and asked me to meet at our local rifle range for a chance at shooting the pistol. Tim had both the Model F and the Model C on hand. The F stands for full-size and the C for compact. I am a full-size pistol guy. In about an hour and 30 minutes we put over 350 rounds through the guns. I liked the trigger and ordered one on the spot.

In about 30 days, I had my Caracal F. The accompanying chart gives the specs. The pistol looks to be about the size of a Glock 17, but it will not fit holsters designed for Glock 17s. I dug through the box that every shooter has—the box-o-holsters—and started trying them out. What worked the best, for me, was a Galco belt slide paddle made for the Glock 30. A Galco clip-on mag pouch, that happened to match the color of the belt slide, finished off the ensemble. I'm sure there will be holsters made for the Caracal soon.

### The Likes

What I really like about the gun is the trigger. If you are an old revolver guy, the trigger has a feel much like a well-tuned revolver. The reset is positive, but a bit long—sort of like the stock Browning Hi-Power trigger. My pistol's trigger weighed in at 4 pounds, 8 ounces, according to the Lyman trigger pull gauge. Like all pistols you must learn the trigger. The reset I mentioned is longer on the Caracal than on the Glock. The Caracal trigger seems to stack less, though.

I like the low bore axis. When you are a munchkin, like me, anything that helps mitigate recoil is a blessing. The lower bore axis robs the recoil impulse of leverage. Follow up engagement is quicker because the front sight reset into the rear sight notch is a shorter distance. You can always out-run the sights with the trigger.



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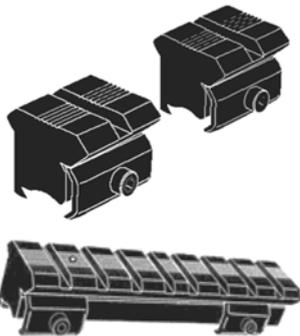
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The Caracal Model F was tested using Winchester and Hornady ammo.

I like the metal magazines and the magazine capacity. Metal magazines can be made thinner than polymer ones. Thinner magazines mean you can have a thinner grip. A thinner grip means you can get the bones of the arm closer to alignment with the bore of the weapon. Eighteen rounds of 9mm also means I don't have to manipulate the firearm as much. It doesn't mean I shoot more, it means I manipulate less. (Thank you Clint Smith for the best doctrine I have ever learned).

I like the shape of the frame. It allows me to get a good grip on the pistol and still have visible space between my trigger finger and the frame of the gun. This equals better, or likely better, trigger control.

I like the finish on the slide. I'm told it is a procedure called Plasox. It gives the slide a kind of battleship gray appearance.

I like the supported chamber and the OK for +P ammo. I talked with Troy Sellars at Caracal USA. He stated that the pistol would easily handle +P *factory ammo*.

I like the ambidextrous magazine catch/release. It doesn't seem to be

in the way. It also doesn't seem to be prone to in-the-holster release problems.

### Dislikes

The sights are too small. I know it is not a target pistol, but I would like a wider notch on the rear sight, and a taller front sight with a tritium element. I don't like tritium in the rear sight. A tritium element in the front sight only, seems quicker, at least for me. While shooting the pistol, I sometimes lost one side of the rear notch while trying to shoot tiny groups from a rest. Tiny groups really don't mean much, but many in the shooting community are enamored of them, so I shot some. The rear sight is also part of the modular fire-control mechanism in the slide. This will not make aftermarket folks happy. It will be difficult for the home gunsmithy to change the rear sight out of the pistol. All adjustment for point of impact is at the front sight, which is dovetailed into the slide.

I would like for the reset of the trigger to be a bit shorter. Shooting friends that know me are all now rolling their eyes. This is my common gripe with most out-of-the-box pistols. The lower arch of the grip frame should be interchangeable to allow for hand-size variation. I believe this would help sales of any striker-fired pistol.

### Shooting

I took my copy of the Caracal to the Polite Society Tactical Conference in Tulsa, Okla. This year the affair was hosted at the US Shooting Academy grounds. This well-worth-the-time-and-money affair is ramrodded by Tom Givens, the head honcho at Rangemaster range in Memphis, Tenn. I shot the Caracal F through

### MODEL F

MAKER: CARACAL INT. LLC.  
TAWASUN INDUSTRIAL PARK, SWEIHAN  
P.O. BOX 94499  
ABU DHABI, UAE  
IMPORTER: CARACAL USA  
7661 COMMERCE LN.  
TRUSSVILLE, AL 35173  
(205) 656-7050  
[WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/CARACAL](http://WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/CARACAL)

**ACTION TYPE:** Striker-fired, **CALIBER:** 9x19mm,  
**CAPACITY:** 18+1, **BARREL LENGTH:** 4.09", **OVERALL  
LENGTH:** 7.09", **WEIGHT:** 27.9 ounces, **FINISH:** Plasox  
slide, **SIGHTS:** Fixed rear, dovetail front, **GRIPS:**  
Polymer frame, **PRICE:** TBA



**The Caracal F was fed five rounds each (above) of the tested ammo, mixed in the magazine. The 15-round group fired standing at 25 yards, with no support, indicates a pistol with more than reasonable service accuracy and was completely reliable. The Caracal Model F liked the excellent Winchester 124-grain NATO load (below).**

the range courses on Sunday and had no problems. This pistol purred like a little kitten, or desert cat, whichever you prefer.

In the standards match, I yanked a couple out of the zero-seconds-down zone. You can't do that at the shooting level of most attendees at this conference and expect a great finish. Remember the comment about learning the trigger. I think a couple of hundred rounds doesn't necessarily accomplish that. I have shot ammo from Winchester and Hornady through my pistol, including +P ammo. I haven't shot any of the steel case ammo through it.

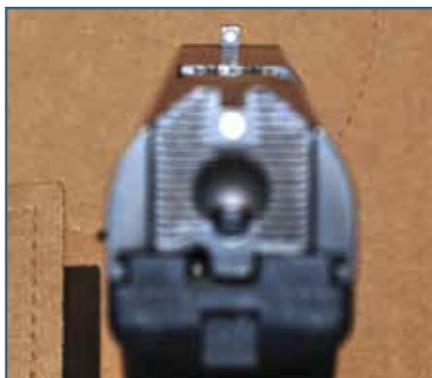
I have included photos of groups I have shot with my forearms rested and sandbag rested shots. The pistol is certainly accurate enough, if the shooter is. It became apparent to me that the Caracal F model really likes the 124-grain bullet. It will tolerate the 115 grainer, but it *really* likes the heavier projectile. The groups turned in by the Winchester 127-grain +P LE round were amazing (until I yanked one out). Always a bridesmaid, never a bride... oh well.



I like mixing up ammo in a new gun's magazine, just to see a kind of overview of the pistols practical accuracy and feeding reliability. The photos show a mixed ammo target at 25 yards and one at 15 yards. These were shot standing, or as my pop used to say, "Up on your hind legs like a man." For me, the pistol is zeroed at 15 yards, and a little high at 25. This is not a bad thing. I would rather the pistol shoot a little high, than a little low. Winchester 124-grain NATO ball also turned in some great groups.

I think I'll keep it. It runs well. It shoots well. It seems very rugged. Do I wish some things were different about it? Yes, but it is a really well made pistol. It is a newer rendition of the striker-fired service pistol. Competition is a good thing for the market. We, the firearms consumer, benefit from competition. I'm going to shoot my copy in the next local IDPA match in the stock service division. Now if someone says something about a Caracal, you won't have to say, "A... what?"

**GUNS**



**The Caracal sights are well done, instead of the usual 3-dot setup, they are "dot-over-dot." The rear sight is very well designed and snag free.**

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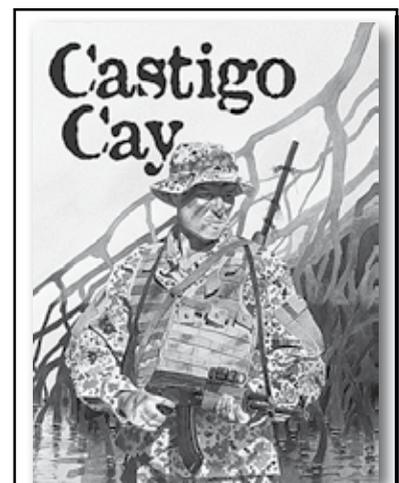
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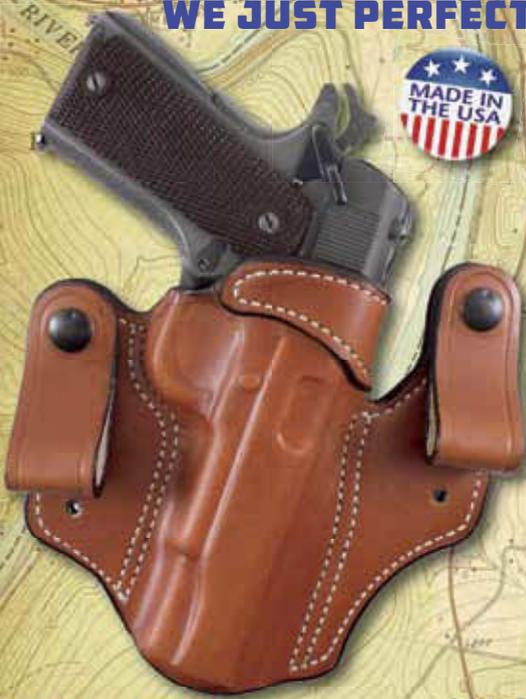
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# Q&A

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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

### Burn Rings

**Q:** I purchased a used stainless Ruger New Model Blackhawk in .357 Magnum. The top of the barrel caught my eye: "Made In The 200th Year Of American Freedom." It's a keeper, and I want to turn it into a "barbecue" gun, with full engraving and stag grips.

The problem is the previous owner did not clean it very well. The front of the cylinder, the forcing cone and the inside of the frame are black with burned powder. I tried bore cleaner and a cloth, but no luck. Could you suggest a cleaner to remove the powder build up, or a better way to remove it?

*Dave Densmore  
Hereford, Ariz.*



**Jeff's S&W .357 has plenty of cast bullet fouling and powder burn rings around the chambers.**

**A:** It's not so hard. I don't normally obsess over burn rings, but for a BBQ gun made in the 200th Year Of American Freedom, I can see why you want it spotless. The photos show my S&W .357 before and after cleaning with Prolix. The key is getting a new phosphor bronze "toothbrush" like the completely

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**A phosphor-bronze toothbrush and Prolix is just the ticket for cleaning away the fouling.**



**Note the shiny bit of lead from one of the revolver's grooves. Prolix is one of Jeff's favorites for cleaning after shooting cast bullets.**

worn out one from Kleen-Bore pictured. That is my last one (the store was out) and it's in need of replacement. I normally buy three or four at time. Nonetheless, it did a pretty fine job, though it took longer. When new, the bristles are sharper

and will get into more tight places and cut faster. Prolix tends to get under the lead and carbon and lift it off. Note the cleaning patch and the lead particles from one of the barrel's grooves. As for the forcing cone area, you'll likely need a Lewis Lead Removal kit from Brownells. It has brass-screen patches and caliber-specific head to hold them to the shape of the forcing cone. I like Prolix because it is safe on firearm finishes such as nickel and washes off my hands easily.

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### **.357 SIG 1911 Barrel**

**Q:** I just finished Mas Ayoob's article on the .357 SIG in the December issue. I currently own a Beretta Cougar in this caliber. I also own several 1911s in various calibers and would like to add a .357 SIG in 1911, but can't find one offered. Mr. Ayoob mentioned a friend of his possesses a 1911 in .357 SIG. Where can I get one?

*James Stacy  
Colorado Springs, Colo.*

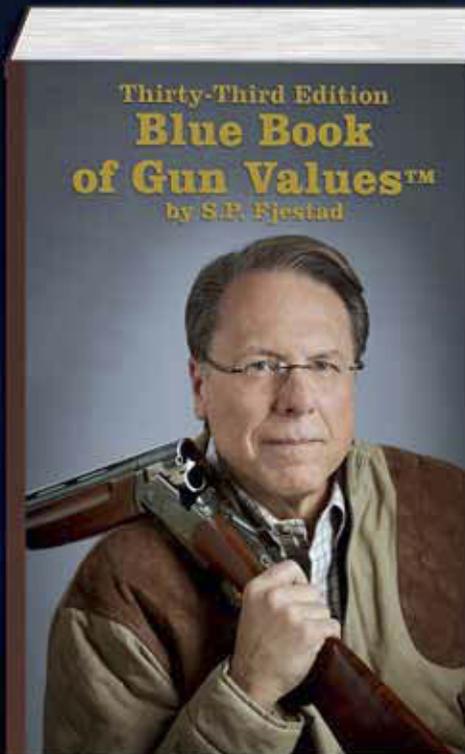
**A:** If you possess a 1911 in 10mm or .40 S&W, you are in luck. Bar-Sto makes a 1911 .357 SIG barrel you can have fitted to most 1911s. If you have a .40 S&W, you can use your magazines, but if it's a 10mm you'll need new mags for reliable feeding. Be sure you get a new recoil spring from Wolff Springs too.

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# COMPACT WITH POWER

The Kel-Tec RFB proves an excellent carbine in .308.

**J. B. Wood**

**A** few years ago, at the annual SHOT Show, I watched design genius George Kellgren demonstrate a prototype of his new .308 bullpup. When he cycled the action, the dummy rounds did not come out the side, nor the bottom.

They came out an opening at the front! Well, I wanted to try one out right then, but he said it was still in the development stages.

The RFB is finally in production, and it was worth waiting for. The model letters, by the way, stand for "Rifle, Forward-Ejecting, Bullpup." The .308 chambering will be welcomed by those who have always felt the .223 is a little too light. As many gun people well know, there are slight differences between commercial .308 and 7.62x51mm NATO rounds. The RFB will handle both.

The detachable 20-round magazine is of metric FAL style, and yes, some regular FAL magazines will work. Some won't, so you'll just have to try them. For the poor souls who live in areas of government oppression, 10- and 5-round magazines are available. In those same benighted areas, the RFB is supplied without the A2-style compensator at the muzzle.

The controls are all conveniently located. The cocking handle is on the left side at the front but can be switched to the right side. The other controls are all ambidextrous. The magazine release and the bolt latch are both at the rear of the magazine housing. The safety lever is perfectly placed, at the top of the handgrip. The trigger pull on my gun is a crisp 6 pounds, with no take-up and minimal over-travel.

There is a 10" Picatinny rail on top, so you can decide what you want in the sight department. I attached my trusty ADCO red-dot sight, and it worked well, as usual. I will note this unit costs a lot less than others of its type, and I have used it on several different guns, always with perfect results. Other features of the RFB include a rubber recoil pad, and comfortable handgrip.

The barrel is offered in two lengths, 18" and 24". The one shown here is the 18" version. The barrel is



*The Kel-Tec RFB can fire both commercial .308 (left) and 7.62mm NATO.*



*The Kel-Tec uses metric-style FAL magazines and comes with one mag. While the RFB worked perfectly with the supplied mag, be wary as not every used or aftermarket mag will work reliably.*



*The empty cases come out at the port J.B. points to here. The ejection tube opening is on the left side, above the barrel, and the gas adjustment can be seen above the port.*



*No sights are present and a Picatinny rail is factory mounted. Here, an ADCO red-dot sight was mounted to the RFB for the test.*



*The Kel-Tec RFB is a forward ejecting rifle of bullpup design (above). The controls are easy to use and empties eject forward out of a tube at the front of the fore-end. Controls are easily accessible.*

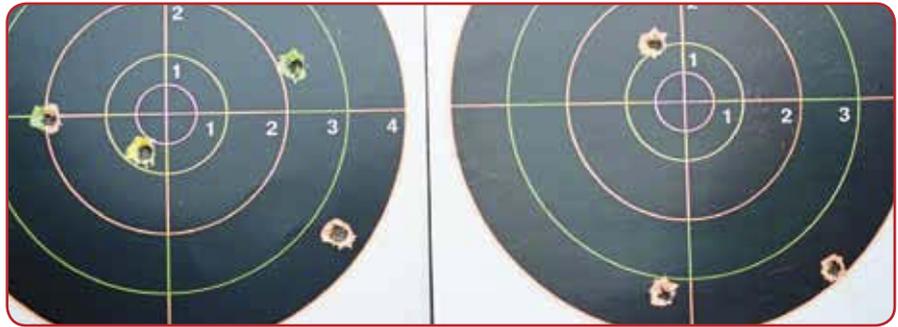
made of 4140 Chrome Molybdenum steel, and is chrome-lined. The firing system has a tilt-locking bolt and a short-stroke gas piston to actuate the bolt carrier. The RFB comes with possibly the best instruction manual I have ever seen, with excellent clear illustrations.

Now, I know you are wondering (as I did!) just how that forward-ejection system works. It's not complicated. When the RFB is fired, the twin extractors pull the case out of the chamber and pivot upward, to align the empty case with the ejection tube. As the bolt closes on a loaded round, the empty case is inserted in the tube, and the extractors pivot down to engage the rim of the chambered round.

### RFB

MAKER: KEL-TEC  
1475 COX RD., COCOA, FL 32926  
(321) 631-0068  
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/  
KEL-TEC-CNC-INDUSTRIES

**ACTION TYPE:** Semi-auto, **CALIBER:** .308, **CAPACITY:** 20, **BARREL LENGTH:** 18" (tested), 24", **OVERALL LENGTH:** 27.5", **WEIGHT:** 8.6 pounds, **FINISH:** Matte black, **SIGHTS:** None, Picatinny rail provided, **STOCK:** Collapsible, **PRICE:** \$1,880



**The 25-yard group (left) was fired with Winchester .308 125-grain PSP and 50-yard (right) was made with Black Hills 168-grain Boattail hollowpoint ammo. Both groups were fired offhand, without support.**

After the last shot, when the bolt locks open, the last empty case is still held by the extractors. Trip the bolt latch, and that case will be ejected. At the front, the ejection tube opening is right beside the adjustment for the gas piston. If you are using sub-sonic rounds, the system can be adjusted accordingly.

At the range, I tried the RFB standing, no rest, at 25 yards and 50 yards. Groups averaged 3" to 5", and all shots stayed within the 8" black of a Champion VisiColor 100-yard sight-in target. Some groups were 3- or 4-shot rather than five, as I found my supply of some ammo happened to be limited.

I had a few rounds of NATO military, 147-grain, dated 1984 and made by Winchester. After 27 years of storage, it worked perfectly. The commercial .308 loads were 125-grain "PSP" (pointed soft point) by Winchester, and a 168-grain boattail hollowpoint by Black Hills. The last one named was used on the 50-yard target. All of these functioned flawlessly in the RFB. The felt recoil is moderate.

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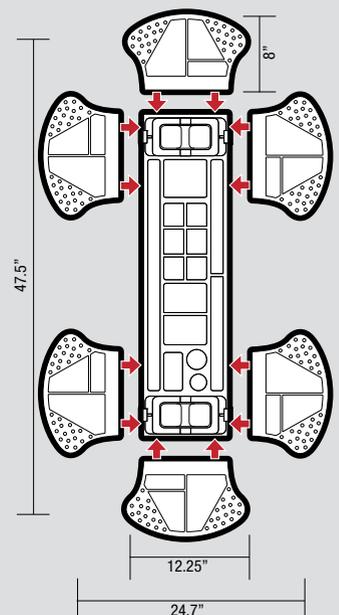
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# TRAIL GUN F



*In shooting the Kimber Stainless Target II .38 Super, John found it to have all the attributes of a Perfect Packin' Pistol.*

## John Taffin

**I**t is hard to believe anyone is not familiar with Kimber unless they have been living in a cave for the past several decades, but just in case we need to mention Kimber is number one when it comes to producing 1911s with over 40 percent of the market share. Although they may call it a Target Pistol, actually the Stainless Target II is also a superb Trail Gun.

The .38 Super is certainly not made for big-game hunting, however with hardcast SWC or JHP bullets, a quality holster, and some time to roam the sagebrush, foothills, forests or mountains, it comes ready to serve right out-of-the-box. To me a Target Pistol conjures up visions of standing on my hind legs in a classic bull's-eye stance with shooting arm extended, off-hand in the pants pocket, and

aiming at a small black bull's-eye at 25 yards.

However, a Trail Gun is not so restrictive. We can use two hands, or whatever rest we may happen to find, a fencepost, a rock, a tree limb, our

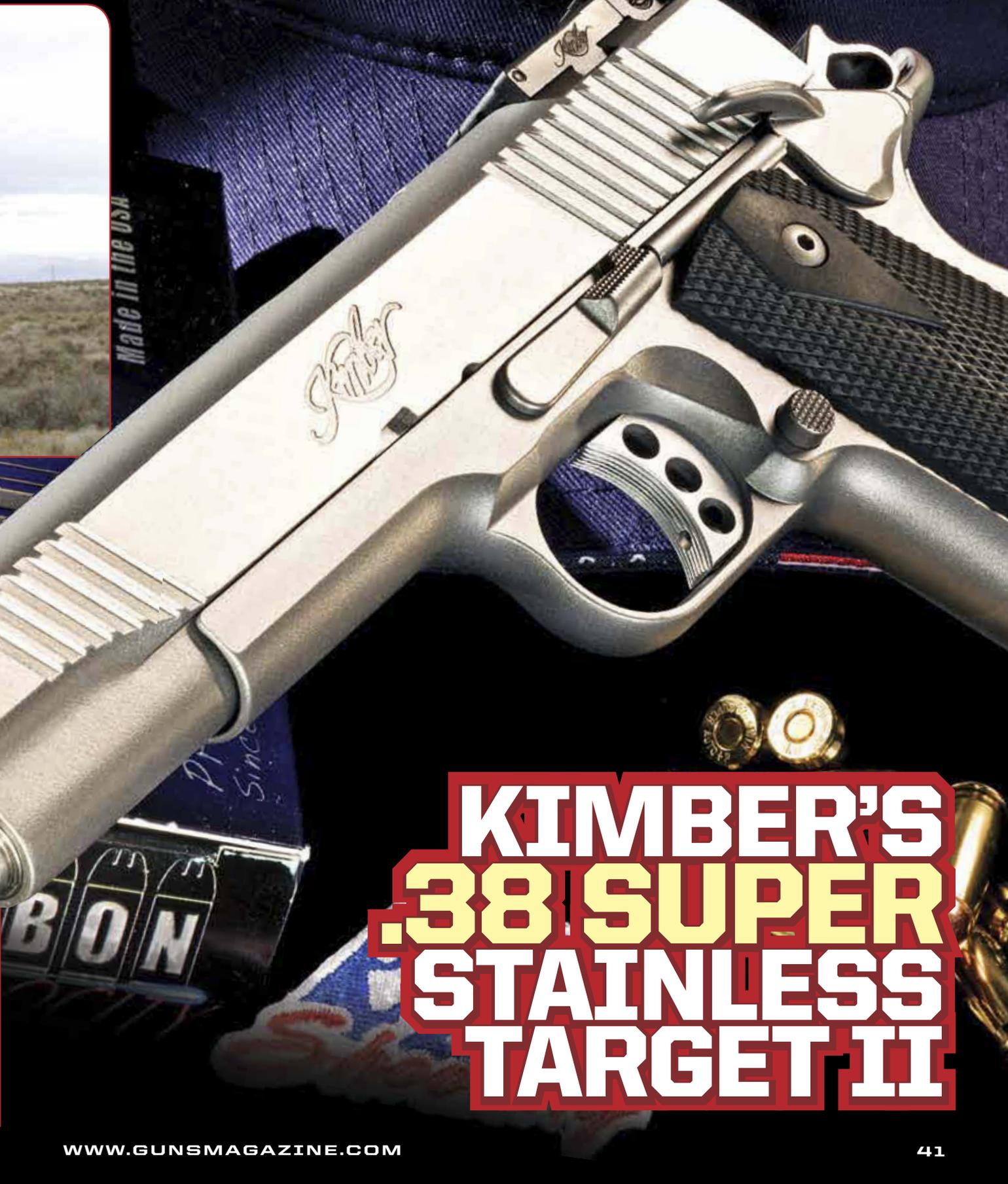
*The Kimber Stainless Target II (left) has a lowered and flared ejection port, long trigger and fully adjustable rear target sight. Front grasping grooves are present on the slide (middle) and the front sight is set in a dovetail. The rear sight is serrated to reduce glare (right). Note the wide, comfortable beavertail grip safely and wide single-side thumb safety.*

backpack, anything to help us connect on our intended target which may be a varmint, supper, or even any inviting long-distance rock or stump. To me target shooting, as enjoyable as that may be, is a high-pressure situation; a gun on the trail is for relaxing and enjoying the moment.

Whether for traditional paper punching or Trail Gun use the requirements are the same, namely a



# PERFECTION



## KIMBER'S .38 SUPER STAINLESS TARGET II

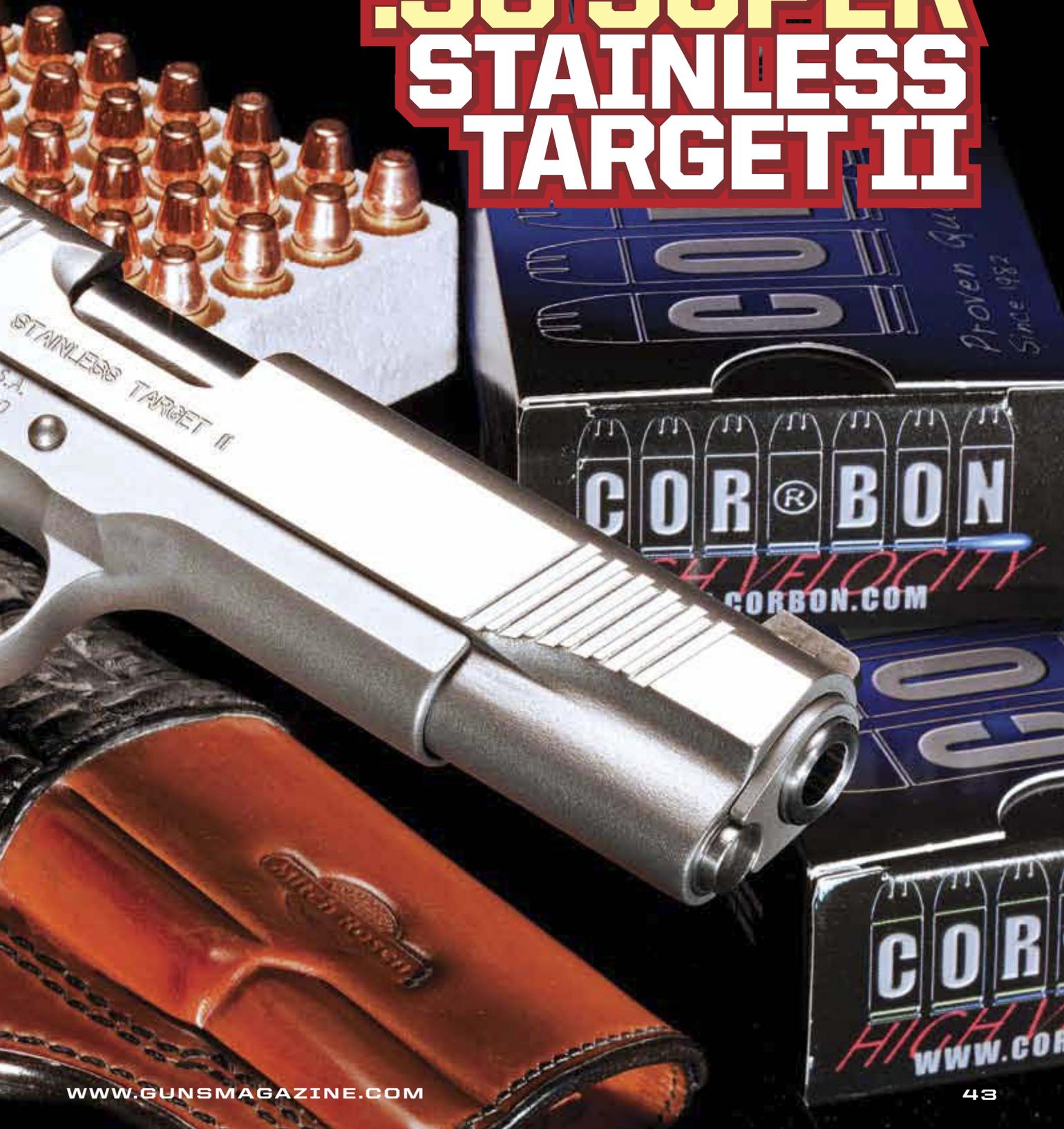
# TRAIL GUN F



# GUNS

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# PERFECTION KIMBER'S .38 SUPER STAINLESS TARGET II



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

**ACTION TYPE:** Semi-automatic, **CALIBER:** .38 Super,  
**CAPACITY:** 9+1, **BARREL LENGTH:** 5", **OVERALL ,  
LENGTH:** 8.5", **WEIGHT:** 38 ounces, **FINISH:** Stainless  
steel, **SIGHTS:** Fully adjustable, **GRIPS:** Double  
Diamond rubber, **PRICE:** \$1,068

solidly built pistol capable of accuracy suitable for the task and no extra baggage. Good sights and a good trigger are paramount and this Kimber Stainless Target II has both. Add in weather beating, tough stainless steel construction matched up with double-diamond-checked rubber grip panels, quality fitting and finish and it is obvious why I classify this .38 Kimber as the Perfect Trail Gun.

However, one of my many quirks is the almost consuming desire for custom stocks. If I were going to spend most of my time on the trail the rubber panels would stay on and especially so in poor weather conditions, however I succumb to the purely subjective task of custom stocks. My choice, fully checkered cocobolo grip panels from Herrett's, were on my desk awaiting the arrival of the Kimber .38 Super. The deep reddish color mates up nicely with the stainless steel finish of this Kimber .38 Super.

Let's take a closer look at this keeper of a Kimber Stainless Target II. For the intended task, namely carried on the trail, this .38 Super is set up perfectly for my tastes. To me, the three most important improvements put forth since the original 1911 of 100-plus years ago are definitely to be found in the sights, trigger, and grip safety. All of these are exactly as I would custom order them.

Sights are big and bold and black with a fully adjustable rear sight having a square notch matched up

### .38 SUPER FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
BLACK HILLS 130 FMJ	1,187	1-1/2
BUFFALO BORE 115 +P JHP	1,447	1-3/8
BUFFALO BORE 124 +P JHP	1,352	2-1/4
COR-BON DPX 125 +P	1,356	1-1/8
COR-BON 115 JHP +P	1,423	1-7/8
COR-BON 125 JHP +P	1,300	1-1/2
COR-BON 147 FMJ	902	1
WINCHESTER 125 SILVERTIP HP	1,180	2-1/8
WINCHESTER 130 FMC	1,162	1-5/8

Notes: Groups the product of five shots at 20 yards. Chronograph screens set at 10' from muzzle.



Targets shot with the .38 Super Kimber Stainless Target II show the accuracy of the pistol with a wide variety of loads.

with a front post. Both of these are set in a dovetail and the serrated front post slants to the front telling me someone was really paying attention on this one. If this Kimber .38 was designed strictly for target shooting the front sight would be a straight post or slanted backwards. As is, it is designed perfectly for holster use. The rear sight blade which is also serrated slants to the rear to cut down on glare.



Cor-Bon's 147 FMJs double as a target load in the Kimber Stainless Target II and won the accuracy crown of all loads tried.

These sights are easily adjustable not only having relatively large screw heads for adjusting but also an arrow pointing to the proper direction which is especially desirable on windage adjustments (all rear sights do not adjust the same way).

The barrel, stainless steel bushing, and trigger are all match grade with the latter being of lightweight aluminum with three weight reducing holes

# THE .38 SUPER

When Elmer Keith's 1955 book *Sixguns* was published, I was still in high school. The .44 Magnum would arrive in late December of that year so Keith's book was full of the .44 Special and it instilled in me a sixgunning passion which has never diminished but simply grown larger and larger. I was out of high school but still a teenager in 1958 when I first found the early writings of Jeff Cooper. They were full of the .45 ACP, but what really caught my eye and imagination was a custom 1911 complete with adjustable sights and Lew Sanderson stocks chambered in the virtually unknown to me .38 Super. While Cooper pushed the .45 as a pure fighting handgun, he gave the nod to the .38 Super with a term I encountered for the first time, namely Trail Gun.

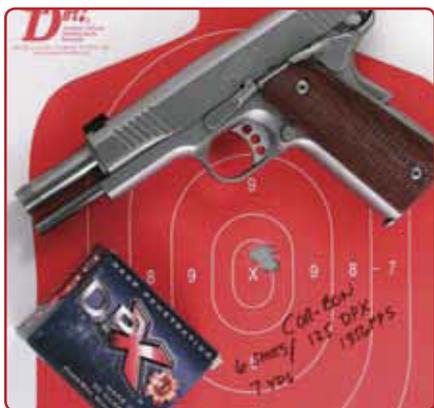
Cooper said the .38 Super had it all over the .45 ACP as a sidearm for the trail where the targets were likely to be everything from birds to varmints up to coyote size. He sold the .38 Super as much flatter shooting than the .45 ACP. I wanted one. Badly. The problem was in the late 1950s even the .45 ACP 1911 was in short supply and the only ones I ever saw were military surplus. For me, at least, the .38 Super was nonexistent.

Flash forward 10 years; Congress had just passed the Gun Control Act of 1968

and we had no idea what the effects would be. Would it be harder and harder to get firearms? No one wanted to take the chance so before it became official law many of us bought everything we could find and afford. Up to this point, I had yet to see my first .38 Super. However, after church one Sunday I went to one of the local department stores (in my area all department stores and grocery stores of any size had gun departments in those days) and what should I find but three Colt Commanders. One was a .45 ACP, the other 9mm, and lo and behold the third was the almost mythical .38 Super. I bought them all.

Finally, I had a .38 Super. The perfect Trail Gun was mine. I emulated Col. Cooper and had adjustable sights installed and found my perfect Trail Gun wouldn't stay on a piece of 12x12" paper at 25 yards. This just didn't make sense. I tried jacketed bullets; I tried cast bullets. Nothing worked. I found a copy of the 1930s book *Shooting* by John Henry Fitzgerald and he also extolled the flat-shooting, accurate .38 Super. Fitz's worked. Cooper's worked. Mine didn't. It was time for research to find out why.

I discovered the .38 Super had arrived in 1929 chambered in the 1911 Colt to give law enforcement a better tool to fight criminals who robbed banks and escaped in cars powered by V8s. The .38 Super



**Not only does the Kimber Stainless Target II fulfill the requirements of both a Target Pistol and a Trail Gun it will certainly suffice for self-defense.**

drilled from side to side. The trigger is matched up with a Commander-style skeletonized hammer. The trigger pull measures out right on the button at 4 pounds which is as light as I would want to go on a trail gun. The beavertail grip safety has a cutout to receive the back of the hammer while allowing it to ride as high as possible and it also has a very slight memory bump to make sure the grip safety is depressed when firing.

with its 130-grain full metal jacketed bullet at 1,300 fps would do something the .38 Special and .45 ACP of the day would not do, namely penetrate car bodies. Ex-Texas Ranger Frank Hamer, who was brought out of retirement for the express purpose of stopping Bonnie and Clyde, carried a .38 Super during his quest. This was before the advent of the .357 Magnum and the .38 Super was the most powerful pistol available.

However, there really was a problem with the .38 Super that neither Cooper nor Fitz mentioned. Sixgun cartridges have rims, semi-automatic cartridges are known as rimless because their rims are the same diameter as the body of the case. The former head space on the rim at the back of the cylinder while the latter was designed to headspace on the mouth of the case.

The .38 Super case was somewhere in between, that is, the rim was ever so slightly wider in diameter than the case itself so barrels were often cut to head space on this miniscule rim instead of the case mouth. What happened in many cases is when the hammer/firing pin hit, the rim was not large enough to hold the case in place and it would move slightly forward resulting in poor accuracy. I had my first .38 Super re-barreled and it immediately went from being unable to stay on a square-foot piece of paper to shooting 2" groups with cast bullets at 25 yards. I had my first Trail Gun. Currently produced .38 Supers are head-spaced correctly.



## .38 SUPER HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET MOLD)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
LYMAN 358156GC	Unique	5.7	1,129	1-1/2
RCBS 38-150KT	Unique	5.0	1,097	1-3/8

Notes: Groups the product of five shots at 20 yards.

Chronograph screens set at 10' from muzzle. Winchester Small Pistol Primers used in Winchester brass.

The top of the slide stop is nicely checkered as is the magazine release and flat mainspring housing. The top of the thumb safety is serrated for positive operation and the slide has striations front and rear for ease of manipulation. If I would add anything it would be checkering on the frontstrap. As far as fit and finish, the slide is tightly fitted to the frame and the overall finish, except for the black sights, is matt stainless; a most attractive pistol. The Kimber Stainless Target II comes with three 9-round magazines none of which, thankfully, have rubber bump pads on the bottom.

### Powerful

The .38 Super is definitely a high-pressure cartridge and was in fact +P before there was such a thing. With some current factory loadings muzzle velocities are in the 1,350 to 1,400 fps range, and even beyond. In fact with a 5" barrel the .38 Super actually exceeds some factory .357 Magnum loads in a short barreled revolver and it was not too long ago when it did it with 10 rounds compared to the .357 Magnum revolver's six rounds. One very nice touch for the Kimber .38 Super is the ramped barrel which is built to better handle pressure by supporting the case head.

Shooting the .38 Super Kimber was pure pleasure. Felt recoil is relatively mild and every type of ammunition used fed perfectly including hardcast semi-wadcutters. The most accurate ammunition proved to be Cor-Bon's 147-grain FMJ followed closely by Cor-Bon's 125-grain +P DPX, Buffalo Bore's 115-grain +P JHP, and my handloads consisting of the RCBS 38-150KT hardcast bullet over 5.0 grains of Unique for just under 1,100 fps. My favorite cast bullets for the .38 Super are the same above-mentioned RCBS Keith and Lyman's 358156GC used in .38 Special and .357 Magnum loads. These are not seated to the crimping groove for the .38 Super but rather to the top of the front driving band. Feeding is flawless. Complete results are in the accompanying table.

Too many years ago I coined the phrase Perfect Packin' Pistol—PPP for short—to describe an easy to carry, adequately powerful for the situation at hand, always available

sidearm, normally a double-action or single-action sixgun. This Kimber .38 Super deserves to be high on the list of Perfect Packin' Pistols.

To quote from Cooper more than 50 years ago: "The dimensions of the world's wildernesses are shrinking while we watch, and even those places we can drive to are becoming so crowded with nature lovers that they hardly permit the feeling of freedom that is the adventurer's age-old joy. However, there are places left, and since we don't know how soon they will be polluted by more roads, more people and more regulations let's hasten to enjoy them while we may. With pack on the back, fishing tackle in its case, and a good trail gun on the hip, a man can still find peace, freedom and self-reliance, even in the space age." If this was true then, it is even more true today. Not only have areas continued to shrink or even become nonexistent, this then-young teenager has become very limited in how much roaming he can do. I cherish every moment left and the Kimber .38 Super Trail Gun is a perfect companion.



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# DOWNING STEEL

*Loading the Black Powder Cartridge Rifle for accuracy, consistency and precision.*

**Mike "Duke" Venturino**

**Photos: Yvonne Venturino**

**T**he following story actually happened to a good friend and master class BPCR Silhouette competitor. He arrived at a public range to try a few experimental loads in his custom rolling block .45-90 match rifle and so set up his gear on a 200-yard bench. A couple of fellows watched as he unlimbered the big iron-sighted, single-shot rifle along with its huge cartridges with their shiny lead alloy bullets. One wisecracker said, "Hey buddy, the 50-yard range is over that way."

Ignoring the fellow, he sat down and proceeded to blow out huge clouds of white smoke. After a fouling shot and then five rounds on paper he told the onlookers to take a look through their spotting scope. Those five rounds clustered into about 2 minutes of angle (MOA) or roughly 2" at 200 yards. Since the other guys with their scope-sighted, magnum bolt guns, had bigger groups on their targets at 100 yards, they suddenly became humble and inquisitive. "How in the world could that old exposed hammer rifle be so accurate?"

They can be. The rifles need not be custom ones either. Most off-the-shelf modern-made replicas of Sharps Models 1874 and 1877, of Remington No. 1 Rolling Blocks, and of

Winchester Model 1885 "high walls" are easily capable of such accuracy. However, startling performance from good rifles requires superlative ammunition. While the processes to make such handloads is a bit involved overall it's not difficult.

## Avid Interest

The following is certainly required: an avid interest in shooting along with some experience in casting bullets and pumping reloading press handles. Of course it doesn't hurt to have basic shooting ability. Here's another little story; this time personal. In the fall of 2011 a long-time friend decided he would like to try his hand at the BPCR Silhouette game so I took him along to a match. He had a good .45-70 Shiloh



*Duke's current two favorite BPCR Silhouette rifles are both built upon original actions from the 1870s. His primary rifle (front) is a Remington No. 1 rolling block and his backup is a Sharps M1874. Both rifles have new Krieger barrels chambered for .45-90.*

Sharps Model 1874 rifle with decent sights but no experience in loading black powder in cartridges. Therefore, I furnished him ammunition crafted for my own Shiloh Sharps Model 1874s. In his first match he scored high enough to begin his silhouette career as an AA class shooter. He says he's going to continue in the game.

I predict he will have difficulty rising above AA class. Why? By his own pronouncements he detests handloading. He only does it so he can afford to shoot to contentment and does it all on progressive type reloading presses. Nor does he like to





cast bullets. In my experienced-based opinion, I don't think anyone can make a BPCR shoot to its full potential if they don't enjoy handloading as an adjunct hobby to shooting.

What follows is a brief synopsis of how I reload good quality black-powder cartridge ammunition for single-shot rifles. Keep in mind this is not the only way to accomplish the chore. It is merely my way. Also keep in mind I don't brag about my rifles shooting MOA groups. My personal criterion for BPCR Silhouette rifles is 1-1/2 MOA but that's for 10-shot groups fired at 300 yards. To keep this within space I'm only going to use .45-90 for examples because my two rifles in that chambering are the ones I've most focused on lately. The primary one is an original Remington rolling block No. 1 target rifle from the 1870s fitted with a new, 32" Krieger barrel. The backup rifle is an original Sharps Long Range No. 2 target rifle, also from the 1870s, and also fitted with a



**Of Duke's current favorite BPCR Silhouette rifles, the Model 1874 Sharps (top) sports a 30" Krieger .45-90 barrel, while the Remington No. 1 rolling block has a 32" barrel. Both are fitted with scope blocks in addition to iron sights.**

new Krieger barrel of 30".

Consistency is the watchword for any type of good handloads. With BPCRs there is the added factor of cast bullets. Therefore I use only "pure" ingredients for alloys: specifically 1-pound tin to 20-pound lead. Then I use that alloy to cast two .45-caliber bullets. The one used on pigs (300 meters), turkeys (385 meters) and rams (500 meters) is very heavy for the caliber. It weighs 555 grains of the above alloy when cast in a custom single-cavity mould by the dipper method. The BPCR Silhouette game also incorporates a 200-meter "chicken" segment fired offhand. For that part my second .45-caliber bullet weighs only 440 grains. It is also cast in a custom single-cavity mould.

The mould for the heavier bullet is by Steve Brooks, and the lighter bullets are made in a Leo Bumphrey mould. Are custom moulds necessary? Not really. I get beat many times a year by people using factory-made moulds. It just happens the specific bullet designs and weights I wanted were not available in off-the-shelf moulds.

Krieger .45-caliber barrels have a land diameter of .450" with groove diameter of .458". Therefore my moulds are dimensioned so that bullets' noses are about .002" under the rifle barrels' lands and their bodies are at, or no more than .001" over the barrels' grooves. They are then run through a sizing die matching barrel groove diameter. Such sizing touches them very slightly or not at all. Also, it should be mentioned that my cast bullet weights vary only +/-3/10 of a grain or 6/10 variance total. I know because each one is weighed on an electronic scale. During the sizing process SPG Lube is applied to all grease grooves of the bullets. Lube is

**To hit those distant black dots (above, metallic silhouettes) out to 500 meters requires a good rifle, superb handloaded ammunition along with some shooting ability. Duke and his traveling companion Ted Tompkins (below), showing their pleasure at shooting well in one of the Arizona state championships for BPCR Silhouette they attend every year.**



a very important component in black-powder loads because it also helps keep the powder's fouling soft. There are several types of lube. I've stuck with SPG because (1) I used to own half interest in it, (2) its owner Steve Garbe is my friend, and (3) it works.

### **Brass**

Now we proceed to the cartridge cases. For .45-90 these are Starline headstamp. When bought, their flash holes and primer pockets are uniformed. That procedure need be done only once. Done for every loading are the following steps: full-length sizing, annealing, and trimming. Most competitors only neck size, anneal only once a year and likewise trim once a year if that. I full-length size because I have multiple rifles per caliber and want my loads to chamber freely in all. Annealing



*Duke shoots his '74 Sharps .45-70 with an MVA scope at one of the summer BPCR Silhouette matches in Montana.*



*The basic components of Duke's .45-90 black-powder loads for his current favorite rifles consist of Starline brass, Swiss 1-1/2 Fg powder, bullets from a Brooks or Bumphrey mold, SPG lube and CCI Benchrest primers.*



*Duke's bullet for the pigs (300 meters), turkeys (385 meters) and rams (500 meters) is a 555-grain "Gov't" roundnose (left). For the chickens fired at offhand from 200 meters, Duke uses a 440-grain roundnose. Good cast bullets are the center of all BPCR Silhouette handloads and Duke casts his in single-cavity moulds by the dipper method.*



*One of the steps Duke considers absolutely necessary for assembling good BPCR Silhouette ammunition is trickling the powder into the case through a drop tube. The Black Powder measure at right is by Montana Vintage Arms.*

is done so case-wall grip on the bullet is uniform—every single time. When cases are trimmed most will be hardly touched but for unknown reasons occasionally one will be cut more than others. Remember what I said about consistency.

Also I'm not going to try to convince you that a specific black powder, a specific powder charge or a specific primer is needed for a winning combination. However, all of those factors and combinations thereof are very important. It's just that your rifle will have to tell you what ones work best by how closely to one another it punches bullet holes in the target paper.

### **Accuracy Expectations**

Also, I'm not going to try to convince you that hundreds of rounds must be fired in untold combinations before the magic load appears. Here's why: with my most recent load development for the .45-90s, I only tried Swiss 1 Fg and 1-1/2 Fg, Federal 210 Match large rifle primers and CCI BR2 Benchrest large rifle primers and 555-grain "Gov't" roundnose and 560-grain "Creedmoor" roundnose bullets. Both were from Brooks moulds. The rolling block .45-90 came first. Just in trying those few components at 300 yards one combination gave a 10-shot group of 3-1/2". So the next day the same combination was tried again. That time its group was 3-1/4". I can count on it shooting like that time after time. That load combination is the 555-grain "Gov't" roundnose, CCI BR2 primers, and 70 grains of 1-1/2 Fg Swiss powder. All in all only about 50 to 60 rounds were fired before I settled on that specific load.

When the same load combination was tried from the Sharps .45-90 the groups were a bit larger on the average. Still, however, they stayed within my criterion of 1-1/2-MOA groups for 10 shots at 300 yards. The 440-grain bullet over the same powder charge clustered into about 3" at 200 yards from both rifles. Incidentally, the heavy bullet load gives about 1,125 to 1,150 fps while the light bullet load's velocity is about 1,225 to 1,250 fps.

How did I arrive at the charge of 70 grains? It was simply the amount of powder required to bring its level to the base of the bullet seated so all grease grooves are covered. However, there was one other very important step involved in powder dispensing. That is that the powder is trickled slowly into the case through a 24" drop tube. Black powder burns better (Remember consistent!) when compacted as it enters the case.



**Duke's .45-90 rolling block is capable of 10-shot groups like this (above) at 300 yards. His '74 Sharps .45-90 is slightly less accurate than his rolling block, note, however, that this group was 12 shots at 300 yards.**



Drop tubing it does that. There was one other factor not mentioned yet. Between powder and bullet goes a .060" vegetable fiber wad also sold by John Walters. Its purpose is the same as with modern gas checks—to protect the base of the bullet. I let the bullet compress the powder the width of the wad during seating.

### Seating

Somebody has to be asking, "Isn't there some special formula you use to determine how deep to seat your bullets?" or "Isn't it best to have the bullets seated into the rifling when chambered?" The answers are "no" and "not necessarily." For instance, with rolling block type rifles there is no camming action of the breechblock to force bullets into the rifling. Rounds must literally fall into the chamber. Therefore I make all my .45-90 loads so the grease grooves are covered, which allows free chambering in the rolling block. The Sharps breechblock does allow some camming of cartridges so the bullets are seated into the rifling upon chambering, but I've never tried it with this one. It's my backup in case the primary rifle fails so it must shoot the same loads.

Here are a couple of facts about the reloading dies I use to assemble my match grade .45-90 ammunition. First off, they are an ordinary set of Lyman dies. Custom expander plugs are available so shooters can match the inside diameter of their expanded case necks with bullet diameter. I don't do that and simply use the

.454" expander plug standard with Lyman .45-90 dies. Again somebody has to be thinking, "Doesn't such a tight fit damage your .458" bullets?" It doesn't and I attribute that to the fact I anneal case walls at least down as far as where the bullet base seats for every loading. Being soft they don't hurt bullets during the seating step. Also case mouth belling is held to a minimum—just enough so the bullet base starts. This is aided by the fact the cases are uniformly trimmed for each loading.

Many BPCR Silhouette shooters buy custom in-line seating dies. Again, for my .45-90s I don't use them. My Lyman die seats bullets very straight. I don't check every loaded round with a dial indicator like some competitors but only spot check about 10 percent. Most have no more run-out than about .003".

The above is a nutshell explanation of my reloading for BPCR Silhouette. But what about my bona-fides? Well, I'm a master class shooter in iron sight BPCR Silhouette but only rank in AAA class in the scoped division. I've traveled to the Arizona state championship every year since 2007 and have brought home one sort or another of trophy every year. However, only one of them was for "champion." That was for the Arizona scoped state championship in 2008. As for the national championships, reloading exactly as described herein I've finished in the top 10 three times since 2006. I'm still striving for that Number One spot!

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# Field Care For HUNTING RIFLES

**John Barsness**

**O**ver the past quarter-century a revolution took place among hunting rifles. No, they didn't rise up and start shooting all by themselves, as many anti-gunners apparently believe possible, but their basic materials started changing from blued steel and wood to stainless steel and various stock materials generically known as synthetic. (Of course, not all rifles turned stainless/synthetic. Hunters are almost by definition conservative, and many haven't accepted silver barrels and "plastic" stocks. Luckily, they don't have to since, amazingly, blued steel and checkered walnut still work in the woods.)

Many modern hunters believe stainless/synthetic rifles don't require any maintenance beyond obsessive bore cleaning. Other than scrubbing the barrel like a pool player on methamphetamines every 15 or 20 rounds, the theory is that stainless/synthetic rifles don't require any special care.

Stainless steel derives its rust-resistance from relatively large amounts of chromium in the alloy, from 10.5 percent to 30 percent instead of .5 percent to 1 percent in "normal" steels. Instead of forming rust (iron oxide) when exposed to



*Hunting in snow and cold creates extra demands on a hunting rifle.*

water, stainless steel develops a tiny layer of chromium oxide. Unlike rust, this doesn't continue to grow, so protects the steel from further oxidation—at least under most conditions.

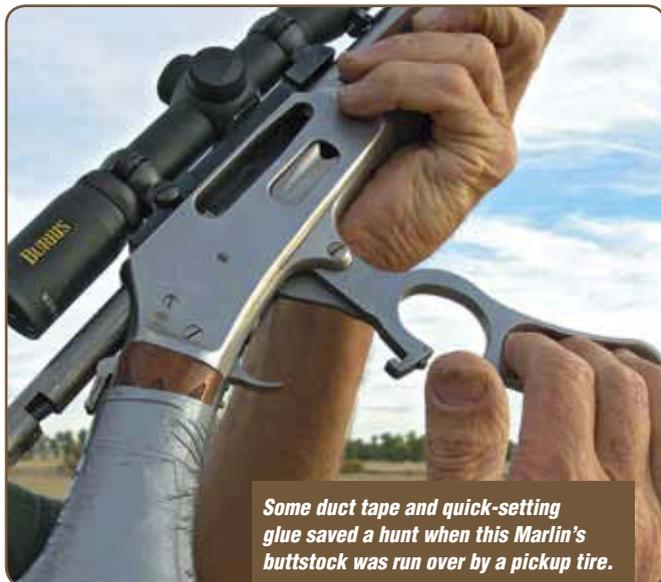
Unfortunately, really high-chromium steels don't work very well in firearms. The most common stainless alloy used in rifles is 416, with a chromium content of 12 to 14 percent.

While 416 machines well, the relatively low chromium content allows it to rust under extreme conditions, especially when exposed to salt or low-chromium steel.

Twenty years ago I went on a horseback hunt in Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness with an outfitter friend, the late Richard Jackson. Another hunter on the trip had a brand-new stainless/synthetic rifle, and after a few days he got pretty upset when red rust started forming on the barrel of his supposedly maintenance-free rifle.

The reason turned out to be the leather rifle scabbard Jackson provided, which had been soaking up salty horse-sweat for a decade or more. The problem was compounded by the barrel's bead-blasted finish, considered necessary by most hunters to prevent spooking game. Bead-blasting creates tiny irregularities in the steel's surface, and these hold moisture longer, encouraging rust. (The polished interior of a 416 barrel is far less likely to rust than the bead-blasted surface, but can still corrode if exposed long enough to the salty air of seacoasts—or saltwater itself.)

Another common cause of stainless-steel corrosion is contact with damp low-chromium steel. It's common to find non-stainless parts in supposedly all-stainless rifles, especially in the bolt, because low-chromium steel is less prone to galling. Stainless steel parts can gall (bind) when two parts fit so tightly together the chromium oxide gets wiped off, increasing friction between the parts. Making one of the parts from low-chromium steel reduces galling, the reason the bolt or bolt-head in some stainless rifles is made of low-chrome steel.



*Some duct tape and quick-setting glue saved a hunt when this Marlin's buttstock was run over by a pickup tire.*



*A lot of Rocky Mountain hunting takes place in cold and snow, requiring more prevention and maintenance than hunting in nicer weather.*

However, if the non-stainless bolt starts to rust, it also rusts the stainless steel it contacts, through a process called galvanic action. I know of at least one stainless rifle that flew back to the Lower 48 from Alaska with a live round in the chamber, because the bolt had a non-stainless head. The rifle got carried around all of one wet spring day during a brown bear hunt on Kodiak Island, and the bolt rusted fast inside the action.

So, no, stainless steel rifles aren't maintenance free. In really harsh conditions it helps to wipe down any exposed surfaces, including the bolt and inside of the action, with a lightly oiled cloth, or one of the silicone-impregnated gun cloths sold by several companies. This not only prevents surface rust, but helps the bolt work slicker.



*One reason Mauser-actioned hunting rifles remain popular is spare parts are easily installed—and abundant.*

## SOME SIMPLE TOOLS MIGHT SAVE A HUNT.

Traditional blued steel and wood rifles can take a certain amount of wet-weather abuse if prepared for it. The worst-case disaster happened to a friend of mine. A dozen of us went on a caribou hunt in northern Quebec, a region normally afflicted by wind and rain thanks to being windward of Hudson's Bay. This was a cheapo hunt where the hunters bring their own food, then are flown into a camp with one or two "camp managers," who make sure the clients don't kill themselves while doing their own cooking and hunting.

To save space on the float plane we took the stocks off our rifles, then put the barreled actions and stocks inside our duffel bags. One of the guys had an almost-new Ruger 77 .30-06, and didn't weatherproof it. By the end of the hunt the wood had swelled so much that the rifle was shooting several inches high and right at 100 yards—and the stock couldn't be pried from the steel. After he got home, it took a week in warm, dry room before the stock shrank enough to remove the hopelessly rusted barreled action.

Many people suggest wiping down blued steel with auto-



*A hollow-handled screwdriver, like this one from Brownells, with a few extra bits, some electrical tape and a collapsible cleaning rod can literally save a hunt. Alas, John's Schukra segmented rod, imported from Austria a few decades ago, is no longer available.*



*Synthetic stocks like the one on this Sako .308 (left) are stronger than walnut stocks, like the field-repaired Marlin buttstock, but still not unbreakable.*



*This CZ 9.3x62 (above) was stocked by Kilimanjaro Rifles in a piece of their patented laminate, and the steel was Cerakoted. It looks like a traditional rifle but is a lot more weatherproof. John carried a custom stainless/synthetic rifle by Charlie Sisk on this Alaskan grizzly hunt—but still oiled the metal beforehand, and taped the muzzle.*



body wax before going on a wet-weather hunt. I tried this a couple of times, but found the wax wore off too easily, especially from polished steel. After some experimentation, I found warming the steel, then applying a modern miracle oil such as Break-Free provided better protection. The barreled action should be taken out of the stock and the oil applied everywhere, since water gets sucked into every crevice in the stock.

Most modern factory stocks are finished with some sort of urethane varnish, often so thick the outside is pretty darn waterproof. The stock inletting, however, normally gets one thin layer, or none at all. Before hunting in wet weather, it pays to paint the inletting with at least a couple of coats of urethane or modern spar varnish, a combination of urethane and traditional oil, usually Tung.

I once went on a spring brown bear hunt on the Alaska Peninsula with a walnut/steel CZ 550 chambered in 9.3x62. The metal was soaked in Break-Free before the hunt, and the inletting of the stock painted with spar varnish—but I forgot to varnish the stock under the recoil pad. By the end of the 10-day hunt the butt had swollen 1/8" all around the recoil pad. ("Does rain make my butt look big?" Yes, sometimes.) The rifle never shifted point of impact, however, and soon after returning to Montana the wood shrank back to match the pad.

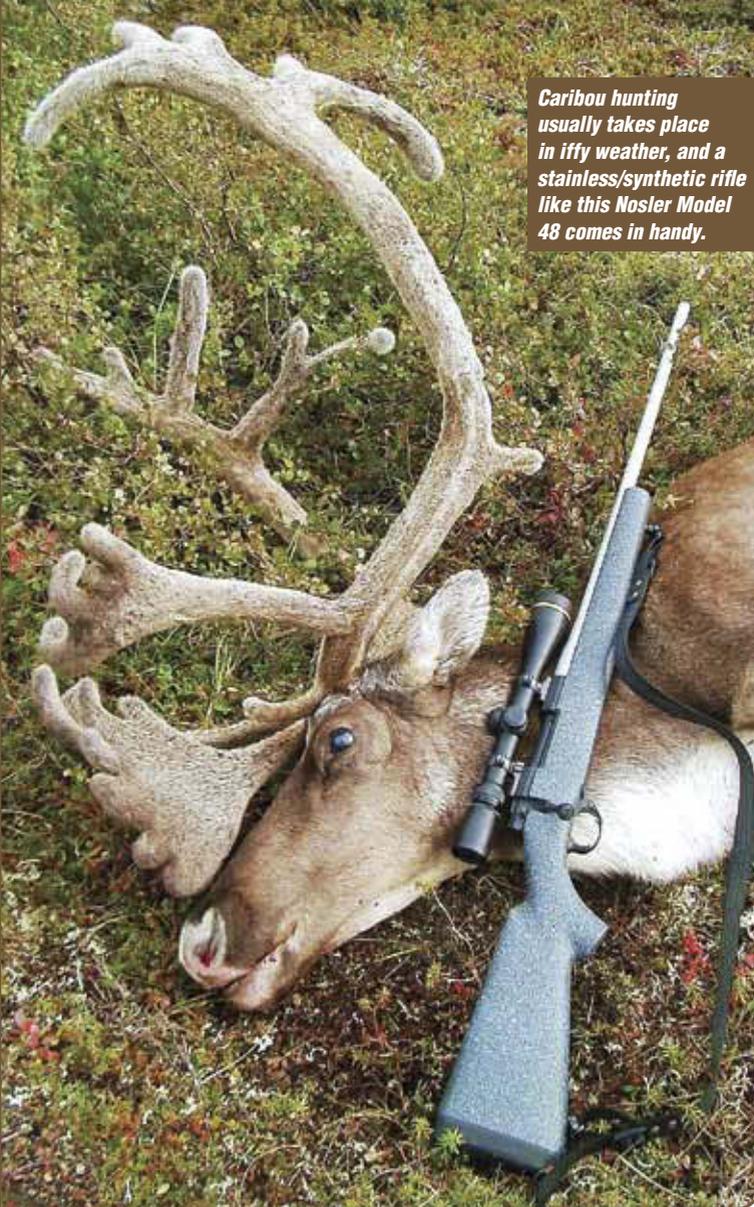
Some hunters apply electrical tape along the barrel/fore-end crevice to keep water out. I did on that brown bear hunt, and on another caribou hunt in northern Quebec. For some

reason I really wanted to use a pre-'64 Winchester Model 70 on the Quebec hunt. The tape definitely helped—but didn't help the rifle's classic look.

A few obsessive hunters finish walnut stocks with epoxy, claiming this totally waterproofs the wood. Hmm. Apparently epoxy was tried during the infamous "salt wood" years when Browning, and a few other firearms manufacturers, were sold a bunch of stock wood quick-dried with salt. A bunch of solutions were tried, including sealing the stock inletting with epoxy, but even epoxy didn't prevent the salt from migrating out of the wood to rust any steel it touched. All any "waterproof" finish really does is slow down wood's tendency to take on water. (Please be aware that a traditional linseed-oil finish is about as effective as slapping mosquitoes in an Alaskan swamp.)

It's also a good idea to take the scope and rings off your rifle, then wax both the inside of the rings and the top of the rifle's action. More than one hunter has gone on a wet hunt with his carefully oiled rifle, afterwards finding a substantial layer of rust inside the scope rings and under their bases. Oh, and even if the rifle has a stainless action, many scope-mount screws aren't stainless, and can rust solid, in the process also rusting the action. You might want to oil them too. (No, oiling base screws won't allow them to work loose, not if they're torqued down correctly, though Loctite also protects threads.)

Steel can also be protected by modern coatings. Probably the most popular right now is the ceramic-based Cerakote,



*Caribou hunting usually takes place in iffy weather, and a stainless/synthetic rifle like this Nosler Model 48 comes in handy.*

It also helps to epoxy standard sling-swivel studs in place. These can come unscrewed during a hunt, allowing the rifle to fall off your shoulder. Often this doesn't do the rifle any good.

It also helps to bring along a compact cleaning rod. This can actually be used for barrel cleaning, but is most useful for knocking stuff out of the bore. Even with the muzzle taped, stuff can happen. Many years ago, I was hunting with my old friend Milo McLeod in western Montana on a snowy Thanksgiving Day. We both had a couple of tags to fill, and the season ended after Sunday, so we intended to take the first legal game we found.

We found an eating-size mule deer buck on the first ridge we hiked, and Milo shot it with his .257 Roberts. He had the muzzle taped, but forgot to re-tape after the shot, and his rifle fell off his shoulder while we were dragging the buck down to the pickup. Of course it fell muzzle-first, and the bore got plugged with several inches of wet snow. Neither one of us had a cleaning rod in our packs. We tried to poke it out with a small stick, but the stick froze in the bore. Luckily, a nearby country store had a couple of cheap cleaning kits. Milo bought one, poked out the snow and stick, and we continued hunting. Ever since I've carried a small take-down rod in my hunting pack, in the same heavy-duty Ziploc bag as my headlamp, electrical tape, fire-starter, etc.

On a long back-country hunt it also helps to take along screwdrivers, some glue and duct tape, plus a spare scope, preferably already in detachable mounts and sighted-in. I usually take a hollow-handled screwdriver with the correct bits inside the handle, and both the screwdriver and spare scope have come in handy more than once.

The duct tape and glue can be used to put a broken stock together. Stocks usually break at the grip, and I've used both Instant Glue and epoxy to repair stocks, luckily not my own. The epoxy job was augmented with synthetic cloth from a bag of horse feed, and held quite well.

Some back-country hunters prefer rifle actions that can be easily disassembled, so any broken parts can be replaced. My own serious back-country North American rifle is a .338 Winchester Magnum built on an FN Mauser action. The factory safety was replaced by a Gentry 3-position model like the one on Model 70 Winchesters, so the bolt can be easily fieldstripped. On distant hunts, whether in remote parts of North America or Africa, I take along a spare firing pin and spring, extractor, ejector and military Mauser trigger. Oh, and the rifle's trigger is a military Mauser, converted to a 3-pound single pull, one of the most rugged, fool-proof triggers ever made. Luckily, I've never needed any of the spare parts, but they're there, just in case.



easily applied by baking in an oven. Cerakote comes in a bunch of colors, some very close to traditional blued steel. I've had several of my rifles Cerakoted, including three stocked in custom walnut, and have been very pleased with the results over the past few years.

In September 2011, I went on a 16-day Cape buffalo and plains game hunt in the Selous Reserve of Tanzania, taking two CZ 550 rifles, one a slightly altered .416 Rigby and the other a 9.3x62 that had been custom-stocked and Cerakoted by Kilimanjaro Rifles. At the beginning of the hunt the weather was so dry that after a couple of days the action screws on both rifles had to be retightened, but by the end the "short rains" unexpectedly started, a month earlier than normal. In most African hunting dust is more of a problem than rust, and I wasn't very careful about oiling the rifles. The .416 started to rust, but the 9.3x62 didn't—though it looked like it did, due to the coating of fine red dust the Cerakote picked up. I wiped off most visible dust during the hunt, but once back home took the rifle apart and rinsed the barreled action under the kitchen tap.

By now you've realized that most "field care" is actually preventive care. One cheap and easy prevention for what can be a really serious problem is a single layer of electrical tape placed over the muzzle. This keeps snow, mud, sticks and rain out of the bore, and also protects the barrel crown when the rifle rides muzzle-down in a vehicle or saddle scabbard. The tape blows off due to air pressure before the bullet reaches the muzzle, so doesn't affect accuracy.

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**Story and Photos: Jeff John**

**O**ctober, 25 1812 the dismasted HMS Macedonia, her upper guns damaged and the ship rolling so badly her lower gunports dipped under water, lowered her colors and surrendered to USS United States commanded by Captain Stephan Decatur. Decatur, upon accepting the surrender allowed Macedonia's Captain John Carden to keep his sword. Quoting Decatur some years later Carden wrote, "And then turning round to his Marines, who were the only Native Americans\* in his ship & all Rifle Men, He exclaimed, 'You call yourselves Rifle Men, & have allow'd this very Tall & Erect Officer, on an open Quarter Deck to escape your Aim.'"

Carden added, "Had he been better acquainted with the true state of this point of their Exertion, & that of the Howitser Cannon mounted

in each of their Tops, he might have been content & spar'd himself the remark.—For out of Fifty two Officers & Men Quartered on my

quarter Deck, only eight & myself Escap'd Death or being desperately Wounded."

Carden would later partially explain his defeat by decrying how he was undermanned at only 259 men and officers at quarters while the United States was manned by crack British seamen, saying, "This Force (& perhaps being the worst Man'd Ship in the British Navy [Macedonia]) oppos'd to Four Hundred thorough bred, Prime British Seamen, & 78 Officers & Rifle Men as Marines, Native of America, could not be expected to do much service...."

Carden, after observing the guns of the United States on the main deck all bore names, noticed one had been named Nelson after the



*British seamen and Marines would've used the old 77-caliber P1778 Brown Bess. Royal Marine Lt. Law of HMS Shannon used a Bess to shoot down USS Chesapeake's Captain James Lawrence, who died of his wounds 4 days later. USS Chesapeake fell to HMS Shannon after a bloody ship-to-ship action June 1, 1813.*

# FIGHTING FROM

## US Marines used 1803 rifles aboard US f



*The 1803 is often considered the most handsome flintlock rifle ever fielded by any army. It has superb balance and features usually found only expensive sporting rifles, such as a 1/2-octagon, 1/2-round barrel and more sophisticated lock internals.*



*The left side of the rifle even sports a cheekpiece, with a small bit of carving. The barrel is held by a key, although two other screws must be removed before the barrel can be lifted off. Riflemen were issued a powder horn (this one, below, built by John Shorb with a RifleShoppe spout kit), linen patches and round balls. The rifleman often stitched the four corners of the square patch together for use when time was a factor. Musket ammo followed the British pattern paper ammunition with the top stitched closed.*

late British Vice Admiral, who lost his life at Trafalgar, and one named Victory, after Nelson's ship. Decatur told Carden those gun crews had served with Nelson at Trafalgar. It didn't improve Carden's humour. The number of prime British seamen aboard US men-of-war became a common apology for British losses in the War of 1812. (1)

In naval warfare, ship-to-ship battles were fought at close range, the contest usually being decided by the skill of the seamen in positioning the ship, the weight of metal thrown and the skill of the gunners. Fighting occurred wherever there was a flat spot on the ship from which to fight, and Marines manned the platforms on the masts with small arms. In the American Navy, Marine riflemen occupied the tops delivering a hail of accurate fire upon the enemy's deck.

Each US Captain apparently deployed rifles a little differently. In his account of the USS Constitution vs. HMS Guerriere in *Naval Occurrences of the War of 1812*, William James says, "Although the Constitution did not, like the President and United States carry guns\*\* in her tops, a



deliberate contrivance for destruction was resorted to, of which many were the victims on board Guerriere. Seven men were stationed in each top; six

of whom were employed in loading for him that was the best marksman. Captain Dacres was wounded in the back by one of these riflemen; and had the ball passed half an inch more in front, he, too, would have been numbered among the dead."

I was unaware our frigates had a contingent of Marine riflemen until reading William Gilkerson's excellent *Boarder's Away, The Age of Fighting Sail Vol. II* (3) where he quotes the above passages from memoirs of British Navy Captains and British historians. Sadly, now out of print,

# THE TOPS

## frigates in the War of 1812.



## US MARINE BROWN BESS

**A**fter the Quasi War with France (1800-01), our government decided to buy a reserve of small arms until national manufacture was up to speed. Our reliance on French muskets was over, so we turned to Britain, whose animosity to us had cooled to a degree.

The United States purchased some 5,000 stands of arms through several London arms dealers and these muskets seem to have come directly from the Tower of London, where British arms were stored. All were India Pattern Brown Bess muskets adopted by the British Army in 1793. They were of simpler manufacture than earlier Tower patterns, based on models made for the British East India Co. to arm its troops. After the American Revolution, an exhausted Britain did little to rearm, something they regretted after the fall of the French Monarchy, thus the adoption of the somewhat cheaper and faster-to-make India Pattern.

Upon arrival in America, these muskets were surcharged "US" on the lockplate and barrel. The funny thing is, once the US Marines found them, surviving correspondence suggests Marines preferred the Bess' shorter 39" barrel to the US musket's 44" (or even to the 42" Naval models) for shipboard use



as being handier around the rigging (3, 4). Also, Marines preferred the heavier 75-caliber ball to the US 69 caliber and the ease of maintenance the brass furniture and pinned barrel offered.

A letter dated 1815 by Decius Wadsworth, Col. of Ordnance said, in part, "I have had it in contemplation for some time to propose transferring to the Navy Department all the small arms of the British caliber in our arsenals. For as the Marines on Board of our ships have heretofore been armed with muskets of



*American-issued Brown Bess muskets (right) had all the normal British military markings atop the barrel and on the sideplate along with a "US" surcharge. To be entirely correct, this one should have one more set of "Crown-Scepter" proofs on the barrel. Note the patches near the triggerguard (right). The muskets were kept bright by polishing with brick dust and a little vegetable oil. The Boston brick dust is from Avalon Forge.*

the British Pattern, and the mounting of these muskets being of brass is less subject to be corroded than the iron mounting of the French Muskets by Seawater, they will be preferred for naval service." (4)

A US frigate might very well be armed with .69 M1795 muskets for the sailors and a contingent of Marines also armed with the M1795 or—if they were lucky—the .75 Brown Bess as well as .54 1803 rifles for use in the tops by sharpshooters.

**GUNS**



**US Marines were issued 1803 .54 Harpers Ferry rifles for use from the tops on board American Frigates in the War of 1812. Surprisingly, Marines favored the .75 British India Pattern Brown Bess, of which there were many purchased in the early 1800s, over the .69 US M1795 musket. Fifteen-star American flag by Annin.**

describes the only known 1803 rifle with US Navy provenance, which was taken from the tops of the USS President by a British midshipman after President's defeat by HMS Endymion in January 1815. The patchbox was engraved with the circumstances and date of the action. Although the rifle was eventually converted to percussion, it retains its original barrel and furniture.

Issues of the "100 Short Rifles, molds and chargers" to Marines to Lt. Miller, Adjutant of the Marine Corp occurred on Aug. 18, 1809, according to George Moller in *American Military Shoulder Arms, Vol. II*. (7) The term "Short Rifles" was used to differentiate between the 1803 and the "Kentucky style" 1792 and 1807 contract rifles.

### Our First Rifle

Not the standard arm, the rifle had mixed results during our Revolution against England and the government didn't authorize a service rifle until 1792. War with frontier Indians was one place where the rifle excelled against the musket, although the smoothbore would remain the main arm of the Army for decades to come. However, from 1792 on, a rifle would always be available to scouts, skirmishers and Marines, although general issue of a rifled arm wouldn't occur until the adoption of the Minié ball prior to our Civil War.

it is a great book chronicling the firearms of the age. Many of the sources cited by him are still in print or available as "Print on Demand" books, and are in the footnotes.

Gilkerson also pictures and



**A set of tools (above) was supplied to Riflemen including a screwdriver, patchworm and ball puller. These reproductions are from The RifleShoppe. A brass patchbox is fitted to the right side (below) and is released by a button atop the buttplate.**



The 1792 rifle, of which 3,477 (7) were eventually purchased, was made by contract gunsmiths, mostly in Pennsylvania. Of sometimes indifferent quality, the same problems arose with the use of the contractors making muskets. Output and quality was unpredictable, and parts weren't interchangeable.

Compounding the arms production problem for the United States was the fall of the French monarchy in 1792. It was instantly apparent the US would need a means of manufacturing arms beyond the cottage industry level and Congress authorized the creation of National Armories in order to eliminate our dependence on foreign-made arms and the domestic trade. President Washington concluded the need for enough arms to equip 50,000 men in time of war and 4 or 5 percent percent of the force should consist of riflemen, so a need for 2,000 new rifles was initially estimated. (2)

Springfield Armory in Massachusetts began turning out



**The USS Constitution fires a 17-gun salute toward the United States Coast Guard Station Sector in Boston to celebrate its 214th launching day anniversary last October. Constitution is the world's oldest commissioned warship afloat. She defended the sea lanes against threat from 1797 to 1855. USN photo: Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kathryn E. Macdonald.**



*The India Pattern Brown Bess likely saw US Marine use. Surviving documents indicate Marines preferred the Bess because it fired a heavier .75 ball and was easier to keep "bright."*

muskets in 1795 and construction of Harpers Ferry in Virginia (now West Virginia), began in 1799. Until the water works was completed, Harpers Ferry mostly did repair work on existing US muskets, and the armory became fully operational in 1803.

It is argued the first 15 of the new Harpers Ferry rifle were delivered to the 1800 Lewis & Clark Expedition, although no records exist. It is a fact that Lewis spent some time at Harpers Ferry being outfitted, and he did take rifles in addition to smoothbore muskets. Rifle No. 14 has been examined by The RifleShope. There are enough differences with the 1803 that the 'Shope calls it the Model 1800, but the basic design is all there. At the end of the expedition, Lewis & Clark auctioned off everything in St. Louis, Mo., so we don't know what the guns were.

### The 1803

Our first—and the only production flintlock muzzleloader made at a US National armory—the Model 1803, is considered one of the most beautiful rifles ever fielded by an army. The 1803 was designed

### HARPERS FERRY 1803 KIT

MAKER: PECATONICA RIVER  
LONG RIFLE SUPPLY, INC.  
P.O. BOX 2791, ROCKFORD, IL 61132  
(815) 968-1995  
[WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/PECATONICA](http://WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/PECATONICA)

**ACTION TYPE:** Flintlock rifle, **CALIBER:** 54, **CAPACITY:** 1, **BARREL LENGTH:** 33", **OVERALL LENGTH:** 49", **WEIGHT:** 8-1/4 pounds, **FINISH:** Brown, **SIGHTS:** Fixed, iron rear, brass front, **STOCK:** American walnut, **PRICE:** \$666.25 (unassembled)

### INDIA PATTERN BROWN BESS

IMPORTER: TRACK OF THE WOLF, INC.  
18308 JOPLIN ST. N.W., ELK RIVER, MN 55330  
(763) 633-2500  
[WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/TRACK-OF-THE-WOLF-INC](http://WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/TRACK-OF-THE-WOLF-INC)

**ACTION TYPE:** Flintlock smoothbore, **CALIBER:** .75, **CAPACITY:** 1, **BARREL LENGTH:** 39", **OVERALL LENGTH:** 54-3/4", **WEIGHT:** 8-1/2 pounds, **FINISH:** Polished bright, **SIGHTS:** None, bayonet stud, **STOCK:** Indian hardwood, **PRICE:** \$439

### ENGRAVER: DALE WOODY FIREARMS ENGRAVING

P.O. BOX 565, 136 KINDLE RD.  
RANDLE, WA 98377  
(360) 497-5280  
[WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/GUNFANCY](http://WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/GUNFANCY)

Dale engraved the US markings and Tower proofs on the Brown Bess and added the US barrel proofs to the 1803.

**PRICE:** P.O.R.



*With a service load of 75-grains Swiss FFg powder, 1 Ox-Yoke Wonder Wad, .010 patch lubed with Birchwood Casey No. 77 and .530" Hornady roundball, the 1803 delivered. The final target of the day (above) was this 4-1/2", 100-yard group. Three of the five shots are in 2-3/4". The bore was cleaned after every 5-shot string. At 25 yards, the Bess (below) grouped more or less on target with undersized paper ammunition. All went down the barrel with no wiping between shots—a necessity to maintain the high-volume of fire musketry demanded.*



by Master Armorer Joseph Perkins, an English-trained gunsmith who emigrated and served as an artillery artificer for the patriot cause during our Revolution.

Unlike the 1792, the 1803 borrows little of its design from the Pennsylvania Long Rifle and is unique even among other military rifles before it and since. It is half-stocked, with a 54-caliber part round, part octagon barrel, 33" long with round-bottom rifling. The barrel even has a wedding band at the junction of the octagon-to-round section, a feature normally found only on high-grade sporting rifles.

Oddly, the barrel has a fixed tang secured by a screw, yet is held at the fore-end by a barrel key. As a

# PECATONICA RIVER'S 1803 KIT

A kit for an advanced builder, Pecatonica provides a well inlet stock of nice American walnut, and all the parts including a Davis lock and Colerain barrel. The stock is inlet for the early round-bottom 1803 barrel and the Colerain barrel is machined with a full octagon portion underneath for those wanting to build a slightly heavier later 1803. The choice is to file or machine the bottom of the barrel round, as was done on early production 1803 rifles or inlet the stock for the octagon portion of the barrel underneath. I chose the early version, since the lock is dated 1803 and the locks were dated with the year of manufacture at this time. Truth be told, the 1803 deliveries didn't occur until 1804 and the serial number I chose puts it in 1805's production. (7)

The Davis lock needed tuning in order to work properly and quite a bit of polish.



*The 1803 rifles were dated on the lockplate with the year of manufacture. The Davis locks (left) are all marked 1803, and this rifle is built as an early version, which is a little lighter than later ones. Upside down on the left flat of the barrel is an "eagle over P" proof, US in an oval and the serial number (only the first run of 4,023 were numbered).*

After adjustment, the final trigger pull is 3-1/4 pounds. The kit's soft yellow brass is well cast and cleaned up easily. The sideplate is cut from thick sheet brass, and the patchbox is of thinner sheet brass. After inletting, the parts were sent to John King to be drilled for screws and pins.

The stock was finished with Dembart Checkering Oil. The wood was sanded to 400 grit, the Dembart oil wiped on,

allowed a few minutes to set, then wiped off with cotton patch. I repeated this every other day until I had four coats on. Since it was rather humid, I let it dry for four days before rubbing down with 0000 steel wool.

The barrel was browned with the old Zischang formula (available as "Tried & True" from Track) and the screws and small parts given a heat blue. The lock was left bright.

**GUNS**

rule, when keys were employed, use of a break-off breech for ease of disassembly would be found. In this case, the soldier still needs to pull the wedge (captured by a pin in the stock, so it won't get lost) and two screws to take off the barrel for cleaning, which could eventually result in damage to the bedding at the tang area. So the use of a keyed barrel is a puzzle as the barrel would be best left in place for routine cleaning.

Nonetheless, the resulting rifle balances extremely well, shoulders quickly and swings smoothly. The tumbler on the lock has a fly, so an extremely fine trigger pull can be had. The caliber is a very good choice for accurate fire to 150 yards while economizing on lead and powder. The sights are fixed with an iron rear with a fine notch and brass front blade, both in dovetails. The large brass patchbox has a button release through the top of the buttplate for access.

The earliest reference to ammunition I have is from the 1850 Army Officer's manual and it wouldn't surprise me to know parameters for the .54 hadn't changed since the adoption of the 1803. The 1850 regs call for .525" well-smoothed balls (cast and tumbled to remove the sprue) over 75 grains of rifle powder. Patches were of square muslin, thin leather or bladder and tied over the ball. The rifleman would then have at his disposal loose ball and patch for

leisurely loading, and pre-patched balls for when events got hot.

More than 4,023 1803 rifles were built with production ceasing in 1808. In 1814, production resumed and a change to a longer barrel of 36" was made in 1815. Production ended in 1820 with 15,703 being produced. The 1803 soldiered on for decades to come and many were converted to percussion.

**GUNS**

NOTES: \*NATIVE AMERICANS HERE REFERS TO PERSONNEL BORN IN THE UNITED STATES AS OPPOSED TO THE MANY BRITISH SEAMEN MANNING US SHIPS. \*\*MOST OF THE WORLD'S NAVIES DEPLOYED SWIVEL GUNS ON DECK AND IN THE TOPS. THESE WERE SMALL CANNON, USUALLY WITH A BORE A LITTLE BIGGER THAN 1", LOADED WITH ROUND SHOT OR GRAPE SHOT.

(1) *A CURTAIL'D MEMOIR OF INCIDENTS AND OCCURRENCES IN THE LIFE OF JOHN SURMAN CARDEN, VICE ADMIRAL IN THE BRITISH NAVY AND WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, 1850.* ©1912, A "PRINT ON DEMAND" BOOK FROM AMAZON.COM

(2) *THE SOUTHERN ARSENAL,* DANIEL D. HARTZEL AND JAMES B. WHISKER, ©1996, OLD BEDFORD VILLAGE PRESS

(3) *BOARDERS AWAY, FIREARMS OF THE AGE OF FIGHTING SAIL, VOL. II,* WILLIAM GILKERSON, ©1993, OP, MOWBRAY PUBLISHING, 54 EAST SCHOOL STREET, WOONSOCKET, RI 02895, (800) 999-4697, WWW.MANATARMSBOOKS.COM

(4) *US MILITARY FLINTLOCK MUSKETS, VOL. 1,* PETER SCHMIDT, ©2006, MOWBRAY PUBLISHING

(5) *NAVAL OCCURRENCES OF THE WAR OF 1812,* WILLIAM JAMES, ©1817, CONWAY MARITIME PRESS, 2004 REPRINT

(6) *ADMIRAL SIR P.B.V. BROKE: A MEMOIR,* ©1866, A "PRINT ON DEMAND" BOOK FROM AMAZON.COM

(7) *AMERICAN MILITARY SHOULDER ARMS VOL. II,* GEROGUE C. MOLLER ©2011 (REPRINT), UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PRESS, ALBUQUERQUE, ISBN: 978 0 8263 4998 9

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# KNIVES

STORY: Pat Covert

## A SLICE OF SKULLDUGGERY! Up-Armored Knives blends and rocks at the same time.

**C**amo is as ubiquitous as Starbucks coffee franchises these days. You can even buy a camo jock strap on e-Bay if so inclined. We won't go there, instead we'd like to show you a refreshing approach to camo that not only works, but has some real eye-popping graphics of skulls and foliage—the Menace Fighter from Up-Armored Knives.

Of course, all the eye candy doesn't mean a thing if the bones of the knife aren't there. Pick up the full tang Menace Fighter and you'll instantly realize that—at 12.5 ounces—it ain't no lightweight. At 11.5" overall this field knife can handle heavy duty chores from building shelter to rustling up grub for a good-size group. The 5.75" drop-point blade has a nice swedge grind on the backside for enhanced penetration and the Micarta handle is ample and sculpted with a chunky pattern for excellent purchase. Steel is easy-to-sharpen high carbon 1095CV that will require a light oiling along the blade edge but the rest of the steel is fully protected by its coating.

And then there's that retina-blistering camo. Up-Armored's patterns are hand applied using stencils and



*Up-Armored's Menace Fighter is a heck of a fixed blade in the raw, but the skullicious camo is the icing on the cake!*

freehand airbrushing, so every knife is different although the graphic elements may be the same. The art is then topped off with a tough DuraCoat hard polymer, clear-coat, matte finish. If skulls aren't your thing the company offers a wide range of patterns that can be tailored to your environment and, even better, offers the same services on firearms. The price of the Menace is \$300, not unreasonable considering this is a custom knife with a unique hand-painted finish. For an extra \$150 you can get a matching, leather-lined Kydex sheath that not only protects the finish, but makes nary a sound when drawing or putting the blade to bed. Skullduggery at its best!

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**BLADE STEEL:** 1095CV, .170" thick, flat ground,  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 5.75", **BLADE FINISH:** DuraCoat,  
Up-Armored Team 6, **OVERALL LENGTH:** 11.25",  
**WEIGHT:** 12.5 ounces, **HANDLE:** Micarta, **SHEATH:**  
Leather-lined Kydex, **PRICE:** \$300

# FLEX

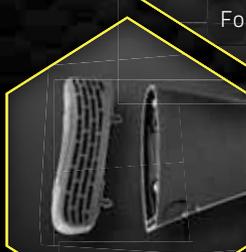
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# GUNS VNR

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**RIGHTS WATCH**

DAVID CODREA

## Academia Nuts

“Quincy College’s governing board will consider a policy that would ban everyone other than police officers from carrying a gun on campus, regardless of whether they have a permit,” *The Patriot Ledger* reports.

According to College President Peter Tsaffaras, they’ve “received anecdotal evidence sometimes that we have students who are coming to school armed.”

And while he admits “they’re not hostile or threatening,” he says Quincy needs a policy “to deal with it.” But it will be a policy without teeth, as campus security guards don’t carry guns.

Having everyone but predators unarmed is how these “educators” define “safety”?

Here’s the thing: Quincy is a junior college, meaning most of its student body is presumably under 21, that is, below the legal age to qualify for a permit in Massachusetts anyway. And to legally obtain a firearm?

NRA describes the process as “complex,” explaining “Depending on the class, a firearm identification card (FID or ‘card’), class A license or class B license is required to possess, purchase or carry a firearm... One’s home or place of business is not exempt from the FID or class A or B license requirements.”

As for carrying concealed, USA Carry gives details on its website to apply for the “may issue” license (meaning authorities may decide not to). Among the requirements:

A NICS (background) check; 40 days to process; a \$100 fee; an approved training course; a completed (and exhaustively intrusive) application (signed under penalty of perjury); copies of driver license or ID card and birth certificate or passport; two passport

photos; two fingerprint cards; proof of residency; an official report listing your arrest record....

Do President Tsaffaras and his governing board really think anyone inclined to bring a gun on their campus for evil purposes will have gone through any of these steps?

And hold on, we’re not done—along with all this comes the subjective part: “You will be required to justify your request in writing. Make your request as detailed and specific as possible. Valid reasons for requesting a concealed handgun include personal threats, being in a high-risk profession or routinely carrying large amounts of cash.”

And “invalid reasons”? Let’s just say quoting “shall not be infringed” probably won’t get you very far—despite the Commonwealth’s Firearms Record Bureau form sporting the Massachusetts Coat of Arms “adopted by the revolutionary provincial congress of Massachusetts in 1775,” per *Flags of the World*, replete with a bow and arrow-armed Squanto, an arm holding a sword, and the motto “*Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem*” (“By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty”).

Also irrelevant for concealed carry justification because it does not articulate a “personal” threat: The dangerous level of violent crime in the surrounding Quincy area, where those disarmed by college policy must traverse on their way to and from campus. Neighborhood-Scout.com rates Quincy “31” on a scale of 100 for safety, and projects the “chances of becoming a victim” at “1 in 260.”

The birthplace of John Adams and John Hancock sure has changed.

**GUNS**

Visit David Codrea’s online journal  
“The War on Guns” at  
[waronguns.com](http://waronguns.com),  
visit [DavidCodrea.com](http://DavidCodrea.com) to read  
his *Examiner* column.

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



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## Uncommon Valor, Uncommon Award

Four Marines from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 264 were awarded the Individual Action Air Medals with the combat distinguishing device last December 16 for heroic actions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Capt. Thomas M. Keech, the mission pilot, Capt. Matthew A. Cave, co-pilot, Sgt. Justin K. Bartfield-Smith, aerial gunner and observer, and Cpl. John M. Cederholm, crew chief, received the Air Medal for actions during a priority re-supply mission in support of 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, also known as Geronimo, on June 12, 2011.

The mission took place in the Sangin River Valley, Afghanistan after ground assets were unable to provide the necessary supplies to Geronimo due to many improvised explosive devices in the area.

Marines on the ground were sustaining heavy casualties and had already required several medical evacuations as well as escort air coverage. One of the escort AH-1W Cobras supporting Geronimo had sustained damage from enemy forces to one of its main rotor blades earlier that day.

When VMM-264 got the call for help, Keech, Cave, Bartfield-Smith and Cederholm, the aircrew of an MV-22B Osprey with VMM-264 prepared a plan of action to move supplies to the Marines in the fight.

After receiving intelligence enemy



**The Osprey is a twin-engine, tilt-rotor aircraft with hover and slow flight capabilities and aircraft can lift 15,000 pounds of external cargo or carry up to 20,000 pounds of internal cargo or 24 combat-equipped Marines. The Osprey's engines can rotate in mid-flight, converting the aircraft to a turboprop airplanes. This feature provides the vertical functionality of a helicopter and the performance of a fixed-wing aircraft. Here, Marines from Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, rig a 1,000-pound cement block to the bottom of an MV-22 Osprey during a training exercise at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. Photo: Pfc. Timothy Childers**

forces were near the landing zone, the crew mounted a weapon system to the aircraft before launching on their mission.

"Intelligence painted a good picture, but we were flying into an unfamiliar place marked with smoke," Keech said. "We weren't sure what to expect." During their flight to pick up supplies, the crew test fired their ramp mounted weapon system.

As they neared their objective,

the crew had to ensure their arrival wouldn't compete with friendly escort aircraft directly overhead the landing zone, so they could integrate their aircraft into the objective area, Keech said.

As they hit the ground, the Marines received fire from insurgents hidden in the treeline bordering the landing zone. Immediately, ground forces and aircraft overhead began to repel the enemy attack while the crew unloaded supplies. As the unloading progressed, enemy fire increased, forcing the crew to immediately lift off. Before leaving the landing zone, they engaged the enemy with the ramp mounted weapon system.

This marked the first time an MV-22B had ever engaged enemy forces in Afghanistan. "This was a humbling experience," Cave commented. "You always hear of the 'glory' of battle, but it's scary. You do your job and leave, so this medal is for those Marines on the ground." Other members of the crew felt the same about their role in the successful resupply mission that day.

"I feel honored to receive this award, but any Marine in our unit would have done the same thing — we just happened to be on duty that day," Bartfield-Smith said. "Everything we do is to support the ground troops."

Due to the actions and adaptation of the air-crew that day, the Marines of 1st Bn., 5th Marine Regiment, were able to get their much needed supplies and the Osprey and crew returned unharmed.— *Cpl. Abigail Brown, Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C.*

## Dawn Raid

British troops and Afghan commandos conducted a daring dawn raid under fire to target a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) factory in Helmand province last December.

Operation Eagle's Shadow saw more than 90 soldiers from the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) fly in three helicopters to the suspected factory in northern Nahr-e Saraj district.

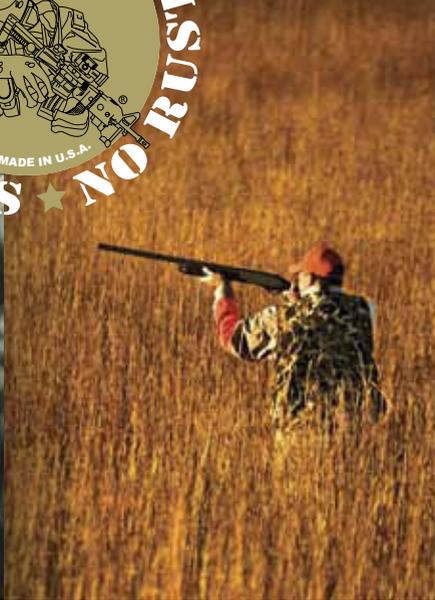
The area had earlier been cordoned off by Scimitar Mk2 armoured vehicles equipped with 30mm cannons, Warthog all-terrain troop carriers armed with .50-caliber heavy machine guns and 40mm grenade machine guns. The vehicles, crewed by the Formation Reconnaissance Squadron, the BRF and the Warthog Group, helped to protect the landing sites as the helicopters swooped in.

Once on the ground, the soldiers came under harassing fire from insurgents as they moved in towards the



**Marines from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 264 awarded the Air Medal for heroic actions in Afghanistan last December 16 include (from left to right) Cpl. John M. Cederholm, the mission crew chief, Sgt. Justin K. Bartfield-Smith, the mission aerial gunner and observer, Capt. Matthew A. Cave, the mission co-pilot, and Capt. Thomas M. Keech, the mission pilot. All were recognized for actions during a priority resupply mission in support of 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, in the Sangin River Valley, Afghanistan, June 12. This mission was the first time an MV-22B had engaged an enemy in Afghanistan. Photo: Cpl. Abigail Brown, USMC**

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compounds. But the insurgents withdrew after two short fire fights, and, with a protective Apache attack helicopter now overhead, the soldiers moved on to the compound where local Afghans said insurgents had been manufacturing IEDs.

Troops found the building had been recently abandoned but discovered a captive patrolman from the Afghan Uniform Police (AUP) who told them the insurgents planned to execute him later that day.

As the soldiers moved out, they spotted suspicious activity at another compound close by, and when they searched the buildings they discovered 30 kg (66 pounds) of opium, an AK-47 submachine gun and large sums of money in different denominations.



*Troops protect their eyes from the debris kicked up by a descending helicopter.*

*Photo: Sergeant Wes Calder RLC, Crown Copyright/MOD 2011*



*Troops from the Brigade Reconnaissance Force patrol cautiously through the northern Nahr-e Saraj district during Operation Eagle's Shadow last December.*

*Photo: Sergeant Wes Calder RLC, Crown Copyright/MOD 2011*

The BRF consists of soldiers from 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards and 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, while the Warhog Group is manned by soldiers from the Queen's Royal Hussars. 2nd Lieutenant Barnaby Smith, an intelligence officer from 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, said, "This Afghan-led operation not only recovered a member of the AUP but disrupted the insurgents in their backyard, denying them the freedom of movement they have recently enjoyed in the area where they thought they were safe."—*Courtesy MoD*



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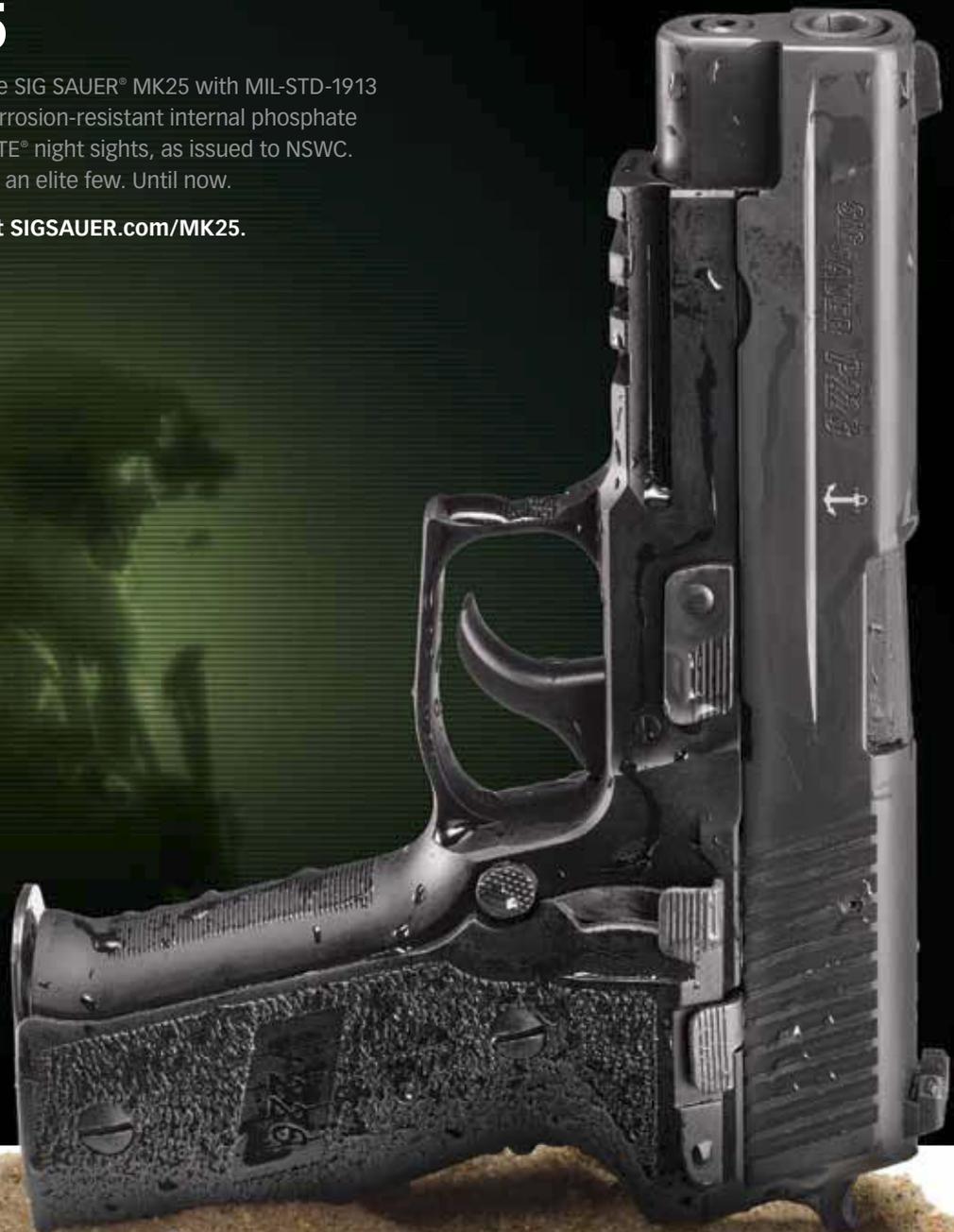
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# QUARTERMASTER

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## CLEAN GUNS MAKE HAPPY SHOOTERS

So clean 'em up and smile!

**D**uring significant slices of my life in some “interesting places,” my biggest challenge in cleaning guns was simply *having the supplies to clean 'em!* In one foreign unit I worked with, the only “solvent” available was diesel fuel, and in another, nobody wore underwear because all such garments were cut up and used for cleaning rags and patches. Now my problem (a great one to have) is *which system will I use on THIS gun? Which goops and sauces?*

With one Glock, cleaned, lubed and preserved with FrogLube, I'm kinda repeating Brian Hoffner's experiment: How long will it run without *any* further care? And I'm getting the same result: Still runnin' slick and smooth. One carbine, a SIG 556 Patrol, has known only Mil-Comm cleaners, lubes and protectants, and it obviously loves 'em. On another I use only Sentry Solutions products, and it shrugs off dust, grit and purposeful abuse. On two bolt guns I use Hoppe's BoreSnakes and their Venom cleaner and lube, with

great results—and the list goes on. Your choices are dazzling, so let's look at some winners:

If traditional rods, jags, and brushes represent “conventional” cleaning gear, J. Dewey has been producing the most unconventionally superior examples of them since 1975. Precise sizing and machining to the closest dimensions have made their tools the choice of benchrest shooters and other accuracy fanatics, like our own Big Cheese Editor Jeff John. He praises the sheer strength and wear resistance of Dewey components and the year-to-year consistency of Dewey's wide array of products. And now they're even making field-cleaning kits for us caveman-types, like their AR-15 and pistol kits. Most highly recommended are Dewey's coated non-marring rods, and their new line of “Copper Eliminator” jags, brushes and adaptors.

The recently introduced M-Pro 7 Advanced SACK—Small Arms Cleaning Kit—is outfitted specifically for 5.56mm and 7.62mm rifles and 9mm pistols. M-Pro's goal was to provide a complete containerized system for both barracks and field use. Housed in both a lockable plastic case and a MOLLE field pouch, it contains a sectioned T-handle rod plus three appropriately sized BoreSnakes, phosphor bronze and nylon bore brushes, dust and utility brushes, patches and a dozen other handy items. By the way, the new Viper BoreSnakes are advertised as “50 percent more effective”—and they *are!*

Of course it also includes M-Pro 7's



**Safariland's Kleen-Bore CableKleen Kit is a pull-through system designed for single-pass triple-action cleaning.**



**The Dunk-Kit by Cylinder & Slide offers a fast, easy way to deep-clean your handguns.**

highly-rated gun cleaning solvent and Gun Oil LPX. If you work around salt water, you should note that LPX is specifically formulated to inhibit salt corrosion, and it leaves an electrostatically dust-repelling film.

The SACK is sold with or without a Leatherman MUT, a multi-tool with weapons maintenance features like a carbon scraper, takedown punch, bolt override tool, brush and rod attachments, and screwdrivers sized for optics adjustments. Overall, the SACK is a great deal.

Safariland's new compact Kleen-Bore CableKleen Kit is a new take on gun cleaning. It's a pull-through system designed to perform a complete bore cleaning with a single pass. The tip of the flexible rod is an integrated multi-caliber patch holder, and its threaded end accepts their dual-function bore brushes. At the free end of the bore brush is another slotted patch holder. Using this setup, you can anoint the “inboard” patch with bore solvent, then the brush follows, and finally, the “end” patch can be dry or oiled—a triple-action pass.

I had my doubts, and found you need multiple passes on seriously dirty bores, but still you get a nice, clean and fast job. Usually, one triple-action pass followed by a single dry patch on the integral cable tip did the trick. The kit also contains one of the best multi-function brushes I've used, and the whole pack fits in a cargo pocket.



**J. Dewey brings precision to their Spartan, compact field cleaning kits for AR-15s and pistols.**



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There are some pretty fair—and even amazing—multi-function clean-lube-and-protect concoctions, but they'll rarely do a single job as well as a goop specifically formulated for a task like carbon removal or bearing-surface lubrication. If you're a nascent nitpicker, check out the impressive array of function-specific cleaners, lubes and coatings from KG Industries. If you haven't heard of them, it's because first, they haven't advertised in years, and second, they've been busy filling military contracts like supplying the British Royal Marines. Having just opened a new facility in Taylor, Texas, they're now taking on the civilian market with everything from their KG-1 Carbon Remover and KG-2 Bore Polish to KG-11 Moly Grease and many more. They've got light, heavy, dry film, wet film and specialized treatments for every shooting application. These guys really know their gun-goops!

Who among us has cleaned as many dirty guns as Bill (The Famous Moustache) Laughridge, master pistolsmith and head honcho of Cylinder & Slide? Now consider when an old shootin' buddy urged him to try the Dunk-Kit immersion gun cleaning system, ol' Bill was so impressed he ultimately bought the company and reformulated the solution so it's just as effective and safe for polymer-frame handguns as for all-steel pistols. *That* should tell you something!

As the name implies, you just plunk your fieldstripped filthy shooter in the soup, let it sit for 10 minutes or so, then commence swizzlin' with brushes, then pluck it out and either wipe it off or hang it to air-dry to spanky-clean condition. Dunk-Kit leaves a thin protective film of oil, so apply heavier lube or grease where needed and you're good to go!

You can purchase Dunk-Kit in several quantities, and I recommend you look at Bill's C&S Universal Dunk-Kit Travel Pack, which comes with additional goodies for on-the-go jobs plus his de-leading wool and even five shop rags—a real bargain!

FrogLube is a non-petroleum, non-toxic, biodegradable solution which not only cleans, lubricates and protects gunmetal, but it even conditions, moistens and preserves rubber, nylon, urethane and plastic parts! Invented by a former Navy SEAL officer, FrogLube actually penetrates the pores of metal surfaces to "condition" the steel. It dissolves carbon on contact and suspends other impurities like copper, lead, sand and grit.

Our pal Brian Hoffner (Hoffner's Tactical Training) torture-tested it in the dusty heat of Texas. After thousands of rounds through his Frog-Lubed Glock in all kinds of weather



**FrogLube is a surprisingly effective non-toxic, biodegradable cleaner, lubricant and protectant.**



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**KG Industries offers an incredible array of gun care products, all first-rate.**

with zero cleaning, re-lubricating—and no malfunctions at all—he became a major FrogLube distributor.

FrogLube comes as a liquid and a paste. Use the liquid where you want it to migrate, like in slide rails, and the paste where you want it to stick, like "batter and bash points." Here's a tip: Put your gun in direct sunlight and heat it up before slathering it with FrogLube. This enhances the penetrating effect. Some users "cook" metal gun parts with it in a crock-pot set on "low." And yes, you can strain dirt out of it with cheesecloth—and keep using it!

Yeah, OK, so I was late in discovering Kroil. You can stop shaking your heads and muttering, "Moron..." But maybe a few of you out there who haven't tried it yet, so I'll tell you this is the most amazingly penetrating, rust-attacking oil available; so fine it will creep into spaces as small as one millionth of an inch. Think about all the

rusted screws, hardened cruddy action parts and formerly-articulating pieces you've cursed and sweated over—or busted trying to muscle them into movement—and then get on the Kroil bandwagon!

Kroil was originally developed to loosen frozen screws, but now I'd say it's mostly used to do "deep-cleaning" on older guns like military bolt actions, especially when the job is a first cleaning since gettin' packed in grease in 1939, and as editor Jeff John uses it, along with JB Paste, to do slick, shiny clean-ups after shooting moly-coated bullets. This stuff gets under and "floats" caked carbon and other contaminants beautifully, breaking chemical bonds at the molecular level. Kroil is used by 480 of the Fortune 500 companies—and now, *me*, not that they'll notice.

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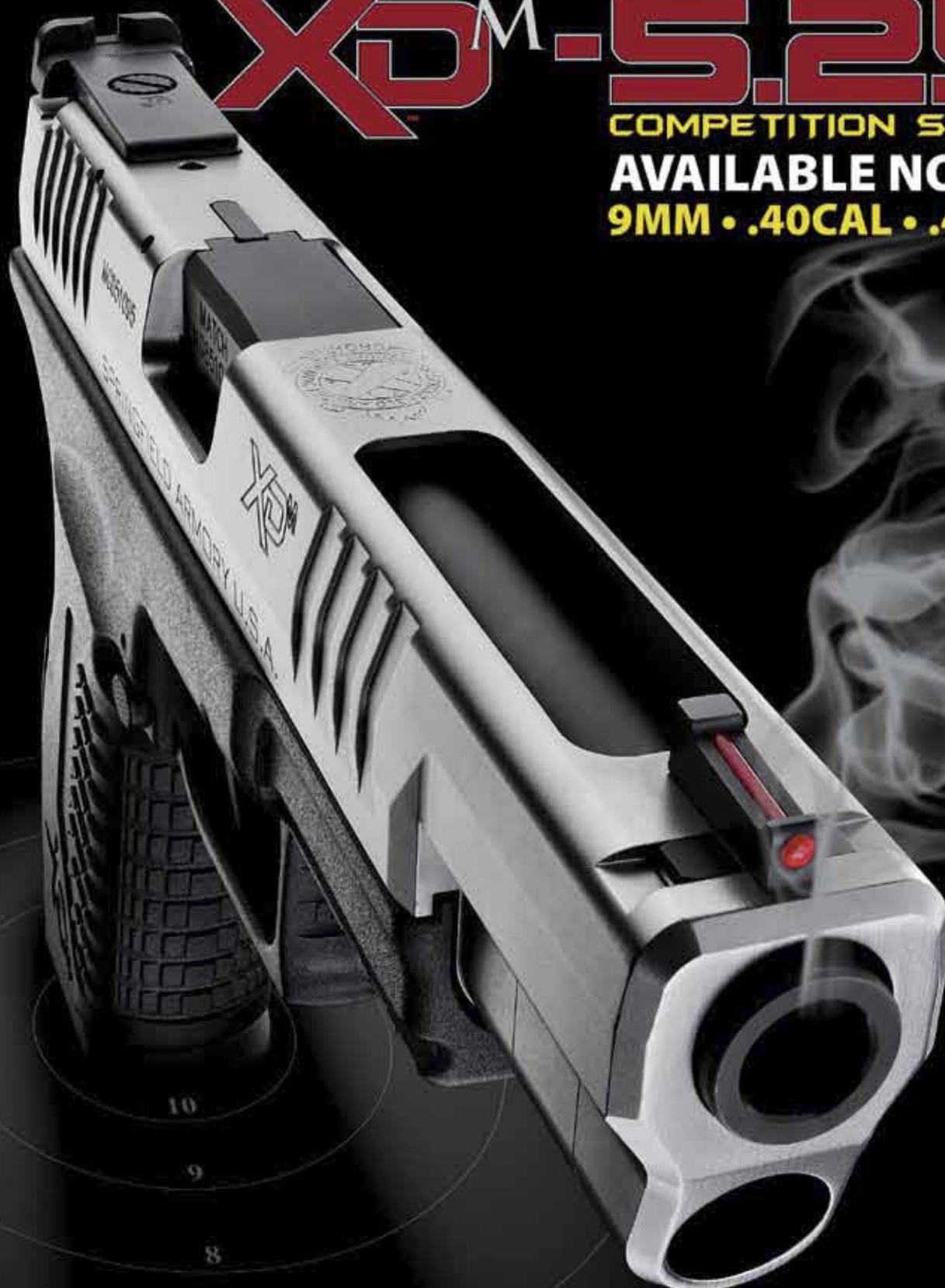
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- EW170 High Contrast.....16.00
- EW171 Dark.....30.00
- EW172 Exhibition.....35.00
- EW173 Presentation.....40.00

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- CP627 Stainless, 5/32" head.....2.35
- RD8 Rivet Drill for 5/32".....19.95
- CP669 Brass, 3/16" head.....2.35
- CP629 Stainless, 3/16" head.....2.35
- RD1 Rivet Drill for 3/16".....19.95

## PRE-SOLDERED GUARD KIT

440C Stainless Steel Blade with a pre-soldered nickel silver bolster. Kit includes blade, pins, dymondwood handle material and instructions.

### Bearcat

- 8 3/8" overall, blade 3 3/4" x 7/8", 1/8" thick.
- SS874 Blade Only.....19.95
- SS874K Bearcat Kit.....25.95
- KT104 Leather Sheath.....14.50

### Nevada Drop Point

- 8" overall, blade 3 3/8" x 1", .144" thick.
- SS650 Blade Only.....19.95
- SS650K Nevada Drop Point Kit.....25.95
- KT104 Leather Sheath.....14.50

## WEEKEND PROJECTS

440C Stainless Steel Blade Kit includes blade, pins, dymondwood handle material and instructions.

### Renaissance Dagger

- 6 1/4" overall, blade 3 3/4", 1/8" thick.
- SS167 Blade Only.....12.95
- SS167K Renaissance Kit.....14.95

### Cobra

- 7 3/8" overall, blade 3 3/4", 1/8" thick.
- SS166 Blade Only.....14.95
- SS166K Cobra Kit.....16.95

### Sportsman

- 7 3/8" overall, blade 3 1/2", 1/8" thick.
- SS164 Blade Only.....14.95
- SS164K Sportsman Kit.....16.95

### Ringtail

- 7" overall, blade 2 5/8", 3/32" thick.
- SS873 Blade Only.....14.95
- SS873K Kit(w/brass bolster).....24.95

## LOCKING LINER KITS

### The 605 Kits

- 8A stainless sub zero quenched. Overall length 5 3/4", 3 3/8" closed, cutting edge 2 3/8", 3/32" thick.
- KV605MS 605 Mini Serrated.....34.95
- KV605M 605 Mini Standard.....39.95
- 605 Orig. overall 7-7/8", 4-1/2" closed, 3 1/4" blade.
- KV605 605 Original.....39.95

### Black Widow

- Black Anodized Stainless overall is 7 5/8", 4 1/2" closed, cutting edge 3 1/8". Is supplied with preshaped, drilled Quincewood handle material. Use a torx wrench T10 and a T6.
- SS652 Black Widow.....19.95

### Hi Tech Folder

- 8A stainless steel blade with satin finish. It is supplied with preshaped, drilled Quincewood handle material. Length 7-3/4" opened, 4-5/8" closed, the cutting edge 3-1/8". Use torx wrench T10 and T6.
- SS3520 Hi Tech Fighter.....19.95

### Fallow Kit

- High Carbon Stainless blade, NS bolster, belt clip. Supplied with preshaped, drilled Quincewood handle material. Overall length 7 13/16" 4-1/2" closed. 3-1/4" cutting edge. Use Torx T10 & T6.
- SS656 Fallow Locking Liner.....19.95

## JEWEL OPENERS

For the 605 folder, Fallow, Black Widow and Hi-Tech Folder as well as other large folders using ambidextrous thumb openers with 1/8" or 5/32" holes, with supplied adapter. 7/32" dia. x.200" long each side.

- 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12
- Choose appropriate color code and add it to the end of the part number below.
- TB81-- Style 825 Opener.....19.95

## VG10 Folder Kits

- Each kit includes all components except handle material. Easy instructions for the beginner. VG10 Super Sharp Mirror Polished Laminated Blade. Overall length opened is 6 5/8", 3 7/8" closed, cutting edge is 2 1/2".
- VG101 Blue Titanium Liner.....69.95
- VG102 Silver Titanium Liner.....64.95
- VG103 Stainless Liner.....59.95

## Pre-Shaped Handle for VG10

Stabilized exhibition quality preshaped handle for the VG10 folder kits above.

- VG519 Sibl California Buckeye.....11.95
- VG570 Sibl Desert Ironwood.....11.95
- VG10 LITTLE BIGHORN
- VG-10 33 layer Damascus, super sharp high colbalt steel blade. Length 5 1/8", 3" closed, cutting edge is 2".
- SS723 VG10 Little Bighorn.....59.95

## JANTZ USA BLADES

Made with pride in Jantz's Davis Oklahoma manufacturing facility, using Crucible steels. Each blade is double tempered & cryo treated for maximum wear resistance and edge holding capability. Brass bolsters available. Available in peened or satin finishes. Call if you do not see the part number for the finish you are wanting.

- Pattern 21
- 7 7/8" overall, 3 1/8" blade, 5/32" thickness
- J2108 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95
- J2127 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95
- K214 Stainless Bolster.....6.95
- KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 22
- 8 3/8" overall, 3 1/2" blade, 5/32" thickness
- J2207 440C Steel (Peened).....29.95
- J2228 D2 Steel (Satin).....29.95
- K214 Stainless Bolster.....6.95
- KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 23
- 9 9/16" overall, 4 5/8" blade, 5/32" thickness
- J2308 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95
- J2327 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95
- K214 Stainless Bolster.....6.95
- KT111 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 25
- 9" overall, 4 3/16" blade, 5/32" thickness
- J2507 440C Steel (Peened).....29.95
- J2528 D2 Steel (Satin).....29.95
- K214 Stainless Bolster.....6.95
- KT111 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 31
- 7 5/8" overall, 3" blade, 5/32" thickness
- J3127 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95
- J3148 154CM (Satin).....34.95
- K314 Stainless Bolster.....6.95
- KT104 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 36 (SS573 Silver Moose)
- 7 5/8" overall, 3" blade, 1/8" thickness
- J3627 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95
- J3608 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95
- K364 Stainless Bolster.....6.95
- KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 37 (SS473 Silver Fox)
- 6 5/8" overall, 2 5/8" blade, 1/8" thickness
- J3727 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95
- J3708 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95
- K374 Stainless Bolster.....6.95
- KT116 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 38
- 7" overall, 2 1/2" blade, 5/32" thickness
- J3828 D2 Steel (Satin).....29.95
- J3837 CPMS 30V (Peened).....39.95
- K384 Stainless Bolster.....6.95
- KT104 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 39
- 6 1/2" overall, 2 1/2" blade, 1/8" thickness
- J3907 440C Steel (Peened).....29.95
- J3928 D2 Steel (Satin).....29.95
- KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50
- Pattern 40
- 7 3/16" overall, 3 1/4" blade, 1/8" thickness
- J4008 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95
- J4027 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95
- KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50

## LETTER OPENER

Available with or without a lightly etched Oak leaf design. 6" length, 4 1/2" blade, 7/16" wide, .046" thick.

### The Frisco



- SS204 Frisco w/ Engraving.....7.95
- SS205 Frisco without Engraving.....7.95

### The Burlington

This new opener is easy to customize. Nickel Silver bolsters are pre-pinned and ready to finish, the mirror finished stainless blade is 9-1/4" overall, 5-1/2" below the bolster. Kit includes blade, handle material, and pins.

- SS203 Letter Opener.....9.95
- SS203K Letter Opener Kit.....12.95

### The Pacific

The mirror finished stainless blade has 3/32" holes and is 8-1/2" overall, 4-1/4" blade. Kit includes blade, handle material, and pins.

- SS201 Letter Opener.....8.95
- SS201K Letter Opener Kit.....10.95

## KEEN EDGE BLADES

Light, flexible, well balanced. 8A blades, satin finished, flat ground to a super sharp edge that stays sharp. 4 styles to meet all your kitchen & camp needs.

### Chef's Blade

- 12-1/2" overall, 8-3/4" blade, .078 thickness
- SS107 Chef's Blade.....16.95

### Cook's Blade

- 10-1/2" overall, 6" blade, .078 thickness
- SS106 Cook's Blade.....14.95

### Steak Blade

- 7-1/2" overall, 3-1/2" blade, .058 thickness
- SS108 Steak Blade.....9.95

### Santoku Blade

- 10-3/4" overall, 6" blade, .070 thickness
- SS110 Santoku Blade.....17.95

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The Vulture-II 3-Day Assault Pack has 2810 cubic inches of carry capacity, in three compartments equipped with YKK #10 zippers and paracord knot pulls. Comfortable back padding, supple curvaceous straps supported by 1" nylon webbing, a chest strap and a waist strap (padded and concealable) help distribute the weight evenly throughout the upper body. This bag has plenty of expansion points on its exterior, allowing users to attach other Maxpedition pouches and accessories. Maxpedition, (310) 768-5950, [www.gunsmagazine.com/maxpedition](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/maxpedition)



## REMOTE TAPE SWITCH

**ELZETTA DESIGN, LLC**

This proprietary Tape Switch provides a fully molded pressure pad (not mere shrink wrap), an integrated zip-tie slot for easy attachment (slot may be clipped off if not needed) and an innovative fail-safe constant-on feature. By rotating the Tape Switch Tailcap fully clockwise, the light will remain on without the pressure pad being depressed. This hands-free, constant-on feature works independently from the pressure pad and remains fully functional even if the Remote Tape Switch cable is severed. Elzetta Design, LLC, (859) 707-7471, [www.gunsmagazine.com/elzetta-design](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/elzetta-design)



## C6 LENS AND SCREEN CLEANERS

**CARSON**

All of the innovative C6 cleaning tools feature a specially formulated C6 dry-cleaning compound that effectively, quickly and safely cleans screens and lenses. The dry compound bonds with the oils left behind by your skin, then simply wipes away, leaving a sparkling clean surface. Seven models, with varying size and shape cleaning pads, clean everything from binoculars and scopes, to cameras, iPods and iPads. Carson Optical, (800) 967-8427, [www.gunsmagazine.com/carson-optical](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/carson-optical)



## DONSON GRIPS

**DONSON PRODUCTS**

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## THE DROP BOX

**DEAD RINGER HUNTING**

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## 1911 SOLO-VAULT

**SHOTLOCK**

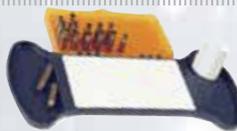
ShotLock, the maker of the only Solo-Vault for shotguns, is introducing a Solo-Vault made specifically for full-framed handguns. Designed to hold a single large-framed handgun, the ShotLock 1911 Solo-Vault is perfectly sized to house most full-framed, home-defense handguns. The Solo-Vault can be mounted on a wall or any stable surface, either vertically or horizontally. ShotLock, (800) 967-8107, [www.gunsmagazine.com/shotlock](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/shotlock)



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**SMART RELOADER**

Lubricate your cases before resizing or forming. Coat the pad with your lubricant and roll the case lightly across it, so the correct amount of lubricant will be transferred to the case. The pad



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## ZEV .22 GLOCK CONVERSION KIT

**ZEV TECHNOLOGIES, INC**

The ZEV .22 Glock Conversion Kit beats the astronomical cost of ammunition. Their conversion kit instantly allows economical



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ForceField Weapon Conditioner cleans, lubricates and protects. It contains no petroleum products to gum up or break down in extreme temperatures, and leaves no greasy film to attract dirt. FFWC protects against rust, corrosion and even fingerprints. Designed for all metals, all composites, fully-automatics and family heirlooms. ForceField Pro, (913) 645-3722, [www.gunsmagazine.com/forcefield](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/forcefield)



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**HERITAGE MANUFACTURING**

Introducing the .45LC/.410, an ultimate self-defense tool. Whether you need protection against an intruder or a snake, the new Heritage .45LC/.410 is up to the task. Like all their other Rough Riders, this bad boy is an American-made, single-action revolver, which holds six rounds and accepts both .410 bore 2-1/2" shot shells and .45LC all-in-1 cylinder. Available in black satin finish with oversized rosewood grips and red ramp, fiber-optic front sight. Retail for: \$449.99. Heritage Manufacturing, (305) 685-5966, [www.gunsmagazine.com/heritagemfg-2](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/heritagemfg-2)



## CONQUEST SUPERFORMANCE WITH RAPID-Z

**CARL ZEISS OPTICAL**

The Conquest Superformance with Rapid-Z combines the legendary engineering and optical performance of Zeiss Conquest riflescopes and the proven accuracy and dependability of Hornady Superformance ammunition into one accurate and easy-to-use package. A shooter just needs to match a select Hornady Superformance caliber and bullet weight with one of the six select Zeiss Conquest Superformance riflescopes. Then simply mount and zero the rifle for 200 yards, place the scope on maximum power and start hitting targets with Hornady Superformance ammunition time after time. Carl Zeiss Optics, (800) 441-3005, [www.gunsmagazine.com/carlzeissoptical](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/carlzeissoptical)



## STAR-LIGHT FOLDER

**WILSON COMBAT**

Designed by noted tactical knifemaker Allen Elishewitz and made in the USA of premium materials by Hogue, the new Star-Light is the toughest lightweight tactical folder on the market today. The Star-Light tactical drop-point blade is ground from premium 154CM stainless steel, cryogenically tempered and noted for its toughness. The edge is honed to a polished, razor-like finish and rides on a hardened, oversize pivot for glassy-smooth operation. Wilson Combat, (800) 955-4856, [www.gunsmagazine.com/wilson-combat](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/wilson-combat)



## FD308

**F&D DEFENSE**

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F&D's bolt and extensions are manufactured in serialized matching pairs to unparalleled standards. Both are crafted from the highest grade materials per MIL-S-7393 and post-processed to be rivaled in precision and durability by no other semi-auto action in the world. F&D Defense, (512) 745-6482, [www.gunsmagazine.com/f&d-defense](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/f&d-defense)

If you would like your product featured in GUNS Magazine's New Products, Contact: Jason Moreau (866) 903-1199.

For more New Products visit us online at [www.gunsmagazine.com](http://www.gunsmagazine.com)

## ETERNA RIFLE SCOPES

**BRUNTON HUNTING**

The Eterna BDC Reticle lets you zero the point of impact at one distance by using Bullet Drop Compensating glass-etched reticle. It uses a series of aiming points to allow for trajectory and improve accuracy at longer ranges. Having fully coated optics provides a crisp image at any distance. It is available in 4.5-14x50, 3-9x40 and 6.5-20x50. Brunton Hunting, (309) 944-5341, [www.gunsmagazine.com/brunton-hunting](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/brunton-hunting)



## SNIPEX

**XADO CHEMICAL GROUP**

New, easy-to-use SnipeX is a gel-revitalizant for rifled barrels, featuring the patented revitalization technology developed by the XADO Chemical Group. SnipeX restores and repairs rifled barrels of used firearms, and it even upgrades characteristics of new firearms to make them a higher-class weapon. The result is drastically improved grouping, increased roundness of shots and killing power. XADO Chemical Group, (847) 991-1140, [www.gunsmagazine.com/xado-chemical-group](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/xado-chemical-group)



## REC7

**BARRETT ARMS**

The REC7 rifle platform comes standard with a 17-4 stainless steel piston system, 2-position, forward-venting gas plug, chrome-lined gas block, Barrett enhanced bolt, A2 flash hider (excluding those with Target Crown Barrels), 6-position MOE stock, and a 30-round magazine. Configurations with A.R.M.S. S.I.R. System handguard come with three configurable rail pieces and a detachable, configurable sling mount. Barrett Arms, (615) 896-2938, [www.gunsmagazine.com/barrett-arms](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/barrett-arms)



# ENTER TO WIN!

GUNS MAGAZINE'S GUN OF THE MONTH GIVEAWAY

## HIS & HERS KAHR ARMS PM9S AND MORE!

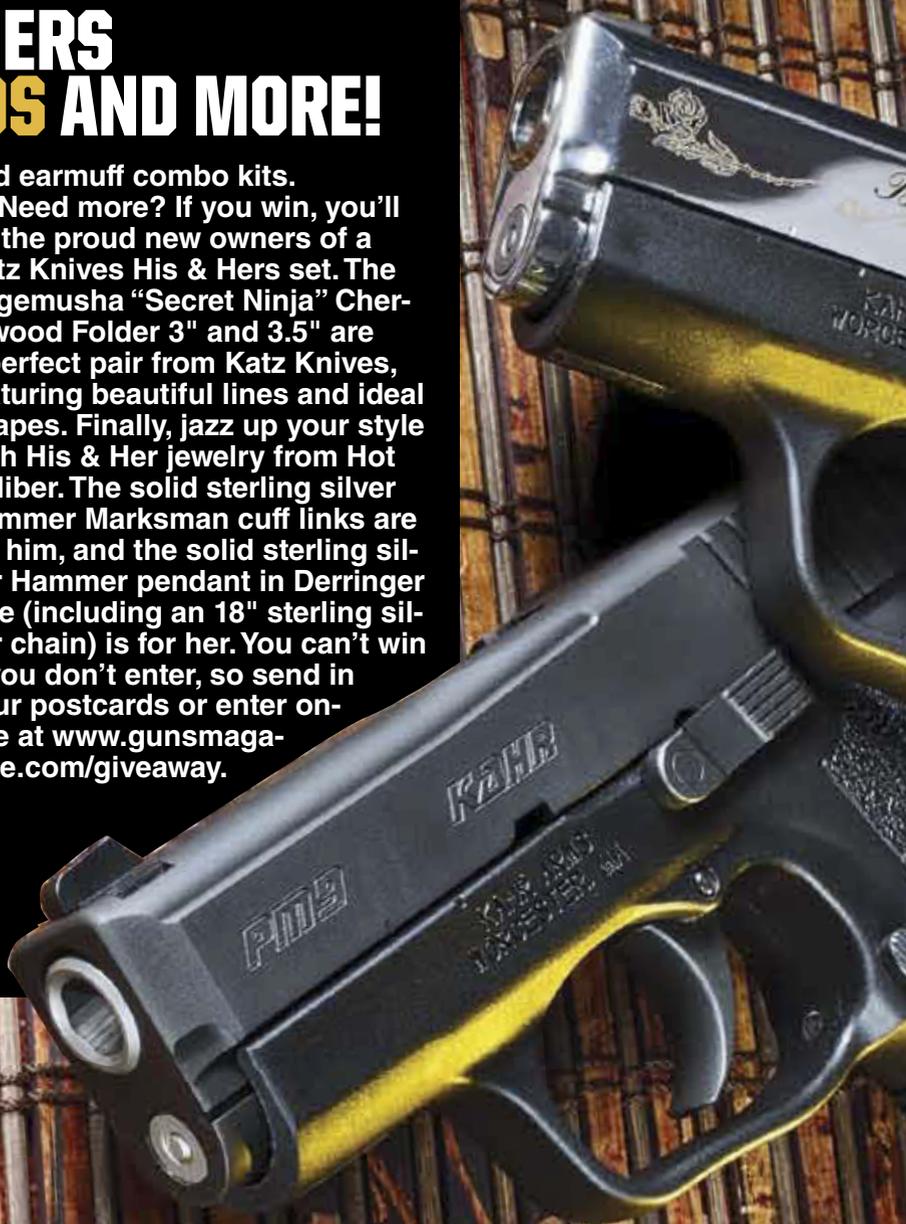
**A** couple that shoots together stays together! You can win this free His & Hers prize package! The Black Rose for her has identical features to the PM9 Black Diamond for him, one of which is a locked-breech system where the backwards force is absorbed by the slide rather than the frame. The pistol for her features "Black Rose Edition PM9 Kahr" engraved on the left side of the slide and a rose on the right, and the one for him features a black diamond coated slide.

Carry your new guns in custom-made His & Hers BH21 Ultra Compact Belt Slides from Black Hills Leather. With minimal bulk, this holster provides maximum stability and quick access—fully beautiful hand carve!

And when you're shooting together, protect your eyes and ears when wearing Howard Leight His & Hers shooting safety eyewear

and earmuff combo kits.

Need more? If you win, you'll be the proud new owners of a Katz Knives His & Hers set. The Kagemusha "Secret Ninja" Cherrywood Folder 3" and 3.5" are a perfect pair from Katz Knives, featuring beautiful lines and ideal shapes. Finally, jazz up your style with His & Her jewelry from Hot Caliber. The solid sterling silver Hammer Marksman cuff links are for him, and the solid sterling silver Hammer pendant in Derringer size (including an 18" sterling silver chain) is for her. You can't win if you don't enter, so send in your postcards or enter online at [www.gunsmagazine.com/giveaway](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/giveaway).



### EARMUFF/EYEWEAR COMBO KIT HOWARD LEIGHT BY HONEYWELL

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VALUE: \$29.99/each



### HAMMER MARKSMAN CUFF LINKS AND HAMMER PENDANT

#### HOT CALIBER

1223 WILSHIRE BLVD. #500  
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(310) 929-5241

[WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/HOT-CALIBER](http://WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/HOT-CALIBER)

VALUE: \$150 (cuff links), \$200 (pendant)

**VALUE OF ENTIRE PACKAGE: \$2,853.38**

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PHOTOS: JOSEPH R. NOVELOZO

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# ODD ANGRY SHOT

STORY: John Connor

## WAR OF 1812 BI-CENTENNIAL

Little known facts about our least known war.

**1812:** Britain was nearly bankrupt. A decade of Napoleonic wars still raged. Luddite saboteurs destroyed British mills and factories. Food riots, housing riots, civil rights riots exploded almost daily. Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* fueled the flames of revolt against monarchical rule. King George III went loony-tunes and got stuffed into the Royal Rubber Room. Prime Minister Spencer Perceval was murdered—in Parliament!

In this issue, you'll find Big Cheese Editor Jeff John's feature on the 1803 Harper's Ferry rifle and the role it played in a decisive sea battle of the War of 1812. I thought I'd chip in about three little known aspects of what is perhaps our nation's least known war....

Most British historians agree that 1812 was the worst year in their country's history, even more destructive than the Black Plague of 1349. It comprised 12 months of riots, revolts, crime and food shortages unequalled before or since. In fact, 1812 was less than an hour old when crowds celebrating the New Year were attacked by huge criminal gangs committing unchecked murders and robberies.

Following America's lead, rebellion against hereditary authority was flaring up everywhere. Possession of a copy of Paine's *Rights of Man* was a crime, and prima facie evidence of treason. Men were hung for it, but paupers pooled their pennies to purchase copies. Public officials, including many magistrates, were assassinated.

Desertion was rampant in His Majesty's army and navy. America traded with both England and France, these factors combining to prompt a British blockade of US ports and impressment of seamen from American vessels. Some seamen were indeed British deserters, but most were American citizens. Making matters worse,

Britain had invested so much political capital in painting American colonists as worthless rabble during the Revolution, and then being soundly beaten by them, that certain elements in the



**Old Hickory became president and got a statue. Mike Severs became a frontier legend, and got an unmarked grave.**

British hierarchy yearned to give that "rabble" a comeuppance. The last thing in the world a strained and failing Britain needed was another war with the US, but in their festering frustration and desperation, they brought it on themselves.

The Brits scored several early victories and succeeded in burning Washington, but their exhilaration was short lived. The "colonial rabble" was aroused...

### A Whuppin' With A Hickory Stick

When British invasion forces threatened the Gulf Coast and the vital port of New Orleans, President Madison sent the right man for the job: Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson. Tough as the wood he was nicknamed for, Andy also had an old score to settle with the redcoats.

Jackson's Scots-Irish parents fled from English oppression in Ireland in 1765, settling in the wild Waxhaws region along the border of North and South Carolina. His father was killed in an accident only 2 years later at age 29, 3 weeks before Andrew was born. His two older brothers were just 3 and 4 years old. Times were hard, and the boys grew up lean—and fast.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, 13-year-old Andrew joined the militia as a courier. His eldest brother Hugh died at the battle of Stono Ferry, and Andy and his brother Robert were captured by the British. Both almost starved to death as prisoners of war. An English officer, a Major Coffin, apparently tried to turn Andy into his personal servant. When Andrew angrily refused to clean the major's boots, Coffin slashed him on the head and left hand with his saber. The scars and the memories were permanent.

Andrew and Robert both got smallpox. Robert died. Andy's mother volunteered to treat American cholera victims on prisoner ships in Charleston harbor. She contracted the disease and died. Andrew was an orphan at 14, his family wiped out, directly or indirectly, by the British.

Jackson distinguished himself not only as a fierce fighter on the frontier, but as a man who could forge alliances between disparate and sometimes mutually hostile forces, leading them against common enemies. He was perhaps the only American commander who could have defended New Orleans.

Jackson's "army" consisted of a small number of regular troops bolstered by freed blacks, stranded seamen, Choctaw Indians and a mob of pirates commanded by the notorious

Jean Lafitte. Together they fended off the Brits in several small engagements, buying time for Jackson's "ace in the hole" to arrive: 2,300 Kentucky riflemen. One got there 3 hours before the others.

"I never in my life seen a Kentuckian without a gun, a pack of cards and a jug of whiskey."—Andrew Jackson

Michael Severs had run barefoot to New Orleans from Kentucky—to win a bet with another militiaman. They were all mounted on horses. Already a frontier legend ranking with Daniel Boone and James Harrod, his wilderness skills and accuracy with a long rifle were the makings of myth, but backed up by witnesses. Many more would witness them in the battle for New Orleans.

As the engagement developed, General Edward Pakenham, commander of British forces, perceived the weak point to be the American left, occupied by the Tennessee and Kentucky militias. Perhaps this was based on the ragged buckskins and homespun garments of the rabble. If so, more attention should have been paid to the condition of their rifles before ordering a frontal attack on them. The redcoats were decimated.

Major James Hunt of Franklin, Ky., wrote in his diary that he watched through his spyglass as Mike Severs, with two companions loading for him, rapidly fired 26 shots. Hunt saw 26 redcoats fall. As the British attack faltered, Hunt saw General Pakenham, surrounded by staff officers, ride up to about 200 yards away, safely out of accurate musket range. Hunt asked Severs if he could hit a man at that distance. Severs replied he could, for a gallon of good whiskey for himself, a half barrel for his friends, and five dollars cash money, not paper. Hunt readily agreed.

Severs laid five loaded rifles across a cotton bale, tested the wind with a wet finger, and commenced fire. Through his spyglass, Hunt saw General Pakenham jerk violently and fall backward from his horse. He died minutes later and the battle was over. The British ceded the field and withdrew. They had lost 291 killed and 1,262 wounded. American losses were 13 dead and 39 wounded. Unknown to both sides, the Treaty of Ghent had ended the war weeks before.

Mike Severs took his winnings and ran back to Kentucky, beating his comrades home to Muhlenburg County. He declined all honors and when he died in 1850, Mike was buried in an unmarked grave.

Few riflemen have known Severs' name—and now, a few more do. Connor *OUT*

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I really didn't have anything specific to be concerned about; it was just the thought of him going off to school on his own. When my daughter and her husband and the three grandkids moved from New York in 1995, they spent the first year living with us.

Brian was 2 years old at the time so I had plenty of work to do. We still talk about the frog in his bed. One night he would not go to bed because he said a frog was in the bed. I had two choices, force him to go to bed or do something so he would not be afraid. I grabbed a shoebox, the flashlight, and the two of us snuck into the bedroom. I shined a flashlight under the covers, hollered I've got it, put a stone in the box, shook the box like something was jumping inside, and the two of us took that "frog" outside and dumped it in the dumpster. Everything was now OK and Brian was asleep in a few minutes. He was in junior high before I ever told him the true story of the frog and we still laugh about it. Perhaps someday he will use something like this with his own son.

I spent many years, time very well spent, going to his T-ball, basketball, football, baseball and rugby games. The latter has to be one of the toughest games played. I've never understood the rules, but I was amazed at the boys' determination and toughness playing the game. Brian graduated from high school this past spring. My plan was for him to go to school locally at Boise State, which as schools go is an excellent school, or at least for the first year while doing a little more growing up. He could live on campus and yet still be close to home. That first year away can be extremely hard on a kid. He had other plans. He had picked a school in New York and now I was really concerned.

### The Struggle

My son-in-law is originally from there and Brian went back for the summer to work with the son and nephew of one of my son-in-law's friends. All of them are 18 and going to college this fall. Brian, Tom and Nick rented a house at Martha's Vineyard, spent just under two months working at landscaping, and Brian was able to bank \$3,500 for school. One particularly hot day, found them deciding to go down to the beach and relax after work. They had just about decided to leave and then one of them said let's toss the Frisbee a little more. As they were doing this they looked out in the water and thought they saw something way out. What they saw was two young men struggling for their lives.

Now here is where the ability it to think really enters. They did not get all excited and jump in the water. Instead, they ran 100 yards back and grabbed a rescue surfboard. With two of them, Brian and Tom, paddling on the front and Nick kicking on the back they headed out to the two men who were treading water. When they reached them the one fellow said, "Thank you for coming to get us." One of the boys said, "Don't thank us yet—look how far out here we are." They were 500 yards from shore. However, they got the two men on the board and headed back. Simply put those three young men saved two fellows from drowning.

### Riptide!

The two fellows had been walking on a sand bar. Suddenly the sandbar disappeared and they literally dropped off the face of the earth. Martha's Vineyard is known for riptides and when the two lost the security of their sandbar the riptide caught them and they could not get back. Fortunately for both of them, Tom had spent many summers at Martha's Vineyard and knew what the conditions were like. "I have been swimming at this beach for my whole life. We've been caught in these currents before and gotten out because we knew what we were doing."

When the five men arrived back on shore one of the witnesses said, "They were just totally exhausted—all five of them. The three teens didn't have much to say. They didn't look for glory or anything. I just thought that was remarkable. I think it's great to know there are young people out there who have these qualities. It's refreshing."

My son-in-law, who is Italian, is always kidded by me simply because everybody in his family and all his friends have last names ending in vowels. These three boys, my grandson Brian Panzella, Tom Angelilli and Nick Gallo represent the best qualities in teenage young men. They are true heroes and will remember this the rest of their lives. Can there be any better feeling than saving the life of someone else? And now, sadly, for the rest of the story. One week later another man drowned under the same conditions. They now have a sign up on the beach warning people and the rescue boards are much closer to shore.

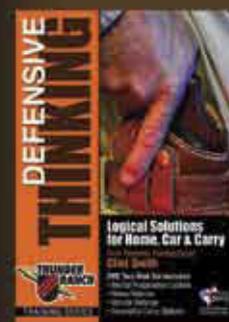
My grandson is still going to school in New York this fall and is home for a couple weeks. He seems a lot more grown up, he dropped about 10 pounds while working, his body is tough as nails, and I'm not so much concerned about him anymore. He'll be OK.

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# CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

## HEROES

**They're closer than we think.**

**L**ife is strange with so many things seeming backwards. When we are young we have the energy to really enjoy life but instead have to spend most of our time working; when we get old enough to retire we now have money and time but the energy disappeared somewhere along the line. Raising kids also seems backwards. In the case of Diamond Dot and myself we were barely more than kids ourselves by the time we had three of our own. With no experience, very little wisdom, and certainly no expendable income we set about raising those three kids. We did our best and they all turned out fine, for which we feel very blessed, however there are many things that just didn't get accomplished.

Thankfully, most of us get a second chance. We practice on our own kids, and then by the time the grandkids arrive we may actually know something. I have certainly worked harder with my eight grandkids than I ever did with my own kids probably because I had not only experience but also more

time available. It seemed like the early years were mostly taken up with going to school and working, usually more than one job. By the time the grandkids arrived I was smarter, or at least wiser, and my life was certainly less hectic. I could concentrate on things like teaching all the grandkids to

shoot and more importantly to think. I was able to do this with my own kids but on a much smaller scale. With three kids it was tough to find time; with eight grandkids time was not at such a premium.

### Thinking

Teaching them to shoot, and especially safe handling of firearms, was extremely important. However, thinking was even more important. So how do you teach someone to think? I'm certainly no expert, however I reasoned with myself that although I could not teach them to think I could place them in a position where they had to think.

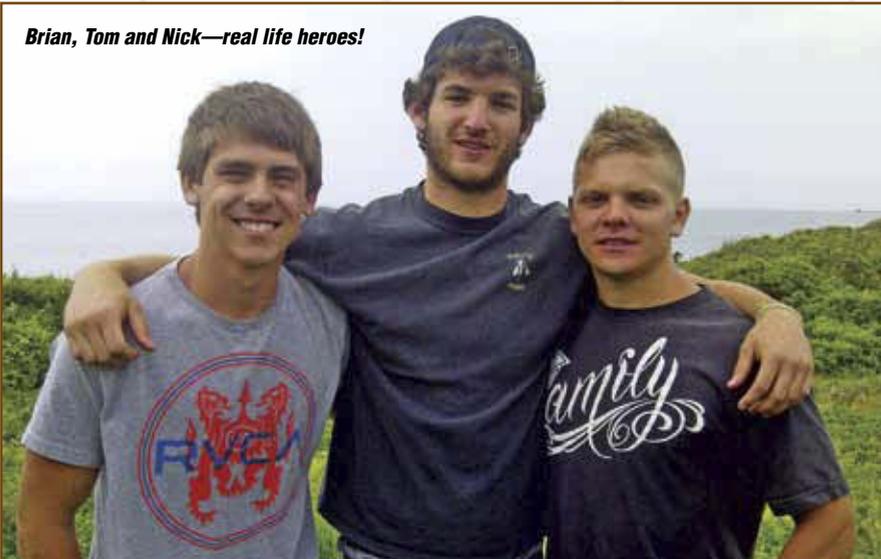
I especially worked hard with the three grandsons on this. It's a simple process. I would tell them to do something but not tell them how to do it. Almost immediately they would say but how, and then they would catch themselves and try to figure it out. At least nine times out of 10 they were successful.

One of our early sessions saw us using the grocery store as a teaching tool. I did the same thing with my own kids long before they could even read. Whether kids or grandkids we would go to a large grocery store and I would tell them what they needed to find without telling them where it was. Even though they could not read they learned pretty quickly where different things were in the store and to recognize them by their labels. It was not unusual for us to be in a quiet grocery store and from several aisles over I would hear a grandson yell out: "Hey Papa! I found the peanut butter." Success had been achieved.

So where is all this leading? My two youngest grandkids are entering college this year. The granddaughter lives in Washington State, however the grandson lives here locally and he is the one I was concerned about.

*continued on page 81*

**Brian, Tom and Nick—real life heroes!**



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