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TRIGGER FINGER MAG RELEASE

ADVANTAGE: LEFTIES

BE PREPARED

RIFLES FOR
TROUBLED TIMES

THE M1 CARBINE

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DIY

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BUTTS!

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AUGUST 2020
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ROBERT JONES/
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MAYBE COCKTAIL HOUR STARTED EARLY?

In Wayne Van Zwoll's "Optics" column in the June 2020 issue, on page 14 it says to push the scope rearward in a Weaver or Picatinny mount (when mounting). Every instruction I have for Weaver or Picatinny rings and mounts says to push the scope forward, not rearward. After all, the rifle will recoil rearward, pushing the scope along with it. Thus the contact from the scope mount will be on the front face of the ring lug, so pushing the scope forward will eliminate any gap between the ring and mount. Correct or no?

Jeff Braun



After some head-scratching research, I owe Wayne an apology. In the manuscript he correctly noted the scope should be tugged forward but at some point during our production process I made a note changing it to "rearward." I have no idea what I was thinking at the time but it was solely my mistake. Thanks Jeff for bringing it to my attention. —BW

GARBERS DOPPELGANGER

I was reading the May edition of *GUNS* and got to the Wild Bunch article. When I looked at the picture of Alan Garbers I was



stunned. Alan and my brother David are identical twins! My first thought was how did David's picture end up here? Sadly, my brother died about a year and a half ago from MS. The picture brought back a lot of good memories of us shooting together. David was an accomplished shooter and particularly loved pin shooting. He attended the Second Chance shoot once and won a 1911 pistol. He was preparing to do cowboy style shooting when he became ill. Just wanted you and your staff to know your work goes farther than just sharing info, sometimes it touches the heart.

Michael Sifers

I'm glad my photo brought back fond memories of your brother, David, and I'm saddened he has passed. We sound identical in more than just looks. I too love bowling pin shoots. It has been awhile since my last shoot, but I used to get so excited my hands would start shaking in anticipation. I am sure David would have loved *Cowboy Action Shooting* and I urge you to try it in his memory. You won't regret it. — Alan "Cholla" Garbers

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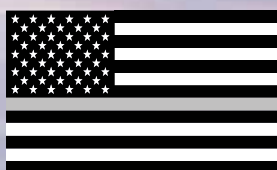
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An original Colt Richards Conversion (right) compared to replicas of the Richards Conversion, Richards-Mason Conversion and 1871-72 Open-Top.

THE FIRST FORTY-FOURS PART II THE .44 COMES OF AGE

Continued from last month — Life is full of trade-offs and while the Walker and Dragoon revolvers had plenty of power, their 4-lb. plus weight made most shooters hesitate to carry one, much less a pair, all day and they were more than a little heavy for fast work from a holster — except for the outlaw Josie Wales and Lonesome Dove's Gus McRae.

It was time for a new big bore sixgun so Sam Colt and Elisha Root worked together on the eve of the War Between The States and developed what I consider the apex of Colt's cap-and-ball sixguns. The old 1851 Navy .36 was perfect for holster use but carried a small payload; now metallurgy had improved to the point Colt could use the same basic frame size as the 1851 Navy to make a .44 sixgun. This was accomplished

by using a two-step cylinder, smaller at the back than at the front, with a cutout at the front of the frame to accept the larger cylinder. By doing so it was possible to come up with a .44 caliber revolver almost as trim as its predecessor.

Basically, the Colt 1860 Army .44 carries a Dragoon-size grip frame on a Navy main frame and with the rebated cylinder larger at the front, is able to hold a full 40 grains of black powder under a .44 caliber ball. The barrel length was 8", the loading lever was streamlined to flow naturally into the frame rather than having the blocky appearance of the 1851 Navy and the grip frame was made slightly longer to handle recoil. Many sixgunners consider the streamlined 1860 to be the most beautiful of all Colt's percussion revolvers.

There is no doubt Sam Colt was a genius when it came to firearms, their mass production and their marketing. He became exceedingly successful producing percussion revolvers for the Union for use in the War Between The States beginning in 1861. Colt would not live to see how successful his company would actually be as he died in 1862.

CARTRIDGES ARRIVE

However Sam Colt could not see the future as far as fixed ammunition was concerned but the team of Smith & Wesson, along with Oliver Winchester, did. The first successful cartridge firing revolver had emerged from Smith & Wesson in 1857 while shortly thereafter the revolutionary 1860 Henry rifle came to market using a .44 Rimfire cartridge. After the success of the 1860 Henry, Oliver Winchester developed the 1866 levergun, the first to bear the Winchester name. Both the Henry and the Model 1866 were high-capacity firearms with some holding as

many as 17 rounds of the new .44 Rimfire. The stage was now set for a long line of .44 cartridges to emerge.

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

The Smith & Wesson Model #3 American in 1870 was not only the first big bore cartridge-firing sixgun, it was also the first cartridge revolver to be adopted by the United States Military.

The Army had pretty much ignored the newly popular cartridge-firing rifles for military use but they were not so shortsighted when the Smith & Wesson American arrived and immediately purchased 1,000 for military use.

Unlike the .44 Rimfire of the 1860 Henry and the 1866 Winchester rifles, the .44 American was a centerfire cartridge. However, over 3,000 Smith & Wesson Americans were chambered in .44 Henry Rimfire. This means it was possible to have a sixgun and a levergun using the same fixed ammunition by combining a Smith & Wesson American .44 Rimfire with either an 1860 Henry or an 1866 Winchester in the same chambering.

The standard First Model American had an 8" barrel, a square butt with smooth walnut grips, and a fluted six-shot cylinder with approximately 8,000 being made from 1870 to 1872. The Second Model American had a hammer that locked into the latch on the back of the barrel assembly, and the frame above the trigger was no longer a straight line but instead had a slight extension just



A pair of original Smith & Wesson .44 Americans.



Early .44 sixgun cartridges include the .44 American, .44 Colt and .44 Russian.

above the trigger. Just under 21,000 were manufactured from 1872 to 1874.

In December 1870, the United States military purchased 1,000 Americans in both blue and nickel-plated. In addition to the United States Army purchase of Americans, they were bought by Argentine Army and Spanish forces in Cuba but major purchases were made by the Russians.

COLT .44 CONVERSIONS

In July 1871 the Colt Richards Conversion first appeared. Starting with an 1860 Army, a breech plate was added to the back of the bored-through cylinder and an ejector rod and housing added to the side of the barrel. This was followed by the Richards-Mason Conversion and both of these were offered on 1860 Army revolvers Colt already had in inventory.

Both were chambered in the .44 Colt cartridge using a 210-gr. bullet over 23 grains of black powder. The first non-conversion Colt revolver chambered in .44 was the 1871-72 Open Top. This model is easily distinguished from the first two Conversions by the fact the rear sight is on the back of the barrel in front of the cylinder. It was offered not only in .44 Colt but .44 Rimfire as well for those who wanted a companion sixgun to their .44 Henry or 1866 Winchester. All three of these Colts firing fixed ammunition were produced simultaneously.



This original Colt Richards Conversion still shoots!



Dave's irreducible minimum for life in the country — (from left) Ruger American rimfire .22 Magnum, Redfield 3-9x40 scope; Weatherby PA-459 12 gauge with Streamlight light/laser on sight rail and Viridian green laser on forearm rail; Ruger Scout .308 with Meopta reflex sight on sight rail and a Streamlight ProTac flashlight on an accessory rail.

RIFLES FOR TROUBLED TIMES

MAKING GOOD CHOICES IN BAD TIMES

“If you could only own one gun” is a hardy perennial in firearms literature. For firearms enthusiasts the question is ludicrous — many of us *carry* more than one gun. When it comes to rifles I must admit although I own many, I only carry one at a time. As I write this we are going through yet another apocalyptic scenario. This one involves the corona virus; a few years ago it was SARS, H1N1, Ebola, Y2K, Legionnaire's disease. A few years from now it will be something else.

In troubled times — and for many, even in untroubled times — the idea of a sanctuary away from big cities becomes very attractive. My wife and I live on the farm our family has owned for three generations, in the house my grandfather built in 1925. Our nearest neighbors (there are only two) are a mile away; the nearest traffic light is 40 miles away. I won't play the only-one-gun game but a few thoughts on rifles I use most might be of interest.

START WITH .22s

It's a good idea to have something to shoot .22 rimfire cartridges. The .22 LR is useful for controlling pests in the garden or outbuildings and the ammunition is compact, relatively inexpensive and widely available. Something like a Ruger Mark IV or Browning Buckmark pistol with a sight rail holding a low-power scope or red-dot sight can do quite nicely while being handy for easy storage and access.

There are so many good .22 rifles, old and new, I'd hardly know where to begin making a recommendation. Worthwhile features include stainless/synthetic construction, detachable magazine for quick loading/unloading and a rail for a scope or reflex sight. However, one of my favorite .22s is a Winchester 61 pump with none of those features. I never claimed to be consistent.

I yield to no one in my admiration for .22 rifles but more and more I use them mainly



A Ruger Scout in .308 Win. will handle about any centerfire task. The grab-n-go chest pouch from Hill People Gear completes the load-out.

“... SHOULD PEOPLE COME WANTING TO DO MY FAMILY HARM OR TAKE THINGS BY FORCE, WELL, WE HAVE AN ANSWER FOR THAT TOO.”

for practice and for plinking. For practical use in controlling vermin and for hunting, I've come to dote on the .22 Magnum. The ammunition is expensive compared to .22 LR but inexpensive compared to most centerfires. Compared to .22 LR the .22 Mag. shoots flatter, drifts less in the wind, is easier to hit with and is far more effective,

especially on vermin or game bigger than gophers and squirrels.

I've owned a Winchester 9422M since about 1975, a beautiful classic rifle. These days my favorite and my most-used rifle is a Ruger American Compact in .22 Magnum. It is accurate, reliable, rugged and moderately priced.

CENTERING IT

A powerful centerfire rifle is of fairly limited use to a city apartment dweller but out here in the boondocks, I want one. Any good big game rifle would do. I have come to like the “scout” concept, or at least some elements. I can take or leave the forward-mounted scope, nor do I care

about arbitrary weight and size limits. I do like an effective and widely distributed cartridge, the reliability of a bolt action, ample magazine capacity, rapid reloading, and the durability of stainless steel.

Currently I have three such rifles, all in .308 Win. — a Steyr Scout (the original Jeff Cooper package), a Ruger Scout and a Tikka Arctic Ranger. Oddly enough my favorite,

the Ruger, is also the least expensive. I keep it cased with five magazines and various lighting and sighting options.

Defense against looters and such hasn't been a big worry — so far, at least. Neighbors tend to look out for one another so extra ammo on hand is not for shooting at neighbors but for swapping for a few steaks or a side of pork. As for strangers, for

115 years no one has ever come to the farm needing help who didn't get it. This will never change, or my ancestors would haunt me. On the other hand, should people come wanting to do my family harm or take things by force, well, we have an answer for that too.

SCATTERGUNS

Two answers, in fact. For intruders into a dwelling I don't know of anything better than a shotgun. My preference is a 12-gauge pump, short overall length, extended magazine and with rails for lights, sights and lasers. My favorite is a Weatherby PA-08 but I'd be happy with any reputable make. The only objection to the shotgun is recoil. If it is an issue the second answer is a compact .223/5.56mm.

My "irreducible minimum" is the .22 Magnum and .308 rifles, and the 12-gauge shotgun. Add a .22 LR firearm and a .223/5.56 semiauto and I feel well prepared. Oh, and you may have noticed I haven't mentioned a .45 ACP pistol or .38 Spl. pocket revolver. I haven't mentioned socks or underwear either, and for the same reason — they are just part of everyday wear.



The .22 LR firearm doesn't have to be a rifle. The Ruger Target model (left) and Ruger frame with Volquartsen upper (right) are as accurate as most rifles while being handy to store.



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THE TRIGGER-FINGER MAGAZINE RELEASE

SOUTHPAWS HAD ONE ADVANTAGE – UNTIL NOW!

The magazine release button on most semiautomatic pistols is on the left side of the frame near the bottom rear of the trigger guard. For decades, I've told left-handed students not to complain about this but to rejoice because it lets them dump an empty magazine faster than their right-handed brothers and sisters.

A right-handed shooter often has to shift the gun in the hand to hit the button with their right thumb; I know I usually have to. On most pistols in most left-handed shooters, though, the index finger just comes right out of the trigger guard to the release button without changing hand placement, unless said digit is unusually long or is stiff from injury or arthritis.

RIGHTIES CAUGHT ON

A number of righties caught on to this. It's a selling point for Springfield Armory's XD pistol line, which comes with a magazine release button on each side. Police officers with Beretta and SIG SAUER duty pistols caught on, too, and on those guns it's a

simple job to switch the mag release button from port side to starboard. Ditto Gen4 and Gen5 GLOCKS when they came along.

It's possible on a 1911 too, but more difficult. My friend John Strayer is a Five-Gun Master in the International Defensive Pistol Association and has long since forgotten how many matches he's won, but like most champions he never stops looking for an edge. Shooting XD pistols, he found the trigger finger mag release technique faster. Also competing with 1911s, he had his match versions fitted with a southpaw mag release kit from Mitchell Custom (bulletworks.com). Currently using XDs for everyday carry, his well-practiced reloading technique transfers perfectly to self-defense needs.

ORTHOPEDIC FACTOR

What got me into it personally was a few years ago, advancing arthritis caught up with my right thumb and I started having trouble hitting the mag release in conventional fashion. Flipping the mag release on my Gen5 GLOCK 19 brought reloading

back up to speed and I've spent a disproportionate amount of time carrying and teaching with this gun ever since. Also shot a couple of IDPA matches with it, winning Concealed Carry Pistol division in one of them. The mag release buttons have since been switched on my SIG P229 Legion and one of my Wilson Beretta 92 Compacts, too.

SAFETY ISSUES

The magazine release on the dominant hand side of the pistol impacts safety in a couple of ways. One is positive and one isn't, but can be mitigated.

On the positive side, it's common to see right-handed shooters flipping the gun muzzle to the left so they can get their right thumb to a magazine release on the left side of the gun — it ain't the right way to do it! The movement should be a turning of the hand on the gun, not a turning of the gun in the hand. In other words, we want to keep the muzzle straight down-range and turn the hand so the proximal joint, the base joint, of the index finger is under the grip tang. This brings the thumb close enough to the mag release button to depress it.

By simply bringing the index finger back from the trigger to a right-side mag release, it's easier to keep the muzzle straight on the



John Strayer's Springfield TGO-II .45, with right-side mag release from Mitchell Custom.



Mag releases switched to right side. Clockwise from top: GLOCK 19 Gen5, Wilson Beretta 92 Compact, Springfield XD(m) 3.8 and SIG Legion P229, all 9mm.

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The trigger finger is safely out of the trigger guard as it hits mag release on author's button-reversed G19.5.



Releasing mag with the trigger finger has long been SOP for lefties, as seen here on a 9mm Ruger SR1911 Commander.

target or backstop during a reload. It also affords the additional safety enhancement of guaranteeing the trigger finger leaves the trigger guard during this procedure. If the finger is on the trigger when the slide slams forward at completion of the reload, the momentum of the slide coming back into battery can drive the trigger into the finger, causing an unintended discharge.

THE BAD

The negative element is when you are wearing the gun the mag release button is now on the outside perimeter of your body. It's something southpaw pistol-packers have had to cope with all along: there is the possibility of pressure or impact will unintentionally release the magazine. It will be out just enough your 18-shot 9mm may turn into a single-shot just when you need it most and recoil may cause the mag to fall the rest of the way out so you can't even do a tap-rack to get it back up and running.

If you're going to carry like this put the unloaded pistol in your holster or pocket with empty mag in place and deliberately use your body weight to press it against a door jamb or something similar. Test it with seat belts. Test it in arm chairs. I've found my reversed-button G19.5 cope with it fine but my holsters may be different from yours. It's one reason I don't care to carry a standard button mag release auto pistol in my left trouser pocket. A gun that won't go bang when you need it to can be literally a life-or-death safety concern.

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SUB-CALIBER TRAINERS

BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER ON THE RANGE

Like most of us, my introduction to shooting was with a .22 rifle. Mine was a single shot Winchester Model 60A my grandfather gave to my father, who gave it to me. I passed it down to my son, who gave it to his. When he's ready, it will likely be passed down to my great-grandson bringing us to six generations with the old Winchester.

I don't love guns, considering them tools. But I really, really like them a lot. Picking a favorite would be hard, but if I had to choose a pet cartridge it would be the .22 Long Rifle.

For just plain fun it can't be beat, counting how many times you can skip a can. It will take many kinds of game. The double-deuce is excellent for starting young shooters due to the small recoil and blast it produces.

All of this is fine and good, but I think where the .22 really comes into its own is using it as a subcaliber for larger guns.

SUBCALIBER TRAINERS

I've had an AR-type .22 rifle since the early 90s before they became popular. No longer made, the upper receiver is an Olympic Arms "Partner" mated to a Stag Arms lower and uses Black Dog Machine magazines. I have it set up like my working guns, including a Streamlight Scout Light, Blue Force Gear sling, forward vertical grip and a red dot sight (RDS).

Having a top-of-the-line nearly-indestructible RDS, such as an Aimpoint, is not necessary for the .22 trainer. I procured a Simmons RDS through Amazon for \$35.

Because the Black Dog mags are the same size as a regular AR magazine, I can practice with the same pouches and chest rigs I use for training and "social work."

Semi-autos are often picky eaters and you should find out what brand of ammo works best in yours. All of mine like the Federal Champion 36-gr. copper-coated

hollowpoint. I buy the bulk pack to save even more money, and who doesn't like to save money?

With most AR-type .22s the bolt won't lock back when the last round in the magazine is fired so the charging handle needs to be worked with an empty gun reload. Some consider this a disadvantage, but I don't. Rather I consider it another training opportunity to load when I can and not when I have to, performing tactical reloads or transition to the handgun.

GET SOME LEVERAGE

I shoot lever-action rifles quite often and it can get expensive very quickly with cartridges like the .30-30, .357 Magnum, .45 Colt, etc.

My Henry Classic lets me get in meaningful practice at a lower cost and the lessened recoil allows me to focus on technique. While it doesn't load through a gate on the side like the larger guns, like the AR I don't find the loading procedure to be a big drawback. I practice levering the rifle as I bring the rifle into my shoulder as I would do if walking along while hunting. For repeat shots, work the action from the shoulder.

TIGHTENING THE BOLTS

One of my favorite hunting rifles is the bolt-action Ruger American chambered for .450 Bushmaster. The cartridge will take any game in North America up to and including bison. I've personally taken large, feral boar hogs with it but buying new ammunition — and even reloading — can be expensive.

To keep in practice for the big gun, I

Denny's AR-type .22 rifle (right) is set up the same as his big guns. Optics for subcaliber guns (below) don't need to be of the same quality — or cost as much — as their larger siblings. On Denny's .22 Simmons RDS works fine.





Henry Classic .22 allows perfecting technique at a much lower cost.



Ruger American Rimfire is almost identical to the same models chambered in larger calibers.

use the Ruger American Rimfire. Besides the obviously shorter bolt throw, the American Rimfire is the spittin' image of its big brother. The trigger pull is very close, has the same length of pull and even has the same texturing on the pistol grip and forend. Since they both load from a box magazine, even reloads are similar.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

While dry firing will not harm most firearms, avoid dry firing a .22 rimfire. As the name infers, the priming compound is in the rim instead of the center and dry fire may result in a peened chamber, possibly a broken firing pin, or both.

For dry fire Lyman offers .22 snap caps

in a package of 24 for around 12 bucks. At only 50 cents apiece it's a good deal and will protect your firearm. Snap caps are also well suited to ball-and-dummy round practice for immediate action drills.

Add some subcaliber practice into your training repertoire — bigger isn't always better!



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Both of these leverguns, Uberti Model 1866 (top) and Marlin Cowboy Comp are chambered in .38 Special with the former still available.

THE .38 SPECIAL AND .44 SPECIAL

SPECIAL LOADS FOR SPECIAL LEVERGUNS

It seems everyone is always talking about .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum leverguns but what about .38 Special and .44 Special loads in leverguns which were chambered thus originally?

HEN'S TEETH

Neither of these have been easy to find, with the .38 Special much more so than a .44 Special. In fact, I have the only original .44 Special levergun I ever saw back in the 1990s, a Cimarron Uberti Model 1866. The good news is Cimarron now catalogs the 1866 in both Special chamberings and the 1873 in .44 Special. For a very short time Marlin made their 1894 Cowboy Comp in .38 Special and I have one of these also. My second .38 Special levergun started life as a 24" octagon barreled Model 1866. It was

very heavy along with its partner chambered in .45 Colt but I had both of those cut back to 16-1/4" and now they are very handy Trapper Models.

There is much talk today of rifles' use for home defense. Setting off a Magnum chambered rifle or a .223 in a closed room results in ear-shattering muzzle blast. We now have excellent self-defense loads in both .38 Special and .44 Special available that work well for self-defense without the excessive muzzle blast. All of my handloads for the Special leverguns are made for easy shooting and will also do just fine for small game and varmints, plastic bottles and pop cans, and definitely for paper punching, with a minimum of recoil. My "Trapper Model" is especially apropos for all of these while being very kind to the shoulder.

LOADS

Assembling .38 Special and .44 Special cartridges for leverguns is pretty straightforward. Normally I use my Redding .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum dies. However, when I really wax nostalgic, I dig out my ancient .38 Special and .44 Special dies from the pre-carbide sizing era. One thing I do with both Special cartridges is load dummy rounds first to make sure they will feed through the action and chamber. The Model 1860/1866/1873 replicas are especially particular about overall cartridge length. I sometimes run .44 Colt loads through my .44 Special 1866 but they need to be very close to .44 Special length or they will jam the action.

Powders for Special loads for the Specials are those we normally use for easy shooting loads and this includes two old standbys

Some bullets used in the .38 Special include (from left) the Hornady 160 Silhouette, Lyman #358477, Oregon Trail 158 RNFP, Acme 158 SWC, Speer 158 LSWCHP and the Oregon Trail 180 FP.





Targets shot with the .38 Special Model 1866.

— Bullseye and Unique from Alliant as well as their Red Dot and Hodgdon's TiteGroup. My choice of brass is always Starline with CCI Pistol Primers. Neither the loads nor the sights on these rifles are designed for long-range shooting.

.38 BULLETS

For the .38 Special my most-used loads are assembled with cast bullets. This includes the Oregon Trail 158 RNFP which feeds ever-so-smoothly through the actions of both rifles, while the Oregon Trail 180 FP works just fine when I want a heavier bullet. Speer offers a relatively soft 158-gr. LSWCHP (Lead Semi-Wadcutter Hollow Point) that works well for both sixgun and levergun .38 Special loads.

These are available quite reasonably in a 500-count bulk pack. A longtime favorite .38 bullet is the Lyman #358477, a 158-gr. bullet quite close to the original .357 Magnum bullet design. Powder coated bullets are readily available today and I like the Acme 125- and 158-gr. "Lipstick Bullets." These are bright red bullets, powder coated instead of lubed. My friend and fellow Shootist, Dick Thompson, is also a dedicated user of PC Bullets and has supplied me with a 158-gr. SWC that also works well in the .38 Special. Jacketed bullets of choice include the Hornady 110 and 125 XTP JHPs that shoot very well and are especially apropos for varmints and small game.

.44 BULLETS

Selecting .44 Special bullets is quite easy for use in the 1866 levergun as I mostly go with Oregon Trail RNFP, available in 200-

225- and 240-gr. weights as well as sizes from 0.427" to 0.430", making it easy to tailor the bullet to individual sixguns or leverguns. They feed very smoothly.

Most, actually, nearly all of my shooting with these Special leverguns is done at 25 yards. The two jacketed Hornady bullets mentioned above are especially great shooting in the .38 Special Model 1866. The 110 XTP over 6.0 grains of W231 and the 125 XTP over 5.5 grains of W231 clock out at 1,400 fps and 1,240 fps respectively with three shots going into 3/4" and 5/8" also respectively. More than accurate enough and powerful enough for small game and varmints. Switching to cast bullets the Oregon Trail 158 RNFP over 11.0 grains of #4227 and the Acme 158 RNFP using 4.0 grains of Bullseye are both excellent performers with groups under 1" and muzzle velocities of around 1,225 fps.

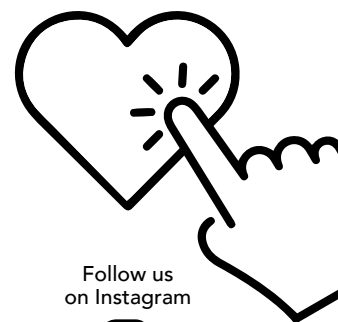
Switching to the .44 Special in the Model 1866 using the Oregon Trail bullets mentioned above results in exceptional accuracy using TiteGroup and Red Dot. Some special loads include the 200-gr. RNFP over 5.5 grains TiteGroup, 1,100 fps and the 225-gr. RNFP over 5.5 grains of Red Dot, 1,050 fps both giving virtually one-hole groups. Red Dot works especially well with the 200-gr. RNFP with groups well under 1" with muzzle velocities of 1,150 fps.

Now replicas of the 1866 and 1873 Winchesters are more readily available, choosing these century-old cartridges not only fulfills our nostalgic bent but also gives very relaxed shooting since both cartridges in these leverguns are very friendly to new shooters.



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CASTING REVOLVER BULLETS POURING TRICKS FROM AN EXPERT

I cast competition-quality BPCR rifle bullets and have more than a few trophies to show for it. If one of my big .40 or .45 caliber bullets drops from its mold with rounded base or driving bands, it's discarded, likewise if it has the slightest wrinkle. From my especially good single-cavity molds, weight variation for keepers is plus/minus a half-grain but usually it's less. Lastly, a casting session nets me about 105 to 110 bullets. Then I quit, for with fatigue I tend to get sloppy. Bullets are poured by the dipper method with corresponding lead-melting furnace.

At the other end of the bullet-casting spectrum are revolver bullets. My criteria there is totally different. Rounded driving bands are okay but nay-nay for bullet bases. Wrinkles are just fine. For revolver bullets I usually want molds with three or four cavities; always casting with two simultaneously. (I will talk about a couple exceptions shortly.) Single cavity bullet molds are ridiculously slow for revolver bullets and weighing them is a waste of time. There is no set limit on a casting session; many hundreds are desirable. A bottom pour furnace is a necessity.

DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE

Many decades long gone, I've forgotten which gun'rter wrote about casting with

two molds but he knew his business. The process is simple. Hold one of the multiple cavity molds under the lead furnaces pour spout until each sprue hole overfills. Set it aside so the alloy will cool as the second mold is filled similarly. Knock open mold number one so the bullets drop on a soft pad, i.e., old towel. Refill it as mold number two cools. Repeat *ad infinitum*. Once I borrowed a friend's triple-cavity mold identical to mine and timed myself. In an hour *after* the lead had been brought to temperature I made 600 perfectly good revolver bullets.

Here's a couple helpful ideas for speed casting. With those multiple cavity molds, especially if they are for heavy .40 caliber or higher bullets, the blocks will begin to overheat rather quickly. If casting is continued lead smears will form atop blocks and under sprue plates. A way to avoid this is to buy a high-speed manicurist's fan. Set the freshly-filled mold directly in front of it while attending to the second one, speeding up the cooling process immensely.

DON'T MIX

A second tip is don't simultaneously cast with molds dropping bullets of similar appearance. For instance, don't cast two .38 semi-wadcutter designs together. You'll spend as much time sorting them as you did casting them. My last casting session



One defect in revolver bullets (above) Duke will not accept is a rounded base such as the sample at right. Bullet at left has a perfect base. Duke's favorite .44-40 bullet (below) is RCBS #44-200-FN. Note top-left bullet has rounded bands. Duke considers it still fine for revolver shooting.



with two molds was with roundnose .45s and roundnose/flatpoint .44s, hence; no confusion.

Here are the exceptions to the three- and/or four-cavity mold rule. Some of my favorite bullet designs only come in two-cavity molds. RCBS is a culprit here. Their molds are of excellent quality but they have steadfastly refused to offer handgun designs in blocks of more than two cavities. For example, my all-time favorite .44-40 mold is their

For casting revolver bullets Duke prefers multiple cavity molds with three or four cavities.



#44-200FN. So I live with it or get another identical set of blocks to use in the dual-mold casting method. Another exception is when casting hollowpoint or hollowbase bullets. Those molds are necessarily single cavity and likewise slow in use. Only in special circumstances do I cast with such.

WHICH ONE?

A favorite question of those considering casting their own revolver bullets is, "What shape of bullet is the best: WC (wadcutter), SWC (semiwadcutter), (RN) roundnose, or (RN/FP) roundnose flatpoint?" Back when I started casting revolver bullets in the mid-1960s you were considered a true dummy if you weren't shooting SWCs. It took me several decades to finally figure out bullet designs should fit shooting purpose.

Speaking in general terms WCs are for paper punching, SWCs are for paper punching or use on living tissue, RNs are good for revolver competition where speed counts because they will load quickly in cylinders from speed loaders. Now my preferred revolver bullet shape is RN/FP



This is Duke's casting setup for revolver bullets. Note the small high speed fan at the left used for quickly cooling molds.

because so many of the revolver cartridges I favor are also chambered in lever guns. I want to handload bullets that work well in both revolvers and rifles/carbines.

RAW MATERIAL

To end, here's a word about alloys. I've tried everything and everything will suffice

to one degree or the other. Because I buy blends of pure lead and pure tin in a ratio of one part tin to 20 lead for BPCR competition, I started trying it in sixguns. It works perfectly up to about 1,200 fps with plain base bullets and another 100-150 fps with gas check designs, making my life a bit easier. 

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Will says the Armat Battlefield Systems M41A Pulse Rifle from the sci-fi epic *Alien* is the coolest firearm ever produced -- he even built one!

COLONIAL MARINES M41A PULSE RIFLE THE ONE GUN TO RULE THEM ALL

Guns are undeniably cool and it's the reason you're currently clutching this hallowed tome. However, amongst countless makes, models, barrel lengths and calibers, there is a single firearm eclipsing all others — the Armat Battlefield Systems M41A Pulse Rifle.

"I want to introduce you to a personal friend of mine. This is an M41A Pulse Rifle. Ten millimeter, with an over-and-under 30mm pump-action grenade launcher ... feel the weight."

SCREEN TIME

Thus Corporal Duane Hicks acquainted Ellen Ripley with the standard Infantry

weapon of the U.S. Colonial Marines in the timeless James Cameron sci-fi combat epic *Aliens*. If you haven't seen this movie, put down the magazine and go watch it immediately. I don't care if you are managing an international crisis, delivering a baby or flying an airplane. I'll wait.

Aliens is the coolest movie ever filmed. I appreciate some might disagree with this assertion but those people would be wrong. I can quote the whole thing.

Aliens was the last of the top-flight analog action films shot before the widespread advent of CGI effects, meaning the guns were operational, the muzzle flashes were captured directly on film and the

action took place in the Real World. The creature effects were masterfully executed by SFX virtuoso Stan Wilson when he was at the top of his game.

THE GUN

According to the backstory, the Armat M41A Pulse Rifle fires M309 10x24mm explosive-tipped caseless, light armor piercing rounds from a 99-round detachable box magazine. The underslung pump-action U-1 30mm grenade launcher carries four rounds and fires a variety of high explosive payloads.

The weapons were designed by James Cameron and crafted by Simon Atherton, the head armorer at the British prop company Bapty and Co. The prop M41As were actually bodged-together amalgams of three real firearms. The heart of the gun was an operational M1A1 Thompson submachinegun, the U-1 grenade launcher was



The original operational props were crafted around M1A1 Thompson submachine guns like this one.



The Franchi SPAS-12 shotgun is a ludicrously complicated piece of kit but it looks cool enough to have landed numerous movie roles ranging from *Terminator* to *Jurassic Park*.

“ALIENS IS THE COOLEST MOVIE EVER FILMED. I APPRECIATE SOME MIGHT DISAGREE WITH THIS ASSERTION BUT THOSE PEOPLE WOULD BE WRONG.”

a cut-down Remington 870 pump shotgun and the forearm came from a Franchi SPAS-12 shotgun. There were either three or four live-firing weapons manufactured for the film, though only one had an operational grenade launcher. I would willingly trade my entire retirement portfolio for that gun today.

Bapty armorers custom machined the metal bits holding these guns together in-house. The aluminum shells were hand built by a racecar manufacturer. The LED ammunition counters were crafted by the movie's special effects department.

The original concept art had the M41A built around HK MP5 rather than Thompsons but the 9mm muzzle flash was inadequate for Cameron's vision. The gun nerd truly committed to his craft can glimpse the MP5-based pre-production version printed on the “Peace Through Superior Firepower” T-shirt worn by PFC Ricco Frost in the film. The fact I know this should lend insight into why I have so few normal friends.

BUILDING MY OWN M41A PULSE RIFLE

My dummy M41A was a homeschool project I built several years ago with my kids. Nothing on the gun actually works and it differs from the original props in several ways a True Believer would find objectionable. However, I think it's just super cool.

The chassis is built around a length of square tubular steel stock from Home Depot. The forearm and cooling shroud came from an inexpensive SPAS-12 airsoft gun. The pistol grip/fire control unit are original M1A1 Thompson parts. While most of the gun can be built from stupid-cheap stuff, these Thompson components are spendy nowadays. I was fortunate to have built this gun back when these parts were commonplace. You can still find them from time to time on GunBroker.com.

The bulk of the project is handcrafted out of pine lumber, distressed as needed and painted to match. The round counter is painted in place and covered with a small

piece of Plexiglas. The end result is heavy and rugged.

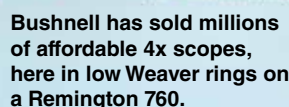
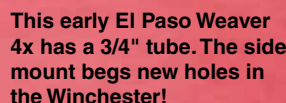
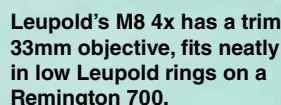
DENOUEMENT

It seems I am not the only person in the world to be taken with the M41A Pulse Rifle. Ebay offers a wide variety of replicas ranging from unpainted kits for \$90 to 3D-printed versions for \$155. Licensed replicas taken from the original props run \$600 while the same gun signed by the actors in the film will set you back \$12,500.

The artists at Lage Manufacturing built a fully-operational version out of a short-barreled Remington 870 shotgun and a custom full-auto submachinegun. Their gun feeds from 50-round Suomi coffin mags. You can see it run on YouTube.

Forget the MP5SD, the MP44, the SCAR16, the elusive FG42 paratroop rifle or John Browning's handcrafted 1911 prototype. For the truly committed gun geek the USCM M41A Pulse Rifle eclipses them all. In my humble opinion it's the coolest firearm ever made.

Warren Page once wrote: "I had thought the question of scope power for selective shooting of open-country [deer] had been settled ... the 4x is just about right, my own personal choice and enough magnification for ranges to 450 ..."



Page, long-time shooting editor of *Field & Stream*, was not alone in his affection for 4x scopes in big places. Jack O'Connor at *Outdoor Life* had a well-known sheep-hunting itch. He scratched it on trips into the mountains with fine custom rifles, most famously .270 Winchester M70 Featherweights from Al Biesen's shop. He scoped his favorite with a 4x Stith Kollmorgen in Tilden mounts. In 1954 Jack killed a Wyoming elk with this rifle, later a Dall's ram in the Yukon. He used it in Africa and India too.

Colonel Townsend Whelen, whose published opinions on rifles brought millions of shooters into the O'Connor era, favored 4x scopes on hunting rifles too. "When I was ordered to duty at Springfield Armory in the fall of 1929, I determined that I would have made the finest possible .30-06 Springfield hunting rifle." He sent Griffin & Howe an un-numbered action. It came back with a matted receiver ring, turned-down bolt handle, Lyman cocking-piece sight and trigger-guard safety. Alvin Linden fashioned a stock of dark walnut. Whelen added a 2¼x Zeiss scope in double-lever mounts, but later found it wanting at distance. He replaced it with a 4x Lyman Challenger.

Cynics might sniff that Whelen, who began hunting with a .40-72 and whose military service pre-dated the Spanish-American War, had no access to more versatile scopes. They're wrong.

In 1902, as two Ohio bicycle mechanics built the first of a crude series of powered aircraft, Zeiss developed a rifle-scope with an erector system. A couple of years later, when Wilbur and Orville recorded an 852-foot flight near Kitty Hawk, Zeiss had a short "prism" scope. By 1921 Zeissdovier and Zieldosechs scopes featured variable power. In 1926 Zeiss listed four fixed-power sights, two variables. The gap in the center of a #1 "Graticle" spanned 25" at 100 yards



With a 100-yard field of 24 feet or more, a 4x gives you quick aim in cover. Light weight is a bonus.

— a range-finding reticle! By 1928 Zeiss controlled M. Hensoldt & Sons, founded in Wetzlar by Hensoldt and Kellner in 1849. The Zeilvier 4x listed at \$45, a hefty sum when motorists in the U.S. could buy Henry Ford's Model T for \$360!

A SCOPE FOR EVERY MAN

Then 24-year-old Bill Weaver designed a scope for the masses. At its 1930 debut his 3x Model 330 sold for \$19, including the mount. A 4x M440 came three years later, when Bill moved from Newport, Kentucky to El Paso, Texas.

Weaver's 1", steel-tube K2.5 and K4 appeared in 1947, the K6 a year later. Weaver replaced its 330 and 440 with 3/4" J2.5 and J4 rimfire scopes, supplanted in 1954 by the B4 and B6. For four decades, Weaver's fortunes rode on the success of its 4x scopes, especially the hugely popular K4.

Bushnell's first offerings were 2.5x, 4x and 6x Scopemasters. It was 1953, five years after Dave Bushnell had overcome daunting obstacles to import Japanese-built binoculars. The Scopemaster line became the Scopechief. A 3-9x variable joined the series in 1959. One of my first scopes was a 4x Scopechief. Had I used it exclusively for the next 48 years, I'd no doubt have killed as much game as has fallen in front of other glass. By 1960 Bushnell optics were selling at 18,000 dealerships worldwide.

In 1949 Lyman's best-selling 2½x

Alaskan moved aside for the steel-tube, 26mm 4x Challenger. An alloy Stream-Lite 4x trailed in 1953 and by 1955 all had alloy tubes. Lyman didn't field a variable (a 3-9x) until 1973.

In 1959 the Redfield Gunsight Co., founded in 1909, began building scopes too. In 1962 Redfield's first variable, a 3-9x, had the first constantly centered, non-magnifying reticle of any maker.

Don Burris, one of Redfield's managing partners, started his own company in 1972. Early on, it offered only iron sights and scope mounts. In 1975 a 4x scope appeared, with 2-7x and 3-9x variables.

WHAT I WANT

Here's why I still prefer a 4x scope — it's less complex than a variable, so there's less to go wrong. It's lighter and, courtesy of having fewer lens elements, brighter. Without a power ring, it has more free tube behind the turret so you can mount the scope farther forward. A set magnification gives you a consistent perspective, so at a glance you can estimate distance.

A 4x scope doesn't need a big objective lens to give you a bright image; in fact, the 24mm glass fronting a 30mm tube yields a 6mm exit pupil, as big as your eye can use in the dimmest of shooting light! Also, a 4x has a field of at least 24 feet at 100 yards — wide enough for a quick, accurate poke when you bump a bull in the lodgepoles.

The argument you need more power at a distance is weak. In 4x glass, an animal appears as big at 300 yards as it does over iron sights at 75 and the scope reticle obscures almost none of the target.

My first pronghorn fell at 420 yards to my .244 Remington 722 and a 4x Lyman Challenger. I didn't want for magnification. Years later on a Namibian plain, a friend hit a zebra poorly. The wounded beast paused at 500 yards. Too far for clear aim with the 4x on my rifle. I closed 80 yards on my belly and held two hand-widths over the withers. The bullet struck perfectly.

THE DOWNSIDES

Liabilities of a 4x? Well, you can't change magnification at a whim. You get to choose just once, as when you pick the color of your refrigerator. You can't spin up power to fill the field with ribcage as your pulse throws the reticle from one end of it to the other. My rule of thumb: Scope magnification for big game is sufficient to handle the same number in hundreds of yards. So 4x is power enough for sure kills on deer to 400 yards. But it's a long poke, edgy for other reasons, but you'll see plenty of rib around the crosswire.

Sadly, you'll find few 4x scopes on the market now. My repeated pleas to reintroduce the best of the discontinued prompts a collective shrug: "Everyone wants variables now. The bigger the better." 🦋

THE M1 CARBINE

A TRUE AMERICAN CLASSIC

Frank Jardim

Born and bred in World War II, over six million M1-, M1A1-, M2- and M3-carbines were made in total from 1942 to 1945. It was the most widely produced American military arm of the era, even surpassing M1 rifle production by at least half a million and not one was made in a U.S. Army Ordnance Department arsenal. Ten private factories produced the majority of them (mostly semi-auto M1s) in a fury of wartime production. Serious carbine collectors usually won't rest until they have at least one example from each firm.

PURPOSE-BUILT

Intended for issue to support troops to provide them with greater firepower and range than a .45 ACP pistol, the M1 carbine's light weight, quick handling, low recoil and 15-shot magazine, represented a tremendous improvement. However, it never had the range or power of the rifle and was never intended to be a front-line infantryman's weapon. It wasn't even equipped with a bayonet until nearly the end of the war. In fact, the Table-of-Organization (TOE) for an Infantry platoon included only one carbine for issue to the platoon leader. Lots of carbines eventually made their way to the sharp end of the spear, usually in the hands of non-commissioned officers whose leadership responsibilities required mobility more than long-range engagement of the enemy.

Good marksman could hit targets at 200 yards, but the fast shooting, controllable carbine came into its own at 50 yards or less. American airborne divisions issued carbines more widely at the platoon level, even to enlisted men, and a special folding-stock version, designated the M1A1, was made specifically for paratrooper use.



All carbines had a simple push-pin in their slide handle (above) to lock the bolt open. The name of the manufacturer is always stamped on the heel of the receiver. Close-up of the gas block on the bottom of the barrel (below) with the tappet fully seated in its bore.



DECADES OF SERVICE

M1, and select-fire M2, carbines were in continuous use by American forces through the Vietnam War and also widely distributed to our allies. An old friend of mine who was a security dog handler in Vietnam loved the carbine because he could carry and shoot it with one hand while on patrol. Even with two hands, he found his issue M14 rifle impossible to control in full-auto fire. After securing an M2 carbine from an ARVN soldier, he relinquished his M14 for the duration of his tour.

Since the notion of arming support troops with carbines was already a couple hundred years old when the M1 Carbine came on the scene, why was the M1 series such a standout among its military peers? First off, at a time when most military carbines were just shorter-barreled versions of full-power military bolt-action rifles, the M1 Carbine was semi-automatic and chambered in mild mannered .30 Carbine (ballistically

A typical WWII setup for the M1 Carbine — standard issue two-pocket magazine pouch snugged over the carbine buttstock and M3 fighting knife, the basis for the carbine's later M4 bayonet.



similar to the .357 Magnum pistol cartridge). If you've ever fired a 7.62 x 54R through a 20" barreled Russian M44 Mosin Nagant carbine, you'll understand how punishing similar carbines are to shoot in terms of recoil and muzzle blast. The mild recoiling M1 Carbine is a delight to shoot and no small part of the gun's popularity.

PISTON RODS

In addition, the carbine was the first successful semi-auto to use a tappet (short piston) operated, short-stroke gas system. High pressure gas is tapped from the barrel close to the chamber and used to drive a small gas piston a short distance (less than 0.25") at a very high velocity. When fired, the carbine's tiny gas piston slaps the inner face of the operating slide hard enough to drive it rearward, unlock the bolt and extract the fired cartridge case from the chamber.

Then, a return spring on the slide drives it forward to strip a fresh round from the magazine, chamber it, lock the bolt in battery and finally depress the little piston in its gas block again. The major advantage of the carbine's tappet gas system was a lighter overall weight for the weapon (about 5.5 lbs loaded) achieved through shortening the action's operating parts. The modern SCAR uses the same short-tappet gas system.

ON THE GROUND

Though I never met anyone who didn't enjoy shooting the carbine, its combat performance record wasn't all accolades. Three common criticisms leveled were it had trouble holding its zero, its thin sheet-metal magazine was easily damaged and it lacked stopping power. On two of the three counts, it's clearly guilty as charged. The entire barreled action is secured to the stock by a hook at the rear of the receiver and a band at the front of the handguard — nobody's



Hornady Critical Defense FTX hollow-point, here compared to GI-issue ball and .357 Magnum, gives the M1 Carbine more credibility as a great, lightweight self-defense rifle.



Carbines were continuously updated. The upper carbine has an early push-button safety and improved milled rear sight while the lower has a late war rotating safety and an early two-leaf, flip rear sight.



The entire barrel, action and trigger assembly tilts out of the stock once the front band is removed. It's a simple field-strip but it does nothing for accuracy!

definition of rock-solid tight. The magazines *are* thin and easily dented or bent if dropped. The battlefield solution to this was to discard used magazines whenever new ones could be had.

Was the .30 carbine really a poor man-stopper and brush-bucker as some soldiers claimed? Extreme cold diminished the performance of its ammunition to a degree and you also have to hit the target to stop it, though it's not too hard to miss with a carbine at longer ranges. Combine a wandering zero with what is essentially a pistol cartridge whose bullet drops a foot at 200 yards — almost four feet at 300 yards — and you can see why the carbine tended to shine at 50 yards or less. Finally, military FMJ bullets are meant to pass cleanly through the body so they aren't the most efficient killers.

The carbine lacked the brute power of a full-size rifle cartridge to compensate for its 110-gr. FMJ bullet. It's this last point where I think the complaints about the carbine's

stopping power originate. In my opinion, the .30 carbine cartridge suffered from standing in the shadow of the awesome overkill of the U.S. Army's M2 ball cartridge, known to us civilians as the .30-06 Springfield — it's an impossible act to follow!

A BETTER LOAD

Loaded with modern soft-point bullets, or better yet hollow-points like Hornady's Critical Defense 110-gr. FTX, the M1 Carbine is a highly effective weapon for self-defense. It delivers .357 Magnum type performance and terrific firepower, especially loaded with a 30-round magazine, in a platform a youngster could handle. While highly collectible and increasingly expensive these days, there's no reason a vintage M1 carbine in good condition can't still do the work it was intended for. Shoot one and you'll soon see it has a lot more going for it than most contemporary pistol caliber carbines.



Mossberg's new MC2c is a compact 9mm pistol loaded with features.

MOSSBERG MC2c

A NEW BIGGER-BROTHER IN THE FAMILY

Denny Hansen

In November of 1998 I was invited to attend the rollout of the Mossberg MC1sc pistol at Gunsite Academy in Arizona. Spelled out, the model is the Mossberg Carry 1, sub-compact. This handgun has met with extraordinary success from both seasoned and novice *pistoleros*.

Now, a few months ago, in November 2019, I returned to Gunsite to attend the introduction of another new Mossberg pistol — the MC2c (compact).

FEATURES

Five initial offerings include two frame variants (standard and cross-bolt safety); choice of slide finishes (black DLC-finished or bead-blasted stainless steel); and optional TRUGLO Tritium Pro Night sights. The pistol in this report is the base model with black DLC slide and standard safety.

The compact MC2c features a 3.9" barrel and has an overall length of 7.1". The frame is constructed of glass-reinforced polymer that provides high tensile strength, stiffness and high impact resistance. Texturing on both sides above the trigger guard give a perfect place for the trigger finger when the sights are not on target.

The grip has a slight palm swell and a grip angle mimicking the 1911, while featuring Mossberg's signature texturing for a

sure, positive grip. All MC2c pistols have a reversible magazine release, and the cross-bolt safety, if so equipped, is also reversible for right- or left-handed shooters.

Integrated into the slide is the Mossberg STS (Safe Takedown System), which unlike some handguns, does not require the user to pull the trigger to disassemble for routine cleaning or maintenance.

TAKE DOWN

To disassemble the MC2c, you ensure the pistol is unloaded, lock the slide to the rear, press down on the slide cover plate, remove it, take out the striker assembly and gently let the slide go forward. Safe and simple, it takes more time to explain the procedure than to actually accomplish it.

The stainless-steel slide features multi-angle fore- and aft-serrations providing positive slide manipulation.

Other standard features include dovetail-mounted, low-profile, drift-adjustable white 3-dot sights. The sights use the same dovetail as a SIG, so if desired SIG sights can be utilized. The stainless steel barrel has cut-broached rifling with a 1:16 twist rate and black DLC finish. The frame has a short, one slot accessory rail and an oversized trigger guard allowing the user to wear gloves.

The flat-profile trigger has the familiar integral blade safety.

The trigger has a short, tactile reset and reduced overtravel; pull weight is around 5.5 lbs.

MAGAZINES

The MC1sc comes with a single-column flush-fit six-round, and extended seven-round, magazine while the MC2c comes with a double-column flush-fit 13-round and extended 15-round mag. Despite holding more than twice the ammunition, Mossberg was able to keep the width of the MC2c only 0.07" (1.10" overall) more than its predecessor, which is amazingly narrow for its capacity.

Similarly, the new offering has an unloaded weight of only an additional 2 oz. unloaded over the MC1sc (21 oz. total).

RANGE TIME

Like its subcompact little bother, I was impressed with the ergonomics of the new pistol. I have spent more time with the 1911 than any other handgun and since the grip angle mimics the 1911 it came on target naturally and quickly.

Mossberg provided both 9mm FMJ and hollowpoint ammunition for the event. The MC2c did not seem to have a preference for functioning or accuracy. I know the pistol I was using had

zero malfunctions and I did not see or hear of anyone else having a problem.

Head shots were very doable for most of the class out to at least 10 yards, and capable of making consistent body shots at 50.

Felt recoil, while subjective, felt very light through the new Mossberg. I attribute this to the fact the frame is cut high with a slight beavertail placing the hand very close to the bore. In putting hundreds of rounds through the MC2c, I found the texturing to be very positive, but not so aggressive to cause a "hot spot" in the hand.

CONCEALED EDC

Gunsite Rangemaster Ed Head has a shooting exercise he calls "The Jack Wilson Drill," named for the hero who stopped a would-be mass murderer earlier this year with a single head shot in a church in Texas. The drill should be shot without a warmup and consists of a single head shot to the target at 17 yards.

When I received my own MC2c two months after the roll-out, I took it to the range the same day and shot the Jack Wilson Drill. The round was low, striking around chin level. Considering I was still basically unfamiliar with the pistol and its short 6.4" sight radius, I was not displeased with the results. I'm sure I'll



Although the footprint of the Mossberg subcompact (MC1sc, left) is not much smaller than the compact, the latter has more than twice the ammunition capacity.



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Key to “no trigger pull needed” disassembly is the slide cover plate (above) which removes quickly and easily.



Magazine release is reversible. On models with a cross-bolt safety, the safety lever is also reversible for right- or left-handed shooters.

improve as I shoot the pistol more.

From the Gunsite/Mossberg event I was confident the MC2c would reliably function with hollowpoints and ball ammo, so I took 50 Super Vel solid copper hollowpoints and 50 Black Hills Ammunition copper Honey-Badger loads with me. While an admittedly small sample, both functioned without a hitch in the pistol.

SHEATH IT

Mossberg provided a DeSantis Mini Scabbard for the evaluation. I liked it so well I continue to use it with my own MC2c. The holster has a slight forward cant so printing is minimized when bending forward. I also wear a standard two-pocket double-column mag pouch with an extra magazine for the Mossberg up front while a SureFire Stiletto light rides in the rear pocket.

Will the coming November see the introduction of the MC3fs full size pistol? We'll just have to wait and see. MSRP: \$490

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THE TIPPMMANN ARMORY GATLING 9MM GUN

BEWARE
OF NAKED
GUN GUYS!



WILL DABBS, MD

**PHOTOS: ROBERT JONES/
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC**

My fingers twitched nervously above my laptop. My breath came in furtive spurts. The intrinsic import of the moment threatened to cloud my vision. I was about to send an email to my bosses Brent and Roy I had waited a full three decades to draft. After a bit of brief introspection, I distilled my message down to a single concise sentence, “Guys, the Gatling gun is here.”

At first brush this thing looks like Rooster Cogburn’s infantry support weapon had a baby with a lawn mower. There are eight stubby barrels, a heavy carriage with an inimitably cool mechanical traverse and elevation mechanism along with a big honking crank on the side. Despite all of this undeniable historical cred, the gun is still nonetheless small enough to move around without a pack mule or a Jeep. Simply put, after a lifetime spent squeezing triggers for fun and money, I think the Tippmann Armory Gatling gun may be the coolest firearm I have ever seen.

ORIGIN STORY

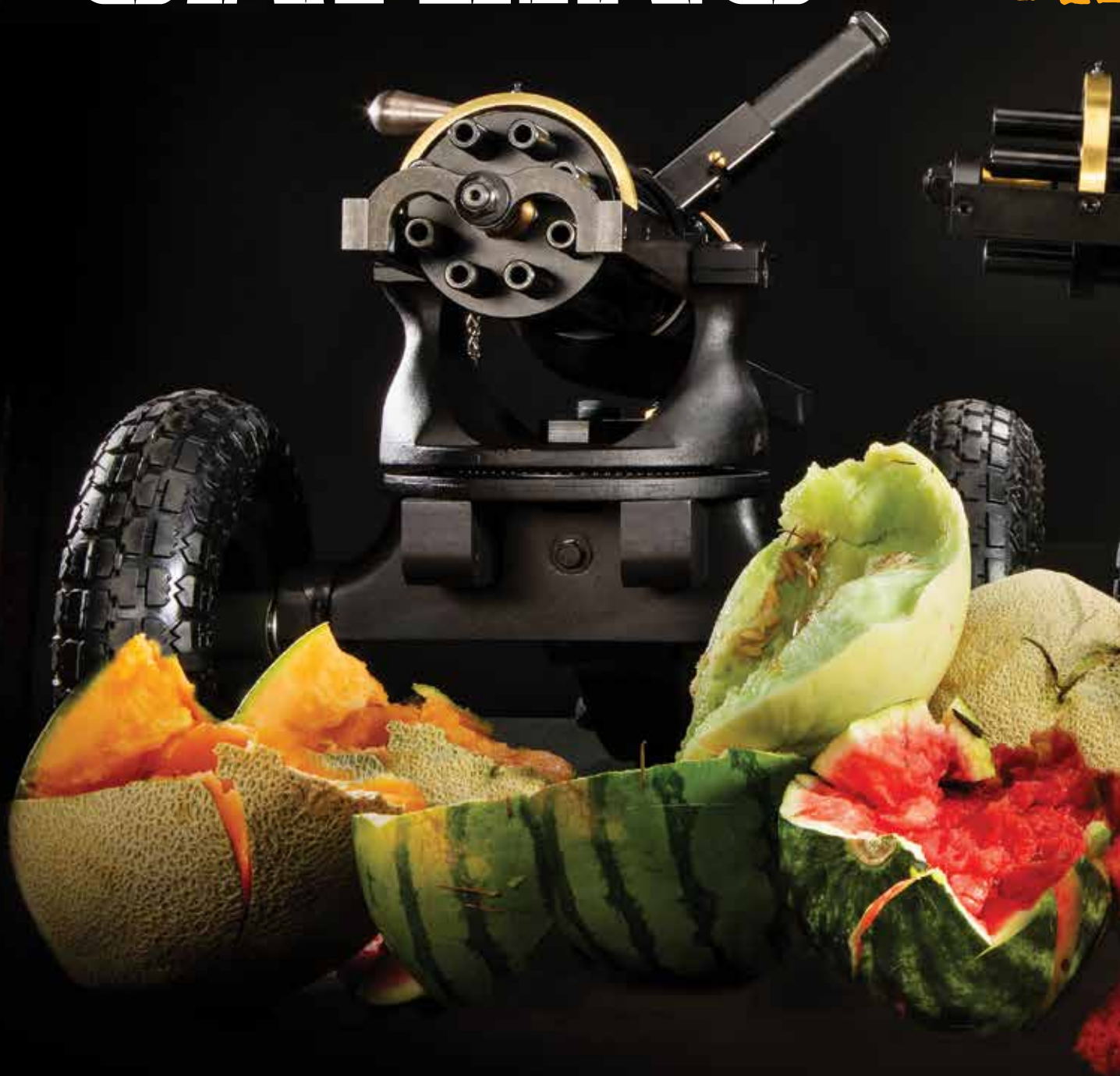
The beating heart of this dream-machine spawns from Dr. Richard Gatling’s 19th-century tactical paradigm-shifter. Richard Jordan Gatling was a physician who never technically practiced medicine. He was a professional inventor who made and lost several fortunes before dying at his daughter’s home at the age of 84. In addition to the multi-barreled firearm bearing his name, Dr. Gatling also invented a screw propeller for steamboats, a rice-sowing machine, an improved toilet, a novel type of bicycle, a device for steam-cleaning wool and several other fascinating contrivances.

Oddly, Gatling imagined his fast-firing weapon as a life-saving response to the horrific scourge of disease during the American Civil War. He once opined, “It occurred to me that if I could invent a machine — a gun — which could by its rapidity of fire, enable one man to do as much battle duty as a hundred,

THE TIPPMMANN ARMORY

GATLING

9MM



MELON GUN



Is the Tippman Armory Gatling Gun practical? Nope! It's simply 62 lbs. of pulse-pounding, melon-murdering shooting pleasure!

GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE

that it would, to a large extent, supersede the necessity of large armies and, consequently, exposure to battle and disease [would] be greatly diminished.” How sweet. I doubt he had any idea how far his eponymous 19th-century death-dealing whirligig might go.

Gatling based his gun design upon that of his mechanical seed planter. The Gatling gun first drew breath in 1862, but the weapon only saw very limited service during the Civil War. George Armstrong Custer famously left three Model 1866 .50-caliber Gatling guns in the rear when his 7th Cavalry got wiped out at the Little Big Horn. In 1893 Dr. Gatling affixed an electric motor to one of his guns and coaxed a 3,000-round-per-minute rate of fire out of the thing.

In 1963 General Electric revived the idea with the 7.62x51mm Minigun, so named because it fired a rifle-caliber round much smaller than the 20mm version feeding the M61 Vulcan aircraft cannon. The U.S. military consumed some 10,000 Miniguns during the Vietnam War. In 1990 Dillon Aero began work on an improved version of the design that is now a common fixture across all American armed services as well as dozens of foreign militaries.

MODERN CIVILIAN TREATMENT

The magwell on the Tippmann Armory Gatling Gun sprouts at a jaunty angle about the 10 o'clock position and accepts standard GLOCK magazines. Unlike some of the rare cartridges driving the originals, this modern Tippmann version runs on cheap 9mm Parabellum. The whole shebang rides atop a pair of pneumatic wheels apparently borrowed from a furniture dolly. The synergistic result is cool beyond the capacity of the language to adequately describe.

I have no idea what kind of gun this is. It's clearly not a rifle. There's not a human being alive who could fire this gun from the shoulder. It's also not a pistol. You couldn't conceal this rascal underneath a proper parachute. The design dates back to the American Civil War, so even Chuck Schumer could not hallucinate this piece into becoming an Assault Weapon, whatever that really is. The BATF has looked it over and said they don't really care. All I can tell you is that it is pure unfiltered awesome.

BACKGROUND

This 9mm GLOCK-fed Gatling gun is the product of the fertile mind of one



**“I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT KIND OF GUN THIS IS.
IT’S CLEARLY NOT A RIFLE. THERE’S NOT
A HUMAN BEING ALIVE WHO COULD
FIRE THIS GUN FROM THE SHOULDER.”**





Dennis Tippmann. Dennis and his sweet wife have 11 kids and enough grandchildren and great grandchildren to populate a small town. You probably don't know them but you might have seen one of Tippmann's other babies — he used to build super-cool belt-fed rimfire machineguns. He built about 1,400 copies total, some 400 of which were registered machineguns papered before the 1986 ban.

This guy really has a gift for building cool gun stuff. His SMG22 is a belt-fed, CO₂-powered full-auto .22-caliber air rifle that can obliterate empty Coke cans faster than Democrats destroy the economy. If you've ever seen a Tippmann paintball gun, it's a Dennis product, too. Now, the 9mm Gatling gun design is his latest weapon of mass recreation.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The action is drawn from Dr. Gatling's original design, thoroughly upgraded. Each of the eight barrels has its own dedicated bolt and striker-fired ignition mechanism. There is a heavy steel receiver cover which pivots out of the way for access to the gun's entrails. The contraption fires at the 4 o'clock position just like the originals.

The key to the gun's Uber-reliable operation is a carefully designed cam mechanism controlling the movement of each individual bolt as the barrel cluster rotates around its central axis. A nifty little shelf activates the spring-loaded striker at just the right moment. The action is designed in such a way it will cycle unfired rounds should the need arise. As a result, this is likely the most reliable repeating firearm in the world.

When I met this gun at the SHOT show, the Tippmann crew had a version with a receiver cut from transparent Plexiglas. Watching all those bolts and firing mechanisms cycle was absolutely mesmerizing. For the drool stains I left all over the thing I offer my sincere apologies.

ACCESSORIZING

Believe me, you will lament the limitations of your magazines. Four 27-round Magpul stick magazines was just barely enough to feed the ensuing addiction. I don't know what kind of secret sauce Magpul pours over the top of all of their cool-guy stuff, but these mags are the cat's pajamas. Exquisitely well-executed and utterly reliable, these Magpul sticks kept the Tippmann Gatling cooking as fast as we could get them loaded.

On this subject, a MagPump magazine loader sure helps you burn ammo faster. The MagPump comes with adaptors for six different popular pistol magazines. Just snap in the GLOCK adaptor, feed in the magazine, dump some ammo in the hopper, and pump away. Your thumbs will thank you later.

Black Hills Ammunition was kind enough to send a large supply of 9mm in support. You'll want a lot of this stuff. Black Hills ammo is reliable as a mother's love and comparably powerful.

This is a Gatling gun. There are no rails, battery-powered optics, or laser designators. The manual of arms is painfully simple. Point the gun at something you dislike, snap in a magazine and turn the handle. Then get ready for near-spiritual ballistic rapture.

“THIS GUN IS SO COOL JUST STANDING NEXT TO IT WILL BRIGHTEN YOUR TEETH, LOWER YOUR CHOLESTEROL, CURE MALODOROUS FEET AND RELIABLY LAND YOU DATES WITH SUPERMODELS.”

TRIGGER TIME

Okay, I'm just kidding — there is no trigger. The Tippmann Gatling is indeed a massive beast at some 62 lbs. but the wheeled carriage makes it easy to move. You could transport this weapon to the range in the back of a Prius should the need arise.

So, you get the gun all set up, sight it in nicely, try to settle your thumping heart, finally turn the handle, and — nothing happens. Cranking the handle only starts the firing sequence. The gun has to cycle through four barrels before it actually fires. Once this gun gets spooled up, however, hang onto your butt.

The Tippmann Gatling Gun cycles as fast as you want it to. Work the crank at a leisurely pace and the cadence seems sedate and almost soothing. Put your back into it and this thing runs like a gerbil on crack; 600 to 800 rounds per minute is not overly challenging.

The traverse and elevation mechanism includes a threaded wheel to raise and lower the rear of the weapon in its cradle. A geared contrivance controls traverse. Pull a brake handle back and the gun is free to pivot. Lock it down and the thing shoots like a laser. The front sight is fixed. The rear sight includes a small anti-aircraft-style ring and is adjustable for windage and elevation.

Dial the T and E in and the gun will shoot a steady arrow-straight stream of 9mm. Loosen up the carriage and you can sweep the weapon back and forth to saturate the backstop with zippy little 9mm bullets. Save your milk jugs, fill them with water, and unlimber the 9mm Tippmann Gatling. You'll grin until your face hurts.

WHAT'S IT REALLY GOOD FOR?

Who the heck cares? It's a 9mm Gatling gun feeding from GLOCK mags. This gun is so cool just standing next to it will brighten your teeth, lower your cholesterol, cure malodorous feet and reliably land you dates with supermodels. You can't hunt with it, and employing this weapon in a defensive role would transform your suburban home into one giant screened-in porch. However, I defy you to find something else this much fun that won't get you thrown in jail or excommunicated from your local church.

Be forewarned, you don't want to be in possession of a credit card while shooting this thing near someplace selling ammo. If your hypothetical ammo purveyor accepts barter, expect to eventually trade your clothes for bullets. The mental image of a bunch of very happy naked gun nerds jockeying for position behind the Tippmann Gatling is frankly unsettling. However, this is what you should expect when you unlimber



this beast at your friendly neighborhood shooting range. I can personally attest the Tippmann 9mm Gatling Gun will reliably draw a crowd.

DRUM ROLL, PLEASE ...

Now the question you're all asking — what does fun on such an apocalyptic scale actually cost? Simply put, the Tippmann Gatling will set you back a cool five grand. Now breathe into a paper bag for a minute and think this through.

This gun is built like a Rolex watch and is actually eight separate firearms all oriented around a central rotating axis. It cycles as fast as an MP5 yet doesn't require a tax stamp. The comparable new-made Colt version shoots an expensive obsolete cartridge, weighs 350 lbs. and costs literally 10 times as much.

The Tippmann 9mm Gatling gun is the ultimate range toy for the gun nerd of distinction. It is also probably unlike anything you've ever fired before. Just be sure and wear some nice underwear. You'll likely end up trading your clothes for bullets.

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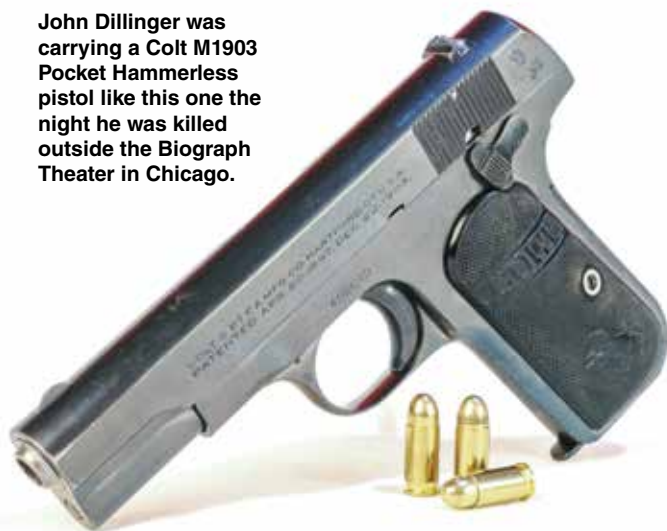
A gangster's "tools of the trade," John Dillinger's firearms defined his outlaw persona.



The M1911 and M1911A1 pistols represented the state of the art in combat handguns during the gangster era.



John Dillinger was carrying a Colt M1903 Pocket Hammerless pistol like this one the night he was killed outside the Biograph Theater in Chicago.



Will Dabbs, MD

John Dillinger was an inveterate career criminal who likely did more to promote the Federal Bureau of Investigation than any other single personality save J. Edgar Hoover. The youngest of John Sr. and Molly Dillinger's two children, John was in trouble from the very outset. Dillinger's first arrest was at age 19 for car theft. A year later he enlisted in the Navy and served aboard the battleship USS Utah before going AWOL.

BIOGRAPHY ENDS AT THE BIOGRAPH

It was in jail Dillinger made the friends who would eventually facilitate his meteoric criminal career. He learned how to rob banks from the associates of Herman Lamm and cemented friendships with gangsters the likes of Pete Pierpont and Homer Van Meter. A month after his parole from the Indiana State

Prison, he robbed his first bank, making off with a cool \$10,000.

In a one-year span Dillinger and his gang robbed a dozen banks, becoming both infamous and wealthy in the process. However, with ill-gotten wealth and fame came the suffocating attention of Melvin Purvis and the U.S. Bureau of Investigation, the precursor to today's FBI. After shootouts, jail breaks, and girlfriends wooed and lost, John Dillinger ultimately found himself in Chicago where he met his gory end outside the Biograph Theater at the hands of Purvis and his fellow G-Men.

Throughout it all, Dillinger burned through a prodigious arsenal of weapons. He lost a pile of them when he fled the Little Bohemia Lodge in April of 1934. Each time he was captured or forced to leave in a rush, the cops ended up with a few of his guns. As America's most recognizable professional criminal, the weapons he wielded defined his persona.



Common calibers used in Dillinger gang guns included, from left to right, the .32ACP, the .38 Special, the .351SL and the .45ACP.



THE THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN

The Tommy Gun with its stubby 10.5" barrel, Cutts compensator, drum magazine and graceful forward handgrip is inextricably linked with 1930s-era organized crime. Though John Taliaferro Thompson did not technically design the gun bearing his name, it was his force of personality ultimately bringing it to life. The original Thompson gun was contrived to get American Doughboys up and out of the fetid trenches defining the First World War. The original prototypes were ready for field testing mere days after the 1918 armistice.

With no handy wars to drive sales of the Thompson, the enterprising general marketed his weapons to Law Enforcement and civilian customers. Prior to 1934 automatic weapons could be freely purchased over the counter in America. However, because a Thompson submachine gun cost \$175 new (\$200 with the optional compensator) — nearly \$3,000 today — sales were tepid.

The original 1921 Thompson sported a rate of fire of around 900 rounds per minute and weighed more than 10 lbs. empty. The subsequent 1928 version employed a heavier bolt assembly and a subsequent rate of fire of around 650 rpm. Both of these weapons were externally identical.

The Thompson fired from the open bolt via a pivoting hammer. There were separate fire selector and safety levers on the left side of the gun while the bolt locked to the rear on the last round fired. To get the gun back in action one need only swap magazines and squeeze the trigger. Nothing is faster, even today.

The buttstocks on these early Thompsons were readily removable via a pushbutton. Thusly configured, the Tommy Gun

was actually quite concealable underneath a long coat. Twenty-round box magazines sold for \$3 while a 50-round drum would set you back \$5. In experienced hands the Thompson gun was a fearsome close combat tool.

WINCHESTER M1907

The M1907 was a remarkably advanced blowback-operated semiautomatic rifle produced by Winchester between 1906 and 1958. Chambered for the intermediate .351SL round, the M1907 was a prescient design. Nearly four decades later the GI-issue M1 Carbine filled a similar tactical niche.

The M1907 sports beautiful workmanship and a variety of advanced features. The gun feeds from 5-, 10- or 20-round single-stack box magazines and is actuated via a plunger sticking out of the front of the forearm. John Dillinger's supervillain sidekick Homer Van Meter used an M1907 to murder Patrolman Howard Wagner outside the Merchants National Bank in South Bend, Indiana, in June of 1934.

A San Antonio gunsmith named Hyman Lebman developed quite a following among Depression-era gangsters. His M1907 rifles included a muzzle-mounted compensator, a vertical foregrip taken from a Thompson submachine gun and a full auto conversion. John Dillinger, Homer Van Meter and Lester "Baby Face Nelson" Gillis all made trips to his Texas gun shop to stock up on firepower. Gillis, his wife, and Van Meter even took Thanksgiving dinner with the Lebman family. Lebman always insisted he thought his well-heeled customers were wealthy oil men with an interest in firearms.



The Winchester M1907 semiautomatic rifle was a remarkably advanced weapon for its day.

A humpbacked receiver defines the Remington Model 11 and Browning Auto 5. Old gangster-era guns like this can be found cheap online; Will's example cost him \$240 via GunBroker.



REMINGTON MODEL 11

The Browning Auto-5 shotgun, a personal favorite of its prodigious designer, was a long-recoil operated weapon wherein the barrel and bolt cycled backwards as a unit before separating to undertake extraction chores. The end result was a lightweight, reliable action configured via a series of bushings to accommodate either high brass or low brass shells. The modern Barrett M82 .50-caliber anti-materiel rifle operates via a similar system.

Right after the turn of the century Browning tried to sell this design to Winchester but couldn't seal a deal. He then approached Remington, but their CEO died of a heart attack during negotiations. This eventually pushed Browning to FN in Belgium. Browning did, however, eventually strike deals with both Remington and Savage. The Remington Model 11 and Savage shotgun were functionally identical to the Belgium-made versions except the FN guns had a magazine cutoff the American variants lacked.

THE WHIPPIT

A popular variant of the Remington Model 11 shotgun favored by Gangsters of this era was called the Whippit. As the Model 11 is a recoil-operated design, barrel length is not critical to reliable functioning. Gangsters would shorten the barrel and buttstock on Model 11s to make something more concealable. The name Whippit came from the rapidity with which such a weapon could be presented from under cover.

Dillinger's gang used at least one Whippit chambered in 12 gauge. Bonnie Parker of Bonnie and Clyde fame wielded a 20-gauge version. Bonnie actually sewed a false zipper pocket into some of Clyde's trousers to accommodate his Whippit during bank robberies.

1911 PISTOL

John Browning's 1911 autoloading pistol revolutionized combat handguns in an era dominated by revolvers. The M1911 design arose in the late 1800s. This single-action, semiautomatic, recoil-operated pistol fed from a 7-round magazine and offered unprecedented firepower.

The M1911 was available in both .45ACP and .38 Super. Hyman Lebman also produced a full auto version of the M1911 he called his "Baby Machinegun." These machine pistols were fitted with extended magazines, a custom muzzle brake, and the foregrip from a Thompson submachine gun to produce a remarkably capable close combat weapon that was still quite concealable.

COLT OFFICIAL POLICE

In 1908 Colt released a .38-caliber revolver called the Army Special. In 1927 the name was changed to "Colt's Official Police" to better reach the American Law Enforcement market. This medium-frame double-action wheelgun was offered with 4", 5" or 6" barrels in a variety of calibers. However, the .38 Special version saw the widest use.

The Official Police was meticulously well executed and featured Colt's "Positive Lock" firing pin block safety. The Positive Lock safety prevented the firing pin from striking the primer unless the trigger was pulled. The sights consisted of a front semicircular blade and a corresponding groove cut into the top strap of the gun.

DILLINGER'S WOODEN PISTOL

John Dillinger was captured in January of 1934 in Tucson, Arizona, and escorted back to Indiana to stand trial for the murder of East Chicago Patrolman Patrick O'Malley. Dillinger was incarcerated in the Crown Point Jail, a facility the local cops described as escape-proof. On March 3, 1934, John Dillinger disproved the claim definitively.

There have been several conflicting allegations regarding the gun in question. However, the most commonly accepted theory is Dillinger took a piece of wooden washboard, carved it into a rough gun shape using a pair of razor blades and blacked the resulting facsimile with shoe polish. Using this crude fake pistol Dillinger locked 23 jailers and trustees in jail cells, stole a pair of Thompsons from the warden's office, walked out of the jail with no one being the wiser and then drove away in the Sheriff's car. To add insult to injury, the jailers had to be freed with cutting torches as Dillinger absconded with the jail's only set of keys.

COLT M1903 POCKET HAMMERLESS

One night in July of 1934, 31-year-old John Dillinger was shot to death by agents. He was packing a Colt .32-caliber M1903 Pocket Hammerless pistol. The same gun was offered in .380ACP as the M1908. Despite the "hammerless" moniker the M1903 was indeed hammer-fired — the hammer was simply enclosed within the rear aspect of the slide.

The M1903 was a beautiful example of the gunmaker's art. A single-action blowback design, the M1903 fed from an 8-round detachable box magazine and weighed 24 oz. empty. The M1903 featured a manual thumb safety in addition to a grip safety built into the backstrap. Around 570,000 copies rolled off the lines before production ended in 1945.

END OF AN ERA

John Dillinger was a smart, resourceful, charming psychopath who averaged one bank heist per month during his yearlong robbery spree. During the course of his time as the country's premiere motorized bandit, Dillinger and his cronies killed 10 men and wounded another seven. The Dillinger gang captured the imaginations of Americans ground down by the Great Depression and in so doing cemented their place in the history of America's most nefarious criminals.

WHAT'S IN YOUR RANGE BAG?

Advice from experts to make your shooting kit even better!

Brent T. Wheat

Range bags — almost everybody has one and they span everything from battered old tool boxes to the latest high-speed, low-drag Ballistic nylon duffle with integrated Bluetooth wireless and a cappuccino warmer. Regardless of how they look, their function is the same — keeping

all the stuff you need for the firing line in one place.

There is no “right” or “wrong” when it comes to range bags and the contents therein but there is always another great idea or tool to make your personal kit just a little bit better and more functional. In fact, most shooters keep certain must-have items

in their bags but otherwise rotate gear in and out as needs, situations and whims change.

So let's take a quick look at some great new shooting accessories, several old favorites and add in a few words of wisdom on the subject from our unmatched staff of firearms experts.

Roy Huntington — “My range bag is really a sort of open-top tool kit. Inside are the bits and pieces I need at-hand to make sight adjustments, do a quick clean, knock a squib out of a barrel, tighten a grip screw and even file a front sight. Pliers, screwdrivers, Q-tips, lube and other goodies fill it. I suppose you could tote all this in a range bag, but I just keep mine on a shelf near the sliding door leading to the porch! Ha!”

Massad Ayoob — “Goof-Off liquid paint remover is important! You get fresh white paint all over your hands at steel matches when you reset targets, and don't want to get it all over your guns on the next run. Other things include BoreSnakes in appropriate calibers, RemOil wipes and D-lead wipes. Screwdrivers of course and staple removers. Since we take targets back to class after qualification to verify student scores,



Brent's new favorite range bag is the huge Hackett Equipment “Big Bertha Four Pistol Range Backpack.” It'll hold more gear than you really need but humping all this equipment is still comfortable due to oversized padded shoulder straps. Other gear includes a Lyman Digital Trigger Pull Gauge, an assortment of Shoot-N-C self-adhesive targets, Howard Leight ear pro and a new pair of Leupold Katmai shooting glasses.



Hearing protection is a must for all shooting and more shooters are choosing electronic muffs. One top-of-the-line digital hearing protection system that won't break the bank is the Howard Leight Impact PRO.

This is Roy's "range bag," a re-dedicated tool bin with all his shooting supplies kept by the back door.

this keeps staff from getting fingers cut."

John Taffin — "My Range Bag is the back of my 4x4 Chevy PU with a locking metal tonneau cover! I literally have everything to keep me shooting—every possible tool, every possible accessory, even a barrel vise which goes into the trailer hitch! Target stands, all

kinds of targets, Lab Radar chronograph, notebooks, extra plans, rulers, rubber bands, paperclips, wrenches, screwdrivers, Allen wrenches, pistol rests, wire baskets for holding spent brass, sandbags, earmuffs, first aid kit, gloves, shooting glasses, stick-on target rectangles and circles of various

sizes, duct tape, regular tape, cleaning kits, several toolboxes, Uplulas, binoculars, heavy duty slip on recoil pads, cleaning kits, oil, cleaning rags, bottled water, snack crackers, TP, band cleaner, spray cleaner, paper towels, ammo cans for both .22 Long Rifle and 9mm, clamp-on extension for the top of my custom-built bench."

While Taffin has a giant self-powered "range bag" which can achieve 60 mph, a few of our "regulars" go a step further —

Will Dabbs, MD — "I hate to sound like 'That Guy,' but I live on my own 100 acres of heaven and shoot out the back door. My gun room is my range bag! However, I do keep a small trauma kit handy just in case."

Mike "Duke" Venturino — "I don't have a range bag, I have a range house, with targets to 300 yards. Everything I need is always there except for the particular gun to be fired and usually the handloads to go with it. In the house are shooting glasses, scope, tripod, screwdrivers, targets, staplers, chronographs, sandbags, etc. Before I bought this place 33 years ago, I did have range bags and range trucks (sort of). What a pain it was to forget something!"



The Big Bertha, as its name implies, holds four pistols safely along with 15 magazines, 12 boxes of ammo and a myriad of other vital stuff. Best of all, its low-key exterior design doesn't look like a gun bag!



COLLAR BUTTONS FOR THE .45-70 GENTLEMAN

Roger Smith

The single-shot Springfield 1873 rifle was already obsolete when the Army issued it with a 33" barrel to the infantry and a 22" barrel to the cavalry. The .45-70-405 cartridge it used, however, had been exhaustively researched and was a marvelous new cartridge with superb performance. Unfortunately, it was housed in a troublesome, non-reloadable soft copper

case until the Army switched to reloadable brass cases in 1882 and began manufacturing and issuing their own reloading kits in 1883.

A BETTER MOUSETRAP

Former Army Sergeant John Barlow understood what sort of tools shooters really needed and had already patented his own first reloading tool in 1882. In 1884 he

patented the Ideal bullet mold design we all know today. He launched the Ideal Manufacturing Company to sell his bullet molds and reloading tools and soon became a supplier to the gun makers. A shrewd bullet designer, many of his designs are still in production.

Barlow knew the Army's .45-70 reduced-powder cavalry loading was still too much of a good thing for training and practice.

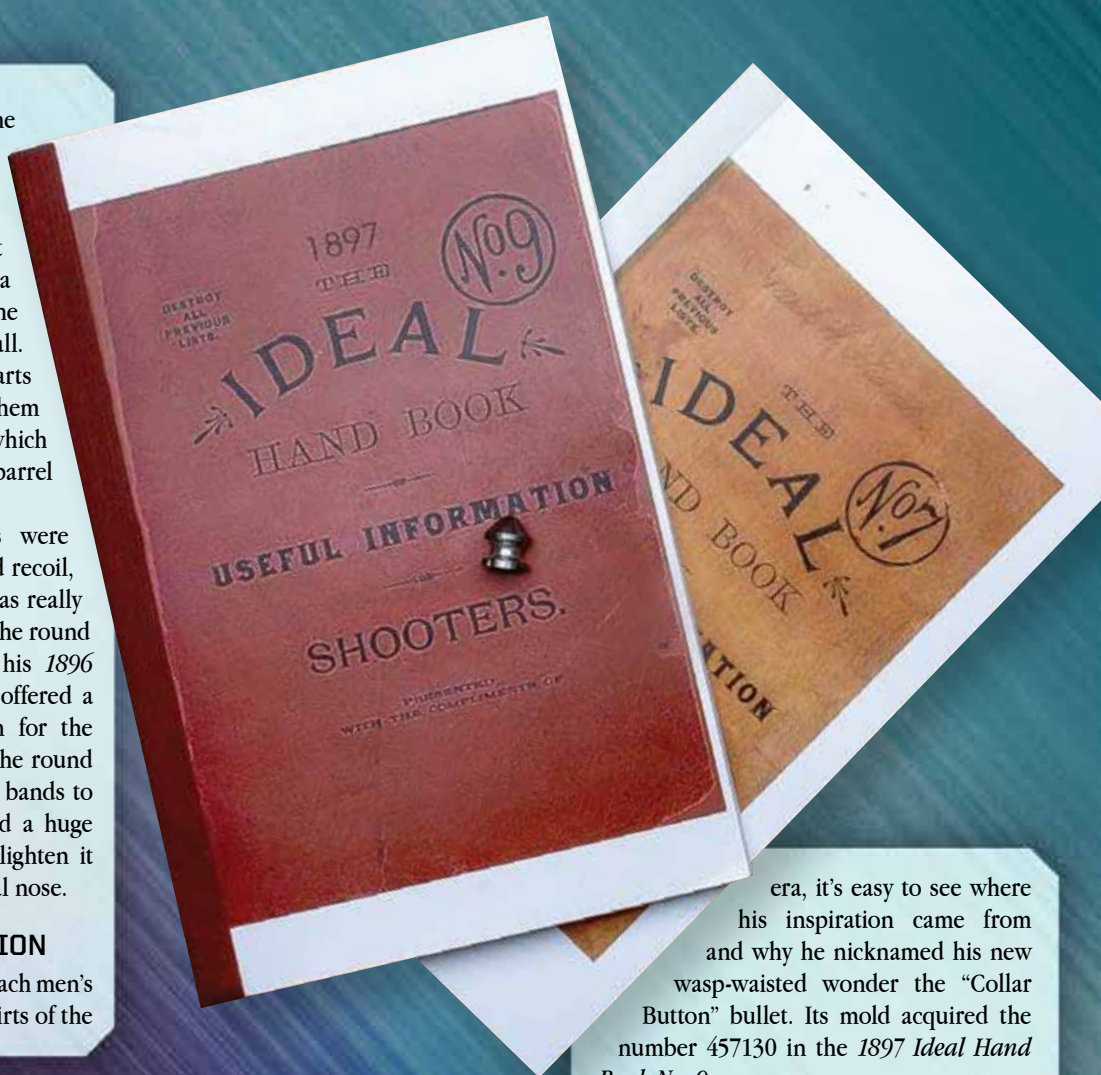
LIGHTEN UP YOUR BUFFALO RIFLE!

In his very first catalog (1891) he offered molds to the public for three lighter-weight bullets for small game and target practice with the .45-70. They were a flat base 210-gr. round nosed bullet, a hollow base 185-gr. version of the same bullet and a 140-gr. round ball. Army bullets used an alloy of 16 parts lead and one part tin to harden them for use in the Springfield 1873, which had a fast (at the time) 1 in 22" barrel twist.

Barlow's lightweight designs were very popular due to their reduced recoil, but the 1873 1:22" rifling twist was really too tight for its tenuous grasp on the round ball, and accuracy suffered. In his 1896 *Ideal Hand Book No. 7*, Barlow offered a radical lightweight bullet design for the .45-70 — it weighed the same as the round ball but offered two wide driving bands to better hold the rifling. It sported a huge grease groove in the middle to lighten it and a bluntly pointed short conical nose.

SARTORIAL INSPIRATION

Looking at the studs used to attach men's collars to the neckbands of the shirts of the

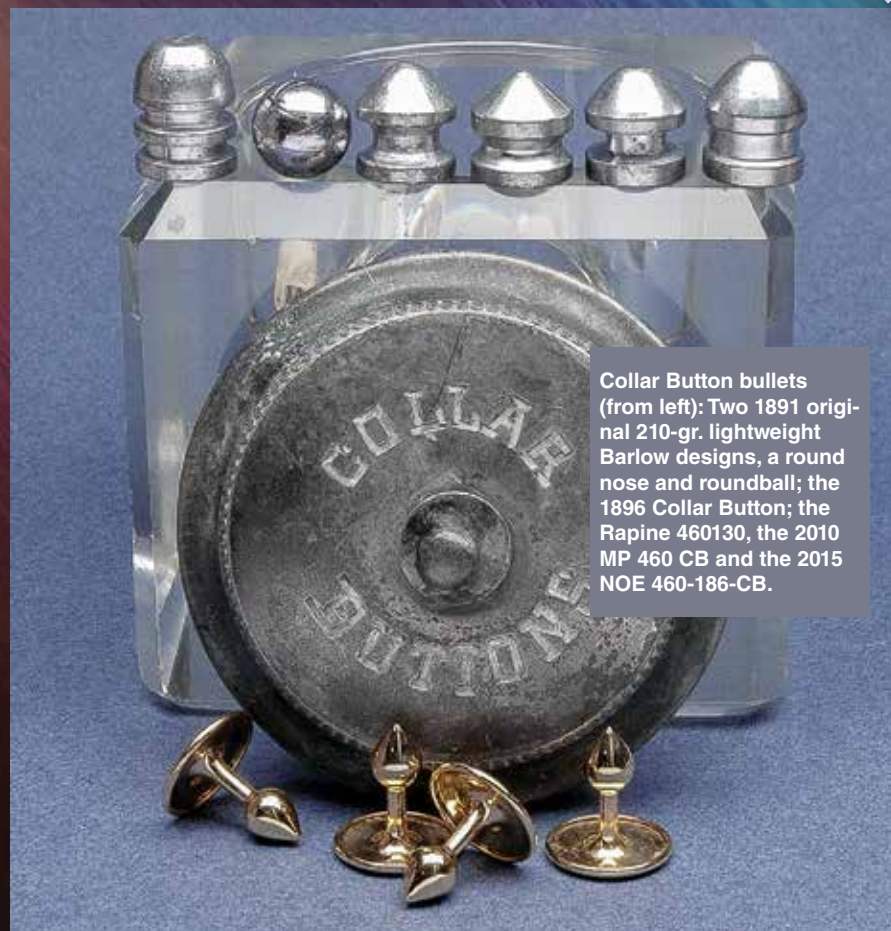


era, it's easy to see where his inspiration came from and why he nicknamed his new wasp-waisted wonder the "Collar Button" bullet. Its mold acquired the number 457130 in the 1897 *Ideal Hand Book No. 9*.

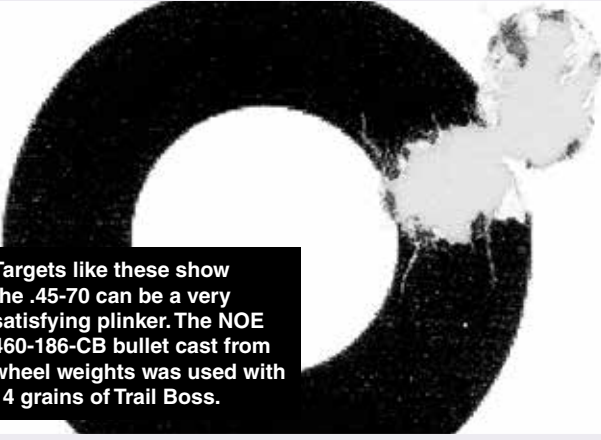
In 1910 Barlow retired and sold his Ideal company to Marlin with whom he had worked closely. During World War I, Marlin sold the company to Phineas Talcott, who sold it to the Lyman family in 1925.

The collar button design lasted through about 1955 or so, with a brief re-run of 100 two-cavity molds in 1999. Unfortunately, the 210-gr. bullet, assigned the number 457127 in 1897 and the hollow base version 457128, also disappeared from the Lyman/Ideal listings around 1955-56 never to be seen again. So did another wonderful lightweight target bullet for the .45-70, the Himmelwright-inspired 193-gr. 457401.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch in Pennsylvania (so to speak), the Rapine Bullet Mold Mfg. Co. was eating Lyman's lunch with their own slightly-larger-diameter collar button bullet, the sharply pointed number 460130. So was NEI Hand Tools with their own collar button design #332C, described as a .458-150-PB. Unfortunately NEI founder Walt Melander passed in 2002 and his company has since gone out of business. Ellsworth Rapine retired in early 2010 and closed his company. No more collar button bullet molds?



Collar Button bullets (from left): Two 1891 original 210-gr. lightweight Barlow designs, a round nose and roundball; the 1896 Collar Button; the Rapine 460130, the 2010 MP 460 CB and the 2015 NOE 460-186-CB.



Targets like these show the .45-70 can be a very satisfying plinker. The NOE 460-186-CB bullet cast from wheel weights was used with 14 grains of Trail Boss.

7-10-15 68° OVERCAST
1895 XLR, LEUPOLD 4X
50 YARDS

460-186-PB
14.0gr. TRAIL BOSS, WLR
1405 Fps ES 68

Fortunately, MP Molds came to the rescue in 2010 with a four-cavity mold for a similar bullet of the same weight. They proved so popular with big-bore air rifle shooters Lyman put their own two-cavity 457130 collar button mold back in their catalog in 2015. If you don't want to cast your own, you can buy them ready-made from the Western Bullet Co.

To really frost the cake for us .45-70 lovers, NOE Bullet Molds introduced their 460-186-CB mold in 2015. It has the same overall length as the Lyman and MP collar buttons but with a much shallower lube groove. The result is a 186-gr. bullet nicely splitting the difference between the vanished and oft-lamented 210-gr. 457127 and 193-gr. 457401 bullets, and the 147-gr. 457130.

ON THE CASTING BENCH

Bullets simply pour out of the five-cavity aluminum version of this mold I bought, with very few rejects. The NOE bullet performs so marvelously downrange, there's little reason to mourn those discontinued Ideal molds any more. Western Bullet also offers 460-186-CBs, sized .458 and lubed.

ROLLING YOUR OWN

In 1897 both Marlin and Winchester began offering reduced-power loads but otherwise, shooting the .45-70 collar buttons has always been a load-your-own proposition. It's really easy, though. Simply use small doses of fast burning pistol powder. Lyman's loading data furnished with their collar button mold recommends more powder and higher velocities (1,600-2,000 fps) than I have found to be optimum in my rifles.

I have used the original collar button design and its modern variations in single shot 32" H&R Buffalo Classic and 26" Shikari rifles, and also in 18" Marlin 1895GS and 24" 1895XLR lever actions.



There are a variety of options to prevent tubular magazine springs from pushing collar buttons deeper into the case, ranging from custom case crimping dies to allowing the rifle to seat the bullet if it has enough freebore.

In all cases, best results for me have come from using 12-14 grains of Trail Boss, 10-12 grains of Red Dot or Clays, 9-11 grains of Bullseye and 13-15 grains of Unique, using Winchester Large Rifle primers. These keep velocities in the 1,350-1,550 fps range. Any faster and groups really open up with my wheel weight bullets. I'm confident a few other fast burning pistol powders could perform equally well but with four good choices already in hand, I didn't feel the need to go further.

YOUR MILEAGE MAY VARY

I can't give you the perfect load since each rifle has its preferences. With the powders I used, their position in those huge cases proved to make very little difference with the WLR primers, so don't sweat it. Just do *not* use fillers or substitute slower burning powders.

The small flats on the noses of the modern MP and NOE collar buttons are intended to make them safe to use in the magazine tubes of lever actions. The pointed nose shape of the Lyman, NEI and Rapine bullet designs pretty much make them a two-shot proposition for lever guns.

There are two easy ways to keep the magazine tube spring from shoving the

bullets deeper into the case. One is to simply roll crimp the case mouth into the lube groove just under the top driving band, if your rifle has sufficient freebore ahead of the chamber to allow it. The original specs for the .45-70 called for zero leade in the barrel, with the rifling beginning at the very end of the chamber, so this may not work for you. The original collar button bullet was intended to be seated with the top of the front driving band flush with the case mouth.

A DIFFERENT TACK

If your barrel has no freebore, there's another way. Lube your bullets with Lee Liquid Alox or LSS Liquid Xlox and leave them unsized, as cast. Seating them will expand the case necks enough to leave a bit of a ledge under them, preventing the tube spring pressure from pressing them deeper. Lee can also custom-make a factory crimp die to create a cannelure in your cases below the bullets to prevent them from being pushed deeper.

From their very first lever action in 1881, Marlins were deliberately designed to be able to feed cartridges as short as empty cases. This enables you to simply seat even the sharpest pointed bullets flush with the case mouth and safely stuff the magazine tube full. With the heavier NOE collar buttons seated this way, velocities increased only 50-100 fps, depending on the powder used.

So, slow down a bit, and enjoy life more. Loads using collar button bullets over a small amount of fast burning pistol powder make it fun to pull the trigger on those big ol' brass cigars. Make some, and go have some.

www.westernbullet.com
www.noebulletmolds.com
www.mp-molds.com

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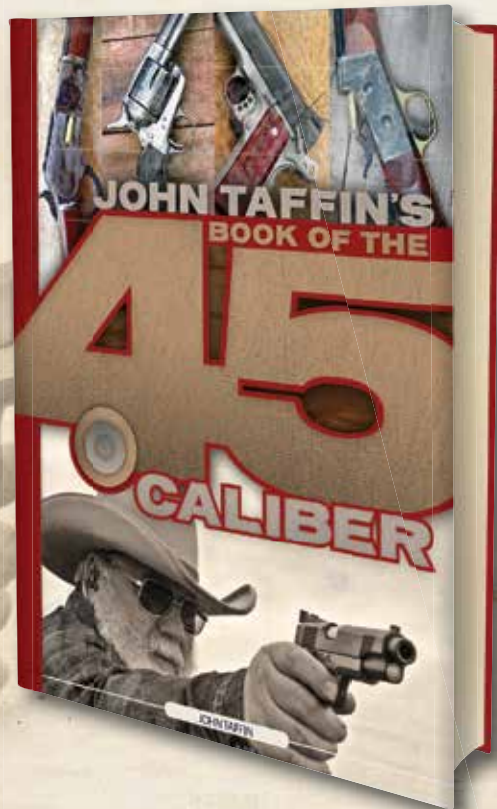


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COLT FRONTIER SIX-SHOOTER

EVERYBODY KNOWS, DON'T THEY?

Mike "Duke" Venturino
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

Recently on an Internet website a fellow asked the following question — "I bought a Colt single-action. The side of the barrel says 'Colt Frontier Six Shooter' There's no caliber marking so what is it?"

I wanted to weep! I wanted to scream! For heaven's sake doesn't everyone know what the marking means? It's almost sacred to Colt single-action lovers like me!

WHAT IT MEANS

Here's the deal — any Colt revolver, either the single-action, Bisley or later Model 1878 double-action, marked on the left side of the barrel "Colt Frontier Six Shooter" is by definition chambered for the .44 WCF. (Now commonly called .44-40 so we'll stick with the current name.) But, it's important to note if no such marking is present on the left side of the barrel a Colt might

still be .44-40. A friend has his father's .44-40 made in 1881. It has a slick left barrel side. Many "Colt Frontier Six Shooter" marked and unmarked .44-40s had a very tiny .44CF stamped at the left rear of their trigger guards.

Colt began offering .44-40 as a single-action chambering in either late 1877 or 1878. Sources vary. Between serial numbers 41,000 and 45,000 the factory began acid etching the term "Colt Frontier Six Shooter" on barrels. This continued to approximately 1889 at the 130,000 serial number range which is when "Colt Frontier Six Shooter" became a roll stamp. It was standard until production ceased for the first time in 1941. By then 71,391 standard fixed-sight single-actions, single-action targets, Bisley's and target sight Bisley's had been made as .44-40s.

No standard production Colt SAA 44-40s were produced during the Second Generation of manufacture between 1956 and 1974. However, in the 1873-1973 Peacemaker Centennial commemoratives 2,002 of the big beautiful 7-1/2" barreled,



This 12-shot group fired from machine rest shows how good .44-40s can shoot when their barrel and cylinder dimensions are matched properly.

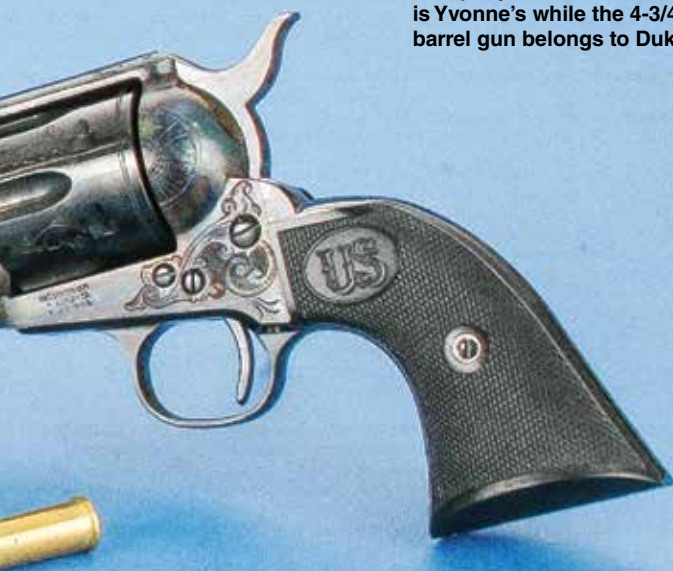


nickel-plated Colt Frontier Six Shooters were made complete with an etched panel and .44 CF on trigger guard. I liked them so much I had a matched pair set up with bison bone grips. (Don't ask me for the maker's name. He has passed away.)

THIRD TIME A CHARM?

The Third Generation of Colt single-action production began in 1976 and to my utter surprise at the 1982 NRA Convention in Philadelphia, Colt announced the .44-40 would again be offered as a caliber option. Right there on the spot in the Colt booth, I ordered one. When it arrived, at first glance I thought Colt

Duke ordered these two engraved .44-40s from the now defunct U.S. Firearms Company. The 5-1/2" barrel is Yvonne's while the 4-3/4" barrel gun belongs to Duke.



These are samples of Duke's .44-40 handloads. (L-R) Oregon Trail, from Lyman mold #427666 and bullet at right is Duke's all-time favorite for .44-40, the RCBS #44-200-FN.

had personally insulted me and all the Colt single action lovers worldwide. They marked the left side of my new sixgun's barrel .44-40! I wanted to pitch a fit but eventually calmed down and accepted the new marking.

However, about 1995 I forgave Colt. Once again they put the Colt Frontier Six Shooter roll stamp on .44-40s and, even better, put it on their misnamed "black powder frame" version. (This version has the cylinder retaining pin angling in from the front of the frame, instead of the spring loaded transverse latch that has been standard since the 1890s.) I bought a pair with 4-3/4" barrel lengths and had them fitted with ivory grips with my MLV initials scrimshawed in.

PARTS IS PARTS

Here I'd like to insert a little story. Back in my 1968/1972 college days in Huntington, West Virginia, I was a frequent visitor to a gun store named Morris Watch Shop in the nearby town of Milton. There was a box of parts on a shelf labeled Colt SAA, and I finally prevailed upon the lady clerk to let me paw through it. Among other things were two new Colt Frontier Six Shooter barrels of 5-1/2" and 7-1/2" lengths. In 1976 I was back



Duke's all-time favorite single actions are this pair of Peacemaker Centennials, aka Colt Frontier Six-Shooters, from the 1970s. They recreated in detail Colt Frontier Six-Shooters from the 1870s.

in the area visiting family and made a special side trip to Milton to see if those barrels were still there — and they were! I bought the 5-1/2" for \$37.50. Ten years later back there for another visit, again I went to Morris Watch Shop and the 7-1/2" one was still in the parts box. I paid \$62.50 for it. The short one was put on what started as a Colt .357 Magnum SAA. The long one languished in my own parts drawer until 2019 when I gave it to a friend.

With the two nice sets of Colt Peacemaker Centennials on hand I pretty much ignored obtaining more *until* discovering the now-defunct firm of United States Firearms (USFA). From the mid-1990s until 2011 they made exquisite recreations of the Peacemaker in a myriad of styles. So, in 2006, I ordered an engraved pair — but not a matched pair. One was for me with my initials for the serial number and one was for Yvonne with her initials for serial number. She prefers 5-1/2" single-action barrel lengths and I liked 4-3/4". USFA couldn't use the word Colt but they did agree to mark our new .44-40s as "Frontier Six Shooter." As the accompanying photo shows both are also exquisitely accurate. It's a shame the company folded.

LOAD 'EM UP!

Over the last 45 years I've engaged in reloading for Colt Frontier Six Shooters, ranging from my friend's 1881 sample to my most recent Third Generation made in 2004. And brothers, let me say, they vary immensely. With my friend's antique one, we realized it had to have black powder for propellant. I loaded some .44-40s with FFg and soft lead bullets of the recommended 0.427" diameter. They wouldn't chamber! So I ordered a 0.425" sizing die and we were in business. Later I found in a 1926 dated *Ideal Reloading Handbook* stating early bullet diameter for .44-40s was nominally 0.424" and Colt cylinders were made for factory rounds so loaded. Around the turn of the 19th/20th centuries 0.427" became the new nominal dimension.

With my 1982 .44-40 bullets of 0.427", the rounds gave mediocre accuracy. Long story short, the problem was cylinder chamber mouths. Those 0.427" bullets were going out 0.431" to 0.433" chamber mouths. Next the Peacemaker Centennials came along and by this time I was using 0.428" bullet diameter. The PCs had 0.429" chamber mouths and shot beautifully — in fact they shot almost as well with black powder as with smokeless. I used this pair of .44s with black powder loads for years in Cowboy Action events until a bum knee forced me to quit the game.

SLUGGING AWAY CABIN FEVER

Last winter in an effort to stay busy during a frigid Montana winter, I set about to slug the barrels of my Colt single actions, including seven .44-40s. At the same time, all 42 chambers were measured with plug gauges. The Colts ranged from 1904 to 2004 in years of manufacture and every barrel measured 0.426"/0.427" in their groove diameters. Three had 0.431" chamber mouths for all six chambers. Those dated from 1904 and the 1980s. The other four had two from the 21st century at 0.428" and the two PCs from the 1970s were 0.429".

At this point in my life I don't experiment much. My favorite home-cast bullet design is from RCBS mold #44-200FN. It weighs 214-gr. of 1-20 tin to lead alloy. For commercially cast bullets I'm happy with any brand using the Magma Engineering mold for a 200-gr. bullet. As I said, 0.428" is my preferred bullet diameter, two powders satisfy me completely — Trail Boss at 6.0 grains or Winchester 231 (aka Hodgdon HP38) at 6.8 grains. The first load is easy shooting at about 800 fps while the other is a bit more powerful at about 900 fps. Both of those figures are for 7-1/2" barrels.

In my old age I've mellowed a bit. My most recent 21st century .44-40s are labeled as such but I still prefer to see the magical *Colt Frontier Six Shooter* on mine.

"You asked for it so we built it!"

~ Roy Huntington
Publisher



The world's best handgun magazine teamed up with Les Baer Custom to create an exclusive celebration of both the classic John Browning 1911 design — and the custom touches readers have asked for!

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MODEL 67

BECAUSE 'MAGNUM' ISN'T ALWAYS NECESSARY!

Brad Miller

The .38 Special has been one of America's darlings for over a century. Most Smith & Wesson .38/.357 reviews focus on the .357 Magnums or snubby .38s. But what about Smith & Wesson's 4" .38 Special-only guns?

Today Smith & Wesson offers little in the way of a 4" or longer-barreled .38 Special-only revolver. They have three — two of the guns are stainless steel, the Model 64 and Model 67, and one is blued carbon steel, the Model 10. The Model 64 is the stainless steel version of the Model 10.

The remaining Model 67 is the stainless steel version of the no-longer-produced Model 15. All three guns are rated for .38 Special +P ammunition and hold six shots.



From a Ransom Rest at 25 yards, Brad's gun managed a six-shot group with Hornady 125-gr. XTP ammo measuring 0.97" and a tight 1.37 for 24 shots. Good shootin' indeed!



Models 10 and 64 have a heavy barrel and fixed sights while the Model 67 adds an adjustable rear sight and red ramp front sight. All three are built on the medium-sized K-Frame that has been around since 1899 under different names.

One might ask why chamber a gun in just .38 Special when it can be chambered in .357 Magnum and have the option to shoot either cartridge? Simply put, some folks are not interested in the .357 Magnum. The .38 Special does all they want and the special guns tend to cost less than .357 Magnum guns. Why spend more money for something you don't want?

TESTING

The Model 67 round-butt frame features a nice consistent brushed finish, a frame-mounted floating firing pin, a top strap drilled and tapped for a scope mount, and comes with hard rubber finger-groove grips.

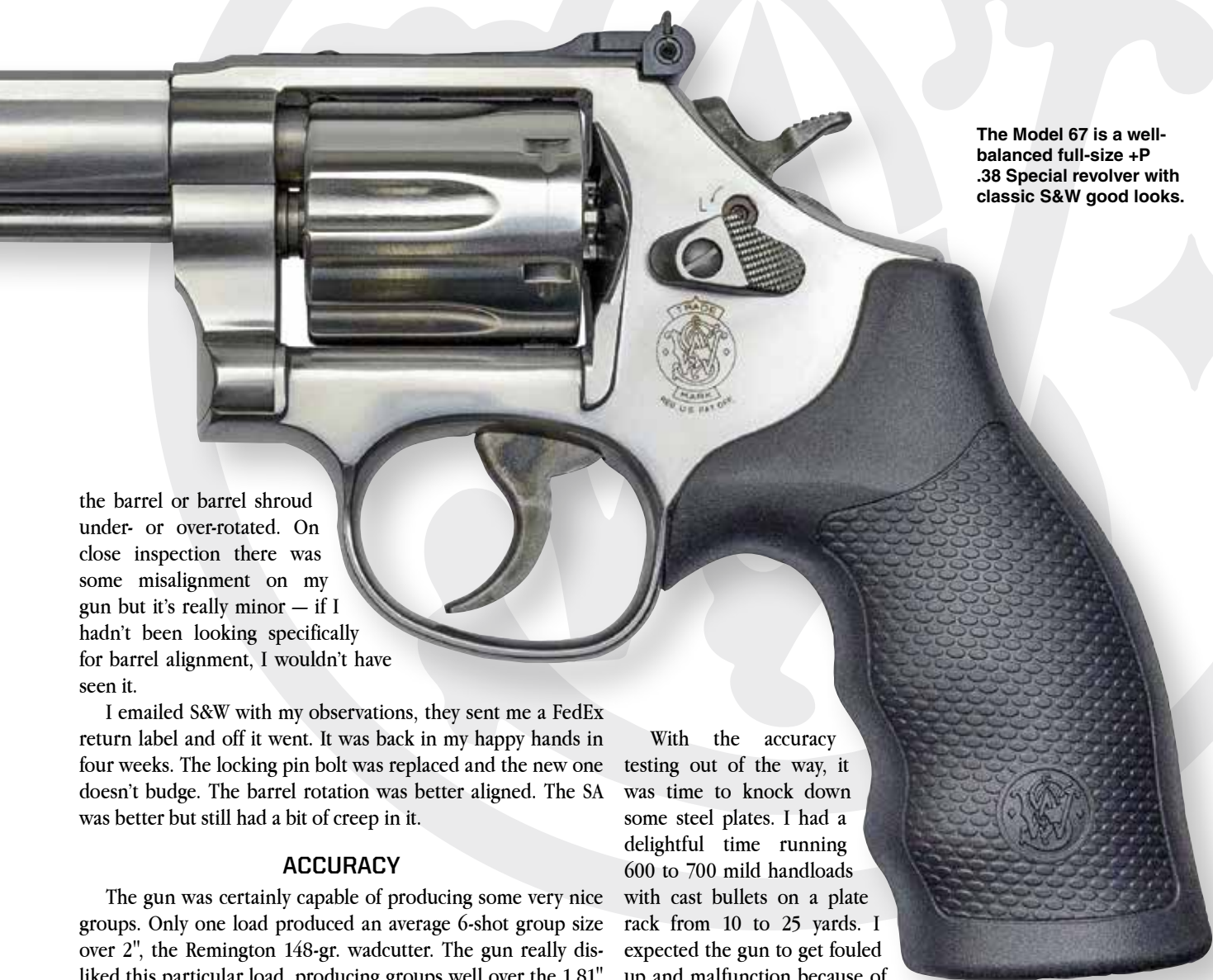
Unfortunately, the gun was not without flaws starting with the locking bolt pin being a little loose. The pin didn't fall out but I noticed it protruding to one side and I could push it back and forth with finger pressure. This means it would probably walk during firing and because of where it's located, might fall out unnoticed and stop the gun.

Single-action trigger pull measured 4.5 lbs. while the double-action measured 13 lbs. The DA pull was a little stagey but in a new gun wasn't unexpected — it will smooth out with use. However, there was creep in the SA trigger pull and it was gritty. This might be a first for me as previous S&W SA triggers I've experienced have been crisp and precise out of the box.

There has been much discussion on internet forums regarding some S&W revolvers coming from the factory with



Note most current S&W revolvers have an internal key lock just above the cylinder release latch.



The Model 67 is a well-balanced full-size +P .38 Special revolver with classic S&W good looks.

the barrel or barrel shroud under- or over-rotated. On close inspection there was some misalignment on my gun but it's really minor — if I hadn't been looking specifically for barrel alignment, I wouldn't have seen it.

I emailed S&W with my observations, they sent me a FedEx return label and off it went. It was back in my happy hands in four weeks. The locking pin bolt was replaced and the new one doesn't budge. The barrel rotation was better aligned. The SA was better but still had a bit of creep in it.

ACCURACY

The gun was certainly capable of producing some very nice groups. Only one load produced an average 6-shot group size over 2", the Remington 148-gr. wadcutter. The gun really disliked this particular load, producing groups well over the 1.81" average of all other ammunition.

If the Remington WC data is removed from the overall data, the average 24-shot group aggregate drops to 2.18", which is very consistent shooting with a wide range of ammo. Not many guns will do this.

With the accuracy testing out of the way, it was time to knock down some steel plates. I had a delightful time running 600 to 700 mild handloads with cast bullets on a plate rack from 10 to 25 yards. I expected the gun to get fouled up and malfunction because of the high round count but it didn't.

It got dirty but just kept plugging along. The cases ejected easily even though the chambers were getting very dirty.

With all the shooting, the creep in the SA trigger pull became less obvious because the grittiness was gone and sometimes I can't detect the creep at all. As expected, the double action smoothed up, too.

In the final analysis, this is a very nice revolver and reflects a quality gun that will serve the owner well though I think Smith & Wesson can do better from the start. The gritty, creepy single action trigger pull right out the box was an unpleasant surprise and the loose locking bolt pin is a problem. The barrel rotation misalignment on this gun was not a big deal and most folks would have never noticed it, but it's something S&W needs to pay closer attention to.

I like the Model 67 very much. It's a wonderful example of a 4" barreled .38 Special revolver, a great range gun, kit gun, target gun or for small game hunting where good sights are needed. If you're considering a gun for self-protection, it'll work well and is even rated for +P ammo. If you're looking for a very capable .38 Special revolver, the Model 67 deserves a close look.



The M67 just keeps running even after hundreds of rounds without cleaning. Brad used several brands of colorful polymer-coated handloaded bullets for shooting steel plates.

www.smith-wesson.com



Benchmade Knives did the Proper slip joint right, with a premium Crucible Industries stainless steel blade teamed up to a lightweight Carbon Fiber handle.

BENCHMADE PROPER A SLICK SLIP-JOINT

One of Benchmade Knives' best innovations has been their sturdy Axis Lock that dominates their line of tactical and everyday carry folders. This tradition went out the window when the company introduced their Propel model, a non-locking slip joint with all the modern style of their expected fare. It's no secret slip joints have become more popular in

recent years and modern iterations of the "pocketknife" have been popping up like hotcakes. Benchmade took their time and did it right with the Proper.

The Proper's blade is a clip-point style of Crucible Industries' CPM-S90V stainless steel, a material with a high volume of Vanadium carbide adding toughness for excellent wear resistance. A straight-pull nail

nick does the opening chores and the blade has a classy satin finish — plus there's 5/8" of jimping on the backside of the blade for enhanced grip when cutting. The Proper's 3.85" handle is Carbon Fiber over bronze-colored PVD-coated stainless steel liners for housing the slip joint's back spring. The handle has a gently curved "snag proof" profile with finely rounded contours.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

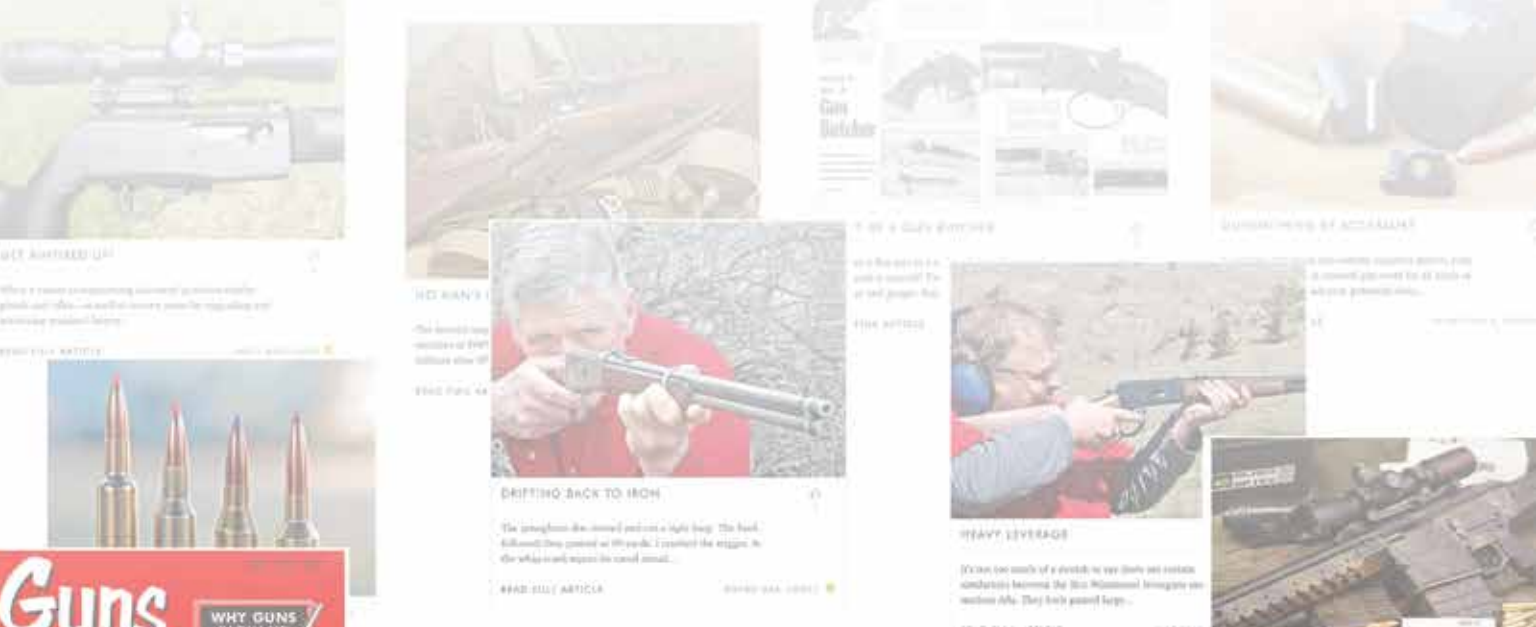
In designing the Proper, Benchmade took every phase and aspect seriously. This is a first class non-locker with top shelf materials smoozed into a thoughtful design and superb ergonomics. At 2.10 oz. you'll hardly know you're carrying the Proper but when it comes time to cut you'll damn sure know it's there.

At \$240 suggested retail the Proper is not cheap. Benchmade doesn't do cheap and they sell a whole lot of knives, attesting to their quality. The company does, however, offer more affordable versions of the Proper in G10 composite handles at \$150 MSRP for budget-minded users. If you're looking for a casual everyday carry with a lot of clout the Proper will do a very proper job — and do it with class.



The Proper's blade features CPM-S90V stainless steel which has a high volume of Vanadium carbides for toughness and wear resistance.

www.benchmade.com



Guns

WHY GUNS BLOW UP

CAN WOMEN OUTSHOOT MEN?

For decades in 1955 the answer was yes. And it still was today. Here's a fun look back at R. D. Galt's five-page article in the July 1955 issue of GUNS.

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RUGER .357 MAGNUM RAGING HUNTER

NEW LEVEL OF REVOLVER ACCURACY DEFINED

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TIME'S UP: FISH OR CUT BAIT THE ELECTION IS JUST OVER THE HORIZON

You do know Election Day 2020 — November 3 — is just over the horizon, right?

As my dad, and probably yours, used to say, “it’s time to fish or cut bait.”

There is much more at stake than just the Congress, the White House, your state legislatures, and local city and county offices; all elections for which everyone who owns a gun should already have studied up.

We’re talking about the United States Supreme Court and the lower federal courts, including federal district courts and

which we discussed back a few months ago. Too many Virginia gun owners went lazy last year and allowed anti-gunners to seize the General Assembly for the first time in 20 years. Those gun grabbers made the most of it, with 2A-hostile Gov. Ralph Northam sitting in his office, eager to ink every gun control measure hitting his desk.

Virginia was child’s play if Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer and their colleagues wind up in full majority on Capitol Hill. Anybody who doesn’t understand this has a serious case of wishful thinking. Moreover, if the

Imagine if Trump has the opportunity to fill one or two more high court vacancies with people who understand the Second Amendment means what it says, and isn’t just an embarrassing bastard child in the Bill of Rights. He would need a Senate controlled by his own party to confirm those nominations.

When Joe Biden told a Michigan auto factory worker earlier this year he was “full of s—” for challenging the former vice president on his gun control record, it sent a signal across the country “Shotgun Joe” is all mouth when he claims to “support the Second Amendment.”

NO EXCUSES ALLOWED!

We’ve been over this ground before. No gun owner can sit this one out, and the only excuse for missing this election would be if you pass away between now and then — the 2020 vote is so critical.

It’s never enough to spout off on social media and get everyone angry without reminding them to channel their frustration into winning back your rights. You’ve got to vote. Too many people come up with reasons not to, such as —

“I’ll be gone on a hunting trip.” Get an absentee ballot. Fill it out, put it in the mail and be able to prove it. Ballots have a nasty habit of getting lost and you don’t want it to happen to yours, do you? Besides, later on when some pal accuses you of shirking your responsibility, wave the proof in front of him and walk around with your head held high.

“I don’t want my name on a list.” This is the champion of lame excuses; the defense of world-class deadbeat non-voters.

“I forgot to vote.” Seriously? With news of the election on every radio and television station non-stop between now and Election Day, you’d have to be deaf, dumb and blind to not know there’s an election coming. Sorry, it won’t wash.

Alan Gottlieb at the Second Amendment Foundation adopted this slogan for the powerhouse organization: “Winning Firearms Freedom, One Lawsuit at a Time.” You can win back the country one election at a time, but it takes filling out a ballot.

THE COURT IS THE PRIZE

Some people on Capitol Hill may think they run things, but we were all taught in high school there are three separate but



Courts of Appeal. They are also essentially on the table. No, none of these learned men and women on the bench run for election. They are appointed for life, and this may be the most important reason of all for you to make sure you vote in November.

The looming battle will determine the direction of the country and it is the fight for your way of life.

WINNER TAKE ALL

This one is for all the marbles. The proof is found in the Commonwealth of Virginia,

“Party of Gun Confiscation” (a label they earned when nobody argued with Beto O’Rourke about taking your AR-15s and AK-47s, remember?) captures the Oval Office, gun owners are in serious trouble.

During his first three years in office, President Donald Trump filled some 200 federal court vacancies, including two spots on the Supreme Court. Those are conservative judges and justices, and with a slew of Second Amendment cases hanging in the balance, those appointments will be critical for the next 25 to 50 years.

equal branches of government: the Executive, Legislative and Judicial.

Congress makes the laws but it's up to the courts to determine whether they pass the constitutional smell test. The Supreme Court is the highest authority, which is why it is critical for gun owners to have Second Amendment-friendly justices and judges.

This column is called "2A Defense." There are many ways to defend the right to keep and bear arms and among the most important is to protect the integrity and balance of the courts. The most effective way to guarantee the courts aren't turned into a legislative extension of an anti-gun Congress is to make sure gun prohibitionists aren't elected so they can put more anti-gun-rights jurists in federal court positions.

"ONE REASON HILLARY CLINTON DIDN'T WIN FOUR YEARS AGO WAS BECAUSE GUN OWNERS TURNED OUT IN GOOD NUMBERS IN KEY STATES ..."

One reason Hillary Clinton didn't win four years ago was because gun owners turned out in good numbers in key states, preventing her from loading the courts with anti-Second Amendment judges.

Keep in perspective you're not voting just to protect your constitutional rights but the rights of your children and their children, even if they haven't been born. We all want our descendants to inherit a country worth all of the sacrifices of our fathers and grandfathers, and people we never knew, to make it a place so many want to sneak into rather than escape out of.

Let this be your personal legacy to generations yet to come. When circumstances called for it, you stepped up to the plate and made it count. You don't want to wake up November 4 knowing you might have made a difference but you didn't bother.

Growing up and living in this country is a gift. *Earn it.*



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TRIJICON SRO RED DOT OPTICS

Jeremiah McCarthy

With every passing year, the now-ubiquitous red-dot sight has gotten smaller, lighter, longer lasting and more durable. Thanks to these improvements and the inclusion in major competitive circuits, red dots have exploded in popularity. For the past decade, Trijicon's RMR (Ruggedized Miniature Reflex) has been the gold standard in pistol-mounted red dots but now they're upping the ante.

The Trijicon SRO, or *Specialized Reflex Optic*, offers nearly twice the lens area as its predecessor along with a top-load battery compartment, all while maintaining the same footprint as the RMR.

With eight brightness settings and large buttons on the vertical lens support, the SRO features a new "lock-in" mode allowing the shooter to use their chosen illumination setting indefinitely. The guts of the SRO are built to withstand more than 30,000 rounds, and battery life is reportedly three years when set at illumination setting four. Available reticles include 1, 2.5 and 5.0 MOA dots — all with an MSRP of \$749.



www.trijicon.com

COMPETITION ELECTRONICS PROCHRONO DLX

Tom McHale

At first glance, the ProChrono DLX looks like many other traditional chronographs. With its standard 1/4x20 threaded mounting hole, you stick it on a tripod 10 or 15 feet downrange and shoot through the designated area.

The magic happens when you mate it with a companion app running on your smartphone via Bluetooth. Then the ProChrono DLX transmits all results to your smartphone on the bench — no wires or fuss.

The system re-calculates string data with every shot and stores your results forever. This new model improves accuracy to within 0.5 percent and measures the velocity of most anything between 20 and 9,999 feet per second (sorry, if you have a magnetic rail cannon, you're out of luck). You can export the data to other apps if you like. As a reloader and avid shooter, this is the handiest range accessory I've seen in a long time. MSRP: \$134.95.



www.competitionelectronics.com

ZIPPO BUTANE LIGHTER INSERT

Brent T. Wheat

Okay, the Zippo Butane Lighter Insert is not strictly a shooting accessory but I nominate it as such because many shooters consider a post-range cigar, pipe or cigarette as a vital part of the whole experience. In fact, countless *GUNS Magazine* ideas and stories first germinated under rich blue clouds of maduro smoke!

Moreover, aficionados know when hanging around the range or campfire you must light your tobacco with a classic Zippo lighter for maximum style points. Unfortunately, if we're being honest, the classic lighter also makes your fine Costa Rican leaf taste like burning shoe polish. Now, with the Zippo insert you get the best of both worlds — panache and efficiency!

The insert swaps out for the guts in your current lighter and comes in several flame variations — my double-flame burns hot and lasts a long time. Costing only around \$15, it's now a vital part of my shooting kit!



www.zippo.com

HYSKORE SIX GUN SPEED RACK

David Freeman

So many guns, so little room! If you're like me, struggling to keep my gun safe organized has been a challenge. Well, I finally found a solution.

The Six Gun Speed Rack consists of an angled steel base mountable in six different ways. It's so flexible because either side of the main unit can be used for mounting guns using barrel inserts made of plastic. The barrel inserts also have a collar to protect the muzzle of your firearm.

The rack includes six inserts fitting .40 caliber and higher, but it's easy to take them down to fit .38/9mm or even .32 caliber by mounting in an electric drill and using a piece of sandpaper.

The shelf hooks are made of M-10 steel with a durable powder coat finish. Remember the weight of six handguns can easily exceed 15 lbs. so make sure the surface it's attached to has the strength to support the load. It retails for around \$20.



www.hyskore.com

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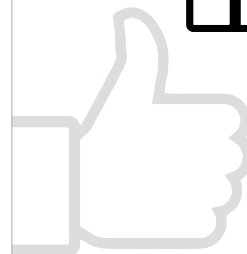
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RIO BRAVO LEVER-ACTION RIMFIRE

ROSSI

The *Rio Bravo* is Rossi's new .22 LR long gun. Based on the company's popular line of R92 lever-action firearms, the *Rio Bravo* features a German beechwood or black polymer forearm and stock with polished black metal finish. It is well-suited for small-game hunting, adventurous target shooting, around-the-farm pest control and also for youth training. Up to 15 rounds of .22 LR can be fed into the magazine tube. For more info: (229) 515-8707, www.rossiusa.com



UMAREX 850 M2

UMAREX USA

Umarex USA is offering a CO₂-powered pellet rifle that resembles a traditional repeating rifle. The *Umarex 850 M2* features Picatinny rails, a removable cheek piece, a fiber-reinforced synthetic stock in a modern design, fiber optic sights, a 2-stage adjustable trigger, an 11mm scope mounting rail and an aluminum 8-round magazine. It can shoot as many as 200 shots with one 88-gram CO₂ cartridge and send pellets up to 700 FPS accurately. The *Umarex 850 M2* is offered in both .177 and .22 calibers for plinking or hunting small game. For more info: (479) 646-4210, www.umarexusa.com



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The *SKO Series* of 12-gauge semi-automatic shotguns from Standard Mfg. provide a high level of performance, reliability and features in one package. The shotguns in the series have AR-type controls and optional 2-, 5- and 10-round detachable magazines. Machined from 7075 aircraft grade aluminum, then Mil-Spec hard anodized, the shotguns are both lightweight and durable. They are available in three variations: the full-length SKO-12 (in picture), the SKO Shorty and the SKO Mini. For more info: (860) 225-3401, www.stdgun.com

205-GR. ELITE HUNTER

BERGER BULLETS

Berger Bullets' *205-Gr. Elite Hunter* is ideal for modern hunting applications. It's for hunters seeking a mid-to-heavy bullet solution for their 30 Nosler, 300 Win Mag, 300 Ultra Mags, 300 PRC and other 30-caliber long-range hunting platforms. The *Elite Hunter* line uses Berger's hybrid ogive design that blends tangent and secant designs to optimize efficiency, reduce wind-drift and minimize sensitivity to seating depth. Their sleek profile features an ultra-high ballistic coefficient (BC) and increased sectional density. For more info: (660) 460-2802, www.bergerbullets.com



FENIX PD40R V2.0

FENIX

The *Fenix PD40R V2.0* is a portable flashlight with USB Type-C charging interface. The 5.43"-long light delivers a maximum output of 3,000 lumens and a beam distance of 405 meters with a single Luminus SST70 LED fitted in its head. The twist-to-turn way for activation of its multiple modes allows easier and faster operation, even if the user is wearing gloves. Weighing 4.13 oz. (excluding battery), it is waterproof up to two meters and impact resistant up to a meter. The *Fenix PD40R V2.0* is ideal for outdoor activities, daily use at home or at work and in emergency situations. For more information: www.fenixlight.com



TACTICAL RIFLE CASE

MTM CASE-GARD

MTM Case-Gard's *Tactical Rifle Case* protects rifles and shotguns during transport and allows them to be stacked for storage. The case features plastic-molded construction and fits most rifles or shotguns up to 42" long. It includes snap latches for a firm lock, quality foam padding for maximum protection and internal tie-down and padlock points for increased security. For more info: (937) 890-7461, www.mtmcase-gard.com



IWB TORSION 3.0 GUN HOLSTER

BRAVO CONCEALMENT

Bravo Concealment's *IWB Torsion 3.0 Gun Holster* features a 10-degree inward angle that makes it conceal better than other holster brands. With the inward angle, a handgun can ride closer to the body without extra attachments or accessories. The IWB holster is ideal for appendix carry or anywhere around your waistline. For more comfort and flexibility, remove the holster's shorter belt clip and use the single-belt-clip configuration. This lets you tuck your shirt between your pants and the holster for a more formal style. For more info: (956) 783-7682, www.bravoconcealment.com



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AXEON NIGHTVUE

AXEON OPTICS

Axeon Optics has introduced the *Axeon NightVue*, a binocular-mounted green laser illuminator. It transforms the standard binocular from a daylight-only tool into one for round-the-clock use. It thus turns even ordinary binoculars into a "night vision" optic. The *Axeon NightVue* mounts to most porro and roof prism binoculars and beams out a powerful 520 nm green laser to distances up to 250 meters. For more info: (479) 646-4210, www.axeonoptics.com

MASTER ARMORER'S MAT

REAL AVID

Real Avid introduces the *Master Armorer's Mat*, a bench top aid for AR15 armorers and DIY builders. Protect your firearm's parts and stay organized with this protective mat and built-in storage tray. Detailed schematics of the upper receiver, lower receiver, bolt carrier group and barrel assembly are printed on the mat's left side. A parts-and-tools tray is attached to the mat while a small-parts storage box snaps onto the top of the tray. Both mat and tray roll up to fit in a storage bag. For more info: (800) 286-0567, www.realavid.com



3-DOT RAM NIGHT SIGHTS FOR CANIK AND TAURUS

XS SIGHTS

XS Sights' *3-Dot RAM Night Sight*s for *Canik* and *Taurus* are now available. The RAM (radioactive material) night sights have the brightest 3-dot sight option for fast and accurate shooting in bright and low light. The RAM's rear sight is blacked out to contrast against the front sight (available in bright orange or green). The front sight features XS's proprietary Ember Glow Dot technology that absorbs ambient light and glows in low light. RAM Night Sights are CNC machined from bar-stock steel. Front blade width is 0.145"; notch width is 0.170". The sights are offered for Canik's TP9SF and Taurus G2 series. For more info: (888) 744-4880, www.xssights.com



BARNSTABLE FARM BOOT FOR WOMEN

DRYSHOD

Dryshod calls the *Barnstable Farm Boot for Women* as the "world's most wearable rubber boot." It features a hand-cut rubber outsole with a compression-molded rubber heel for added grip and traction in slippery areas around barns and stables. The Barnstable has a waterproof, 5mm Densoprene foam insulated bootie to keep feet warm and dry. For more info: (866) 663-6825, www.dryshodusa.com



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DIAMOND D OUTDOORS

Designed and tested in Alaska, the *Denali Chest Holster* is built to withstand challenging weather conditions. At the same time, the holster also provides comfort and versatility for quick and easy access to your firearm. It is offered in 10 sizes depending on your type of gun and barrel length and comes with a strap system and adjustable retention strap. This ensures the best chest holster fit for you and your gun. Made of 1050 Ballistic nylon, the *Denali Chest Holster* is worn tight on your chest for a one-handed, quick and easy draw. For more info: www.diamonddoutdoors.com

BÖKER PLUS LANCER 42

BÖKER USA, INC.

Böker USA introduces the newest version of its Lancer pocketknife. The *Böker Plus Lancer 42* features a 2.76" blade made of D2 steel with a stonewash-finish. The blade opens with a nail nick and is secured with a sturdy frame lock. Designed by Ukrainian knife maker Serge Panchenko, the *Böker Plus Lancer 42* is lightweight, compact and flat for easy carry. The knife is offered with G10, carbon fiber or Cocobolo wood handle scales. A lanyard hole and tip-up pocket clip complete the package. For more info: (303) 462-0662, www.bokerusa.com



MOSSBERG MC2C 9MM GIVEAWAY

After the success of the MC1sc, Mossberg has released another handgun: the *MC2c (compact) 9mm pistol*. It's the gun Denny Hansen reviewed on p. 32 and the same one you're gonna get if we pick you as winner of this issue's giveaway! The increased capacity (with 13- and 15-round double-stack magazines), combined with the ergonomics and innovative design of the MC1sc, makes the MC2c ideal for concealed carry. Featuring a 3.9" barrel, OAL of 7.1", a slim width of 1.10" and height of 4.90", the new Mossberg pistol is offered in standard or cross-bolt safety and in black DLC or bead-blasted stainless steel finish. Integrated into the slide is the Mossberg STS or Safe Takedown System. Sights are dovetail mounted and come standard in a low-profile, snag-free white 3-Dot configuration. Frames are high-tensile strength, glass-reinforced polymer with Mossberg's aggressive grip texturing and palm swell. A front rail for mounting accessories is standard.

Streamlight's *TLR-8AG Gun Light* with the Flex package features ergonomic and ambidextrous on/off rear switching that includes high and low options. With 500 lumens of white light and a green laser visible night or day, the 2.58"-long TLR-8AG

fits a range of full-size and compact handguns, including the MC2c. Just mount the light to your MC2c's front rail, if you win this giveaway that is. Weighing 2.64 oz., this water resistant gun light has a run time of 1.5 hours with a beam distance of 140 meters.

Carry your new MC2c in the *Ambidextrous Sweat Shield 2-in-1 Holster*. It's a combination of two of Remora's holster styles that keeps body oils and sweat away from the gun while also protecting the user from "hammer gouge" or similar irritations.

Keep your handgun close while you sleep, drive or work with the *SofHold American Patriot Gun Magnet*. Your pistol will be within your reach when you need it. The magnet has over 50 lbs. of pulling force to secure heftier guns. And with a top-grade leather cover, this gun magnet won't scratch your piece.

Join the giveaway for an opportunity to enhance your personal defense situation during these uncertain times! Go to www.gunsmagazine.com/giveaways or mail a post card! Here's hoping you win! —Jazz Jimenez



MC2C 9MM SEMI-AUTO PISTOL

MAKER: Mossberg
(203) 230-5300
www.mossberg.com

CALIBER: 9mm

CAPACITY: 13 (flush) and 15 (extended)

OAL: 7.1", **BARREL LENGTH:** 3.9"

WEIGHT: 21 oz. (unloaded)

VALUE: \$490

ENTER TO WIN!



If you are unable to enter online, mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please). Entries must be received before August 31, 2020. Limit one entry per household.

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WINNERS CHOSEN BY RANDOM DRAWING. Limit one entry per household. To protect the privacy and security of winners, their names will NOT be made public. Contest void where prohibited by law. Winners must undergo a background check and comply with all other federal, state and local laws. Taxes and fees will be the responsibility of the winner. Contest open to U.S. residents only. Employees and agents of Publishers' Development Corp. are not eligible. No purchase necessary. Winners will be notified by certified mail on official letterhead. Attention deployed military: Use stateside address! Giveaway guns and accessories may have evidence of being test fired or exhibit minor handling marks. Factory warranties may apply in some cases. The Gun of the Month package is awarded only to the entrant drawn and will not be awarded if the firearm presented is illegal in the jurisdiction of the winner. An alternate, authorized winner will be selected. No substitutions or transfers to a third party are allowed.



End result: a round-but Ruger GP100 without modifying the frame.

ROUND BUTTS ARE BEST NEED A SPECIAL STOCK? MAKE YOUR OWN!

Round-butted snubbies are the stuff dreams are made of, especially for nostalgic old Coppers. Compact, they have a comforting, familiar heft when loaded with cartridges such as the .44

Special. Round-butts don't dig into our sides while concealing the way square-butts do, and oh boy, do they feel good in the hand! There's no sharp corners to accentuate recoil while shooting with them. Everyone

loves round-butts, and for good reason.

When it comes to gun needs, sometimes we just have to grab the bull by the horns and do it ourselves. I was faced with this problem after I had a Ruger GP100 customized by Ken Kelly at Mag-na-port International. In a nutshell, Ken lopped the 5.5" barrel of my Lipsey's Exclusive down to 3" and did other cosmetic work for the slickest .44 Special you ever saw.

THE PROBLEM?

Ken did his usual wonderful job, but the problem was the stocks. Ruger did a great job farming out Altamont to manufacture



This shows how making the first cuts saves you a lot of sanding work.



A belt or disc sander helps remove wood quickly to rough-shape the grips.



A squirt of Ballistol multi-purpose oil is all you need to finish your stocks.



Some 220-grit sandpaper and a little elbow grease will clean up the cuts and contour the stocks to your liking.



Tank used a band saw to make his cuts but a coping saw would work too.

stocks I call "Baby Roper's," a smaller version reminiscent of Roper stocks. For a 5.5" barreled revolver, they're perfect. For a 3" Concealed Carry gun, not so much. I wanted to round-butt this special shooter.

Scouring the internet proved futile. I couldn't find any appropriate stocks. Removing, and looking the Altamont stocks over, I saw there was plenty of wood to reshape them without encroaching into the recessed area for the gun's grip-frame. Grabbing a pencil, I drew lines to the shape I wanted. It looked like it was going to work.

WHY?

After a recent Online article involving a Barranti Leather CCR holster for a Custom 3" GP100 with home-altered stocks, Head Honcho Roy (Publisher Roy Huntington) received a few inquiries about the stocks. I guess people liked them, having the same problem I did in finding suitable stocks



The factory stocks from Altamont have plenty of extra wood to shape into the grip of your dreams. Just mark how you want them and go at it.

for a shorty GP100. After discussing it, Roy thought a DIY piece on how I altered my stocks might be interesting for the readers.

JUST DO IT!

After drawing the lines, I cut the excess wood away with a band saw. You can use a coping saw too, but either way, cutting is a lot faster than filing the wood away.

I then used a belt/disc sander to start rounding, removing and shaping the stocks to "roughly" the contour I wanted. During this phase I worked with the stock halves

screwed together to make working on them easier.

We're about 80 percent done. Next, I used 220 grit sandpaper to finish shaping the stocks. I sanded with the grain and the final shaping/finish didn't take long at all. Total time invested was around 45 minutes.

FINISHING UP

My finish was simply spraying some Ballistol onto the stocks and buffing them with an old rag. I think they turned out pretty nice.

GUNS[®] MAGAZINE

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2020**

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8. Feel a little too invincible — A problem of experienced shooters, we sometimes tend to not worry about avoiding foreseeable problems because we're "ready" if trouble comes. True, your gear is top notch and your shooting skills are superlative but don't forget you might run into somebody sneakier or just plain luckier. Avoidance is

always preferable to confrontation.

9. Forgets shooting skills are perishable — "I've been to ThunderGunValley Academy and I'm ready for business!" Yeah, but with each passing day your skill set diminishes just a bit. If you aren't having regular meaningful firearms practice, along with occasional professional instruction, you are slowly rusting away. Sound like anybody you know? Look in

the mirror!

10. Doesn't step outside their comfort zone — Once you've been to ThunderGunValley Academy, don't stop there. Book a trip to Valleythunder Gun Ranch and then Frontvalley Thundergun School so you'll learn other ways of doing things. You might just learn you never want to use these new techniques but recurring instruction will always make you a better-rounded shooter. 

IN OTHER NEWS:

In the July issue, our cover story "Springfield XD-M Elite," a list of prop suppliers got cut at the last minute. As we are forever indebted to our partners for providing the gear to enhance cover stories I wanted to give a shout-out to Bluegrass Targets (www.bluegrasstargetsky.com) for the steel, Federal Premium for the 147-gr. JHP HST (www.federalpremium.com), Streamlight for the TLR-1HL for the gun light (www.streamlight.com), High Speed Gear for the HSGI Taco mag pouches (www.highspeedgear.com) and Safariland

for the Model 6004 Holster (www.safariland.com). As they used to say on the old Hee-Haw television show: "Saaaaa-lute!"

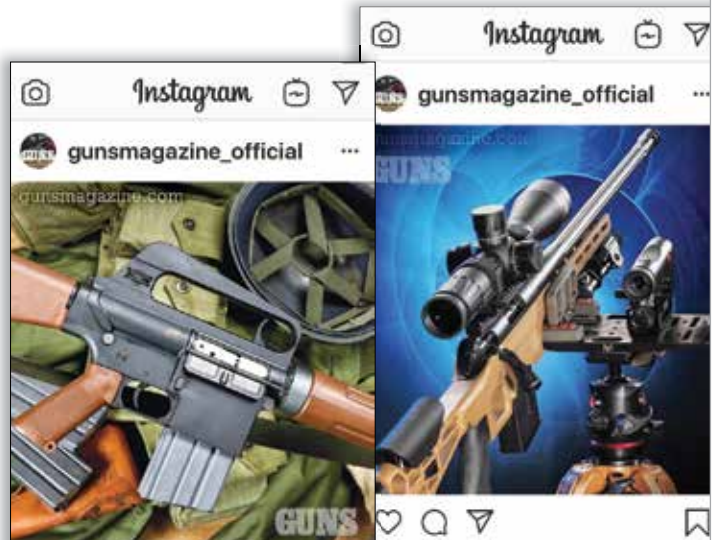
Another nail for the NRA? — It wasn't widely reported but the NRA "laid off or furloughed dozens of employees, imposed a four-day work week and cut salaries across the board" in late March. The reason was attributed to the pandemic crisis, which is certainly reasonable. However, considering we've been hearing countless folks claim they're not sending the NRA "another dime" until the administration

changes, along with the group's documented legal troubles, it seems likely the kingdom's treasury is starting to run dry. This also comes on the heels of another friend, an important figure in the publishing industry, who last week told me he wouldn't give the NRA any coverage of any kind until there are changes.

It's sad really — right now is the most critical time for Second Amendment advocacy in perhaps our lifetime but the most effective player on the team seems distracted and running short on money. Just remember to make the personal commitment to vote in the upcoming elections! 

Instant eye-candy

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10 SELF-DEFENSE MISTAKES

DON'T BE TACTI-COOL - JUST BE GOOD!

We don't throw the word "tactical" around here very often, even though self, home and family defense are a major topic of concern with our readers. We try to maintain a reasonable level of discourse and coverage on the subject while avoiding some of the excesses of our esteemed colleagues in the gun 'ritin business (I'm talking here to you, Mr. YouTube "influencer").

However, a little reminder now and again on the things we *should* be doing to take care of ourselves and loved ones doesn't hurt things one bit and might even help somebody. Therefore, by the powers vested in me by our official masthead, I hereby command thee: "don't be this guy —"

1. Doesn't carry a gun — Really, this is actually a bit of a misnomer. I'm not worried about dummies who won't carry a defensive firearm but rather the folks who regularly carry but too-often decide it's not worth the hassle or discomfort to carry in certain situations. Always remember the first rule of a gunfight: Have a gun. It's not "once in a while" or "only when I go to the bad part of town."

2. Their gun isn't really for shooting people — Unfortunately, I think this is a *significant* portion of concealed-carry permit holders. In my wooly opinion, backed-up by a couple of decades of street and training experience, I believe many "gun" people aren't really mentally prepared to shoot a real-live bad guy.

If you drill down, these folks delude themselves into thinking they can stop trouble by simply waving around their magical blaster. If I had a dime for every time someone has told me in confidence, "I couldn't really shoot anybody, I just want to scare them," I could buy a couple of really nice guns myself.

If you're going to carry, get your mind right! Otherwise, don't carry.

3. Believes knives are a valid self-defense weapon — I'll admit in a pinch a pocket knife or a big Bowie can fend off an assailant but then again, so will a large rock or perhaps even loud flatus. I've been



blessed to have professional training from literally some of the best instructors in the world and they all say the same thing: You don't *ever* want to be in a knife fight! If you do, the odds for significant arterial bleeding — yours — are exceedingly high even if you win. Always carry a knife, but remember knives are one reason we carry guns.

4. "Knows it All" — This problem is rampant in the shooting circles. If you really think you've gotten everything all figured out in relation to firearms, you're eventually setting yourself up for a hard lesson someday — or then again, maybe you're just a royal jackass.

5. Practices "advanced gunfight" techniques — It's sometimes humorous to watch online shooting videos because you'll see some of the most convoluted, bizarre and dangerous drills performed in the name of "advanced shooting technique." You'll occasionally see the same at your local range or even — ugh! — a training school.

While there is nothing wrong with spicing up training, pushing your self out of your comfort zone and preparing for new challenges, at what point does the whole thing turn into a circus sideshow? In the everlasting (paraphrased) words of the immortal trainer Louie Averbuck, "There is no such thing as an advanced gunfight; there are just the basics applied under higher stress." Amen!

6. Doesn't carry a flashlight — This is a personal pet peeve. Shooting situations aside, there are so many potential crisis situations where artificial lighting could literally mean the difference between life and death. It doesn't have to be a 4,000-lumen tactical light, just carry something in your pocket to light up dark places. Then, carry a small back-up.

7. Is *highly* "TactiCool" — This generally isn't a problem among *GUNS* readers but certainly rampant among the larger shooting world. Here's a tip, kids: I don't actually believe you are a former SEAL or Special Forces A-Team operator because of your patch-covered backpack, faux "service dog," tactical beard and the tourniquet hanging off your dress belt. In my experience most real warriors look like construction workers or the building janitor. Quit worrying about looking the part but rather focus on being the part. I often tell people one of the most experienced "tactical" humans I personally know wears bib overalls and a John Deere "gimme" hat every day at home. He's a certified and tested "real deal" — but doesn't look (or talk) like it.

continued on page 73

"I DON'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE YOU ARE A FORMER SEAL OR SPECIAL FORCES A-TEAM OPERATOR BECAUSE OF YOUR PATCH-COVERED BACKPACK, FAUX 'SERVICE DOG,' TACTICAL BEARD AND THE TOURNIQUET HANGING OFF YOUR DRESS BELT."



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