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2020

Volume 45 • Number 6 • Issue 266

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER



34

FEATURES

26 GUNCRANK DIARIES

Dying to Be Cool. WILL DABBS, MD

32 MY FATHER'S COLT

Faithful Service: 30 Years, 3 Wars. BRUCE CHERRY

34 THE MAKING OF A TANKER

Mag-na-port's GP100 Custom Carry Gem. JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

36 CZ'S P-07 POLYMER CARRY PISTOL

The European 1911? DAVID FREEMAN

38 WALTHER'S CCP M2

A Retro Tech .380 ACP. FRANK JARDIM

40 KIMBER'S RAPIDE BLACK ICE 1911

10mm Futuristic Elegance. TOM McHALE

46 RUGER AMERICAN COMPETITION PISTOL

Equipping Your Inner Warrior. WILL DABBS, MD

48 WILSON COMBAT'S EDC X9S

The Ne Plus Ultra of Pistols. GREG MOATS

50 SPARTA RISING!

Spartan Blades' KA-BAR Alliance. PAT COVERT

79 THE AYOOB FILES

With A Gun to Your Head. MASSAD AYOOB

COVER STORY

22



DEPARTMENTS

12 HANDLOADING

.44 Special Loads. JOHN TAFFIN

14 SHOOTING IRON

BBQ Colt. MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO

16 HANDGUN HUNTING

Adventure into the Unknown. MARK HAMPTON

20 BETTER SHOOTING

Medium Please. DAVE ANDERSON

22 PISTOLSMITHING

Back to the Future. GREG DERR

24 CARRY OPTIONS

1791 Gunleather. JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

28 THE SIXGUNNER

The Superb .38 Super 1911. JOHN TAFFIN

30 TACTICS & TRAINING

Avoid & Escape! TIGER McKEE

54 GUNNYSACK

Norma MHP Ammo and American Tomahawks. TOM McHALE

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38



46



48

COLUMNS

8 VANTAGE POINT

TOM McHALE

10 SPEAK OUT

18 COP TALK

MASSAD AYOUB

55 GUN RIGHTS

ALAN KORWIN

82 THE INSIDER

ROY HUNTINGTON

RESOURCES

52 HANDGUN GIVEAWAY

56 CUSTOM CORNER

76 NEW PRODUCTS

DELANO AMAGUIN



18

16



14

WIN HANDGUN OF THE MONTH 52



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LET THERE BE RED DOTS

So far, 2020 has done an admirable impression of water skiing without a boat. This COVID-19 pandemic has thrown a wrench in just about everything and I suspect the aftershocks will impact our way of life, the economy and Hollywood's movie theater revenues for years to come.

There's *some* positive news on the horizon — if you're one to embrace change. I think this just may be *the year of the handgun optic*. Sure, we've been sticking red dot sights on handguns for decades, but their use has been largely limited to competition and range plinking.



Bushnell
RXS-250



Bushnell
RXS-100

ENTER BUSHNELL

By the time you read this, industry stalwart Bushnell will have just announced their entry into the *handgun optics Octagon* with two new models: the RXS-100 and RXS-250 Reflex sights. While the two models vary in price, don't think of the pair as cost effective and premium choices. The dual SKU strategy is where Bushnell got it exactly right. Let me explain.

Many manufacturers jumped on the pistol red dot bandwagon, announcing a new optic designed for "whatever." And therein lies the problem. A good optic is defined entirely by its suitability for a specific use.

Want an optic for competition or range plinking? Then attributes like size and structure will emphasize optimal visibility with less regard to concealment and even durability. A "range optic" might have a manual on/off switch because "always on" functionality really doesn't matter. Manufacturers can do things like build a brighter

dot because they're less concerned about batteries running dry.

If you're looking for an optic for defensive use, then the feature priority matrix changes. In my view, some form of *always on* is an absolute and non-negotiable requirement, even if this means a smaller or less bright dot. Compact size and extreme durability are a must. How many times are you going to knock the optic on something while going about your daily business? For this use, the dot absolutely, positively has to work — all the time.

The RXS-100 is the general-purpose 4-MOA dot, complete with larger window and manual controls. The RXS-250, also 4-MOA, is the rugged defensive sight, although there

OPTICS TIME

What we're starting to see is adoption of handgun optics on defensive, carry and even duty guns. Just browse the internet and you'll see all manner of tactical Delta Ninja dudes grimacing at unseen targets while crushing the grips of red dot-equipped pistols. But it's not just the *operator photo models* brandishing pistol red dots; I'm seeing *average Joe's like me* put them on home defense and carry pistols.

Why? The debate over pistol optics merits will rage on for years, as did the arguments over sticking *glass (!)* scopes on rifles. Yes, trillions of iron sight shooters insisted putting such fragile devices on working rifles was a sure path to self-immolation and perpetual embarrassment. Who in their right mind would dare spoil a tough and reliable iron sight system just to gain the benefit of actually seeing stuff at long distances? Yet progress happened. No one bats an eye at scope-equipped rifles anymore.

We're at the inflection point with pistol optics. New red dots are tough as nails, compact and run for tens of thousands of hours on a single battery. Your mileage may vary, but for me, pistol optics yield a net positive. Once I learned to stop looking for the dot and focus on the front sight as usual, I found it leaps into view effortlessly. I'm (so far) a tad slower with a red dot at contact distances, say five yards and in, but much *more accurate and measurably faster* at any distance past that.

is nothing preventing you from using it for whatever purpose you like. It's got a tank-like protective body and runs for 50,000 hours. That's over five years. Change it every other year for worry-free reliability. You'll also note a chamfered, low-profile shape designed to hide easily and avoid snags on draws from concealment — features not required on a competition model.

The new Bushnell models share the Leupold DeltaPoint footprint, already adopted by most pistol manufacturers. Whether buying a new pistol with a slide cut for optics or swapping your existing slide for a new one, you should have no trouble with compatibility.

Maybe it's time to give pistol optics a try?





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The best-selling HK pistol just got even better. HK VP9 2020 pistols now include the following upgrades.

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GUNCRANKS

I have enjoyed the Wednesday webcasts. I could hang out with you all for days. One thing I have always enjoyed about the FMG staff is you are all genuine, down to earth and fun folks. Thanks to all of you from editors on down to the lowliest gun 'riter!

Mel Westlake
Via Email

More on Guncranks

I absolutely love the *Guncranks* videos!! The amount of knowledge from your variety of backgrounds is amazing, plus, you make it all very entertaining. I'm always surprised at how fast the time flies when I'm watching them. My level of experience is far, far less than any of you, and I appreciate getting "real-life" information from people who've seen and been through damn near everything.

Keep 'em coming!

Gary
Via Email

In case you've missed it, the GUNS Magazine and American Handgunner editorial teams have launched a new online show — Guncranks Live. You can tune in on either of our Facebook pages or via Youtube.com/FMGPubs Wednesday evenings at 8 pm EST. All previous shows are available to view anytime at the same locations. —TM

Ayoob Files

Thanks to Mas Ayoob and *American Handgunner* for the "Texas Church Shooting" in the July/August 2020 issue. I have been reading *The Ayoob Files* for several decades and was glad to see this one. (I'm still waiting on the 1997 Hollywood Bank Robbery shootout.)

Ron
Via email

Since before 2008, I have been reading *Handgunner* and one of my favorite authors has always been Massad Ayoob. The Sept/Oct 2020 *Ayoob Files* left me frustrated. How can this wonderful country of ours permit our laws to be twisted to where criminal justice means justice for the criminals? I just don't understand Mr. Stiffler's situation where he's

the victim and has lost everything.

I would hope every gun owner in the U.S. would complain to their congressman. If we don't do something soon, we are going to lose it all!

Bill Rau
Murphy, NC

Target Mystery ... Solved!

What does John Taffin use for targets? He always features those cut cards, either red or black with white, with careful notes around the group. I'm thinking he probably has enough to fill the old card catalog cabinets from a decent-sized library!

Alvin
Via Email

I use stick-on rectangles which are 3" wide and 2" as the width seems to match up with most front sights. I order these online from Uline and they come in rolls of 500 in whatever color you like. For me, red works best because you can write on them with a black felt-tip pen. —JT

Puffery?

Greetings from Midcoast, Maine. My purpose in writing: while I very much enjoyed John Taffin's Colt Python review, I wondered as I read on when he planned to mention the revolver's widely reported problems. I further wondered when I got to the end of Taffin's report whether as an editorial policy you appreciate the difference between a frank and honest review and a puff piece.

Mike Silverton
Via email

Mike, first thank you for writing. Yes, I saw some "widely reported" so-called problems on the Internet. I did two things. First, I consulted the number one expert on Pythons. He agreed the new Python was improved over the old



design and they did it right. Colt has already addressed the few problems due to a loosened screw.

The second thing I did was shoot it, experiencing zero problems. The Python faced the same thing as every new product: self-proclaimed experts on the Internet going into their trashing routine. There are no perfect guns. Colt has addressed the matter and corrected what few problems were found.

I don't do puff pieces. Never have; never will. Our policy with both Handgunner and GUNS is to tell it like it is. There are several firearms and products over the past 40 years I would not review as they were not worthy of my time. I only review things that work, and I have often pointed out minor problems. —JT

The Perfect Revolver?

Last night I read the article in the July/August issue of *AH* on the Les Baer/AH custom 1911. It was not until this morning that I realized what you were saying between the lines. With this article on a custom American Handgunner 1911, you laid down the gauntlet. You have challenged the readers to submit our recommendations for a custom *American Handgunner* revolver! You have displayed your brilliance as a writer in saying something without saying it! Genius!

Mark Gruber
Hastings, Minn.

For me, the perfect revolver would be a S&W 640-ish Pro Series in .327 Federal Magnum, 6-shot, with HIVIZ neon green fiber optic front sight.

The .327 is arguably the perfect snub revolver cartridge, offering all the penetration and tissue disruption

advantages of the .357 Magnum with less felt recoil and an extra round in the cylinder. It's also versatile being compatible with the .32 H&R Magnum, .32 S&W Long, .32 S&W (Short) as well as certain offerings in .32 ACP. The only thing against the .327 is the lack of industry support due to the defensive handgun market being unaware of this round's advantages.

Even if this unicorn of a revolver never sees the light of day, it would still be a great idea to do an article on the potential and versatility of the .327 Fed Mag family of cartridges.

Jerry Amstutz
Berne, Ind.

Lefties Unite!

Bias and prejudice come in many forms, one of which is "Southpaw" bias. I just received and perused the July/August issue and was shocked, once again, at the bias towards us lefties. The front cover, rear cover and no less than half a dozen photos inside, including the beautiful gun give-a-way centerfold all display 1911's with no right-side safety levers. Why? Southpaws unite in our frustration! Kudos to Kimber (page 9) for showing what the passenger side of a 1911 should look like.

A. Whitacre
Brooksville, Fla.

Kind Words

To all, please keep the good articles coming. I enjoy the history provided in many of the articles Mr. Venturino writes. The heart and soul and feeling of Mr. Taffin's stories about wheel-guns. The downright, honest to God, facts of life Dr. Dabbs provides in his articles.

Editor, you have excellent writers. All with unique experiences and perspectives on life and the shooting sports.

Don't change a thing!

Steve Polek
Via email

Hey guys. I just wanted to fire off a brief note saying, as a new subscriber, I find the magazine a joy to read. The articles have great pictures, descriptions, reviews and comments in a nice concise format. Also, the broad selection of various handguns is terrific. You will definitely retain me as a subscriber for a long time to come!

Gary
Via email

"War" Trophy

I just finished Taffin's "5"-gunner article about the .44 special. It feels like John was writing the article to me.

Continued on page 56

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Why the .44 Special? A better question would be, why not? For the vast majority of us, the .44 Special will do everything needing doing with the sixgun. We're not looking for long-distance hunting or max power. In other words, a load comparable to the black powder .45, with a 250-gr. bullet at 900 fps left little to be desired.

The Oregon Trail Laser Cast 240 SWC shoots every bit as good as carefully home cast bullets.

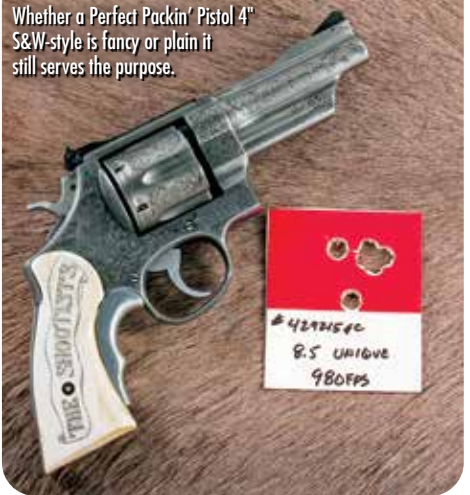


KEITH RULES

My standard choice for loading the .44 Special is what's normally known as the *Keith bullet*. There are many bullet designs bearing the name Keith, *but a semi-wadcutter design does not make it a "Keith" bullet*. Elmer laid down specific specifications for a bullet bearing his name: three equally sized full caliber driving bands, a deep crimping groove between the middle and top bands, a large grease groove between the middle and bottom bands and a flat bottom with no bevel.

Since I cast my own, I have a choice of H&G #503, Lyman #429421, NEI #260.429 and the RCBS #44-250KT bullets. Using wheel weight alloy, they weigh approximately 255-260 grains. I recently read the .44 Special cast bullet is standardized at 0.430". This is definitely not the case if you're looking for accuracy. I have .44 Specials whose chamber throats are as tight as 0.427" and as large as 0.433", and I just took possession of a Spanish copy of the old S&W Triple-Lock with 0.437" throats. Trying to make a 0.430" bullet work for all of these would be an exercise in futility.

Whether a Perfect Packin' Pistol 4" S&W-style is fancy or plain it still serves the purpose.



JOHN'S SECRET RECIPES

My standard loads are assembled with 7.5 grains of either Unique or Universal, 17.5 grains of #4227, or 8.0 grains of Power Pistol. Depending upon barrel length, sixgun and bullet, these loads will be in the 900 to 1,000 fps range. They're certainly capable of doing everything we expect the sixgun to do. If I'm looking for a little more velocity, I go with the Lyman/Thompson #429215GC that lubed, sized and gas checked weighs around 220 grains. For this bullet 8.5 grains of Unique results in 980 fps in a 4" barreled S&W while 15.5 grains of #2400 goes up to 1,140 fps. With a 5½" barreled sixgun, 9.0 grains of Unique is just under 1,200 fps.

For those who don't cast, check



out the Oregon Trail Laser Cast 240-gr. SWC. This is not a true Keith bullet and even has a bevel base, however it shoots well. With 6.0 grains of Unique and a 5½" sixgun the result is a very pleasant shooting, and accurate, load of 825 fps. That's slightly more than the original .44 Special loading from *more than a hundred years ago*. Going up to my standard load of 7.5 Unique registers just over 1,000 fps from a 4" S&W Model 1950.

Speer offers the perfect .44 Special jacketed bullet. The 225-gr. SWC-HP is one of the first "jacketed" bullets offered by Speer nearly 50 years ago. It's a natural outgrowth of half-jacketed bullets, and unlike traditional jacketed bullets, consists of a full-length copper cup with a lead core. I push this with 16.3 grains of #2400 yielding 1,217 fps from a 5½" barrel. Either 17.0 grains of #4227 or 8.5 grains of Unique will

give right around 1,000 fps. Using standard weight 240-gr. jacketed bullets from Hornady, Sierra, or Speer with any of my first mentioned standard load powders result in slightly slower velocities than cast bullets, giving right around 900 fps from a 5½" barrel.

You will notice the standard Keith load is conspicuous by its absence. I do use it from time to time, however it's more than I want for an everyday workin' load at 1,200 fps with a 260-gr. bullet. Instead of using it in my lighter weight .44 Special sixguns, I mostly use it in .44 Magnums.

The idea of .44 Special for Everyday Workin' Loads is a relatively lightweight sixgun, around 1/2 lb. less than a comparable .44 Magnum, and also less recoil while still being more than adequate for any situation which should arise. For me, the .44 Special and the above loads fit the bill nicely.



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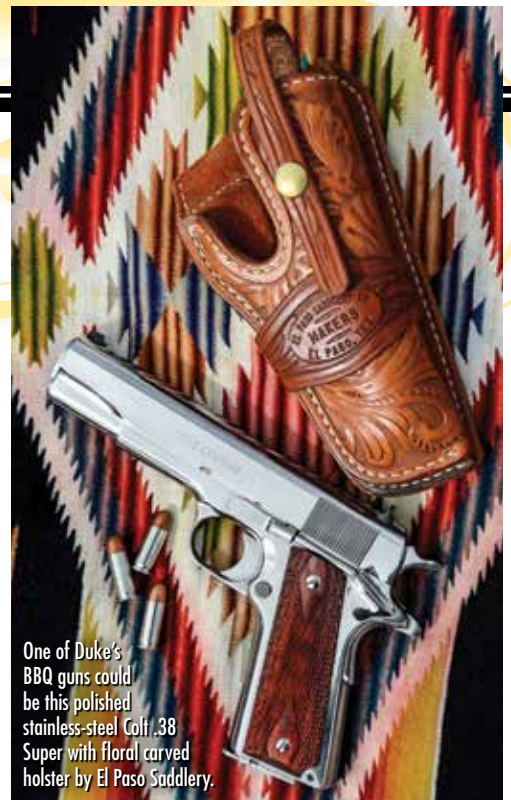
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BBQ COLT

Recently on an Internet website a fellow asked me, "Do you have a barbeque Colt?" I replied, "Um, No, I don't think so." Then another fellow, sensing my ignorance, added the term arose from fancied-up handguns Texas Rangers reserved for backyard BBQs. A third fellow added, "Mike, you just showed a picture of an engraved Colt SAA, so you definitely have a BBQ Colt." All this got me to thinking, "What if I was invited to a BBQ requiring a fancy handgun?"

Most of my life I could have been named Mister Ordinary. My hats, saddles, boots and clothes were all plain. At age 24 I surrendered to just a mite of ostentation. Throughout my high school years, I used laundry markers to put my MLV initials in brand, so when I ordered my first S.D. Myres holsters I had them hand-carved accordingly. Since then, I've plastered my "brand" on just about everything. Over the years two readers had branding irons made as presents for me. Once when heating one of those branding irons Yvonne said she saw a *strange gleam in my eyes* and vacated the premises. I deny that!



One of Duke's BBQ guns could be this polished stainless-steel Colt .38 Super with floral carved holster by El Paso Saddlery.

CANDIDATE EVALUATION

After this Internet chat and weeks of lockdown boredom, I sat in my gun vault and considered my candidates for BBQ guns. One would be a Colt 1911 of the ELCEN serial number range. These were ordered by a major distributor supposedly for sale "south of the border." For this reason, they were all .38 Supers. Made of stainless steel (except for the sights) they were given such a high polish I thought at first it was nickel-plating. Grips on mine are checkered rosewood. Then I turned to El Paso Saddlery for a floral carved holster for packing it.

However, my most gussied-up handguns are single actions. In fact, I could attend BBQs every weekend for months without feeling underdressed toting a fine SAA. Two of mine are engraved Colts. The .38 WCF/.38-40 was made up expressly for the Colt Collector's Association. It's numbered 79 of 150. It has 4.75" barrel with tasteful engraving, but as yet I've not equipped it with

fancy grips. I can't make up my mind as to what material they should be crafted from — fancy walnut, checkered rosewood, bison bone, ivory, or something else.

My other fancy Colt SAA was engraved here in Montana by Brian Gouse. It's also 4.75" barreled with the factory issue grips — for now. What takes it a notch up is the two cylinders are fitted. The original one is .44 WCF/.44-40. With considerable searching I located an unfired .44 Special cylinder and had it engraved also by Brian. If attending a backyard BBQ where I might be charged by a raging bull or hungry panther I'd fit the .44 Special cylinder and load it with the special run of Black Hills .44 Special factory loads with 250-gr. SWCs.



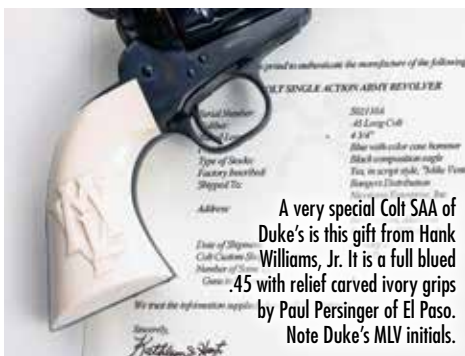
Another option for a BBQ gun would be this factory engraved Colt SAA .38-40 made as a special-order lot of 150 for the Colt Collector's Association.

If attending a BBQ with prestigious guests where I might have to resort to name dropping in order to get my proper quota of attention, I'd wear a very special Colt SAA. This one is a .45 with 4.75" barrel and full blue finish. Its stocks are exquisitely relief carved ivory with MLV on one side and steer head on the other. They are the work of Paul Persinger of El Paso. This Colt bears name dropping because it was ordered from Colt by country/western musician Hank Williams, Jr. with my name engraved on the backstrap.

DON'T FORGET YOUR BETTER HALF

So far, I've left Yvonne out of this imagining game. I couldn't attend such a BBQ so finely adorned with her looking plain. If we were attending a BBQ together, we have a perfect, yet not identical pair. Back in the early 21st century when U.S. Firearms was making beautiful quality single actions, I ordered two with engraving. Yvonne already had a Colt SAA .44 WCF/.44-40 with a 5.5" barrel, so she asked for her USA to have the same length. Obviously, my preference for barrel lengths is 4.75". Hers has serial number YMVI and mine is stamped MLV3.

Truth be told, the backyard BBQs I've attended in my lifetime could probably be counted on the fingers of one hand. But who knows? It could happen.



A very special Colt SAA of Duke's is this gift from Hank Williams, Jr. It is a full blued .45 with relief carved ivory grips by Paul Persinger of El Paso. Note Duke's MLV initials.

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A giant forest hog taken with a .44 Mag. will make any handgunner smile.



Karen and trackers stop for a well-deserved break.

ADVENTURE INTO THE UNKNOWN

Handgun hunting often provides considerable adventure. At times, the pursuit takes hunters to unique, not-so-friendly environments in hopes of taking elusive, challenging game. Exploits like these offer the adventurous hunter experiences not soon forgotten.

Several years ago, I ventured into

the Central African Republic — truly wild Africa. The largest African antelope, the Lord Derby eland, was the primary target. After a charter flight over endless jungle canopy punctuated by a dirt runway landing, we began an unforgettable hunt.

The area was most remote, in the middle of nowhere, with camp con-

sisting of grass-thatched huts. A five-gallon bucket with holes in the bottom served as our shower. No running water, no electricity, no amenities, but plenty of snakes and army ants. I asked for a Diet Coke and the professional hunter (PH) responded, “Do you see anyone in this country that needs Diet Coke?” Well, I guess water would be fine.

HARD-CORE HUNTING

Despite anti-malaria medicine induced discomfort, we would drive down somewhat of a road looking for tracks to follow. These huge-bodied eland can walk forever. And if ever spooked, they usually go over to the next zip code before slowing down. The temperature reached 106 degrees every day before noon. We had four trackers and one guy dedicated to carrying five jugs of water — you can’t drink enough of it. If we couldn’t locate fresh tracks from the road, we simply took off into the bush hoping to cut fresh spoor.

The PH advised me to bring a small caliber for guinea fowl and duikers. My good friend and T/C guru, the late Ken French, had T/C’s Custom Shop make a .22 Hornet for this purpose. After a few days of hunting, the Hornet provided fresh meat — which we needed badly.

Covering miles in extreme heat was the daily norm and the eland remained elusive. Our normal day was 10–12 miles, but one “death march” covered 17 miles. If nothing else, this hunt was a great weight-loss program.

After 12 days of grinding it out, we came away empty handed. The PH wanted me to return in a couple of months and I was stupid enough to agree. When I returned home, I had lost around 20 lbs., experienced gastronomic infection and looked like Hell. My close friends thought I had cancer.



Mark took this Central African Savannah buffalo on his third trip to the CAR. The buff was no match for a Freedom Arms .44 Mag. and Buffalo Bore ammo.

GLUTTON FOR PUNISHMENT

Somehow, I managed to talk my wife in returning with me. She can’t be very smart either. When we landed in Bangui, Karen asked, “Why are French military personnel around every corner?” It wasn’t the ideal time to inform her — risk of terrorist attacks in the CAR during recent times was classified as “Very High.”

The camp was the same — and so was my luck. Karen was in the “bathroom” when army ants invaded. Not good! We hunted for a solid week before I finally scored on a huge

Lord Derby eland — on my 19th day of hunting. I had worn out a brand-new pair of New Balance tennis shoes on this quest. I wish the story ended here, but it doesn’t.

The nearby river had swollen to the point we couldn’t get to the dirt runway. We loaded up two Toyota trucks with all the staff and supplies and headed toward a village with a serviceable runway. The “roads” were really more like trails. One vehicle broke down beyond repair, so all supplies and staff were crammed into one vehicle. The first night we slept on

the ground under the stars. Food was in short supply with fresh, clean water not far behind. The second day we had seven flats. Luckily, we had a bicycle pump and repair kit. During the second night, under the stars, we enjoyed trail mix for dinner. I thought it was kind of romantic; Karen, not so much.

On the third day we crippled into the village and stayed at a Catholic mission. The next morning fog prevented the charter plane from landing on schedule. Knowing there is one flight per week back to Paris, my wife about lost it thinking about being stranded another week. Fortunately for me, the fog lifted, and we made it back to Bangui for the flight to Paris.

Handgun hunting has its share of thrills. Thankfully, I still have a wife!



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WHO SHOULD CHOOSE THE GUN?

POLICE DEPARTMENT OR OFFICER?

As long as any of us have been alive, some law enforcement agencies have mandated a “company gun” policy of one duty sidearm for all armed personnel, while others have had a PODA (privately owned, department approved) policy. Each policy has strengths and weaknesses.

POLICE STANDARD ISSUE PROS AND CONS

In favor of standard issue, more of the same gun can lower price with volume. The agency’s armorers only need to be certified to work on one platform. This was one reason cited by the FBI in their recent policy change, soon to be completed if it hasn’t been already, of disallowing grandfathered traditional DA autos, .40s and .45s. The plan is to consolidate on one gun for everyone, a 9mm Gen5 GLOCK. Inventories of magazines, ammo, holsters and spare parts are all greatly simplified.

One would think a single standard platform would make things easier for instructors, too, but that’s only partially true. Yes, the instructor is spared having to say the decocking lever works this way on one pistol and differently on another, but the fact is with the prevalence of striker-fired guns today, most everyone can get by with a reasonably standard manual of arms.

The flip side is more cops flunk qualification because the gun

doesn’t fit their hand than because they get confused about where the controls are. Shooting a poorly fitting gun is like driving a car whose seat has been adjusted for someone with different size arms, body and legs than you. You may get to where you can drive it acceptably, but you’ll never be able to reach your full potential in operating it.

One unheralded reason for the success of the modern polymer-frame, striker-fired duty pistol is interchangeable grip and backstrap panels, allowing greater hand size adaptability. This is also a significant factor in the meteoric rise in LE adoptions of the SIG P320, with its advanced grip modularity.



Most PODA policies also allow some choice in caliber.

POLICE PODA PROS AND CONS

Even when NYPD was “all .38 Special service revolver,” members of the service had the choice of Colt or S&W and later, Ruger. Today it’s 9mm auto only for duty wear, the last couple hundred grandfathered six-shooters having left the streets years ago. However, the officers (who buy their own pistols through the department) have a choice of GLOCK 17 or 19, SIG P226 DAO, and the now-discontinued S&W 5906. Heads of the NYPD Firearms Training Unit told me one reason for this was protection against a brand’s quality control. If one started slipping, the department wouldn’t be held hostage by a single gun manufacturer.

There’s a theory cops will take better care of their own guns than the department’s, just as officers with take-home cars seem to abuse them less and maintain them better than those who draw their vehicles from the motor pool. The fit issue favors the personally owned gun.

So does the caliber question. No matter how

much the ghost of Jeff Cooper may frown, there are cops who don’t shoot as well with their issue .45 as they could with their own 9mm. Conversely, some cops don’t accept the FBI mantra with modern ammo 9mm equals .45 and would be more confident with the larger caliber. In the Chicago PD, today’s recruits are issued a 9mm GLOCK 17, but after passing probation have the option of going up to a .40 or .45. LAPD issues 9mm S&W M&Ps or GLOCKS at the Academy, but many officers carry optional .40s and .45s, including 1911s. LAPD’s two highest-risk units, SWAT and the Special Investigation Section, were still requiring .45s for those teams last I knew.

A downside of the personal duty gun is seen when departments get slack on the “approved” part. I recall a patrolman I knew in the ‘70s who was carrying a Spanish copy of a Smith & Wesson .32 revolver on duty until the chief got wind of it and issued him a Model 10 S&W .38 Special. The department firearms instructors should have a major say in what is and isn’t approved. And yes, a PODA policy will demand a bit more work from the armorers and instructors. But if the nation’s three largest municipal police departments — NYPD, Chicago PD and LAPD — can handle it, well...

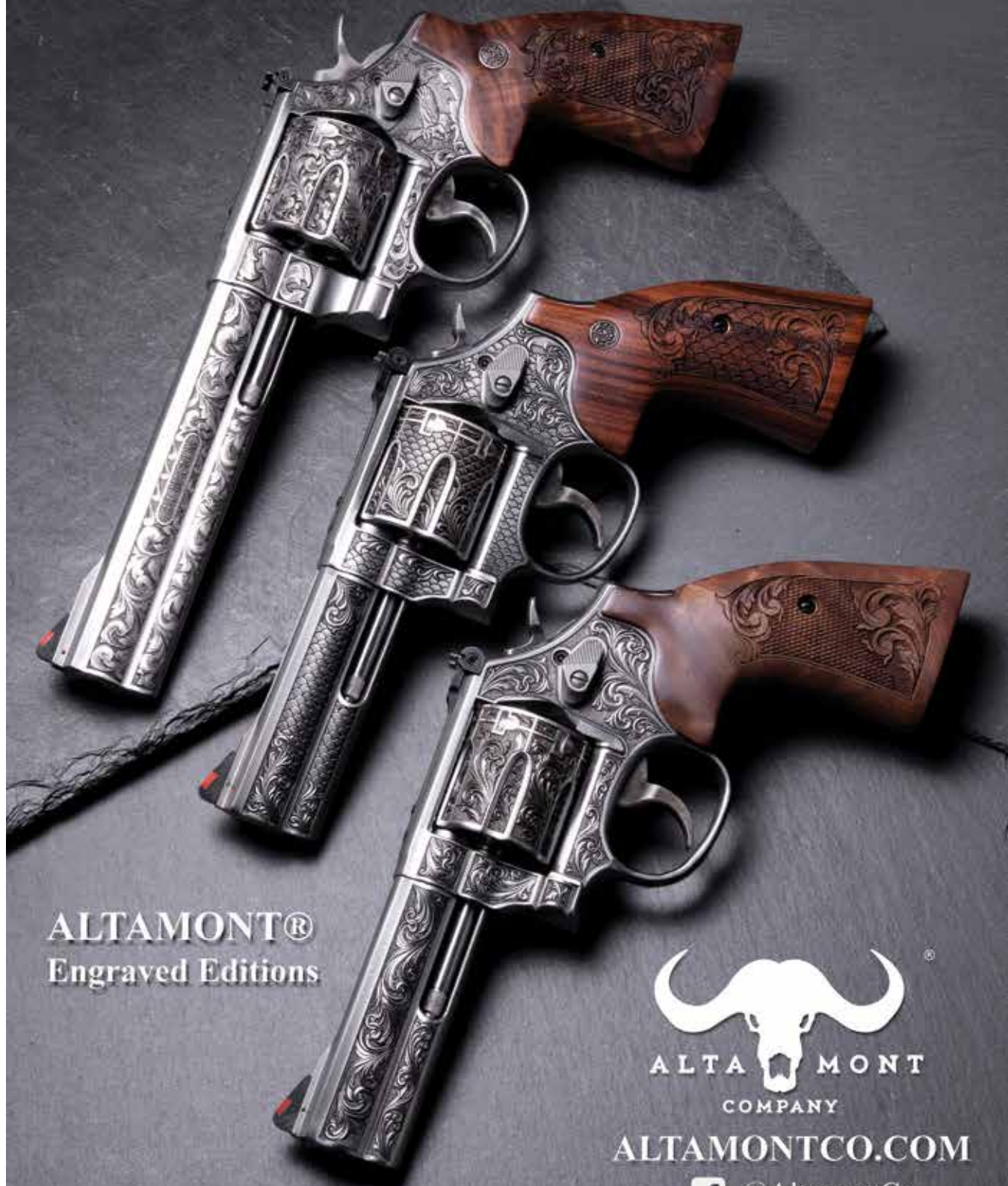
Confidence and competence intertwine. The officer will most likely be alone when he or she fights to survive. They should have the gear giving the individual officer the greatest confidence and competence.



The adjustable grip size feature on this GLOCK Gen4 (and later models) has helped the hand fit problem with standard issue pistols.

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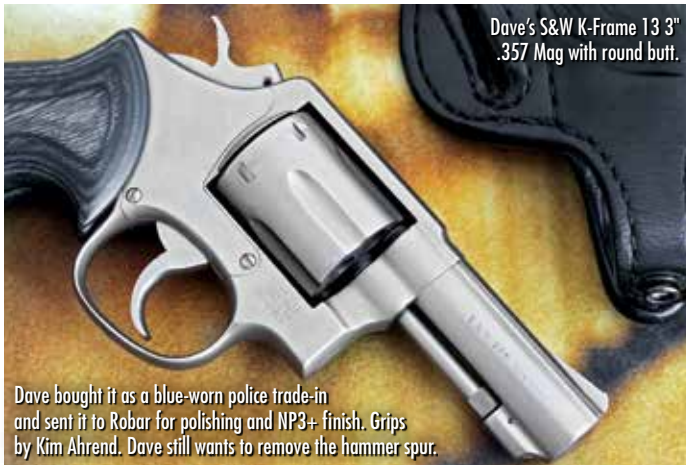
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I'D LIKE A MEDIUM PLEASE



Dave's S&W K-Frame 13 3/4" .357 Mag with round butt.

Dave bought it as a blue-worn police trade-in and sent it to Robar for polishing and NP3+ finish. Grips by Kim Ahrend. Dave still wants to remove the hammer spur.

Selecting a firearm for everyday carry can be bewildering. Firearm manufacturers have responded to increased carry interest with an amazing array of designs in various sizes. Do try as many samples as possible before purchasing.

Anyone who carries a handgun for personal defense has to find a delicate balance of concealability, shootability, power, recoil, magazine capacity and practical accuracy. We can get so caught up in all these factors *we sometimes forget why we carry in the first place* — to stop an unprovoked attack. We need a firearm with enough power to stop the attacker and one we can shoot well enough to place shots accurately.



For the 1911 fan looking for a concealed-carry handgun the Springfield EMP 9mm hits the sweet spot. It's compact, relatively light, accurate, reliable, packs 9+1 and with the mag extension allows a full grip.

MOUSEGUN TEMPATIONS

Many new to concealed carry tend to obsess with concealability. We think everyone is watching us. We worry the gun will print through the covering garment or become exposed in some other way.

There's nothing wrong with being careful as long as we don't develop habits of constantly adjusting clothes, fidgeting, or patting the gun to ensure it's still there. Those are giveaways in the unlikely event someone really is watching you. The reality is *most people are barely aware you're alive*, even on the rare occasions they stop staring at their phones.

Obsessiveness with concealment is one reason so many feel they need small

guns like tiny .25 ACP semi-autos. Tiny pistols are both shy on power and very difficult to shoot well, even for seasoned handgunners. For the novice, they are about the worst possible choice.

Another factor in small-gun appeal is an attitude I've noticed in novice gun owners, to consider the handgun as some sort of magic talisman, like a St. Christopher's medal or a lucky rabbit's foot. There seems to be a belief just having a gun, any gun, is enough to

ward off danger.

In fairness, there is an element of truth to such belief. No one wants to get shot. Most people have enough sense to realize being shot, even with a .25 ACP is still a serious thing. Statistically, simply displaying a firearm is often enough to cause an assailant to either surrender or flee. Just don't count on this.

IS BIGGER BETTER?

The late Jeff Cooper had utter disdain for .25 ACP pistols. I recall he once wrote he would rather be armed with a stick or wine bottle than a .25. Remember though, Cooper was a big, and in his prime, very powerful man, well able to defend himself with bare hands if necessary. He may not have fully appreciated the needs of a 5' 2" woman or a 70-year-old pensioner. Not to mention *it's awkward to carry a wine bottle around*.

I've probably erred on the side of too small a gun myself. I've always liked S&W J-Frames and Colt D-Frames. When I was a kid, it was routine for plainclothes police officers to carry such revolvers. Back then they were considered adequately armed. A satin-nickel S&W 442 .38 Spl. Airweight is



Dave's most-carried handgun, either as a backup or on its own: S&W Centennial Airweight 442 with satin nickel finish and Eagle Secret Service grips ...

... carried in a front pants pocket in a Mitch Rosen Pocket Softie holster.

a personal favorite, pocket carried in a Mitch Rosen Pocket Softie holster.

Times change, people change, circumstances change. For at least 40 years a 1911-style pistol in .45 ACP has been the handgun I trust the most and shoot best, like my current favorite Nighthawk Falcon Commander. As the years creep up both recoil and gun weight become factors. And the world just doesn't seem as safe a place as it did even 20 years

ago. Back then a lone mugger was about my only concern, and I felt well protected with my J-Frame with one reload.

These days multiple assailant incidents are more common. A compact 9mm semi-auto (24–30 oz.) seems for my needs an ideal balance of size, weight, power, magazine capacity and shootability. A pistol like this also provides me a full three-finger grip. As a 1911 fan I like the Springfield Armory EMP but there are many other fine choices. Oh, and that little Airweight is still in the pants pocket!



The EAA logo is located in the top right corner, featuring the letters 'EAA' in a bold, red, sans-serif font, with a small 'CORP' in a smaller font to its right. The background of the entire advertisement is a light blue-grey with a pattern of white and grey geometric shapes, resembling shattered glass or ice. Three handguns are prominently displayed: a gold-colored one (labeled 2), a black one (labeled 1), and another black one with a textured grip (labeled 3). Several gold-colored bullets are scattered around the guns. In the bottom right, there is a circular target graphic with a red bullseye and concentric yellow rings, with small yellow dots representing bullet impacts.

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BACK TO THE FUTURE



The finished Bob Chow-Derr Precision Colt Commander. Blue over hard chrome with ebony grips by Wood Caliber.

I tend to forget how creative gunsmiths from before I was born could be. Case in point: A client recently brought me a Colt slide and barrel. Bought as part of an online auction deal, the .45 ACP Colt Commander slide was fitted with a Smith & Wesson K-Frame revolver rear sight and a ramped front sight was seamlessly soldered on. The barrel was fit to the slide with an internal block to help barrel fit. The barrel bushing was stamped “Chow.” The rear sight nested in the slide elegantly. Real quality craftsmanship. I had heard of Bob Chow for many years but had never handled one of his guns.

F. Bob Chow, born in 1911 in California, became a very accomplished shooter and gunsmith. Chow was a member of the 1948 U.S. Olympic Team competing in rapid-fire pistol. He was also the first gunsmith of any renown of Asian heritage. He had a shop in San Francisco specializing in NRA Bullseye guns. In the '50s and '60s his work ruled the pistol competition world.



The Harrison Design rear sight replacement for a BoMar-style sight on a Ruger 10mm 1911. The Harrison sight features milled edges, appropriate for a carry sidearm.

SLIDE RESURRECTION

Right off I decided I wouldn't change anything on the slide. My task was to make a frame for the existing “Chow” slide. My thought was to build a lower complementing the brilliant work Chow did — maybe something '70s style with a few subtle modern touches. I found an orphaned blued Colt Commander frame in the shop.

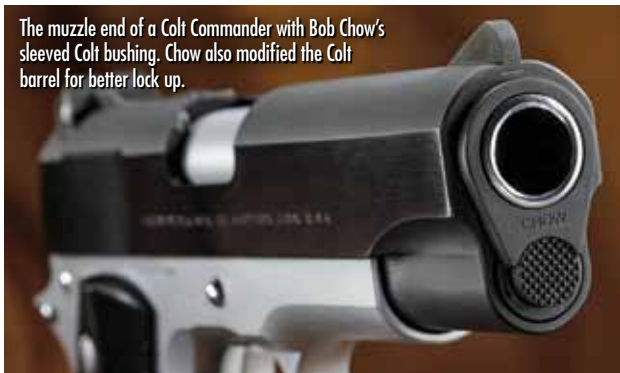
The Chow slide looked like it was for “conceal carry” so I stuck with this theme.

First the trigger guard was forged square, very popular in the '70s. The front strap was checkered 25 lpi for grip.

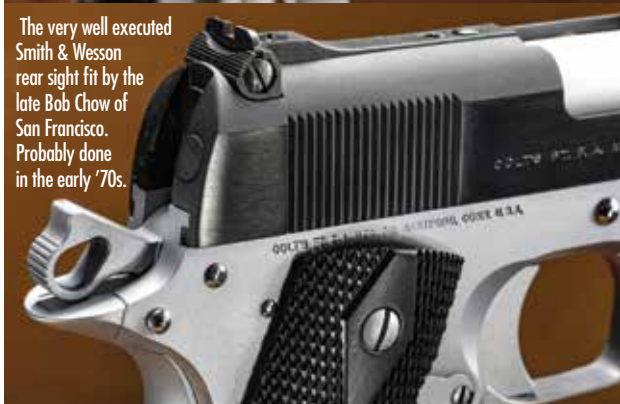
For easy reloads I chose to use a Stan Chen Gen 2 magwell (also checkered 25 lpi) which required cutting the .300 off the lower part of the frame. Next I fit my Derr Precision bobbed grip safety. It mimics a King's Gunworks period part but is cleaner with smaller gaps after fitting. The internals are all new bar stock pieces by Cylinder and Slide with a Harrison Design “CC” hammer.

For the finish I elected for traditional two-tone. This differentiates the original Chow work in blue and my new work in brushed hard chrome. To finish things off I added traditional “double diamond” checkered ebony grips by Wood Caliber secured with satin hard chrome screws. The Wood Caliber grips have some of the best checkering I have ever handled on grips.

Commanders have always been a favorite of mine; they feel great in the hand and shoot very well. The finished gun shoots cloverleaf groups at 15 yards.



The muzzle end of a Colt Commander with Bob Chow's sleeved Colt bushing. Chow also modified the Colt barrel for better lock up.



The very well executed Smith & Wesson rear sight fit by the late Bob Chow of San Francisco. Probably done in the early '70s.

SIGHT OPTIONS

For those who want a less “snaggy” option to the traditional BoMar-style rear sight, John Harrison of Harrison Design has the right replacement. The BoMar style sight cut is complex but John has a nicely shaped fixed rear sight that fits the cut. A small dovetail filler piece is slid into the current dovetail, the steel body of the new sight is screwed into the filler piece with two hex head screws secured with LocTite. The fit and finish are excellent. There are no square edges to get caught on clothing during a draw. Sights are available for most of the major manufacturers in solid black, single or twin lamp tritium. Mated front sights are also available.

Chow like many smiths in the early days of 1911 gunsmithing had to work with very little in the way of oversized parts. It's to these early smiths' credit *they custom made everything by hand*. Young gunsmiths can learn a lot from their work, I know I do.

I really would have liked to have met Mr. Chow. He was certainly ahead of his time, meticulous in his methods and a great shooter. There are a lot of little-known gunsmiths from the '50s and '60s who led the way in customizing. Many of today's custom features grew out of their work.





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CARRY ON

How we carry and conceal our shooters is as personal and preferential as the type of handgun we carry every day. The holster we choose provides the means of securely carrying and concealing that handgun.

1791 Gunleather starts by using 100 percent certified American, heavy native steer hide for their products. The team consists of four generations of master leather artisans combining craftsmanship, performance and innovation by blending traditional gun leather with contemporary styles everyone can appreciate.

I have several holsters bearing the 1791 brand.

ULTRA CUSTOM

The Ultra Custom features Memory-Lok technology — the first of its kind — allowing Kydex-like custom fit and retention characteristics, with the soft comfort of leather. Can't beat that! A patent-pending process lets you customize your holster for your firearm with a simple three-step process. It works! If needed, you can repeat the process to re-fit down the road.

This holster comes with a reinforced synthetic

tuckable clip for secure IWB carry and slim profile for concealment. The open-top design allows easy drawing and holstering. The Ultra Custom is available in six sizes, from revolvers to full-frame pistols. For my purposes, I have one for my GLOCK 22. I couldn't be happier with it.

FAIR CHASE

The typical Frontiersman knew the value of "buckskin," making everything possible, bags, shirts, moccasins and even britches from it. Buckskin offers a unique combination of strength, resistance and flexibility unmatched by any leather. 1791 uses only "Fair Chase" whitetail deer hides for this comfy holster. The pattern, combined with buckskin qualities, accommodate a wide range of firearms.

A strong, American-made clip keeps your Fair Chase holster secure and in place for quick draw and preferred mounting angle. The heavy, reinforced stitching guarantees security and a lifetime of comfortable service.

OPEN TOP PADDLE HOLSTER

Paddle holsters provide a perfect blend of convenience and security. The polymer paddle allows fast on/off capabilities yet provides stability with comfort. But don't confuse convenience with vulnerability.

The paddle keeps the holster snugged securely to the body while the retention hooks keep the holster anchored while drawing. The paddle is adjustable for optimal cant angle. Other features include a leather sweat guard, adjustable screw for custom tension fit. It's available for numerous pistols and revolvers.

Carrying my Mag-na-port 3" custom GP100 .44 Special was a joy with this holster and I really appreciated the easy on/off abilities.

OPTIC READY (OR) MULTI-FIT BELT HOLSTER

Red dot sights are here to stay! It only makes sense having OR holsters to accommodate these sights. Even if you're not ready for an optic sight yet, these holsters still allow the secure carry and

The Open Top Paddle holster is made for convenience, security and stylish good looks.

If you're the kind who likes to take your rig on and off throughout the day, this holster's for you.

The "Optic Ready Multi Fit" belt holster is traditionally styled with dual belt slots.

The low-cut front allows any optic-equipped pistol to fit properly. Even without an optic, it's a great all-around rig.

The Fair Chase (top) and Ultra Custom (bottom) offer comfortable and convenient ways of carrying IWB. Even Tank's full-size GLOCKS had no problem riding in these minimalist holsters.



versatility of your favorite pistol. Made of top-quality steer-hide, this double-slotted holster keeps your gun strapped tight against your body while allowing quick access and draw.

The low-cut front accommodates optic sights. The holster throat and body are reinforced with a second layer of leather for easier holstering and secure retention. My S&W Shield .45 fits like a glove in the Multi-Fit holster even though it's sans an optic sight. When my eyes do deceive me, I'll be able to use this holster after mounting an optic. Nice!

THERE'S MORE

Besides holsters, 1791 Gunleather makes a slew of gun belts, rifle slings and magazine pouches. All 1791 leather holsters/products are made of 100 percent certified cowhide leather and have a lifetime warranty for each product.

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Behold, the world's coolest teenager-mobile. Will's little brother perched so adorably on the hood is 6'3" and a federal prosecutor today.

DYING TO BE COOL

What exactly does it mean to be cool? Though difficult to define, you know it when you see it. Guns are cool. So was Steve McQueen. You get kind of a *gestalt* about such stuff.

Some of us spend our entire lives striving mightily to be cool yet fail quite to get there. However, many's the young man's unscheduled trip across the river Styx 'twas precipitated by a *poorly reasoned effort to be cool*.

The Perfect Day

It was one of those torrid Mississippi summer afternoons when the sun burned like a furnace and the air was so humid you could rip off a chunk and gnaw it. School was out; I had not a care in the world.

In my day you got your driver's license at 15. I wouldn't trust today's 15-year-old males unsupervised with gum, much less an automobile. However, this was a different time.

While I have indeed never been mistaken for cool, my dad did see to it I rolled in a cool car. A young man's ride is so much more than transportation. It is style, personality, character and status all packaged up on four spinning wheels. My car was *pure unfiltered awesome*.

The year was 1981 and the car was a 1970 Buick Skylark convertible. The sole ragtop in my small Mississippi Delta community, it was metallic

blue and immensely, nay ludicrously, powerful. I would frequently go sit in the back seat and read science fiction tomes with the top down while parked in the driveway. As I said, being cool was more a journey than a destination with me.

On this particular day I was sporting cheap, mirrored aviator shades while tearing down a preternaturally straight stretch of Lee Drive, so named for the esteemed General. Like all adolescent males *I was young, bulletproof and immortal*. Harm could never befall me.

The Power Of Stupid

Overcome by the moment, I pushed myself up such that I was sitting atop the headrest. A gangly, long-legged lad, I manipulated the accelerator with my right great toe and kept the wheel nominally managed with my fingertips. My face was fully in the slipstream above the windshield.

Seatbelts were not the religious sacraments they are today, so mine were tucked down out of the way behind the seat so as not to interfere with my signature dynamic entry into the vehicle — vaulting over the door to land gracefully in the driver's seat, ready to rock. During such a maneuver, one does not desire the painful inconvenience of seatbelt buckles. As a result, I perched atop my charging metallic blue steed, restrained not one whit.

My nemesis lurked anonymously

within the tall Johnson grass that lined the rural road, happily munching his mid-afternoon snack. Whether driven by boredom, hunger, or love will never now be known, but he did for some reason then spontaneously take flight. Spreading his broad green wings, this massive 4" Delta grasshopper flexed his powerful legs and leapt into the ether.

I perceived a scant flurry in the periphery of my vision and my entire world exploded. The gargantuan insect caught me squarely in the forehead and *detonated like an antitank grenade*, knocking me bodily back into the rear seat and leaving my legs draped limply astride the headrest. At this point my trusty Skylark was still making some 70 miles per hour, though now charging randomly sans pilot.

I clawed violently back over the seat and dropped in behind the steering wheel again, seizing the appendage in an involuntary rictus. By some miracle throughout it all the car remained within the two white lines of its own accord. No doubt the vehicle was guided solely by my guardian angel, himself a both overworked and underappreciated spook.

Denouement

I carefully coasted to a stop on the side of the deserted road and took stock. My sunglasses were gone, never to be seen again. A not insubstantial gash tracked rakishly across my forehead, now most liberally adorned with splintered chunks of chitin and copious pureed pest. I wiped away the gore with an oily towel and pattered meekly back home.

I crept stealthily into the house and retired to the bathroom to attend my wounds. My dad inquired concerning my injuries over dinner, and I not untruthfully explained I had been struck by a grasshopper while out driving with the top down. All involved thought it comical.

The truth has remained suppressed to this very day, and now, my friends, I share it with you.



COOL THINGS!



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The .38 Super: How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. Targets shot with Taffin's latest .38 Super, the Kimber Stainless Target II.



Colt .38 Supers: stainless steel Commander, Government Model and Commander all with stocks by Herrett's.

PLAYIN' FAVORITES: THE SUPERB 38 SUPER 1911

I'm taking advantage of my advancing years and looking at my favorite handguns — an admittedly subjective exercise. Choosing favorites is not always easy. Sometimes I can pick one favorite; other times it's several. With this in mind we herein look at Taffin's Top .38 Supers.

The .38 Super chambered 1911 arriving in 1929 predated not only the .357 Magnum of 1935 but also the .38-44 Heavy Duty of 1930. Crime was rampant in the Roaring '20s and peace officers found themselves at a disadvantage when armed with revolvers firing the standard round-nosed .38 Special. Both Colt and

S&W went to work to come up with a better solution. Smith & Wesson's first answer was the .44 framed double-action revolver made to handle the first Plus P .38 Special, the .38/44 Heavy Duty. Colt, with their New Service .38, already had a heavy framed revolver able to handle higher pressure .38 Special loads so they looked in a different direction — *chambering the 1911 with a hotter .38 ACP*. The result was the .38 Super with a 130-gr. metal piercing bullet at approximately 1,300 fps.

A "MAGNUM-POWERED" SEMI-AUTO

Beginning in the 1930s and lasting until the 1990s, the .357 Magnum was the number one choice for peace officers desiring something more powerful than the .38 Special, while the .38 Super remained virtually unknown except



The .38 Super and the Super .38 Super, the .38 Casull.

to a small core group of dedicated *pistoleros*. This would not change until the advent of action shooting matches in which the lower recoil and higher capacity of

Wilson Combat builds superb 1911s.



The .38 Super with giraffe bone stocks by Scott Kolar.

The .45 with Herrett's stocks.

Leather by Milt Sparks.



Taffin's fascination with the .38 Super began with this book by Jeff Cooper.



Texas Bar-B-Q gun: high polished stainless steel Colt Custom .38 Super with genuine mother-of-pearl grips.

Belt slide by Black Hills Leather.

the .38 Super compared to the same pistol chambered in .45 ACP gave a decided advantage to competitors who virtually saved the cartridge.

Americans have basically been revolver shooters, and this was especially so among law enforcement until the 1990s when semi-automatics took over. All this time many shooters were looking to the .357 Magnum sixgun as the ideal self-defense choice. Only relatively few of those in the know carried a .38 Super including one Texas Ranger by the name of Frank Hamer. It was Hamer

Continued on page 68

COUNSELOR

BY NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM

How do you make the ultimate concealed carry pistol better? By adding our Interchangeable Optic System (IOS)! The Counselor is our smallest, lightest 1911 yet, and adding our IOS for a red dot optic will give any shooter confidence in every situation.



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WARNING
Guard Dogs
On Premises

Left: Life in the country is safer, especially if you have a good dog on duty. Yes, there's more responsibility and planning involved, but it's much easier to protect those you're responsible for, and when necessary, defend against an attack.

AVOID AND ESCAPE

TIGER MCKEE

Trouble comes in all forms; danger flares from both man and nature. Whatever the source, avoidance is generally the best response. Sometimes danger is unexpected, but at the first hint of instability think *escape*. As I write this, there are violent urban “protests” taking place. It’s DefCon 4 out there, making avoidance and escape even more important.

Team Pay Attention

The first step to avoiding trouble is staying aware. This involves more than just your immediate surroundings, what you can actually see, hear and touch right now. Pay attention to where you are now, and where you plan to be in the future. If you’re considering a trip, to the corner grocery, a visit to the kids, traveling to another state or, heaven forbid an international journey, it’s mandatory you *gather intel* prior to leaving home. If there’s any hint of potential trouble, reschedule. Put it off until it’s safe.

I recommend reading *Left of Bang* by Van Horne and Riley. This incredible book, based on the Marine Corps Combat Hunter Program, is all about identifying a potential problem before the “bang.” Paying attention to your environment and the people it contains provides cues to danger, allowing you to escape before trouble erupts. Avoidance and escape are sure paths to victory.

Avoidance and escape involve teamwork. Your team — friends and family — are having a great time. One of you notices the *strange looking guy in the trench coat*, especially considering the warm temps. No sign of trouble yet, but this person’s behavior is definitely unusual. Just in case, because it’s not

worth the risk, your team makes a calm exit to a safer location.

Maybe there was never any danger. Or perhaps that evening you see the shaky phone video of the violence that erupted after you left. Teamwork is great, as long as you have a plan and commit to practice. Moving, communicating and the skills to use cover are all important. Performing these as a team is difficult and acquiring new skills during the time of danger is impossible. Prepare in advance.

Get Out Of Dodge

Escape is a more dynamic action. There’s trouble, coming fast. If you were paying attention to your environment, and already knew where the closest exit was, escape is easy. If total escape isn’t an option, find a location that could be easily defended. Positioning yourself in a sound, tactical spot *allows you to defend against multiple attackers*.

Avoidance and escape may also apply to where you live. Large urban environments have their advantages; dining, museums, brick-and-mortar book stores and other recreational destinations are all available in urban areas. However, the recent violent protests popping up in multiple locations are showing us the utopian life urban environments promised in the 1950s is likely a thing of the past. Densely populated areas are powder kegs waiting for a spark; *there’s less safety than ever*, even if you live in the “nice” part of town. This is the start of “social justice,” and it’s not going to get any better.

Uprooting the family to move to a new location is never a straightforward decision. One thing the “Virus” has shown us is you can work, shop and

Working as a “team” under normal circumstances is sometimes difficult — think about your last family vacation. Teamwork under dangerous and stressful conditions is exponentially harder and requires planning and practice.



Staying aware — learning how to spot potential danger before it develops — is the key to avoidance and escape. The book *Left of Bang* is an invaluable resource.

get an education without having to be in proximity of these establishments. If “city life” is going to get worse, moving to a safer location helps ensure the safety of those you’re responsible for. In many cases, the job of protection becomes easier. A “safer” location doesn’t mean you relax completely — always be vigilant. But I’m pretty sure there’s not going to be any civil unrest or violent protests taking place within 30 miles of our home, so the strain of security is relieved somewhat.

When Rome began to fail, leaders instituted “bread and circuses” or “bread and games” to placate and distract the people. Today we have stimulus checks and riot coverage. The “bad” part of town is growing, like a cancer. “Social justice” is an “us against them” mentality. If you’re not with them, whoever they are, then you’re going to be a target.

Avoid — don’t be there. Escape at the first sign of trouble. Not paying attention is no longer an option.



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Clyde went on to head the Flight Test School at Edwards Air Force Base.

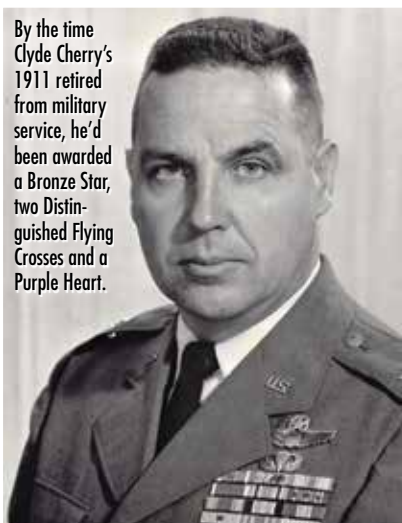


Bruce and Clyde Cherry spending some quality time in California.

MY FATHER'S COLT

FAITHFUL SERVICE THROUGH 30 YEARS AND 3 WARS

By the time Clyde Cherry's 1911 retired from military service, he'd been awarded a Bronze Star, two Distinguished Flying Crosses and a Purple Heart.



BRUCE CHERRY

He was 23 back then, less than one third my age today. For a first lieutenant in the Army Air Corps fresh out of flight school, the 1911 .45 ACP Colt came as standard issue along with the wings. The wings stayed on his chest and the Colt stayed at his side during an incredible journey lasting 30 years and three wars.

Shot Down!

He was still 23 when he and his classmates were sent to England to serve as bomber pilots. Days after his 24th birthday, the Colt was in his right hand while a Nazi patrol searched a moonlit hedgerow in France, trying to find the crew of a B-24 bomber that had crash-landed after being shot down by German fighters.

"We went in gear up and there was no fire, so everyone got out alive. We were hiding in the brush when we saw some figures approaching in the moonlight and figured they were probably French Underground. But when they got to within 30 yards, we could hear them talking. I'm no expert in foreign languages, but I know German from French and these guys were not speaking French. I had my Colt cocked and ready to go, but fortunately the Nazis never found us. It took a week to get back to England. My buddies thought I was dead, so they divvied up my belongings and it took another month to get all my stuff back."

He completed 40 missions and along the way his planes got shot to pieces, but he made it back home to Colorado.

Six years later, he was a captain and flying jets over Korea.

"If you take a hit and have to eject, there's no time to grab anything. Out



Within a year of graduating flight school, 1st Lt. Cherry (far right) found himself dodging Nazis in the French countryside after his B-24 was shot down by fighters.



Asked what he would do differently, Clyde responded he would have spent more time in the Colorado Mountains he so loved.

you go, right now, and whatever you're wearing is all you'll have when you hit the ground. I always had some candy bars, a flashlight and a knife in the pockets of my flight suit, and I always wore my Colt. It wouldn't be much good against a Chinese patrol, but it would be better than nothing. A lot better than nothing."

He wasn't shot down in that war and once again made it back to Colorado. Shortly afterward, he was assigned to the Marine Corps as an Air Force liaison officer and transferred to Quantico, Va.

Home — For A Time

"I got involved in competitive pistol shooting at Quantico and sent my Colt to the factory to have it tuned up. New barrel, new sights, new grips. They really did a fine job. After about a year of practice, I could hold my own against any of the Marines. I must have fired at least 5,000 rounds through that pistol. Probably more."

I was in college when he was sent to Viet Nam. He was a colonel and in command of an air wing of F-4 Phantoms.

"That war was a mess. You never knew who was your enemy and who was your friend. Turned out my barber was a Viet Cong officer. I was more concerned about getting shot on the ground than I was about getting shot in the air, so I carried my Colt everywhere. I even slept with it."

Peace At Last

That was his last war. He came home and hung up his uniforms and we spent a good portion of the next 30 years fishing and hunting together. Even on fly-fishing safaris, where the only enemy is the wind, the Colt came with him.

"You never know," he would say, gently placing the Colt into its suede, fleece-lined case and then putting the case into his helmet bag. "Things happen."

A dozen years ago we were sitting in front of a campfire in central Colorado, neither one of us speaking, both of us lost in the flames. The Milky Way was a broad brushstroke across the face of heaven that faded and then disappeared as the moon rose over the Continental Divide and set the world aglow. No words were spoken for a long time because neither one of us has much to say unless something needs to be said. I don't particularly like the taste of bourbon, but I was sipping a tumbler of bourbon and water because my father had offered it to me and that was what he was drinking.

"It's been quite a trip, hasn't it?" I said, my eyes focused on the flames.

"Yes, it has."

Taking No Chances on the ability of him swiftly enough to the nearest air raid shelter, should enemy bombers raid his barracks somewhere in England in the night, First Lieut. Clyde Cherry put to work the engineering knowledge he won at Denver university, dug himself a foxhole under his bed and lined it with concrete slabs. Now, when sirens blow, he just yawns and rolls over into luxurious safety.—Ninth air force photo.



Clyde's engineering skills came in handy during WWII. He built a bomb shelter under his bed.



"Whatever you're wearing is all you'll have when you hit the ground." Clyde always carried a couple of candy bars, a light, a knife and his Colt 1911.

"If you had it all to do over again, would you do anything differently?" I asked.

He was silent for a moment. He took a sip of his drink and put the glass down on the ground. Then he looked up at the moon. I had already asked my question and I knew he had heard it, so I didn't ask again.

"This is how it was the night the Germans almost got me. Full moon, no wind, not a sound. Even the temperature was about the same." He looked at me and grinned. "If they had captured me, you probably wouldn't be here."

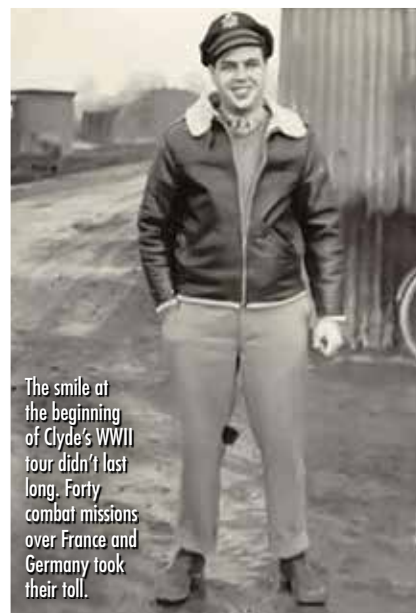
"Nor would you."

His gaze returned to the fire. "I suppose the only thing I'd do differently, if I had any say, is I'd spend a lot more time here in Colorado, up in the mountains." He slowly stood up, grasping his right knee, and hobbled over to the truck. He opened the camper shell and removed his helmet bag. Then he came back over to the fire and sat down in his chair. He unzipped his helmet bag and took the suede pistol case out. "Do you want it?" he asked, offering me the pistol case. "I won't need it anymore. It might come in handy someday."

"No," I said, slowly shaking my head. "Not now, anyway. Just don't sell it."

He put the pistol case back into his helmet bag and then stood up, holding the arm of the aluminum chair for support. "I'm going to hit the sack," he said. He started to walk away but after only a few steps he turned back to face me. "I keep it in the nightstand next to my bed. That's where it'll be."

He turned away again and walked through the moonlight toward his tent.



The smile at the beginning of Clyde's WWII tour didn't last long. Forty combat missions over France and Germany took their toll.



Fresh out of flight school and headed to Europe to join the fight.

MAG-NA-PORT TURNS A GPI100 INTO A CUSTOM CARRY GEM

JEFF “TANK” HOOVER



THE MAKING OF A TANKER



Here's the Tanker nestled next to a 5" Ruger GP100 for comparison. Tank has the Tanker loaded with Black Hills Honey Badger and the stock revolver totting MP-Molds .44 Keith slugs.

As the resident reprobate writing for FMG Publications, I'll admit it's changed me. I was happy being the stock-box kind of gun guy — then it happened! I was infected by the custom gun bug. It's a hazard of the gun writing profession, but one I'm willing to endure.

Roy saw the errors of my innocent ways, hatching a diabolical plan. “Tank drive up to Mag-na-port and visit Ken Kelly. Bring a couple guns, hang out in the shop, learn something while he works your guns over. Maybe have him show you firsthand how EDM works. Who was I to question Roy? Sounded like a plan, so I readily agreed a tour of proper “EDM-



Tank decided this Tanker needed rounded stocks, so he got busy and made his own.



The "Tanker" shoots as good as it looks. Black Hills HoneyBadger and the "Skeeter" load both shot well. The porting really reduces recoil and muzzle-flip!



A close-up of the EDM work, jeweled hammer and trigger and matte-blue finish.

the heck EDM is. He's a *mad scientist* when it comes to Electrical Discharge Machining, the same process his dad, Larry Kelly, used to put Mag-na-port on the map. Ken carries things further, using electricity in ways that would earn the envy of Dr. Frankenstein.

"Tanker" Model?

Wasting no time, Ken lops off part of the barrel and crowns what's left. Everyone assumes this is a 5-minute job, and I did too. The cutting was quick using a band saw, but the inverted crown takes time due to the setup of the Bridgeport milling machine.

Ken tucks the gun into a storage box for future work as he tells me I'll see the finished product next year. Did Roy have anything to do with this? Hmmm ...

Fast forward a year and I'm back. The chopped-down GP100 is finished. Handing it to me, I'm in awe! Holding the

perfect concealed carry revolver, with plenty of punch and polish, it only needs proper stocks, but I have an idea.

Details

The original 5" GP100 has a half-lug and cutting it down to 3" leaves a nice radiused curve from muzzle to the tip of the ejector rod. Ken EDM's a pocket for pinning a front-sight blade in case I ever need to swap for one a different height. The blade has a red

Continued on page 62

ing" was in order. By the way, anyone know what EDM is?

Double, Or Nothing?

Digging around my safe I find two candidates. I have two each of these particular guns, just in case. In case of what, I'm not sure, but I'm glad I have them. Preparation is important, right? The first is a blued Ruger GP100 Lipsey's Exclusive with a 5" barrel in .44 Special, the second, we'll talk about at a later time. That's me being mysterious.

I have two goals. I want to turn the 5" GP100 into the perfect concealed carry piece and have Ken utilize his EDM skills, while showing me what



Tank had two identical revolvers because he likes to be prepared. Just because. The result is this legitimate before and after shot.



You've gotta love the trimmed hammer spur, diamond-cut EDM machining in the trigger-guard, improved sights and matte blue finish.

CZ'S P-07

The CZ P-07 is a descendant of the fine Czech handguns popularized throughout Europe.

Notice the high undercut at the back of the trigger guard. The frame texture and serration above the trigger is a unique feature on the P-07.

THE EUROPEAN 1911P

David found the P-07 easy to control free-handed and utterly reliable.

The flat controls aid concealed carry but are large enough they're easy to use. The de-cocker can be converted to a safety with the included parts.

On CZ-style pistols the slide goes inside the frame on full-length rails.

POLYMER CARRY PISTOL

DAVID FREEMAN

In Europe, the CZ-75 is what the 1911 is to American shooters. Česká Zbrojovka Uherský Brod (ČZUB), a Czech Republic firearms manufacturer, produces some of the finest-made firearms in the world. The company makes pistols, rifles and shotguns for the military, hunting, sporting and personal protection arenas. In the U.S., CZ firearms are imported by CZ-USA.

The most popular of the Czech handguns, the CZ-75, was introduced in 1975. I first came to know this style of pistol through the EAA Witness and the SAR B6 and K2 models imported by European American Armory. My experience with these CZ-75 clones led me to like them, trust them and recommend them to others. I've owned several EAAs and SARs, but I never actually owned a CZ-manufactured version until recently.

The original CZ-75s are all steel and ship in several models including the 75, 85 and Compact with differing features such as size, finish, capacity and caliber. In recent years, the ČZUB factory has introduced several polymer-framed models. A mid-size pistol, the CZ P-07, caught my eye as I pondered adding a true CZ pistol to my collection. I'm thinking "P" stands for polymer and I think the "07" has something to do with size, since the P-09 and P-10 are bigger and the P-01 is smaller.

I've had it for a couple of years now, and I really like this gun. I know what you're thinking, "David, you like all guns!" Well, that's not exactly true. I've handled guns I don't like, and others about which I'm indifferent. To get my attention, a handgun has to: feel good in my hands, fit me properly, have good easy-to-align sights, have a quality trigger, operate flawlessly, be chambered in a caliber that makes sense for its purpose and be comfortable to shoot. The CZ P-07 meets all these requirements.

But if a handgun has already met your *needs* and many of your *wants*, there's got to be more, right? Otherwise, it's just another gun. The P-07 has a bit of a futuristic look about it, but also manages to scream *all business*. When I got mine, they only came in black, but now you can order P-07s in tan and green.

Ergonomics

The P-07 is all CZ-75, yet it's different. CZs differ from most of the guns

we're familiar with in that the slide rails are inverted. The slide attaches to the inside of the frame unlike most semi-automatic handguns where the slide attaches outside the frame. Does this make a difference in how the gun operates? Not really. The rails on a CZ are full length so there is good solid contact. The configuration makes the slide a bit narrow, so it doesn't provide quite as much grip area for cycling the slide. I admit that's a bit of an issue, but I like shooting the gun so much I figured out a method of handling it that works for me.

The P-07 ships with different-sized back straps, so I was able to customize the grip to my hand size and shape. When I pick it up or pull it out of a holster, it naturally finds the right place in my hand, ready to go with no shifting around. The sights line up, and I can easily put my finger on the trigger with the proper positioning.

There is a Picatinny rail that's just shy of 2" long for mounting a light, laser or combo. The trigger guard is squared off in front with a bit of a tang, and the back part of the trigger guard is raised to allow a high grip. Very nice. Both sides of the grip are recessed near the top as a natural fit for your thumb and forefinger regardless of which hand is your dominant



In the P-07 kit, you'll get a sturdy plastic case with three magazines, two additional back straps and a cleaning brush. Also included are parts and tools necessary to convert the de-cocker to a safety.



The slide lock lever doubles as the take-down control. Align the notches on the frame and push the lever through the frame.

hand. The designers in the CZ shop obviously worked with this gun for a while, tweaking here and there and passing it around until they all agreed it was ready. *They did a great job.* The weight of the slide, the thickness of the frame and the texture of the grip all come together to make it a perfectly balanced shooting platform.

Controls

The slide lock lever, which doubles as a takedown lever, is big with a surface that's easy to work, yet flat so it doesn't interfere with concealment. There's a de-cocker, which with a little bit of DIY gunsmith work can be converted to a

Continued on page 72

WALTHER'S CCP M2

FRANK JARDIM
PHOTOS: F.J.G. JARDIM



If you like to use the trigger guard for grip support, you'll appreciate the curved and textured contour.

The SoftCoil piston system dampens recoil and allows use of a lighter, and easier to rack, recoil spring (not shown).



A RETRO TECH 380 ACP

If your dream concealed carry pistol is a slim, medium-compact, accurate, 8+1 shot .380 ACP autoloader, with an exceptionally easy-to-work slide, and considerably less recoil and muzzle flip than other guns of like caliber ...

Walther's .380 CCP (Concealed Carry Pistol) is your waking reality.

There are smaller guns in this caliber that are easier to hide, and a few bigger ones like the Beretta 84,

but none of them are as soft-shooting, with a slide this easy to rack, or quite so quick handling in rapid-fire as the CCP.

Recoil Science

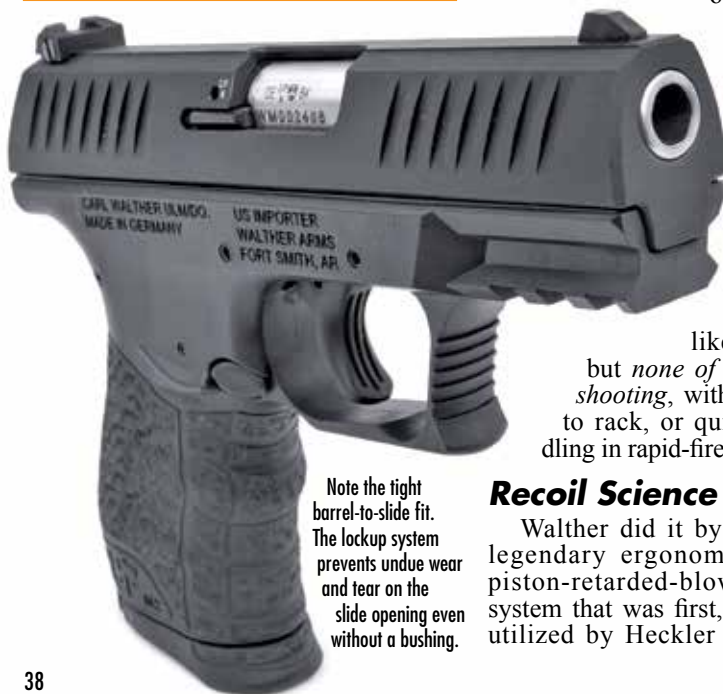
Walther did it by combining their legendary ergonomics with a gas-piston-retarded-blowback operation system that was first, and only, widely utilized by Heckler & Koch in their

P-7 type "squeeze-cocker" pistols. In this delayed-blowback system, the resistance of the recoil spring and slide mass keeps the action closed while the bullet is traveling through the barrel, like a standard pistol. The recoil process is supplemented by a gas-charged brake in the form of a frame-mounted cylinder below the barrel, capped by a slide-mounted piston.

Gas from the fired cartridge, vented from the barrel through a small hole just in front of the chamber, fills the cylinder below and bears against the face of the piston, holding the slide closed. The moment the bullet leaves the barrel, the pressure against the piston face is relieved, eliminating the braking effect, and allowing the slide to move rearward against spring pressure as a simple blowback. Walther calls their version of this system SoftCoil, and its benefits are a lighter recoil spring and easier to rack slide. The company claims a 30 percent recoil reduction.

Safety First

Safety features include a red cocking indicator protruding from the rear of the slide, a firing-pin blocking drop-safety



Note the tight barrel-to-slide fit. The lockup system prevents undue wear and tear on the slide opening even without a bushing.

preventing the release of the striker unless the trigger is pulled, a magazine safety disconnecting the trigger from the sear unless the magazine is fully inserted, a tiny loaded-chamber inspection window on top of the slide and a manual safety on the left rear of the frame. I found the manual safety perfectly placed and weighted for easy thumb manipulation on the draw with no need to alter my grip. It's swept down to disengage in the usual American fashion.

Clever Engineering

The CCP is essentially a right handers' gun since both slide release and manual safety are on the left side of the frame but the magazine release button can be flipped around for lefties. *Southpaws need not sink into abject depression.* The gun will shoot as well for them as it will for a righty, and they can disengage the slide-stop by pulling the slide back slightly and releasing it.

The CCP's polymer three-dot sights aren't designed to be snag free, but they are full size. The rear is adjustable for windage with a screwdriver. Elevation changes require selecting the best of three included front



Note the lollipop locking block and cocking indicator.



There are no traditional rails securing the slide to the frame on the CCP. Instead the piston system up front and lollipop locking block in the rear secure the side.



The CCP ships with three front sights allowing you to customize point of impact for your preferred ammo.

Frank found the CCP field strips easily and without tools.

If you're going to make cutouts in the magazine, they might as well be cartridge-shaped.

sights of differing heights and installing them with the included tiny Torx bit key.

The CCP is a high-quality pistol, entirely German made, with a polymer frame, aluminum slide, steel barrel and piston and steel inserts in both slide and frame to hold it all together. This doesn't seem like a pistol you're going to wear out easily. It has a steel insert in the rear of the slide comprising the bolt face, extractor and striker assembly housing and also engages a sliding, lollipop-shaped locking block, the latter mounted in a steel insert pinned into the rear of the polymer frame containing the sear, striker reset button, safety and ejector.

Instead of conventional, rectangular, frame-mounted slide rails, the CCP keeps slide and frame in align-

ment with a trio of cylindrical contact points, with two of the three (piston and "lollipop" locking block) having steel-to-steel contact. The barrel and piston hold the slide to the frame in the front. At the back of the frame, the lollipop-shaped, sliding locking block secures the rear of the slide to the frame. After a few hundred rounds there was minimal slide wear inside the barrel hole suggesting to me the SoftCoil piston was sharing the work of keeping the front of the slide correctly oriented, at least vertically, around the barrel. Since the slide has no barrel bushing, wear at this point was initially a concern for me.

The CCP comes with two stainless-steel 8-shot magazines with eight bullet-shaped view slots stamped through one side taking the guess work out of determining how much ammo you have left. At 6.4" long and 5.1" tall, this pistol is bigger than many of its .380 ACP peers, but the grip is only 1.19" at its thickest swell. Fully loaded, with one extra in the chamber, it weighs 1.5 lbs.

Continued on page 70

Frank appreciated the excellent ergonomics including palm swells and elegant cocking serrations, front and back.





KIMBER'S 1911

RAPIDE BLACK ICE

HANG ON TIGHT TO THIS 10MM EXPRESS TRAIN

Rapide seems to me a decidedly French word, conjuring images of croissants and retreat. But don't hold this against the new Kimber Rapide Black Ice 1911 family of pistols. These futuristic gems are designed to perform with attitude — and they do. You might guess the word “Rapide” carries a speed connotation. As an adjective, it means *fast* or *quick*. As a noun, it often refers to a European express train. Aston Martin launched a high-end sports car back in 2010 called the Rapide. Its 5.9-liter V12 engine moved the sexy beast *tres rapide*, up to a maximum speed of 188 mph. Not bad for a sports sedan.

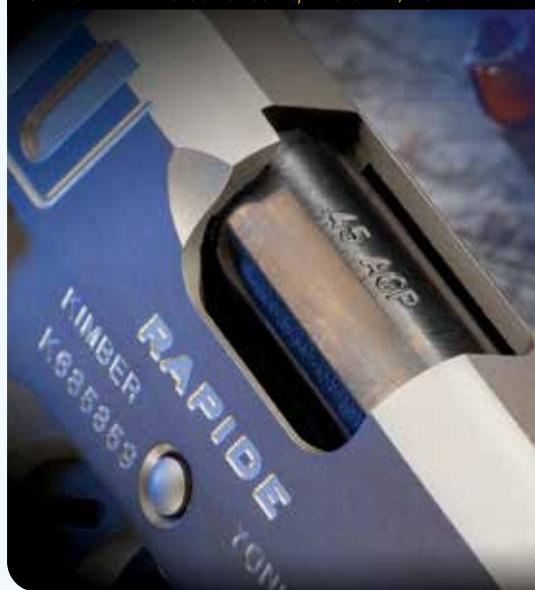
The Kimber Rapide, introduced last year, also draws its *speedy* name in part from design elements like slide-lightening cuts to reduce lock time and partly

from its intended goal of being a serious competition-ready pistol right out of the box. It's not cheap, but then again, the thinking is no “tweaking” is required to get this one in the winner's circle.

The *Black Ice* part of the name refers to the second generation of Rapide pistols with an eye-catching two-tone Kimpro finish. While cosmetics are always a matter of personal preference, I have to say I love the aesthetics here. Calling objects like guns *sexy* drives my adult daughter crazy, but if any gun can be considered sexy, it's this one. Think part brushed stainless coloring, with a darker hue, combined with a glass-like surface feel and appearance. Add black G-10 grips, a darker gray trigger finish, a shiny black DLC coated barrel, and this pistol is a looker. It's got an ultra-modern vibe to it for sure. More on this in a minute.

The Rapide Black Ice has become

TOM McHALE • PHOTOS: ROB JONES/IMAGESMITH, LLC





AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER®

KIMBER 1911 RAPIDE BLACK ICE





a small nuclear family, with three caliber variations: 9mm, .45 ACP and the 10mm model we're focusing on here. We've got some thoughts on the .45 ACP version too because Kimber kindly sent photographer Rob this version for some of the photos you see here.

Popsicle Sticks?

While trying to figure out how to describe the striking cuts, cocking serrations and grip texture, I had an inspiration. Popsicle sticks. Yeah, I know this is a gun magazine, but humor me for a hot second.

While the slide lightening cutouts are recessed and stepped rectangles, the cocking serrations are more like popsicle sticks cut in half — one end squared off and the other rounded in a perfect semicircle. Like the slide cutouts, these are also stepped. The rear cocking serrations have the rounded

ends facing down while in the front they face up. The result of all this recessed and ledge cutting is a texture offering a sure grip while not gouging your sides when carrying inside the waistband. And the Rapide has become a carry pistol in my world.

You'll also see an encore performance of the same pattern on the black grip panels — those same cutouts enter both front and rear of each panel and combine with interior rectangular cutouts and a dimpling pattern. The result is a nifty-looking design providing plenty of useful texture.

Frame and slide are both heavily melted in key spots for carry friendliness. The slide features a flat section on top that transitions via a wide-radius curve to the "slab" sides. There are few hard edges present on this pistol. The base of the slide has a hard angle but given its location, it doesn't interfere with hands or holster. You'll also find radiused cutouts entering the trigger guard on both sides with no favoritism shown to right- or left-handed shooters. While we're talking about the smoothing cuts, you'll notice most of the cut and recessed areas are finished with a lighter shade of the Kimpro Black Ice finish, creating the striking two-tone effect.

Mechanicals

The Rapide Black Ice is all 1911. It doesn't have a full-length guide rod, so some large percentage of you can cheer while another large percentage can wallow in misery. I've got both styles and quite frankly, I don't care one way or the other. If it runs reliably and shoots

small groups, I'm happy. I haven't yet needed to do a high-speed tactical field stripping, so a requirement, or not, for a disassembly tool isn't a big deal for me.

I should note both frame and slide are stainless steel, which explains the 40.7-oz. weight. That's according to our digital kitchen scale. Don't tell my wife. In this pistol, the heavier steel frame is a good thing given its 10mm chambering.

The trigger is outstanding, especially for carry or defensive applications. The cuts in the aluminum look spiffy but it's the performance that shines. The factory claims 4 to 5 lbs. pull weight. This one averaged 4¼ lbs. on the nose. The break is crisp and the reset is better — positive by feel and sound.

The grip safety has a generous memory bump and that's textured with cuts to provide a bit of non-slip surface area. With some 1911s I find an iffy engagement of the grip safety when riding my thumb on the safety lever. Not so with this one — whether you prefer a thumb-up or thumb-down hold you should have no worries about consistent grip safety function.

The magazine capacity of the 10mm model is eight rounds. You can fit nine without undue exertion, but things feel a little wonky and the magazine is hard to seat. Let's all color within the lines and stick with the manufacturer's instructions. While we're talking about capacity, note the 9mm carries 9+1 and the .45 ACP version also packs 8+1 like the 10mm. I appreciated the flared magazine well — you can't miss with fast reloads. I tested some of the optional magazine base pads with this setup, and when, not



if, I choose to keep this pistol, I'm going to outfit its collection of magazines with them. A standard flush magazine base is recessed when seated. A magwell notch allows you to tug it out if necessary, but the base pad additions will spoil you as they make seating easy and sit flush with the extended well. That's \$10 well spent.

The magazine release is accessible and well textured. A recessed area in the left grip panel makes it easy to reach and operate without changing your firing grip. The safety levers are equally positive. Even if you don't ride the safety with your thumb, you should have no problems with inadvertent safety re-engagement.

The Black Ice sights are from TruGlo — The TFX Pro models. The front sight consists of a green fiber optic tube completely surrounded and protected, barring a top cutout, by a steel housing. Behind the fiber tube is a Tritium vial shining through the fiber optic tube in low light conditions. Surrounding the visible end of the tube is an orange contrasting circle, aiding daylight visibility. You can't miss the front sight, day, night, or anywhere in between. The rear sight follows the same design pattern: Tritium-backed fiber optic tubes protected by an indestructible steel housing. One could hammer nails with these sights with no ill effects. I like the proportion of the front sight width and rear "U" notch. There's enough air

space visible on either side of the front sight to get a quick picture, but not so much as to negatively impact precision.

10mm Goodness

Col. Jeff Cooper was keen on a cartridge that would deliver a 200-gr. projectile at 1,000 fps. That works out to about 444 ft lbs. What he and all the rest of us eventually got was something with significantly more juice. Loads vary with bullet weight, but most standard 10mm offerings crank out from 500 to 700 ft lbs. For example, the DoubleTap Ammunition 200-gr. Controlled Expansion JHP leaves a 5" barrel at 1,250 fps — this translates to 694 ft lbs.

The cartridge has had a roller coaster history beginning with the unreliable, but later to become cool Bren Ten and subsequent introduction of the Colt Delta Elite in 10mm. In more recent years, the 10mm seems to be making somewhat of a comeback. I've grown fond of it myself.

As the 10mm in its true form delivers more kinetic energy than a .45 ACP, we shouldn't be surprised there's an associated recoil cost. But how much is this cost, really?

I've got a Springfield Armory 1911



TRP that sends a 230-gr. Speer Gold Dot bullet downrange at an average of 868.3 fps. This yields a hair over 385 ft lbs. of muzzle energy. Factoring in the 42-oz. weight of the pistol, we can calculate raw recoil energy of 5.28 ft lbs. The

Continued on page 75

The Ruger American Competition pistol is good for way more than winning matches. This reasonably priced top-tier combat handgun is a great defensive tool that's also a ton of fun on the range.



WILL DABBS, MD

THE RUGER AMERICAN

EQUIPPING YOUR INNER WARRIOR



Ruger Security-9



New American Competition



Ruger 57

The Ruger American Competition pistol is a whole lot of gun for the money. Building upon the time-tested Ruger American line, the new Competition is elongated, tuned and optimized for match applications. Featuring innovative ergonomics and industry-leading design, the Ruger American Competition is the match pistol equally at home defending your

family or killing a lazy Saturday afternoon at the range.

Origins

When we were kids, we called it “Playing Army.” To paraphrase the Terminator from the sequel to the movie of the same name, it is in our nature to destroy ourselves. No matter how hard we try to suppress, drown, whitewash, or castrate it, mankind’s primal urges draw us toward combat like moths to a flame.

As man-children this meant running about the neighborhood like maniacs shooting one another with make-believe firearms. War toys were both realistic and ubiquitous in my day, so mock combat had a decidedly edgy flare. Oddly, we still turned out just fine, thank you very much. Now into adulthood those same martial

The Ruger American Competition shoots plenty straight. This tidy 12-meter group was fired offhand from a simple rest.



urges manifest yet still.

Lest the *less durable* take umbrage, what do you think football is anyway? Big sweaty guys pounding one another along the gridiron is little more than thinly varnished small unit combat.



Three different interchangeable grip modules let you optimize for particular hand sizes. The Teflon-coated stainless steel 17-round magazine is the best in the business.

The Ruger American Competition pistol is a match-optimized variant of the classic 9mm Ruger American combat handgun. The same sterling attributes making the Competition such a range beast also facilitate other applications as well.

COMPETITION PISTOL

Give those same guys swords and you have the gladiatorial games. We're not ourselves so much removed from the ancient Romans.

In few places are these primal urges more vigorously exercised than in shooting competitions. Such pursuits come in a variety of flavors, but everything from IPSC to 3-Gun is designed to mimic the many splendored nuances of CQB (Close Quarters Battle). At the end of the day the principal adversary is the clock, and nothing gets bruised beyond a little pride, but that martial spark pervades everything, nonetheless.

The reason for all this philosophical pontification is to make a point (and you thought I was just vacuously rambling). Shooting for sport, competition, recreation and defense is big business these days. The flower of modern engineering prowess has focused its not inconsiderable talents on optimizing the tools we use for such stuff as this. These same attributes that make for a match-winning handgun also translate nicely into the *Real World*. Enter the Ruger American Competition pistol.

Tactical Attributes

The American Competition is a striker-fired, polymer-framed combat handgun sporting the same monotonously reliable trigger pull from first to last. Three interchangeable grip modules optimize the gun for your particular anatomy. Swapping out grip modules involves nothing more than twisting an



The Streamlight TLR-8 AG is a compact, rugged, cost-effective combination weaponlight and laser designator.



The mag catch is a bilateral push button and the slide release is perfectly replicated on both sides of the gun.

Allen screw a quarter turn.

The 5" stainless steel black nitride barrel sports a 1:16 twist. This bore geometry is optimized for inexpensive blasting bullets, though it also drives the serious social sort quite nicely as well. The slide is skeletonized for extra cool points. The front sight sports a fiber optic light tube, while the rear sight is serrated and easily adjustable for windage and elevation.

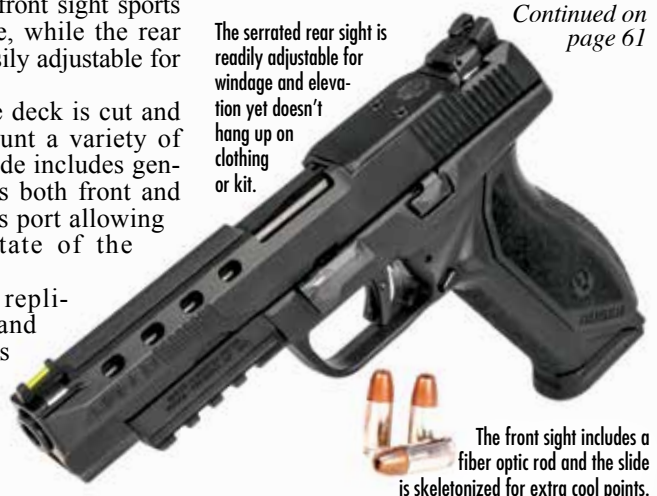
The top of the slide deck is cut and tapped to directly mount a variety of micro red dots. The slide includes generous gripping grooves both front and rear. There is an access port allowing you to assess the state of the chamber at a glance.

The slide stop is replicated on both sides, and the magazine catch is a legitimate bilateral push button. Take-down is a dream without tools, and the trigger need

not be squeezed to do so. This may seem a small thing, but I am personally acquainted with five sordid episodes wherein L.E. officers experienced negligent discharges because of stuff like this. Each was undeniably a training failure, but I personally like the fact the trigger is

The serrated rear sight is readily adjustable for windage and elevation yet doesn't hang up on clothing or kit.

Continued on page 61



The front sight includes a fiber optic rod and the slide is skeletonized for extra cool points.

WILSON COMBAT'S EDC

Unlike the original X9, the slide stop, magazine release button and slide safety are all shorter and/or thinner than those found on the original X9.

Photo:
Wilson
Combat



The Wilson Combat X-tac pattern graces the front and backstrap and sides of the grips and replace the rear slide serrations.

Photo: Wilson Combat

THE NE PLUS ULTRA OF DEFENSIVE HANDGUNS

GREG MOATS

X9S

If there's a more bandwagon-centric racket than the firearms industry, I'm not aware of it. There seems to be no saturation point to the AR-platform rifle, 1911 pistol or polymer-striker-fired handgun bandwagons. The R&D departments of the various gun companies have to possess the creativity of Kaitlyn Jenner's plastic surgeon to keep morphing *fresh spins on old faces*. Thanks in large part to the proliferation of concealed carry licensing, the subcompact, EDC (Everyday Carry) handgun market is the hottest trend in the industry.

The newest entry to wear the title of "subcompact" is the Wilson Combat EDC-X9S. Never much of a bandwagon jumper, the term "subcompact" is the only thing Wilson's X9S has in common with the remainder of the category. Feeling the world didn't really need another polymer-striker-fired pistol, Bill took the genre in a direction Wilson Combat does best — build custom 1911's.

Designed For Reliability

Wilson and his team spent a couple of years engineering a 9mm 1911-



Author and trainer Dave Spaulding demonstrating the negligible recoil of the X9S.



Loss of removable grip panels shaved thickness from this slim carry pistol.
Photo: Wilson Combat

type handgun that would avoid the traditional vexations caused by the incompatibility of the platform and the cartridge. The 1911 handgun was designed around the .45 ACP cartridge, hence the magazine and mag well are dimensionally too long for optimum feeding performance with the shorter 9mm cartridge. Without either dimpling the front or adding a spacer at the back of the magazine, the 9mm cartridge has a *tendency to nose-dive* when the slide attempts to feed it into the chamber.

Wilson and his team therefore started the original EDC X9 gambit by designing a proper-sized magazine and then building a gun around it. The result is a pistol shorter front to back and allows an almost straight-into-the-chamber feeding angle. This eases the emphasis traditionally placed on precision in the angle and smoothness of the barrel ramp, a perpetual issue with the 1911 platform, especially when chambered for 9mm.

The original X9 design goal was to create a reliable, high-capacity 9mm utility gun while maintaining the great trigger and superb accuracy provided by the original 1911 design. The X9 deviates from Browning's design — the gun has no grip safety, has an exterior extractor and a fluted, bushing-less bull barrel. Eliminating the bushing required altering the spring cap mechanism, but these alterations had been perfected in other models years ago.

According to Bill Wilson, fluting the barrel looks good but also aids in functioning when the gun gets dirty. The *slide is tri-topped* (referred by some as “coffin-cut”) with the top

Continued on page 66



The standard 10-round magazine, while ideal for deep-concealment carry (particularly in an AIWB holster) requires those with “meaty” hands to curl the little finger under the grip.



The fluted, bushingless barrel fits flush with the front of the slide.
Photo: Wilson Combat



The rear sight on the X9S is a comparatively low-profile fixed sight with a “U” notch nicely matching the red-pipe, fiber optic front sight.
Photo: Wilson Combat

SPARTAN RISING!

PAT COVERT

SPARTAN BLADES POISED TO TAKE NEW TERRITORY

There's an old adage in the business world that states "If you're not going forward, you're going backwards." If so, Spartan Blades just took a massive leap ahead. Formed in 2008 in the Sandhills of North Carolina near Fort Bragg, Spartan Blades burst onto the cutlery scene under the ownership of two former Spec Ops veterans, Mark Carey and Curtis Iovito. With their solid reputation behind them, Spartan Blades quickly carved out a nice-sized chunk of the high-end tactical market, garnering numerous industry awards along the way. Recently all this changed in a maneuver that will expose the company to a customer base Mark and Curtis never dreamed of when cutlery giant KA-BAR Knives entered the scene.

"I met John Stitt, President of KA-BAR for the first time at the 2014 International Blade Show in Atlanta," Curtis explains. "In 2016 we worked together on a short run of custom Ek Daggers. We made 400 of them; 200 for



Pallas Folder

KA-BAR and 200 for Spartan Blades, to be sold as a Limited-Edition. Because the project went so well and because we enjoyed working with each other, a friendly relationship developed. This

Harsey
Dagger



Large Damysus

Small Alala

led to talk of another project and the possibility of KA-BAR making some knives designed by Spartan.”

Then the plot thickened. “During this process Mark and I visited KA-BAR in Olean, New York to meet the folks there and tour both the KA-BAR and CUTCO facilities,” Iovito continues. “During the trip we watched the KA-BAR Hockey team and spent some time with the KA-BAR families. Several months later, I traveled up to Olean again along with our machinist/programmer to assist with some CNC tooling. During this trip, I jokingly said to John Stitt, ‘Ever think of buying a small knife company in North Carolina?’ We both laughed and went back to work.” The seed, however, had been planted.

Exploring Fertile Soil

“A few months later, John called our shop and asked if we had given any serious thought to selling Spartan Blades,” Curtis recounts. “We were a little surprised but explained we had always intended to sell someday but we were planning to do this after a little more growth. He suggested giving it some thought, and we did.”

“Both Mark and I had already retired once from the Army and weren’t getting any younger. We asked ourselves what we wanted to happen to the company after we were gone. We both agreed it would be nice to see the company live long past us and thrive. We knew how important family and tradition was to KA-BAR/CUTCO and truly liked all the folks there. We simply

thought they were the best match for Spartan Blades due to common ethics and military connections. After several months of due diligence, planning and creating courses of action, we called in lawyers to make it more pleasurable! Yes, I’m being facetious. We formed a new corporation called Pineland Cutlery, Inc., which now does business as Spartan Blades.”

The Pineland Strategy

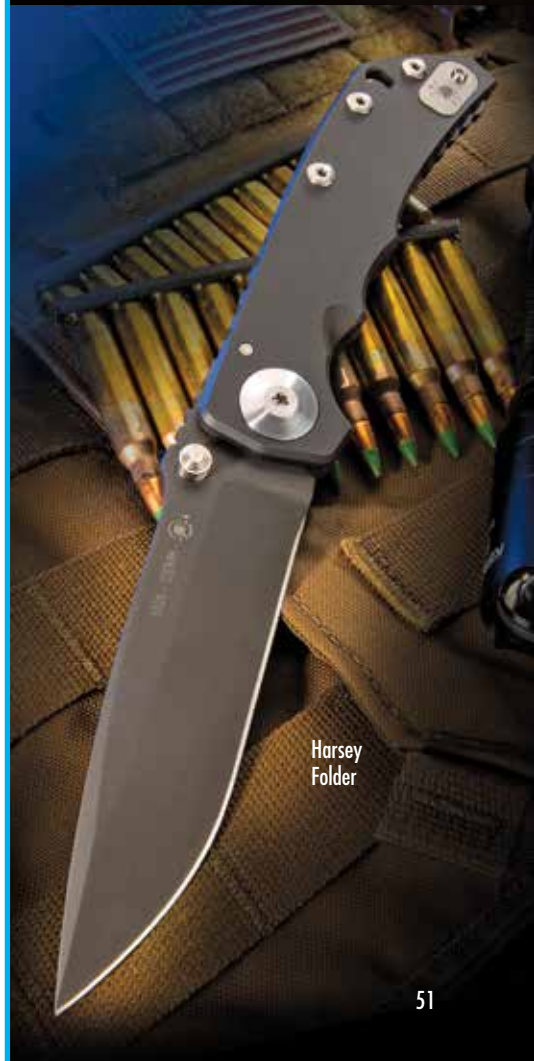
In essence, forming Pineland Cutlery gave Spartan Blades the opportunity to expand many times over. KA-BAR Marketing Director Joe Bradley notes, “We got to know Curtis and Mark on a professional and personal level and this was really the catalyst for what would become Pineland. The more time we spent around Curtis and Mark, the more we liked them. KA-BAR is very much a relationship-based business and there are few people we have encountered with the work ethic, attitude, trustworthiness and humor Mark and Curtis have. Their products are a reflection of them — top shelf.” Through much discussion the new partners came up with a strategy that not only carries on the Spartan Blades name, but introduces them to a broad, devoted user base KA-BAR has developed for over 100 years.

The Pineland strategy is to offer three distinct grades: Gold, Silver and Bronze. “This is our effort to bring Spartan Blades to a variety of people by giving them price options,” states Iovito. “For over a decade we have

Continued on page 65



Difensa



Harsey Folder



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HANDGUN OF THE MONTH



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SPORT
PACKAGE**

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE NOVEMBER 30, 2020 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. Winners must respond within 30 days of receiving notification or an alternate winner will be selected. 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 *Handgun 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. **UNABLE TO ENTER ONLINE?**

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SCAN TO ENTER



PLUS

STREAMLIGHT TLR-9



SPARTAN HARSEY DAGGER



SAR USA by Sarsilmaz proudly introduces the SAR 9 Sport Semi-Automatic Pistol. And we at *American Handgunner* are delighted to have it on our giveaway page. Built on the same platform as the legendary SAR 9, the SAR 9 Sport is possibly the most rigorously tested pistol and is proudly carried by NATO and elite forces around the world. The striker-fired pistol comes standard with a slightly longer forged steel slide with cooling ports and a lightweight polymer frame. It offers three back straps to customize fit and a safety trigger that's smoother than a double action revolver's. The SAR 9 Sport points naturally and is a pleasure to shoot.

Streamlight's TLR-9 is packaged as the TLR-9 FLEX. It comes with a High switch mounted on the light, plus an included Low switch. With 1,000 lumens of light reaching a distance of 200 meters, the 3.87"-long TLR-9 fits a range of full-frame handguns, including the SAR 9 Sport. If you happen to win this giveaway, all you have to do is attach the light to the SAR 9 Sport's accessory rail. Weighing 4.26 oz., this water resistant gun light has a run time of 1.5 hours with a beam distance of 200 meters.

The *Harsey Dagger* from Spartan Bladees is based on knife designer William W. Harsey, Jr.'s experience working in the Special Operations Forces. He developed the epitome of a combat dagger — one with a timeless design made of premium U.S. materials. The Harsey Dagger's 6" blade is premium CPM S35V with a 58-60 HRC; handle is 3D contoured canvas Micarta. You can read more about Spartan Blades on pp. 50-51 of this magazine.

Don't just imagine owning this giveaway package! Join so you can have the chance to win. Go to your computer and type www.americanhandgunner.com/giveaways or take out a stamp and mail a postcard! —Jazz Jimenez

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SPARTAN HARSEY DAGGER

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GUNNYSACK

NORMA MHP SELF-DEFENSE AMMO

Norma's MHP (Monolithic Hollow Point) features a solid-copper bullet optimized for personal defensive use. The twist on this one is a design for massive expansion within a large velocity range. Use it in compact or full-size pistols and it'll work.

The single-material bullet design virtually guarantees the projectile will remain intact and not fragment. Being all copper, the bullet weight is light-for-caliber at 108 grains, so maintaining structural integrity is important. The lightweight bullet and moderate velocity yields a hidden benefit: *low recoil*. It's noticeably milder than standard 9mm ammo.

MHP is also *stunningly accurate*, and I don't say this lightly. Using a scoped Springfield Armory XD-M Elite Tactical, it delivered an average five-shot, 25-yard group size of just 1.4" over multiple strings. For more info: www.norma-ammunition.com



REAL AMERICAN TOMAHAWKS

Chop, build, improvise, break, escape, cut, trim, defend, improvise, throw. The

list is near endless of the things you can do with a proper tomahawk. Founded and run by "a group of incredibly skilled outdoorsmen capable of surviving for years with nothing more than their Tomahawk and a blade of grass," the company takes inspiration from its flagship product from Peter LaGana, descendant of an Iroquois brave. LaGana demonstrated his 1-lb. wonder to Marine officials back in 1968 for potential use in Vietnam. While it didn't become standard equipment, some 700 troops bought their own to use over there.

With a head drop-forged from 1060 carbon steel and choice of Dupont Nylon 66 textured or Tennessee flamed and lacquered wood for the handle, it's a tool that'll last through tough use. I know this from experience. After many "aggressive" throws they're still intact. You can even choose one in olive drab green for the authentic 1968 look.

Two bits on the American Tomahawk website stand out: *Not made in China* and *Makes owner cooler than their friends*. The former rings true as these fine tools are crafted in Chattanooga, Tenn., and we can certainly agree with the latter. For more info: www.americanatomahawk.com



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GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



GUNS VS. NO GUNS

IT WAS NEVER REALLY ABOUT GUN "CONTROL"

Are you old enough to remember times before the great gun debate? Americans understood guns, kids wore six-shooters, you bought caps in candy stores (we had candy stores back then). People took guns for granted and political parties didn't battle over endless gun-control blather. It was cops and robbers back then, remember?

Today, the D and R parties (Democrats and Republicans) are in a constant struggle over so-called "gun control," and surprisingly, the C party (Communists) are not even in the picture, though they really are — at least in communist China, and Russia, Cuba, Venezuela and across South America, Africa and scattered around the globe. In fact, the Cs, way hidden in so-called "news," can't remain so hidden any longer, because they've taken over our prescription drugs (this you know because of the Wuhan plague,) our lost manufacturing base, and ... wait for it ... the sad fact *1.2 billion Chinese communist subjects* (they're not citizens) are gunless and under threat of execution from their armed Chicom masters.

It's not about guns vs. gun control any longer, as American "news" sources frame it. It's about guns vs. no guns, as the C party runs it. The C party along with the D party are philosophically allied here. You'd see this truth on nightly broadcasts if they were newsworthy. Some "officials" are in both parties at the same time. Look closely to see the dots connect.

The "news" actually presents it, almost despite themselves, but with so much window dressing it's admittedly hard to see. One candidate for president (for president!) ran as a "democratic socialist" with policies and philosophies straight out of Stalinist Russia and Karl Marx. But we don't even have to go there. Just look at the official platform of the D party supporting him, cheering him on wildly. Look at the policies of the D party reflected explicitly in writing in the platform they stand for in the gun bill they're proposing to enforce against us. No shame, no secret, it's there on the government server (HR 5717). What? The so-called "news" media isn't screaming about it every night?

Guns are okay as long as they don't work. I know this sounds absurd and impossible, but there it is. Again. It's the exact policy the D party had in our nation's capital until the famous Heller case at the U.S. Supreme Court overturned it in 2008 — by a single vote. You could have a gun, at home only, if you could get one (nearly impossible in practicality), as long as it was unloaded and locked up. Mr. Heller's private gun was okay (he was a

Continued on page 64

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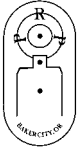
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SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 11

My first home was in a tough neighborhood and I quickly found out about the frequent robberies, home invasions and drug deals. I was single with no kids, so I started buying and placing guns in every room. I kept a S&W 396 stashed between towels in the bathroom.

One day while toweling off after a shower, I heard footsteps on the back steps. I opened the bathroom door to see the teeth of a pry bar sink past the back door jamb. The 396 was in my hand in an instant. As the low life was leaning back on the pry bar, I knocked on the glass with the big .44 muzzle. The scumbag's eyes grew big as saucers. He pivoted and jumped all six steps of the deck, vanishing into the night. I still have his pry bar as a war trophy. The .44 special saved both of our lives and has a special place in my heart.

Ryan Guzek
Via Email

Stainless Upgrades

Those of us who conceal carry often pocket carry with a smaller handgun in warmer weather. The problem in warmer weather is twofold: heat and humidity. Heat and humidity produce sweat which attacks handguns. Most pocket guns are polymer and/or stainless steel for the most part. I haven't found a company yet that uses stainless parts for the safety, magazine release, slide lock and takedown levers. The purpose of the stainless/polymer combination is for weight reduction and durability. But mechanical items like guns are only as strong as their weakest link. I check my firearms daily to make sure these small parts aren't rusting away in my pocket. Having to apply rust preventative and then stuff them back in my pocket isn't something I should have to do. Charge us a little more and make these parts stainless also — please.

Jeff McNelis
Via email

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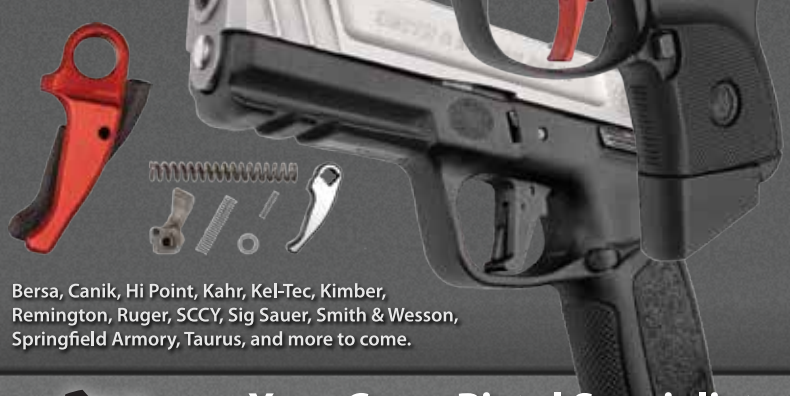
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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 79

The other, directly behind Larry in the rear passenger seat, has the decidedly loaded revolver he's kept pointed at Larry's head. The bandits have the case between them containing two CZ 9mms and mags and ammo. At the wheel, he can't see them both at the same time in the rear-view mirror. If he conspicuously turns around to look at them, it will tip them off and put them on alert.

Either of them will be able to clearly see if he reaches for the Walther, so the console gun is out. He might be able to slip one of the pistols out of the door pocket with his non-dominant left hand but shooting backward over his shoulder will be awkward and difficult, and he'll be unlikely to be able to neutralize both before one of them can kill him. The logical strategy still seems to be, "*Bide your time.*"

At The ATM

The robbers ask him how much money he has in his ATM card account. Larry answers truthfully, "About \$12,000." They yell at him, "You're lying! You live in that big house! You've got to have more money!"

They pull up to the ATM. The security camera will be able to identify only Larry. The masked men in the back seat are largely shielded by the truck's tinted windows; perhaps they had this in mind when they chose to seat themselves where they did. Larry believes he can only withdraw a thousand dollars per day and tells them so. The refrain comes again, "You're lyin'! We're gonna shoot ya! We want it all!" Larry answers as calmly as he can, "We can't get it all." They tell him to try for \$1,500.

It takes Larry a while to punch in the numbers. The machine won't give him \$1,500. He tries for \$500, gets it, then gets another \$500. He tries a third time but hits the wrong buttons, and the machine only gives him \$20. Apparently fixated on the stated amount, the robber with the revolver tells him, "Get \$480!" He does. They're satisfied. They tell him to drive.

As the truck is rolling, the larger criminal tells him, "Okay, we're gonna take your truck. Go to the woods behind your house ... We're going back to your house and get your wife." He adds, "*We're gonna put you in the trunk.*" Larry has already complied with their order to give him the opening code to their gate, and he knows he has had to leave the house unlocked.

As a medical doctor Larry Goldstein has spent his career diagnosing. The diagnosis of this particular problem is excruciatingly clear. Drive to the

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woods. Go to the house and get your wife. We're gonna put you in the trunk of a pickup truck that has no trunk.

He realizes they're going to murder him, go back to the house, and probably murder his unsuspecting wife.

The stakes of the game have just gone up and Larry Goldstein knows there is only one card left to play.

Steering with his right hand, he unobtrusively reaches down with his left, lifts the GLOCK 19 from the door pocket, and surreptitiously slips it under his left thigh.

Last Resort

They reach a spot in the woods behind Larry's house. They order him to stop. He does so. They order him to get out of the car.

As he opens the driver's door, Larry lifts his left thigh enough to discreetly pick up the GLOCK with his right hand. As he alights on the ground, the man with the revolver opens the door behind Larry's and prepares to step out, as his accomplice comes out of the right rear door.

Larry Goldstein channels his five years of USPSA, sweeps the 9mm up rapidly into a two-handed stance, and opens fire.

He's shooting as fast as he can. He can see the gunman starting to fall backward, can see a window on the right side of the car shatter as one of his bullets passes through his antagonist and strikes the glass. The robber falls backward on the rear seat, his gun still in a hand that has fallen limply down.

Larry turns toward the second threat. The other man is running away. Larry fires three shots at him, from about 30 yards. The masked man disappears from view.

Larry turns his attention to the downed gunman. He sees the revolver is still in his hand, snatches it away, and puts it out of the man's reach. He grabs the blood-soaked gunman and pulls his body out of the car. The experienced MD knows a dead man when he sees one. The gunman has been hit twice in the abdomen, twice in the chest and once in the head.

The remaining thug is running in the direction of the Goldstein home. All Larry can think of is his wife's safety. He jumps behind the wheel of his pickup and goes after him.

In moments, Larry has eyes on him again. The perpetrator is getting into a tan SUV, apparently the getaway car, he has parked near the church close to Larry's home. He starts it and begins to drive away. Larry aims his G19 and fires three rounds at the vehicle. It disappears from his view. It's not heading toward his house; he lets it go.

They've taken his iPhone. Larry Goldstein drives his truck to the nearest house, knocks on the door, and asks

the lady who answers the door to call police. She hands him a phone. He first calls his wife, telling her to lock the doors. Then he calls 9-1-1 and gives a brief description of what has happened.

The first act of the deadly play is over. The second now begins.

Immediate Aftermath

The scene not being exactly downtown, it took police 20 minutes to arrive. When he saw them coming, Dr. Goldstein unloaded the GLOCK, set it in the truck and stepped away from it. Patrol officers and detectives alike were professional and understanding.

A crowd had formed. Having called his wife to reassure her, Larry phoned a friend he was supposed to pick up to go to the match with him. The friend called a mutual friend, an attorney, to meet them at police headquarters. One of the officers drove him there — in the front seat of the patrol car, uncuffed. With legal counsel by his side, Larry told detectives what had happened. At one point the chief of police arrived. "How are you doing?" he asked Larry. "Not very good," the doctor replied. "Don't worry, you're going to be all right," the chief said.

The chief had told him no lie.

Long Term Aftermath

Larry was never arrested, never sued, and *never had to pay a penny in legal fees*. His lawyer friend refused to bill him. He got his guns back in about a week. The escaped suspect was captured within a few days. He had used his personal vehicle as a getaway car and had taken it to an auto body shop to repair the bullet holes and shattered window caused by Larry's gunfire. "I thought he'd be charged with felony murder," Larry told *American Handgunner* later, "but the charges were kidnapping, armed robbery, and home invasion." Legal proceedings dragged on, as they often do. "In December 2018," says Larry, "he was convicted on all counts. *His sentence added up to about 80 years. He'll be eligible for parole in 40.*"

Dr. Goldstein got a new truck out of the deal. His had become evidence, necessarily stored with the windows up in an impound lot in Mississippi heat. The rear cabin was soaked with blood. Blood is tissue. Tissue rots. The insurance adjuster opened the door, gagged at the stench, and blurted, "It's totaled."

Needless to say, the incident left an emotional mark. "The next morning when I woke up, it really dawned on me what could have happened, and I lost it," he remembers. "I was a basket case for a while. Every time I thought about the incident, it really upset me. Later, I went to the family burial plot, and was overwhelmed at how close I had come to joining them."



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PATENT PENDING



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One of the first things he did when he got home was to put a .45 caliber GLOCK 30 where he could reach it immediately. Was the dead man a gang-banger, with buddies who would seek revenge? He didn't know, but he had to consider the possibility and provide for it. The hypervigilance remained for quite a while, and never entirely went away, even though no reprisals materialized.

"I went to a psychologist, and studied up on post-traumatic stress disorder," Larry comments. "I lost appetite. I had trouble sleeping. I did have a few dreams related to the incident." Before long, he and his wife sold the house and moved. Friends and family were extremely supportive. So, he remembers, were the police and the prosecutor's office.

A competitive shooter, Larry had never felt a need to take a defense-oriented class. This changed. His 25-minute ordeal sent him on a long odyssey of training, all the way to instructorship; in fact, he and I met when he took my MAG-40 class at the superb Boondocks training facility in Mississippi. He has found sharing with others the lessons of what he went through to be therapeutic.

Lessons

The doctor's short-term hypervigilance settled into simply ... vigilance. Larry feels *the biggest lesson he learned was the importance of being alert and aware and avoiding complacency*. He now carries a gun on his person almost all of his waking hours and is seldom far from one. "I don't step out to pick up my newspaper or take out the trash without a gun on," he says adamantly.

If he had tried to fight earlier than he did, when the odds against him were all but hopeless, he would probably have been murdered and very likely his wife would have been, too. Larry was wise to give them reasons to keep him alive (getting money from the ATM on a weekend), to lull them into complacency with his compliance, and yet be ready to do what had to be done when the moment came.

He feels his competition experience definitely helped him win the fight with the men who were almost certainly going to murder him. When the time came to shoot, he performed on auto pilot: two-handed, eye level, hits sufficiently fast, accurate and voluminous to keep a deadly opponent from pulling the trigger of the revolver in his hand. Larry had been shooting USPSA for five years when the incident took place. He has continued competition to this day.

He's glad he reached for the GLOCK instead of the seven- or eight-shot .380s also within reach. The G19 contained

a GLOCK 17 magazine, for a total of eighteen 9mm rounds including the one in the chamber. It still had ammo on board after his three volleys of gunfire. The cartridges were match rounds, mild 147-gr. round nose FMJ handloads. His defense guns have modern defensive ammo in them today.

When Larry tells his story, one of the first questions he gets is "Didn't you get in trouble for shooting at the fleeing felon?" The answer is, he didn't, and this bears some explanation. The man he shot at had committed, not just a felony, but a "heinous felony against the person": kidnapping. They had given him every reason to believe they intended to murder him. They'd explicitly stated they were next going to get his wife, who was sleeping in an unlocked house while the felon had the combination to the security gate. Larry was without communications, and no other reasonable means of capture seemed feasible. He could not identify the suspect — the only description he could give was a masked African-American man of average size — and if he was not stopped he was likely to remain at large indefinitely.

Finally, the cornerstone of the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Garner v. Tennessee* was even police should only use deadly force on fleeing felons if their continued freedom constituted a clear and present danger to innocent human life. Larry had ample reason to consider this man armed and extremely dangerous. Remember, the thugs had told him they were going back to his house where they all knew Mrs. Goldstein was. While *Garner* was a civil case and involved police, it remains the defining statement on the mood of our highest court on the use of deadly force on fleeing felons. It is why I think, in this particular set of circumstances, Larry's actions would have been defensible in court ... and it's probably why the investigating officers and the prosecutors had no problem with Larry's final shots. Those last three shots, remember, were important factors in the ultimate capture of the surviving thug.

A last important lesson is it's BS to think "I live in a nice neighborhood, so I don't need to keep a gun at hand." *Au contraire*: Larry lived in a fine home in a very nice neighborhood and this was one reason he was targeted! We can't overlook how many times they told him a guy with a house as big as his should have lots of money on hand. The nice neighborhoods are where the best stuff is to steal.

We at *American Handgunner* thank Dr. Larry Goldstein for sharing the lessons of his deadly encounter with our readers.



RUGER COMP

Continued from page 47

not part of the disassembly process.

The Teflon-coated stainless steel 17-round magazine is as splendid as mankind can contrive, and the gun comes with two. There is a scant taper at the base of the grip to assist with removal in the unlikely circumstance a mag gets sticky. The grip is aggressively textured for proper purchase even when sweaty, rushed, or *terrified*. The dust cover is railed for accessories.

Light Speed

I'm a Streamlight apostle. Those guys make superb gear at reasonable prices. Their new TLR-8 AG low-profile rail-mounted light is tiny yet offers a blistering 500-lumen white light along with a dazzling green laser designator.

The unit comes with two separate tail caps, each with matching switches both left and right. Choosing a switch unit lets you customize the accessibility to best suit your anatomy. Low-profile geometry won't snag on clothes or kit, and the device is powered by a single CR123 battery. It's also cheaper than products of comparable quality elsewhere.

How Does She Run?

The trigger is fairly typical for a striker-fired handgun. This isn't a tuned single-action 1911, but the trigger is delightful for its intended applications. The pre-tensioned striker system offers manly authority in the event of a recalcitrant primer yet retains a pleasant personality.

There is something different about the way this gun cycles that's tough to articulate in words. Ruger claims the barrel cam geometry is designed to distribute recoil forces over a longer period to reduce felt recoil. I can't really get my head around that. However, this is indeed one of the most pleasant 9mm pistols I have ever run. The gun just rocks back on recoil without the sort of snap you might expect on a lesser pistol. This placid comportment makes for smoother, faster, more accurate follow-up shots. I really was impressed.

The slide locks back with authority on the last shot fired, and magazines just jet out of the grip when the mag catch is stroked. There is no grittiness or undue resistance to the slide release, so tactical reloads go as quickly as your dexterity might allow. I found the gun to shoot instinctively and *run like a lizard across hot asphalt*.

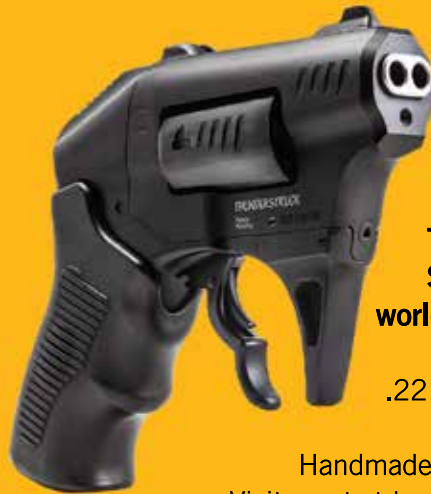
What's It Good For?

I don't myself shoot in competitive pistol matches. As a nominally professional gun writer, I have a certain reputation to maintain. Were I to get smoked

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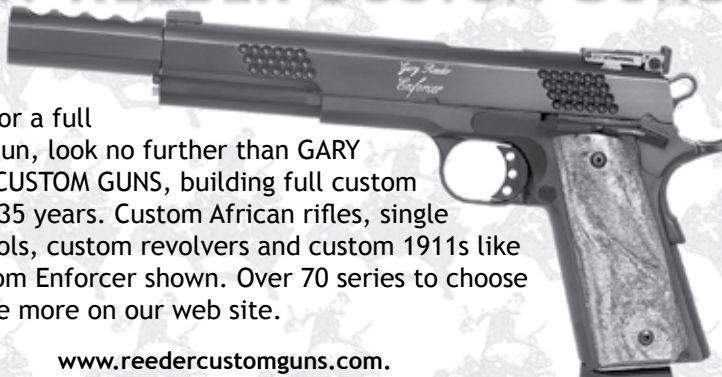
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by some souped-up teenager juiced on *Call of Duty* and *Red Bull*, I might never emotionally recover. However, I do carry a gun whenever I am not asleep or in the shower, shoot quite a lot and have had need of one for real on a couple of occasions.

This gun is unnaturally smooth and pleasant to run. It is no heavier than any other comparable plastic pistol and could be carried concealed if you are big-boned and open-minded. Where this gun really shines, however, is trigger time.

Everything about the Ruger American Competition is designed for practicality. The gun ran flawlessly with

everything I fed it and remained placid and comfortable throughout. Just because it has Competition in the name doesn't mean that's its sole purview.

The same attributes making this a match-winning pistol also make it a superb defensive tool or recreational plinker. Pack the thing underneath loose clothing and you are postured to punch the grommets out of a mugger's hoodie should the need arise. With an MSRP of \$597 and a street price even lower, I was smitten.



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MAKING A TANKER

Continued from page 35

insert that my eyes pick up quickly for fast target acquisition.

The rear-sight blade was upgraded to one with a narrower notch and heavier painted white outline, making sight-alignment picture perfect. Years ago, *Ken's mom hand painted the sight-blades* while watching TV at night. What a Mag-na-port memory. I'm honored to have one on my gun!

EDM Maestro!

Ken outdoes himself with his EDM work. Carbon pieces are machined into shape for transfer to the metal surface. Electrical current machines the metal away in a burr-free process, not harming the finish up to the edge work. Ken machines three slots in the rib, giving my gun a Colt Python, King Custom look, and machines five diamonds into the trigger-guard.

The hammer and trigger are highly polished and jeweled and the hammer spur trimmed back, making it more concealment friendly. The cylinder release, ejector rod, trigger pin, crane pin and rear sight pin are polished and deep blued for a tasteful contrast to the matte blue finish.

The barrel porting itself is responsible for reduced recoil and muzzle flip. Ken also EDM'd "Mag-na-port Custom" into the barrel for that custom handgun marque. If you've got a gun ready for the Mag-na-port treatment, Ken states they're running 7-10 days for simple porting. Same day porting can be done by appointment. Of course, additional custom work will take longer.

Round-Butt Concealment

Altamont's "baby Roper's" look perfect on the 5" Lipsey's Exclusive, but the 3" Tanker screams for round-butting. Searching numerous sources was futile. I wondered, "How hard could it be? The inside recess for the grip-frame leaves plenty of wood to trim away." A few pencil marks, a little cutting, filing and sanding was all it took. I think they came out pretty good for a DIY job!

Final Word

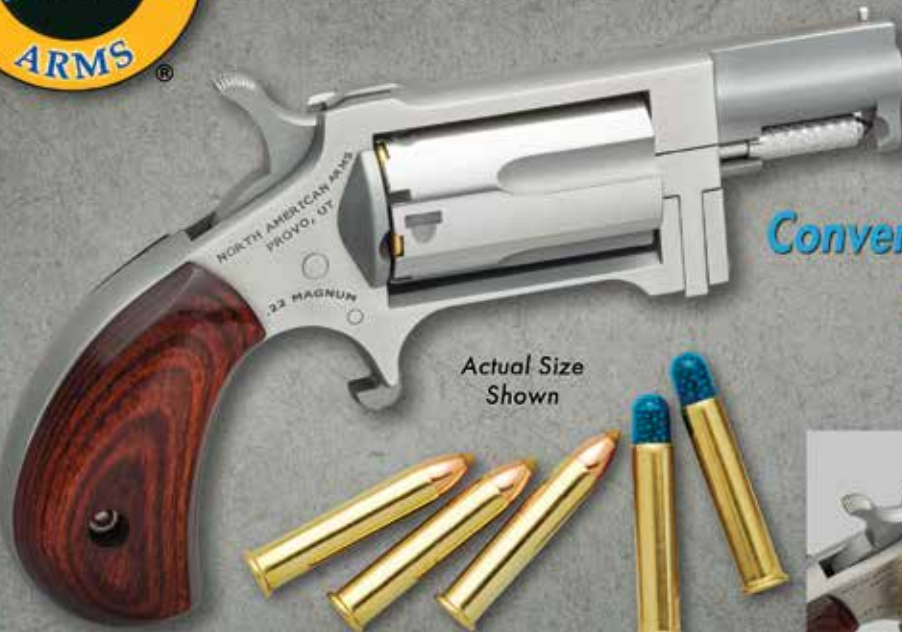
Shooting the 3" Tanker is bliss with the polished trigger and action job. The DA pull is 7 lbs. 8 oz. and the SA measures 2 lbs. even. Wow! This chopped-down shorty is easy to carry and conceal while being very accurate in the potent .44 Special. I'll be carrying the Black Hills HoneyBadger load for self-defense and the "Skeeter" load for field work in my Barranti Leather CCR shuck.





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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 55

federal security guard) while inoperable. If he was criminally attacked at home, while the attack was on, he could unlock and load it (a Harrington & Richardson nine-shot .22 caliber revolver). Making it functional otherwise was criminal. I'm not making this up. It's why we won the case. By one vote.

The D party has re-created the bill with one change. If it passes, it covers the entire nation, not just the District of Columbia. Don't take my word for it. Read HR 5717. Don't wait for reporters to read it to you. They won't. They never do. Folks, it's guns vs. no guns, just like the Communists. Just read the table of contents — you'll freak out. Democrats don't even want accountability — the plan is to assign lockups to bureaucrats you don't vote for, can't name and can't see. Hoplophobic "consumer products safety experts," not constitutionally guaranteed elected property guardians will do the dirty work.

"News" media keeps parroting they just want to ban what they call "assault rifles." *The written bill proposes banning virtually all guns with a magazine and a grip.* Yes, any "characteristic that can function as a grip." How did reporters miss this? How did you? You know it's how Communists work.

It's the guns-versus-no-guns struggle. You should know the Communist Party of America and the Socialist Party of America (almost the same thing except for minor policy differences and battles among leadership) hold regular meetings, in public, with modest fanfare. You should also know members of the D party give speeches there, attend the meetings, share friends and the media doesn't play this up for obvious reasons. Well, you do know Bernie is proud of it, thinks communist Cuba is a cool place (media touched on that), and took his honeymoon in communist Russia. I did say look, and the dots connect.

Now the D party wants to change how we vote — one man 10 votes — in Congress by proxy, and publicly by mail. Blame it on the communist propagated Wuhan Flu. Remember Comrade Stalin's playbook: It doesn't matter who votes, it matters who counts votes. You should definitely vote because an overwhelming vote is harder to hide. And do cling to your guns and Bibles. 

Alan Korwin's website features plain-English books on state and federal gun laws for the public, and more common sense like you just read. He invites you to write to him or see his work at GunLaws.com, where you can get books and DVDs that help keep you safe.



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SPARTA RISING!

Continued from page 51

made what are considered to be some of the best knives on the market — but often at a price point that was out of reach for many. The Silver and Bronze line is our effort to bring quality knives to the price conscious consumer. We feel we can do this by giving our customers options and being honest with them about how they are made. The Gold line will be made in our North Carolina shop only using American-made materials. The Silver line will be made in New York by KA-BAR, and finally our Bronze line will be made in Taiwan. Spartan Blades Gold Grade knives will continue to use top-of-the-line proprietary steels. We have always used premium steels. Currently we are using CPM S35VN and have begun transitioning to CPM S45VN for our Gold line, which is the latest quality steel from Crucible Steel out of New York.”

“KA-BAR brings their expertise of using more affordable steel to the Silver Grade knives,” Bradley adds. “KA-BAR is known for using 1095 Cro-Van, a great value steel. Pineland allows our companies to perfect what we do best and complement one another.” Silver Grade

users will get the benefit of Spartan’s innovative designs in a proven, hard use steel that won’t bust their budgets. Bronze Grade knives will be for entry level knife buyers, who typically buy offshore products, to get their feet wet, but often move up to higher grade cutlery as their interest in knives intensifies.

Rising To The Task

Longtime Spartan Blades devotees have no fear, Mark and Curtis will still be at the helm of Spartan Blades/Pineland Cutlery with Carey serving as President of Plans and Operations and Iovito as President of Product Development & Marketing. “Expect to see several new folders this year, two in the Gold line and three in the Bronze with designs from William W. Harsey, Jr. and Les George,” Curtis relates. The Gold and Silver grades have already been incorporated in the Pineland Cutlery line and the Bronze line should be fully incorporated by the time you read this.

Sparta is definitely rising and with all the options knife users now have we think you’ll be seeing the Spartan Blades logo on a heck of a lot more knives. Rise and shine!

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EDC X9S

Continued from page 49

flat surface being attractively serrated longitudinally. Grip panels are held in place by a removable backstrap, allowing for the elimination of grip screws and bushings resulting in a thinner grip. Removal of the backstrap allows easier access to most of the internal parts, a feature Bill admired on the Browning BDM handgun.

Wilson used his X-tac pattern on the front and backstrap of the frame and for both front and rear slide serrations. The X-tac pattern is as aggressive as fine checkering, not as abrasive as sharp baseball cuts and looks much better than rough stippling; it may be the best all-around surface treatment for a utility handgun.

They further modified the 1911 design by shortening the frame rails resulting in less bearing surface and enhancing reliability particularly in cold weather. A major engineering alteration is the elimination of the traditional locking lugs on the barrels. Similar to a GLOCK, the front of the barrel hood locks directly into the front of the ejection port. According to Bill, this had a dramatic effect on reliability without sacrificing accuracy.

The marketplace responded well to the X9's reliability, accuracy and great trigger. The X9's premier virtue however is its "ergonomics," which is a five-dollar word to express the five-cent sentiment the gun just "feels" good. The original X9 has an overall length of 7.4", height of 5.25" and width of 1.4", making it slightly larger than a GLOCK 19 and a little smaller than a Colt Commander. In short, it is an ideal size for a concealed carry gun.

It Keeps Running

When the original EDC X9 was introduced, I couldn't wait to acquire one. Little did I know it was a "gateway" purchase and I became addicted to it quickly. To date I've shot the gun during two Gunsite classes, a Dave Spaulding class, a Clint Smith/Robbie Leatham class, a Jerry Miculek class, a Steve Hendricks class, the annual GAS match and have shot at least 3,000 rounds during practice sessions.

I've had a total of two failures-to-feed. One was caused by *loading a cartridge backwards in the magazine* while not paying attention to what I was doing. The EDC actually fed the cartridge into the chamber base first! Of course, the slide wouldn't go into battery, but the gun sure tried its best to make it happen! The second failure to feed happened at Gunsite when we were dropping our magazines from

our gun onto the deck while speed reloading from our magazine pouch. After repeating this 15 to 20 times, enough sand got into the magazine the follower stuck and would not feed a cartridge. A quick tap and wipe-down with a rag had the magazine running like new. Both failures were operator error/neglect. Bottom line is the EDC X9 is extremely reliable.

More Compacting

Not satisfied to rest on his laurels, Bill wanted a shorter version of the X9 for deep-concealment-carry. Shortening a semi-automatic handgun is a process often requiring significant re-engineering. Angles of barrel-tilt change, slide weight is decreased, and subsequent speed is increased requiring regulating springs in both the gun and occasionally the magazine to accommodate appropriate dwell time. It's more complicated than *just hacking off* the front of the slide and bottom of the grip!

After an extensive trial-and-error process, the result was the EDC X9S (for "subcompact") with an overall length of 6.75", a height of 4.5" and width of 1.25". Dimensionally it is to the original X9 what the GLOCK 26 is to the GLOCK 19.

In addition to changing the dimensions, they did away with the grip panels entirely, machining the X-tac pattern with an overlaid Wilson Starburst directly into the solid sides of the grip frame, shrinking the circumference of the grip by approximately 1/2" and the width by 1/4". All the external mechanisms other than the trigger have been reduced in size. The slide safety, magazine release button and slide stop are all shorter and/or thinner than their original X9 counterparts. This aids not only concealability but also provides added comfort for a right-handed shooter since these are all located on the in-board side of the handgun.

A low-profile fixed rear sight replaces the adjustable one used on the original X9. The rear blade is serrated with a "U" notch aperture that nestles well with a red-piped fiber optic front sight. The X-tac forward slide serrations are eliminated, replaced by what Wilson terms *carry cuts* — a thinning of the front of the slide like on a Browning High Power. All the remaining virtues of the original X9 are found on the Subcompact version.

The EDC X9S comes with two magazines: a 10 rounder with a flat base sitting flush with the bottom of the grip frame, and a 15 rounder that comes with a machined aluminum "hard-use," grip-frame extension. The flush-fit 10 rounder, while optimum for deep concealment will leave the "meaty-handed" shooter curling his pinky under the grip. The extended 15

rounder provides a comfortable full gripping surface and extends a nominal 3/4" below the grip.

The gun comes with an option of short, medium or long trigger to accommodate the individual shooter's trigger-finger span and can be ordered with or without an accessory rail.

Shooting The EDC X9S

Long ago I lost my appreciation for the assumed inherent accuracy of defensive handguns based upon the published data of groups shot by gun writers. There are very few, if any, new handguns that *can't outshoot all but a handful of shooters* and with my trifocal-spectacled eyes, I'm certainly not in this group. All you really need to know is EDC X9S comes with a Wilson Combat accuracy guarantee of 1/2" at 25 yards, a fact of greatest interest to those with Dunning-Kruger syndrome. Of greater significance is the trigger. The sample I tested averaged 3.5 lbs. with variations of just a couple of ounces in either direction. The trigger was "crisp" and broke as cleanly as a politician's campaign promise with an astonishing 1/10" reset!

An objective gun-test doesn't need to be torturous, but it does need to be intensive, first of all to ascertain the reliability of the mechanism after sustained use but further (and per-

haps more importantly) *to determine the "friendliness" of the gun's design* when the shooter is nearing fatigue. To accomplish this, I used the EDC X9S while enrolled in Dave Spaulding's "Advanced Covert Pistol Class." Devoted to concealed carry techniques, we shot approximately 800 rounds in two days and practiced the drawing-stroke from concealment with as many repetitions as rounds fired. When you draw *800 to 1,000 times in two days*, you develop a "feel" for its virtues and vices.

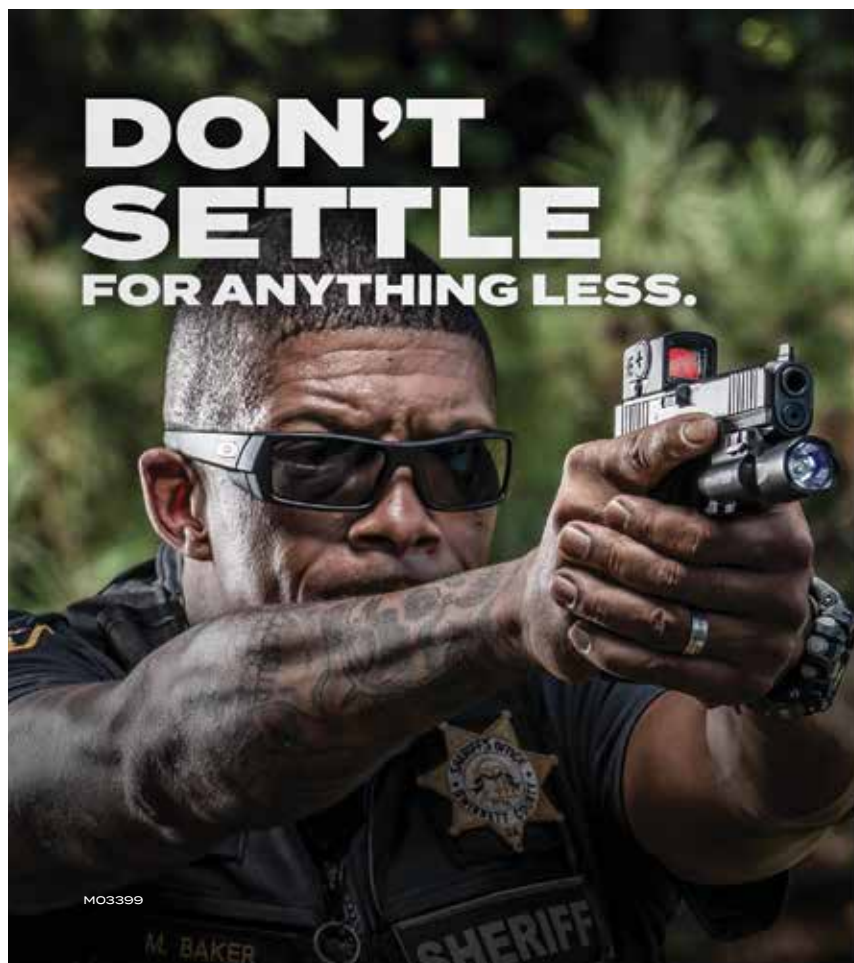
On the virtuous side of the balance sheet, I found the gun doesn't recoil or "feel" like any subcompact I've experienced. It felt like shooting a Commander-sized handgun. I suspect it's due to in part its 25-oz. weight — a little over 3 oz. heavier than a GLOCK 26 but still a couple of ounces less than a lightweight Commander. Combined with the grip angle, beavertail and trigger disposition, it gripped and recoiled much more like a 1911 than any GLOCK or SIG 365 I've shot. In full disclosure I admit to not using the 10-round flush-fit magazine simply because in a school-setting it would require reloading with greater frequency. I used the extended 15 rounder supplied with the X9S along with full-sized magazines I have for my original X9.

From my previous experience with the original X9 I expected perfection and wasn't disappointed, the gun performed flawlessly. I was initially concerned the full-sized magazines might not have the spring tension to regulate the added slide speed of the X9S, but this concern was unfounded.

Not surprisingly the pistol was easy to conceal with an OWB holster with both a closed and open garment and felt more comfortable than my original X9 when I switched to an IWB holster for a few drills.

On the other side of the balance sheet I found while practicing different methods of speed reloads, I was inconsistent hitting the narrower slide stop lever when attempting to use my support thumb to drop the slide. I believe this is a training issue, not a design flaw; if you acquire an X9S, I recommend you make a conscious effort to practice finding the lever quickly with your support hand thumb.

Does the world need a deep-concealment handgun with an Olympic-echelon trigger capable of 2 MOA accuracy? If you've been around the gun-culture for any length of time, you know it never has been and hopefully never will be about "need." At \$2,695, the Wilson Combat EDC X9S is a cashmere gun in a polyester world.



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SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 28

who headed up the group of lawmen who took down Bonnie and Clyde.

The .38 Super has been hampered for a long time by the lack of anything except hardball style ammunition. This has changed today with several companies offering JHP + P.38 Super loadings. Long before the advent of high capacity magazines in semi-automatics we already had a Commander-sized .38 Super, the equivalent of a short-barreled .357 Magnum revolver with 2/3 more capacity, 10 rounds compared to six cartridges in a cylinder.

My First .38 Super

My deep love affair with the .38 Super goes way back to the early '60s when I read Jeff Cooper's high praise for the .38 Super. Cooper, who always pushed the .45 ACP, published a picture of a custom .38 Super 1911 and stated *as a trail gun it would shoot rings around any .45 ACP 1911*. Before the Gun Control Act of 1968 became law I went looking for a couple good guns before it became effective. I went shopping and found a .38 Super Colt Commander in the local department/grocery store. In my town at that time every grocery store, department store and drugstore had a gun department. Sadly, this situation has long passed into oblivion.

For me, the .38 Super is to semi-automatics what the .44 Special is to sixguns. But after waiting those several years to get my first .38 Super I was disappointed to find it would not stay on a piece of notebook paper at 25 yards. The problem was how the barrels were headspaced at that time — via the very small rim instead of the mouth of the case. I sent it off to Bill Wilson who re-barreled it. My groups immediately shrunk to 2" using the Lyman #358156GC bullet designed for the .357 Magnum. I now had a 10-shot semi-automatic which could run with any .357 Magnum. Properly loaded there definitely is nothing wimpy about the .38 Super.

John's Growing Collection

Over the years this .38 Super Commander has been joined by two others, one a stainless-steel Colt Combat Commander and the other a Colt Commander slide and barrel on a Springfield Armory frame. In addition to these I also found a 1911 Government Model chambered in .38 Super from a Sheriff's Department sale. *Even some bad guys prefer .38 Supers.*

I have always wanted, and please don't ask me to explain why, a nickel-plated Colt .38 Super fitted with real

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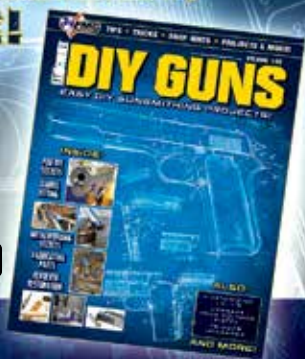


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mother-of-pearl grips. Yes, I know what General Patton said about pearl grips, but I doubt even he would challenge the many Texas Rangers who regularly carried pearl-gripped Colt Single Actions. My latest .38 Super is not nickel-plated as I had been hoping for but is actually better with high polished stainless steel; the finish will never flake and if it becomes scratched it is easily re-polished. To complete the package, I ordered mother-of-pearl stocks from Eagle Grips.

My deep love affair with the .38 Super goes way back to the early '60s when I read Jeff Cooper's high praise for the .38 Super.

About two decades back in my quest for the perfect .38 Super I ordered a Springfield Armory Mil-Spec .38 with the idea if it showed possibilities, I would use it as a base gun and have it tightened, tuned and fitted with a good set of adjustable sights. That was the plan. However, the best laid plans not only often go awry for mice and men, but gunwriters too. Here it was actually a good thing as the .38 Super from Springfield Armory shot so well, I've not done anything to it except equip it with Herrett's grip panels.

But what of the really special .38 Super exquisitely tuned and wearing adjustable sights? Once again Bill Wilson came to the rescue. He not only fixed my first .38 Super he also sent a full sized 1911-style .38 Super Combat Classic to me several years ago for a magazine article. There was no way this one was going back, and it now wears giraffe bone stocks by Scott Kolar.

This brings us to my latest .38 Super from Kimber and although they may call it a Stainless Target II, it's also a superb trail gun. The .38 Super is certainly not made for big-game hunting, however with hard cast SWC bullets or jacketed hollow points, a quality holster, and some time to roam the sagebrush, foothills, forests, or mountains, it comes ready to serve right out-of-the-box. To me target shooting, as enjoyable as this may be, is a high-pressure situation; *a gun on the trail is for relaxing and enjoying the moment.*

In addition to my .38 Supers I also now have a "Super .38 Super" which overshadows both the .38 Super and .357 Magnum. Back in the days before

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I quit flying, I hunted the YO Ranch in Texas every year under the auspices of SCI's Handgun Hunters Chapter. This is a charity hunt with the emphasis being two-pronged, that is having a good time hunting and gathering some trophies and also donating all the meat to the Salvation Army.

On this particular hunt I took a beautiful big bull bison. Three guns were offered as prizes for the top three meat gatherers one of which happened to be a brand-new .38 Casull semi-automatic from Casull Arms shooting a 147-gr. JHP at over 1,600 fps. Made available for shooting during one lunch

break, only a couple of us took advantage of the free ammunition and test-firing of the new gun. I thought if I had any chance this was the gun I'd pick. Ending up in third place, I knew there was no way I would get this one. However, sometimes things really do work out and the other two winners had no idea what the .38 Casull was. I won it by default.

I have the same number of .38 Supers as I have grandkids, and picking a favorite .38 Super is about as easy as picking a favorite grandchild; in other words it ain't gonna happen!



WALTHER CCP M2

Continued from page 39

Take down on this model is simple and requires no tools. That's good because you'll want to keep the gas piston gizmo clean. I'd expect a lot of shooting with lead bullets would start to deposit fouling inside it. It certainly collects carbon. Fortunately, Walther gives you a nice brass brush with the gun to get you started on the road to good firearm maintenance. I shot a few hundred rounds through my test gun with no problems or failures of any kind without cleaning, but why ask for trouble?

Did The CCP Perform?

Bench rested at seven yards, I shot strings of five-shot groups and discovered the striker-fired, 3.54" barrel CCP was nearly as accurate as my SA PPK and Beretta 84. Fixed barrel guns like these generally have an accuracy edge over camming barrel guns and the CCP's polygonal rifling is said to produce better accuracy through a snugger fit between bullet and bore with less deformation and more consistent velocities. How much any of this may, or may not, have affected how well this gun actually shot is beyond my ken to know.

The fact was the CCP's great accu-

racy surprised me. During the course of my bench testing where I obsess over wringing every bit of accuracy from my test guns by careful and consistent bracing, *breathing and squeezing to the point where shooting is no fun*, I concluded the CCP had one of the creepiest, stop-and-go, halting trigger pulls I've ever encountered, I was sure I'd shot terribly until I examined my target. Winchester's 95-gr. Train & Defend "D" JHP averaged 1" groups. Browning's BPT 95-gr. loads averaged 1.3". HSM's 100-gr. cast, RNFP averaged 1.45". The CCP shot the solid copper, self-defense, Black Hills Ammunition HoneyBadger 60-gr. and Fort Scott Munitions 95-gr. TUI bullet better than my PPK or Beretta, with average groups of 1.59" and an amazing 0.78" respectively. I wonder if it's the curving lands and grooves of the polygonal rifling?

Striker fired pistols aren't known for smooth, crisp, breaking trigger pulls. Though the CCP's trigger exceeds mere squishiness, perhaps the relative lightness of the pull at 5.5 lbs. compensates for it. In slow, aimed fire, it didn't seem detrimental to accuracy in the way I'd expected. In rapid fire, standing, two-hand hold shooting, the trigger creep so appalling during my 200 rounds of bench rest testing was completely unnoticeable and my

groups averaged just over 1.5". By this time, I was accustomed to the CCP's trigger and was shooting it to the best of my ability.

I also tried shooting it in panic mode, pointing without trying to use the sights, and firing a four-round string as fast as I could safely manage against an old T-shirt "assailant" seven yards away. The result was 3-4 chest hits on average. Compared against my PPK, SCCY, Keltec and Beretta, only the Beretta grouped its shots as closely as the CCP. I'll bet this had a lot to do with the CCP's grip fit and low recoil resulting from the SoftCoil delayed blowback system. The CCP had, hands down, the best grip. It's ergonomic, aggressively stippled, has three distinct palm swells, a pinky rest magazine floor plate and front grip strap with diminishing finger grooves working together to provide me with a sure and consistent shooting grasp on the gun.

Acquisition!

The CCP is available in basic black, black frame and silver slide, and "Angel" blue frame and silver slide. MSRP is \$467 but lowest online-retail, which, by the way, never includes shipping and transfer fees, was around \$390. If I were going to conceal-carry a .380 ACP, this one would be a top contender.



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CZ P-07 PISTOL

Continued from page 37

safety, allowing those who want the ability to carry the P-07 “cocked and locked.” The extra parts required for the conversion come with the gun. The grip surface has just the right amount of aggressiveness to make the gun easy to hold without hurting my hands.

CZ added something to this gun I’ve not seen on other handguns. There are grip serrations on the frame similar to the ones on the slide. The frame serrations are about midway on the gun, just ahead of the slide lock. I found by using the frame serrations with my left hand, I can more easily retract the slide with my right hand.

The P-07 is designed and sized for concealed carry, though police all over Europe carry it as their duty gun. It’s 7" long including the beavertail and 5.25" high. Frame width is 1.07" but when you include the ambidextrous de-cockers it’s 1.45" wide at that point, almost exactly the dimensions of a GLOCK 19. Total weight unloaded is just under 28 oz.

The top of the frame is rounded on the sides and in front. The controls on the side of the gun are as flat as any I’ve

seen on a handgun, yet they’re easy to operate because of their size and texture. The slide lock/takedown lever is large with two ridges on it for traction and the de-cocker is flat and ambidextrous.

The reversible magazine release is rectangular with tiny ridges that make operating it easy. The manual says reversing it is a job for a gunsmith, but if you’re handy, it’s not hard to do. The key is to carefully contain the detent and spring that will fly across the room if you’re not careful.

The CZ P-07 is the first CZ to have what they call the Omega Trigger system. All the trigger parts are interlocking in nature, allowing full disassembly and reassembly without the need for gunsmithing experience or tools. Trigger operation is smooth with a pull measured by my Lyman Trigger Pull Gauge averaging 10 lbs. DA and 4 lbs. 10 oz. SA. The take-up in DA mode is about 1/4". In SA mode, I measure about 1/2" before encountering resistance.

Disassembly for cleaning is standard for all CZ-type handguns. Remove the magazine and make sure there is nothing in the chamber, then look for a pair of marks on the left side of the gun near the rear of the slide — one on the frame, one on the slide. They are tiny vertical strips you align by retracting the slide just a skosh. The hammer has a half-cock

position helping take the pressure off the slide while you align the marks. With those marks aligned, you push the slide stop lever through and out of the frame from the right side. I use the base of a magazine to accomplish this task. With the lever removed, the slide slips right off the front of the frame. Compress and lift out the recoil spring/guide rod, then lift out the barrel and you’re done.

Closing Arguments

I have used various brands of common defensive rounds with the P-07, including Inceptor ARX, Speer Gold Dot, Federal Train & Protect, Fiocchi JHP and Hornady FTX. If I do my part the P-07 will shoot one ragged hole with any of these rounds at close encounter ranges up to 10–12 feet. Moving out to 15 yards, it will still keep the rounds where I want them to go. I’ve probably put close to 2,000 rounds through my P-07 and have not experienced any type of malfunction.

It’s funny how the pond between the United States and Europe has led to the adoption of different “classic” handguns. While the 1911 is the quintessential pistol here, the same can be said about the CZ-75 family in European circles. It’s a heck of a pistol and I’m glad to see them finally catching on in these parts.



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KIMBER RAPIDE

Continued from page 45

Black Ice 10mm weighs in at 40.7 oz. and launches a SIG SAUER V-Crown 180-gr. bullet at 1,206.4 fps. This yields 581.8 ft lbs. of muzzle energy at a recoil “cost” of 6.95 ft lbs. While there’s far more to recoil science than a foot-pound calculation, the calculated 31 percent increase sounds a little high compared to my subjective observation shooting the pistols side by side. I feel increased recoil with the 10mm, but I wouldn’t have guessed it to be nearly a third more. To me, most of the 10mm loads tested “felt” like they had 10 to 20 percent more recoil than the .45 ACP.

What Do Friends Think?

Rob Jones, our photographer *extraordinaire*, and I have a bit of fun with each cover feature handgun. We’re in different cities, so we usually ask (beg) the manufacturer to send two guns — one for Rob to photograph and another to the writer (me in this case) for evaluation and editorial. What usually follows is an ongoing email discussion about the gun and its handling characteristics. Hey, Rob’s a thorough guy, so he unquestionably needs to shoot the handgun before knowing how to set up the photo shoot. I can assure you this is no fun at all for Rob — it’s all serious work! We’re sticking with this story.

Anyway, we got to talking about the Black Ice, so I asked him his impressions about this spiffy looking pistol. He’s a southpaw so his perspectives sometimes vary from mine. One thing Rob pointed out is the friendliness of the magazine release for left-handed shooters. He likes the release button on the left side, normally for right-hander use, using the trigger finger release technique Mas Ayoob talked about in the August 2020 issue of *GUNS Magazine*. Normally, he’s got to file the button down a bit to prevent gouging a hole in his second finger while shooting, but the Rapide button-to-grip ratios worked out fine. Rob also appreciated the ambi safety levers on the Rapide. I feel a bit slighted as the “rightie” lever (left side) is actually smaller than the “lefty” control on the right side. On closer examination, I see the reason for this. The left side lever is cut to allow easier movement of the firing hand thumb to and from the safety. Take that, Rob!

Time To Shoot

I’ve been shooting the heck out of this pistol because it’s loud — and fun. Boys will be boys ...

While there’s been a growing list of 10mm practice and defensive ammo on the pre-COVID gun store shelves, my 10mm “go to” phone call is always to

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DoubleTap Ammunition. Mike McNett, the Godfather of Boom, seems to have a soft spot for the 10mm, so the company makes a plethora of interesting varieties.

While a 200-gr. bullet is somewhat standard, DoubleTap makes some compelling carry loads at the light end of the spectrum. The 135-gr. Controlled Expansion hollow point left the muzzle of this Rapide at an average of 1,534 fps while its portlier 150-gr. sibling still showed a jaw-dropping 1,386 fps. There’s also a 155-gr. Lead Free (solid copper) offering with an HP cavity suitable for a bowl of Cheerios. That one averaged 1,296 fps for 578 ft lbs. All three of these loads would re-awaken the Walking Dead with the noise, but the recoil sensation of a lighter bullet moving faster was surprisingly pleasant. Still a bit more than a .45, but not significantly.

On the more traditional front, the 200-gr. Controlled Expansion bullet moved at 1,125 fps. If you’re headed to the woods, perhaps consider the 200-gr. Hard cast flat point. This one clocked in at 1,150 fps and delivered 586 ft lbs.

I also spent some quality time with the Speer Gold Dot and Federal Premium HST loads, both weighing 200 grains. Federal got the velocity nod with 1,112 fps while the Gold Dots rang the bell at 1,065.

Another compelling carry candidate is the SIG SAUER 180-gr. V-Crown. The lighter projectile didn’t give up anything in the speed department, averaging 1,186 fps. I liked the tradeoff between recoil, bullet weight and performance of this one. It’s a solid carry load.

Perhaps the most fun at the range award goes to the HSM Ammunition Bear Load. The 200-gr. lead round nose flat point bullets averaged 1,070 fps.

While it makes a great hunting or woods protection load, I have to say what I enjoyed most was the smoke. While not creating black powder levels, each shot delivered a bit of nostalgia and fun from this decidedly modern pistol.

So, yes. I gave my Competition Electronics Pro Chrono DLX a workout. There’s something thrilling about seeing large, and sometimes shocking, four-digit figures pop up on my Bluetooth-connected companion app with every shot. Seeing shot strings in the 1,500+ fps range when shooting .40-caliber bullets seems wrong, but concurrently awesome.

As for accuracy and handling, you won’t be disappointed. Mechanically, the gun will print tiny groups. Just for kicks, I sandbagged it at 15 yards or so and found it easy to create one-hole and touching-hole groups. What really illustrates the handling characteristics of this pistol is its ability to print similar groups freehand. If you do your part, take your time, and fret over the crisp trigger, you’ll most certainly shoot groups of similar size. It’s a very easy pistol to shoot accurately. The iconic 1911 ergonomics are part of it, but the sights give a healthy assist.

Meanwhile, in Photography Land, Rob “worked” with the .45 ACP version of the Black Ice. His ammo picks included Norma’s Safeguard 230-gr. JHP offering and Black Hills 185-gr. JHP. With a little help from a sandbag, Rob had no trouble printing 2.5" groups from 25 yards with both ammo types.

The Kimber Rapide Black Ice ain’t your grandpappy’s 1911. It looks more like something out of a *Star Wars* franchise movie, but don’t let its pretty looks fool you. It’s built to run. And carry.





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Bravo Concealment's *IWB Torsion 3.0 Gun Holster* integrates a 10-degree inward angle making 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 info: (956) 783-7682, www.bravoconcealment.com

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Wilson Combat

Wilson Combat reworked a SIG SAUER P320 chassis and an unfinished SIG-manufactured compact slide to come up with a portable yet full-capacity 9mm handgun. The Wilson Combat Optimized *WCP320 Carry* is a smaller than full-size striker-fired handgun for defensive use and concealed carry. It wears Wilson Combat's polymer Carry-2 grip module with a 3-slot rail. The slide, front and rear cocking serrations as well as the slide top have been machined with the Wilson Combat X-TAC pattern. SIG's XFULL trigger is standard on the WCP320 to increase leverage for a lighter, smoother trigger pull. For more info: (800) 955-4856, www.wilsoncombat.com



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The *BlackBeard* is an auto-resetting trigger system for AR15s. It allows you to dry fire practice with your AR15 without having to run the charging handle between shots. Using electro-mechanical wizardry, *BlackBeard* allows you to take up to 10 dry fire shots per second, quickly resetting the hammer between each shot. It's a drop-in Bolt Carrier Group + magazine that works with your existing trigger with the same weight, break and reset. Installation takes less than a minute. For more info: (630) 551-8171, www.mantisx.com



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The *Ultra Custom Multi-Fit Holster* is made from ultra-soft cowhide. This holster from 1791 Gunleather features a sweat guard to provide a layer of protection between user and firearm. It comes with a reinforced synthetic tuckable clip for IWB carry. A user can customize the *Ultra Custom Multi-Fit Holster* to his firearm multiple times. Available in six sizes, the holster will fit everything from revolvers to full-frame firearms. For more info: (800) 407-1791, www.1791gunleather.com

GUN TOOL AMP — 1911

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Real Avid's *Gun Tool AMP — 1911* is a compact kit loaded for the 1911 platform. It packs in-the-field capability into an efficient and intelligent frame system. The tool includes both Government and Officer barrel bushing wrenches, 1911-related bits and implements plus a foldout magnetic bit driver. Includes punches, picks, scrapers, wrenches and innovative hex key storage. Also offered for pistols and AR15s, the *Gun Tool AMP* comes in a quick-deploy holster. For more info: (800) 286-0567, www.realavid.com

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TangoDown's *SSM-01 ACRO*

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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

1791 Gunleather	60	Galloway Precision	58	Simply Rugged Holsters	11
AGM Container Controls Inc.	25	Gary Reeder Custom Guns	61	Smith & Wesson	15
Aimpoint	67	Harbor Freight	74	SoftHold	6
Alchemy Custom Weaponry	56	Heckler & Koch	9	Spartan Blades USA	62
Alien Gear	59	HiViz Shooting Systems	58	Springfield Armory	84
Altamont Company	19	Hodgdon	71	Standard Mfg. Co. LLC	61
ALTOR Corporation	75	HSS Corp.	78	Streamlight	54
American Leathersmith	62	IronMind Enterprises Inc.	66	Taurus International Mfg. Inc.	23
Belman Inc.	66	Kimber	17	Ten-Ring Precision	56
Black Hills Ammunition	73	KRUDO Knives	65	TOPS KNIVES	57
Böker USA	64	Lee Precision Inc.	69	Turnbull Restoration Co. Inc.	70
CM Products	72	Les Baer Custom	13	Tussey Custom	56
CrossBreed Holsters	2	Mag-na-port	68	Versacarry	55
Cylinder & Slide	64	MTM Case-Gard	73	Volkman Precision	56
CZ-USA	6	Nighthawk Custom	29	VZ Grips	11
DeSantis Holster	27	Nine Line Apparel	81	W.C. Wolff Company	68
Diamond D Custom Leather	65	North American Arms	63	Walker's	71
Dillon Precision Products	7	Powder River Precision Inc.	56	Wilson Combat	63
European Amer. Armory Corp.	21	Ruger	31	Wyoming Sight Drifter LLC	56
Fiocchi Ammunition	83	SCCY Industries LLC	3	XS Sights	78

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WITH A GUN TO YOUR HEAD: THE LARRY GOLDSTEIN INCIDENT

SITUATION: You are surrounded by hidden, loaded handguns. Unfortunately, one of your kidnappers is holding a .357 Magnum to the base of your skull.

LESSON: Sometimes it's best to lull your assailants off guard by complying and biding your time. Experience shooting under pressure will help when the targets are trying to shoot you.

May 15, 2015. In a suburb of Jackson, Miss., Larry Goldstein, MD, is in his open garage, loading his pickup truck. A successful gynecologist, his sleepless years in residency and dedication to his long-standing practice have rewarded him with a large, expensive home. Unfortunately, criminals are drawn to signs of money.

His personal sport for the last five years has been competitive shooting. He is on his way to a USPSA match. He has just put his gear bag in the back seat of the quad cab. In it are two CZ Shadow 9mm pistols, several magazines of 9mm, and enough ammo for the whole match. He hears a noise sounding like a squirrel on the eaves, and suddenly *he is confronted by two strange men wearing bandannas over their faces.*

The nearest, a broad-chested guy about 5' 10", shoves a long barreled stainless-steel revolver in his face. Larry makes it for a .357 Magnum. He can see the noses of the live cartridges in the front of the cylinder. The man snarls, "You know what this is?" Larry replies as calmly as he can, "It's a gun." Predictably, the next words from the man are, "We want your money!"

Larry's gun safe is visible in the garage. The guy with the revolver spins him around, grabs him by the shirt, and forces him toward the safe with the gun's muzzle at the back of his head. He orders him to open it. Larry's shaky hands don't get the combination right at first, and he tries to explain. "You're lyin'! We're gonna shoot you!" He finally manages to get the combination right. The intruders start grabbing stuff. There are at least two AR15s in the safe, including a .223, but the one they grab is a Smith & Wesson M&P chambered for .22 LR. They grab a handful of AR magazines and a few handguns and stuff them into a backpack.

They march him into the house, his hands behind his head and the revolver still at the nape of his neck. Larry does not have a gun on his person. He has earned black belts earlier in his life in Hapkido and Tae Kwon Do. *He knows enough to realize a disarming attempt on one of the men will leave him vulnerable to the other.* He bides his time. They walk through the bedroom, past Larry's sleeping wife. He cannot find his billfold — it will later turn up in a pair of pants he was wearing the day before — and the robbers satisfy themselves by pulling all the money from his wife's purse. Without waking Mrs. Goldstein, they march Larry out of the house. Their plan is to make him drive them to an ATM and empty his account.

At the pickup, the second man tries to load the AR15 and realizes he can't fit a .223 magazine into a .22 LR. They make him get a magazine fitting the rifle. Both robbers get into the back seat, the revolver still aimed at the base of his skull, and order him to take them to the bank's drive-up ATM.

Going Mobile

Dr. Goldstein experiences a "water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink" moment. Like many armed citizens (and off-duty cops) he has presumed staging guns reasonably close in the home or vehicle will be adequate. In the console is a Walther PPK .380. In the driver's door pocket of his pickup are a Ruger LCP .380 and a GLOCK 19. *All are loaded.*

He assesses his odds if he reaches for one as he drives. Both robbers are in the back seat, the smaller man (about 5' 7", 150 lbs.) has put a full magazine into the .22 caliber AR, and Larry has to presume him to be armed even though he hasn't spotted a weapon of the suspect's own yet.

Continued on page 58

critical to accuracy so I'm perfectly happy with the slight play in a S&W cylinder at lock-up.

Things Can Go Wrong

When timing gets out of whack the fit of the parts changes. As the ratchet cogs wear — or the hand or the trigger or the cylinder stop and other things — that delicate set of events can get out of "time." The cylinder might start to turn before the stop gets withdrawn. Or the hand will push the cylinder to align the next chamber but the "stop" won't snick into the right bolt notch in the cylinder. Maybe the hand is too thin (means it can't push the ratchet around enough) so the chamber isn't quite aligned and the cylinder hasn't turned far enough to allow the cylinder stop to snick into the notch. Oopsie.

If you clear your revolver then very slowly and carefully pull the trigger in DA mode, you can hear two distinct clicks (or at least you should). The first is the cylinder stop clicking against the cylinder as it's released by the sear cam on the trigger as the cylinder turns. The second is the "click" as the stop slips back home into the next notch on the cylinder. That should occur just before the DA sear releases the hammer to fire. If your gun is "out of time" you'll likely hear that second click — but the stop hasn't seated into the next notch. If you then gently rotate the cylinder counter-clockwise, you may get it to turn a tiny bit and you'll hear the stop "click" home. The hand hasn't pushed the cylinder far enough "around" to align the next notch with the stop. S&W calls this "Carry

Up" but most of us call it "timing."

Fix it?

It takes a bit of talent to fix timing, and almost always a new "hand." A thicker hand will push the ratchet cog further around. Some people peen the cog which is coming up short, pushing metal toward the hand. But that takes real talent, trust me. If a revolver is only slightly out of time, shooting it normally in DA mode will allow the cylinder mass to "Carry Up" correctly, turning that last few thousandths using inertia. But it will continue to wear, so getting it fixed is best. If you cock the hammer the same series of events occur and indeed, things should time correctly both ways if the gun is timed right.

Sure, there's YouTube videos on

how to fix "Carry Up" but remember there's also some rubes out there who are advising you to do wrong things. Midway has a great series of gunsmithing videos on YouTube and there's one on replacing a worn S&W hand with a few one and fitting it. But don't just grab your wrench, files and grinder and go to work. This is something done in "thousandths" of an inch so unless you're comfy there, let a pro do it.

Chances are good, too, if you've read this far, you'd enjoy our *DIY Guns* special edition book. It's chock full of "how-to" gunsmithing tips and tricks. Find it online at fmgpublications.com or on Amazon.com. I promise you'll enjoy it.

If you'd like me to write more on this sort of thing, drop us a note at editor@americanhandgunner.com.



GEMINI CUSTOMS REDHAWK

That Magical Master of Rugers, Marc Morganti, has done it again. While I don't have room to go into detail, suffice to say his take on the famous Ruger Redhawk ramps the game up to the very

top. Things like an in-house barrel machined from Krieger stainless stock, custom grips by Marc, timed and tuned action, beautiful black PVD DLC Black plating called Hot Rod Black and 24K gold plate done in-house only start the options available. The gun pictured is the first one — sorry folks, it's sold! — but it can be built as a .44 Magnum or 8-shot .357. Marc can build on your gun or a supplied gun. Costs average between \$4K to \$5K depending on options and the gun used.

The gun shoots ragged one hole groups at 20 yards and I'm thinking it'd shoot better than that if you could scope it or something! I'd love to try this out to 50 and 100, and Marc said he'll loan us one when he has one he can spare. This is the "Ultimate" Redhawk at every level from what I'd easily call the top Ruger shop in the country. www.gemini-customs.com

ADD IT UP

2,561,962

Handguns imported to the US from other countries in 2019.

210,333

Revolver production by S&W in 2018.

1,581,717

Total firearm production by Ruger in 2018 (top producer in US).

3,931,607

NICS background checks in June 2020, breaking all records.

UPL RIG FROM ROSEN

I've transitioned to the Springfield Hellcat as my daily carry gun and it's proving to be everything I expected. Being an old time cop, I tend to like to carry on my strongside, right at the right hip. Too many years of carrying a duty gun in the same spot makes it feel natural and comfy. I reached out to old friend Mitch Rosen of Mitch Rosen Extraordinary Gunleather and he recommended his "The Upper Limit" or UPL rig. A very high-ride holster, it's vertical and set up to hold the butt in tightly and the muzzle off of the hip, which in some designs can really poke at you by the end of the day. I got mine lined with cowhide and in a great mahogany color.

I also asked Mitch to toss in a container of his "Leather Lightning" which is applied to the inside of the rig using a finger or small piece of paper towel. This makes break-in much easier, allowing the gun to snick right in or out. It's great for any holster that's tough to draw from. So far, this rig is just what I needed and it's both comfy and secure. It can also do double-duty as a cross-draw worn in front of the off-side hip. About \$185 with the lining. www.mitchrosen.com



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TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Readers Alex Vrenios sent us a note asking to explain revolver “timing” as he recently had a problem with one of his revolvers having to do with that very topic. He said looking at the diagrams didn’t explain how a revolver “times” or how to identify an issue and then repair it. You’re in luck, Alex, as I just did some repair work for two out-of-time revolvers, a 120 year old S&W Hand Ejector and a modern S&W Model 10.

“Timing” is a general term for the process occurring when you cock the hammer or pull the trigger in double action mode on a revolver. Many things have to happen at just the right micro-instant in order for this quite complicated series of events to poke along smoothly. A S&W K-Frame has about 58 parts, give or take a few depending on the model, including all the pins and small bits like springs and such. Of those, about 20 or so are directly involved with making sure the cylinder lines up correctly with the forcing cone when the gun fires. Or, in other words, they’re involved in “timing” the revolver.

In DA mode, you start the trigger pull which — due to a minor miracle

of cams, springs and “timing” — starts to move the “cylinder stop” out of the notch on the cylinder, preparing it to be able to rotate. During this trigger movement, it presses on the DA sear — a spring-activated lever on the hammer front — which begins to cock the hammer. As the trigger is pressed further, the “hand” or “pawl” — attached to the rear of the trigger — moves upward and forward (due to spring pressure) beginning to poke through a “window” in the frame on the breech face.

At the rear of the cylinder there is the extractor (the star-like thing you use to kick the empties out by hitting the ejector rod). The extractor does double duty. It not only lifts the empty cases out, but on the face is a very complicated “ratchet” set. As the hand is pressed further out and up through that window by the trigger pull, the very tip (on the left side, looking forward toward the muzzle) pushes against a cog on that ratchet. As the trigger is pulled further the hand rotates the cylinder counter-clockwise (in a S&W). In the meantime the cylinder stop has slipped off the cam on the front of the trigger and is now pressed against the cylinder by spring pressure, waiting anxiously to drop into the locking notch on the next chamber. That’s why you get a fine “drag” line on many cylinders.

Things Get Exciting

As the trigger nears the end of the press, the hand extends further and the left side bears on the right side of one of those cogs on the ratchet. This is all “timed” to have just nudged the next chamber in line with the forcing cone (where the bullet enters the barrel). A micro-second prior to this, the cylinder stop has clicked into the next notch, locking things in place. The forcing cone is just that, a cone which sort of channels a bullet into the rifled portion of the barrel.



Once the gun is clear and safe, a slow DA trigger pull will help you to see if a gun is out of time, or, as S&W calls it, failing to “Carry Up.”



The “hand” (vertical metal piece) turns the cylinder by pushing on the ratchet cogs, finally bearing against the side of one cog. By then, the cylinder “stop” will have snicked into the proper notch in the cylinder, locking things in place.



The “Hand” or “pawl” (red arrow) and the cylinder “stop” (green arrow) work together to move and lock the cylinder in place correcting “timing” so they both work together. When these wear, things can get “out of time.” Gun is a modern S&W Model 10.



This 120 year old S&W Hand Ejector uses a “hand” and “stop” too, but the mechanics then were considerably different from a modern revolver. Roy was able to get this one “back in time” with some creative gunsmithing since there are no parts available.

It’s perfectly natural for a S&W cylinder to have a bit of “slop” (rotational play) at this lock-up. If it was 100 percent rigid it would soon wear and would be difficult to keep in “time.”

Colts use essentially the same process but as the trigger is pulled all the way it also forces the hand up hard, pressing against that cog and “forcing” the cylinder to hold still. Theoretically this makes a 100 percent solid lock-up (indeed, a well-timed Colt cylinder doesn’t turn when locked like that), but alas ... it also requires a huge amount of careful hand work and delicate part alignment to do it. And that all wears out. S&W sort of fudges a bit on that fit, but it’s been proven it’s not

Continued on page 80

FIOCCHI

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