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GUNS Magazine (ISSN 1044-6257) is published monthly by Publishers' Development Corporation, 12345 World Trade Drive, San Diego, CA 92128. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Diego, CA and at additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS: One year (12) issues \$24.95. Single monthly copies, \$4.95. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Eight weeks notice required on all changes. Send old address as well as new. SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS: For immediate action write GUNS Magazine, Attention: Circulation Dept., 12345 World Trade Drive, San Diego, CA 92128 or call (858) 605-0250. CONTRIBUTORS submitting manuscripts, photographs or drawings do so at their own risk. Material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. PAYMENT will be made at rates current at time of publication and will cover reproduction in any or all GUNS Magazine editions. ADVERTISING RATES furnished on request. Reproduction or use of any portion of this magazine in any manner, without written permission is prohibited. All rights reserved. Title to this publication passes to subscriber only on delivery to his address. The opinions and recommendations expressed by individual authors within this magazine are not necessarily those of Publishers' Development Corporation. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to GUNS Magazine®, ATTN: Circulation Dept., 12345 World Trade Drive, San Diego, CA 92128. Copyright © 2012 by Publishers' Development Corporation.

CROSSFIRE

LETTERS TO GUNS

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New 8mm Bullets

In "Montana Musings" in the October issue, Duke mentions two 8x57mm loads using Hornady's new 196-grain hollowpoint boattail bullet. I have Hornady's latest reloading manual and nowhere does it show a .323" 196-grain bullet. I called Hornady and they don't know of such a bullet either. What's up?

Frank Amitrano
Thornton, Colo.

I can't answer for the Hornady phone call, but upon reading your letter, I found the bullet, (Stock No. 3237) listed on the Hornady website (www.hornady.com) and loaded ammo available in the Vintage Match line (No. 82298). As for the company's reloading manual, perhaps they went to press before the 196-grain bullet was offered.—Jeff John

Not Tex

First, let me say that I sincerely enjoy your publication. Second, in the August 2012 issue, I found a mistake in the article written by John Taffin concerning the "Tribute To Two Texas Troubadours, Happy Trails Children's Foundation Silver Screen Legend XV." About the picture shown on page 89 of the pair of Colt Single Action Revolvers and two legendary cowboy singers, one is Eddie Dean but the picture, labeled as being Tex Ritter, is in fact Guy Madison. I'm sure it's not John's fault. The information was probably provided by the Happy Trails Foundation.

Bruce Burgess
Elizabethtown, Ky.

Yes, the info and photos came from Happy Trails. Funny thing is, neither John nor I could find a good enough picture of Tex Ritter on the Internet or in our libraries to verify the photo. By the way, it's not too late to order tickets for the gun & rig drawing held

Dec. 15, 2012. Tickets are \$10 each or 11 for \$100. Contact the Happy Trails Children's Foundation, Silver Screen Legend XV, 10755 Apple Valley Road, Apple Valley, CA 92308, (760) 240-3330, www.happytrails.org. If we sell a bunch more tickets to help abused children because of the mistake, it's one mistake I won't mind having made.—Jeff John

News

I read your magazine cover to cover. Quite a good read! I may be stepping on some toes here, for this I shall apologize in advance. I don't understand the inclusion of military propaganda in the news section.

The usual line is "We support the troops." The unspoken truth would be, "We support this war."

I've served in the Military and seen combat. This, in my view gives me the liberty to say, can that crap! It is without question, unrelated to the nature of your magazine.

If I cared to involve myself with this garbage I'd reenlist. Just my 2¢.

I am not going to threaten your financial empire by withdrawing my \$4.95. I'll continue to buy and read GUNS. I will simply toss the news section in the trash.

Jeff Trochelman
via e-mail

Connor

In the August issue Mr. Connor tells us we can use dryer sheets to cut down on walnut dust in our brass tumblers. Thanks.

Another handloading use for dryer sheets is to rub plastic funnels and other plastic tools with them. This eliminates the tendency to develop static electrical charges, and powder will flow without sticking. I always use a new sheet for this, not one that has been through the dryer.

Loren Bengtson
Rising Sun, Ind.



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PRODUCTION 858.605.0216

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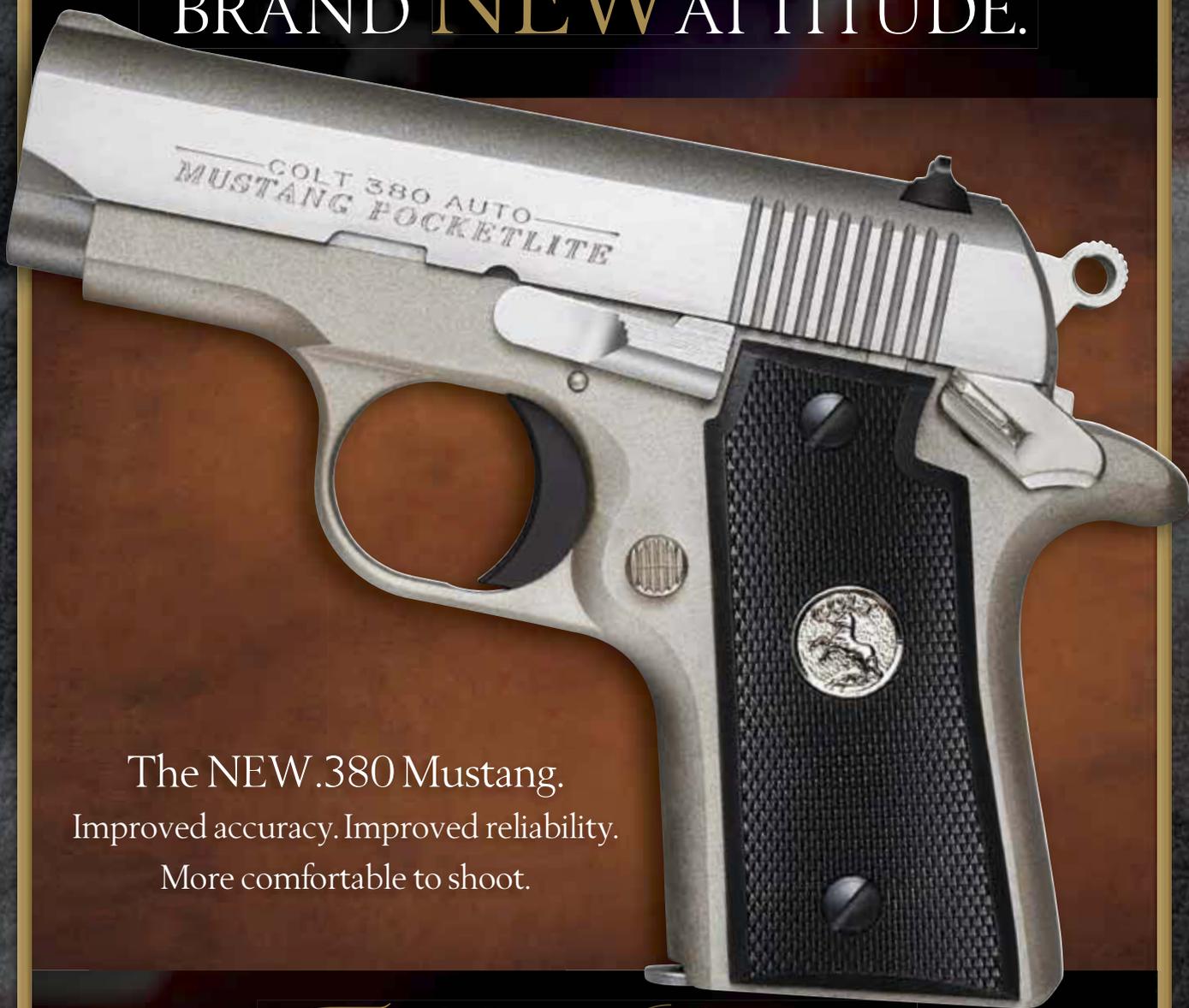
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HANDGUNS

STORY: Massad Ayoob

HAMMER OR... “-LESS?” Debate rages over which is better: “hammerless” or “thumb-cocking” S&W J-frame models.

Along about 1950, S&W introduced what would become the most popular concealment revolver in the world in the J-frame .38 Special. The original Chiefs Special had a conventional external hammer and could be fired double or single action. In 1952, firearms authority Rex Applegate convinced S&W to make the same gun with the sleek internal hammer design of the old top-break New Departure Safety Hammerless revolver of 1887. Since it was introduced in the year Smith & Wesson was celebrating its 100th anniversary format, this “hammerless Chief Special” was dubbed the Centennial. In 1955 came a third variation, the Bodyguard. This was the company’s answer to the removable hammer shroud that had grown in popularity since their archrival Colt introduced it for their small-frame snubs in 1950. On the Bodyguard, the shroud was integral to the frame and looked sleeker, but still left a nub of hammer spur exposed for single-action cocking.



Grant Cunningham with the J-frame he feels is the smoothest, the Centennial.

We all have our preferences. For my needs, I’m inclined toward the Centennial hammerless. Here’s why.

The “hammerless” model’s most obvious advantage is its snag-free profile. The great police weapons authority of the past, Paul B. Weston, described the conventional hammer spur as found on the Chief Special as a “fish-hook” that tended to snag on clothing and stall a fast draw. Even so, bobbing the Chief’s hammer can eliminate the snags, or choose the Bodyguard which has a smooth-drawing shape fans affectionately call “the hump-back.”

One thing the Centennial offers that its siblings can’t is a higher grasp. The shape of its frame allows the shooter’s hand to get all the way up that high “horn” of its backstrap. This puts the bore axis proportionally lower to the wrist than either of the other styles, and affords significant leverage to the shooter. Muzzle rise is less, allowing a faster rate of accurate rapid fire. This is a very significant advantage to the Centennial, and is the main reason I so often carry one while my Chiefs and my Bodyguard lie neglected in the gun safe.

The rationale of the dual single-action/double-action capability is the option of cocking the hammer for an easy single-action trigger pull, “for a precision shot.” The thing



Note the higher hold afforded by Centennial (right), which lowers the bore axis more than the Chief (left).

of it is, “precision shots” are rarely taken with these pocket-sized guns, which are generally seen as reactive close-quarters weapons. Double action is faster. If you do need a precision shot, a slightly slower roll of the double-action trigger will get you there. Double action also gives a shorter hammer fall, improving lock time, and probably more important, doesn’t require you to break your hold and thumb your hammer back.

There’s also the matter of cases where the cocked revolver went off unintentionally, with fatal results (New York vs. Frank Magliato, for example) or when it was falsely alleged that this had happened, to create an element of negligence after a justified shooting (Florida vs. Luis Alvarez, to name one). Both avenues of legal attack against you are road blocked with a gun that can *only* be fired double action. And that’s before we get into de-cocking a revolver that has been cocked by sweaty, trembling human hands in a high-stress situation.

My friend Grant Cunningham, master wheelgun-smith and author of



Centennial (Model 642, left) can only be fired double action, while Chief Special (Model 60, right) can be cocked to fire single action if desired.

the excellent *Gun Digest Book of the Revolver*, writes the following at his blog at www.grantcunningham.com: “... the Centennial models simply have better actions! The enclosed hammer Centennial models have slightly different sear geometry than do the exposed hammer models, which gives them a pull that is more even—more linear—than the models with hammer spurs. For the savvy shooter it’s a noticeable difference, making the Centennial a bit easier to shoot well.”

Grant continues, “The Centennials also have one less part than the other models: since they have no exposed hammer, they don’t have (nor do they need) the hammer-block safety common to all other ‘J’ frames. That part, which is quite long and rides in a close-fitting slot machined into the sideplate, is difficult to make perfectly smooth. Even in the best-case scenario, it will always add just a bit of friction to the action. Not having the part to begin with gives the Centennial a ‘leg up’ in action feel. (In fact, at one point in time a common part of an ‘action job’ was to remove this safety, in the same way that some ‘gunsmiths’ would remove the firing-pin block on a Colt Series 80 auto pistol. Today we know better!) So, if your criterion is action quality, the choice is clear: the enclosed hammer Centennial series is your best bet!”

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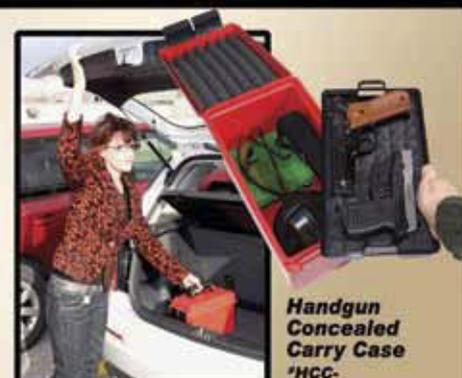
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HANDLOADING

STORY: John Barsness



The rifle shot in the new-powder tests was a limited-run Sako A7 made in 1988.

THE .280 REMINGTON

Another cartridge in the “too good to die” class.

Some cartridges never seem to get a break. Remington introduced the .280 in 1957, but handicapped it by limiting the maximum average pressure to 50,000 CUP, rather than the 52,000 to 54,000 CUP of other modern cartridges. Supposedly this limitation was due to the .280 being specifically designed for Remington’s Model 740 semi-auto and 760 pump-action rifles, though it also simultaneously appeared in their bolt-action Model 725 rifle. Theoretically semi-autos and pumps function more reliably at slightly lower pressures, since their extraction isn’t as powerful as a bolt action’s.

So why was the 740 also chambered for the .308 Winchester, with its 52,000 CUP limit? And the 760 had been available for several years in .270 Winchester at 54,000 CUP.

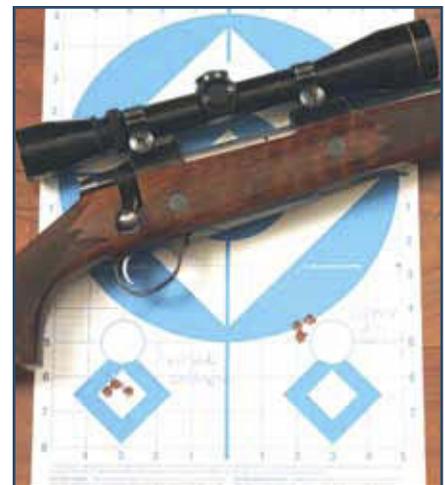
Even when limited to relatively wimpy pressures, the .280 had several theoretical advantages over its competition. It was basically the old 7mm-06 wildcat, with the shoulder of the case moved forward slightly to prevent chambering a .280 round in a .270 rifle. However, 7mm bullets originated with the 7x57 Mauser in 1892, the very early days of smokeless powder. Back then most new military rifles had relatively fast rifling twists to stabilize the heavy

roundnose bullets then in vogue. The 7x57’s original ammunition featured a 173-grain roundnose in a rifling twist of 1:220mm, about 1:8-2/3". Ever since, most 7mm barrels (including those of the .280) have featured a rifling twist of around 1:9", sufficient to stabilize even very long 175- or 180-grain boattail spitzers. The three original factory loads used 125-, 150- and 165-grain bullets, and handloaders could easily approximate 130-grain .270 or 180-grain .30-06 loads, making the .280 quite versatile.

Unfortunately, the 1950s were also the beginning of a long period of magnum mania. Roy Weatherby

started the trend, and eventually the larger companies had to offer their own magnums. In 1959 Winchester introduced three belted magnums, the .264, .338 and .458, all short enough to fit inside the magazines of the cheap 98 Mauser and 1903 Springfield “war surplus” rifles then flooding the market. Remington had to come up with an answer, and in 1962 introduced the 7mm Remington Magnum in a more sedately Weatherby-styled upgrade of their 725/722/721 bolt actions called the Model 700.

The people who developed the 7mm Remington Magnum knew it would cut heavily into sales of the .280, but the company really had no choice. The new



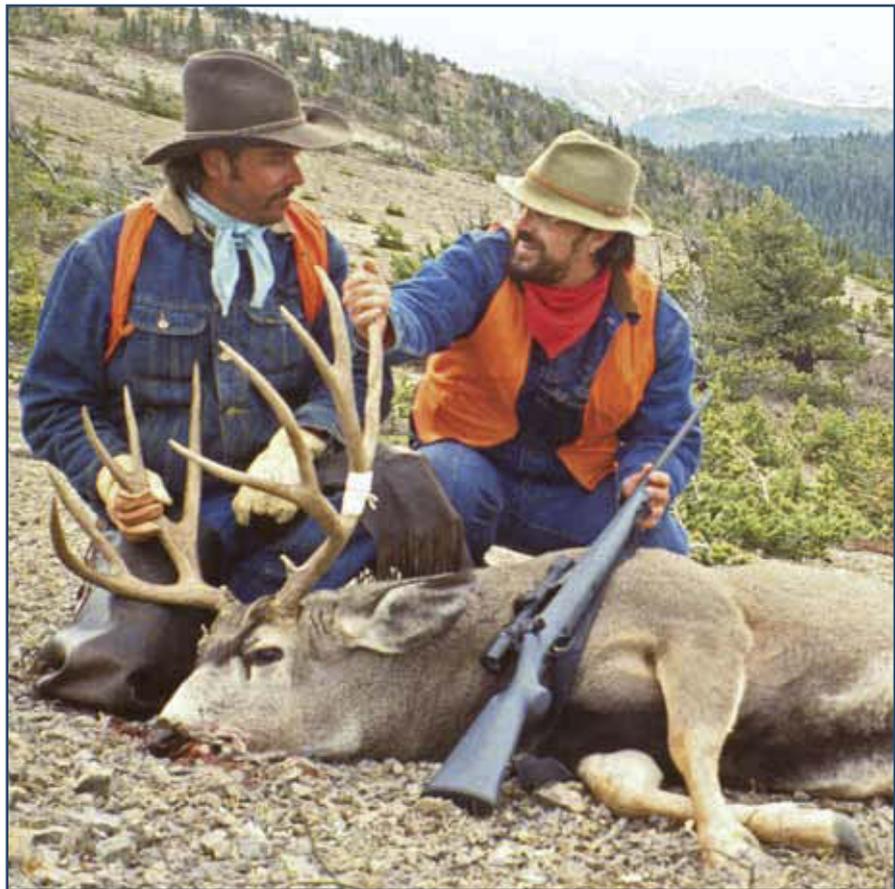
The Sako shot most loads pretty well, but was super accurate with loads it liked.

cartridge turned out to be the hottest-selling American magnum, and the .280 went into a tailspin.

In 1979 Remington tried to revive the .280 by changing the name to the 7mm Remington Express and offering slightly juiced-up ammo. This strategy had worked previously when they changed the name of the .244 to the 6mm Remington, but some shooters tried to use 7mm Express ammo in 7mm Magnum rifles, and soon Remington changed the name back to the .280.

All of this should have finished off the .280, but it was too good a cartridge to die. Though its advantages over the .270 are more theoretical than substantial, they're still advantages. Plus, real rifle loonies often prefer something a little different, just to set them apart from the common man. Today the .280 is not only offered in several factory rifles but is a popular choice in custom rifles.

My first .280 was a custom lightweight built by the late Dave Gentry on a Remington 700 action, and I used it as my primary North American big-game rifle for much of the 1990s. Eventually, somebody else wanted it more than I did, but a couple of other .280s appeared over the next dozen years, one a Winchester Model



John has had a soft spot for the .280 ever since he used a custom Dave Gentry rifle to take this huge mule deer 20 years ago, while hunting with the late Richard Jackson.

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.280 REMINGTON HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

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GENTRY CUSTOM RIFLE, 23" BARREL				
HORNADY 139 SPIRE POINT	H4831	60.0	3,111	.87
NOSLER 150 PARTITION	H4831	58.5	2,955	1.03
NOSLER 160 PARTITION	H4831	57.0	2,927	1.30
HORNADY 175 SPIRE POINT	H4831	55.0	2,691	.69
NOSLER 175 PARTITION	RL-22	55.0	2,766	1.22
WINCHESTER MODEL 70 CLASSIC FEATHERWEIGHT, 22" BARREL				
NOSLER 140 SOLID BASE	H4831	61.0	2,999	1.06
NOSLER 140 PARTITION	RL-19	58.0	2,975	.85
CT 149 FAIL SAFE	RL-19	57.0	2,901	1.13
SAKO A7, 24.44" BARREL				
NOSLER 120 BALLISTIC TIP	RL-19	63.0	3,301	.77
BARNES 120 TIPPED TSX	Superformance	60.0	3,393	.69
BARNES 140 TSX	RL-19	57.0	3,149	2.27
SIERRA 140 PROHUNTER	Hunter	54.0	2,959	1.63
SPEER 145 GRAND SLAM	H4831	58.0	3,101	1.56
NOSLER 150 BALLISTIC TIP	IMR7828SSC	59.0	3,005	1.54
HORNADY 154 SPIRE POINT	MRP	58.0	3,103	1.03
NORMA 156 ORYX	4000MR	55.0	2,956	1.76
SIERRA 160 GAMEKING	Magpro	61.5	2,994	.75
BERGER 168 HUNTING VLD	MRP2	61.0	2,924	1.12
REMINGTON 175 CORE-LOKT	Magpro	58.5	2,773	.97

70 Classic Featherweight and the other my present .280, a Sako A7 (also known as the L61R) purchased off an Internet site. When it showed up the serial number was a puzzler, including the letters GO. Through the Sako collector's association I eventually found out it was one of a special run of 500 commissioned by GO Hardware in Billings, Mont., in 1988, which probably explains the fancy walnut.

Due to the .280's extreme similarity to the .270, we'd expect the same powders to work well. That's exactly what I found in the Gentry rifle. Hodgdon H4831 and Alliant Reloder 22 worked so well that I rarely used any other powders in loading bullets from 139 to 175 grains. The Model 70 preferred Alliant Reloder 19, another excellent .270 powder.

With the Sako I tried a couple of loads with H4831 and RL-19, but mostly tried newer powders after doing a search of available data. Mostly I picked powders producing the highest velocities, but some manuals indicate which powders shot most accurately in the test barrel, so a few of those were tried too. The rifle has a barrel just under 24-1/2" long, while the Gentry had a 23" barrel and the Winchester a 22". The longer barrel produced some pretty impressive muzzle velocities.

The brass used was some 7mm Remington Express obtained in a lucky trade a few weeks after buying the rifle. I

swapped some bullets for four boxes of unfired cases, adding a historical touch to the range sessions. The primers were Winchester Large Rifle.

In the field I've found the .280 does indeed work about like the .270, but then I've never taken any big game with either cartridge beyond about 400 yards, where the higher ballistic coefficient of some 7mm bullets really starts to take effect. I've also never taken any game with 175-grain bullets, and in fact have only run into one guy who loaded and hunted with 175s.

A lot of .280 fans talk about the wider range of bullet weights in 7mm compared to .270, but apparently very few actually take advantage of it. Most use bullets in the 140- to 160-grain class (including me), though these days a few hunters handload 120-grain bullets like the Nosler Ballistic Tip and Barnes Triple Shock. The 120 Ballistic Tip has a very heavy jacket, thanks to its use as a target bullet. When it first appeared quite a few silhouette shooters tried it, due to its high ballistic coefficient and accuracy, but found it splattered on the steel targets instead of knocking them over. Nosler made the jacket much heavier, coincidentally turning it into a good big game bullet.

For anybody looking for an all-around big-game cartridge combining the best ballistics of the .270 Winchester and .30-06 Springfield, the .280 Remington is a fine choice. **GUNS**

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OPTICS

STORY: Jacob Gottfredson

PRIDE-FOWLER'S CQB RIFLESCOPES

Making hits quickly at many ranges.

The hills are alive with close quarter battle scopes. A trip on the Internet reveals we are drowning in them. It is interesting to note the many differences. While most do the same thing, the people writing the specs manage to make them slightly different, particularly the reticle. Are they useful? I tend to think those from Pride-Fowler Industries (PFI) are.

For a particular and varied purpose, I have several impossible demands in a scope. It must have a reflex sighting system that allows

shots at very close range. It must have the ability to sight and hit targets from 0 to 600 yards. It must have the ability to range. It must have a means



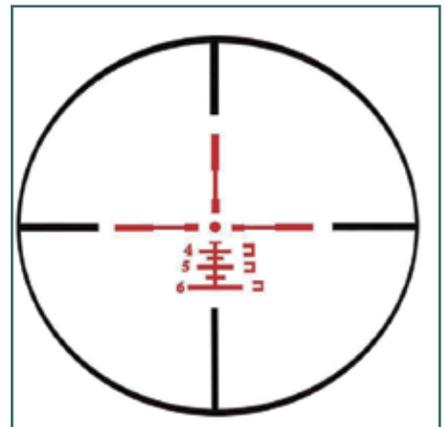
A steel LaRue target (above) was used and shooting accomplished from the bench with a benchrest rear bag and Harris bipod. Testing was done in 100-yard increments to 600 yards. The literature states that the hashmarks are positioned for the .223, .308 and other of similar ballistic path. But it can be used effectively for any bullet and ballistic path with the help of ballistic software. The tests (below) were conducted with 77-grain Black Hills Military and 50-grain A-Max rounds. The little scope is well suited to this .223 AR. The optics presented a great image and the RR-CQLR-1 was fast and effective. At extremely close range the hashmark system becomes an effective reflex sight when turned to 1X. The scope is mounted on a LaRue upper and DPMS lower.



of adjustment for wind. It must have illumination. And it must have the ability to do all this without using the elevation and windage turrets. PFI offers exactly that in their RR-CQLR-1 1-4x24mm.

How PFI managed to do all that is an American exercise in innovation. The more I use the scope, the more I am impressed by their thinking. They started with their now well-known Rapid Ranging System, which is currently being used by Zeiss as well. Lines, which I commonly call hashmarks or bars, are spaced below the main, horizontal crosshair. They are progressive subtention lines spaced in a pattern to accommodate the ballistic path of the .223, .308 and other cartridges matching those ballistics at specific velocity ranges. That is a marketing strategy I have some difficulty with. While it appeals to many, it may be a turn off to anyone using a different ballistic path and velocity. The truth is: the system will work just fine with any ballistic path at any velocity. I don't have the real estate in this article to explain that, but trust me.

The Rapid Reticle System solves the problem of shots at targets from 50 to 600 yards. But now



Shown is the reticle on 4X and illuminated. Primary ranging is centered on a 9" circle in several different ways. The hashmarks are spread for a 10 mph wind at each range to 600 yards. Shorter distances are ranged using the center dot and the distance between the edges of the main horizontal crosshair. The brackets are used for more distant targets that are 9" in diameter.

F

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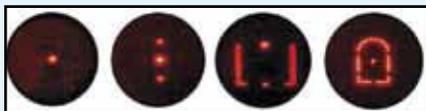
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FEELS RIGHT

THE ACTION-4 QUAD RETICLE REFLEX SIGHT

There are those who will only be working at close range. Typically they want a red dot or reflex sight. While PFI has those, the quad is something you might want to take a look at. Although not as small as some of the popular red dots on the market, it provides some innovative features they don't and is housed in a strong and capable body. Like most, it has dials for elevation and windage. On top, it has a dial that allows illumination to be set at 11 different levels, under which is housed the battery. On the left side of the body is another dial, and this where it gets interesting.

The dial sets four different red dot configurations: 1. The normal, single red dot; 2. A 3-dot configuration; 3. A box, much like a tombstone with a dot in the middle; 4. Part of a rectangle with dots at the top and bottom.

Zeroing the first, single dot will zero the center dot on No. 2 and No. 3. Reticle No. 4 can be used to aim at the neck area using beanbags or impact rounds. If the scope is zeroed at 15 yards using the top dot of reticle No. 2,



The Action-4 Quad can access any of the four reticles shown. The dot, 3 dot, box and tombstone are used for different situations. When correctly sighted in, the dots represent different zero ranges, or you can use the brackets to deliver effective shot placement.



The Action-4 Quad reflex sight comes with rings, sunshade tube extensions, and sun filter. The lens protectors are not shown. A battery and spare were included. A durable and flexible reflex sight with four reticle choices available by turning the dial on the left. It has both elevation and windage dials. The dial on top houses the battery and regulates illumination brightness on 11 levels.

ACTION-4 QUAD REFLEX SIGHT

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P.O. BOX 4301
SAN DIMAS, CA 91773
(909) 599-0928
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/
PRIDE-FOWLER-INDUSTRIES-INC

FEATURES: Nitrogen filled, shock, fog, and waterproof, multicoated lenses, four reticle LED projection system, 1 MOA elevation and windage dials, two sunshade tube extensions, sun filter, lens covers, two 33mm aluminum rings and wrench, **POWER:** 2032 3v Lithium battery: 8 days full power, 1 year intermittent, **WEIGHT:** 8 ounces, **LENGTH:** 4-5/8", **TEMPERATURE RANGE:** 158 to -4 F, **PRICE:** \$449.99

then it will be zeroed at 25 yards using the center dot and at 45 yards using the bottom dot. If the top dot of reticle No. 2 is zeroed, then the top dot of reticle No. 4 can be used for direct fire. Reticle 4 is 18" wide at 25 yards.

Why Four Reticles?

My first reaction was why would anyone need more than a red dot to hit targets from 15 to 45 yards? Just put the dot on the target and fire. There is a lot of truth to that but let me give you an example to show it is not quite that simple. A police officer cornered a bad guy with a hostage at an inch or so over 11'. The perp was using the hostage to cover the better part of his face. The officer had a rifle with a scope. The scope was above the barrel about 2". At close range the bullet leaves the barrel far from the line of sight. Let's look at the path of a .223 bullet in such a scenario (see chart). Standard environmental conditions, BC of .243, 3,200 fps. Zeroed at 15 yards.

So it is true that in many instances and for large targets, just put the dot on the target and fire. But when you drop below 15 yards and less, things get strange very quickly. The change from 3 yards to 30 yards requires almost a 57-MOA elevation change. From just 9 yards to 24 yards, it is a change of 13 MOA. The flexibility of the Quad-4 can be rigged to make these shots using the multiple dots available. By the way, the officer made the shot successfully, or so I was told.

GUN

RR-CQLR-1, 1-4X24MM

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MAGNIFICATION: 1X-4X, **TUBE:** 30mm, 6061 Al, matte black, **RETICLE:** First Focal Plane Rapid Ranging, **ADJUSTMENTS:** 1/4", **ILLUMINATION POWER:** 2032 Lithium 3v, **BATTERY LIFE:** 9 days full, 1 year intermittent, **WEIGHT:** 17.29 ounces, **LENGTH:** 10.24", **EYE RELIEF:** 3.81" (1X), 3.74" (4X), **PRICE:** \$1,299.99

to solve the problem of ranging. That is accomplished in two ways, although I think they only advertise one. The one shown in detail in the owner's manual uses the center dot, the reticle distance from the center dot, and the brackets, all using a 9"-diameter-size target. The other would be to figure out the exact subtention of the hashmarks and use them to range. For example, suppose the target is 24" tall. Suppose further that the third hashmark subtends 5" at 100 yards. If the target fits inside the main crosshair and that third hashmark the range would be $24 \div 5 = 4.8 \times 100 = 480$ yards.

With that solved, we turn to firing in twilight or near darkness. Turning the knob on the left gives you 10 levels of brightness. But that solves another problem as well, that of very close quarter shots, made possible by placing the reticle in the first focal plane. As you know, subtention between the lines is then proportional to the range at all powers. This makes ranging the same at any distance but also solves the other problem of close shots. That is, when turned to 1X, and with illumination on, it acts as a close quarter reflex sight.

Wind is handled by spreading the hashmarks on the vertical crosshair such that they represent a 10 mph crosswind at each range in increments of 100 yards to 600 yards. All that in a short, compact scope with good optics. But they threw in a bonus. No more having to find a wrench or a screwdriver to loosen the turret heads and return them to zero. Just lift the head, turn to zero, and push them back down until they lock.

They want something for both close range and medium range, but in a compact package primarily to mount on an AR. The PFI RR CQLR-1 fits that bill.

Image quality is good in both scopes. Resolution is excellent, contrast excellent, and I could not detect any aberrations. Color balance is very good with no bleeding or fringing. Lenses are made by Light

Range yards:	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
Path MOA:	50.7	19	8.4	3.1	0	-2.1	-3.5	-4.6	-5.5	-6.1



scope's primary purpose is centered on the use of the hashmarks, I turned to long range, chose the appropriate hashmark, and started pulling the trigger. The satisfying sound of a bullet hitting steel rebounded to my ear with each shot.

I wrote previously about the RR900. I will have to repeat here what I said there: It is a real advantage to have a reticle built specifically for your cartridge. In this case it is for the .308 in 150-, 168- and 175- grain Sierra MatchKings from a 26" barrel in the 2,600 to 2,800 fps velocity range or any bullet of equal ballistics. This is also predicated on standard conditions at sea level. Put the 600-yard dot on the 600-yard target and voilà! Problematically, not everyone lives at sea level or has a 26" barrel and might not even like shooting 150-, 168- or 175-grain bullets. The result is that the 600-yard dot might not hit the 600-yard bull. But don't worry, you can use any cartridge, bullet, velocity, and ballistic coefficient, conditions you desire and make the reticle work perfectly with the use of any modern ballistic software.

The PFI RR-CQLR-1 is a top quality scope with great glass and very useful elevation and windage dials, holdover bars, illumination, and an innovative zero set.

GUNS

The RR-CQLR-1 offers great flexibility, providing both close quarter and mid-range to 600-yard effective reticle use. The reticle is in the first focal plane. When turned to 1X and the illumination turned on, it acts like a reflex sight. When on 4X, the hashmarks are effective to 600 yards and can be used for ranging as well. The dial on the left houses the battery and allows 10 settings of illumination.

Optical Works, Ltd. of Japan, one of the best lens makers in the world. The reticle is very sharp once the diopter has been adjusted.

I mounted the RR-CQLR-1 on a LaRue upper and DPMS lower and

sighted it in at 100 yards. Lifting and zeroing the dial was quick and easy. This scope allows you to either dial up to distance and right or left for windage or use the reticle to both range and for holdover and windage. Since the

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GUNSMITHING

STORY: Hamilton S. Bowen

RECOIL PADS

Installing one is similar to skinning a cat and this is one more way.

One of the most oft-requested tasks of gunsmiths is the installation of recoil pads. While there are as many ways to install recoil pads as there are gunsmiths, I am, nevertheless, going to throw in my 2¢ worth, thanks to an epiphany occurring whilst motoring down the highway, doing gunsmithing problems in my head. Unfortunately, fitting recoil pads is an equipment-rich enterprise and not something done easily out of your back pocket. The usual stuff first, all old hat to professional gunsmiths. As with most information in the world, you will find any of a number of perfectly good descriptions of this work on the Internet.

Most typical applications require shortening the butt stock, which is the trickiest part of the operation. First, check the pitch of the stock, defined as the angle of butt to line-of-sight. Easiest way is to put the butt flat on the floor with the gun butted up to a wall. The distance of the muzzle to the wall usually describes pitch. Obviously, shorter butts and barrels will give a different number. Main thing is to

maintain positive pitch, which, if extreme, would let the gun slip up and over your shoulder. Negative pitch would let it slip down. For most jobs, start with a cut parallel to the existing butt but 1/8" or so short of the final cut. Check pitch and adjust accordingly with the final cut.

Actual cutting depends on your circumstances. Faster and finer the saw, the better, else you chip the wood. My saw, a Diston framing saw, left over from teenage summer jobs, is neither so I tape the butt on the cut line and cut only to within 1/8" or 1/4" of the final cut line and taking great care. Before doing the final grind, I like to drill out the old screw holes an inch deep or so and plug with a hardwood dowel retained by Elmer's wood glue. Then, I grind it to length on a disc grinder. At this point, try to make a vertical line with a pencil or scribe along the centerline of the butt as close as you can manage by eyeball.

Once the butt is trued up, grind flat the back of the pad (where it mates to the wood), taking care to remove just enough material to get the pad flat all over. Then, poke the screws in from the groundside of the pad until you see a little dimple in the business side. With a sharp, greased, oiled X-Acto knife, or similar, make a slit about 3/8" to 1/2" long on the vertical line of the pad. Now, lay the pad against the buttstock

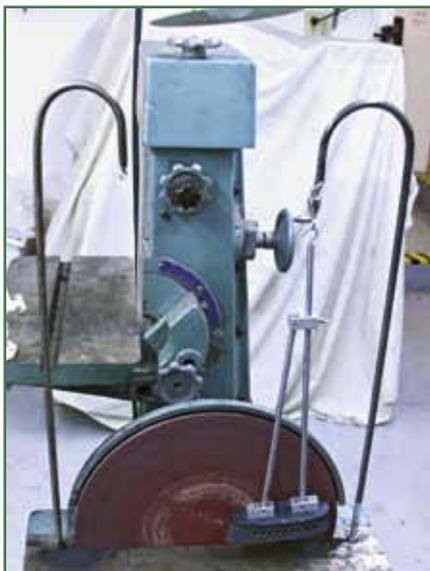


These simple tools start the ball rolling on a recoil pad installation.

centering side-to-side as best you can without cocking the pad off to one side or the other. Be sure to position the pad with enough material at the bottom to retain the lower line of the stock through the thickness of the pad. With the upper screw (oiled) run in from the back, tap it with a hammer. Check the location of the dimple on the butt—should be pretty close to the centerline. If so, measure the screw hole spacing on the pad and transfer it to the butt using the dimple as the starting. Carefully drill the screw holes with a drill sized to the minor diameter of your screws.

Once I have the pad bolted down tight, I retape the stock with masking tape and very carefully cut a line around the pad with the X-Acto knife and I do mean cut. I want this line deep enough to hold some white-colored compound, whether chalk, zinc oxide, typewriter whiteout or what have you. Even in the nuclear glow of my shop light, I want a crisp line to follow when grinding to size.

Everybody wants perfect work and rightly so but, what distinguishes the men from the boys, is not doing perfect work but doing perfect work very quickly. After trying every known recoil pad holding fixture ever made, we finally discovered the B&R fitting jig sold by Brownells. It solved almost all of the usual problems of smoothly manipulating the pad against the grinder. Even so, any time you are pushing the pad against the grinding disc rather than the grinding disc pulling on the pad, there is a risk of chatter to the cut in the form of little facets or flats on the smaller



Faithful Dayton disc grinder with both B&R fixtures deployed with a pad. Messieurs B and R must be a clever lot.



Weary old family heirloom Savage shotgun has been put back into service with a new pad and a coat of varnish.



Scribing a sharp line, once the pad is fitted and bolted in place, marks the net line where material will be removed.



Not a pretty line, but it will give you a fighting chance of seeing what you are doing.

arcs of the pad. But, with one fixture and a 1-way disc, this would always be problem. Then the little light in the ole noodle glimmered a bit and a solution glowed. Why not use two fixtures and run the disc both ways? Laid in another B&R fixture and mounted it on the other size of the grinder table. Friend Michael Carver, local wizard electrician, rigged up a reversing switch. Now, by grinding one side and end of the pad on one fixture, I can reverse the motor, hang the pad from the other fixture to tackle the diametric opposite sides and arcs with the pad pulling against the wheel at all times on all points for the smoothest possible finish. I use a 120- or 150-grit disc and finish by hand with 220- and 400-grit paper. With a little experience, it won't be hard to perfect the technique. For those of us who install just a few pads a year, this is a down and dirty way to get respectable results with minimal trial and terror.

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MONTANA MUSINGS

STORY: Mike "Duke" Venturino
PHOTOS: Yvonne Venturino

MY LAST FULL AUTO The Japanese Type 99 Light Machine Gun.

After a 6-month wait for the government paperwork to clear, the newest addition to my World War II collection arrived yesterday. It was both a happy and a sad occasion. Happy needs no explanation, but it was sad because I think I've bought my last WWII full-auto. It's not that I'm retiring or about to kick the bucket. It's more like I'm out of options.

My current nine full-autos by far don't represent the total variety of WWII full-size and submachine guns. What they do represent are pretty much the maximum that I'll be able to afford in this lifetime.

For instance, a genuine WWII-era Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) Model 1918A2 that can be legally owned by an individual such as myself usually sells in excess of \$20,000. A German MG42 (nicknamed Hitler's Buzz Saw) would set me back about \$10,000 more than the BAR. My newest acquisition still cost a considerable sum by my standards but it was a fraction of the mentioned prices.

Why? Because it is a Japanese Type 99 7.7mm and for some reason Japanese WWII weapons are held in far less esteem by collectors of such

things. Such is a simple truth but perhaps an error because my Type 99 shows exemplary craftsmanship. It is also in much nicer condition than many WWII full-autos I've seen or even bought with higher price tags.

Here's some background. Essentially, WWII full-autos can be divided into three basic categories: heavy machine guns, light machine guns, and submachine guns. The general differences are the first variety requires a crew to transport and serve it. One soldier usually carries the second type, but others are needed to carry ammunition, spare parts, and take over if the primary gunner is put out of action. Both light and heavy machine guns fire full-size rifle cartridges. Submachine guns by definition fire pistol cartridges and are one soldier's



The Type 99's sights are offset to the left because the magazine inserts in the top center of the action.

personal weapon. (Germany's MP44 is an exception in that MP stands for "machine pistol" but its cartridge is definitely not a pistol round.)

My Type 99 is a light machine gun: Japan's answer to America's BAR. It fires full-auto only, is to be supported by a folding bipod and aimed from the soldier's shoulder. (Except when held by a sling over the gunner's shoulder and fired from the waist in what was termed "marching fire.") Its standard



Duke's Japanese Type 99 7.7x58mm light machine gun shown for comparison with an Ohio Ordnance Works Model 1918A3 BAR.

7.7x58mm Japanese “ball” load carried a 184-grain bullet at approximately 2,400 fps. By comparison, the US M2 “ball” load used a 150-grain bullet at about 2,700 fps.

The word “light” in the term light machine gun is relative not definitive. My Type 99 weighs 20 pounds and wisely the Japanese fitted it with a carrying handle sticking up at 12 o'clock. That's also where the 30-round magazine inserts into the action. How does you sight down the barrel? You don't—you use the peep sight with blade front offset to the left of the barrel and action. The arrangement sounds odd and looks odd but works well.

Type 99s are often called “Nambus” because a Japanese ordnance officer by that name is generally credited with its development. Actually he first developed the Type 96 6.5x50mm version that is almost identical in appearance, except it doesn't have the bell shaped flash hider of the Type 99. Both Type 96s and Type 99s have bayonet studs—a waste of steel and brain cells because anyone doing bayonet fencing with a 20-pound light machine gun is almost certain to lose the fight.

Another difference between Type 96s and Type 99s is their cyclic rate.



These markings on Duke's Type 99 indicate it was manufactured in September 1941.

With their less powerful 6.5mm round Type 96s are rated at about 550 RPM (rounds per minute). Type 99s are rated at about 800 RPM. (Source: *International Armament, Vol. II* by George B. Johnson and Hans Bert Lockhoven.) Incidentally Type 99s are dated on their receivers in an odd fashion with a number, a period, and another number. To get its time of manufacture the first number is added to 1925 and then the second number is the month of manufacture. Mine is marked 16.9 meaning it was made in September 1941. I haven't actually clocked the RPM of my Type 99 but that will be done shortly using a variety of factory loads and handloads.

Nambu light machine guns, both Type 96s and Type 99s, saw heavy action against US GIs and Marines all over the Pacific Theater of Operations. In his book *Shots Fired in Anger* Lt. Col. John George relates running into both types on Guadalcanal and says, “the capabilities of the Nambu Light Machine Guns caused me the greatest and most demoralizing fear I have known in all the combat I have seen.” Interestingly he rated them a better weapon for their purpose than the much-revered American BAR.

However, it should be mentioned that the combat career of both types of Nambu full-autos did not end with Japan's surrender in 1945. Both Nationalist and Communist Chinese forces took large quantities of them from surrendering Japanese troops and put them to use against each other in their civil war. Then the victorious latter army turned many Nambu light machine guns on Americans again during the Korean War of 1950-1953.

I will consider my Type 99 as semi-retired: seeing only light use because of its 80-year age and also because spare parts are scarce. It's a darn good addition to the full-auto segment of my WWII collection even if it must be the last one.

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RIFLEMAN

STORY: Dave Anderson

2-STAGE TRIGGERS

Often derided, they are growing in popularity and quality.

A century ago when armies were equipped with bolt-action rifles most had 2-stage triggers. The Lee Enfield rifle has a wide sear and engages a wide surface of the cocking piece. This substantial sear engagement provides a safety margin against the cocking piece being jarred off the sear by impact.

A military rifle must function under adverse conditions. In the trench warfare of WWI a soldier might be firing his rifle and the next minute have to use bayonet or buttstock in hand-to-hand fighting.

In the Lee-Enfield action the first stage ("first pressure") moves the sear down and partially out of engagement with the cocking piece. In every example I've seen the engagement surfaces are angled

so first pressure actually moves the cocking piece back slightly—just a little extra safety margin. The second stage pulls the sear fully down and releases the cocking piece to fire the rifle.

American hunters have generally expressed a preference for single-stage triggers. As the shooter places the trigger finger and begins building pressure there is no trigger motion. Pressure builds smoothly until the sear releases. Certainly there has to be some movement or the gun couldn't fire, but properly adjusted the trigger movement is so small you have to pay close attention to see it.

Most post-WWI American bolt-action sporting rifles use single-stage triggers. Notable examples include the Winchester 70 introduced in the late 1930s and the Remington 721/722 series. Many a military action had its trigger mechanism altered or replaced so as to have a single-stage pull. As a result there's a misconception that 2-stage pulls are just a military expedient, while single-stage triggers are inherently superior. In fact good and bad triggers can be made with both styles.

Self-Loading Rifles

Semi-auto rifles often have 2-stage pulls, or at least pulls with considerable take-up, along with a generous sear engagement. Full sear engagement helps prevent the firing mechanism from being jarred off the sear by impact as the bolt cycles.

On a superbly accurate Les Baer .223 I have a Jewell trigger with a 2-stage pull, total pull weight about 1.5 pounds. It's lighter than I'd use for 3-gun competition, but fine for a rifle used exclusively for target and varmint shooting.

I've noticed several 3-gun competitors using 2-stage Geissele triggers. They tell me the pull doesn't slow them down at all for fast close-range shots, yet gives the option of a crisp pull when a precision shot is required.

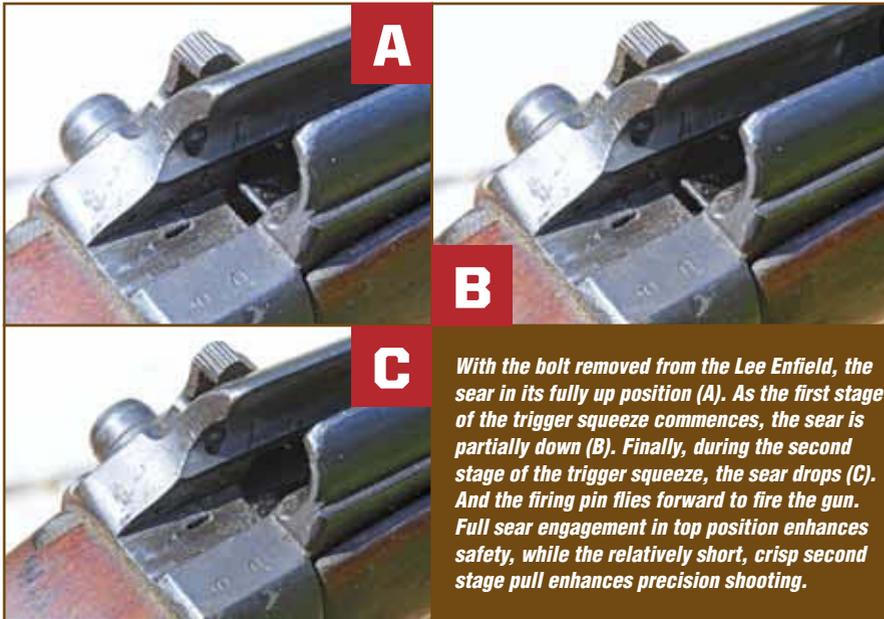
Modern 2-stage pulls operate a little differently from the original military style. With all I've tried, the first stage does not move the sear. The only resistance to first pressure is



Dave's Les Baer AR in .223 will shoot sub-1/2-MOA groups all day long. The trigger is a 2-stage Jewell, and the first stage takes about a pound of pressure. Then an additional 1/2-pound pressure fires the rifle. Pull is lighter than Dave would use on a competition rifle but ideal for target and varmint shooting.

This is an English Lee Enfield No. 1 Mk III rifle, with the bolt cocked. It has a 2-stage trigger pull. The first stage pulls the sear partially down, and then additional pressure for the second stage fires the rifle.*





A With the bolt removed from the Lee Enfield, the sear is in its fully up position (A). As the first stage of the trigger squeeze commences, the sear is partially down (B). Finally, during the second stage of the trigger squeeze, the sear drops (C). And the firing pin flies forward to fire the gun. Full sear engagement in top position enhances safety, while the relatively short, crisp second stage pull enhances precision shooting.

distinct steps, one to clear the safety lever built into the trigger face, and a second step to press the trigger. On my Savage heavy-barrel .22-250 it takes .5 pounds for initial pressure, another 1.6 (2.1 total) pounds to fire the shot.

The 2-stage pull on my Ruger 77 .204 Ruger requires a pound of pressure for the first stage. An additional 1.66 pounds (2.66 total) fires the shot. Since these rifles are used for target and varmint shooting these relatively light pulls are acceptable.

A bit more pull weight is a good idea on a big-game rifle, which is more likely to be used in cold weather. The trigger on the new Weatherby Vanguard S2 is just superb. With a 3-pound trigger I tested the first stage required .6 pounds pressure, then an additional crisp, virtually motionless 2.4 pounds pressure releases the shot.

The first two rifles I owned as a teenager were a Lee Enfield with 2-stage pull and an Anschutz .22 with a crisp single-stage pull. As long as the pressure releasing the sear is crisp, clean, and reasonably light I really have no preference. I think a competent rifle shooter should be proficient with both. Most good shooters can pick up a strange gun, dry-fire it a dozen times, and do a decent job of shooting with it.

GUNS

the trigger return spring. The trigger moves a short distance against spring pressure, and then comes to a definite stop. Further pressure releases the sear.

The advantage to the shooter is dividing pull weight into two steps. With practice the shooter learns to index the rifle on target, take up the first pressure, refine the sight picture

and then smoothly press through the remaining pressure.

Let's say first pressure takes up a pound. From the shooter's perspective he can then refine his sight picture and release the shot with an additional, crisp 2.5-pound press. Yet the rifle has the safety of full sear engagement and a total pull weight of 3.5 pounds.

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SHOTGUNNER

STORY: Holt Bodinson



The DT11 Sporting is a serious, international level, competition gun.



The receiver of the DT11 has been beefed up to distribute more weight at the hinge pin. Beretta's detachable lock system is as elegant as it is practical.



The secret to the DT11's performance is the internal geometry of its "SteeliumPro" barrels.



Beretta's Grade 3 wood on all DT11 models is spectacular.

THE DT11

Beretta rolls out a Champ.

The Italians have a gift when it comes to building delightful over/under shotguns. It's in their blood. It's in their culture. They simply have an innate flair for making lively, aesthetically pleasing shotguns.

The house of Beretta is a case in point. Little did Bartolomeo Beretta know in 1526 when he received an order for 185 arquebus barrels from the Doges of Venice that 486 years later his family would still be making guns under the Beretta banner in rural Gardone and be known for being the oldest family owned business in the world. That's the pedigree Beretta's new competition DT11 line brings to range.

The DT11 line can be thought of as an evolutionary refinement of the already durable and match-winning DT10 series of competition models. Beretta's DT11 is designed to go head-to-head with Krieghoff's and Perazzi's in international competition, and it's being hand assembled by

Beretta's craftsmen in the Premium Gun Group, who even balance each individual gun around the hinge pin by adding lead to the stock.

At Beretta's Shooting Grounds in Dover Furnace, N.Y., I had an opportunity to shoot with and speak at length with Dr. Niccolo d'Amico, the Product Manager of Beretta's premium gun line about the development of the DT11. Dr. d'Amico was the pivot man in the development process of the DT11 and responsible for bringing together the experience and recommendations of seasoned shotgun competitors with the engineering, production and marketing expertise of the company.

What Dr. d'Amico stressed was

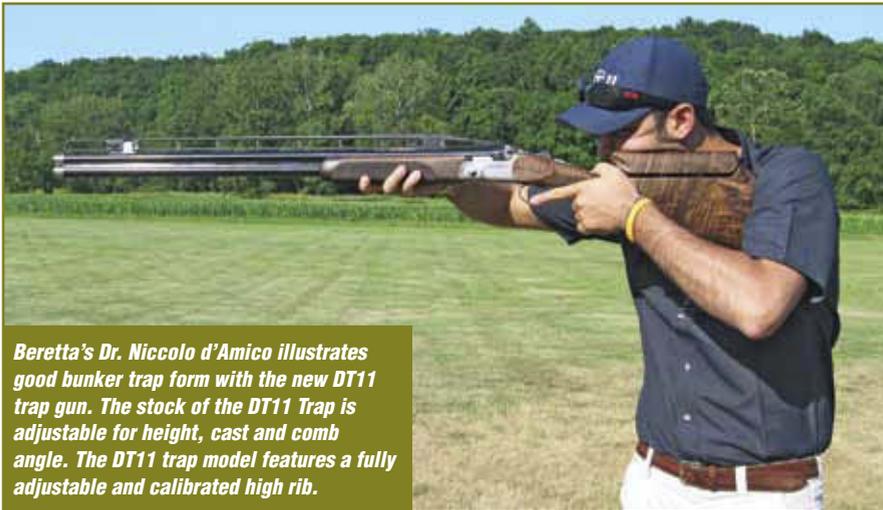
the final design of the DT11 was very much driven by the end-users, shotgunners like ourselves, who are engaged in the sport for fun, fame or money. He commented, "The DT11 is a gun from a shooter to a shooter." I couldn't help but observe that Dr. d'Amico's favorite sport is bunker trap and that the new DT11 trap gun

Beretta's new DT11 O/U shotgun is designed to give the discerning competition shooter a lifetime of high-performance shooting.



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Beretta's Dr. Niccolo d'Amico illustrates good bunker trap form with the new DT11 trap gun. The stock of the DT11 Trap is adjustable for height, cast and comb angle. The DT11 trap model features a fully adjustable and calibrated high rib.

is without question the most refined model in the whole line.

Beretta's use of the acronym "DT" stands for "detachable trigger." Actually what we're talking about is a completely hand-detachable lock assembly. By pushing the safety fully forward and then breaking the gun open, the shooter can simply withdraw the compact lock assembly from the bottom of the action. Beretta stresses the safety factor in their design in that the shooter must break open the gun before the lock assembly can be removed.

What are the advantages of a detachable lock system? First and foremost, if the shooter were to experience a lock failure in the middle of a tournament, he could replace it in seconds. The ability the system gives the owner to clean, lubricate and otherwise service the lock is obvious. On a more esoteric level, if the shooter desired to use a release trigger, for example, in a particular event, he could swap out locks.

The Beretta lock itself is beautifully machined and finished, and it's powered by classic "V" mainsprings rather than coil springs. The "V" springs are faster than coil and reduce lock time. Just to be safe, Beretta supplies two additional "V" springs with each gun and two additional

firing pins.

The trigger blade is adjustable for both right- and left-handed shooters. Moving it forward-or-aft does not change length-of-pull, which is established by the your grip on the pistol grip, but, permits you to fine tune the trigger to the length of your trigger finger.

Barrel Geometry

The most innovative element in the DT11 is to be found in the internal geometry of the barrels. Made from a proprietary alloy called Steelium, Beretta barrels are deep drilled, hammer forged and then stress relieved. Back-boring barrels has been hot stuff for over a decade. There's no question, back boring has improved patterns and reduced recoil. What Beretta has done in the DT11 barrel is to taper the complete bore from a very short forcing cone forward to their Optimachoke tube. Specifically, the bore diameter begins at .767" and gradually tapers to .725". Beretta calls this the "Optima Bore" and the complete barrels, "SteeliumPro." According to Beretta, the benefits are smoother recoil, reduced muzzle flip (faster recovery for the second shot) and improved patterns (less shot deformation).

Personally, after shooting 200 sporting clays at Dover Furnace with the DT11 Sporting model fed a mixture of Fiocchi 1- and 1-1/8-ounce loads, I can vouch for their reduced recoil and fast recovery claims but would have to hit the patterning board to prove the third. Time in competition will really give us more insight into whether or not Beretta has come up with a truly superior barrel design in their DT11.

The skeet and trap models of the DT11 aren't due to be released until Jan. 1, 2013. I did get a good look at the trap gun, although I didn't have time to play with it. It's gorgeous, quite



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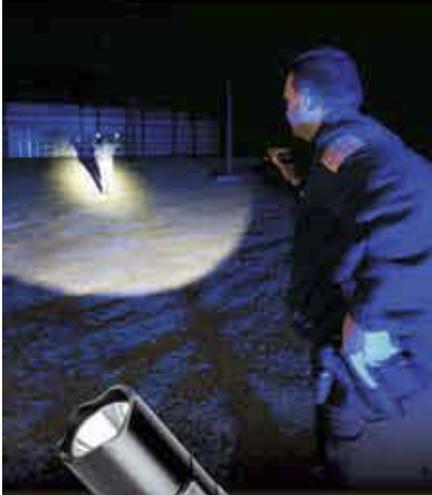
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ACTION: O/U, **GAUGE:** 12, **CHAMBER:** 2-3/4" and 3",
CHOKE: Extended Optimachoke tubes, **DROP AT COMB:** 1-1/2", **DROP AT HEEL:** 2-3/8", **LENGTH OF PULL:** 14.7", **BARREL LENGTH:** 30" and 32", **RIB TYPE:** 8mm to 10mm tapered, **SIGHTS:** Mid bead w/ Bradley-style front bead, **TRIGGER:** Adjustable drop-out, **FINISH:** Blue and satin nickel, **PRICE:** \$8,050

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Olympic level, sporting clays coach, Dan Carlisle, improved Holt's game in 5 minutes.

sophisticated, mounts well and swings smoothly. It's fitted with Beretta's new B-FAST stock and B-FAST high rib—B-FAST standing for Beretta Fast Adjustable Technology. The stock is adjustable for height, cast and comb angle, and the adjusting hardware is all-metal. The B-FAST high rib is calibrated and offers all the adjustment any shooter needs.

One of the significant differences between the DT10 and DT11 lines is in the receiver. While both competition models incorporate a hinge pin, not trunnions, and a flat, Greener-style crossbolt, the DT11 receiver is 3mm wider than the DT10 and more artistically sculptured. The newer design was undertaken to improve the balance and dynamic handling of the gun by placing more weight around the hinge pin and between the hands.

The newer receiver does add weight to the gun. The DT11 Sporting model with 32" barrels weighs 9 pounds, which is about 1 pound heavier than the DT10 Trident Sporting model, but when compared to the weight of other premium competition clays models, it's not out of line. I stress the adjective, "competition." The DT11 is a serious, international level, competition gun, built to produce high scores with an extended life of hundreds of thousands of shells fired.

If you enjoy richly grained walnut (who doesn't?), the DT11s are stocked in Grade 3 wood. Grade 5 wood is exhibition grade, and I would gladly settle for Beretta's Grade 3 walnut any day of the year. Because the DT11s are hand assembled, Beretta offers custom stocking services to match a buyer's measurements. The cost of a custom stock is approximately \$500 and the wait, approximately 6 months. That's a best buy in the shotgun world of today.

And speaking of buying, the price

of the Sporting model with 30" or 32" tubes will be \$8,050, the Skeet model with 28" barrels, \$8,500 and the Trap model with 30" or 32" tubes, \$9,200.

In closing, I might add that Beretta's venue for unveiling the new DT11 was the picturesque rolling farmland of Dutchess County, N.Y., just 90 minutes north of Manhattan. Home base for the shoot was the Ten Mile River Preserve, a 3,000-acre hunting and shooting membership club with hotel accommodations operated by the Muncey family. Minutes away was the Beretta Shooting Grounds at Dover Furnace, a public shooting facility which rates two out of three Tridents in Beretta's Trident program to evaluate and rate hunting and shooting venues around the world. Associated with the Beretta Shooting Grounds are Olympic Medalist and coach, Dan Carlisle, and Will Fennell, International FITASC champion and co-instructor. In you live in the Northeast, these shotgunning venues and instructional opportunities are not to be missed.

The DT11 is an exciting addition to Beretta's prestigious and match-winning stable of premium grade guns. It's going to be tough on the competition. **GUNS**

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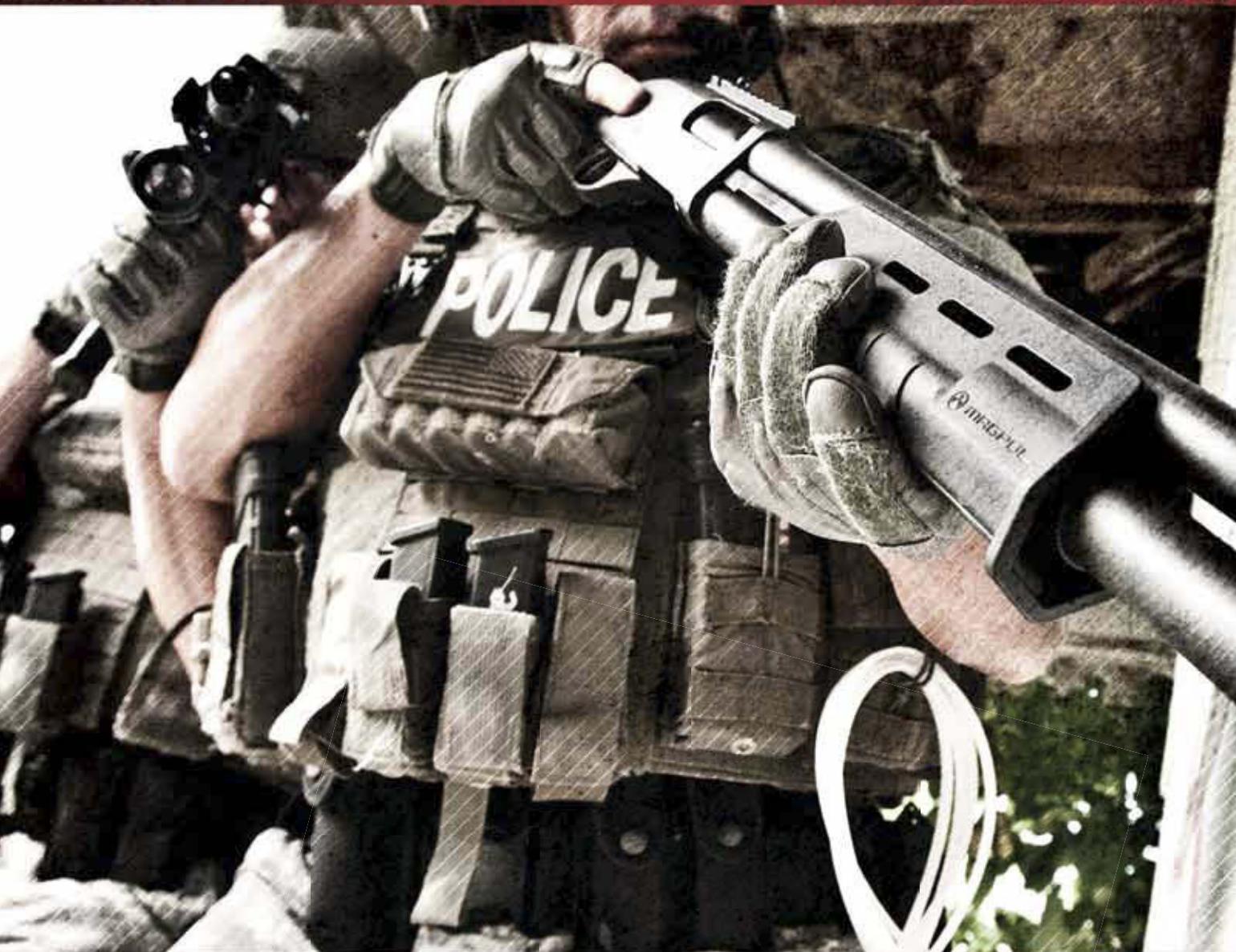
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SHOOTER'S EDGE

STORY: DAVE ANDERSON

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RUNNING THE BOLT

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“There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays, and every single one of them is right!” (In the *Neolithic Age* by Rudyard Kipling). There are several ways to operate a bolt-action rifle (maybe not nine and sixty) and they mostly all work. Still, we all have preferences.

Some shooters like to keep the hand open while operating the bolt. Others keep the hand straight, raising the bolt with a kind of reverse karate chop. Personally, I use and recommend the “ball-and-socket” (also called the “closed hand” or “pinch”) style, with the bolt knob gripped between thumb and forefinger.

A few principles apply with all methods. The rifle remains shouldered

as the bolt is operated. Firing a shot, lowering the rifle while working the bolt, then shouldering it again is slow, tacky, and just wrong.

Reload immediately after firing. The shot sequence doesn't end when the shot is fired; it ends when the rifle is ready to fire the next shot. Reloading should be so quick and habitual the action is being worked while the shot is still echoing. If another shot isn't

needed there will be plenty of time to clear the chamber and reload the magazine.

Work the bolt briskly. Don't abuse the rifle but don't baby it either. Run it like you mean it. Whatever direction the bolt is traveling, keep it going until some mechanical feature of the rifle stops it.

A common error is for a shooter to see the fired case eject and immediately begin moving the bolt forward, before it has moved far enough back to pick up a fresh cartridge. Remember: The rifle, not the shooter, stops movement of the bolt. Lift the bolt until it won't lift further. Pull it back until it hits the bolt stop. The bolt stop will take it. If it won't you need a better rifle.

Broad-Spectrum Techniques

I use a lot of different guns. I want any shooting technique to be as “broad spectrum” as possible. I use short, standard, and magnum actions, rifles with 90-degree bolt lift, others with 54- or 60-degree bolt lift, bolt handles with round knobs, flattened knobs, and butter-knife handles.

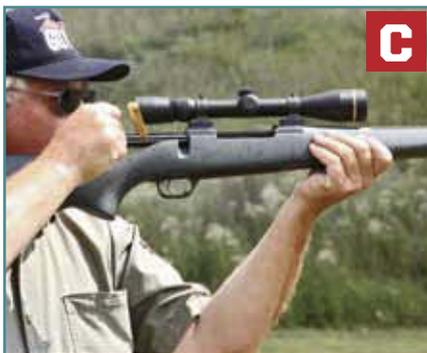
Consistency is more important to me than minor increments of speed. I'm sure there are many shooters who can operate a bolt faster than I can. What I want is a technique I can count on to work every time, with all kinds of rifles and under adverse conditions.

Raising the bolt can take a bit of effort, since two things are being accomplished: primary extraction (breaking the fired, expanded case free) and compressing the mainspring. One reason the old Lee-Enfield rifle was so fast to operate was initial bolt lift just extracted the case, while cocking was done as the bolt was closed.

I like the ball-and-socket or pinch technique as it works with most any bolt action, it is very consistent, and it provides plenty of strength on the bolt lift for situations where primary extraction is sticky or the rifle has an unusually heavy mainspring or rough cocking cam.

Practice

There are a few subtleties of bolt operation, which can only be learned



Reloading sequence notes (A-D): The rifle remains shouldered in firing position throughout sequence. Here's the reload sequence using a long-action rifle with short bolt lift. Technique is the same; some shooters may want to move the head back slightly while reloading with a long, or magnum action so the bolt doesn't hop your nose. The rifle is Weatherby Mk V Ultra Lightweight in .257 Weatherby with Leupold 4.5-14X scope.



A close-up of the "ball-and-socket" or "pinch" method of bolt operation. After firing a shot the shooting hand moves to the bolt, the forefinger begins lifting the bolt, and then the thumb will close on top of the bolt knob as the bolt is cycled. Bolt knob is held between thumb and forefinger throughout the reloading sequence.



by diligent practice. When lifting the bolt, most effort is upwards, but there should be a bit of backward pressure as well. The bolt should begin retracting as soon as the locking lugs clear their recesses. Similarly when closing the bolt, most pressure is forward but with a bit of downward pressure so as soon as the round is chambered the bolt begins moving down to locked position.

With long-throw magnum actions the shooter may have to move his head slightly to allow bolt travel. Some shooters practice moving the rifle forward a bit with the support hand as the bolt is being retracted, then moving the rifle back as the bolt moves forward.

Practice being smooth and consistent, and the speed will come. Remember the goal is to hit the target. Maintain a reasonable accuracy standard while practicing. Otherwise you're just making noise and learning bad habits. At whatever range you're shooting, endeavor to keep your shots within around a 4" group.

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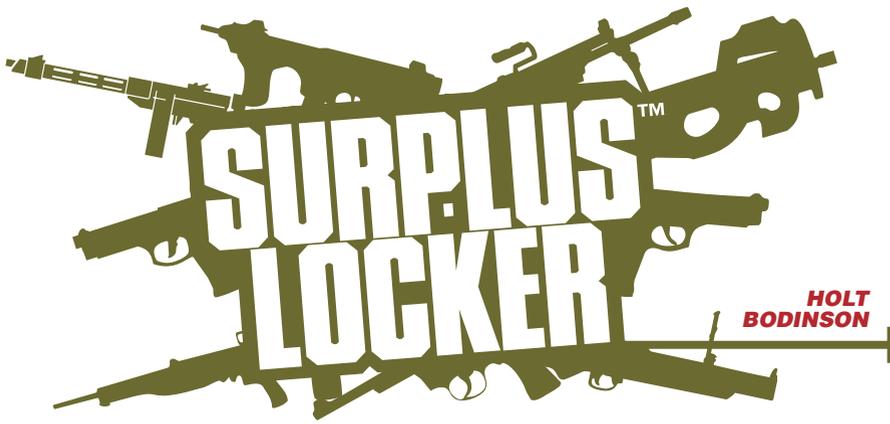
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The Berthier and Rolling Block WWI 8mm Lebel's span the designs of 19th and 20th centuries.

Wartime production is a fascinating subject and rarely covered in the mainstream news. Three, sudden, short, wars in our own history—the Civil War (1861-1865), WWI (1917-1918) and WWII (1941-1945)—are cases in point. It's miraculous that in a matter of months, not years, manufacturing and logistics could be turned around so quickly and so successfully to supply the millions of products necessary to sustain armies, navies, air and marine forces in combat.

The story of the M1 carbine comes to mind. From mid-1941 to mid-1945, 10 contractors, only one of which (Winchester) had made firearms previously, produced 6,221,200 carbines in 4 years from scratch. Just as fascinating is another story, which took place in WWI when the house of Remington became arms maker to the world, quite by accident.

I was sanding a stock in my shop not long ago. My mind was wandering as it often does when I'm doing a bit of repetitious work, and I caught myself staring at two rifles standing across the room. One was a French Berthier, converted into a handy sporter, and the other was a Remington rolling

block mounted with a long staff, tang sight by a previous owner. I had never associated the two rifles before that moment in time. Staring at them, it dawned on me that both were chambered for the 8x50R Lebel, the world's first smokeless cartridge, that both were made by Remington under separate contracts with the French government and that both were being made during virtually the same WWI time period at two different Remington facilities.

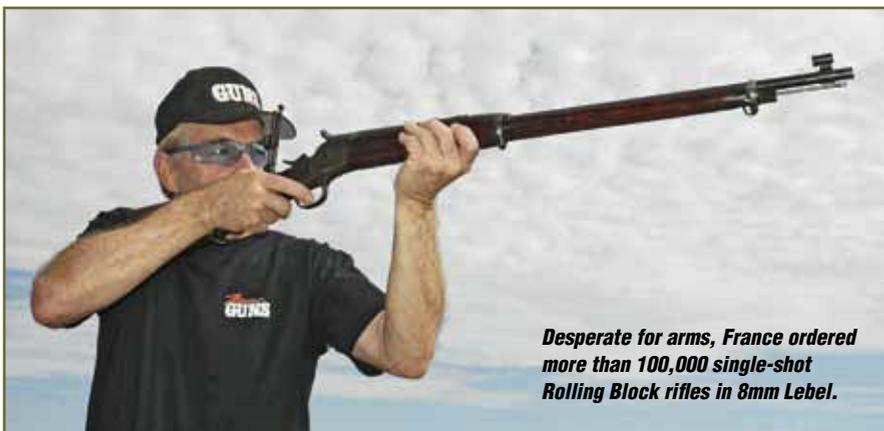
As I thought about it, what was even more intriguing was that one was a simple, robust, single-shot design dating back to the Civil War and the other was a modern, bolt-action, repeating rifle.



Insufficient production in France gave Remington the opportunity to build the Berthier alongside the obsolete Rolling Block.

When Germany declared war on France in 1914, the French were caught flat-footed with insufficient stores of small arms and ammunition for their newly raised army. Adolphe Berthier, Chief of Office for the Algerian railroad, had designed the Berthier in 1899. With the advent of WWI, the Berthier was put into full-scale production as the Model 1907-15 and produced at the government arsenals of Saint-Etienne, Chatellerault and Tulle as well as under contract with the French firms of Etablissements Contin-Souza of Paris and Societe Francaise Delaunay of Bellville. The pace of French production proved insufficient so France contracted with Remington to produce 200,000 Model 1907-15 Berthiers and 100,261 Model 1914 rolling block military rifles chambered for the 8mm Lebel Balle-D cartridge.

From 1912 to 1914, Marcellus Hartley Dodge was the president of the Remington Arms Co. He was a visionary, and as the world descended into war, Dodge ordered the immediate construction of new arms making facilities at Ilion and Bridgeport as well as improvements to Remington's ammunition plants at Bridgeport,



Desperate for arms, France ordered more than 100,000 single-shot Rolling Block rifles in 8mm Lebel.

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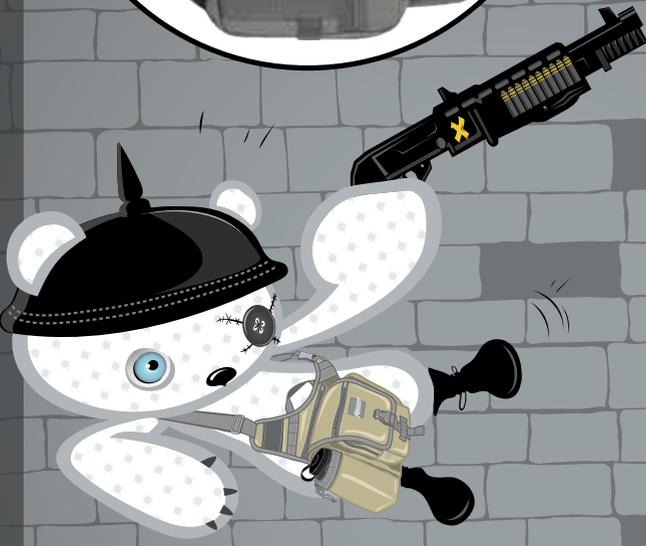


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At Ilion in 1914, the manufacturing floor space was increased from 353,855 square feet to 1,016,000 square feet and the work staff from 1,521 in 1914 to 7,361 by 1918.

In 1915 at Bridgeport, Remington constructed 13 interconnected, 5-story production buildings with a combined floor area of 1,104,200 square feet plus five forging shops, a kiln and power plant. By 1918, the Bridgeport facility



At Bridgeport in 1915, Remington built 13 interconnected, 5-story production buildings, totaling 1,104,200 square feet. Photo: Roy Marcot



Old Remington 170-grain softpoint ammunition has proven exceedingly accurate in all French rifles Holt has shot.

employed 15,000 workers.

Further wartime production capacity was obtained by leasing factory floor space from the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Eddystone, Penn.

The Model 1907-15 Berthier was produced at Bridgeport while the Model 1914 rolling block and matching Model 1914 sword bayonets were produced at Ilion. As pointed out in Roy Marcot's definitive and lavishly illustrated, official history of the Remington Arms Co., entitled *REMINGTON America's Oldest Gunmaker*, possibly only a 100,000 or so Remington Berthiers were produced and many of that lot were bought by the US government and

issued to the 369th through 372nd US Negro Infantry Regiments, who fought alongside the French Colonial troops in WWI.

Details about the disposition of the rolling blocks are clearer. Most did reach the French Republic and were issued to rear echelon troops and later ended up in the French colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Indo-China. After WWI, existing French rolling blocks, like the one pictured here, were rethroated for the Balle-N cartridge, featuring a 232-grain spitzer with a muzzle velocity of 2,480 fps. When modified, the rifles were stamped with an "N" over the front receiver ring.

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Rocco Wachman, Senior Instructor of the Arizona Cowboy College, during a mounted field patrol course.

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amazing story at Remington during WWI. The French contracts were a drop in the bucket.

Between 1914 and 1915, Great Britain contracted with Remington to produce 1,000,000, Enfield Pattern 1914 bolt-action rifles. By war's end, Iliion would produce 403,193 and Eddystone, 604,941 Pattern 14 rifles.

With a deficit of 1903 Springfields on hand to arm the American Expeditionary Force, the US turned to powerhouse Remington for a ready solution. With Pattern 14 tooling on hand at Iliion and Eddystone, Remington responded by modifying the Pattern 14 into the familiar Model 1917, chambered for the .30-06 cartridge. Between 1917 and 1918, Iliion would produce 646,444 and Eddystone, 1,181,908 M1917 rifles!

Million More

That's a lot of rifles, but Czarist Russia gave Remington its single biggest military WWI contract. In 1916, Russia ordered 1,000,000 Mosin-Nagants with matching bayonets. Production was undertaken at the new and expansive Bridgeport facility. By 1917, 4,000 to 4,200 Mosin-Nagants were being produced *daily* at Bridgeport as well as 10,000 Russian and British bayonets per day. Total production by Remington was 750,000 Mosin-Nagants with 469,951 being delivered to Russia before the Czar was overthrown. Much to the relief of Remington, the remainders were purchased by the US.

Additional US military arms produced in WWI by Remington include the Colt Model 1911 pistol, the Model 1917 Browning, water-cooled machine gun, the Model 10 trench shotgun and the Pedersen Device together with Pedersen modified Springfield rifles.

WWI Ammunition production at Remington was equally astounding. Some of the highlights include 2,750,000,000 rounds of .30-06, 234,249,000 rounds of 8mm Lebel, 144,081,000 rounds of .45 ACP and 12,336,000 rounds of 7.62 Russian.



The rare Model 1914 was the last of the military rolling blocks built by Remington.



Chambered for the 8x50R Lebel cartridge, Remington barrels are simply marked "Cal. 8 M.M." After WWI, French 8mm rifles were rethroated for the Balle-N cartridge and so marked. The Remington-made Berthier is marked in script on the receiver.



WWI production of firearms and ammunition by Remington-UMC is a remarkable story. The production figures in the multiple millions are staggering, and I still shake my head every time I think of the incredible incongruity between an 8mm Lebel rolling block and a bolt-action Berthier rolling off the Remington production lines during the same time period. Desperate times demand desperate measures. If there's one lesson to be learned, it is that production capacity wins wars. **GUNS**

FURTHER READING

ALLIED RIFLE CONTRACTS IN AMERICA BY LUKE MERCALDO, HARDCOVER, 224 PAGES ©2011, \$49.99, WET DOG PUBLICATIONS, 5603-B WEST FRIENDLY AVE., STE.166, GREENSBORO, NC 27410, (336) 394-4138, WWW.FN-BROWNING.COM.

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OUTTM of the BOX

JOHN TAFFIN

CIMARRON'S .45 ROOSTER SHOOTER A shootable reproduction of John Wayne's Silver Screen Single Action Army .45.

In older Western movies quite often the firearms used became as recognizable as the star himself. For a time in the 1960s, and 1970s especially, our eyes were assaulted by poorly finished, brass-grip-framed Italian replicas in most Western movies. Thankfully, there were companies who decided to take the path of more authentic replicas and most Westerns made in the last 20 years or so have paid special attention to the firearms using period correct sixguns and rifles, which are faithful replicas of the originals. One of these companies is Cimarron Firearms. Mike Harvey of Cimarron started out small several decades ago by purchasing a small importer by the name of Allen Firearms. He did not stay small but rather worked tirelessly with Italian manufacturers to produce authentic replicas. Today we have almost every frontier firearm available as a quality replica and a major part of that is due to Mike Harvey and Cimarron.

In addition to standard replicas Cimarron provides such famous movie guns as the "Man With No Name" cartridge conversion used by Clint Eastwood in several of his spaghetti Westerns. Cimarron Firearms also now offers one of the most famous sixguns ever seen on the screen, namely John Wayne's .45 Colt Single Action which has become known as the Rooster Shooter. John Wayne had a long Hollywood career starting with very minuscule bit parts in long forgotten movies, however he found his niche as a Western hero. In the early B Westerns he mostly carried an ivory gripped, or at least what appeared to be ivory, 5-1/2" Single Action which was chambered in .38-40. Western movie firearms used a "5-in-1" blank so named because it could be used in Single Actions chambered in .45 Colt, .44-40, and .38-40, as well as Winchesters originally made for .44-40 and .38-40. So it made

no difference what the hero's firearms chambering was as long as it was one of these.

In 1939 John Wayne really became a star with his portrayal of Ringo



Taffin's late friend Ron Elerick was an Alaskan State Trooper assigned to "caring for" the Duke way back in the day.



John found the Cimarron Rooster Shooter a pleasant sixgun, which shot a little low for him—an easy problem to fix by filing the front sight down sight a tad.

in *Stagecoach*. This was the first appearance of his large-loop lever-action carbine, the Winchester Model 92 chambered in .44-40. He would go on to use this rifle in virtually every major movie he made after *Stagecoach*. He levered a cartridge in by swinging that rifle in *Stagecoach* and also as Rooster Cogburn as he rode into the Ned Pepper gang in that memorable scene in *True Grit*. In that same scene he also carried the .45 Colt, which he erroneously called a "Navy Colt," that starred along with him in virtually every one of his major budget Technicolor movies. This is the sixgun which is now offered in replica form by Cimarron.

The Rooster Shooter is a 4-3/4" Single Action .45 Colt (also offered in .44-40 and .357 Magnum) with Original Finish, which basically gives the sixgun a well-worn or antique look. Actually it appears to have no finish at all and is complete with built in blemishes and pits. Unless you carefully examine it up close, it appears to be a well-used 19th century Colt Single Action. In the John Wayne movies the grips appear to be yellowed ivory, however they are actually a synthetic material and the word is these were found by Wayne in a shop while traveling through the Southwest. The left-hand grip panel has finger grooves. To complete the gun fighter persona, Wayne carried this sixgun in a leather rig, which has now become known as The Duke Rig. El Paso Saddlery now offers this practical belt and holster, along with several other top-grade leather manufacturers. This rig consists of a folded over money belt with a holster that slides on the belt rather than hanging from a buscadero loop.

In 1969 Wayne received an Oscar for his portrayal of Rueben J. "Rooster" Cogburn. Rooster was an aging, potbellied, hard-drinking, 1-eyed United States Marshal working out of Fort Smith, Ark. His eyepatch and .45 were major attributes of his winning performance. The sequel to *True Grit* was *Rooster Cogburn* in which he also carried his Rooster Shooter. Interestingly enough his last movie, *The Shootist*, did not feature his well-worn .45 Colt but rather he used an ornately

.45 COLT FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE 4-3/4" BARREL

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
BLACK HILLS 250 RNFP	690	1-5/8
FEDERAL 225 LSWC HP	824	1-1/2
SPEER 250 GOLD DOT HP	843	1-1/2

Notes: Chronograph set at 10' from muzzle

.45 COLT HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
HORNADY 255 LSWC	WW231	7.1	800	1-5/8
OREGON TRAIL 255 SWC	Unique	8.5	928	1-3/4
OREGON TRAIL 255 SWC	WW452AA	6.2	770	1-1/2
OREGON TRAIL 250 RNFP	Unique	8.0	801	1-1/4
OREGON TRAIL 250 RNFP	WW231	7.1	691	1-3/4
OREGON TRAIL 250 RNFP	H4227	18.5	870	1-3/4
OREGON TRAIL 250 RNFP	N-100	6.2	787	1
RCBS 45-255FN	UNIQUE	8.0	916	1-5/8
RCBS 45-255KT	H4227	20.0	973	1-3/4

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

Chronograph screens set at 10' from muzzle. CCI 300 primers used in Starline brass.

engraved pair of Great Western .45s with ivory stocks. These were presented to him by Great Western in the late 1950s. By *The Shootist* Wayne had changed from United States Marshall Cogburn to an aging dying gunfighter, J.B. Books. Gone was the trademark well-worn .45 and the eye patch as he assumed the role of a more neatly attired shootist.

Cimarron Firearms Rooster Shooter is a faithful replica of the original complete with yellowed "ivory" grips with three finger grooves on the left grip panel. Earlier mention was made of Cimarron's efforts to provide a more authentic replica. One of the other problems with early sixgun copies was the front sight, actually lack thereof. Especially on .44s and .45s there was a notable lack of front sight height causing the revolver to shoot high. Today's sixguns, including this Rooster Shooter, provide a much taller front sight, which, of course, results in a sixgun, which shoots low. The high shooter is not easy to fix, however all the low shooter requires is a good file. Once a load is selected it is just a matter of filing down the front sight until point



The Rooster Shooter rests on a picture of the original in use by John Wayne.

of aim matches point of impact. The Rooster Shooter shoots about 3" low for me with standard .45 Colt loads while at the same time being right on for windage. So this one is an easy fix.

Although this is a replica made to look authentic thankfully the sights do not follow the same path. The original 19th-century sixguns had a thin tapered front sight matched up with a very shallow V-notch rear sight. Rooster's Shooter has a well-defined square notch rear sight matched up with a squared post front sight making shooting much easier than with the originals. Cimarron's Rooster Shooter shoots well and also takes us back to an earlier time when movies were mostly entertaining. John Wayne is gone and there'll never be another like him, however this .45 Colt jogs very pleasant memories of a time long gone.

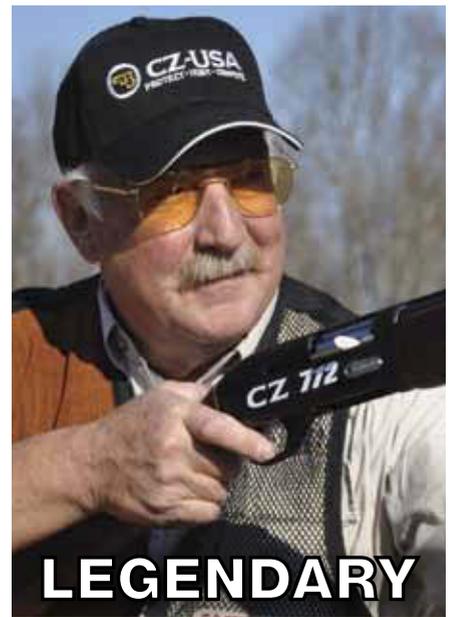
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ACTION TYPE: Single action, **CALIBER:** .45 Colt,
CAPACITY: 6 (only carry 5!), **BARREL LENGTH:** 4-3/4",
OVERALL LENGTH: 10", **WEIGHT:** 39 ounces, **FINISH:**
 Original finish, **SIGHTS:** Fixed, **GRIPS:** Finger
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Q&A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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12345 World Trade Dr., San Diego, CA 92128. Due to the volume of mail received, GUNS cannot offer a personal reply.

JEFF JOHN

Sight Height

Q: All of your handgun articles have the accuracy tests at 25 yards. How do you guys keep your groups in the black at that distance? My two firearms, an FNP-40 and Kel-Tec P11 are already shooting 3" to 4" low at 10 yards. At 25 yards I'd be off the paper. Do you adjust your point-of-aim by holding high or am I the only one with low-shooting pistols?



The FNP (here an FNP-9) has a front sight in a dovetail, which can be changed to adjust elevation. Jeff's FN is finished in desert tan with KG Air Cure.

Mike Carocci
Gillett, Penn.

A: On unusual occasions when we test a pistol shooting far off the mark, we contact the company first about the problem. We try to give the writers enough time to solve such problems before deadline. Windage is simple to adjust as a rule by just tapping the rear sight in the correct

direction. On many modern pistols, it is easy to change the front sight to adjust elevation issues. Before you call the factory, though, have a friend shoot the pistol and see if he shoots it low, too. For the FN, call the company at (800) 322-4626 and talk with a technician about the problem. Because the FNP sights are in dovetails, the point of impact can be adjusted by changing the height of the front sight. As for the Kel-Tec, the firm offers a sight kit for the P11 (part No. P155) consisting of three rear and two front sights of different heights you can mix and match to adjust point of aim.

Upgrading to an adjustable sight may be worthwhile. Because both .40 S&W and 9mm ammo come in a wide variety of bullet weights, you can adjust the windage and elevation easily if you enjoy shooting the full spectrum of available ammo.

On the other hand, if your handguns are primarily for self-defense, and you've settled on just one or two 9mm and .40 S&W loads proven accurate and reliable in your pistols, it would make sense to adjust the the fixed sights so your guns shoot where you're aiming. If you have a concealed weapon permit, fixed sights are generally more easily concealed and less prone to snagging on the draw.

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.223, 5.56, .308, 7.62

Q: At a recent gun show I was searching for an AR upper with a 5.56x45mm chamber. Finding several marked .223, I asked the dealer if he had any with a 5.56 chamber. He told me the .223 and 5.56 were identical. When I tried to explain the difference, the dealer looked at me like I had three heads.

Then, I read Glen Zediker's article (Sept. 2012 issue) on the difference between the .223 and the 5.56. An excellent column, I wish all gun dealers would read and be better informed on such matters.

Would you consider doing a similar



Do not shoot high-pressure .308 Winchester in self-loading rifles (above) unless it is specifically chambered for .308 or the gas system can be adjusted to handle it. An adjustable gas system (below) as found on the DS Arms FN/FAL can be adjusted to suit the ammunition, although not its original purpose.

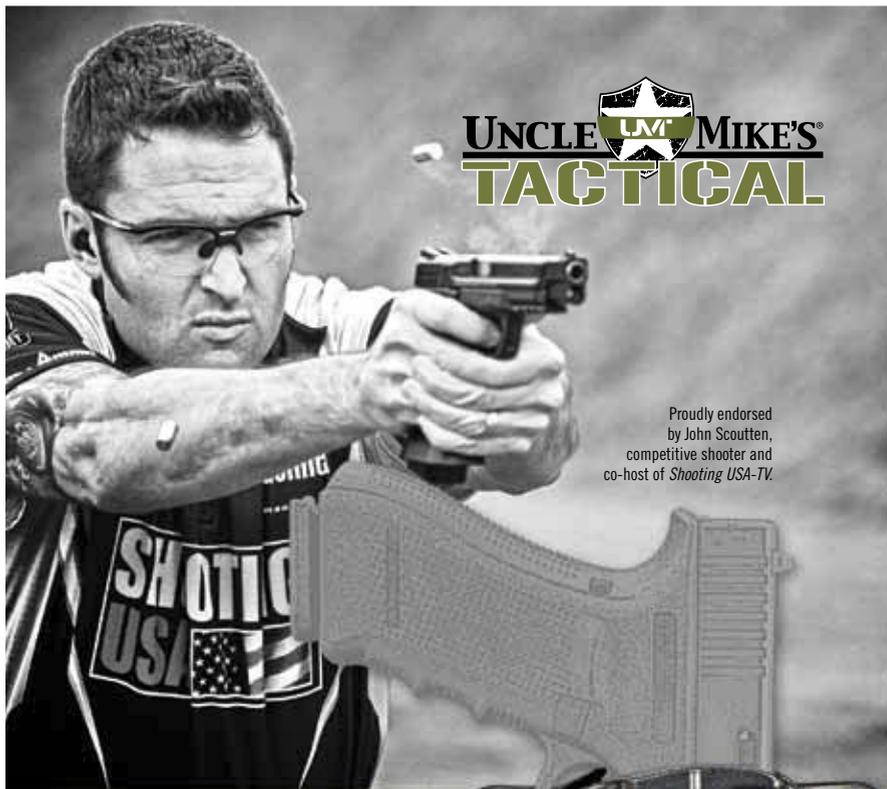


article on the .308 and 7.62x51mm? Are they identical?

A: While the 7.62x51 and .308 Winchester ammo are dimensionally similar, the .308 is loaded to a maximum of 62,000 psi, while 7.62x51 is loaded to a max of 50,000 psi, according the *Ammo Encyclopedia, 3rd Edition*, by Michael Bussard (now in its 4th Edition). In a modern bolt action it doesn't really matter, but in a self-loader it becomes important. The FN/FAL, among others, has an adjustable gas system and can be regulated to shoot .308 without harm. Many AR-10 rifles have fixed gas systems adjusted for 7.62x51 and should not be fired with .308 Win because it causes the action to work too abruptly. There are now aftermarket adjustable gas regulators for the AR system and some higher end AR-10 rifles come with them, such as many from ArmaLite.

Differences in brass internal volume means reloaders should beware. Military cases are usually of thicker construction and have less internal space, which must be accounted for when reloading. The *Hornady Reloading Manual* has data for both cartridges. **GUNS**

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In The CROSSHAIRS

HOW ABOUT A NEW SHOOTING GAME?

Mike "Duke" Venturino

Remember the song, "Is that all there is?" Those were the words I was thinking last October as we drove away from the CMP's Western Games at the Ben Avery Shooting Range near Phoenix, Ariz. The Vintage Sniper Rifle event was our primary reason for attending but it consisted of only 10 rounds at 300 yards and 10 at 600 yards. My Montana friend Ted Tompkins and I did participate in other matches but they weren't important to us. Personally I left feeling unsatisfied. That's not criticism of the CMP because their primary focus is on 200-yard competition with metallic-sighted rifles.

During the 1,200-mile trip home we talked about a way to enjoy more shooting with vintage sniper rifles. Both of us are avid competitors in the NRA's Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette game, so it was

natural to think about trying the old, scoped sniper rifles on steel metallic silhouettes. Most of the NRA sponsored BPCR silhouette matches consist of 40 shots for score with unlimited sighters in the allotted time

period. That makes about 60 rounds fired in an event.

More shooting plus getting to see the targets fall through the scopes sounded good to us. I've been match director for numerous state and regional BPCR silhouette championships so organizing a new one didn't seem daunting. But we wondered about where to have an experimental match? There are several silhouette ranges in Montana but they are already booked most weekends throughout the warm months.

That's where the matter rested until the next month when we were again in Phoenix for the Arizona state championship for BPCR Silhouette. There we discussed the idea with our friend A.P. "Butch" Ulsher who is on the board of directors of the Butte (Montana) Gun Club. Butch is never adverse to more shooting so he said, "Why limit it to vintage sniper rifles? Why not attract more people and make it a challenge between our BPCRs and vintage sniper rifles? And why make it a 1-day event? Our club also has pits for paper target shooting. We can shoot steel on day one and then paper on day two."

Upon returning to Montana Butch gave me a call saying the weekend of June 30th/July 1st was open at the Butte Gun Club. So now we had an idea, a range and an available date. What next? Some rules and a match format were needed and I was pretty much left to come up with that.

Rules

In order to make it compatible with the BPCR silhouette folks, their match format was the logical choice. Such is as follows. The steel targets are chickens, pigs, turkeys and rams at 200, 300, 385 and 500 meters. They are shot in sets of five with the first five having a 7-minute time period with unlimited sighters *but* the five score shots must also be fired in those 7 minutes. The second set of five score shots have a 5-minute time period *but* with no more sighting shots.



Winner of seven national BPCR Silhouette records in 2011, Jen Oliva is shooting her CPA Stevens chambered for .40-65, topped with a 6X scope by Montana Vintage Arms. (Photo: Viv Fontenia)



Montanan Butch Ulsher firing a custom BPCR built upon a Remington Hepburn action with new Kreiger barrel chambered for .45-100. (Photo: Viv Fontenia)



These people (above) traveled to Butte, Mont., from as far away as Arizona and Southern California to try an experimental match that pitted vintage sniper rifles against Black Powder Cartridge Rifles. (Photo: Vin Fontenia)

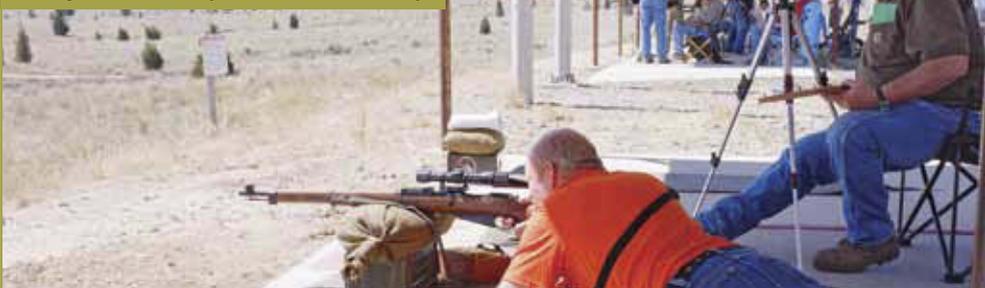
For the paper-target segment we loosely borrowed from the CMP rules. Firing was done from 300 and 600 yards but we differed in the time periods. At the CMP games the targets are only up for 20 seconds. That's OK because getting a round fired in that time is easy. The problem was that the targets were only down for 20 seconds also. If for some reason the target puller had problems finding the bullet hole or fumbled with shot markers and then didn't get the target raised in a timely fashion, the shooter was penalized due to no fault of his own. I decided to simplify matters for our paper target event. The shooters were given a 5-minute sighting period and then 15 minutes for 15 shots at each distance.

Here are some other details. In the BPCR silhouette game shooters can fire at all targets except the chickens from a crossed-stick rest—sitting or prone. Chickens are shot offhand. (If you don't think that's difficult put up a paper plate at 200 meters and whang away at it offhand.)

Anyway, I figured the 200 meter offhand segment should apply for vintage sniper rifle shooters too, but not crossed stick rests. Instead I felt that vintage sniper rifle shooters should use something, as a military fellow would possibly have such as a pack, bedroll, or even an ammo can with sandbag atop it. (I included the later because it was exactly what I already had.) We followed the same rest rule for paper-target shooting.

As for what constituted a vintage sniper rifle the following were my ideas. The rifle itself had to be either an original or reasonable facsimile of a sniper's rifle as issued by a military organization prior to 1955. That allowed semi-autos such as the M1D Garand but not reproductions of the later M14. Of course most vintage bolt actions such as US Model 1903s, 1903A4s, 1917s, various Mausers, Finnish and Soviet Mosin-Nagants, and British Enfields were allowed.

Competitor shooting Finish Model 1939 7.62x54Rmm fitted with Accumount's replica PE 4X scope and mounts. (Photo: Aimee Rathburn)



For the second day of the experimental match shooters fired at 300 and 600 yards on paper targets.

I loosened up rules on scopes a bit. Many replicas of vintage sniper scopes are now available. Companies such as Gibbs Rifle Company, Creedmoor Sports, Montana Vintage Arms, Numrich, and Leatherwood offer suitable scopes. In fact scopes from all those companies were present at our match. However, I decided to allow any scope as long as it was of 10X power or less because not everyone could obtain one of the replica scopes and get it mounted in time to be ready for our event. It should be mentioned that using an optical sight was not mandatory in either vintage sniper or BPCR categories and some shooters in each segment relied on iron sights.

Sniper rifle ammunition could be any factory load or handload even with full metal jacket (FMJ) bullets as long as it wasn't armor piercing in deference to Butte Gun Club's expensive metallic silhouettes. Of course with paper targets we didn't worry about that factor. BPCR silhouette and

paper target competitors can only use lead alloy bullets with black powder for propellant so we stayed with that rule for them.

When we first put voice to this match idea, several Montana BPCR competitors jeered at it, saying we would be lucky to get three people in attendance. Therefore I was pleased to have 24 shooters come to the silhouette day and 16 returned the next day for the paper-target match. They were split as follows. In silhouette 15 shot vintage sniper and 9-shot BPCR. For paper targets there were 12 shooters in vintage sniper and only four firing BPCRs. That's not what I would call a heavy turnout but considering Butte, Mont., is a long way from most everywhere it was satisfying for an initial event.

Also the growing interest in vintage sniper rifle competition was demonstrated in that we had two guys from Arizona, one from Southern California, a Coloradoan, and a fellow from Idaho show up. Incidentally most

shooters used one sort or another of US '03 Springfields but also fielded were Mausers, Mosin-Nagants, and one US Model 1917.

The weather cooperated both days as it often *does not* here in Montana with temperatures in the high 70s and low 80s and winds no more than 15 mph most of the time. Many shooters when told about this upcoming event said something like, "Oh, the vintage sniper rifles will run away with it. BPCRs can't begin to rival them." Those of us who have been shooting those old smoke-poles in competition for decades knew better.

So here's how it worked out. On the silhouette day Mark Griffis (Belgrade, Mont.) shooting a custom rifle based on a Winchester High Wall action (.45-70) hit 27 out of 40 possible. Mike Otterberg (Wolf Point, Mont.) shooting a US M1917 (.30-06) with Lyman

10X scope hit 26. Because the scores were so close and just for fun we had the two guys do a shoot off on the pig silhouettes. It was five shots, no sighters, and *offhand* to boot. Griffis hit two to Otterberg's one and was pronounced the winner of our first Vintage Sniper/BPCR Silhouette Challenge.

On day two with paper targets the situation was dramatically reversed. Dan Phariss (Big Timber, Mont.) using a borrowed '03 Springfield (.30-06) fitted with a 10X Unertl scope shot an amazing 289x300 with 4Xs. He dropped a single bullet into the 9-ring at 300 yards and scored 140 of a possible 150 at 600 yards. The closest BPCR competitor to that was again Mark Griffis with a score of 268 with 4Xs.

Here are some personal observations. The best performing vintage sniper rifles were those with positive windage

and elevation scope adjustments such as Montana Vintage Arms' 5B or the new Leatherwood replicas of the 8X Unertl scopes used by the US Marine Corps in World War II. That original Unertl scope on Phariss' borrowed '03 performed flawlessly.

My old friend Rob Rathburn a retired Denver cop attended this match, having just a few days earlier received a brand new rifle. It is a replica of the USMC '03 with 8X Unertl as being now marketed by Creedmoor Sports as their Model 1941A1. His was number one sent out. (Mine was number two.) Rathburn's new rifle performed very well in the silhouette match, hitting all 10 pigs at 300 meters, and nine turkeys at 385 meters. Then as his last target, only five rams at 500 meters fell to his bullets. A probable cause for that was poor wind calling by his spotter (me!). I used my new Creedmoor Sports' '03 in the paper match with fine results at 300 yards. My score of 147 of 150 possible was caused by me pulling three shots into the 9-ring. (My score at 600 yards was much worse, which I attribute to shooter fatigue and not the rifle.)

As an aside, I'd like to relate what can happen when relying on vintage equipment aged at least seven decades. My silhouette shooting started with the original German K98k low turret mount sniper rifle as I wrote about in an article titled "Resurrection" in the February 2012 issue. I cleaned all 10 pigs with it but on my fourth sighting shot at turkeys something broke inside its Zeiss scope. It went from perfectly clear to completely blurry. Of course I had a fallback rifle but such illustrates the potential problems with aged equipment.

Do I consider our experimental match to have been a success? That judgment was made by the shooters themselves because many of them said something like the following, "This was great! Let's do it some more." Because our match format was compatible with BPCR Silhouette matches the Butte Gun Club is going to allow vintage sniper rifles to shoot in their monthly events but scored separately. If interest grows the Vintage Sniper guys will get their own match days.

Suitable rifles and scopes are becoming more and more available so time will tell if shooter interest is there too. I think Vintage Sniper Rifle competition has a future, especially the silhouette version.

(Author's Note: I would like to personally thank Sierra Bullets, Nosler Bullets, Hodgdon Powder Company, and Gibbs Rifle Company for their generous prize donations.)

GUNS



Montanan Rich Galli shooting his Mosin-Nagant Model 91/30 7.62x54mm fitted with replica PE 4X scope. (Photo: Viv Fontenia)



A lady shooter firing Shiloh Model 1874 Sharps .40-65. (Photo: Viv Fontenia)



Rob Rathburn of Colorado is shown shooting the very first Creedmoor Sports Model 1941A1 sniper rifle to be shipped. Duke is the spotter. (Photo: Viv Fontenia)

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RE-STRIKE: THE SIG P290RS

**A YEAR AFTER ITS INTRODUCTION,
SIG'S SMALLEST 9MM GETS SOME
MEANINGFUL DESIGN CHANGES.**

MASSAD AYOOB

PHOTOS: JOSEPH R. NOVELOZO

The guns I call “slim-nines,” 9mm carry pistols made thin and ultra-compact, are a hot item today. SIG’s entry is the P290. I first saw it in the fall of 2010 at the IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police) conference. It was introduced in January 2011 at the SHOT Show.

Some concerns showed up in its first year in the field. There were reports of occasional misfires. Because a lot of buyers were fans of traditional double-action SIG SAUER pistols, they didn’t appreciate the fact that like so many striker-fired autos, these new guns wouldn’t let you just pull the trigger again if you got a misfire, one SIG exec later informed me. The folks at SIG SAUER in Exeter, N.H., came up with a few other tweaks that could be wrought on the P290, too.

As a result, the redesigned P290RS was introduced one year after the original P290, at the 2012 SHOT Show. It’s not another option; it’s a total replacement of the older gun.

The trigger mechanism is the defining new feature—but not the only one—on the P290 RS. The suffix in its designation stands for Re-Strike. Tim Butler, SIG SAUER’s Product

Manager at the Exeter, N.H. plant tells me the change involved a redesign of trigger bar, sear, and hammer. The result is a long, conventional double-action-only trigger stroke. The trigger goes much farther back before sear release than on the first iteration, but has proportionally less backlash.

The obvious advantage is the re-strike gives an immediate second “shot” at a recalcitrant primer in the event of a misfire. Some don’t see this as a big deal, because they follow it if a bad round failed them once, doesn’t get a second chance, and their preferred response to a “click” instead of a “bang” is a fast “tap-rack-assess the situation in front of you.”

An absolutely undeniable advantage of the P290RS over its predecessor, however, is that it’s much more friendly for dry fire. Instead of having to interrupt your trigger



The trigger pull came in at 9+ pounds in a smooth double-action-only pull. The redesigned P290RS now offers re-strike capability. The magazine catch has been reduced in size.

pulling practice by breaking your hold and retracting the slide between dry “shots,” the P290RS owner can roll the trigger continuously.

More Changes

There have been four other changes. Apparently some folks had hands beefy enough that the web of their palm could ride up and get pinched by the bottom of the external hammer during the slide cycle. (That never happened to this writer with the P290, but this writer doesn’t have the world’s biggest hands, either.) In any case a subtle, rounded beavertail



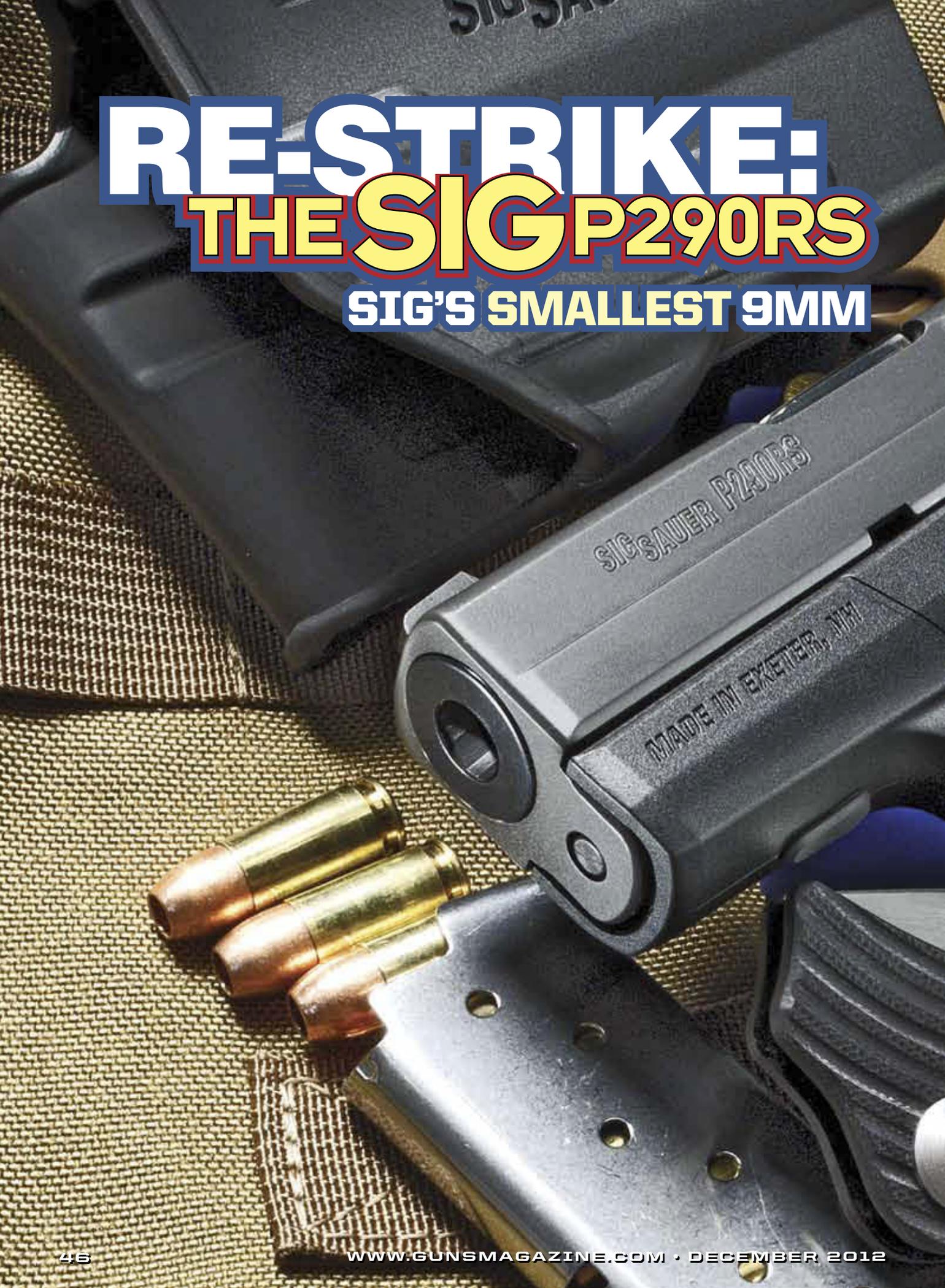
The muzzle is flared almost “cannon” like and mates to a dish machined recess in the slide.



A modest beavertail is provided to prevent hammer bite for large-handed uses. By placing your thumb over the exposed hammer, you may holster more safely because you’ll be alerted if the trigger snags on loose clothing.

RE-STRIKE: THE SIG P290RS

SIG'S SMALLEST 9MM





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The front of the P290RS slide and frame is nicely sculptured with sharp edges reduced to provide snag-free drawing and re-holstering.



A generous port is present with a nicely smoothed feed ramp on the barrel to provide excellent feeding and ejection.

has been added at the rear of the grip tang. For smaller-handed shooters, it won't hurt anything; for those with meatier paws, it could be a deal sealer for this little 9mm.

The lower rear edge on slide-lock lever of the earlier P290 had a rather sharp corner, and I can see where it would have been a problem for those who shoot with straight thumbs. That corner has been very nicely rounded. Good for you, SIG! There is another manufacturer of powerful subcompact pistols, which has long ignored a similar well-founded criticism.

On the first variation, the magazine release button stood up "loud and proud." The good news was, when you were doing a speed reload, that big button was easy to hit. The bad news was, when you weren't trying to dump the mag, it was still easy to hit. There were reports of some buyers carrying it inside their waistband, along with their personal "spare tire," whose excess flesh accidentally popped the magazines. For the P290RS, the mag release button was trimmed down some in hopes of curing that problem.

Finally, for some users, the super-small profile that was the P290's raison

d'être proved to be too small. Those consumers felt they couldn't get enough hand on the gun when shooting. A lengthened lip on the P290RS magazine created enough additional frontal length for both middle finger and ring finger to gain a secure purchase. (For those who want minimum butt size in every dimension, the P290RS comes with a flush-bottom floorplate that can be installed on the new magazine, which, like the old, holds six rounds. Older mags will work in the new version of the P290, and vice versa.)

Moreover, the P290RS comes with an additional 8-round magazine featuring a grip extension. The thing was a test of strength insofar as getting the eighth round in, but it worked fine, and didn't bind upon insertion even with the slide closed. Test sample serial number is 20C008078.

P290s in their first generation had a trigger pull somewhere between 9 pounds and off the chart, the latter referring to the fact that the most popular pull gauge hits its limit at about 12 pounds. The sample P290RS when tested on a Lyman digital trigger-pull gauge from Brownells averaged 9.23 pounds of pull weight, when leaving

P290RS

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ACTION TYPE: Double-action-only, **CALIBER:** 9mm,
CAPACITY: 6, **BARREL LENGTH:** 2.9", **OVERALL LENGTH:**
5.5", **WEIGHT:** 20.5 ounces, **FINISH:** Nitron, **SIGHTS:**
Fixed 3-dot, **GRIPS:** Polymer (interchangeable),
PRICE: \$758

the slide forward throughout and just pulling the gauge on the trigger. However, when cocking the slide to duplicate live fire cycling between each test trigger pull, the average weight went up to 9.60 pounds of average pull.

Strangely enough, over the years it has become common to test short-barrel handguns at short ranges—5, 7, 10 or 15 yards—instead of at the 25-yard line, which is where fighting handgun accuracy has been judged ever since this old man came on the scene. Not yet having "gotten the memo" that people with short-barrel handguns will be "given a handicap" in a gunfight across a parking lot, this writer continues to test short- and longer-barreled defensive handguns alike at the traditional distance of 25 yards.

Working hand-held off a Matrix rest on a concrete bench at a measured 25 yards, I tried out the P290RS with the three most popular bullet weights in 9mm Luger. I used my standard protocol: measuring each 5-shot group center to center between the farthest hits, and then taking a second measurement of the best three hits. A test done for our sister magazine, *American Handgunner* a decade ago by Charles Petty and I, confirmed that the "best three" measurement under these circumstances would come remarkably close to what the same gun and cartridge would do from a properly



Spent case is visible above and behind hammer area, with P290RS at peak of recoil in Mas' hands. Recoil wasn't bad at all. Photo: Massad Ayoob.



The slide-lock catch is sculptured with no sharp edges for those who shoot with the thumb straight out.



The P290RS has a double-recoil spring system on a guide rod.

adjusted Ransom machine rest. It's a useful tool, because most folks don't have access to a machine rest, but most can test their hardware from a solid benchrest, to compare their results with what the gunwriter might be getting.

The 147-grain subsonic 9mm Winchester load became trendy in the late 1980s. Winchester developed the concept with their original OSM (Olin Super Match), created at the behest of Special Forces personnel who wanted super-accurate 9mm rounds that could center an enemy sentry's head from a suppressed MP5 submachine gun. The exemplar of the concept for this test was the inexpensive Remington-UMC 147-grain full metal jacket round, which this writer has seen win many a pistol match. From the SIG SAUER P290RS, it put five shots into 4.25" from 25 yards. It must be noted that four of those five shots were in 2.45", and the significant "best three" shots created a tight group of 1.10". (Measurements were to the nearest .05".)

For most of the epoch of the 9mm Luger cartridge, the 124-grain bullet

was the heaviest load available. For this test, our 124-grain exemplar was the Hornady XTP load, using a deep-penetrating jacketed hollowpoint projectile. The five shots went into 4.35", and the best three of those formed a 2.80" group.

When this writer was a young puppy cop, if you wanted a hollowpoint 9mm round, it was going to weigh 115 grains. Our test load in that bullet weight was the Federal Classic coded by its manufacturer as "9BP," which over the decades proved it to be one of the most accurate loads ever produced in its caliber. It proved so again in this test, with a 5-shot group measuring 4.05". Four of those shots were a mere 2.25" apart, and the "best three hits" measurement was a "best of the test," 65/100ths of one inch center to center. That is simply amazing performance from a short barrel pocket pistol with a heavy trigger pull at—remember—25 yards, not 25 feet.

For a very long time now, "conventional gun wisdom" has held that a 4" group at 25 yards was



Seven fast headshots at 7 yards; the P290RS is a controllable little 9mm.



This 5-shot group from 25-yard bench was delivered by Hornady 124-grain XTP 9mm.



The best group at 25 yards from the P290RS, by a small margin, was with Federal 115-grain JHP. Note the tight "best three" cluster.



Economy-priced Remington UMC 147-grain FMJ delivered this group at 25 yards from the P290RS.

"acceptable combat accuracy" from a full-size 9mm service pistol. The P290RS, an itty-bitty pocket pistol, came achingly close to that. Group sizes of 4.15" with 147-grain, 4.35" with 124-grain, and 4.05" with 115-grain averages under 4.25". By that standard, we have in the SIG P290RS a pocket-size 9mm that needs to make no apologies at all in terms of accuracy. This was, after all, a small, light, gun with a long trigger pull much heavier than the gun's own weight. I have no doubt its intrinsic accuracy is much greater than what I was able to wring out of it in 5-shot groups.

I wore the little SIG 9mm for a while on my non-dominant-side hip as a backup, in the useful new Remora holster. Comfort was exquisite: no sharp edges anywhere.

Because of the long trigger pull and concomitantly long trigger return, I wasn't able to get the speed in rapid fire I'd expect from some other fire control mechanisms. Recoil had a bit of a snap for 9mm Parabellum, but nothing I could call uncomfortable. The shape of the P290RS causes it to

The polymer grip-frame is nicely textured all around for a sure grip.



point low for me, but that's subjective: dry handling in the gun shop will quickly show whether it'll be a problem for you, before you put your money on the counter.

This little pistol passed through a lot of hands among my test group. Only one shooter had a problem: a man with very long fingers found his middle finger (and particularly his thumb, in the thumb-down grasp he prefers) rode the magazine release and three times caused the mag to drop when he didn't want it to. The long, heavy trigger pull didn't make a lot of friends, but the little SIG's comfortable size and rounded edges were both unanimously appreciated. Several also liked the fact that by putting their thumb on its flat hammer, they could holster the P290RS without fear of an unintended discharge if a drawstring from a warm-up jacket or something like that got fouled in the trigger area.

Throughout the whole test, there were only two malfunctions. One was a 12 o'clock misfeed with a 147-grain load, quickly rectified with a tug on the slide. The other was a misfire (on a Federal round, of all things, famous for sensitive primers). As per the "RS" design, I just pulled the trigger again, and the shot went downrange. Both malfunctions occurred early in



The P290RS comes with extra, extended magazine increasing capacity by two more shots to 8+1, and a much better "hold." Photo: Massad Ayoob.

the first 50 shots during "break-in." There were no further mechanical malfunctions.

All in all, despite a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$758, this handy little 20.5-ounce 7-shooter is a definite contender in the currently hot niche of subcompact 9mm carry pistols.

GUNS

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RIFLE BARREL BURN

IF YOU SHOOT, IT'LL HAPPEN, BUT YOU CAN **MINIMIZE** ITS EFFECTS AND **PROLONG** YOUR TUBE'S LIFE.

John Barsness

About 15 years ago, Melvin Forbes of New Ultra Light Arms went prairie dog shooting for the first time with a few of his western friends. On a warm July afternoon the barrel of his .223 almost started to glow from dozens of 50-grain bullets zipping out the muzzle. One of the other guys said, "Hey, Melvin, you're gonna fry that barrel!"

Melvin looked at him and asked, "What day of the week is it?"

The guy looked puzzled. "Saturday."

Melvin smiled. "I do believe Douglas will be making barrels again on Monday!"

While that glass-is-half-full statement is obviously true, many of us like to extend the life of exceptionally accurate barrels. To do that we need to understand how barrels burn out. Luckily, the subject has been studied considerably; mostly because of the money it costs to re-barrel military small arms and artillery.

The erosion of a rifle bore can be broken down into three distinct but interrelated processes: thermal,

chemical and mechanical. Thermal erosion is primarily caused by the heat of burning powder gases, the reason the bore right in front of the chamber suffers the most: As the gases produced expand while the bullet travels down the bore, their temperature drops. Chemical erosion occurs when some of the gases produced by burning smokeless powder essentially alter the alloy of the bore's surface. Hydrogen and oxygen lower its melting point, but nitrogen actually tends to strengthen steel. Mechanical erosion is due to each bullet wiping away a slight amount of steel, or breaking off tiny pieces of an eroded bore.

Heat checking, the "alligator

skin" appearance of a fried throat, is primarily caused by steel turning brittle as the surface cools after each shot. The difference in flexibility between the hardened surface and the softer steel underneath results in tiny cracks. At the same time, tiny amounts of softer alloying elements are melted away, like water evaporating from a mud puddle. The result is gator skin.

Heat-checked steel is even more susceptible to chemical and thermal erosion, since the cracks cause more turbulence in the expanding gases. Instead of streaming down the bore, hot gas circulates longer in the eroded area. Cracks at right angles to the bore are most affected, since they "catch" far more hot gas. Roughly machined bores, with obvious reamer marks, also probably erode faster than very smooth barrels, due to the same effect.

A cracked bore is also more vulnerable to the primary mechanical cause of erosion, the "melt-wipe" process. The roughness of a heat-checked bore creates more friction, accelerating erosion both due to melt-wipe and pieces of cracked steel breaking off. Mechanical erosion, however, is definitely in third place as a cause of barrel burnout, far behind thermal and chemical erosion in all but very low-pressure cartridges.

Obviously, the easiest way to avoid burning out a barrel is not to shoot quickly and repeatedly, thus avoiding heat build-up. This is exactly why many prairie dog shooters take more than one rifle afield. When the barrel on one rifle starts to heat up, they put it in the shade to cool off, with the barrel pointing up and the action open. On a really hot day some shooters drape a damp towel around the barrel, allowing the rifle to get back into action sooner.

It also helps to shoot smaller cartridges for a given bore-size, one reason larger .22 centerfires like the .22-250 and .220 Swift have become less popular for prairie dog shooting. On a big prairie dog town the barrel of a .22-250 can be totally fried in one day of consistent shooting.

On a hot day in western Kansas one of my companions shot his walnut



The .220 Swift (above) is a great varmint round, especially for woodchucks and coyotes, but has lost favor for high-volume prairie dog shooting because it's really hard on barrels, especially when shot hot. Sitting in the shade not only keeps this prairie dog shooter (below) cool but prevents the barrel of his Remington 700 VTR from heating up quite so quickly. One recent trend in varmint rifle stocks is holes in the fore-end to help air circulate around the barrel.



OUT

stocked .22-250 so hot the fore-end started smoking, and we had to douse the barrel in the melted ice water of a big cooler to put out the fire. That rifle never shot really accurately again. At the opposite end of the spectrum, over the past decade I've often shot my Ruger No. 1B .22 Hornet just as fast and hard. The barrel's never come close to charring the fore-end, and the throat of the bore doesn't show a trace of heat checking when examined in a bore scope.

Case design also affects throat erosion. The shoulder of a bottlenecked case acts as a "converging nozzle," concentrating hot gas where the angles of the neck meet. A shallow shoulder angle tends to "aim" the gases further forward in the throat. Also, since erosion is most severe right in front of the chamber, a longer case neck protects more of the bore. Both a sloping shoulder and short neck are why the .243 Winchester has more of a reputation as a barrel burner than the 6mm Remington, even though the 6mm has slightly more powder capacity.

Bullet shape has a definite effect. Boat-tails tend to allow a little hot gas to edge past the base of the bullet, increasing throat erosion. A lot of varmint and target shooters prefer boat-tailed bullets due to their higher ballistic coefficient, but barrels tend to last longer when fed square-based bullets.

Very hard bullets also allow some gas blow-by, since they don't obturate ("bump up") as the expanding powder kicks them in the rear end. This is why hardcast bullets often lead the bore right in front of the chamber far more than softer lead alloys: Hot gas cuts past the bullet, melting the lead slightly. (This is also why revolver barrels usually last longer when shot with bullets cast with wheel-weights, rather than linotype or jacketed bullets.)

Common wisdom suggests hotter-burning double-based powders tend to erode barrels quicker than cooler-burning single-based powders, but



The finish on this .223's barrel is Cerakote Transfer Gray, a ceramic heat-transfer coating developed for industrial use on radiators, engine blocks and heat exchangers.



One of the reasons for the 6mm PPC's popularity for benchrest shooting is the relatively small-powder capacity of the case (below) allows custom barrels to last longer.

experiments indicate the higher nitrogen content of double-based powders tends to strengthen the surface of the bore. Also, since double-based powders contain more energy, less powder is needed to attain the same velocity, reducing the time the bore is exposed to hot gas—and there isn't a vast difference in the burning temperature of single- and double-based powders anyway.

Many shooters believe stainless steel barrels last longer than barrels made of standard steel, probably because they assume a barrel that resists corrosion (rust) also resists erosion, but most tests show a similar bore life for any steel commonly used to make barrels. On the other hand, a stainless barrel that's left "in the white" doesn't get nearly as hot from the sun's rays. On a hot, clear day a blued barrel can become almost too hot to touch just from sitting under the sun.

Over the decades many techniques have been developed to protect the bore. Chrome plating has been used for a long time, and does tend to help, because the melting point of chromium (3,374 degrees F) is higher than the heat produced by most smokeless powders. Chrome also prevents corrosion, and slows down the buildup of bullet and powder fouling.

One of the theoretical disadvantages



of chroming the bore is the coating is often slightly uneven, reducing accuracy. For the absolutely finest target accuracy this is probably true, but one of the most accurate hunting rifles I've owned was a J.C. Higgins Model 50 in .270 Winchester, the FN-Mausser-actioned hunting rifle offered for a while by Sears Roebuck. The barrels were made by High Standard and chrome-plated. That .270 shot so well I frequently used it as a test rifle for various handloads, and shot the barrel out.

Did it last longer than a non-chromed bore? Maybe. The throat started to go about the time I bought my Hawkeye bore-scope, and it looked gator-skinned just like any steel bore. Recent research indicates chrome-plating can heat-crack much like steel, perhaps due to the hardness differential between the thin layer of chrome and the steel underneath, and often also has tiny cracks even before being shot.

A more recent technique is installing the ceramic-based Dyna Bore Coat



Unless a barrel's throat is really fried, the only way to track erosion is through a bore scope.

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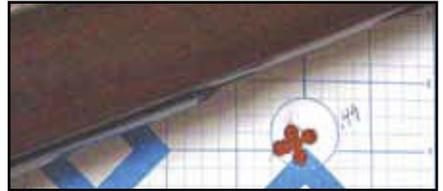
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Most AR-15s have "perforated" fore-ends to help cool the barrel, a feature more manufacturers are copying on bolt-action rifles.



This Remington 700 Classic .221 Fireball was rejuvenated after a few thousand rounds by fire-lapping the throat, then installing Dyna Bore-Coat.

(DBC), originally developed for military use. DBC is essentially microscopic ceramic particles in a quick-drying glue that's swabbed into an absolutely clean, dry barrel and allowed to dry. Several quick "curing" shots melt the ceramic slightly and press it into any small imperfections in the bore. Friction is reduced considerably, reducing bore fouling by 80 percent or more, but the bore also doesn't heat up as quickly, partly due to the thin ceramic layer increasing heat dissipation.

DBC is much thinner than chrome plating, averaging .25 of a micron in thickness on the smoother areas of the bore, so doesn't affect accuracy. It can also be installed on top of chrome plating, filling any tiny cracks. I put it in the chromed bore of my Bushmaster AR-15 .223 to reduce bullet and powder fouling, and between the chrome and DBC the barrel can be fired several hundred rounds between cleanings. It slicks right up with a couple of patches soaked in any powder solvent, since there's rarely any copper fouling. It's been shot fast and hot quite a bit over the past 5 years and there's very little throat erosion.

Cerakote is an industrial exterior ceramic finish used as a heat dissipater on radiators, engine blocks, heat exchangers and anything else that tends to get hot, but due to its corrosion resistance has also become quite popular as a finish for rifle barrels and actions. Cerakote can be any color, since it's essentially painted on, but the most popular for industrial use is "Transfer Gray."

I had a shot-out Remington 788 .222 re-barreled to .223 a few years ago, then Cerakoted the barrel in Transfer Gray and installed DBC in the bore.

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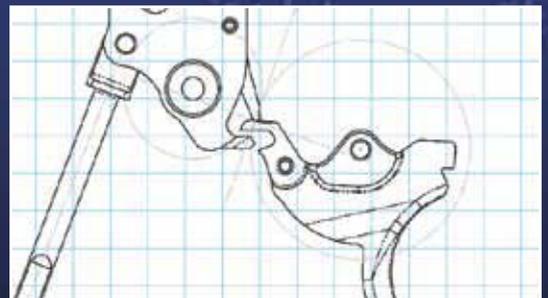
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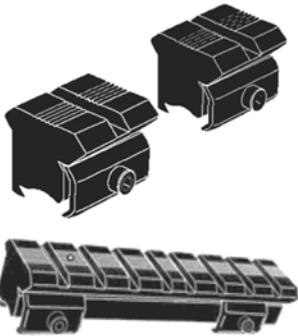
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This lineup of modern short, fat magnums (above) illustrates one reason the .223 Winchester Super Short Magnum (left) has the reputation of being hard on barrels: The sloping shoulder concentrates hot powder gas in the area right at the front of the short neck. The .338 Lapua Magnum's large case (below) burns a lot of powder. This makes muzzlebrakes effective but also burns out barrels.



The barrel ran noticeably cooler during rapid-fire shooting than similar-weight .223 barrels, and also cooled off quicker when placed in the shade.

Dynamic Finishes, the company that markets DBC, also offers a clear, easily applied ceramic exterior coating called Dyna Gun Shield that also provides some surface cooling, but doesn't change the color of traditional bluing or any other finish, and also makes the surface slicker and more corrosion resistant. It works great on rifle bolts, hunting knife blades or anything else stuff tends to stick to, but needs to be reapplied now and then.

Fluting also helps barrels cool off quicker, due to increasing surface area, but these days a lot of fluting might be termed cosmetic, since it's too shallow to increase the surface much, if at all. Recently I tested a factory rifle with flutes so shallow they were essentially a mirror image of the outside radius of the barrel.

Deeper flutes are far more effective, and the deep, spiral flutes offered by the E.R. Shaw company provide more flute-length per inch of barrel. One of my long-range rifles is a 6.5-06 made by Shaw with a No. 4 contour, spiral-fluted stainless barrel. To keep in practice for longer-range, big-game hunting I usually shoot a few dozen shots at prairie dogs every year, and the barrel cools down pretty quickly, thanks both to the fluting and DBC inside the bore.

These days more bolt-action manufacturers have taken a clue from AR-15s and put holes in the fore-ends of varmint and target rifles. These help dissipate heat, especially

when combined with a free-floated, fluted barrel.

When a barrel throat starts to erode, the process accelerates, due to increased bullet friction and gas turbulence. One traditional solution is to unscrew the barrel and cut off an inch or so of the barrel shank, then rethread and rechamber the barrel, but so-called "fire-lapping" can also rejuvenate a worn throat. For a number of years well-known target shooter David Tubb has offered his "Final Finish" kit, a small batch of bullets coated in abrasive for slicking-up a throat, and NECO sells a kit providing everything needed for a shooter to abrasive-coat bullets.

Either kit will break in a new barrel with just a few rounds, instead of the 20 or 30 shots recommended in the "1-shot-clean" method, but fire-lapping is just as useful for smoothing an eroded throat. In the past year I rejuvenated the barrels of two favorite varmint rifles, a .221 Fireball and a .223 Remington. Firing 10 to 15 coarse-grit lapping bullets erased all trace of fire checking in both rifles, but instead of firing more bullets with finer-grit abrasives I installed DBC. Both rifles began shooting more accurately immediately, and the smoothed throats should last longer before starting to heat-check again.

Some shooters apparently like to fry barrels, but today there are plenty of ways to keep a good barrel shooting longer.

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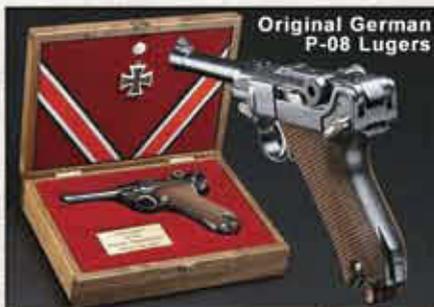
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HAPPY 50TH!

Remington

ANNIVERSARY MODEL 700 RIFLE IN 7MM MAGNUM.

Dave Anderson

When rifle manufacturers dream, they dream of Remington in 1962. A successful rifle model is a great thing. A hot-selling new cartridge is a triumph. In 1962, Remington achieved both at once. The Model 700 in 7mm Rem Mag was just the right product at just the right time.

The 700 was an evolutionary development of Remington's post-WWII bolt-action series. Before the war it made sense to make guns with complicated milling setups. A rifle receiver was made by locking a block of steel in a fixture and making a

milling cut. Then lock it in another fixture and make another cut. Then lock it in another fixture... some receivers were reputed to require as many as 70 individual setups. It worked because in the prewar world trained machinists worked cheap and

were grateful to have a job at all.

Not so after the war. Even unskilled labor was in great demand, and a good tool-and-die maker could practically write his own ticket. Gunmakers no longer competed just with other gunmakers for skilled workers, but with Boeing, Ford and GE, and thousands of small companies making parts for big companies. At the much higher wages required, old methods no longer worked. Call it the death of 70 cuts.

Remington realized they would have to turn to high-tech equipment, which workers could be trained to operate in less time. The primary high-tech machine of the era was the lathe. What lathes do best is make round things.

The receivers of the new 721/722 rifles were made from sections of round bar stock, with openings cut for magazine and loading/ejection port, and recesses for the locking lugs. Bolts were another section of round stock with a locking lug section brazed on one end and a handle brazed on the other.

Stocks were made of plain, unchecked walnut. Inletting for a round receiver proved to be less time-consuming and costly than inletting for a flat-bottomed receiver. As a side benefit it made for a more precise fit at less cost. Hmm.

A stamped steel strap shaped in the form of a guard and bolted to the stock doesn't look as nice as a machined, inletted guard, but it protects the trigger just as well and costs a fraction as much.

Sometimes I read and hear shooters today waxing poetic about the wonderful workmanship of those classic 721/722 rifles. When they first appeared there was plenty of harrumphing and chin stroking from the "old guard." Reviews from



A selection of 700s includes (left to right) a 1962 model with Shilen .243 barrel, 6-18X Redfield, the Anniversary 7mm Mag, 3-9X Redfield, early '70s .243 with 4-12X Leupold, Classic 7mm Mag with 6X Weaver, 7mm Ultra Mag with 2.5-8X Leupold, early Ti .30-06 with 2.5-8X Leupold and a late production .223 with Leupold Mark 4 3.5-10X.

old magazines have phrases like “not an enthusiast’s rifle,” “a good utility rifle,” “parts made from stampings” and “cheaper to manufacture.”

Some reviews mentioned heavy bolt-lift because of the strong firing-pin spring, or the “cheap and fast” button-rifling method used to make the barrels. But keep reading and you’ll find phrases like “gave surprisingly good accuracy” or “never tested one that didn’t deliver excellent accuracy.”

Surprise, surprise. Wisdom of the day said the key to accuracy was the barrel. Accurate barrels took days to make: bored, honed, lapped, polished, with rifling hand cut, ideally by the light of a waxing moon, using a cutter it took two weeks to make, preferably by an eccentric and truculent octogenarian using his blood and tears as cutting fluid.

In theory barrels rifled by running a carbide button through them shouldn’t be accurate, but they were. As Yogi Berra is supposed to have said, “In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.”

A fast lock time (hey, now the powerful firing-pin spring makes sense) enhanced accuracy further. A strong, rigid receiver supported the barrel more consistently than a flexible Mauser-type receiver. Making everything square and straight improved accuracy, and was easy to achieve with the Remington action.

The accuracy reputation came later. Initially buyers were influenced more by price. In 1951 the 721A retailed at \$79.95, the 722A at \$74.95. At the same time the Winchester 70 in .270



The Remington 700 is America's most popular bolt-action hunting rifle, a modern classic in production now for 50 years. Originally, the Redfield 3-9X was a very popular scope for the M700. Today, the current Redfield Revolution 3-9x40mm is an excellent scope, a terrific value. The Buck 110 folding knife is another American classic and was first announced about the same time as the original 700.



Dave's old 700 short action made in 1962 (top), now wears a Shilen .243 barrel. The old rifle is shown in its original stock fitted with a vintage Redfield 6-18X scope. A vintage Redfield 3-9X graces the anniversary model.



This is the ad that appeared in all the hunting/shooting magazines in 1962, touting “the finest rifle Remington has ever made.” Incidentally at first the 700 used a 24” barrel for magnum cartridges, a 20” barrel for standard rounds.

or .30-06 had a retail price of \$109.50. A difference of \$30 or \$35 seems like nothing today but in 1951, \$40 a week was considered not a bad salary.

By the late 1950s supply had caught up with demand, and buyers were becoming more discerning, wanting more features and ready to try new cartridges. Remington by then was financially secure, with the assets and expertise to try new ideas.

The short-lived (1958-1961) Model 725 was a good-looking rifle with a nicely shaped and hand-checked stock, but not enough different from the older models to be a big seller at a higher price. What was needed was a complete redesign, something to really catch shooters’ attention.

Remington knew they had a good rifle in the 721/722 design. It just needed to look prettier. The 700 is a cosmetic makeover of the older models, but a very good makeover. The bolt handle was reshaped, swept back a bit and with a flattened, knurled bolt knob. The BDL series added

an inletted triggerguard and hinged floorplate assembly, made of cast aluminum rather than milled steel, but gracefully shaped and functional.

The new stock design showed some “California” influence with a Monte Carlo cheekpiece, white-line spacers and black forearm tip. Probably the most controversial idea was the stamped-in “checkering” on pistol grip and forearm.

Shooters got the message. At a time when other gunmakers were desperately cutting corners, trying to stay afloat, the perception—and the reality—was Remington was genuinely trying to make a more appealing rifle.

The sensational 7mm Rem Mag cartridge contributed to the 700s success. As with the rifle itself there wasn’t anything particularly new about the cartridge, it was more a matter of the market being ready for it. Big-case 7mms have a history going back to the early 1900s, with cartridges such as the .275 H&H, .280

Ross, and .280 Newton.

For several decades anyone who could get his mitts on a few .300 H&H cases was designing a new cartridge. The poor old Holland case was fire-formed, necked down, necked up, shortened, bent, folded, spindled and mutilated. Some of the names coming to mind include Ackley, Dubiel, Halbe & Gerlich (Halger), Mashburn, Norma, Sharpe & Hart, Taylor & Robbins. If shooters think designers make grandiose claims for their cartridges today, they should read some of the stuff from the '50s and earlier.

Roy Weatherby, with his flair for promotion and boundless enthusiasm, probably did more than anyone to build interest in magnum cartridges. Weatherby rifles at the time cost two or three times as much as a Remington 700 or Winchester 70.

Magnum Mania

In 1962, there were lots of shooters who wanted rifles a bit fancier looking, they wanted a magnum, and (though they'd die rather than admit it), they were apprehensive about the "formidable recoil" of the .300 magnums. The 700 in 7mm Rem Mag exactly fit the bill. It's true the 7mm kicks a bit more than a .30-06, all else being equal, but all else wasn't equal.

The standard Remington 700, and the popular Winchester 70 Featherweight, weighed around 8 pounds field-ready. With its beefier 24" barrel the new 7mm Mag was about 1-1/2 pounds heavier. Shooters

50TH ANNIVERSARY MODEL 700

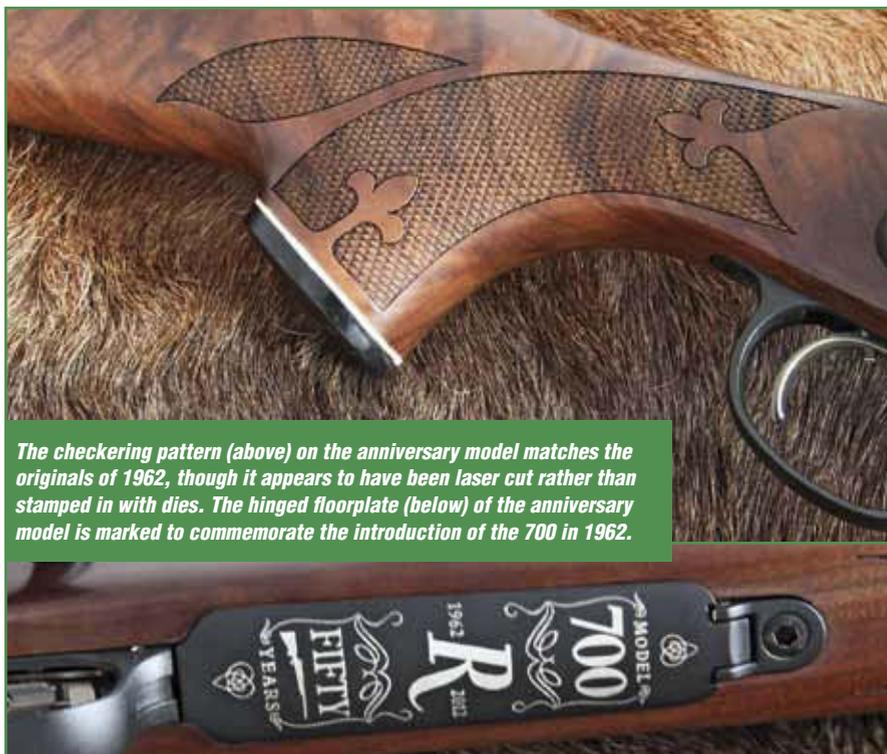
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ACTION: Bolt-action repeater, **CARTRIDGE:** 7mm Remington Magnum, **CAPACITY:** 3, **BARREL:** 24", 1:9.25" twist, **OVERALL LENGTH:** 44-1/2", **WEIGHT:** 7-5/8 pounds, **FINISH:** Satin blue, **STOCK:** Walnut, **PRICE:** \$1,399

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ACTUAL MAGNIFICATION: 3.3X - 8.5X, **OBJECTIVE DIAMETER:** 40mm, **MAIN TUBE DIAMETER:** 1", **ADJUSTMENTS:** 1/4 MOA click, **EYE RELIEF:** 4.2" (3X), 3.7" (9X), **OVERALL LENGTH:** 12.3", **WEIGHT:** 12.6 ounces, **ADJUSTMENT RANGE:** 56" elevation & windage, **RETICLE OPTIONS:** 4-Plex, Accu-Range, **PRICE:** \$224.99



The checkering pattern (above) on the anniversary model matches the originals of 1962, though it appears to have been laser cut rather than stamped in with dies. The hinged floorplate (below) of the anniversary model is marked to commemorate the introduction of the 700 in 1962.

who were comfortable with an '06 found they could handle the "Big 7," and they were shooting a sure-enough Magnum.

Demand was so great Remington was caught by surprise and took some months to catch up. Meanwhile competitors who could do so quickly adapted their rifles to accept the new cartridge.

For about the next decade the hot setup with hunters in the know was a Remington 700 in 7mm Rem Mag with a Redfield 3-9X variable. The 700 went on to become by far the most popular American bolt-action hunting rifle, in a bewildering number of variations. It has also provided excellent service to America's military forces and police agencies.

As anniversary models go, the Remington 50th Anniversary 700 rifle is both an appropriate tribute to a great rifle, and a very nice hunting rifle. Remington really made the effort to get it right. The stock is a fine recreation of the original, right down to the checkering, now done with lasers rather than pressed in with dies, but the patterns are true to the originals.

In terms of design and operation the original 700 was identical to the 721/722 models—differences were entirely cosmetic. In fact the 700 changed more in the last 50 years than it did in the initial transition.

An anti-bind feature was added by slotting the right/bottom locking lock to fit a rail in the receiver. My older 700s never gave any functioning

problems but it's a worthwhile feature. Certainly bolt operation on the test rifle was smooth and reliable.

Originally the safety locked both bolt and trigger. Later the bolt-locking feature was deleted, so the rifle could be loaded or unloaded with the safety engaged. In the field I carry my rifles magazine loaded and the chamber empty and seldom use a safety, so this doesn't concern me one way or another.

The third change is the X-trigger. The original trigger was very good. Unfortunately some shooters with no understanding of what they were doing would break the seals on the adjustment screws, merrily spin screws around and create an unsafe condition.

At any rate Remington now uses the X-trigger, which can be user-adjusted for weight-of-pull via a screw in the top of the trigger. With the screw turned out as far as possible weight-of-pull was 4-1/4 pounds, free of creep and with a crisp break.

By the mid-1960s the hot setup was a Remington 700 in 7mm Rem Mag, most likely fitted with a 3-9X Redfield in Redfield rings and a 1-piece windage-style base. Your knife would be the new Buck folder, the Model 110.

Still Here, 50 Years Later

Today the rifle, cartridge, and knife are still available, little changed over the last 50 years. The old Redfields are long gone, but happily the name has been resurrected. Current Redfields

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The current Redfield Revolution 3-9x40 has been very successful, and deservedly so. It is tough, durable, and an amazing value. I've used an early production model on half a dozen rifles from .223 to .338 RCM and found it completely reliable. The practical matte finish of the scope is a good match for the anniversary rifle.

I used factory Black Hills Gold ammunition for testing, loaded with 150-grain Hornady SST and 140-grain Barnes TSX bullets. Three shot groups of around .6" to .7" were routine. Frankly I'd have been astonished by any other result. Over the years I've owned a lot of 700s and shot a lot more. I have yet to see one that wasn't accurate.

Functioning was flawless with smooth feeding from both left and



Here's 7mm Rem Mag ammunition then and now. Early Peters ammunition was loaded with a 175-grain Core-Lokt bullet (left) and modern Black Hills Gold is loaded with 140-grain Barnes TSX. Typical 3-shot, 100-yard group with the 50th Anniversary Remington 700 7mm Rem Mag, using Black Hills Gold ammunition, here with the 150-grain Hornady SST bullet was in the sub-MOA range.



right rails, and reliable extraction and ejection of fired cases. Overall quality of parts and workmanship appears to be very good.

The stock on the test rifle showed an exceptionally nice grain, though I don't like the way the grain runs through the pistol grip area. I looked at several anniversary models at local gun stores and found they also had better-than-average wood quality.

Metal isn't quite as shiny as the originals, being polished and blued to a satin finish, attractive and well done. With its 24" barrel the 7mm Mag anniversary rifle is no lightweight at 7-5/8 pounds (empty rifle without scope or bases). Nonetheless it balances and handles nicely.

Some fans of the 700 who will buy this rifle as a collectible, keeping it unfired in the box. I won't tell others what to do with their own property, but collector value aside this is a very practical rifle which would be right at home in the field. Kudos to Remington for a fitting and worthy tribute to a great American hunting rifle. **GUNS**

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GUNS 2012

Christmas Gift Guide

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JOHN CONNOR

It's that time again, folks, so break out your Naughty & Nice List, number the names of the numptys on it, grab a marker, and start highlighting who-gets-what on these pages. Oh, what do I want for Christmas?

Hmmm. I'd like a round tuit; not a square one, or one of those common hexagonal tuits. There are so many things I'd like to do, if I could just get a round tuit. Wood is fine, solid brass is better. Thanks in advance, and Merry Christmas!

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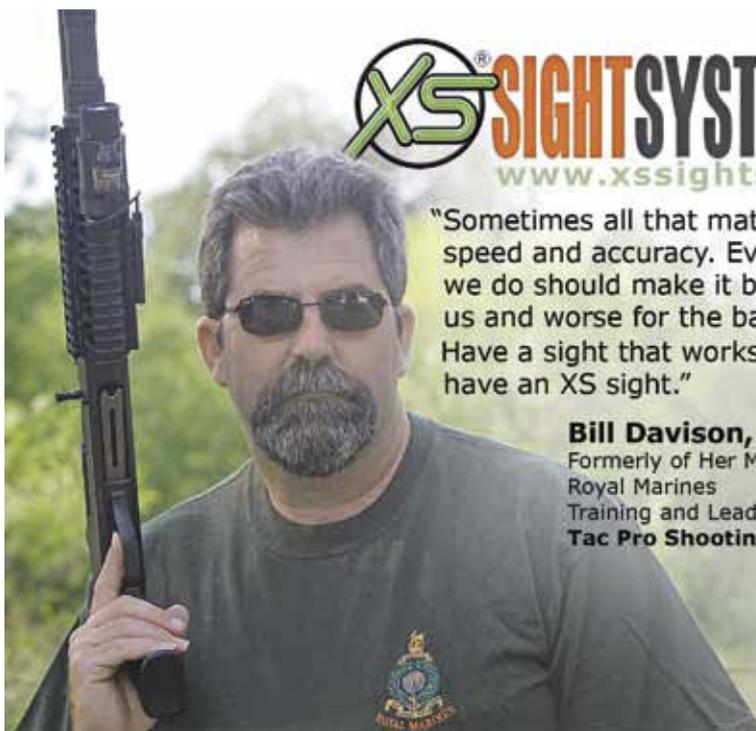


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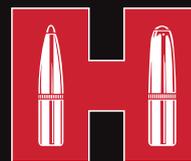
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KNIVES

STORY: Pat Covert

POUND THIS!

Grayman adds a modern Bowie to their popular Mega-Pounder series.

Back in November 2011, we introduced you to Grayman Knives' Satu, an oversized, tank-like tactical folder. If you like such heaping helpings in a knife, you're going to love Grayman's new Mega-Pounder Bowie. Throughout the company's line of fixed-blade knives, their Mega-Pounder series tops the rest in sheer brawn and weight. The Mega-Pounder Bowie carries on this tradition with added style points and a handful of tugs at the traditional knife lover's heartstrings.

Grayman's Bowie is a blend of traditional styling with modern twists. The 6" upswept clip-point blade is reminiscent of the old Iron Mistress of movie lore, but it comes with a surprise. The blade is actually chisel ground—flat on the backside—to make sharpening easier. To further that cause, the 1/4" thick blade is 1095 carbon steel (read: very easy to sharpen) and sports a black Gunkote finish for corrosion resistance. The knife's corpulent, yet comfortable handle features a deep finger choil, hearty textured G10 scales,



At 17.3 ounces, the hefty Mega-Pounder Bowie more than lives up to its name. Seen on the bottom is the new Dua folder, a smaller version of the Satu.

and a skull-buster base with lanyard hole.

At 17.3 ounces the Mega-Pounder Bowie more than lives up to its name, but if you need a "little more knife" Grayman offers the same knife in 7.5" and 9" blade lengths. The 6" SB 6 model featured here can be had with a standard MOLLE-compatible tan Cordura sheath or you can go deluxe with a superb tooled sheath (see photo) by Riedel Custom Leather for a few clams extra. Either way, be prepared to own the whacker of your dreams. Mike Grayman only builds big, bad knives, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

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DAVID CODREA

The Dark Night Rises

A frenzied reaction from gun control advocates, the mainstream media and opportunistic politicians was predictable following the horrific mass shootings at the Aurora, Colo., premiere of the Batman summer blockbuster, *The Dark Knight Rises*. The prolonged, furious intensity, unabated at this writing, weeks after the attack, suggests enemies of the Second Amendment sense an opportunity to buck political timidity preceding the November elections, and to strike a crippling blow to the right to keep and bear arms. Adding a disappointing element into the furor was a number of so-called conservatives who felt compelled to add their voices to those of the mob.

“NRA’s LaPierre has blood on his hands,” Pete Dreier, a “progressive” professor accused in an all-too-typical hit piece representative of Salon.com and the establishment media. “He didn’t pull the trigger, but he’s the NRA’s hit man when it comes to intimidating elected officials,” Dreier “reasoned,” devolving into childish ad hominem such as “Its [sic] hard to know if he’s mentally unstable but he’s certainly crazy like a fox (and Fox News).”

Legislation demands from the usual suspects were immediate, everything from a renewed ban on “assault weapons” to banning of online ammunition sales to—and those who ridicule the “slippery slope” concept take note—a ban on handguns endorsed by the United Methodist Church. President Obama ignored the pre-election wisdom of not touching the “gun control” third rail and, per *The Washington Post*, “told the National Urban League... he believes a lot of gun owners would agree that ‘AK-47s belong in the hands of soldiers,’ not

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civilians on American streets.” The next day he and his people backed off and resumed the “enforce existing gun laws mantra,” notably after Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid freaked at the prospect of November revenge and announced there was no room on his schedule to even consider such measures.

That’s not stopping RKBA nemesis Rep. Carolyn McCarthy and others in “safe districts” to join with Senator Frank Lautenberg on an ammo sales bill, one that would require showing the same form of government-issued ID Eric Holder’s Justice Department maintains discriminates against minorities when you require it to vote.

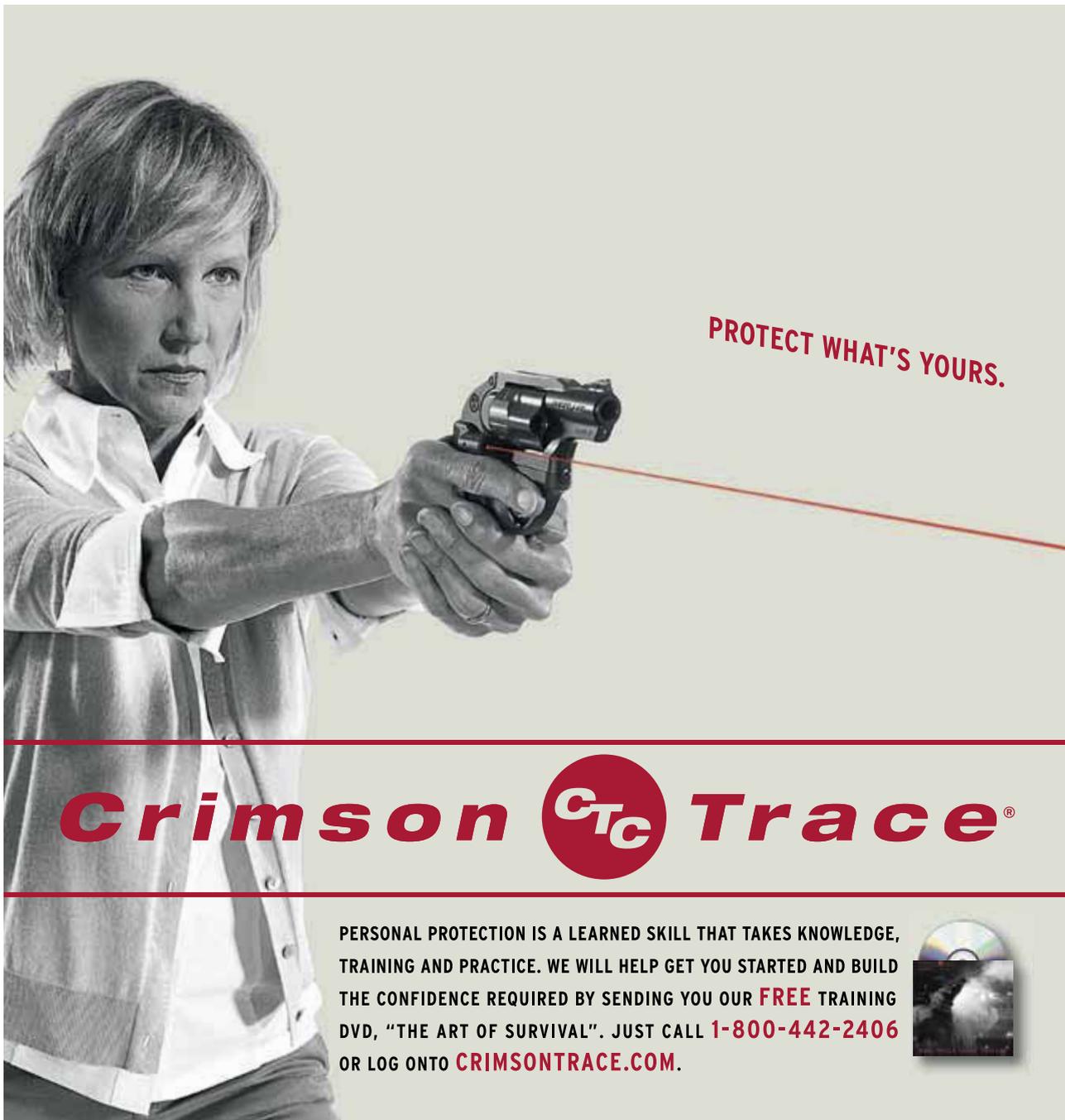
And Obama’s spokesman, apparently oblivious to the previous flap, indicated the president would “evaluate” the measure.

Adding to the wave of assaults was a surprise attack from the political right, with “conservative” pundit Bill Kristol advising Democrats they were “foolish” for not pushing guns, and calling a ban on semi-autos “moderate.” Bill O’Reilly of the despised-by-the-left Fox News, evidently ignorant of the 1934 National Firearms Act, demanded Congress require dealers to report “heavy weapons” sales to the FBI. Syndicated radio host Michael Savage endorsed banning “assault weapons.” And Supreme

Court Justice and presumed “originalist” Antonin Scalia felt it necessary to volunteer, again on Fox News, that “the Second Amendment leaves room for US legislatures to regulate guns, including menacing hand-held weapons.”

The good news is, it appears a critical mass of Americans aren’t being fooled by the engineered hysteria, and gun owners, properly vigilant and holding fast, are realizing it’s always darkest before the dawn.

Addendum: Jury results in the trial of the Reese family reported last month in “A Fixed Fight” were announced as I was finishing this column. The family



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was found not guilty on one count of conspiracy and 18 counts of gun smuggling they had been charged with. Three of the defendants were found guilty on four of the eight charges of providing false statements.

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

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

NEWS

CWD In Texas

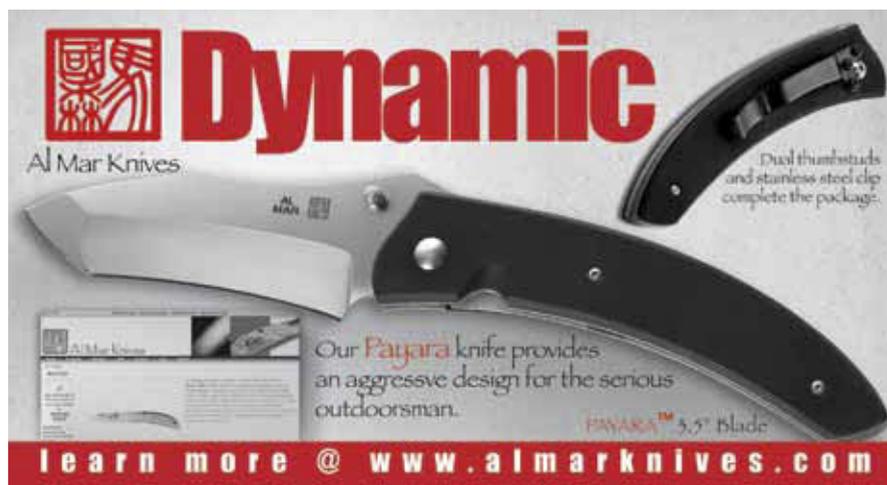
Texas has become the 19th state to confirm Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in its deer population after two mule deer tested positive for the disease in early July. A Texas Parks and Wildlife Department press release reports the two animals were collected during regular sampling tests in Hudspeth County after mule deer in New Mexico were reported positive in mid-June. Texas has had a CWD surveillance program in place for more than a decade. Management caused by these newly identified cases will concentrate on containment of the disease.—*Courtesy NSSF*

Glock's Important Safety Guidelines

In honor of National Safety Month, Glock, a leading global manufacturer of pistols and accessories, wants to remind gun owners of 10 important safety rules. These safety tips will help users remain confident and safe when using a firearm.

Rule 1: Train with all your guns.

Every gun is unique in the way it feels, handles and fires, so it's important to achieve a maximum comfort level with every gun you own by practicing with each one separately at a local dealer or range. Done on a regular basis, this exercise will strengthen familiarity and muscle memory, so each gun feels as natural and comfortable as the next, even in stressful situations. While training on the range, remember to always use acceptable



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Rule 2: Handle every firearm as if it's loaded.

Rule 3: Always point the muzzle in a safe direction, away from yourself and others.

A safe direction means the muzzle of the gun is pointed so that if it were to accidentally fire it would not cause injury or damage.

Rule 4: Keep your finger outside the firearm's triggerguard and off the trigger until you have aligned the firearm's sights on a safe target and you have made the decision to fire.

Rule 5: Always be certain your target and the surrounding area are safe before firing.

Rule 6: Know your gun's safety features.

The safety features of firearms vary in accordance with the mechanical characteristics of each gun. Since guns can be so different, never handle any firearm without first having thoroughly familiarized yourself with the particular type of firearm you are using.

Rule 7: Store your gun properly.

Guns placed in drawers, closets, desks, cabinets, or other unlocked, accessible places are simply not secure. For proper storage always use a personal safe or single-gun lock box with a trigger lock placed on the firearm for an added layer of protection.

Rule 8: Educate loved ones on gun safety.

Take time to teach your loved ones, including children of an appropriate age, the basic safety guidelines outlined here. Bring them with you to the range to become more comfortable around guns and to see their proper, safe use firsthand.

Rule 9: Ensure all users are properly trained.

Whether it's a family member or friend, it's essential that anyone else who will be using your gun is properly trained. Gun education, training and classes are widely available for both adult beginners and children over a certain age, are offered for a reasonable fee and can be taken at firing ranges and dealers in your area.

Rule 10: Properly maintain your gun.

Gun maintenance includes proper use, cleaning and service. It is important to use good ammunition of the proper caliber. Occasional cleaning and lubrication will keep your gun functioning at an optimal level. To maintain the integrity of the pistol, Glock recommends leaving it in factory-issued form with no aftermarket parts. Should an issue arise with a factory-issued pistol, contact the manufacturer's customer service.

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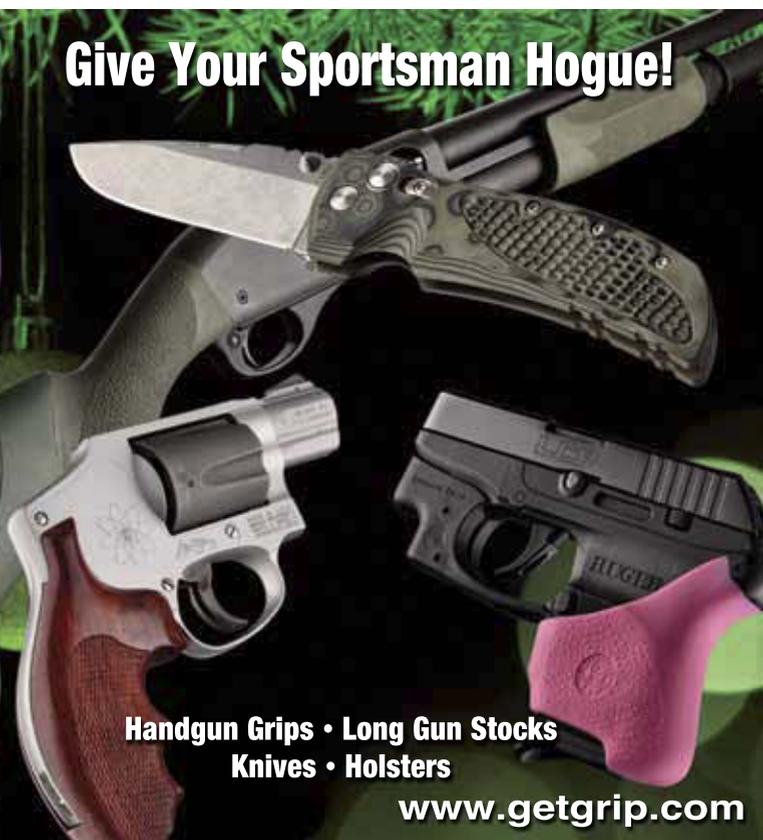
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"Gun safety is at the core of Glock's mission as a company, and we encourage all gun owners to take safety very serious," said Glock Vice President Gary Fletcher. "Our industry expertise, online and in-person training and sport shooting events make Glock a proven partner in a gun owner's life." For more information about Glock's safety rules and procedures, please visit www.youliveyourlife.com.

Nosler Employee Promoted Lt. Colonel



Nosler Design Engineer Mike Moffit has been promoted to the rank of Lt. Col. in Oregon Army National Guard. Photo: Nosler

Nosler, Inc. is proud to announce that company employee Mike Moffit has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Oregon Army National Guard last July. Lt. Col. Moffit has been a member of the Oregon Army National Guard for 15 years during which time he has been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Lt. Col. Moffit has been employed at Nosler for 8 years and currently holds the position of Design Engineer. Nosler is honored to employ both Veterans and Active Duty members of our nation's Armed

Services and is very pleased Lt. Col. Moffit's exemplary service and dedication to the National Guard have resulted in his recent promotion.—
Courtesy Mason Payer, Nosler

Zins 11-Time Champ

Brian "Gunny" Zins of Poland, Ohio, won his 11th National Pistol title during the NRA's National Rifle & Pistol Championships in Camp Perry, Ohio last summer. Shooting an aggregate score of 2649-142x, Zins finished three points ahead of his nearest competitor.

"Considering that I took 18 months off due to an elbow injury, to win here in Camp Perry, it's awesome," said Zins. "I thought I was out after the .45 slow fire match. But I knuckled down and it worked out well."

Brian Zins has long been a force in the competitive shooting world. His 10 NRA National Pistol titles brought him to the attention of History Channel's popular shooting challenge show *Top Shot*. A favorite at the opening of Season 2, Zins came in second during the much-anticipated finale.

"Camp Perry is a different animal," explained Zins. "There are mystic elements and a mystery about this place that makes it really hard to perform at your best. All you can do is do better than everybody else."

Finishing a second overall, with a score of 2646-116x, was 2-time National Champion Sergeant First Class James Henderson of the US Army Marksmanship Unit. John Zurek of Arizona came in third.

Last year's winner, Philip Hemphill of Clinton, Miss., clinched the High Police title with a final tally of 2616-124x. The designation of High Junior as well as High Collegian went to Ohio State's Joseph Totts while Judy Tant of East Lansing, Mich., took home the High Woman title for the fifth year in a row.

The National Rifle Association and the Civilian Marksmanship Program conduct the National Matches at Camp Perry each summer. Considered the "World Series" of the shooting sports, participants range from novices to Olympic-level shooters, and include civilians, military personnel, and law enforcement officers. The NRA National Rifle and Pistol Championships are open to everyone; NRA membership is not required. **GUNS**

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SAUVESTRE'S HIGH-TECH SLUG

HOLT BODINSON

French "Sauvestre" brand shotgun and rifle ammunition is once again available through a new importer, Century International Arms. Sauvestre's shotgun slug is especially intriguing. From a design point-of-view, there's nothing quite like it. It's pretty radical, looking ever so much like a miniature rocket, and its designer is as intriguing as the fin-stabilized slug he created.

Jean-Claude Sauvestre is a recognized munitions engineer who was formerly in charge of France's entire weapons development program. He worked extensively on sabot and fin-stabilized tank ammunition, and having a lifelong passion for hunting, it was almost foreordained that Sauvestre would eventually turn his considerable engineering talents loose on cutting-edge hunting ammunition. He's done exactly that with today's lead-free lines of Sauvestre rifle and shotgun slug ammunition.

Sauvestre's slug, known in French as the "Arrow Projectile," incorporates some of the design principles employed in modern tank munitions—a fin-stabilized kinetic energy projectile surrounded by an advanced sabot molded from aerospace-quality polymers. The 12-gauge, 2-3/4" slug pictured here weighs 318 grains, is 2" long and sports an unexpanded diameter of .460" at the nose. The body is composed of two, non-ferrous alloys—a hard central core attached to the rear fin surrounded by a softer, expanding cup at the nose. Upon impact, the cup folds

back creating an enlarged wound channel while the hard core, now exposed at the nose, functions as a penetrator.

The rather complex, gold-colored, polymer sabot is molded precisely to the body of the projectile while the

bore-riding surface of the sabot consists of a series of narrow ribs with an outside diameter of .745". The ribbed design works well in both smoothbore and rifled barrels. Interestingly, when the complete sabot is seated in the factory case, the fin portion of the projectile is actually seated in the middle of the powder charge. That fin is made from a tough polymer!

Factory quoted ballistics are interesting. From a 24" barrel (smooth or rifled not stated), the slug has a muzzle velocity of 1,887 fps, churning up approximately 2,562 foot-pounds of energy. Sighted in at 100 meters, the slug is 1.45" high at 50m and +1.38" at 75m. That's flat. The factory recommends the slug for wild boar, roe deer and red deer.

I had five rounds to play with. One I disassembled for the photographs so I decided to shoot two at 50 yards from a smooth bore Ultra 87 with open sights and two from a rifled and scoped Savage Model 210. Having had some painful experiences with the damage that separating sabots can do to chronograph screens, I chose not to confirm the factory's velocity figures.

The accuracy of those four remaining rounds was remarkable. The Savage printed two holes that touched with a center-to-center measurement of 3/4". The Ultra 87 by Century Arms has always been

an outstanding performer with slugs of all types and turned in a 1" group. The clean cut holes in the target measured 7/16" in diameter with four slits made by the stabilizing fins quite evident at the periphery. Another observation that was interesting was there was no visible powder fouling left in the bores after firing the Sauvestre slugs.

Century is importing the full line of Sauvestre ammunition, which includes 12- and 20-gauge slugs in 2-3/4" and 3" cases as well as centerfire rifle ammunition. As a complex, premium slug, the 12-gauge Sauvestre slugs sell for \$47.95 per box of five. A bit pricey for a lot of practice, but for hunting, how many slugs do you shoot each year pursuing big game? Ammunition is still the cheapest part of the hunt and the most important.

Given its high velocity, flat trajectory and excellent ballistic form, the Sauvestre slug should prove very effective in the field. By all means, be sure to see the great videos of the product on the Century and Sauvestre websites.

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HUNTERJOHN TARGETS

HOLT BODINSON

When was the last time you patterned your shotgun? Possibly never? If so, join the club. It's a *big* club.

To most smoothbore users, patterning seems almost superfluous. A shotgun's a scattergun, right? When we miss, we universally blame our leads.

But what if your target simply sailed through one of the many holes in your shot pattern or was just tagged by a single pellet on the weak outer fringe of your pattern. Or suppose your scattergun doesn't really center its pattern where you know your point-of-aim is. Suppose the stocking of the gun doesn't fit your anatomy and affects your ability to center your patterns. Suppose your shotgun with its particular chambers, forcing cones, bore size and chokes simply isn't compatible with the factory ammunition or hand-load it's being fed. How will you ever know if you don't spend a few minutes shooting patterns on paper?

The answer is you won't.



Century is importing a full line of Sauvestre slugs in 12 and 20 gauges (above). From a rifled or smooth bore, the Sauvestre slug delivered impressive accuracy (below).



The polymer sabot (above) is molded precisely to the body of the projectile. The fin-stabilized, kinetic energy projectile (below) is certainly exotic looking.



While patterning and interpreting patterns seems like an arcane science full of techie terms like "pattern performance efficiency" and "pellet distribution factors" coupled with mystical pie chart representations, the patterning process can be simplified and actually be enjoyable. What has changed is the nature of available patterning target.

The HunterJohn series consists of 38"x 40" targets overprinted with 79 clay pigeons, or the silhouette and internals of a duck, or the head of a turkey. In the center of each target is a large red aiming point. The advantage of the HunterJohn series is that each target permits the shooter to see the location and concentration of their patterns superimposed on a realistic image—either on a clay pigeon about the size of the body of a dove or quail or on one of our popular game birds. The targets even incorporate a variety of 30" circles and pellet count formulas for more traditional pattern analysis.

In practice, the targets are shot at the distances commonly occurring in the field or on the trap, skeet or sporting clays range. It's your choice—say anywhere from 25 to 60 yards depending upon your game—and not at the traditional standard of 40 yards. They are shot with the exact ammunition and with the exact degree of choke you would be using as well. The aiming point is the 4" red dot in the middle of the target. I would recommend shooting at least three targets for interpretive purposes before changing the load, choke or distance.

To interpret the results, I hold the target up against the sky and check whether or not the pattern seems centered on the target. Each pellet hole becomes a point of light, and the distribution of the shot in the pattern is immediately visible.

I then check the pellets in the actual target image. The duck and turkey images provide immediate feedback as to whether or not the shot have hit a lethal area of anatomy. The clay pigeons require some study. I routinely draw a large "X" across any pigeon that does not contain at least three pellets, following the generally accepted rule-of-thumb, that it takes approximately three pellets in the core body area of smaller upland birds to insure an adequate percentage of kills.

Then comes the corrective phase. Is the pattern centered? If not, the problem may be as simple as the way you mount your gun, or as complex as the stocking, the barrels, sighting plane, or the choke of the shotgun. The answer may be as simple as a little hands-on coaching or as complex as the purchase of a custom-fitted stock or a new gun altogether.



HunterJohn produces the finest, easiest to use and to interpret patterning targets available offering clays, turkey and duck targets for quick and easy target analysis.

Does the pattern reveal a distribution of shot appropriate to your game? For example, a high core-density for head shots on turkey or a well filled out, even pattern for clay targets and most bird shooting. Here's where the fun comes in with endless options for tailoring the end results with changes in ammunition, powders, wads, shot sizes, and choking.

So if you've been put off by the whole idea of patterning your shotguns, pick up some HunterJohn targets. They're fun, easy to use, and the results may surprise you. One thing for sure, you will know your shotgun a lot better than you do now. Patterning targets let your gun speak to you and in doing so, reveals its likes and dislikes, its strengths and its weaknesses.

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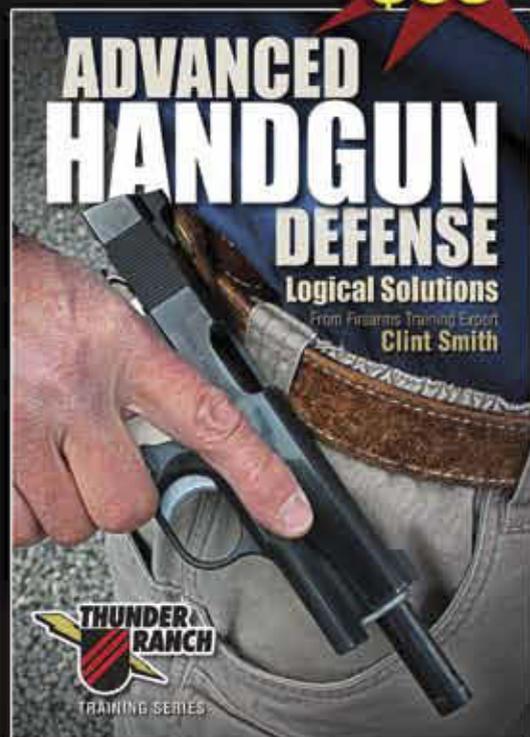
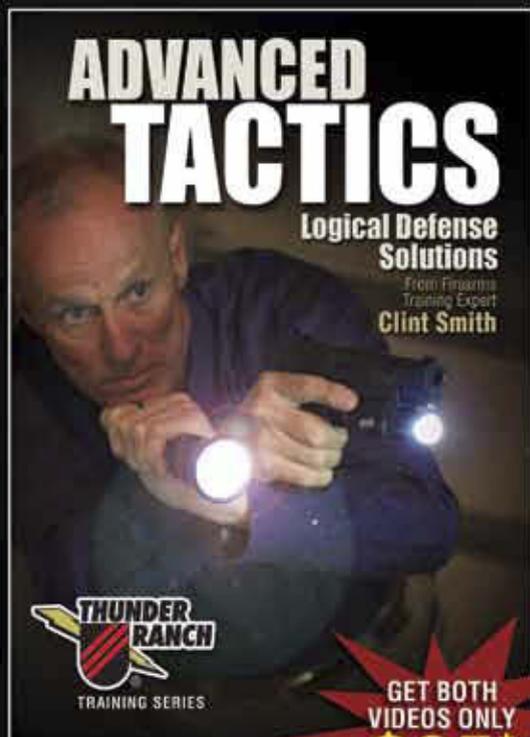
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~Clint Smith



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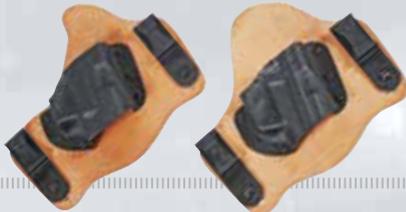
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HOLSTER FOR SPRINGFIELD XD-S

CROSSBREED HOLSTERS

CrossBreed Holsters will be offering holsters for the new Springfield XD-S pistol. The slim, compact .45 ACP XD-S was introduced earlier this year as the latest in Springfield's popular XD line. Using a sample XD-S pistol to create a mold, CrossBreed will be able to accommodate the Springfield XD-S in the SuperTuck, MiniTuck, QuikClip, SnapSlide, SuperSlide and Ohai model holsters. For more info: (888) 732-5011, www.gunsmagazine.com/crossbreed-holsters



RANCH HAND HOLSTER

GRASSBURR LEATHER

Originally inspired by Steve McQueen's *Wanted Dead or Alive* TV Western from the 1950s, the Mare's leg is making a comeback. Grassburr Leather offers a new, lined belt-slide holster with adjustable buckle for leg tie-down support. The holster comes in black, natural, mahogany or antique brown. MSRP: \$120. For more info: (210) 687-1717, www.gunsmagazine.com/grassburr-leather



CR6720CA

COLT

The CR6724CA is an ideal carbine for target shooting, hunting and varmint shooting. It features a stainless steel, free-floating barrel that allows the barrel to flex as it should, without being constricted during firing. The 6720CA weighs 9 pounds, measures 39" long and features a 20" barrel. The additional length of the barrel allows for increased firing distance. It features a 1.9" RH twist for lighter-grain ammunition, a black A2-style buttstock, Colt flash suppressor, tubular handguard and pistol grip. This direct gas system, locking-bolt rifle comes in a matte black finish with a 9-round magazine and ships with a scope mount for additional accessories. It is chambered for 5.56x45 NATO (.223 Remington). For more info: (800) 241-2485, www.gunsmagazine.com/colt



INFRA RED LASER SIGHTS

CRIMSON TRACE

Crimson Trace's new line of Infra Red (IR) laser sites are observable only through night vision equipment, offering the user the ability to mark a target invisibly, which is a boon for predator control, security personnel or anyone involved in the growing sport of hog hunting. The first IR lasers made available were the MVF-515 vertical foregrip and the Rail Master mini laser. The Rail Master fits almost any firearm with a Picatinny rail and adds less than 2 ounces to the overall weight, while incorporating the most powerful laser available by law. The MVF-515 has an incredibly long runtime and offers the additional benefit of a blinding, 200-lumen white light to enable the use of daytime optics as well as night vision devices. Due to ITAR restrictions, the IR sights will be available only through select distributors in July 2012. For more info: (800) 442-2406, www.gunsmagazine.com/crimson-trace



BRAVO34

OUTLANDS AT

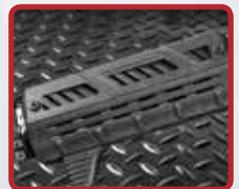
The Bravo34 is an updated version of the M-7 Tanker, reworked and expanded to holster all 1911-style pistols, and some short-barreled revolvers. The holster comes with an adjustable grip strap and bluing-friendly interior, padded and form-lined to hold its shape. Its durable 1050 D ballistic nylon, 1" webbing and hardware is handmade in the USA. MSRP: \$65. For more info: (206) 240-4489, www.gunsmagazine.com/outlands-at



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STRIKE INDUSTRIES

The Dura Grip series vertical grips are made of 100 percent CNC-machined aircraft-grade aluminum and are designed to last forever. The built-in finger grooves and contour grooves allow for comfortable ergonomics with increased surface area with lighter weight. The grip is also convertible from full-size to CQB configurations in just seconds. The Mitch handguard features a built-in, rotating short vertical grip that can be used as a finger stop, vert-grip, fore grip and magwell extension grip all in one. It is made of reinforced polymer and has a vented ergonomic design that ensures breathability and comfort. For more info: (714) 557-9831, www.gunsmagazine.com/strike-industries



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CUSTOM COMPETITION PISTOL

BLADE-TECH INDUSTRIES/ STI INTERNATIONAL

Blade-Tech Industries has teamed up with STI International to create and donate the 2012 Bianchi Cup Pistol, a custom competition pistol, as part of Blade-Tech's sponsorship of the 2012 Midway USA/NRA Bianchi Cup. The pistol was made at STI International facilities in Georgetown, Texas. The firearm is based off of STI's popular Apeiro 2011 model. Like the Apeiro 2011 model, the 2012 Bianchi Cup Pistol is a high-capacity, double-stack, .40-caliber pistol that has unquestioned reliability. In addition, the slide of the Pistol is emblazoned with both the 2012 Bianchi Cup and Blade-Tech logos. Blade-Tech also manufactured a holster designed and molded for this custom competition pistol. For more info: (512) 819-0656, www.gunsmagazine.com/sti



MILITARY 5-25X56MM RIFLESCOPE

STEINER OPTICS

Designed for use on long-range, tactical and sniper rifles in a combat environment, the new riflescope from Steiner Optics extends the shooting range and provides visibility in even the lowest light conditions. It features a 34mm 1-piece extruded aluminum main tube and broadband anti-reflective coated optics for maximum light transmission. The digital illumination offers 11 intensity levels (7 night/ 4 day) and a battery saver position between each level. The windage knob, located on the right side of the tub, is calibrated for up to 5 mils of adjustment for both left and right adjustment. For more info: (970) 358-1670, www.gunsmagazine.com/Steiner



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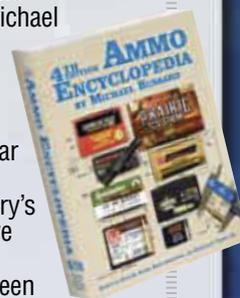
The Tactical Gear Retractor is a high-quality, heavy-duty retractable gear tether with a stainless steel spring, subdued hardware and durable lightweight Kevlar cord. The all-weather retractors are made in the USA and have several attachment styles and retraction forces to choose from. Also available in black and OD green. For more info: (310) 768-0098, www.gunsmagazine.com/maxpedition



BLUE BOOK PUBLICATIONS

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The 4th Edition Ammo Encyclopedia by Michael Bussard has been expanded to 968 pages, and includes extensive ballistic charts for most popular rimfire and centerfire cartridges. The industry's newest cartridges have also been added, and many sections have been updated with additional information, charts and images. The 4th Edition Ammo Encyclopedia is also available online and on CD. For more info: (800) 877-4867, www.gunsmagazine.com/blue-book-publications-inc



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QUESTION OF THE MONTH: What accessories do you plan on buying for your rifle in the near future?

- A.) Optics
- B.) Laser/flashlight
- C.) Bipod
- D.) All the above
- E.) None of the above

Name _____
 Address _____
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ODD ANGRY SHOT

STORY: John Connor

TELL SANTA WHAT YOU WANT, KIDS Or, increase your collection of ugly ties, whatever...

Really, guys; how many ugly ties do you need to check the oil in your car? I know it's deeply soul-satisfying—to me, anyway—to wipe my dipstick with a tie I wouldn't wear to a dogfight, but I wish Great-Aunt Emma wouldn't keep sending 'em every Christmas. And after you've got enough gaudy, useless “ski sweaters” to jam under the entire length of your drafty garage door through the winter, do ya really want your sister gifting you another one? Tell those surrogate Santas what you really want!

I'm gonna try to hit two birds with one stone in this column. First, if you're like me, you'd rather not get a Deluxe Mug-Froster, a genuine NASCAR combination ash tray and incense burner, or anything which prompts a response like, “Uhh... Where the heck can I put this until it's been around long enough for me to semi-guiltlessly send it to Goodwill?”

Second, lots of you have asked me for personal recommendations on emergency preparation gear. Why not ask for that stuff? Explain to Santa's helpers that to *you*, these objects are toys, entertainment, and responsible planning as well. I'd be 'way more tickled with a \$4.95 100-hour emergency candle than a \$14.95 paisley tie, or an \$11.95 can of *Fired Up!* emergency fuel and fire-starter than a \$29.95 sweater with cute little dancing bears on it. Maybe they'll get the hint.

Clean Water, Hot Chow

In light, portable water purifiers, you can't beat the hand-pumped *First Need XL*. It uses ultrafine micro straining to remove bacteria, viruses, giardia, parasitic cysts, algae, pesticides and other nastiness. It's easy to operate and field-serviceable, using no chemicals or batteries, and sells for about \$115. And here's a great tip I picked up from a hardcore backpacker:

The *First Need XL* comes with a good pre-filter to remove solids, but to

significantly prolong service life, especially when cleaning really muddy, foul water, here's what you do: Buy competitor MSR's *Sweetwater SiltStopper* pre-filter unit (about \$20) and a 3-pack of replacement pre-filters (also about \$20). Carefully cutting the tubing, install the MSR *SiltStopper* just above the *First Need* pre-filter. Now you're set up for maximum potable water treatment for extended periods. Your emergency may not be over quickly, and you may not just be supplying yourself and your family. These products are available in many sporting goods stores and online.

Nalgene wide-mouth water bottles are emergency essentials, virtually bombproof, and cost under \$10 each. If that seems too plain a gift for your givers, tell 'em to toss in some M&Ms—or waterproof matches—and you'll be happy. Note: every family member needs two; one for “suspect” contents, one for purified water only.

Wanta heat up or boil that water for bathing, cleaning wounds, cooking, coffee? Check out *JetBoil* compact, lightweight cooking systems. They're extremely efficient and fast to set up and use under challenging conditions. *JetBoil* systems use proprietary isobutane/propane 4-season fuel canisters, but their BTUs for the bucks are excellent. Sizes and materials vary with systems running from around \$100 to \$150. If that's too rich for Santa's elves, buy it yourself and hint that extra fuel



JetBoil and Kelly Kettle cook systems—Christmasy-lookin', aren't they?

canisters will fit in your stocking!

A great field or emergency cooking system which uses almost any fuel is the classic *Kelly Kettle*. This old design is back in vogue simply because it's so efficient, and burns almost anything flammable: sticks, twigs, leaves, trash, pinecones, charcoal and more. Imagine a double-walled thermos with a chimney right up its center—that's the principle. Your water goes inside that jacket, and the design traps virtually all the heat from its burner below, and multiplies the heat transfer surface. With its optional cook set and pot stand, you can even cook chow over the top of the kettle's chimney while your water is coming to a boil.

One of the best things about this design is that once your fire is going and drafting well, you can feed it damp material and it still burns. If you must start with wet fuel, a little *Fired Up!* starter will get it going.

The *Kelly Kettle* comes in three sizes up to 1.6 liters, in aluminum or stainless steel, ranging in cost from about \$55 to the complete large stainless steel *Base Camp* cooking setup for \$110. My source for that and *Fired Up!* fuel/fire starter is BePrepared.com.

Stocking Stuffers

You *need* good maps of your home and surrounding areas, sufficient to cover a “Get Outta Dodge” situation, and if you're a city-dweller or suburbanite, you need 'em even more than “we who live in the Lost Lonelies.” That's because structures and development obscure or hide so many features which can be critical to you, like flood control channels,



Hundred-hour emergency candles, Nalgene bottles and First Need XL water purifiers make unconventional but excellent gifts.

railroad bridges and tunnels, utility accesses, etc. Ask for good physical and road/street maps and especially *USGS topographic maps*. After events like hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and fires, the landmarks you've oriented yourself to and routinely depend on may be gone. USGS topos run about \$6 each.

Silva, Suunto and Brunton make serviceable flat-base map-ready compasses as low as \$10 each. If you have a good compass, you need a backup; if you've got a backup, you need a spare—you get the idea. Why not for Christmas?

Squeeze-activated instant-cold and instant-heat packs are plentiful and relatively cheap. I say "relatively," because in emergencies they're solid gold. They come in brightly colored packages, so that's Christmasy, right?

Mylar (metallized plastic) rescue blankets belong in your kit too, and they have a shiny side, so you could call 'em "festive." Nylon 550 paracord is another necessity. It comes in over 100 colors and camo patterns, including neon and reflective. Even your munchkin who saves small change in a sock can surprise you with a hank of it on Christmas morning. Just make sure you're surprised and delighted!

Heck, if I got nothing but a few of these things for Christmas I'd be wigglin' like a puppy and makin' a fool of myself. OK, all right, I'd be doin' that anyway, but that's beside the point! Merry Christmas to all! Connor *OUT*.

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MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2012

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.357 Blackhawk as the platform for the new .44 Magnum and made up three prototypes with 4-5/8", 5-1/2" and 7-1/2" barrels. Keith warned them frame was too small but he wanted the former to use as a .44 Special. They listened enough to do further testing and in doing so one of the guns blew with a proof load; I would imagine the other two were destroyed. That was the last we heard of a .44 Special from Ruger. They did do a .45 Colt, however they used the .44 Magnum Super Blackhawk frame as the platform. We really could not complain too much as for the first time we had a single action capable of accessing the real potential of the .45 Colt case. We were soon safely shooting 300-grain bullets at 1,200 fps from the .45 Blackhawk. But alas and alack it seemed our dreams of a .44 Special had really fallen apart at the seams.

Beginning in the 1970s sixgunners started converting .357 Magnum Blackhawks, both the original Flat-Top versions of 1955-1962 as well as the Old Model of 1962-1972. What Ruger had not done was now corrected and over the ensuing decades I have had Ruger .357 Blackhawks converted to .44 Special by such premier gunsmiths as Bob Baer, Hamilton Bowen, David Clements, Ben Forkin, Andy Horvath, John Gallagher, and Bill Grover; but still no .44 Special from Ruger. The dream was still there however, and when Ruger brought out the 50th Anniversary .357 Blackhawk they reverted back to the original sized frame, which had been enlarged with the coming of the New Model .357 Blackhawk in 1972; it was also flat-topped.

The 50th Anniversary Model also had the original style rear sight as well as the XR3-sized grip frame, which is identical to the Colt Single Action. It was a perfect platform for building a .44 Special. I talked to the then president of Ruger a couple times about building such a sixgun and while he didn't say yes he also didn't say no. I also put in my bid with the production manager of that time. Both men are now gone from Ruger, however the dream has lived and I hoped against impossible hope, I continued to dream the impossible dream, that someday, somehow, we would see a factory produced .44 Special from Ruger.

What Ruger was not willing to do, Lipsey's was. Lipsey's is a well-known distributor and they did what Wolf & Klar did in 1926, which was give the .44 Special a well-deserved boost. Wolf & Klar did it by placing an order for what became the Smith & Wesson 3rd Model Hand Ejector complete with an enclosed ejector rod housing. In 2008 Lipsey's made the impossible dream come true.

Lipsey's placed a large order with Ruger for 2,000 4-5/8" and 5-1/2" .44 Special New Model Flat-Top Blackhawks built on the 50th Anniversary .357 Magnum frame. These sixguns sold so well Ruger made them a factory offering. However, Lipsey's did not stop there and now offer five more .44 Special Rugers. No distribu-



"Fairy Tales Can Come True!" As in the case of a long-awaited Ruger New Model Flat-Top .44 Specials.

tor has ever shown so much faith in the .44 Special and for this I salute them. They are now offering both the 4-5/8" and 5-1/2" .44 Specials with a different twist; that is, they are Bisley Models complete with Bisley grip frame, hammer, and trigger while at the same time using the mid-sized mainframe rather than the regular standard New Model Blackhawk frame. This is tremendously important as a .44 Special built on a New Model Blackhawk would be the same size as a .44 Magnum so there would be no point in doing it.

Approximately 5 years ago, Ruger dropped their large-framed Vaquero single action and replaced it with the New Vaquero, which just happens to have the same size frame as the 50th Anniversary .357 Blackhawk. These, of course, are fix-sighted sixguns and were originally offered in both .45 Colt and .357 Magnum. The .44

Special versions from Lipsey's are a 4-5/8" New Vaquero and a 3-1/2" Sheriff's Model. The final version, at least for this year, is a stainless steel, 4-5/8" Flat-Top Blackhawk. Dreaming of a .44 Special is one thing but it was really extreme to expect one in stainless steel. I like mine so well I had it "C" engraved by Michael Gouse. Michael does excellent work at very reasonable prices; I will be talking more about his work in the future.

But it doesn't stop there! A group I started 25 years ago known as "The Shootists" appointed a committee of Bud McDonald, Tedd Adamovich, and Jeff Quinn to search out and come up with a suitable 25th Anniversary sixgun. After talking with Ruger and thanks especially to Lipsey's the order was placed for 100 Bisley Model .44 Special Rugers all with 7-1/2" barrels. Instead of the standard blue found on most Rugers these are finished in high-polish blue and specially engraved with the Shootists Logo of "Men Who Stand In The Gap" as well as being serial numbered SH001 through SH100; SH stands for Shootists Holiday which is our annual rendezvous.

Many of us have dared to dream the impossible dream and it has come true in many ways. Frank Sinatra was so right! It really does pay big dividends to be young at heart. I don't know what is the worse situation, young people who are already old at heart, or old people who are also old at heart. I hope to continue to dream the impossible dreams and to always stay young at heart. There is one major problem however, and that is the fact the older the body gets the younger it seems the heart and mind turns. The heart is always telling the body to do things and most of the time the answer comes back "no way!" But we keep trying. Whatever your impossible dream is hold onto it and dare to really dream even to the point of, in the words of Don Quixote, marching into Hell for a Heavenly Cause. **GUNS**

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CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

TO DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

That wonderful year was 1954. Our first nuclear submarine, Nautilus, is launched, Ike warns about intervening in Vietnam, and the Army/McCarthy hearings begin. On the lighter side Roger Bannister runs the first 4-minute mile and RCA offers the first color TV set with a 12" screen for \$1,000. To celebrate our Judeo-Christian heritage the phrase "Under God" is added to the *Pledge of Allegiance*. I was delivering papers every day and once a week when I went to town to pay my bill I normally went to the movies. It was in 1954 I heard Frank Sinatra sing words on the big screen I never forgot. Even to this day I still remember those lyrics:

"Fairy tales can come true, it can happen to you, if you're young at heart. For it's hard you will find to be narrow of mind if you're young at heart. You can go to extremes with impossible schemes, you can laugh when your dreams fall apart at the seams, and life gets more exciting with each passing day, and love is either in your heart or on its way. Don't you know that it's worth every treasure on earth to be young at heart; for as rich as you are, it's much better by far to be young at heart. And if you should survive to 105, think of all you'll derive out of being alive. And here is the best part, you'll have a head start, if you are among the very young at heart."

Not only were the 1950s the time of classic sixguns it was also a grand time for lyricists; if there are any songs like this out there now, anything that actually inspires, I certainly haven't heard it lately. Not only was 1954 a banner year in so many ways as mentioned, something

else which would have a great effect on handguns was taking place in a small manufacturing plant in the Northeast. Bill Ruger had begun producing the Sturm, Ruger .22



"It Can Happen To You!" From Lipsey's, Ruger 25th Anniversary Shootists Bisley Model .44 Special and Stainless Steel .44 Special Flat-Top engraved by Michael Gouse.

semi-automatic in 1949 and followed this with his .22 Single-Six in 1953. With the latter Ruger resurrected the single action revolver and now in 1954 he was putting the finishing touches on the .357 Blackhawk which officially arrived in 1955. We

have such a proliferation of all kinds of handguns today it is probably difficult for younger shooters to realize how important that .357 Blackhawk, now affectionately known as the Flat-Top, was.

Most Modern

Colt had dropped the Single Action Army in 1940 with no thought of ever producing it again. In 1954 Great Western in Los Angeles started producing the first replica of the Colt Single Action; Ruger went Great Western at least one step further by modernizing the Single Action in two ways, adjustable sights and virtually unbreakable lockwork. Gone were the old flat springs of the Colt as the new Ruger used the same coil-spring action as the .22 Single-Six. The Blackhawk, of course, was larger than the Ruger .22 being full Colt-sized, and with a heavy flat-topped frame containing a fully adjustable Micro rear sight. The old Single Action dating all the way back to 1836 was now officially modernized.

The Blackhawk .357 Magnum was a wonderful sixgun and in fact was my first new center-fire single action. But those of us who were young at heart were ready to go to extremes with not so impossible schemes but it soon appeared our dreams would fall apart at the seams. Elmer Keith got every sixgunner excited by telling us Ruger promised .44 Special and .45 Colt versions momentarily... neither ever happened. The arrival of the .44 Magnum in late 1955 pretty much put the kibosh on a new .44 Special from Ruger. Ruger did try to use their

continued on page 89



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