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**JANUARY 2020**  
Vol. 66, Number 1, 781st Issue



**COVER PHOTO BY**  
**ROB JONES/**  
**IMAGESMITH, LLC**  
The 25th Anniversary  
Kahr K9 9mm is ready  
for a big night out.

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# GUNS

## CROSSFIRE

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**GUNS Magazine®** welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit all published letters for clarity and length. Due to the volume of mail, we are unable to individually answer your letters or e-mail. In sending a letter to *GUNS Magazine*, you agree to provide Publisher's Development Corp. such copyright as is required for publishing and redistributing the contents of your letter in any format. Send your letters to *Crossfire*, GUNS Magazine, 13741 Danielson Street, Ste. A, Poway, CA 92064, [www.gunsmagazine.com](http://www.gunsmagazine.com); e-mail: [ed@gunsmagazine.com](mailto:ed@gunsmagazine.com)

#### COPPER CLAPPER CAPER?

Okay, I know many of your writers there go wayyyy back with some of the shooting greats. I readily recognize the names they drop, such as Colonel Jeff Cooper. I would have never guessed that you have developed a method to preserve Mr. Cooper in the form of collectable semi-precious metal ingots, but the proof is right there on page 62 of my November 2019 edition. The knife is resting on ingots of "Fine Cooper," at three-nines purity. You guys are simply amazing. Will any other firearms greats be offered any time soon? I cringe to think of what a bar of John Moses Browning will go for, but I'm still interested none the less!

Brad Hancock



Hmmm, Brad is right! One of our editorial staff saw the misspelled stamping on the ingots as Brad pointed out, but thought it was a brand name. Depending on the angle, it might also read "Coorer." Apparently, nobody else saw it, including story

author and photographer Pat Covert. We all had a good laugh! Meanwhile, keep an eye out for some of our new GUNS tribute products: Martini-Henry bar Olives and Sam Colt horse balsters. —BW

#### WHERE'S CLINT AND JOHN?

I'd been away from *GUNS* for a time when I received an opportunity to get in on a 5-year deal, so I pulled the trigger. The first thing I noticed was no Clint Smith and no John Connor. I know you can't run out and get Clint and Connor back just because I enjoyed reading them. My subscription goes till I'm past 80 and I still want to be reading Taffin at that time. Hang in there John, I'm with you.

Chuck Padrick

I had a nice talk with Clint last week at his house in Oregon! He's really too busy to write but has graciously taken the offer under consideration. Meanwhile, John Connor is coming back in "Terminator: Dark Fate"... wait, it's a different John Connor. John's officially "retired" from, as he says, "Bein' blowed up too many times. Gotta' rest now." —BW

#### MORNING HAS BROKEN

It's morning here in Missouri farm country. This old guy sat down to enjoy coffee with a bunch of likeminded friends.

Mas (Ayoob), who says so much of great value in so few words, spoke first. John with his fine discourse on the lever gun loads followed. Dave speaking about the ever-popular mouse guns, which most of us have

*continued on page 34*

# GUNS

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THE FINEST IN THE FIREARMS FIELD SINCE 1955

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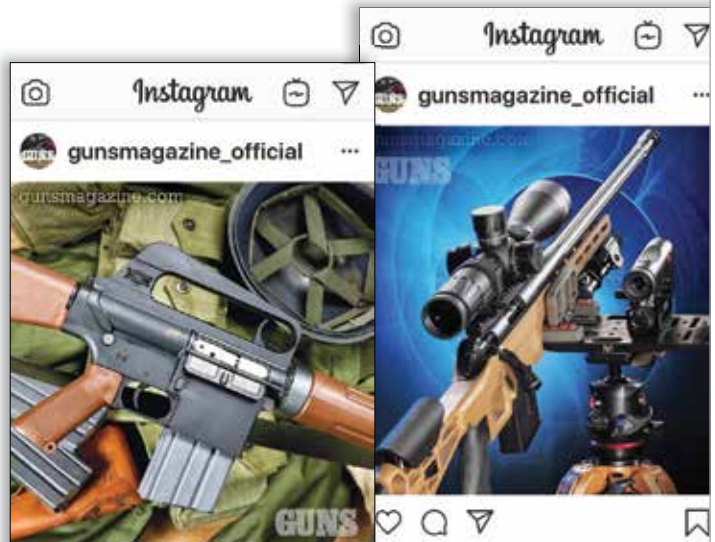
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# Instant eye-candy

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Lineup of Skinner Sights, from the 860 Reliable (left) all the way to the Skinner Express.

## SKINNER SIGHTS AIMS TO PLEASE

### HOW TO TAKE A GOOD LEVERGUN TO GREAT

There are several ways to equip a lever-action rifle with sights and most shooters, at least those of us who have been around for a while, need something better than the stock sights.

Receiver sights are perfect for those who wish to keep the slick handling properties found in traditional leverguns. My original .22 Marlin Model 39A I purchased as a teenager in 1956 wears a receiver sight. This particular one is an old Redfield and has been on this rifle for well over 50 years, probably closer to 60.

Such sights are available today from both Lyman and Williams and provide an excellent option to a scope as they are based on the fact an aperture with a round hole in the eyepiece forces us to concentrate on the front sight and place it in the middle of the dot. While not as obtrusive as a scope or a tang sight, receiver sights normally bolt to the left side of the

frame and protrude there and also across the top of the receiver.

#### A BETTER MOUSETRAP

Andy Larsson of Skinner Sights has come up with an excellent idea which gives us the benefit of a receiver peep sight without the protrusion on the side of the frame and top of the receiver. Andy's company motto is: "We aim to Please." This motto is twofold as the company is designed to provide us with satisfaction while also giving an excellent sight which allows us to aim without losing the slick handling property and inherent smoothness of a levergun.

These sights are about as compact as a sight can be made and still work. Andy says of his sights: "Skinner Sights are handcrafted in my shop in St. Ignatius, Montana. Machined from a solid steel,

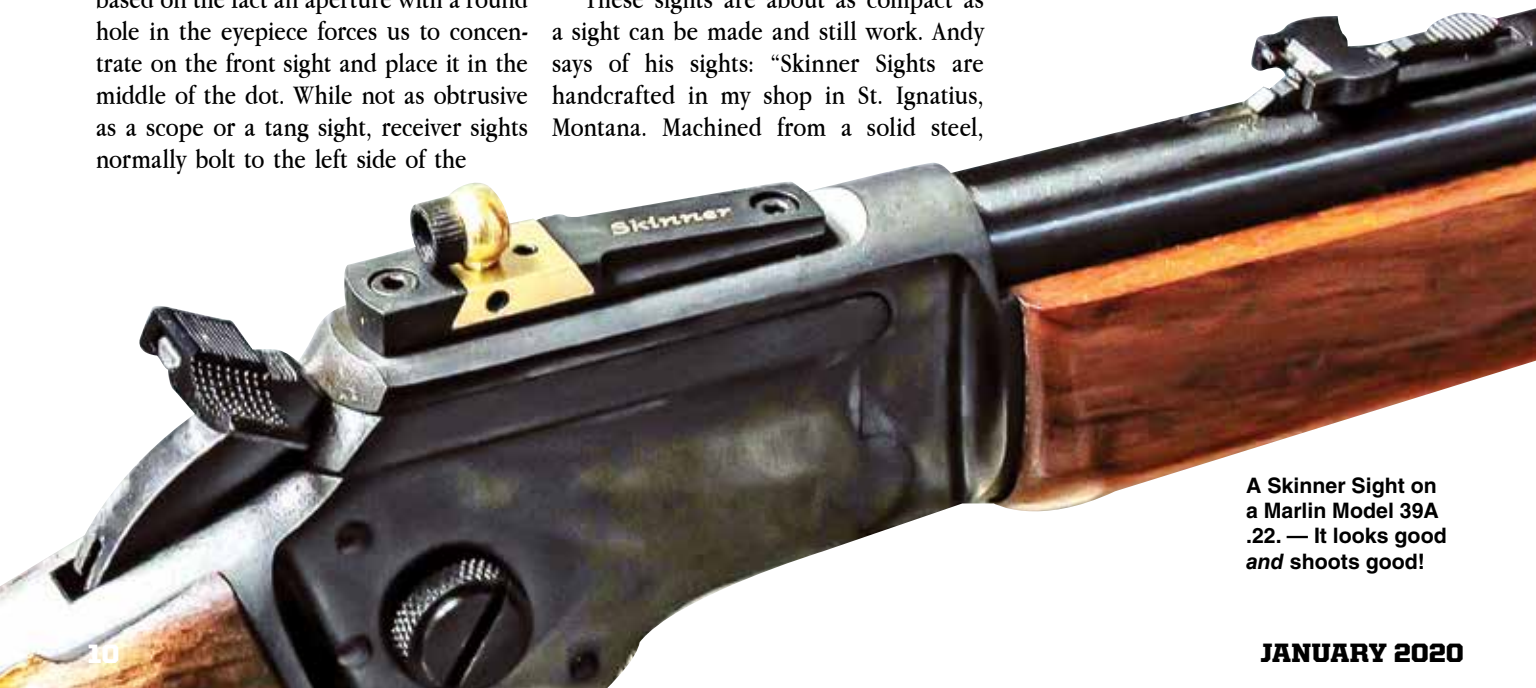
stainless steel or brass bar stock, the parts are hand fitted to close tolerances. We have worked hard to design sights which are not only extremely functional and rugged, but to also complement the firearm. I make high quality sights at a reasonable cost to the customer. Skinner Sights are not expensive, but not cheap."

Notice these are not aluminum sights! They are not only extremely well made but quite attractive, especially as the brass versions are to my eyes.

Skinner Sights consist of a base which accepts an eyepiece. The base is adjustable for windage, while the stem of the eyepiece, which is locked in place by an Allen screw, can be rotated to adjust elevation.

#### THE SIGHTS

The base itself can be small, such as what is called the 860 Reliable sight, which is barely over 1" long with two holes spaced



A Skinner Sight on a Marlin Model 39A .22. — It looks good and shoots good!





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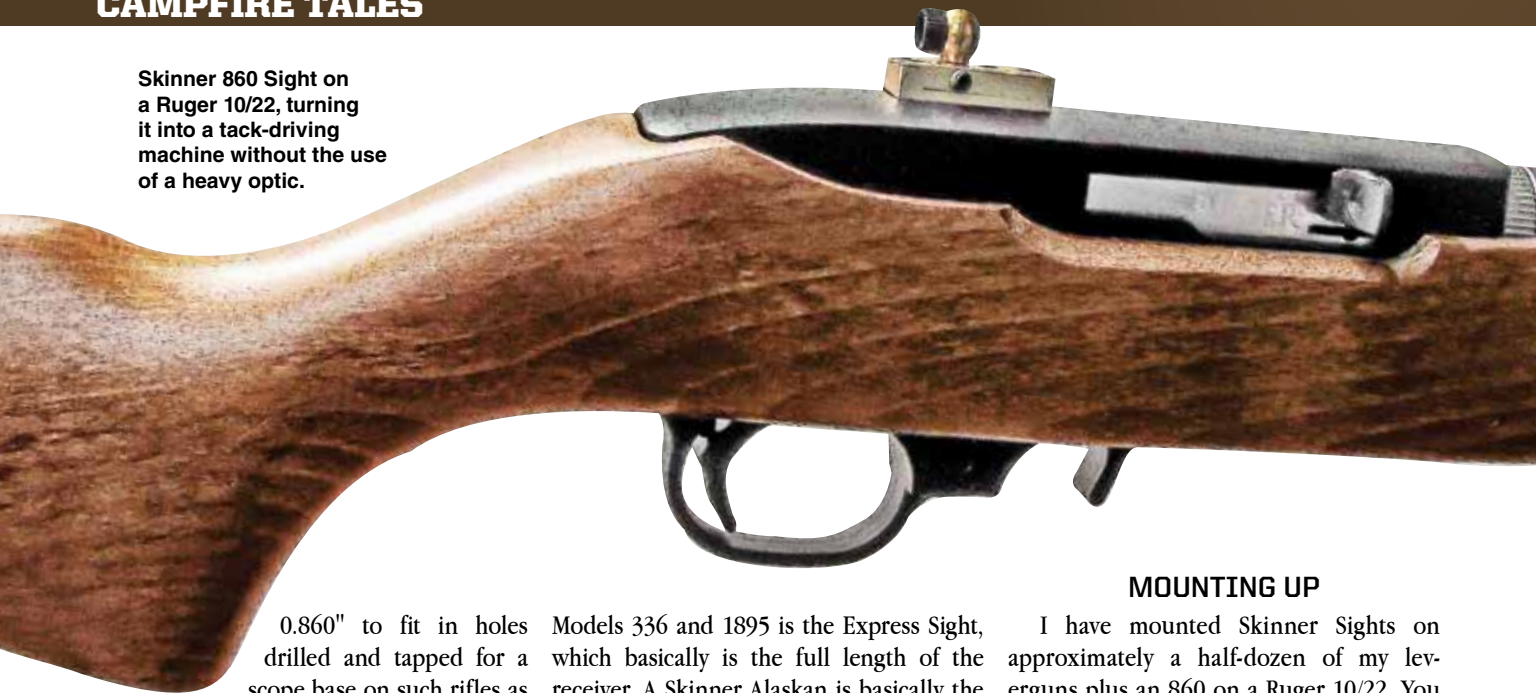
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Skinner 860 Sight on a Ruger 10/22, turning it into a tack-driving machine without the use of a heavy optic.



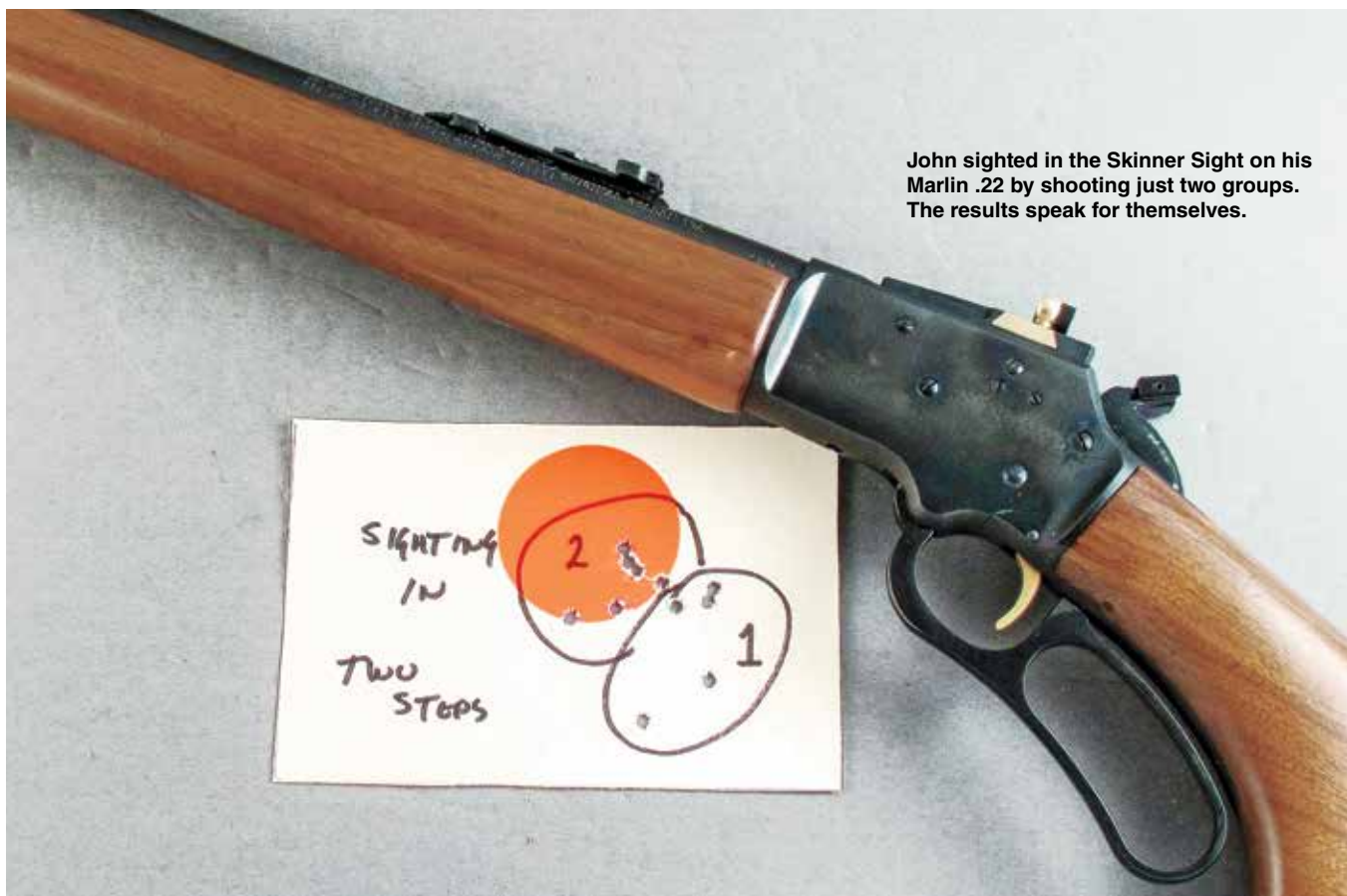
0.860" to fit in holes drilled and tapped for a scope base on such rifles as the Ruger 10/22. This is about as small as a sight can be and still work properly. It is also very handy on the Ruger .44 semi-automatic Deerstalker. This Ruger .44 could well be the ultimate feral pig rifle and if one wants a larger opening the eye-piece can be removed to give a "ghost ring" style sight. Different sized apertures are also available.

Another version especially for Marlin

Models 336 and 1895 is the Express Sight, which basically is the full length of the receiver. A Skinner Alaskan is basically the same sight with one-half inch more sight radius. The Guide Set comes with the rear sight and a ramp front sight. The Reliable is an abbreviated version. Skinner also offers a sight for open-top lever actions such as the Winchester 1894 which fits on the back of the receiver right in front of the hammer, along with a Barrel Mount version which goes into the rear sight dovetail found on most rifles.

## MOUNTING UP

I have mounted Skinner Sights on approximately a half-dozen of my leverguns plus an 860 on a Ruger 10/22. You may or may not have to replace the front sight to match up with the Skinner Sight. For example, on a 24" Marlin 39A I did not have to change the bead front sight at all as there was enough elevation adjustment in the rear sight. With a .35 Remington Marlin levergun, groups were 9" high at 25 yards making it necessary to replace the front sight and I had one 0.530" tall in my parts box. With this in place the rifle



John sighted in the Skinner Sight on his Marlin .22 by shooting just two groups. The results speak for themselves.



now shot low, however 1-1/2 turns of the rear sight put groups right to point of aim. Skinner also offers varying heights of ramp style front sights.

I find the sights exceptionally handy on leverguns and should be just the ticket for hunting in brush country or heavily forested areas for such as deer, black bear and feral pigs. One can even remove the aperture and as mentioned above have a larger peep sight for fast handling especially when hunting feral hogs.

### OTHER FUN STUFF

As well as offering these excellent sights, Skinner Sights offers several other very interesting items. One is the "Bush Pilot" which is described as a Carbine Survival Kit. This consists of a Winchester 1892 replica in .44 or .357 Magnum, with a 16-1/2" octagon

**"I NOW SIT  
WAY IN THE  
BACK WHERE  
I CAN SEE  
EVERYTHING ..."**

barrel, stainless hard chrome finish, walnut butt stock and forearm, and of course Skinner Aperture Sights. This is a takedown model and comes packed in a folding case along with such survival items as a knife, firestarter, 50 feet of rope, stormproof matches, compass and a space blanket tent. It is also available in .45-70 on a replica Model 1886.

Many churches are going to Security Teams to protect their parishioners and Andy offers a unique item for carrying a concealed handgun — the Concealed Carry Bible Cover. It looks quite innocent as it appears to only hold a Bible, however it is constructed to also house a concealed handgun. For many decades I had always sat in the front pew at church. However, with the spread of church shootings I now sit way in the back where I can see everything and I am not only armed but several other people are as well. This makes a very easy way to be armed with instant access to the firearm.

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## FROM ACQUAINTANCE TO FRIEND

### A PASSING FANCY BECOMES MUCH DEEPER

**B**ack in 2016 Smith & Wesson introduced the .45 ACP Shield and I tested it for a feature article in this magazine. I already owned the 9mm and .40 S&W versions, but the .45 became my favorite Shield. Five shots in less than 1 1/2" at 25 yards, three of them 0.30" apart center to center, with Remington 185-gr. JHP was

an eye-opener. The 2.30" for all five with a "best three" cluster of 0.55" kept those eyes open. I liked the test sample enough to buy it. I was still a part-time cop then, and passed the sample over to Sgt. John Parsons, who had succeeded me as primary firearms instructor for the department and would be named Chief shortly after I retired in 2017. He liked the .45 Shield so much he ordered one for each of our officers as a backup/plainclothes/administrative uniform weapon, supplementing our uniform issue M&P .45s.

I had found the .45 Shield unerringly reliable, as the department subsequently did across the board. At 21 oz. unloaded, it was exactly the same weight as the old Colt Detective Special snub-nose revolver but held seven to eight rounds (depending on the magazine) of .45 instead of six .38 Special cartridges. Easy to shoot, too. The recoil of the .45 Shield seems to me about the same as the .40 version, which is to say, unexpectedly mild for the size/weight/caliber combination.

I didn't carry it much, though. I've carried full-size and full-weight service handguns all my life and didn't really need a smaller, lighter one on my hip. I go with the smaller ones only for backup, and for me, the Shields are just a tad big for pocket or ankle carry. In 2019, however, I found an unexpected use for it.

#### ANOTHER EYE-OPENER

My Shield .45 didn't get too much use until June 2019. My favorite match, The Pin Shoot — known in the 20th Century as the Second Chance Shoot — had been resurrected and now included a Concealed Carry event. The contestant's pistol had to have a barrel no longer than 3.5", but still be powerful enough to blow a heavy bowling pin back off a table.

I was miffed the year before when I shot it with a 3.5" ParaOrdinance LDA .45. Host and match director Rich Davis likes to sing a little ditty to the tune of "Camptown Races" — "It worked all year but not up here, doo-dah, doo-dah." I fit the profile when my little Para, which had run flawlessly until then, choked on three of the six runs in the 2018 match.

For 2019, I wanted striker-fired reliability for the event, but was stymied. One of my favorite GLOCK 30 .45s? Their barrels were 3.8" long. Then it hit me: My M&P



The 9mm Shield (left), .45 version (right) — not much difference in size.





**Talon Grips for Shield .45 have great feel and are easy on bare skin in deep concealed carry.**

Shield .45's barrel is only 3.3" long! Its 6-lb. trigger sits just right for me to get the crease of the distal joint of my index finger on its center. I took it to the range one more time and was sold.

Long story short — the Shield .45 ran 100 percent, and I came in third in Concealed Carry with a score that would have won the year before. The 21-oz. pistol, totally out-of-the-box, had handled Federal HST 230-gr. +P hollow points with aplomb and actually beat my score with the custom, long-barreled compensated 1911 that I used in the Pin Gun and Space Gun categories. It was the first time I had shot a .45 Shield in a match and it won a prize for me. This more than paid for its purchase price. Hard to argue with that.

## CARRYING THE SHIELD .45

The little Shield had done me a solid, and later in the month I took it along to teach a class in California. Limited to no more than 10-round capacity there, I didn't



**The S&W Shield Family (from top): 9mm, .40 S&W and .45 ACP.**





Sub-1.5" group from 25-yard bench with Remington 185-gr. JHP. Note the 3-shot cluster.

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feel at all disadvantaged with an 8-shot .45 and two spare magazines.

The spare mags, I confess, were downloaded to six rounds each — with the slide forward a full seven-round Shield

magazine has to be really hammered into place and if I needed to perform a tactical reload I figured I'd rather have the old "six for sure" than "seven maybe." I was reminded how sinfully, decadently

comfortable it was to have a 21-oz. pistol on my hip instead of a 39-oz. model holding only one more round of the same ammunition.

I have half a dozen magazines for it, two of the 6-round shorties for deep concealment and four of the extended 7-round ones which give a full grip for all fingers. Kydex holsters from Precision Holster and an IWB from Green Force Tactical give me all the flexibility I need. If I decide to carry it against bare skin beneath an untucked tee or polo shirt, I'll invest in soft, comfortable Talon grips because the same aggressive S&W factory stippling making it so solid in my hand at the match can chafe against an unprotected side.

For me, the S&W Shield .45 began as a likeable acquaintance. It has earned its upgrade to friend, and I'll be sharing more companionship with it in the future. I plan to bring it to The Pin Shoot again in 2020.



S&W M&P Shield .45 with 6-round "concealment" magazine in place. Mas carries his "on safe" as shown.

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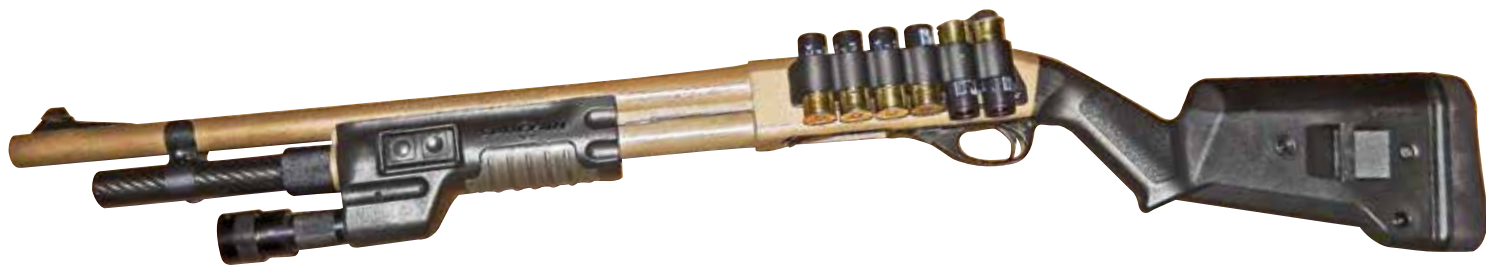
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Denny's personal Remington 870 set-up for tactical/self-defense use. Magpul SGA stock allows the user to adjust the LOP to properly fit the shooter.

## MAKE MINE A SHOTGUN

### THE SCATTERGUN IS STILL VERSATILE *AND* VIABLE

In the last decade or so, the shotgun has been largely eclipsed by semiautomatic carbines — especially the AR-15/M4 — for use by law enforcement and private citizens. Yet, even though the shotgun does not have the same CDI (“Chicks dig it”) factor of the carbines, it remains the most versatile of all commonly encountered weapon platforms.

#### CONS

The most frequently heard complaints about the shotgun are 1) they have a low ammo capacity, 2) are slow to reload, and 3) the recoil is so punishing few will take the time to practice and become proficient with them.

Let's look at each one of these in order. For our purpose, we'll confine the following to the tried and true slide-action (pump) shotgun.

It's true when compared to the latest XYZ Super Blaster, they don't have the ability to miss so fast you can't catch up. However, assuming you're not repelling an invading Mongol horde, how much ammunition do

you really need to prevail in a non-military encounter?

If you truly feel the need to increase the capacity, there are a plethora of aftermarket magazine extensions available at a reasonable price. The Mossberg 590M comes with a 10-round detachable magazine and a 20-round mag is available. This ammo load keeps up with virtually all pistols and rivals the AR-15. To carry more shells onboard, there are accessories — such as the Side-Saddle — which attach to the receiver.

With the exception of a shotgun with a detachable magazine, they are indeed slower to reload but with proper technique a shooter can keep the gun running. Years ago, I was taught by the late, great Louis Awerbuck to “shoot one, load one; shoot two, load two.” In other words, load when you can, not when you have to.

In my experience the objectional recoil can be mitigated to a large degree with a stock properly suited to the shooter. The length of pull (LOP) most shotguns come with from the factory are too long for most folks. To reach the trigger, people of smaller

stature must place their body in an awkward position, which actually increases felt recoil. A stock with spacers, such as the Magpul SGA Stock allows a shooter to properly fit the stock to their own physique as well as heavy clothing or other outer gear.

Another option is to go with a lighter-recoiling 20-gauge rather than a 12-gauge.

#### PROS

Between my time as a peace officer and attending numerous high-round count shotguns courses — as well as time on my home range and hunting — I have not witnessed a single malfunction with a pump-action shotgun which wasn't shooter-induced by “short stroking” the action. The reputation they have for reliability is legendary.

While carbine payload choices are basically limited to bullet weight, the selection of ammunition capable of being fired from a 12-gauge pump is staggering. They include slugs, buckshot, birdshot (for training and hunting), gas rounds, less-lethal rubber balls and beanbags, breaching rounds, flares and more. Personally, I avoid the 3" Magnum shell. While you do get more bang for the buck, this is one case where its bite is worse than its bark.



Denny's shotgun is equipped with integral SureFire forearm/light combo and Lyman carbon fiber magazine extension.





A small sample of shotgun payloads (left to right): slug, buckshot, birdshot, rubber ball, CN gas and bean bag. No other weapon offers such a wide variety of load choices.

There is a common myth buckshot will spread one inch per yard. My "social" shotguns are all cylinder bore and they will shoot Federal Premium 00 buckshot with FLITECONTROL wads into 8" at 35 yards and almost as well with Hornady 00 buckshot with Versatite wads. Shotguns, even those with consecutive serial

numbers, may prefer one brand of ammo to another. I recommend patterning your shotgun with several different brands, find out what it likes, and stick to the same brand and type.

Quality slugs turns the shotgun into a

long gun capable of good accuracy — especially with "rifle sights." However, I have seen more than one shooter fire groups measuring 5" from 75 yards with a simple bead sight. This is hardly comparable to a rifle, but certainly within minute-of-bad-guy.





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Mossberg Shockwave is ideal for deploying from tight confines, such as a vehicle.



Quick change artist: Swap the barrel and this shotgun changes from a “serious” self-defense gun into a fowling piece — an obvious bonus in a *real* survival situation.



The shotgun can be configured in many ways from tactical to hunting. A single gun can be used for either purpose with a quick swap of an 18" barrel to a full-size 26" tube.

A few years back Mossberg came out with the 590 Shockwave utilizing a 14" barrel but is a “firearm” per the Gun Control Act (GCA) and not a Class 3/NFA firearm due to its Raptor bird’s head pistol grip and overall length. Other companies

soon began copying the concept.

The Shockwave and others of its ilk do not have the punishing recoil exhibited on most pistol gripped equipped shotguns. Their compact size allows them to be brought on target in confined spaces such as a vehicle.

The shotgun may be the perfect all-around survival gun. When used for defense, the stopping power of a 12-gauge is well documented. It can take large game

with slugs and can be used for rabbits and birds with birdshot. True, you can shoot a rabbit or bird with a .223 carbine, but there may not be enough left of it to make up for the calories spent during the stalk.

Make mine a shotgun — it will provide me with true social security in my old age. 🦅

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## THE .270 WINCHESTER

### A BIG GAME LEGACY BUILT WITH PERFORMANCE

The .270 Winchester cartridge was introduced in 1925. A case could be made for it as the most successful American hunting cartridge of the 20th century. The .30-'06 is undoubtedly the greatest cartridge, and the .223 Rem. and .308 Win. outrank the .270 in sales. But these are all military cartridges, with all the advantages of familiarity and brass availability. The .270 made it entirely as a hunting round, primarily a big game cartridge.

#### UNDERDEVELOPED

A criticism of the .270 is it got a bit left behind in bullet development. There are

many target rifles in 6mm, 6.5mm, 7mm, .30 cal. and hence a huge array of cutting-edge bullets. One seldom hears of a .270 being used for competitive shooting. Nonetheless there are some very fine match and hunting bullets from Berger and others in .270. One I especially like is the 145-gr. Hornady ELD-X.

Over nearly 50 years I've loaded hundreds of .270 rounds. In my experience with 22" barrels the 130-gr. bullets produce 3,000-3,050 fps and 150-gr. bullets 2,850 to 2,900 fps. I started loading the .270 using the old surplus H-4831 (still have a few pounds) and have used several others, all giving much the same results.

In the last couple of years, I've been reading reports of good results with Alliant RL-26 with 150-gr. .270 loads. I'm wary of "magic pixie dust" claims for new powders but the reports were intriguing. Then I thought, "new bullet, new powder, why not a new rifle? And to make things interesting make it one with a 24" barrel." My local dealer had a Weatherby Vanguard with 24" barrel, a special run green synthetic stock with black spiderweb and detachable box magazine.

#### THE RIFLE

The Weatherby Vanguard is one of the very best bolt-action rifles available at any price. At the prices I see on dealer shelves it's in a class by itself for value. Howa has been making this model since the 1970s. In terms of design, quality of materials,





workmanship and performance they have got it down cold. I've owned or tested at least a dozen Vanguards and have never had a problem with one, or seen one failing to shoot sub-moa.

The new .270 was no exception. Out of the box the excellent two-stage trigger broke cleanly right at 3 lbs., while function was flawless in all respects. Just to show I can be nitpicky too, the thick, soft recoil pad was fitted just a hair offline, not enough to notice visually but I could feel it with my fingertips.

I added a Leupold 20 MOA Picatinny rail and fitted a Nightforce NXS 2.5-10 x 42. Out of the box the Vanguard weighed 7 1/2 lb., The Nightforce scope weighs 19 oz. with base and rings, bringing the total weight (empty) came to 8 3/4 lb.



Dave's "once in a lifetime" custom rifle, a pre-'64 Winchester 70 with Featherweight barrel and Leupold 2.5-8 x 36, built by Biesen.



Laser rangefinders, portable weather stations, ballistic programs and high-BC bullets wring out the maximum accuracy potential from the .270 Winchester.

## ROLLING 'EM

Components included W-W brass and Winchester Large Rifle primers. Bullets were seated to a cartridge overall length of 3.415", the longest the magazine would allow. The Alliant reloading site doesn't have data for 145-gr. bullets, but for the Speer 150-gr. BTSP they show a charge of 60.4 grains of RL-26 for a muzzle velocity of 3,034 fps from a 24" barrel.

In the Weatherby rifle with this load my Oehler chronograph gave the following

results (average of five rounds): 60.0 grains, 3,050 fps; 61.0 grains, 3,104 fps; 62.0 grains, 3,152 fps. Consistency was excellent with extreme spreads of only 15–25 fps for each of the five shot strings.

Just to put this in perspective, in 24" barrels current factory velocity for the .264 Win. Mag. with 140-gr. bullets is listed as 3,030 fps. For the 7mm Rem. Mag., most 140-gr. factory loads are listed at 3,150 fps. Maybe there is something to this magic pixie dust after all!



Dave's latest .270 rifle — a 24"-barrel Weatherby Vanguard from a special run outfitted with green/black stock and Nightforce NXS 2.5-10 x 42 scope.

# "THE .270 MADE IT ENTIRELY AS A HUNTING ROUND, PRIMARILY A BIG GAME CARTRIDGE."

Of course, this is an apples/oranges comparison as the magnum cartridge velocities can also be enhanced by handloading and the 7mm Rem. Mag. really comes into its own with bullets of 160 grains and up.

## THE FINAL ANSWER

I settled on the 61.0-gr. load for two reasons: 3,100 is plenty fast enough for my needs and with the 62.0-gr. load I had to tap the case and settle the powder a bit to avoid compressing the charge. Accuracy was outstanding, no surprise there. We were blessed with a couple of calm days so most accuracy testing was done at 300 yards, with three-shot groups running 2–3".

In the 22" barrel of my 1982-era Winchester 70 Featherweight, the 61.0-gr. loads averaged 3,040 fps — similar to what I expect with 130-gr. bullets. Considering the heavier weight and higher ballistic coefficient of the ELD-X bullet, this is commendable.

With laser rangefinders and reliable scope adjustments, velocity is not so



The .270 fixin's — W-W brass and primers, Alliant RL-26 and Hornady 145-gr. ELD-X bullets improve an already exceptional big game cartridge.

critical in dealing with bullet drop. Where velocity and slippery bullets really help is in reducing wind drift. Time of flight of the bullet is less important in shooting at static

targets, but is important in hunting. Game animals can move, for reasons of their own, in the interval between the trigger breaking and the bullet arriving.



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## HARD TO PIN DOWN ACCURACY PROBLEMS? MAYBE IT'S THE FIRING PIN!

If there is a firearm using metallic cartridges that operates without a firing pin, I'm completely unaware of it. In fact, the firing pin is the most important part of any firearm. Without one, a gun is little more than a conglomeration of parts. A firearm's primary purpose is to slam the firing pin into a primer with enough force to cause ignition.

### A CORNUCOPIA OF PINS

Firing pins come in an amazing variety of styles and sizes. Bolt-action rifles, as a rule, have long firing pins about the length of the entire bolt body. Some handguns such as Colt Single Action Army sixguns have very small firing pins. They are so small as to appear fragile but how many have you ever

seen broken? It happens but is rare. Firing pins are not always straight in shape. Old Smith & Wesson #3 revolvers had curved firing pins. Old Sharps "buffalo rifles" had a dog-leg-shaped pin arrangement. In revolvers, firing pins over the years have gravitated from hammer mounted to frame mounted. However, it should be noted Colt Conversion .44 revolvers introduced in 1871 had frame mounted ones.

### LIKE THE BATTERY BUNNY

After what I said in the initial paragraph, the following statement may seem odd — some varieties of firearms will continue shooting with broken firing pins. I've seen it happen many times and experienced it myself. The ones I've experienced are

BPCRs (black powder cartridge rifles), namely a Sharps Model 1874 and Remington #1 "rolling block." Once I was shooting an original Sharps '74 at a silhouette match. My score started out great but deteriorated to the embarrassing level by the event's end. As I carried the rifle back to my cleaning bench muzzle down someone noted, "Mike, something fell out of your barrel." It was the firing pin.

Those Sharps '74s were designed so their pins were "captured" in breech blocks. After breaking, they won't fall out until the rifle's muzzle is pointed downwards. Even broken a tip can still be pushed by its "transfer bar" with enough force to ignite the primer but it's not as beneficial as it might sound. Floating loose in its "tunnel," a broken pin hits the primers with a variety of force. For the best ignition and therefore the most consistent of powder burn, primers must strike consistently. I've heard self-styled experts say, "All a primer has to do is go off; then its job is done." Not so. Light or variable firing pin strikes can cause vertical stringing and/or dismal groups. At BPCR silhouette matches, if a competitor's rifle with known accuracy suddenly "goes south" the first thing experienced shooters say is, "Check the firing pin." It is usually the culprit.

### BUT SOMETIMES IT'S NOT ...

A firing pin doesn't necessarily have to be broken to cause problems. Anything impinging on its strike to primer will cause



A tale of three pins: A broken firing pin for a modern Sharps Model 1874 replica (left), a Remington #1 "Rolling Block" showing a broken firing pin tip (middle) and an original Model 1874 transfer bar with the firing pin broken off.

Some firing pins are relatively tiny. This one on the hammer of a U.S. Firearms single action is the early cone-shaped type. It is nearly impossible to break.







Japanese Type 14 8mm Nambu semi-auto pistols had such a reputation for breaking firing pins they came with a spare and their holsters even had a special slot for them.

erratic accuracy. One of my Shiloh Sharps .45-70 Model 1874's impressive precision suddenly disappeared. On inspection the firing pin was fine. Deeper searching revealed something in the lock plate had shifted causing the hammer to slightly rub on the edge of the breechblock in falling.

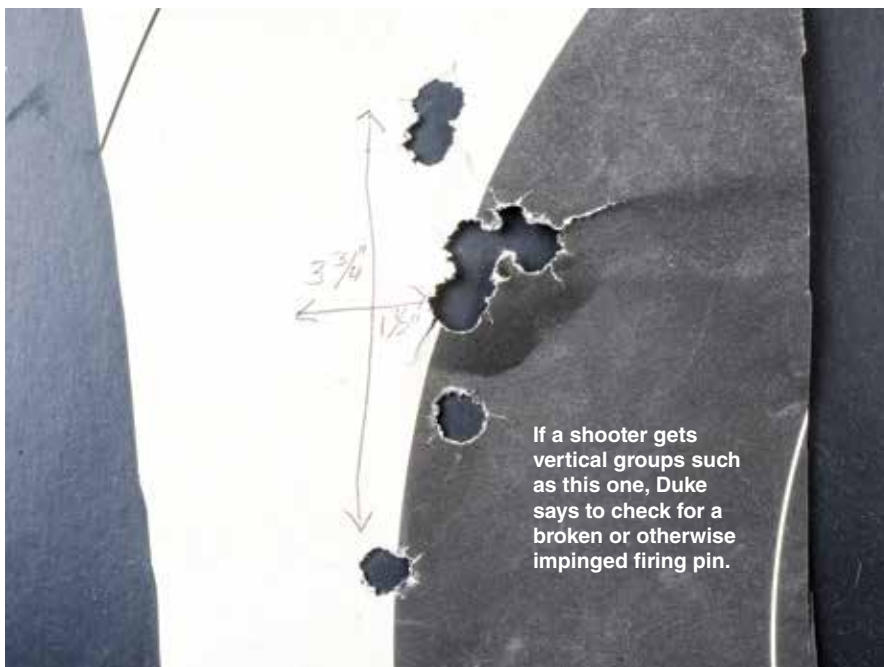
Once it was rectified, shooting precision returned. With old military rifles I've seen mediocre groups turn to very good ones by cleaning dried oil or Cosmoline from bolt body interiors. The dried "gunk" in there had been cushioning firing pin travel or the firing pin was not able to move far enough

forward to ensure positive ignition.

Speaking of military firearms, from my experience the two with the most unusual firing pin set-ups are Japanese Type 14 Nambu 8mm semi-auto pistols and U.S. M1A1 .45 Thompson sub machine guns. The Type 14 Nambu's had such a reputation for breaking firing pins the Japanese Army and Navy issued them with a spare. Their holsters even had a special slot to store those spare pins — such things couldn't give a Japanese officer much confidence in their sidearm.

Conversely, the American U.S. M1A1 "Tommy Gun" didn't have a separate firing pin at all. It was a simple nub machined into the bolt face. Those submachine guns fired from an open bolt, i.e., the bolt is always locked back until the trigger is pulled, so there is no danger of an accidental "slam fire." I'm not saying it's impossible for an M1A1 Thompson's firing pin to break but I cannot see how it would have been possible.

Firing pins are absolutely necessary but can be a source of despair for shooters if not inspected regularly. When a good rifle or handgun starts shooting poorly, the firing pin and/or its ability to strike primers properly is the first thing I check. 



If a shooter gets vertical groups such as this one, Duke says to check for a broken or otherwise impinged firing pin.



## THE .32 WINCHESTER SPECIAL

"EVERYTHING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PRACTICAL ..."

The first John M. Browning-designed Winchester arrived as the Model 1886. Browning then basically reduced the size of the action to come up with the Model 1892 which was chambered in .44 WCF as well as .38 WCF and .32 WCF. Browning's next design for Winchester is one of the most popular rifles of all time with more than 7 million Model 1894 leverguns being produced. When I was a kid in grade school the 2 millionth 1894 was presented to then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Originally the Model 1894 was chambered for two black powder cartridges, the .38-55 and the .32-40. In 1895 the first American smokeless powder rifle cartridge arrived as the .30 WCF, or as more commonly known today, the .30-30. Shortly after the turn-of-the-century, Winchester brought out the 1894 chambered in .32 Winchester

Special. This cartridge is not to be confused with the .32 WCF or .32-20 which is a much shorter cartridge. Whereas the .30 WCF has a twist of 1:12 the .32 Winchester Special was given a barrel twist of 1:16.

There are a lot of myths surrounding the .32 Winchester Special and the best way to find out the facts is by going back to the original information provided by Winchester. This is from an early catalog — *.32 Special Caliber Rifles For Smokeless or Black Powder. The .32 Winchester Special cartridge, which we have adapted our popular Model 1894 Rifle to handle, was developed to meet the demand of many sportsmen for a smokeless powder cartridge of larger caliber than the .30 Winchester, yet not so powerful as the .30 Army, and which could be loaded with black powder. This cartridge fills all these requirements. Rifles of this caliber can be*

*furnished in styles to meet all tastes.*

My experience with the .32 Winchester Special began with a trip to my local gun store, Buckhorn Guns, to pick up a pistol which had arrived for test and evaluation. As I was filling out the paperwork, Chris placed a Winchester levergun in front of me without saying a word. I accused him of taking advantage of the feeble-minded. My favorite rifles are leverguns and my favorite leverguns are the short-barrel Trapper Models. Now here in front of me was a pristine Winchester 1894 Trapper Wrangler chambered in .32 Winchester Special. There was no way I could resist so both my test pistol and the .32 Trapper came home with me. It turned out to be a virtually unfired rifle manufactured by Winchester Repeating Arms.

Once I got it home, I quickly ordered a set of Lee Precision Dies. These are typical

For loading the .32 Winchester Special with 170-gr. cast and jacketed bullets, John uses the Lee Precision dies as well as the Lee Factory Crimp die.



Essentials for loading the .32 Winchester Special include Lee Precision dies, as well as the Lee Universal Expander and Factory Crimp dies.



John's most used powders for jacketed bullets in the .32 Winchester Special are WW748, BL-C (2) and Reloder 7.





Missouri Bullet Company 170-gr. cast bullets from the .32 Winchester Special at 25 yards with the factory iron sights.

rifle 2-die sets, with one die for full-length sizing and de-capping while the other is for seating and crimping. As with most bottleneck cartridges there is no die included for expanding the case mouth. I already had a Lee Universal Expanding Die and I also ordered a Lee .32 Winchester Special Factory Crimp Die. The Universal Expanding Die comes with two tapered plugs to handle everything from .22 to .45 caliber. I find both of these invaluable for loading semi-automatic pistol cartridges as well as most rifle cartridges. Once the cartridge has been full-length-sized I then use the Universal Expanding Die to just kiss the case mouth to allow easy insertion of a flat base bullet. It is also invaluable when loading cast bullets. Without this step, a bullet may collapse the case, while a cast bullet may shave off lead which will probably wind up smeared inside the barrel.

## FINDING IT

Now the .32 Winchester Special brass is not something to be found on many gun shop shelves. Buckhorn had three boxes of factory Remington Core-Lokt 170-gr. .32 Specials and I also ordered 200 rounds of Hornady brass. For bullets I went with 170-gr. FN jacketed bullets from Speer and Hornady as well as 170-gr. cast bullets designed for the .32-40 from Missouri Bullet Company.

It takes two extra steps to load the .32 Winchester Special and these are the same steps I use for loading the .30-30. Once I have applied the proper kiss to the mouth of the

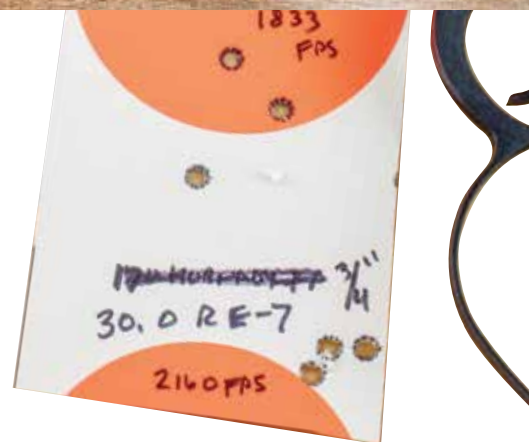
case and used the RCBS powder measure to drop the proper powder charge, I then seat the bullets without crimping. After I have a full loading block of uncrimped brass, I then use the Lee Factory Crimp Die. Instead of having one ring of metal which squeezes the crimp, the Lee has four collets which squeeze in on the case resulting in a factory-style crimp. The Lee die is very easy to set. It is simply screwed into the press until it meets the shell holder and then turned one half turn more. It is now ready to provide a quality crimp.

## TAKE IT EASY

Most of my loads for the .32 Winchester Special are easy-shooting rounds. The 170 Hornady FP over 34.0 grains of WW748 clocks out at 1,725 fps and groups just under 1" at 45 yards. Moving up to 36.0 grains gives the same accuracy and 1,825 fps, while 36.0 grains of BL-C (2) gives the same muzzle velocity as the lighter load of WW748 as well as the same accuracy.

Remington's 170-gr. Core-Lokt clocked out at 2,165 fps from this short-barreled Wrangler and I duplicate this load with the Speer 170 FN over 30.0 grains of Reloder-7. This is an exceptionally accurate load grouping three shots into 3/4" at 45 yards.

My cast bullet loads are assembled with the above-mentioned Missouri Bullet Company 170-gr. hard cast bullet using Red Dot. With 8.0 grains, muzzle velocity is just over 1,300 fps and upping the powder charge to 9.5 grains of Red Dot increases



The bottom target shot at 45 yards is John's factory duplication load.

the muzzle velocity to just under 1,450 fps. These are very easy shooting and quite accurate. With plain-based bullets I discovered long ago 1,400–1,500 fps was the upper level for accuracy — and no problems with lead in the bore — so I see no reason to try to push these bullets any faster.

It would be easy to say *why bother?* with the .32 Winchester Special since the .30-30 has such widespread appeal and really not much, if anything, is gained by going to the .32 Special. However, everything doesn't have to be practical and I enjoy the pure enjoyment of shooting this .32 Special Wrangler Winchester Trapper. That's enough reason for me. It must also be enough for many other shooters as Winchester announced the return of the .32 Winchester Special Model 94 in 2018. 🦋

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# TAKING CARE OF YOUR AIR (RIFLE)

## MAINTENANCE TIPS FOR THE AIR GUNNER

**Tom McHale**

Besides the quiet, backyard-friendly nature of airguns, they offer another big benefit which could save your marriage. Without all the fire and brimstone common to rimfire and centerfire guns, there are no kitchen counter cleaning chores after every outing. No burnt carbon. No copper jacket fouling. No massive heat baking on dirt and oil residue. OK, there may be an occasional lead cleaning; we'll get to that in a minute. All the time you'll save cleaning allows you to do a bang-up job in keeping up with a handful of airgun maintenance chores. Follow them and your guns will be plinking into the next century.

### OIL THE GAS

If you have a CO<sub>2</sub>-powered airgun, like the SIG SAUER M17 pellet pistol I used here, proper lube and maintenance is a cinch. First, get yourself a tube of Pellgun Oil from Crosman. It's available at most any sporting goods seller, big box store or online retailer. It'll cost you a whopping three

bucks, give or take, and keep your pellet or BB gun running in tip top shape. The usage procedure is complicated, so pay close attention. Ready?

### PUT A DROP ON THE TOP OF EACH NEW CYLINDER

That's it. A small drop placed right where the CO<sub>2</sub> seal will be pierced will self-lubricate the guts of your CO<sub>2</sub> airgun. It'll keep the CO<sub>2</sub> seal itself functional and blow through just enough oil for the rest of the internals. Since the tip of a CO<sub>2</sub> cylinder is only so big, it's virtually impossible to over-lubricate.

### HAVE PATIENCE WITH YOUR BREAK-BARREL RIFLE

Like other firearms, a break-barrel air rifle wants to settle into its groove. According to Lawrence Taylor from Gamo, "Put more than 100 pellets — and in many cases more than a couple hundred — before becoming overly concerned about

**“WHILE WE’RE TALKING ABOUT BREAK-BARREL AIR RIFLES, BE SURE TO AVOID CHOPPING OFF YOUR FINGERS.”**

When cocking a break-barrel rifle, always keep a firm grasp on the muzzle end until the action is cycled, fully closed and locked.



extreme accuracy. Then, try a variety of pellet weights and styles to identify the one your gun likes the most.”

### COCK LIKE A BOSS

While we’re talking about break-barrel air rifles, be sure to avoid chopping off your fingers. When cocking a break-barrel, it’s important, no, make this *critically important* to keep your hand firmly on the muzzle end until the cocking cycle is complete and the barrel is all the way back in its locked position. If for any reason the trigger lets go or is inadvertently pressed, and the barrel isn’t firmly under your control, it will slam shut at warp speed with the breech end heading right towards the hand you used to load a pellet. Too many airgunners have sustained serious hand damage and lost parts of (or all) fingers by ignoring this safety procedure.

### DON’T BLOW YOURSELF UP!

Pre-charged pneumatic (PCP) airguns store their air at very high pressure, usually between 3,000 and 4,500 psi. Now, have you ever noticed diesel engines work by combining something flammable with high pressure? Well, using a petroleum-based oil inside of a high-pressure PCP airgun can result in some very undesirable internal combustion. For external parts unrelated to the air system, a quality oil can be okay. For anything remotely related to the air system, like seals, only use a pure silicone lubricant. Silicone operates safely at a much higher pressure. Above all, since every airgun is different, follow manufacturer directions faithfully. This is one case where the instructions really do matter.

### KEEP THE PRESSURE UP

If you have a PCP air rifle, be sure to keep a minimum charge in the air reservoir. As with those end-of-the-world germ virus outbreak movies, keeping positive pressure in the tank prevents outside air from coming in. For the Hollywood Hero’s germ lab, positive pressure keeps cooties from getting into their office. For your rifle, the pressure in the reservoir prevents ambient (and *damp*) air from getting into your rifle. Your manufacturer will specify a minimum storage pressure.

### CLEANING THE BARREL? MEH.

Most airguns don’t require frequent barrel cleaning and some never require cleaning at all unless you introduce dirt or fouling in some other way. Without all the heat, burnt power, and carbon residue, they tend to stay clean with no extra care and maintenance. If you do notice a degradation of accuracy over time, go ahead and give it a gentle cleaning but it’s not unusual to shoot for a long, long time without a need for a scrubbing.

### STORING A BREAK-BARREL RIFLE

When you finish shooting a break-barrel air rifle for the day, take care to leave it un-cocked after firing your last shot. Most manufacturers strongly recommend not storing a break-barrel, spring or piston air rifle under pressure. It takes a bit of planning to reach a safe storage condition because most manufacturers also recommend you don’t dry-fire a spring or piston-powered air rifle. They’re designed to operate with a pellet in the chamber to offer the right amount of resistance.



The Foster fitting where you connect an external air supply on a PCP is one place you definitely do not want to lubricate. Keep it dry and clean!



Always keep a minimum charge in your PCP air tank. The positive pressure prevents damp ambient air — or weak political promises — from getting into the system.



Maintaining a CO<sub>2</sub> airgun is easy — just add a drop of Pellgun oil to the top of each new CO<sub>2</sub> cylinder as you load it.

So, take the last “real” shot and pack up your rifle immediately after so it doesn’t get cocked again.

These few tips will take you a long way with a variety of airgun types. This is a direct result of their simplicity and the fact they don’t contain repeated explosions with every shot. All the commotion inherent to the fire and brimstone world creates not only wear and tear on the gun, but rapid removal of lubricants and plenty of residual gunk. Without such things, you can spend a lot more time shooting and a lot less time maintaining.







# JOHNSON MODEL 1941

## LONG-LOST GEM FROM WWII'S "SECOND STRING" LINEUP

## Payton Miller

When the U.S. military selects a new rifle or pistol, some mighty fine “also-rans” are the inevitable result. Want a relatively recent example? In the early 1980s the Beretta M92 beat out the SIG P226 for general issue, although the SIG later achieved cult status as a limited-issue choice for several elite units. Okay, how about an earlier example?

## TWO MEN, TWO RIFLES

Although Melvin Maynard Johnson (1909-1965) may have lost America's WWII semi-auto rifle sweepstakes to John C. Garand, his contributions to military small arms outnumbered those of his Canadian-born competitor. Besides his namesake 1941 rifle, he also developed a recoilless mortar, various experimental flash hiders and an aircraft cannon. His Model 1941 Johnson Light Machine Gun was employed by the Marine Raiders, Paramarines and the Army Special Service Force in the European Theater.

IN USMC SERVICE

More than 20 years ago, my shooting buddy Thomas Mackie showed me a Model 1941 Johnson semi-auto rifle he'd acquired. Thomas, to put it charitably, is not a major fan of bolt-action rifles. I guess he'd rather not go through the indignity of having to throw a bolt manually.

However, when my Dad found out about Thomas' acquisition, his eyes lit up. Until then I'd pretty much assumed the M1 Garand was the only .30-06 semi-auto battle rifle fielded by the U.S. military in WWII. Wrong! I got schooled real quick by my Dad. Relatively few U.S. servicemen got "close and personal" with the Model 1941 Johnson, but my Dad was one of them.

My Dad was a Paramarine until the elite USMC unit was disbanded — along with the Marine Raiders — roughly at the close of the brutal Solomon Islands campaign. After they turned in their parachutes, Dad was reassigned to the 28th Regiment, 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton from where he was sent to take part in the Iwo Jima landings on February 19, 1945. There, he served as a flamethrower-operator until he

was seriously wounded by a sniper about a week or so after Mt. Suribachi was taken. By then, of course, the Johnson was pretty much out of the picture.

My dad gave Thomas and me a copy of *The Opening Shock*, the publication of the Association of Survivors of World War II Parachute Units, United States Marine Corps. In the July 1996 issue there was a fascinating article written by Joe Aiello called "The Johnson Was the Best!" Aiello, serving with the 6th Marines at the MCRD in San Diego, was part of a 1939 USMC evaluation between an earlier iteration of the Johnson, the M1

[illegible]

**Mid-to-late 1950s ads for surplus Johnsons graced many a vintage gun magazine.**





**Distinctive profile:** The recoil-operated Johnson wasn't as graceful as an M1 Garand, but plenty reliable and not without a racy splash of "Buck Rogers" coolness.



**Comparison:** the recoil-operated Johnson (top) and the gas-operated Garand (bottom). The Garand recoils slightly less and the safety is a bit quicker than the Johnson.

Garand and a Winchester test rifle.

Aiello felt strongly the Johnson was the best of the three. He opined "The only reason the Johnson was not adopted was that the Army had thousands of the Garands and it wouldn't have been politically correct to throw them out."

### UGLY DUCKING

Basically, the Johnson is a short-recoil operated semi-auto with a weight of 9.5 lbs. and a 22" barrel. It feeds from a 10-round rotary magazine loading via side port from 5-round '03 stripper clips or in single cartridge mode. The rifle's weight and overall length of just under 46" puts it in a near-identical class size-wise with an M1. However, the Johnson's bulbous receiver gives it a pregnant look accentuated by its naked, recoiling barrel protruding from a pretty serious looking vented sleeve above the wood forend. Besides the usual .30-06 chambering, the Johnson also was chambered in 7x57 Mauser for export sales.

Although the Johnson may look clumsy — fat middle, skinny barrel — it actually balances pretty well as we found out in offhand shooting berm-bound clay birds at 50 and 100 yards. Although the Johnson does sport a bayonet lug, its recoiling barrel makes the use of a serious M1-style bayonet problematic. The initial solution was a 5" triangular lightweight spike-type bayonet. They were kind of silly and relatively few survived — and now command "tall dollars."

### M1/JOHNSON SHOOTOUT

About a year or so after Dad passed, around late 2000, Thomas and I took the Johnson out to shoot a bit. Nothing serious, no paper targets or sight fiddling — just a couple of pops at a 100-yard gong for giggles. However, Thomas had recently acquired a nice M1 so we decided to see how a WWII-vintage Garand would stack up against the prize Johnson.

We both shot the Johnson and the M1 at 100 yards from a rest, using some 150- and 165-gr. soft points, which weren't impressive in terms of grouping from either rifle. But when we went to some 1948-vintage GI ball, things tightened up considerably from both rifles. Functioning of both, incidentally, was flawless but the Johnson could be loaded without disturbing your firing position, meaning you didn't have to lift your head much to ram down an 8-round *en bloc* clip as was necessary with the Garand.

Our 100-yard groups with the Johnson were, to be honest, over twice the size of those with the Garand. But since neither



**Here's how to load the Johnson via a 5-round stripper clip, plus you can also reload the rotary magazine with single rounds. Try this with your M1!**

Thomas nor I are spring chickens in terms of visual acuity, we were pretty stoked with the results. The Garand gave us 3-shot groups slightly over 2" while the Johnson was over 4". Funny thing was, the Garand's trigger was 5.5 lbs., but clean and reasonably crisp for an issue service rifle while the Johnson was a lesser 4.5 lbs. The difference? The Johnson's was creepy and gritty as hell.

But the Johnson apparently worked and worked well. Bruce Canfield, author of the definitive book on the gun, relates an incident which could well serve as a wry commentary on the overall Johnson/M1 saga:

*Any thought that the Johnson rifle was not suitable as a combat weapon was firmly set to rest by Platoon Sergeant Harry M. Tully of the 1st Parachute Battalion. Tully, armed with an M1941 Johnson semiautomatic rifle killed 42 Japanese at ranges up to 800 yards on Gavutu. Tully also earned the Silver Star for his exploits. Sgt. Tully's story was later printed in the December 1, 1942, issue of Look magazine. Ironically, in the accompanying artwork, Tully was depicted armed with an M1 Garand rifle rather than the Johnson rifle he actually used.*

### PARTING SHOTS

The upshot? The M1 went on to earn Gen. Patton's accolade of "The Best Battle Implement Ever Devised" while the Johnson went on to grace black and white surplus rifle ads in 1950s-'60s magazines, including *GUNS*. Since then, prices have gone up accordingly, a phenomenon not totally attributable to inflation. After all, they ain't making any more of 'em!

But there's something else to explain the distinctive appeal of the Johnson — they're just plain cool!





## CROSSFIRE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*continued from page 8*

and never tire of shooting — especially with younger family members.

Holt seems to find the most interesting guns to talk about, we never get tired of hearing from him. Of course, any get-together would never be complete without Duke and Yvonne. His words of wisdom on restorations touched a chord with me because that is what I have done in my shop for over 25 years. Mark was telling about his turkey hunt here with the crossbow; it makes me think maybe I might like to try one. Dr. Will comes up with the most interesting guns and related stuff. Wish most doctors were like him.

I am really looking forward to our next get-together, but I need to get out to the shop and start work on that old Stevens Crackshot. See you guys later!

*Joel Monteith*

**“AFTER READING  
THE ARTICLE, I SLIPPED  
INTO A DREAM STATE  
WHERE I WAS TELEPORTED  
TO MONTE CARLO ...”**

### SENSUAL NIGHTHAWK

I thoroughly enjoyed Dr. Dabbs' article entitled "The Nighthawk, Custom Agent 2." This could be the most sensual gun article I have ever read. Upon completion I considered a cold shower and an apology to my wife. Appropriately, it was the centerfold.

After reading the article, I slipped into a dream state where I was teleported to

Monte Carlo. I dabbed (pun intended) a bit of Hoppes on my face, slipped into my rented powder blue tuxedo, and drove my Jeep to the casino for a moonshine martini. One needs fortitude for counter-alien insurgency operations. Upon entering I was embraced by a striking Bond Arms girl. She whispered in my ear "My, that is a big gun in your trousers. Is that a Nighthawk Custom







Agent 2"? Keep up the good work! I enjoy all of your magazines.

*M.C. McClintock*

*Will and I both enjoyed your commentary, but Will is concerned I might hire you to replace him! —BW*

#### LEGENDARY PERFORMANCE

I just read the November issue of *GUNS Magazine* and as usual, I really liked it. I read Brent T. Wheat's article "350 Legend Ranch Rifle" and I enjoyed it, but there wasn't a lot of information on the cartridge. I really like the looks of the rifle but how much different is the .350 Legend from the .35 Remington?

*Myron Winchester*

*Thanks for the kind words about the story. It was fun to live and fun to write. The 350 Legend is somewhat similar to the 35 Remington, along with the .357 Max and a couple of others. I didn't add too much of this compare/contrast because there are many ballistically comparable cartridges and I couldn't decide what to choose, so I*



**"THE WINTERS THERE WERE COLD AND WINDY; SNOW FLEW SIDEWAYS SO INDOOR SHOOTING WAS A WAY TO PRACTICE AND TEACH YOUNGSTERS PROPER GUN HANDLING."**



*just said to beek with it. I've had a couple of reader emails similar to yours, but they're all asking about different cartridges! —BW*

#### PLINKIN' WITH PRIMERS

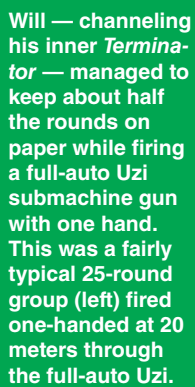
After military and college, I lived in NW Kansas and took up reloading. The winters there were cold and windy; snow flew sideways so indoor shooting was a way to

practice and teach youngsters proper gun handling. I ordered some Speer plastic bullets and cases to shoot (with large pistol primers only) in my .357 Ruger Blackhawk. In our spacious basement, we shot at cardboard boxes with homemade targets on them. I thought of those times while

*continued on page 66*



TERMINATE::: WILL DABBS..... MD





# CLASSIC SHOTS

## FROM CLASSIC FILMS

### CAN LIFE IMITATE ART?



#### WILL DABBS, MD

Guns are an integral part of modern cinema. Our enthusiasm for firearms in movies stems from the basic suspension of disbelief intrinsic to the experience. Whether it be robbing banks, getting the girl, righting egregious wrongs or leaping over tall buildings in a single bound, movies allow us to experience extraordinary things without running afoul of social mores or violating the immutable laws of Physics.

Most diehard gun nerds enjoy a good action movie almost as much as we enjoy a relaxing day at the range. Movie minutiae always make for spirited conversation anyplace two or more firearms enthusiasts are gathered. As such, we thought it might be fun to recreate a few of our favorite gun scenes from some of our favorite action movies to see how they played out here in the Real World.

#### HAVE A NICE DAY

Detectives Martin Riggs and Roger Murtaugh defined the *buddy cop* genre in Richard Donner's 1987 action flick *Lethal Weapon*. Danny Glover's Murtaugh was a family man and a seasoned old-school cop close enough to retirement to smell the shuffleboard. Mel Gibson's Riggs was a suicidal adrenaline junky with nothing to live for beyond a derelict travel trailer

and a mutt dog. Their oil-and-water chemistry made the movie an action classic.

As Riggs and Murtaugh are reluctantly getting acquainted, they find themselves together on the police indoor shooting range. Murtaugh uses his ported .357 Magnum Smith & Wesson Model 19 to snap shoot a single hole in the center of his target's head. Riggs then runs the target out to the limits of the range, raises his Beretta 92F 9mm, and proceeds to shoot eyes and a mouth around Murtaugh's nose hole. He runs the target back to admire the smiley face, and then says flatly, "Have a nice day."

Murtaugh, incredulous, asks Riggs if he sleeps with his weapon. Riggs, a former Special Forces sniper per the backstory, answers he would — *if* he ever slept. For a gun nerd like me this is as cool as it gets.

To recreate the scene, we set a standard silhouette at 15 meters and attempted the identical exercise. A 'Smith Model 66 stands in for the Model 19 wheelgun of the movie, but the Beretta 92F is otherwise spot on. Considering the best group, I can print with the Beretta at this range is around 2", our subsequent happy face turned out more like Salvador Dali's work than Norman Rockwell. After several iterations we just gave up. With the proper tools, however, the results can be simply splendid.

REPORTING



Using a new CSA45 carbine from Flint River Armory, we produced several nice smiley faces at the same range from a proper rest. The CSA45 is a piston-driven, gas-operated defensive carbine capable of printing single ragged holes at close combat ranges. Taking our time and using the CSA45 we could easily reproduce Mel Gibson's happy face performance in *Lethal Weapon*.

### I'LL BE BACK

The original Terminator was a Cyberdyne Systems Model 101. On the outside is skin, flesh and bad breath but on the inside is a hyperalloy combat chassis, heavily armored and very tough. This was how Kyle Reese, the soldier from the future sent back to protect a young and vulnerable Sarah Connor, described Arnold Schwarzenegger's humanoid killing machine in the 1984 James Cameron epic *The Terminator*.

During a career spanning more than 30 films, Schwarzenegger's depiction of the pitiless cyborg from the future is likely his best work. The Terminator looked bad, sounded weird, and projected a timeless cruelty perfectly channeling Schwarzenegger's muscle-bound ambience. In one of the cooler scenes in this unimpeachably cool movie, the Terminator pursues his quarry into a classic 1980s disco called *Tech Noir*. After failing to terminate the girl with a stainless 1911 Long slide equipped with a then-revolutionary onboard laser sight, the Terminator indexes to a concealed full auto Uzi and hoses down the crowded dance club. All of the Uzi work was done one-handed.

We set up a standard silhouette at 15 meters and then



In *Lethal Weapon*, Mel Gibson's character displayed superhuman marksmanship with a Beretta 92F. Mel was busy so Will's son Wyatt agreed to pose as stunt-double.

proceeded to blast away one-handed with a full auto Uzi. Of 25 rounds fired, we connected with the paper between 14 and 16 times on several tries. The magazine holds 32 rounds but loading 25 lets you get two mags out of a box of ammo. We no doubt would have fared markedly better had we actually been a 600-lb. nuclear-powered mechanical assassin from the future rather than a skinny 50-year-old gun writer who no longer gets enough aerobic exercise.

### NUMBER ONE WITH A BULLET

John Carpenter made such benchmark films as *Halloween*, *The Fog* and the first remake of *The Thing*. One of my favorite Carpenter films is the dystopian 1981 classic *Escape from New York*.



He doesn't look anything like Issac Hayes in *Escape from New York*, but Will found the MAC-10 and suppressor combo could be used to effectively taunt a paper President.



The plot line of the movie has Air Force One crashing into Manhattan Island in the not-too-distant future. According to the narrative Manhattan has been walled off and transformed into a maximum-security prison populated with the worst dregs and criminals America can produce.

With time winding down on an international summit which could threaten the fate of the entire planet, Snake Plissken, a former Special Forces soldier played by Kurt Russell and condemned for life for robbing the Federal Reserve bank, is the world's last hope. Plissken reluctantly agrees to infiltrate the island prison and rescue the President in exchange for a pardon for his past crimes.

The Duke of New York, a flamboyantly insane character played by Isaac Hayes, runs the prison from the inside. Snake embarks on his mission armed with a sound suppressed 9mm MAC-10 submachine gun equipped with a telescopic sight as well as a Smith & Wesson Model 67 .38 Special pistol, also sporting an optical sight. In relatively short order Snake is captured and the MAC-10 falls into the hands of The Duke.

At one point the President, played by Donald Pleasence, is secured to a wall, the briefcase containing a tape critical to the success of the summit chained to his wrist. The Duke amuses himself by using the MAC-10 in semi-auto to shoot an outline of bullet holes around the terrified President. In a stroke of luck, The Duke nails the latch on the President's briefcase and the vital tape falls to the ground where a lunatic named Romero recovers it.



The Beretta 92 wasn't really up to the task so Will switched to a Flint River Armory CSA 45 carbine and Holosun red-dot sight to print several splendid smiley faces.

To replicate this shot we arranged a standard silhouette at 20 meters and reclined comfortably with our MAC-10 in the manner of The Duke. Taking our time and likewise shooting semi-auto, we traced the outline of the target through a full magazine. While the MAC-10 submachine gun is hardly known for its accuracy potential, we did a decent job of replicating The Duke's performance. We might have nicked Mr. Pleasence here and there, but he would have survived.

## ART AND LIFE

Guns are as much a part of modern movies as wildly over-priced popcorn and desiccated antique hot dogs. Additionally, strategic product placement actually sells quite a few firearms. I bought a Beretta 92 soon after seeing *Lethal Weapon* in the theater, and eventually added facsimiles of the Steyr AUG and HK MP5 to my collection at least partially motivated by their performances in *Die Hard*. Otherwise inexpensive guns with a reliable movie provenance can bring astronomical sums.

Modern advances in digital graphics allow filmmakers to depict just about anything imaginable on the big screen. However, for those of us who do shooting for real, it's always cringe-worthy to see the infamous bottomless magazine or the six-shooter inexplicably firing nine times without a reload. While Hollywood blockbusters continue to push the envelope of credulity, rest assured the selfless staff here at *GUNS Magazine* will tirelessly strive to keep moviemakers honest.

Now, pass the popcorn.



Taking his time, Will outlined a standard silhouette target almost as well as The Duke did in *Escape from New York*.

[www.flintriverarmory.com](http://www.flintriverarmory.com)  
[www.beretta.com](http://www.beretta.com)  
[www.smith-wesson.com](http://www.smith-wesson.com)





**JEREMIAH MCCARTHY**

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

**B**oy, how time flies! A quarter of a century ago, when I was just 13 years old, I was glued to the television set at my grandfather's house watching police cruisers chase a white Ford Bronco somewhere on the West Coast. The year was 1994. The Federal Assault Weapons Ban was signed into law by then President Bill Clinton the same year, putting a decade-long halt on the manufacture or importation of "high-capacity" pistol magazines (i.e., double stack).

Times were tough for gun enthusiasts. I was a young teenager who regularly scoured the firearms classified ads at a time when "pre-ban" was all the rage. Manufacturers were focused on full-size sidearms, and everyday carry (EDC) wasn't even a thing. If you were looking for a reliable, accurate and concealable pistol

in anything larger than .380 ACP, good luck.

Around the same time — perhaps coincidentally, perhaps not — Justin Moon, founder and CEO of Kahr Firearms Group (formerly known as Kahr Arms), introduced the K9 pistol, a compact, single-stack 9mm pistol which set the stage for what would subsequently become referred to as the single-stack revolution.

While many a firearm has come and gone the way of Crystal Pepsi, only a few have stood the test of time — and the Kahr K9 prominent among them. After 25 years and upwards of 40 different variations in caliber, size, and material, Kahr is commemorating the introduction of their barrier-bashing K9 with a limited-edition 25th anniversary pistol sure to get the juices flowing for EDCers everywhere.





# KAHN ARMS K9

## 25th Anniversary

### CELEBRATING THE SINGLE-STACK REVOLUTION

The Kahr K9 Anniversary Model is a special iteration of the market-changing pistol.

#### GET 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT

For the anniversary model, Kahr took 500 of their iconic K9s and tricked them out with (amongst other things) an engraved, commemorative “25 years” logo on the slide, front and rear slide serrations, and an individually numbered steel frame. Topping it all off, the anniversary model wears a Sniper Grey Cerakote finish, tritium night sights from TRUGLO and Hogue aluminum grip panels with a custom-engraved Kahr logo. We received numbers 99 and 100 for review.

The K9 anniversary model is a sharp-looking pistol built on an all-steel frame. It arrived in a lockable hard-sided case with a numbered sticker on the outside. Each gun ships with three magazines (a pair of 7-round mags and an 8-round extended mag), as well as a 1791 Gunleather pancake holster with a commemorative “25 years” Kahr logo and the years “1994-2019”

etched into the side. The famed double-action only (DAO) Kahr Action, along with the 3.5" polished stainless steel barrel, has our K9 measuring out at an overall length of 6" along with a sub-1" slide width — perfectly suited for concealed carry.

#### THE JUICE

The magic of the Kahr Action lies in several patents involving the locking, firing and extraction systems — six, in fact. Similar to the action of Browning's Hi Power pistol, Kahr pistols utilize an offset recoil lug to give the K9 a locked-breech, delayed-blowback design. However, unlike the Browning, Kahr dropped the external hammer in favor of a striker-operated design to help ensure a snag-free draw from concealment.

Another benefit of the offset recoil lug on Kahr pistols can be noticed by looking at the depth at which it sits inside the





**KAHN ARMS K9**  
*25th Anniversary*  
**GUNS**  
MAGAZINE





The perfect gun for everyday personal safety or a special occasion, the Kahr Anniversary K9 merges style and practicality into one package.





Unique "tire-tread" slide porting adds a touch of class to this dressed-up 9mm.

At home on your hip or carefully squirreled away to conserve collector value, the Anniversary K9 stays true to its lineage as one of the first defensive single-stack 9mms.



frame — or, better yet, by shooting it. The design contributes to a much lower bore axis in the K9 than in most pistols, allowing it to be significantly less snappy when compared to similar-sized rigs.

Utilizing what Kahr calls a “safe cam action,” the trigger bar runs closely nestled inside a channel along one side of the frame and rotates a cam performing two functions while the trigger is engaged. Not only does the cam fully cock the striker, it simultaneously disengages the striker block safety just before releasing the striker. The additional level of safety provided by the longer travel of a double-action trigger is further enhanced by the cam, which physically prevents the striker from being released while it’s rotated. While some variants of Kahr pistols do offer manual, external safeties, most do not. Kahr’s 25th anniversary K9 falls into the latter category.

### I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT BUTTER

If you're a shooter who was born and raised on two-stage striker-fired pistols — or maybe you're a breaks-like-a-glass-rod 1911 type of shooter — resist the urge to turn your nose up at the thought of shooting anything with a double-action trigger. The Kahr trigger is really something that needs to be experienced before passing any judgment because there's really nothing else quite like it.

The end result of Kahr's unique design is a buttery smooth double-action pull weight in the 5- to 7-lb. range. On our test model, the trigger pull weight averaged out to 5 lbs., 11 oz. through five pulls. Comparatively, the double-action pull weight of most revolvers find themselves significantly higher on the scale, somewhere between 9 and 12 lbs. of pull weight. Unlike revolvers, the Kahr's trigger doesn't stack, meaning the trigger pull weight stays constant throughout the length of travel, leading to some accurate and enjoyable time on the range.

### RANGE TIME

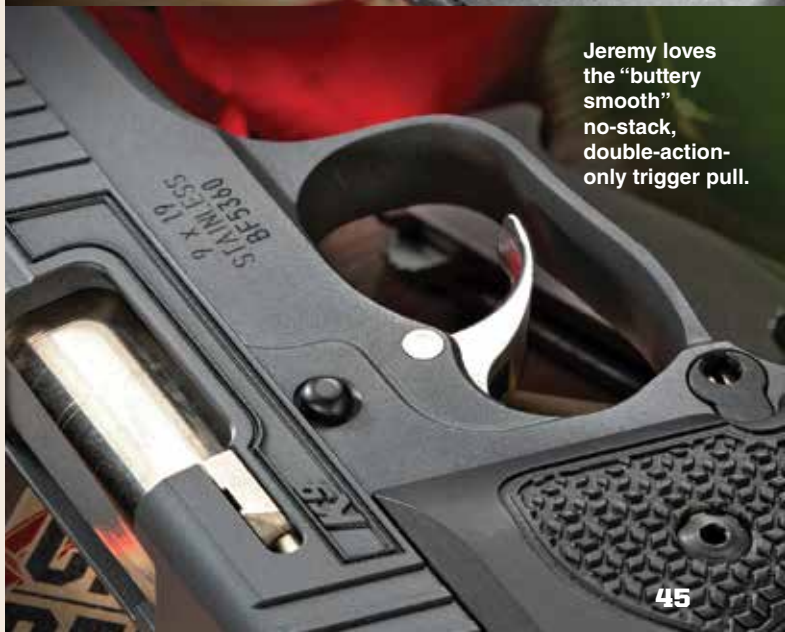
I was curious about what kind of splits I could get while running the K9. Defensive situations are serious business, and time is always of the essence. Due to the additional length of travel required to fully reset the double-action trigger and the additional time it would add to follow-up shots, it was important to me to get the K9 on the clock.

A good friend of mine — an officer with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and fellow National Guardsman — joined me for the day and helped set up a 12" by 20" steel silhouette at 10 yards before getting to work. For comparison, we had a typical two-stage, striker-fired pistol on hand. With shot timer in hand, we timed each other shooting strings of five rounds at the steel target. The steel would have to ring five times in order for the run to count.

At this distance, I'm typically a quarter-second-splits type of guy when I feel like I'm on it. This day would prove similar, and my buddy and I shared roughly equal split times between shots. For the K9, we were running 0.30-second splits with its longer trigger reset — and with our two-stage striker fired pistol, only slightly faster at around 0.25 seconds. With a difference of just five-hundredths of a second between shots with the double-action K9 and two-stage striker fired pistol, it's fair to say the K9 alleviated any concerns about being slow.

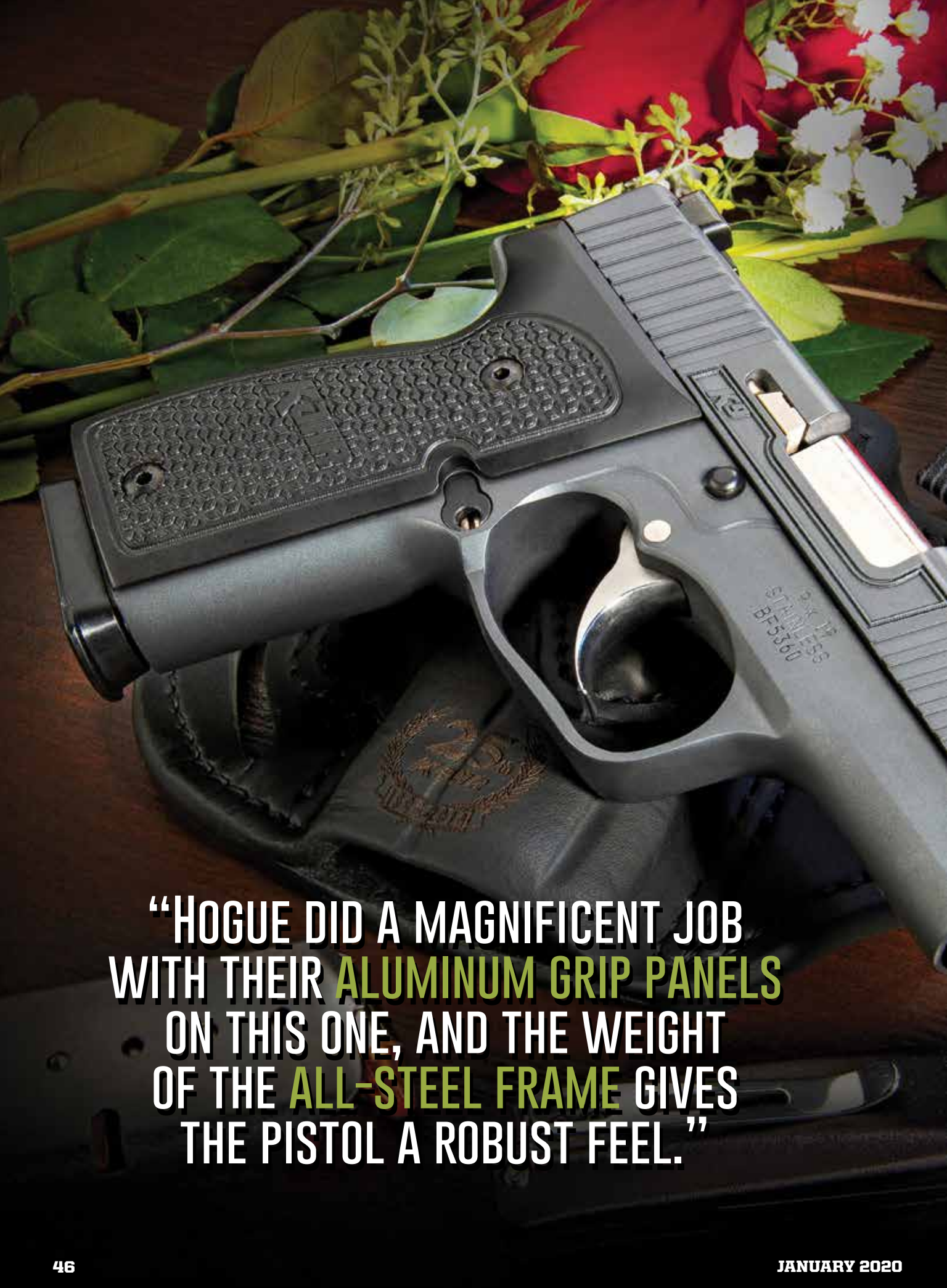


The gun sports an eye-catching logo highlighting 25 years of production and visible unit number designations.



Jeremy loves the “buttery smooth” no-stack, double-action-only trigger pull.





“HOGUE DID A MAGNIFICENT JOB WITH THEIR **ALUMINUM GRIP PANELS** ON THIS ONE, AND THE WEIGHT OF THE **ALL-STEEL FRAME** GIVES THE PISTOL A ROBUST FEEL.”





**Ready to rock? Jeremiah and company put the pistol through paces in an offhand course — who could argue with the results?**

## TAKEAWAYS

I almost always stop listening to someone the second they start to talk about how well or how poorly a particular pistol might fit their hands. I believe “fit” sits near the bottom of the list regarding any implications on how well one can shoot. Sure, comfort is important. However, most feelings regarding how a gun doesn’t fit one’s hands properly can usually be remedied by practice and becoming more familiar with the particular firearm.

I and all the other shooters in my circle who had the opportunity to handle the anniversary model were quick to point out how well the K9 fit in their hands. Hogue did a magnificent job with their aluminum grip panels on this one, and the weight of the all-steel frame gives the pistol a robust feel. The palm swell? Dare I say, it was perfect for my medium-to-large sized hands. The lip on the basepad of the seven-round mag reliably tucked my pinky onto the pistol grip with each draw.

This gun was built to be reliable, and it chewed up everything we could feed it — from soft shooting 150-gr. action pistol loads to heavy hitting +P defensive loads. No surprises here, really — the design of the Kahr action allows the firing pin block to be placed farther back in the slide making it less susceptible to fouling. In addition to the unique locking and firing systems of the Kahr pistol, Kahr also utilizes a unique self-cleaning

extractor which allows fouling to be pushed away as it pivots through a series of relief cuts.

In the accuracy department, Kahr’s K9 did not disappoint. From a sandbag rest at a distance of 10 yards, SIG SAUER’s 115-gr. 365 V-Crown loads posted the best group of 0.869". The gun also liked NOVX +P loads using the 65-gr. Inceptor ARXs. The lightweight metal/polymer matrix of the ARX bullet came screaming out of the K9’s short 3.5" barrel at a blistering 1,600 feet per second (fps) and printed a best group of 1.16". Magtech’s 115-gr. full-metal jacket (FMJ) loads fared about the same in terms of group size.

It’s easy to see the impact the Kahr K9 had on the firearms market. Nowadays, if you spend more than five minutes browsing Instagram, you’ll see a picture of some gun geek’s pocket dump. Somewhere in the picture, odds are they’re rocking a single-stack 9mm for concealed carry.

The anniversary model Kahr K9 is just as accurate and just as reliable as the first K9s produced a quarter century ago, but with the addition of modern accoutrements EDCers crave (tritium sights, front and rear slide serrations, Cerakote finish and slide ports). The limited edition 25th anniversary Kahr K9 respectfully celebrates its past, while its unique action carries it into the future. 

[www.shopkahrfirearmsgroup.com](http://www.shopkahrfirearmsgroup.com)





The classic Stevens 520 — though sharp-eyed readers will note Clayton's gun is actually a "Sears Ranger 520" outfitted with a chopped 18" barrel instead of the 28" factory tent-pole.

The Browning-design take-down feature allows the 520 to be neatly separated into two halves.





# STEVENS 520

## BROWNING'S “OTHER” SHOTGUN

**CLAYTON WALKER**

If we start naming all of John Browning's inventions, we're going to be here a while so let's just focus on the shotguns. It's amazing how many of these century-old designs are not just recognizable but still a part of today's varied shooting cultures. Auto-5s are still knocking birds out of the sky. Browning's Superposed over/under shotgun and its derivatives remain beloved in the world of skeet and trap. The Winchester Model 1887 and 1897 are still being made as reproductions and are frequent companions of Cowboy Action shooters.

In this respect, the Stevens 520 is certainly the ugly ducking of Browning's shotguns. Not just figuratively, mind you: its distinctive “humpback” — egad, even a double humpback — strikes many as an ungainly feature. The relative lack of attention given to this shotgun is also a little unusual considering Stevens produced a few hundred thousand of the guns in multiple variations from 1909 all the way up through 1948. Any firearm so ubiquitous certainly deserves a second look.

### THE ORIGINS

The Stevens 520 began life in 1903 as a submitted patent by one John Moses Browning, which detailed a new shotgun with an internal hammer, locking-breech block, and a take-down design. The patent caught the interest of the J. Stevens Arms and Tool Company, as they knew slide-actuated repeating shotguns were becoming hot stuff at the dawn of the 20th century. However, they lacked such a model of their own to round out the product mix.

From the gun's inception, Stevens offered the 520 with two standard, full-choked barrel lengths: 28" and 30". Guns were produced with Stevens rollmarks prior to 1929. After this point the design continued on in the form of various “department store” re-brands, which by some estimates are more plentiful than the Stevens-marked shotguns. Such examples of these 520s include the Ranger Model 30 for Sears, the Western Field Model 30 for Montgomery Ward, the Riverside Arms Model 520 and the





Hand checkering and good walnut stocks were standard features. The checkering wasn't the best quality but was obviously done by a human artisan!

Stevens 520 features included a double humpback receiver and "suicide" safety inside of the trigger guard.



J.C. Higgins “102.25.” Truly — *a rose by any other name!*

Two things conspired against the 520, nearly bringing it to death's doorstep in the 1930s. The first was the introduction of the Model 620 in 1927. Savage (which had become Stevens' parent company) was keenly aware the 520 was pug-ugly so the company rolled out the Stevens Model 620. Identical to the 520 internally, it differed only by virtue of a more “modern,” rounded profile to the receiver. The second existential threat to the 520 was the Great Depression, which poured cold water on firearms sales across the board.

Given a weak economy and a more-popular sister product cannibalizing demand, Savage began to warehouse 520s in the 1930s. However, the design was given a new lease on life at the dawn of World War II because the U.S. government needed combat firearms in a hurry, and bought up every repeating shotgun in Savage's warehouse regardless of configuration.

Production of a handier “riot” version with a 20" cylinder-bored barrel (the 520-30) ramped up quickly for wartime. Many of these military 520-30s were further modified into “trench gun” configurations consisting of a bayonet lug and heat shield. About 35,000 of the Stevens 520s and 620s saw action — a figure exceeding the number of M1941 Johnson rifles used in combat!

## SHOOTING AND HANDLING

Despite the inexpensive prices these guns routinely sell for, it definitely does not feel like a budget gun. The 520 action is far slicker than one would expect, all the more surprising given its single action-bar. Much of this is explained by the firearm's machining, which is thoroughly impressive outside and in. The precision cuts forming the “teeth” on the barrel assembly and receiver are especially illustrative as they interlock with no discernible side-to-side play. Additionally, hand checkering and nice walnut stocks were standard 520 features. One shudders at how much this gun would cost to produce today.

As might be imagined from a Browning design, the Stevens 520 runs like a top. Shells eject smartly, the lifter never freezes and the gun never fails to give each primer a hearty smack. I also put the gun through its paces with a clay pigeon thrower and from the low-ready position it would blast neon discs out of the sky with gusto — if I did my part.

I've heard my shotgun buddies talk about Perazzis and Kriegshoffs “pointing” like a natural extension of one's body. The Stevens 520 doesn't point. It's more accurate to say, with a weight of just less than 7.5 lbs. and given the “bank vault” construction of its forged steel receiver, this gun needs to be steered more than pointed. And, despite the 520's weight, I found recoil to be stout. Trading off between the 520 and a friend's Auto-5 — a shotgun with a reputation as a hard kicker even despite being recoil-operated — the Auto 5 seemed downright genteel by comparison.

## A 520 OF YOUR OWN

There are two pieces of great news for any shooter interested in picking up a Stevens 520: First, they're cheap, and second, they're even cheaper when gun stores don't exactly know what they are. Given production stretched so long and with the plethora of “department store” guns produced, there's an affordable 520 out there with your name on it. I was able to purchase mine, tagged only as a “Ranger 12ga” for \$150 in 2019 dollars.



Note the “teeth” mating barrel assembly to receiver. This is great machining for the price! A distinctive or ungainly profile? Opinions are mixed.



Stevens produced a staggering number of 520s under different names, brands, and rollmarks for Sears, Montgomery Ward and “Riverside Arms.”

Be warned, however, prices escalate sharply if you're looking for authentic police or military surplus versions. Stevens 520-30s in original, period-correct “riot” configurations often sell for a thousand dollars or more. WWII-era trench guns in excellent condition can sell for several times this amount and there's more — because of the cheap price of commercial 520s, trench gun forgeries abound.

You'll want to check a few things with any version of the 520 before purchase. Extended use (or bad luck) may crack the receiver around the area of the locking block, and firing pins are notoriously brittle so refrain from dry-firing. Additionally, despite the strength of the design, springs can wear out on these old-timers so function-check the gun with a snap cap if possible.

If the price is right, you should snag one if only to have such a shootable piece of Americana in your collection. It's downright amazing to see the craftsmanship and design going into even the most utilitarian shotguns of yore. While the sun set a long, long time ago on such an era of firearms manufacturing, the Stevens 520 is a fun and affordable way to take a step back into the past.

[www.savagearms.com](http://www.savagearms.com)



# 686

## AFTER FOUR DECADES, NO SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN

MARK HAMPTON

In 1981 a real workhorse galloped out of the Smith and Wesson stable in the form of the company's model 686 — a stainless version of their model 586. Here we are almost 40 years later and the S&W Model 686 is still going strong.

Based on S&W's well-engineered L-Frame revolver, the 686 was designed for a steady diet of .357 Magnum ammo. When the 686 first hit the radar screen, it was a bit difficult to get your hands on one as many law enforcement agencies were adopting it as a service revolver. Before the world became emotionally attached to high capacity semi-autos, the 686 quickly procured a strong following. The 4" 686 was commonly seen resting in the holster of on-duty officers — and the rest of us mere mortals were just trying to find one for sale.

Through the years, the burgeoning 686 became available in these barrel lengths: 2 1/2", 3", 4", 5", 6", and 8 3/8". Other barrel lengths and modifications could be found on exclusive offerings or by special order. Due to the overwhelming popularity of

the 686, a multitude of variants occurred including the Classic Hunter, Black Stainless, Target Champion, Model 686 Plus, featuring a 7-shot cylinder. Regardless whether you were in law enforcement, competitive shooting, recreational plinking or a hunter, the 686 was a reliable revolver you could depend on.

### FIXING IT UP

I took the 686 to the range recently and felt bad it had been neglected. Unfortunately, it didn't take long to discover my aging eyes and iron sights don't play well together. When I went to install a mount for optics, I realized the early models were not drilled the same as the newer versions so I sent the gun to Mag-na-port. Ken Kelly worked his magic — along with a nice action job — and now this revolver is a dream come true to shoot. Thanks to Weigand Machine and Design, a neat little compact base was installed for an UltraDot L/T reflex optic.

Just about any company who makes grips will offer one or

Whether you're a handgun hunter, target shooter, or like banging steel targets, the 686 is accurate.





Smith & Wesson's Model 686 with 6" barrel is fitted with an UltraDot L/T optic on Weigand Machine and Design's mini-mount.



more options for an L-Frame Smith & Wesson. Preferring finger-grooves, I chose Eagle Grips with their genuine rosewood combat grips. These grips are super comfortable and attractive to boot.

After some modifications, this 686 really shines at the range and I can see the targets better thanks to the UltraDot. Karen, my wife of 40 years, also enjoys shooting this revolver so I started looking for another 686 to add to the stable.

Fortunately, I was able to pick up an 8-3/8" model. It too was an older gun and had to be sent to Mag-na-port for their alterations to install a Weigand base. This model was a 686 "no dash," which means it was in the first production run. If a 686 has a number proceeding, it denotes engineering modifications during the production life of the particular model.

The 686-1 implies the redesigned "radius-stud/floating hand" change occurring in 1986 which many people consider less desirable. The 686-2 (1987) S&W changed the hammer nose. The 6" version I have is a 686-3. This model began regular production in 1988 and signifies a new yoke retention system. The 686-6, manufactured in 2001, has the internal key lock was incorporated. In 1996, S&W introduced a 7-shot cylinder with a round-butt frame and Hogue grips, while deleting the square butt.

After Mag-na-port drilled the top-strap for the Weigand base, I mounted a Leupold 4x scope. Options for grips are almost endless but I finally landed a beautiful set of Claro walnut combat grips from Culina Grips.

### VERSATILITY DEFINED

One of the many attributes of the .357 Magnum is versatility. In my younger years when I was 10-foot-tall and damn near bullet-proof, I shot .44 Magnums for most revolver pursuits. Now, I've reached the point in life where I find pleasure in less recoil so Karen and I have been shooting a lot of 38 Specials. Both of these guns are extremely pleasant to shoot. When you want to up your game, there is a plethora of .357 Magnum ammo available.

There are so many options when it comes to bullets for .38 caliber. I've been loading Nosler, Hornady, and Sierra 158-gr. bullets for the most part. Cast bullets abound too. Powder choices are also widespread and I generally use Longshot, Unique, 2400, and 231 for plinking loads. H 110 gets the call for magnum rounds. You can tailor your loads for any application from small game hunting, competition shooting, banging steel targets, or handgun hunting.

There are hordes of holsters available for the 686 depending on barrel length and carrying preference. Since I'm packing the longer barrels in the field, I lean toward Simply Rugged, Barranti Leather, Pistol Packaging, or Diamond D Custom Leather rigs.

My next purchase will be a 686 Plus with a 3" barrel, a seven-shot model. Karen has a slight aversion for semi-autos as she has issues with racking the slide. The shorty 686 will be an ideal home protection piece for either of us.

### WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

For the moment, I'm having too much enjoyment shooting the two models with 6 and 8-3/8" barrels — both being very accurate. On our farm, Karen and I have a few deer blinds situated in the woods where shots seldom range beyond 75 yards. This fall I plan on taking one of the revolvers to the woods and hope to fill our freezer with venison.

If a hog hunt happens to hit the radar screen, I won't hesitate to use Swift ammo and their 180-gr. A-Frame bullet. Many years ago, I watched my good friend JD Jones drop a big hog over 200 lbs. with his 686- and 180-gr. bullets. The shot was well-placed and the big, mean hog dropped quickly. There are better hunting rounds such as the .41 and .44 Magnums but the smaller Magnum will work with proper shot placement and the right bullet.

I won't be here 50 years from now but I'm willing to bet the Smith & Wesson Model 686 will be. It will go down in the history books as a classic. Long live the 686!

[www.smith-wesson.com](http://www.smith-wesson.com)



# PERCUSSION REVOLVER 101

## BIG SMOKE MEANS BIG FUN

MIKE CUMPSTON

Shooting pre-cartridge black powder revolvers is solidly ensconced in worldwide shooting culture. They provide a tangible link with history, develop the same skill sets as modern firearms and are often less encumbered with regulation.

Early replicas were plagued with brittle screws and the fragile leaf springs and action parts which went “snap, crackle and pop” with regularity. The need for occasional spring replacement is still a reality but current improvements in overall quality and metallurgy have rendered the occasional busted leaf spring mildly surprising rather than a regular occurrence.

### THE GUNS

Currently we have single-action revolvers mimicking Colt designs from 1836 through 1860 such as Beal Patent Remingtons, LeMats and the very well done Rogers and Spencer from

Euroarms. These all have a half-cock hammer position freeing the cylinder to rotate for loading and provisions for setting the hammer down safely between chambers. Colt and Remington copies from Uberti and Pietta are the most widely distributed while Taylor, Cimarron Arms and VTI Gunparts all keep comprehensive stocks of spare parts. VTI has a gunsmithing service for the major brands and originals. It is quite expensive but may prove a valuable resource when the handgun goes *discompuesto* and is beyond the owner's mechanical capabilities.

### THE LOADS

1. *Black Powder* — The only American black powder manufacturer is Goex Powder, Inc. which started life in 1802 at the Belin Works of the E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. This plant operated essentially the same for decades but was purchased

What's Possible — Black powder revolvers really don't need much extra in the care and feeding department aside from powder, bullets and a good cleaning.







in the 1990s by Goex and resulted in the facilities moving to Minden, Louisiana. In 2009, Hodgen Powder Company purchased the plant and continues to manufacture “the real stuff” in various sizes and grades. There are also many black powders available from Europe such as the Schuetzen and Swiss brands

2. *Black Powder substitutes* — They come and they go. Pyrodex in Pistol granulation performs much like the high quality Swiss FFFg Black Powder. It has outlasted several formulae that demonstrated lack-luster performance. Black Powder is very consistent, has an apparently indefinite shelf life and ignites easily. Pyrodex is harder to ignite but provides low velocity spreads and is regulated the same as smokeless propellant. Black Powder is regulated as an explosive and more difficult to find.

3. *Balls or bullets* — Round balls allow for large powder charges, higher velocity and excellent accuracy. There is no practical reason, beyond experimentation and historic verisimilitude, to use bullets or paper cartridges — in spite of the incorrect nattering by The Foremost Authorities declaring conical bullets *significantly* less accurate. Conical bullets from Lee Molds, Dixie Scissor molds or originals are quite accurate if the rammer stem has been configured to fit the bullet nose.

4. *Wads and grease* — More on this later.

5. *Percussion caps* — There are several varieties with CCI and Remington being widely distributed. The universal recommendation for revolvers is the number 11 cap though some smaller pistols are better served with number 10. CCI caps of either size are tighter than Remington and harder to set off.

## PROJECTILE SIZES

Appropriate ball diameter for the .31 caliber revolvers is 0.320-0.323". Smaller balls marked “31 Caliber” are for use with patches in rifles. The same is true with balls marked .36 or .44. The .36 caliber revolver balls measure 0.375" or 0.380" — the smaller diameter works well in Pietta revolvers but 0.380" is optimal for Uberti chambers. A slightly out-of-round 0.375"



ball will often come out of the ramming sequence stuck to the loading stem. The 0.380" will work for both.

“Forty Four” balls available in 0.451" work fine in Pietta and EuroArms. A 0.454" ball is ideal for Uberti chambers and will work in both. Original Remington New Model Army revolvers use 0.457" as do the variations on the Ruger Old Army.

## LOADING FOR SUCCESS

First, remove all traces of oil from the chambers and make sure the nipple (cone) channels are clear.

Now, from the original Colt broadside:

*Draw the hammer to the half-cock notch which allows the cylinder to be rotated. A charge of powder is then placed in each chamber and the balls, without wadding or patch, are put one at a time on the mouths of each chamber, turned under the rammer and forced down with the lever below the mouth of the chamber. This is repeated until all the chambers are loaded. Percussion caps are placed on the tubes when, by drawing back the hammer to the full catch, the arm is in a condition for a discharge by pulling the trigger: a repetition of the same motion*



*produces the like result. To carry the pistol safely, it is necessary to lower the hammer on to one of the pins on the end of the cylinder between each cone.*

Dispatches from 1849 describe soldiers in the Mexican War putting grease over the mouth of each chamber to prevent multiple ignitions and exploded revolvers. Later on, this practice was also supposed to keep powder fouling soft. Colt's instructions came considerably later and make no mention of applying grease.

Correctly-fitting balls and bullets effectively prevent cross-firing and vaporized grease does not keep fouling soft but actually encourages its accretion. Exploded percussion caps are also prone to stick to a greasy hammer face, blocking subsequent ignition and dropping fragments into the action to bind it up. Since grease-sealing the chamber mouths is a Shibboleth found in much literature and many instruction manuals, many people are wedded to the practice. However, in truth, they can minimize malfunctions by merely wiping the



Many original black powder revolvers came fully kitted-out in wooden cases.

hammer face and the portion of the breech under the hammer between loadings.

The use of wool-felt, sheep-tallow wads under the bullet is another matter. Elmer Keith said he talked to early westerners who could keep the barrel of their percussion revolvers free of



Realistic replicas (from top) — Colt Dago, a .44 caliber for mounted troops; a Colt 1851 Navy Revolver; Remington Model 1858; the popular Colt Army Model 1860.





An original Colt Walker delivered to U.S. forces starting in 1847. They were most noteworthy for blowing up, most likely due to soft iron and 60-gr. powder charges!

fouling by using wads cut from old hats and treated with sheep tallow, then blowing across the muzzle after shooting. This works. The shooter who elects to load balls or bullets directly over the powder charge can keep the revolver shooting accurately by running a damp patch through the barrel after every full cylinder. Windex is popular for this but spit works just as well.

### SHOOTING FOR SUCCESS

The goal is the reasonable expectation of reliability. Upon firing, the percussion cap frequently explodes and flares. Ideally the fragments will travel with the cylinder around the breech face and fall free at the capping window. Holding the revolver level or executing the ill-conceived "Gunfighter Flip" while cocking allows the burst fragment to fall down on the hammer face and into the inner workings of the action, locking everything up as tight as the southern aspect of a north-vectoring mallard. Cocking the arm with the muzzle at a downward angle minimizes this and the absence of grease-imbued fouling on the hammer face and breech virtually eliminates the problem.

If, as is often the case with the pocket models, there is insufficient clearance between cylinder and the right side of the breech,



Black powder revolvers are often easier to shoot accurately than modern handguns! This single-handed, off-hand group was shot from 40 yards with a .44 caliber 1860 Army.

cap travel can be freed up without visible mischief by increasing the clearance. Should fouling become excessive, cleaning the arbor and other close components ought to maintain smooth function. A drop of spit on the arbor can also be beneficial.

### CLEANING

Proper cleaning is a tedious necessity requiring disassembly of the revolver to major components without delay. If out of reach of an ideal cleaning environment for a few days, the revolver can be kept free of rust by using standard petroleum-based oil. The full cleaning drill involves thorough flushing with hot water and mild detergent. A favored formula is a mixture of Murphy's oil soap, hydrogen peroxide, alcohol and dish soap in a spray dispenser. Heat drying by immersion in clean boiling water works well and is immediate, thorough saturation (after the water steams off) with CLP-grade oil affords long-term protection from rust and corrosion. The revolvers in these pictures have undergone this treatment many times with little or no degradation of the factory finishes.



Shoulder stocks were a common accessory for cavalry troops, an advantage for the mounted soldier who never really learned to shoot his handgun! This group was shot at 25 yards.

[www.cimarron-firearms.com](http://www.cimarron-firearms.com)



# PUMP-ACTION Rifles

## THE FORGOTTEN ONE?

DAVID FREEMAN

As a teenager, my .22 rifle was a single-action Remington. It was all I could afford, but I dreamed of something slicker, something which would shoot more than one time without reloading. My dream was for a Winchester Model 62. The '62 was a beautiful .22 rifle operating on the same principle as my much-loved Winchester Model 12 pump shotgun but, alas, I couldn't afford one.

As with so many things we dream about when we're young, when we finally get to a place where the expense could be justified, the item is no longer available. However, my search led me to a beautiful modern Henry replica of the old Winchester pump-action rifles. This rifle fulfills the dream of my youth and provides opportunities for my grandchildren to enjoy something which is — *sadly* — becoming rare.

### IN THE BEGINNING

The first pump rifle was made by Colt starting in 1884. The Colt Lightning, designed by former Remington gunsmith William H. Elliott, was meant to compete with Winchester's lever-action rifles of the time. Colt and Winchester had come to a "gentleman's agreement" in 1880 — Colt would stick to revolvers and Winchester would stick to repeating rifles. Colt must have considered only lever-action rifles as part of the agreement because they produced various models of pump rifles for at least 20 years.

The first Colt Lightnings were in .44-40 to complement the most popular cartridge in their best-selling 1873 revolver. This

became their medium frame rifle. A small frame .22 was first issued in 1887, along with a large frame version in several calibers all the way up to the .50-95 express, designed to take down large North American animals.

John Moses Browning designed a pump-action rifle for Winchester, the Model 1900. The Model 1900 was caliber-specific and available in .22 short, .22 long, .22 long rifle versions. A Model 1906 was introduced as a less expensive version of the rifle and this one was available as a .22 short rifle or one cycling .22 long and .22 long rifle interchangeably. Examples exist of Standard and Expert models introduced in 1908 with a plain, fluted slide grip and a pistol grip stock. These models were all replaced in 1932 with the introduction of the Model 62, which handled all three .22 cartridges interchangeably and remained in production until 1958 — about the time I started dreaming of owning one.

### THE HEYDAY

Marlin made a bunch of pump rifles over a spread of years but left the market in the 1930s. Their offerings included Models 18, 20, 25 (all rimfire takedown) and Models 27, 27 and 29 in centerfire calibers. Marlin's Model 32 was the first of the hammerless slide action rifles. Chambered in .22 rimfire, it was followed by Models 37 and 38 with different barrel lengths. There were a couple more centerfire models offered in very small quantities.

Mossberg introduced the Model K, .22 caliber with 22"-barrel, tubular magazine, internal hammer and takedown system. It



Prime pumps: Taurus Thunderbolt in .45 Colt (top) is side-loading, top ejection. The Henry .22 Magnum loads from a tube and ejects from the top.



Henry's authentic replica of the Winchester Model 62 with hammer and buckhorn open sights.



Truly an odd — but unique and effective — slider (above) is the 16"-barreled Troy AR Sporting Pump-action Rifle in .308 Win. One of the few centerfire pumps in production, Remington's Model 7600 (below) is available in many popular calibers.

was discontinued in 1931. The Model M was the same as K but with a 24" octagonal barrel, offered in 1928–1931.

Remington had some early models beginning in 1909 including the Model 12, Model 121, Model 14, Model 14 ½ and Model 141. All of these were out of production by 1950. Savage built pump rifles from 1903 until 1967 — their rimfire rifles included the Models 1903, 1909, 1911, 25 and 29. The Centerfire version was the Model 170.

A few years back Taurus built a Lightning replica in Brazil which sold under the name Thunderbolt. These rifles got mixed reviews throughout the Cowboy Action Shooting world and were in and out of production for several years.

Looking through the *Blue Book of Gun Values* there were some other surprises. Israel Military Industries introduced the Timber Wolf Carbine in 1989. Available in .357 Magnum or .44 Magnum, it was offered in blue or hard chrome finish. It is no longer in production, nor is the Browning BBR-22 chambered in .22 LR and .22 Magnum. This rifle was manufactured between 1977 and 1982 while the Browning Trombone Model .22 LR was made by FN between 1922 and 1974 and imported to the U.S. by Browning.

## PUMPING LEAD TODAY

Italian manufacturer Davide Pedersoli currently builds Colt Lightning replicas in several calibers and barrel lengths. The only other centerfire pump rifles being made today are the Remington 7600 and an interesting AR variation made by Troy Industries.

Remington introduced the Model 572 Fieldmaster in 1958 and it's still produced today. If a kid wants a .22 rifle today, they have a choice of bolt action, lever action or semi-automatic from a variety of manufacturers. However, if they want a pump — other than a Henry — the Remington Model 572 Fieldmaster is their only choice. It's typically a \$600–\$700 rifle.



David's Taurus .45 Colt Thunderbolt at 50 yards shooting from a sandbag rest can still hold its own in the accuracy department.

## WHY NOT?

The scarcity of pumps is puzzling to me because a pump-action rifle is faster to operate than a bolt action or lever action and in practiced hands it can be as fast as a semi-automatic.

Operating a pump — or *slide-action as often said* — is almost intuitive and ambidextrous. The mystery of unpopularity is further compounded when you realize the movement required to cycle the action on a pump is so small compared to a bolt-action or lever-action — for my .22 Magnum, it's 1.25".

The action doesn't have a lot of parts so it's less expensive to manufacture and easier to maintain than lever.

Pump shotguns continue their popularity but I wonder what happened to the pump rifle? A Winchester hammerless pump rifle, its appearance and action much like the Model 1300 shotgun, would be a fine .22 small-game rifle for a kid or adult.

Pump-action rifles are just not in demand these days or we'd have more of them. I think it's a shame.



# .450 BUSHMASTER

**OR**

# .458 SOCOM?

**ROGER SMITH**

**O**K, so you've decided you want to shoot something bigger out of your AR15 and have decided to skip the intermediate stuff and go all the way to the .45 caliber. In doing so you're immediately confronted with a puzzling choice — the .450 Bushmaster or the .458 SOCOM? Which one? Why are there two .45s to choose from in the first place?

In a nutshell, both rounds were developed for different purposes and the SOCOM came first. It was developed for the Special Forces Task Force Rangers who complained bitterly for years afterward about the inadequacy of the 5.56x45mm during the October 1993 Battle of Mogadishu against the khat-chewing locals. They wanted authoritative one-shot put down with the ability to also pulverize and penetrate short-range cover.

## **BUILDING THE BETTER CARTRIDGE**

Two requirements were stated. First, a bigger round had to be fired using a standard M16 simply by exchanging the upper, with no changes to the recoil spring, buffer, or anything else. It also had to be able to feed totally reliably from a stock USGI aluminum magazine. The Rangers wanted big heavy bullets for

## **ALIKE BUT DIFFERENT, HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?**

everyday operations plus the ability to use extra-heavy bullets at subsonic speeds fired through suppressors.

Marty ter Weeme and Tony Rumore eventually heard about their complaints. In 2000, Marty designed a fat new bottlenecked cartridge using readily available .458 bullets for the .45-70 and Tony had the first rifle ready in 2001. Properly engineered in the first place, the rifle and cartridge were a success from the first time out. They named it the .458 SOCOM in honor of the Special Operations Command warriors who needed it.

Southern Ballistic Research has been making SOCOM ammo since the very beginning and their continuing research and development has led to an extensive line of ammunition — currently 29 different loads — for law enforcement, military use and hunting. The SOCOM round has established an impressive reputation among hog and bear hunters. What could be better

The .458 SOCOM has a huge variety of factory loads available plus an equally wide selection of bullets for handloading.







**Follow me:** Center-feed followers are essential for the 450 Bushmaster, not so much for the 458 SOCOM but it does make inserting the first round easier.

than a 10-round magazine-fed semi-auto equivalent of the venerable .45-70? Today, several other companies also offer 458 SOCOM ammo.

### DEER DESTROYER DEVELOPED

The 450 Bushmaster started when Tim LeGendre developed the 45 Professional cartridge using common 0.452" bullets for use in those states allowing deer hunting with rifles using straight-walled cartridges up to 1.8" long (generally considered pistol cartridges).

Tim licensed it to Bushmaster, who then went to Hornady to make the ammo. LeGendre and Bushmaster agreed to let Hornady shorten the case to enable them to use their 250-gr. SST bullet and the 450 Bushmaster was born. It was SAAMI approved in 2008.

### FEED THE BEASTS

Nowadays Hornady offers 450 Bushmaster ammo with the 250-gr. polymer Flex Tip expanding (FTX) bullet, Winchester has a 250-gr. Extreme Point polymer-tipped bullet, Remington has their 260-gr. AccuTip polymer-tipped bullet and Federal offers a 300-gr. JHP. There are other brands on the market, too but excluding exotics like the lightweight ARX-style "drill bit" bullets, factory 450 Bushmaster ammo falls into the 250- to 300-gr. range.



The 450 Bushmaster factory ammo is generally limited to 250- to 300-gr. bullets.

The rounds are similar in velocity. The 450 Bushmaster 250-gr. FTX round has a published muzzle velocity of 2200 fps while the SOCOM round loaded with the Barnes 250-gr. TSX HP bullet is listed at 1990 fps. However, the standard barrel length for the 450 is 20" with a 1:24" twist while the 458 SOCOM standard is a 16" barrel with a 1:14" twist. The 4" difference between the two accounts for about 100 fps of the velocity difference. Reverse the barrel lengths and the difference would disappear. The 450 does get a bit of a boost from being loaded to a slightly higher chamber pressure than customary for the 458 (there is no SAAMI standard for the .458 SOCOM).

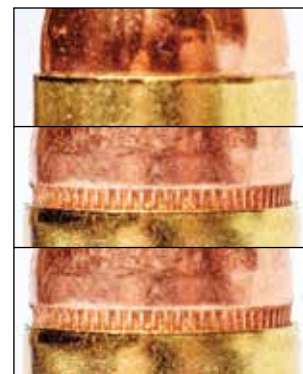
What about ammo prices? Nope, not even close. A box of Hornady 250-gr. FTX for the 450 is only \$31.99, or \$1.60 per round from Midway USA. A box of 20 SOCOM 250-gr. TSX runs \$54.99, or \$2.75 each, and 300-gr. loads run around \$60 (\$3 per round) — and it just goes up from there.

And I thought shooting my .45-70 was expensive. Holy Schmoly, Batman! So, come feeding time, the Bushmaster seems to have it all over the SOCOM.

But wait. We haven't talked about magazines yet. Remember, the 458 SOCOM was required to feed faithfully from standard mil-spec mags, — and it does! The 30-round .223 magazines hold ten 458 SOCOM cartridges, the 20-round USGI mags hold seven while 10-round mags hold five. The SOCOM's reputation with 30-round .223/5.56 polymer Hexmags seems to be flawless. Those wonderful PMAGs? Nope. The center rib down the inside front prevents them from being usable with the 450 and 458. Lancer mags are fine when modified for the 458 by Wilson Combat or Tromix.



**Quick tip:** Dykem Layout Fluid is great for showing how badly your steel magazine lips are gouging your cartridge cases and identifying tight spots.



Hornady cautions reloaders not to use a heavy roll crimp on the 450 Bushmaster cartridge and doesn't crimp their factory ammo (top) while Federal does (middle). SOCOM reloaders can crimp to their hearts' delight (bottom)!

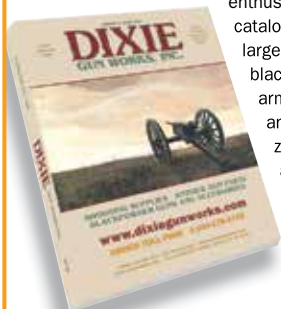


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**Loose lips, SOCOM ships: Wilson Combat opened their SOCOM-specific Lancer magazine (left) lips by 0.040" wider for reliability than the Lancer mag by Tromix.**

## "IF YOU DECIDE TO GO WITH THE .458, YOU'LL NEED PLENTY OF BUCKS FOR AMMO OR LEARN TO RELOAD."

On the other hand, the only magazine Bushmaster offers for the 450 is a short five rounder. Why? Because it doesn't feed worth a darn in larger magazines. Several magazine makers have tried making or modifying 7- and 10-round mags, and failed. As mentioned, the 450 Bushmaster case is a tapered but straight walled case while the 458 SOCOM is a shorter, fatter bottlenecked case.

Therein lies the rub — standard .223 magazines can barely contain five of the skinnier 450 Bushmaster rounds. The cartridges do their best to double stack and also frequently force the magazine feed lips wider, eventually ruining the mag and allowing the cartridges to self-eject.

The sole company still offering a 10 rounder for the 450 is Tromix Lead Delivery Systems. It's a highly modified Tapco Intrufuse magazine, costs \$50, and is limited to one per customer when available.

### RELOAD

Come reloading time, the 450 Bushmaster can use common jacketed 0.452" bullets intended for the 45 Colt, the 454 Casull and the 460 S&W, but usable bullet weights top out at 325 grains. Not surprisingly, Lyman also lists two cast bullet loads, using their 225-gr. bullet designed for the .45

ACP, and a 325-gr. flat nose revolver bullet.

The 458 SOCOM is just getting started with 300-gr. bullets. There's no dearth of .458 bullets up to 500 grains for reloading thanks to the 458's faster twist rate but hard-copy data is a bit skimpy. The only manual I'm aware of with SOCOM information is the *Lyman 50th Edition*. Western Powders' *Handloading Guide Edition 7.0*, available on-line, offers a lot of information for both the 450 and the 458. Barnes and Nosler also offer limited reloading information online for their bullets while Lee Precision offers data with their reloading die sets. Southern Ballistics Research offers their own SOCOM-named powder and data for 300-gr. bullets.

### END USERS

If you need to live with your state's hunting cartridge restrictions, it's the 450 Bushmaster. It's a great flat-shooting, hard-hitting cartridge with far more power than needed for deer. Its reputation on larger game is impressive.

If you want the .45 with the most versatility, it's the 458 SOCOM. If you decide to go with the 458, you'll need plenty of bucks for ammo or learn to reload. At a savings of more than two dollars per round, it doesn't take long to pay for a basic reloading setup.





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## CASE ASTRO: SPACE TRAVELER!

### LUNAR HISTORY IN YOUR HAND

He was just a kid of 11 or 12, visiting a mall store which sold knives and sword canes, hunting clothes, guns and other cool stuff. Malls were rare for

those times. He remembers vividly staring up at it in awe, bigger than life, sitting there on the shelf — the Case Astronaut Knife M-1. It was way out of reach pricewise for this kid who had to save up his allowance just to buy a gun magazine. Then, one day he went into the store to admire his Holy Grail knife and, much to his dismay, it was gone.

The kid in question was *GUNS* Publisher Roy Huntington and he was delighted when W.R. Case & Sons released a 50th-year commemorative of the Astronaut Knife M-1 to celebrate the Apollo 11 landing and man's first steps on the moon. The commemorative edition, 17" overall, is a very accurate reproduction of the space knife, right down to its 11.75" machete-like Tru-Sharp stainless-steel blade with saw-tooth back spine and white synthetic, brass-pinned handle.

Two versions of the M-1 were

produced — a Standard boxed set and a ready-to-display limited edition Shadowbox version of 250 pieces. The Standard version comes with a sleeved certificate of authenticity while the Shadowbox includes a serial-numbered certificate.

#### WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

If you're like Roy and like to hold a piece of space history in your hands, even if it is a reproduction, the Case Astronaut Knife M-1 is sure to scratch your astral itch. Case did a jam-up job of reproducing this knife to their usual exacting standards and the packaging on both versions is first class. Both editions quickly sold out to Case dealers but a little time on the internet would likely produce results from online dealers and it's always worth checking your local outdoors stores that sell knives. MSRP for the Standard edition is \$232.99, the Shadowbox Limited edition \$399.99. A little pricey *yes*, but the fond memories are worth it.



The standard Case Astronaut Knife M-1 comes with a certificate of authenticity, shown here, while the Shadowbox Limited Editions are serial numbered.

[www.caseknives.com](http://www.caseknives.com)



## FIVE CRITICAL MISTAKES THE THINGS GUN OWNERS SHOULD AVOID IN 2020

**Y**ou've heard this before: Your rights are one election away from being lost forever, and the election in question could actually be just over 10 months away, in the first week of November 2020.

For the past half-year, we've been listening to candidates running to unseat Donald Trump, each trying to out-gun-control one another with some of the most outrageous, anti-rights rhetoric in the history of the gun prohibition movement. To hear this crowd, one might presume they all slept through high school civics where the Bill of Rights was discussed.

One candidate thinks gun owner licensing and registration is fine because we license drivers and register their cars. He can't tell the difference between a right and a privilege. Another has suggested adopting gun control policies by executive order. She forgets there are three branches of government and none of them is a monarchy. A third, long since gone from the race to run for reelection to Congress, even advocated prosecuting and jailing people for resisting a national ban on certain popular firearms.

The disturbing thing is none of these people have been rebuked by any of their peers for their extreme proposals. Well, 2020 has arrived and it's time to bring some much-needed adult supervision to this nonsense. But there's a little catch — it's up to all of you to do it. There is no room for slackers.

Anyone who thinks someone else is going to step in and make things right, while you don't even know the name of your local representatives, is his/her own worst enemy.

Last month, we talked about this year's national primary schedule and provided an "activist's checklist." You saved it, right?

Over the next 10 months, here are five mistakes gun owners cannot afford to make:

**1. *Instigate rather than lead.*** — Some people are very good at getting others energized and angry, but then walk away before showing them how to channel the energy into action. This column endeavors to provide action items. Igniting anger without direction is wasted effort.

**2. *Let the "perfect" be the enemy of the "good."*** — Most of us know someone who rejects a political candidate because they're not — in his/her opinion, anyway — 100 percent in alignment with everything Mr./Ms. Know-it-all believes or wants. Maybe the plan or candidate is only 75 or 80 percent and it's never "good enough." Social media is full of such people. Don't be this person because you'll never accomplish anything.

Someone who agrees with your worldview most of the time is someone who can be educated. The person's opponent, who disagrees with your views 100 percent and hates everything you believe in, will not be educated and will only be happy to slam a door in your face. Let it sink in.



Unless you've been living in a cave, at some point over the past seven months you've heard what the contenders think of your Second Amendment rights. Only you and like-minded people can stop them. It's a big job and it requires full engagement. As the late Bill Jordan made perfectly clear in his book about gunfighting, there is No Second-Place Winner.

Here's an idea. If you don't think anybody measures up to your ideal, run for office. Study the issues. Assemble a platform. You may be smarter than you think you are. Short of this, be available to offer guidance to the candidate you're backing.

**3. *Make excuses for dropping the ball.*** — Don't be the person who calls a major gun

rights organization on the Monday before Election Day and asks for whom they should vote. The "I don't have the time to read a newspaper" excuse is pretty hollow, since these days people read newspapers on their cell phones.

Likewise, saying "I don't want my name on a list" is the least credulous argument of them all for not voting. Take this column's word for it, if you own a car, a firearm, a house, pay your taxes, have a credit card ... your name is on a list. Several of them, in fact, and "they" already know who you are.

**4. *Be a "Keyboard Commando."*** — Social media is filled with chest-thumpers; people who vow to "go down fighting" when all they really need to do is get active and vote. Sometimes, these people actually discourage others from voting because they are consistently negative about everything. (See #2!)

**5. *Let George do it.*** — We'll put this another way. Would you miss your son's graduation? How about your daughter's wedding?

Defending your Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms is essentially the same thing. You need to "be there." You need to do what it takes to make sure your friends and family "are there" as well.

Anti-gunners win by mobilizing people, and don't kid yourself, they are good at it. If you belong to a local gun club, start working right now to make sure you get people to the polls this fall, and learn from your opponents.

Organize a "ride to the polls" effort involving your fellow activists to provide transportation to pro-rights seniors or disabled people — especially disabled veterans — in November. Use social media to publicize this and start a fund-raising effort to pay for gas.

Make sure people get absentee ballots if they cannot travel, or may be away on Election Day. November, after all, is in the middle of hunting season. This takes advance planning. Contact your county elections official for details you can then share on social media, so everything is done properly and in compliance with the election laws.

This year's national elections really could be for all the marbles. Defending the Second Amendment means taking nothing for granted. Let the other side make the mistakes.



reading David's article on Rubber Bullet Plinking. I just went out to my shed where I reload and found those cases and bullets. Will start practicing again when I can't go to the range. Thanks for the reminder.

Gary Owens

*Glad to hear it jogged your memory! Whenever there are (friendly) bullets in the air, there is joy in the heart! —BW*

### HELP A BROTHER OUT

I recently purchased a Colt MKIV Series 70 chambered in .38 Super caliber. The gun was allegedly featured in *GUNS Magazine*, possibly '70s or '80s. I am attempting to confirm if the pistol was featured or not and also learn more about the history of the pistol. I've attached two photographs of the pistol, which show the engraving to the slide which are erotica themed. Any assistance would be appreciated.

Mike Gordon

*Cool gun! Unfortunately, I went through our database but didn't find anything. If we can narrow it down a little, it might help. Honestly, I can't believe it would*

*have appeared in print without retouching due to the provocative scenes on the slide. In the meantime, maybe it'll strike a chord with one of our readers? And yes, I blurred out a few of the more "interesting" engravings! —BW*

### MSRP?

Long time, no write — long sad story of bad lungs and being on oxygen. Being me, there *must* be a bit of humor everywhere so my new introduction is, "Hi, I'm Mike, the guy who sucks all the oxygen out of the room!" But I can still squeeze a trigger, when the humidity is low, and do horrible damage to paper and political sign backers so life is still really good if not perfect.

I can offer a suggestion which could save us geezers some time. The Bullpup, Nighthawk, and Saint .308 articles in *GUNS*, while great as usual, do *not* include an MSRP. I, of course, have to put down the magazine, grab my tablet, search the internet for prices, discover that if I dip into my ( never to be revealed to wifey ) money, I could actually afford one.

Mike Quill

*The MSRP question is interesting. I have intentionally been leaving them off stories lately for several reasons but ultimately, it boils down to this: Should we expend precious "real estate" on things like MSRP (a mostly-fictional number) and*

**"... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT  
WOULD HAVE APPEARED IN  
PRINT WITHOUT RETOUCHING  
DUE TO THE PROVOCATIVE  
SCENES ON THE SLIDE."**





non-story-related specifications when the info is easily found online? I will tally your vote and wait to hear from others. Meanwhile, take care of yourself and keep on shooting! The world needs more trigger-pullers! —BW

### WE HEAR YOU!

I am 76 years old and reading my October issue of *GUNS*; a great, great issue by the way!!! Owning several "Dirty Harry" .44 magnums, your article's timing was excellent. I plan on heading to the range soon with my daughter who is a crackshot with her 9mm. There is also an article on the Pyramex Amp BT hearing protectors. I'd like to see an article in choosing hearing protection because ratings are all over the place as far as dB ratings. I have been told "the higher the dB rating the better the product" yet there are 27 dB units for \$20 or so and 24 dB units for several hundred dollars, which blows that logic. What am I missing?

Gary Eaton



*The Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) is a system measuring the effectiveness of hearing protection. The NRR isn't as straightforward as it would seem. Protection follows the formula: Decibel reduction = (NRR-7)/2, so wearing a 31 NRR muff doesn't lower a 100 dB sound to (logically) 69 dB, it actually lowers it to around 88 dB. The highest possible number for ear muffs is 31 dB, while for ear plugs it's 33 dB. Yet, if you combine them, the noise reduction is only 36 dB. It only gets more complicated from there. Gunfire is around 140 dB so any protection is worthwhile, but the higher NRR the better. From there electronic muffs vary in sound and build quality plus features. For example, stereo muffs allow you to determine the direction of sound, a more-expensive but critical feature when instructing! The sky is the limit from there. Hope that tells you more than you wanted to know! —BW*

### TED TALK

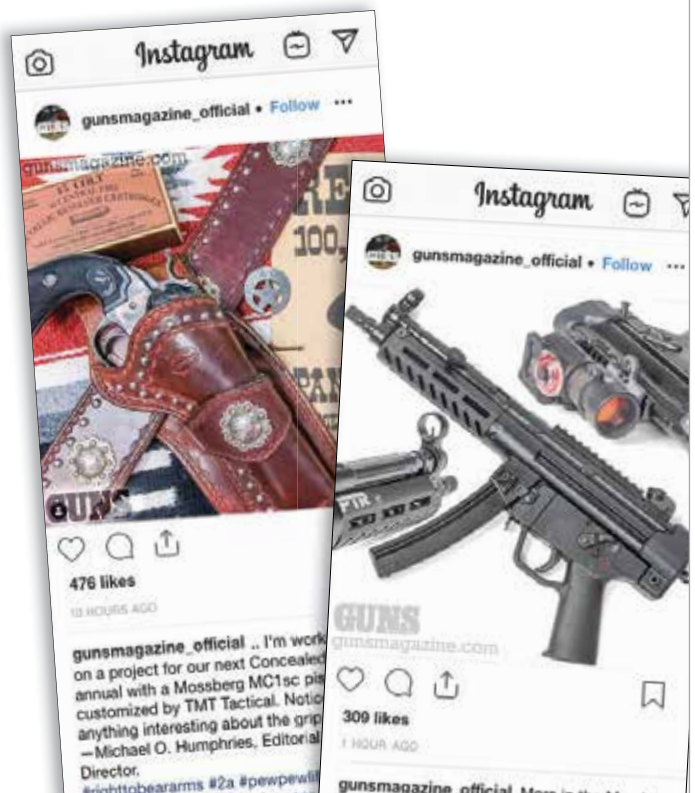
Picked up a Ted Williams (made for Sears) .30-30 lever action 3 years ago. It's in excellent condition, paid \$327 for it, think that is about what it was/is worth. This is reportedly made by Winchester but also, reportedly, not completely interchangeable with a Model 94, possibly some plastic parts to keep costs down and ease manufacturing. So, was I more or less in the ballpark as far as value of my rifle, and what was the period when these were made for Sears? I thank you for your time and a truly great periodical.

Jeff Schaffer

*As a matter of policy we don't discuss valuation of used firearms; too many potential pitfalls for us there. The sources I checked agree there is little collector value on Ted Williams guns. The rifle is likely a "post-'64" Winchester Model 94 made in 1964–early 1970s but I can't advise on parts interchangeability. On a related note, manufacturers sold carloads of "Hardware store" rebranded guns (I've owned several) so perhaps it's time we do a story!! —BW*

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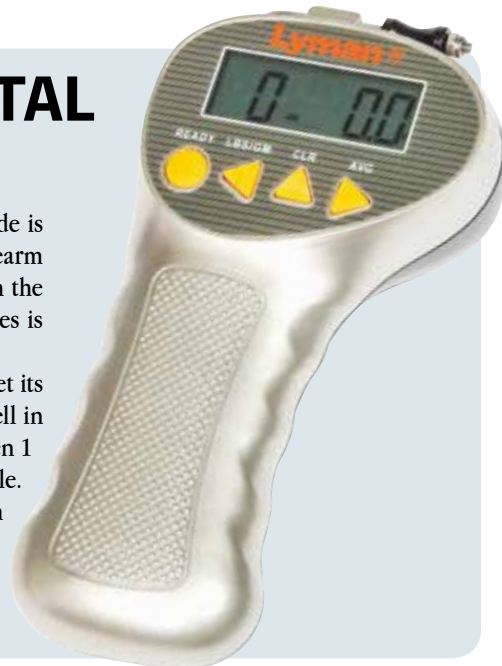
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## LYMAN ELECTRONIC DIGITAL TRIGGER PULL GAUGE

When you're a firearms journalist, one of the standard tools of the trade is a trigger pull gauge. Measuring the exact trigger pull weight of a firearm is also important if you're an armorer, a gunsmith or just dabbling in the black arts of "gun plumbing." For my money, one of the best trigger pull gauges is the Lyman digital model.

After my old spring-loaded — and wildly inaccurate — gauge accidentally met its demise under a boot at the range, I acquired the Lyman model and instantly fell in love. Handling measurements on anything with a trigger pull measuring between 1 oz. to 12 lbs., it's claimed to be accurate within 0.1 oz. at the low end of the scale. I don't have the necessary test equipment to verify such claims but it does seem accurate when compared against factory specifications. Moreover, it's versatile and very simple to use — even for a gun 'riter.



## STREAMLIGHT PROTAC HL-X LONG GUN LIGHT WITH LASER

Don't look this one in the eyes! Boasting 1,000 lumens plus an integrated red aiming laser, the Protac HL-X light performs near the top of its class at a non-paroxysm-inducing price. In my case, the new Protac unit is residing quietly on the Remington 887 which lives under my side of the bed, mounted to the gun via the integral rail grabber.

So far, everything is rock solid even under the repeated battering of 12-ga. slugs. The unit comes with both a switched tailcap and remote pressure switch — I chose the less-convenient switched tailcap because I don't like rubber thingies dangling off my guns during important moments, though the Streamlight version looks very robust. The light runs off



either a rechargeable USB battery or two CR123 lithium batteries. While I haven't used it for anything more provocative than several range sessions, I have faith it will stand the test if something goes bump in the night.

## LEUPOLD MARK 5HD 7-35X56

Can you even see a target at 2,000 meters? I can't, at least not with the naked eye, but having recently rung an 18" steel plate steel at 1.2 miles, I can attest having a great scope makes all the difference. In my case, achieving this personal-best hit was entirely facilitated by the new Leupold Mark 5HD 7-35x56 with a little help from a Ruger Precision Rifle in 300 PRC.

The scope was designed with input from long-range shooters and it shows. From the incredible lightweight yet rugged construction (only 33 oz.) to the highly-repeatable ZeroLock adjustment system, the scope certainly embodies legendary Leupold image quality. The scope offers 70 MOA of adjustment in three turret spins in MOA and there are several reticles available; I chose one in Mil-dot. My favorite feature



is the auto-lock which made returning to zero a no-eyes but repeatable event. If you love "air mail delivery" I highly recommend this 'scope!



# HOWARD LEIGHT IMPACT PRO HEARING PROTECTION

I'm from the generation who used to think "hearing protection" was a couple of .38 casings stuck in your ear canal. As both I and the shooting industry matured, I realized protecting whatever hearing I had left was probably a good idea. This started with muffs, then earplugs but the day I bought my first electronic muffs was truly an epiphany: I could hear range commands *and* protect myself from gunshot noise.

My current favorite of the bunch are the Impact Pro electronic muffs from Howard Leight. Of course, they're stylish and comfortable but more importantly provide incredible hearing protection with a 30 dB rating, yet still allowing normal conversation. So far, I haven't needed "ears and plugs" even when shooting magnum rifles under a metal-roofed firing line. The muffs are conveniently powered by a pair of "normal" AAA batteries and even include rubber padding to prevent scratching your rifle's finish. With an MSRP of \$90, they're a bargain!

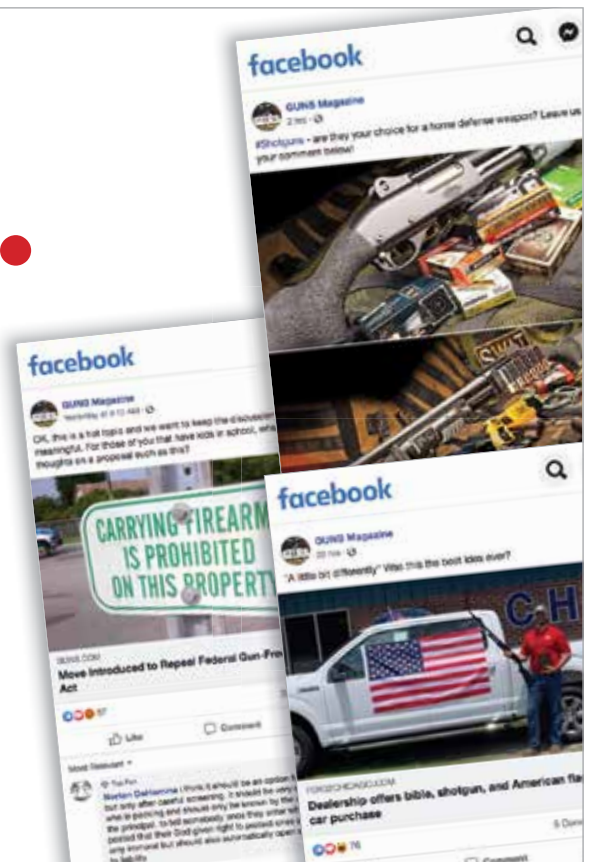


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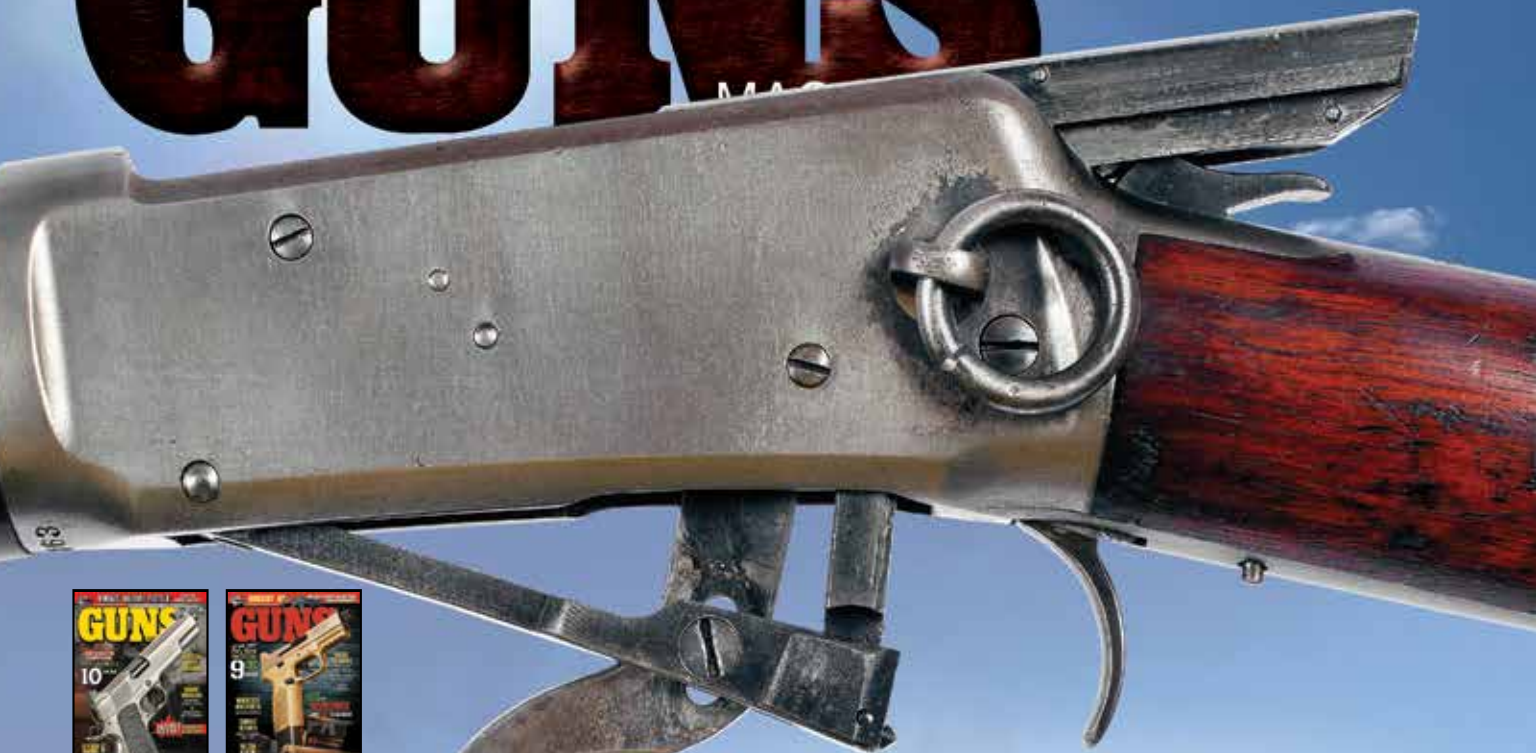
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Colt has added to its line of "snake guns" with the release of the *King Cobra Target Revolver*. Forged from American stainless steel, the 6-round capacity, double-action revolver features a 4" barrel, adjustable rear sight, elevated fiber optic front sight and custom wood medallion grips. It is the third model in the modern King Cobra series and was developed to bring the .357 magnum King Cobra to a competitive range. Colt reintroduced the King Cobra .357 in January 2019, followed by the King Cobra Carry in May 2019. Colt's snake guns continue to be popular for defense, target shooting and with collectors. For more info: (800) 962-2658, [www.colt.com](http://www.colt.com)



### G3 POLYMER 9MM PISTOL TAURUS USA

Taurus has released their first full-size G-series pistol: the *G3 Polymer 9mm Pistol*. The semi-auto represents the next generation in the Taurus G-series polymer-frame handguns and is the 4"-barrel version of the G2c, among Taurus' most popular EDC guns. The G3 has the polymer-frame of the G2c but in a full-frame configuration. Features include generous stippling patches across the grip, an ergonomic palm swell, side-frame memory pads, an integrated Picatinny rail on the frame and a manual safety and slide release lever above the thumb. For more info: (305) 624-1115, [www.taurususa.com](http://www.taurususa.com)

### STREET SCALPEL 2.0

TOPS KNIVES

The Street Scalpel is a favorite of LEOs, active duty military and everyday citizens. The *Street Scalpel 2.0* has the features of the original, with some changes. Weighing 3.1 oz, the 2.0 is slightly lighter. Its 1095 RC 56-58 blade steel, thinned to 3/16", makes the 2.0 a better slicer but strong enough for tough

jobs. Its black canvas Micarta handle has been redesigned to offer a finger guard and the new black Kydex sheath with

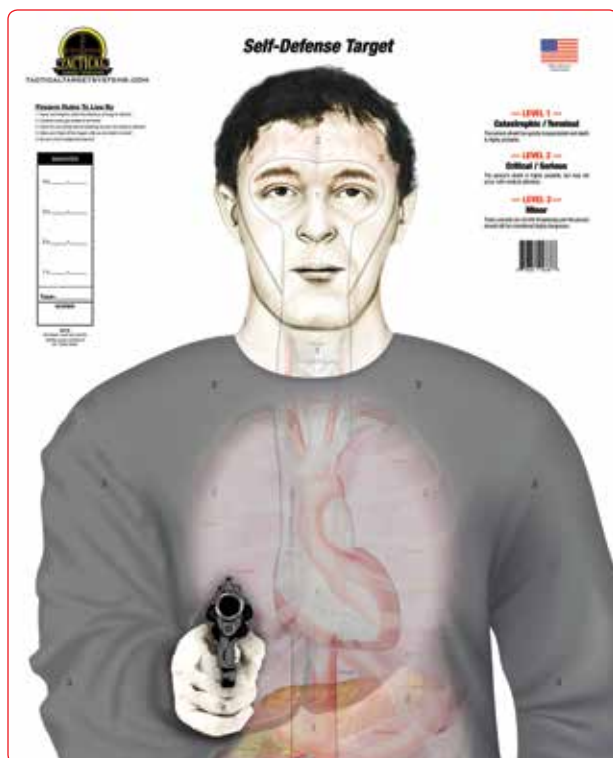
Beta loops allows multiple carry options. For more info: (208) 542-0113, [www.topsknives.com](http://www.topsknives.com)



### RAGE 3G RIFLE ROCK RIVER ARMS

The *RAGE 3G Rifle* brings together Rock River Arms' RAGE 5.56 NATO carbine and its 15" lightweight, aluminum free-float handguard that extends across the rifle's 16" chrome moly HBAR barrel. M-LOK compatible, the handguard provides custom accessorizing and blends smoothly with RRA's proprietary aluminum flat-top upper. Weighing 6.5 lbs., the RAGE 3G is designed to perform at peak proficiency for long- and short-distances. It is also affordably priced for shooters just entering 3-gun competitive shooting. For more info: (309) 792-5780, [www.rockriverarms.com](http://www.rockriverarms.com)





## SELF-DEFENSE ARMED-THREAT TACTICAL TARGET SYSTEMS

**T**actical Target Systems' *Self-Defense Armed-Threat* is different from traditional targets. The new design shows an anatomically accurate, smaller-statured male with true-to-size organs and vital areas. A three-level scoring system makes it quick and easy to evaluate neutralizing shots on a realistic threat. Used by federal, state and local law agencies, the 19"x25" target ships unfolded in a reusable box in quantities of 25 and comes with a free cardboard clay pigeon target. For more info: (913) 333-8619, [www.tacticaltargetsystems.com](http://www.tacticaltargetsystems.com)

## RED RYDER MODEL 1938 DAISY OUTDOOR PRODUCTS

**T**he *Red Ryder Model 1938*, a popular air rifle introduced in 1940 by Daisy Outdoor Products, marks its 80th anniversary in 2020. To celebrate, Daisy will put out a special edition with engraving on the forearm and a commemorative medallion in the stock. It will still have the wood stock and forearm, sturdy lever action, saddle ring and real leather thong that made it much sought after in the past. The Daisy Model 1938 Red Ryder has remained mostly unchanged all these years except for some cosmetic changes, internal improvements and other enhancements. For more info: (479) 636-1200, [www.daisy.com](http://www.daisy.com)



## N1 MICRO-COMPACT 9MM PISTOL NAROH ARMS

**T**he *N1 Micro-Compact 9mm Pistol* is the first firearm designed and produced by Naroh Arms, known for their skeletonized billet AR grips and rifle accessories. Features include a DAO hammer-fired operating system and aluminum internal frame offering the rigidity of a metal gun with the interface of a polymer pistol. The 6.1"-long N1 weighs 16 oz. empty and just over 19 oz. loaded. It comes with a 7-round magazine with flush fit and extended base pads. The pistol ships with white 3-dot polymer sights and is compatible with all aftermarket G43/42 sight options. For more info: (321) 806-4875, [www.naroharms.com](http://www.naroharms.com)

## 7.65 FRENCH LONG STARLINE BRASS

**S**tarline Brass has added the 7.65 French Long to its line of high-quality brass. It was originally developed in the U.S. as the .30 Pedersen for use in the Pedersen Device, a conversion for the 1903 Springfield to turn it into a blowback-operated semi-auto rifle with a higher capacity magazine. The 1935A and 1935S pistols, along with the MAS Model 38 submachine gun were chambered for the .30 Pedersen, now the 7.65 Long. This .30 caliber cartridge is more powerful than the .32 ACP and capable of firing projectiles as heavy as 100 grains. For more info: (800) 280-6660, [www.starlinebrass.com](http://www.starlinebrass.com)







## CZ 75 SP01 EXECUTIVE SERIES

**GUNCRAFTER INDUSTRIES**

**G**uncrafter Industries takes the CZ 75 SP01 Executive Series of pistols to the next level by adding distinct upgrades and finishes. The pistols now have Hot Salt Blue slides with polished flats, a flush cut and crowned barrel and the company's Slim-Tac G10 Grips. The barrel and small parts are also DLC-coated. Clear Cerakote has been applied to the color case hardened frame sporting an engraved Guncrafter Industries logo. For more info: (224) 321-5044, [www.guncrafterindustries.com](http://www.guncrafterindustries.com)

## TAC-MAT LONG-RANGE SHOOTING MAT

**LYMAN PRODUCTS CORP.**

**L**yman's Tac-Mat Long-Range Shooting Mat is ideal for long-range, target or tactical shooting, and varmint hunting. It works well even for tall shooters, yet rolls up to a compact, easy-to-transport size. The Long-Range Shooting Mat comes in two versions: a basic design with a 600D construction in black or FDE; or a heavy-duty (HD) version with 1000D construction in black. These comfortable 2-lb. mats will protect you from dirt, rocks, wet surfaces, insects, hot truck beds, gravel or pavement. For more info: (800) 225-9629, [www.lymanproducts.com](http://www.lymanproducts.com)



## PADDED COBRA SLING

**VERSACARRY**

**T**he Padded Cobra Sling from Versacarry is a comfortable and functional way to carry a rifle during a hunt. It is handsomely designed too. The sling offers premium support and is made of double-ply water buffalo leather with a padded backing. It gives the user shoulder support and stays in place when you're walking and climbing. For more info: (979) 778-2000, [www.versacarry.com](http://www.versacarry.com)

## GUARDIAN

**NELSON HOLSTERS**

**T**he Guardian features a metal reinforced mouth, adjustable retention and a low cut front. Offered with black or white thread, this OWB holster hides reasonably well with an untucked shirttail. The Guardian is a complicated holster to build and uses a lot of leather. Made of 100 percent Wicket & Craig leather, it's handmade in the U.S.A. like all other Nelson holsters. For more info: (828) 729-3415, [www.nelsonholsters.com](http://www.nelsonholsters.com)



## DOUBLE-THREAT DOVE CHOKE TUBE

**TRUGLO, INC.**

**T**he Double-Threat Dove Choke Tube from TRUGLO is designed for dove hunting. The dual-position choke tube allows hunters to choose between Decoy and Pass settings. The former is optimized for close-range shooting with more patterns while the latter is for longer-range shooting with tighter patterns. A twist-and-click changes the setting without tools. The Double-Threat is designed for common lead dove loads ranging from #6 to #8 shot. For more info: <http://www.truglo.com>





## PURSES FOR CONCEALED CARRY

### TACTICA DEFENSE FASHION

With Tactica Defense Fashion's *Purses for Concealed Carry*, you don't have to sacrifice style or comfort for protection. Designed with your safety in mind, the purses come with a separately concealed compartment at the back — just for your firearm. Two zipper-openings allow you to draw from either side and still keep your firearm concealed. Designed to meet different users' needs, the purses come in a variety of styles, colors and sizes. For more info: (208) 618-4101, [www.tacticafashion.com](http://www.tacticafashion.com)



## NOIZEBARRIER MICRO EARPLUGS

### OTTO ENGINEERING

The *NoizeBarrier Micro Earplugs* from OTTO Engineering provide natural and enhanced hearing on the range and in the field. The electronic earplugs provide up to 40 dB of noise protection and feature a one-touch enhanced mode, amplifying soft sounds by 5X for improved situational awareness. NoizeBarrier Micros last for 16 hours of continuous use and are rechargeable up to 20 cycles with the provided charging station on a single charge. For more info: (847)-428-7171, [www.otto-comm.com](http://www.otto-comm.com)



## BEAR EDGE 61128

### BEAR & SON CUTLERY

Bear Edge Knives, a Bear & Son Cutlery brand, introduces the *Bear Edge 61128*. With the blade and handle both made of stainless steel, the 6.5"-long pocketknife can do most arduous

tasks. It measures 3.75" closed and weighs only 3 oz. Ball bearing washers in the blade pivot make deployment easy with a push of ambidextrous thumb

studs. A clip secures the knife in your pocket; a lanyard hole gives additional carry options. For more info: (800) 844-3034, [www.bearandsoncutlery.com](http://www.bearandsoncutlery.com)

## X5 BUCKLE & TAN TACTICAL GUN BELT

### KORE ESSENTIALS

Like other Kore Essentials gun belts, the *X5 Buckle & Tan Tactical Gun Belt* has no holes and no Velcro. Instead it uses a hidden track system with 40-plus micro-size positions to choose from. This gives the belt a ziptie-like fit keeping both holster and firearm secure. The newest version of the tactical belt has a reinforced power-core center for added strength and rigidity but remains flexible and comfortable. For more info: (619) 303-9663, [www.koreessentials.com](http://www.koreessentials.com)



## 108 COMPADRE FROE

### BUCK KNIVES

The *108 Compadre Chopping Froe* from Buck Knives is a multi-purpose woodworking tool for outdoor activities. Made of 5160 steel, the 9.5" blade is ideal for clearing brush, heavy chopping, splitting and batoning. Weighing under 2 lbs. and with an overall length of 16 3/4", the Compadre Chopping



Froe is the right size for all outdoor tasks. It comes with a genuine leather sheath. For more info: (208) 262-0500, [www.buckknives.com](http://www.buckknives.com)



## FRANKLIN ARMORY REFORMATION RS7 PACKAGE

The gun we're giving away for *GUNS Magazine's* first issue of 2020 is Franklin Armory's *Reformation RS7*. The name evokes change and it's only apt as we're transitioning into a new year, nay, a new decade. Chambered in 5.56 NATO, the Reformation RS7 has Franklin Armory's 7.5" full-contour Reformation barrel, a 7" FST M-Lok handguard and forged FAI-15 lower and upper receivers. Custom features like the Franklin Armory Triumvir muzzle device, Binary Firing System Gen III trigger and Magpul SL-K Stock are included out of the box. Here's a unique fact about the RS7: It's neither a rifle nor a shotgun. That's because its barrel do not "impart spin" on projectiles so it's not rifling and thus doesn't meet the definition of a rifle. It also isn't a

smoothbore so it's not a shotgun either.

With an OAL of 10.13", the *SXS* or the *Skullcrusher's Xtreme Sidekick* was designed as a complement to TOPS Knives' larger survival knife — the *Skullcrusher's Xtreme Blade*. The 5.25"-long blade of the *SXS* is made of 1095 RC 56-58 steel with a Black Traction Coating. Handle is Black Linen Micarta.

MTM Case-Gard's *Ammo Rack* is a better way of storing and organizing your ammo! You'll see what we mean when you get your dark earth ammo rack with clear blue boxes — if you win this giveaway package.

Welcome 2020 with positive vibes! Join the giveaway with high hopes of winning! Click on [www.gunsmagazine.com/giveaways](http://www.gunsmagazine.com/giveaways) or send us a postcard. —Jazz Jimenez

### AMMO RACK

**MAKER:** MTM Case-Gard  
(937) 890-7461  
[www.mtmcase-gard.com](http://www.mtmcase-gard.com)  
**VALUE:** \$13.99



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



# ENTER TO WIN!



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

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San Diego, CA, 92150-2795.

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VALUE:  
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## **REFORMATION RS7**

**MAKER:** Franklin Armory  
(775) 783-4313

**CALIBER:** 5.56 NATO, **CAPACITY:** 30

**BARREL LENGTH:** 7.5" full contour

**OAL:** 24"/27", **WEIGHT:** 5.7 oz.

[www.franklinarmory.com](http://www.franklinarmory.com)

**VALUE:** \$1,409.99

## **SXS**

**MAKER:** TOPS Knives  
(208) 542-0113

[www.topsknives.com](http://www.topsknives.com)

**VALUE:** \$200



## BUSTIN' BANANA ROCK 11MM AT A TIME ... THE TALE OF A SPECIAL 71/84 MAUSER

Every year, it's there — resting seductively on the #2 loading rack of the Hunter Pistol Silhouette Range. Next to it, a heaping bag of handloads, used to feed this hungry German. We're in Raton, NM, home of the NRA Whittington Center, the most beautiful shooting range in the World.

Each year a group of dedicated shooters gather for a holiday of sorts in order to visit, catch up, exchange ideas and well, shoot. For 10 years I'd noticed the slender German with the ravenous appetite, hanging around, waiting patiently to cast its spell on any passing shooter. Certain guns are funny like that.

### PROPER BAIT?

What shooter in their right mind could pass on such a clever set-up? The ingredients are all there, a vintage rifle of German descent, a large bag of ammunition, steel silhouette targets, not to mention a mountain

side of rocks, boulders and dead trees to shoot at. The steel is set at 75 meters, while the other targets of opportunity vary anywhere from 500 to 600 yards away.

White powder-dust erupts from the many rocks "way out yonder" after being struck by gunfire. One in particular, affectionately called Banana Rock, has been hailed upon for decades with lead. Roughly the size of a VW Bug, the large boulder is about 600 yards away, depending on where you're standing on the firing line.

The bombardment of bullets, usually in the form of big-bore homegrown cast bullets from these salty-sort of shooters has nibbled away at the dimensions of the fabled "rock."

### SIGHTED IN

The owner of the iconic 11mm Mauser is a retired firefighter from Los Angeles named Jim Williamson. He's as nice as they come and shares his beloved military rifle with any and all takers who stroll by, enticed by the sultry surplus shooter. It's this kind of generosity fueling the spirit of these nimrods.

Jim keeps the beautifully milled ladder rear sight zeroed for any takers of Banana Rock. The sight picture is vintage perfection. Coupled with the precision-milled sights and long sight radius, hitting the fruit shaped boulder is child's play.

With the front sight nestled in the rear sight notch, simply perching "the banana" on top of the front sight and slowly pressing the 2-stage military trigger is all it takes. While recovering from recoil, the 400-gr. lead bullet chugs its way up the mountainside. When struck, white dust erupts from the ol' banana, confirming your hit as a grin subconsciously appears on your face.

### HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

The Model 71 Mauser started life as a single-shot rifle. In 1884, it was converted to repeater status with the addition of a magazine tube, hence the name 71/84. Alfred von Kropatschek designed the alteration, making it Germany's first repeating rifle.

Sitting in its usual spot, the Mauser 71/84 seductively poses, waiting to be picked up and loaded to chip away a little more of Banana Rock.



A close-up shot of the beautifully crafted rear ladder sight. It ranges all the way out to 1,600 meters.





The quality is evident — wood to metal fit, checkering, polishing and finish are all top rate, especially for a 131-year-old military-issued rifle.



The 71/84 was formally adopted by the German Government in 1884 and officially designated as "Infantry Repeating Rifle M. 71/84," and is chambered in 11mm Mauser, the same cartridge as the Model 71. By 1886, the entire German Army was equipped with it.

The 71/84 weighs 10 lbs. 2.25 oz., 14 oz. more with affixed bayonet and measures 4' 3" without bayonet and 5' 9-1/2" with bayonet. The barrel is 31.5" long with 1:21.65 rate of twist. The rear ladder sight runs from 200–1,600 meters. Factory fodder was 1,425 FPS with a 385-gr. bullet.

## HAND-FED BOULDER BASHER

Jim feeds his Model 71/84 with handloads of his own making. He casts his projectiles from an RCBS 11mm mold and simply forms his cases by running 45-90 brass through his 11mm Mauser sizing die.

For Remington 9-1/2 large rifle primers used for ignition, 28 grains of IMR 4198 is the propellant of choice. This carefree, clean-burning load allows Jim, and the many converted 11mm Mauser fans to shoot smoke-free and not worry about dealing with black powder residue in the rifle or brass. I know — "Duke" Venturino is cringing at us but it's very convenient.

Jim brought over 600 rounds of loaded ammo and went home with over 600 empties. This makes over 34 lbs. of lead and

Even the sharp scripted roll marks are cool looking, showing the birthmarks of the finely-crafted German Mauser.



Here's a vintage box of 11mm Mauser ammo next to Jim's new case-formed brass and cast RCBS slug.

2.5 lbs. of powder Jim donated to be sent downrange by any and all enticed shooters. As a result, more Model 71/84s are popping up at the range every year.

## BACKWARD STEP?

While trying out the latest releases is nice, sometimes taking a step back opens our eyes even more, bringing new meaning to us. The willingness to share allows others to learn and experience something new, giving them a fresh perspective on things. As long as there are guys like Jim Williamson, we all get the chance to do so. This spirit embodies the Shootists who gather each and every year.



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# GUNS

MAGAZINE

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## YEP, WE'RE ALL TANGOS!

By now, you've heard the 11-member San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution declaring the National Rifle Association a domestic terrorist group. This board is, politically-speaking, more leftist than Chairman Mao and utterly clueless about things (or the people) outside their feces-contaminated, trash- and homeless-filled socialist paradise by the bay. Fortunately, no one outside of gun control advocates and their pals in the mainstream media care at all.

Personally, I'd much rather have neighbors who were NRA members than a San Francisco Supervisor.

While I'm a big believer in the idea of,



“ignore stupid people and they eventually go away,” we must give a shout-out to firearm manufacturer Honor Defense who combined capitalism with Second Amendment support. As a response to San Francisco's exercise in group ignorance, during September the

company offered an 11 percent discount on USA-built, veteran-assembled pistols if you used the special code “Cluesless11inFrisco.” Yeah, that's what they said. (Photo credit of beautiful downtown San Francisco: “Mid-Market Blight” by spotreporting)

## POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE

I've got to hand it to our readers — they are an inventive bunch! As you probably can guess, we receive bushels of cards as entries in our monthly gun giveaways. *GUNS* Associate Editor Jazz Jimenez takes care of all the inbound mail so the editor doesn't chap his precious fingertips.

Recently, Jazz shared some of the incredible array of “postcards” we receive as entries. My personal favorite was a



section of the box from what used to be called a “TV Dinner,” though a recycled

son-in-law birthday card was a close second. I thought our readers are really resourceful. Someone did point out postcards are now difficult to find.

As a side note, even though we receive a good number of entries each month, the overall number is small compared to some big national sweepstakes, or certainly any lottery. Therefore, statistically speaking, you stand a much better chance of winning a gun from *GUNS* than nearly any other such contest. Keep those Salisbury Steak boxes coming!

## TALK ABOUT FAKE NEWS!

Last month many social media users and media outlets, including *GUNS Magazine*, received an official-looking press release announcing Swiss arms and ammunition manufacturer RUAG

was closing down. The only problem — it was literally fake news.

RUAG issued a press release saying, “Earlier today, a hoax press release was circulated claiming that RUAG would close its Ammotec division and cease making weapons for export. That announcement was entirely false. RUAG will continue to supply the world with arms, and we will pursue legal action against the perpetrators of this awful hoax.”

Apparently, the disinformation was circulated by someone or some group who would like to see the company stop making weapons and ammunition. The release

also included some strange claims such as RUAG bankrolling the Zurich-based Neumarkt Theater's production of “They Shoot Horses, Don't They?”

RUAG had a great comeback: “We do appreciate a joke, although this one is in very poor taste. But, if you must put a horse down, RUAG makes frangible rounds that minimize danger for the shooter while maximizing stopping power to the horse.”

### ONE CORRECTION

There was a typo in the last Insider concerning Janelle Cooper, wife of Gunsite Founder Col. Jeff Cooper. We stated Janelle died Sunday, June 28 when in fact it was Sunday, July 28, 2019.





## BETO SHOOTS GUN CONTROL EFFORTS IN THE FOOT

The NRA has anointed him AR-15 salesman of the year and liberals are horrified when he gave away the game plan. Of course, we're talking about democratic presidential hopeful Robert (Beto) Francis O'Rourke, who proclaimed,



"Hell yes, we're taking away your AR-15s and AK-47s."

He was trying to generate attention for his faltering campaign but managed to not only fire up gun owners, he also enraged his "progressive" co-conspirators. I've been reading with great glee all of the online wailing and gnashing of teeth from lefties over his pronouncement. The basic feeling seems to be, "Beto, you weren't supposed to tell anyone!"

I'll take this moment to beat the drum again so gun owners understand very plainly (just like Beto) — if *any* of the current crop of Democrats is elected to the White House in November, there is a very good chance the government will eventually attempt to take away your firearms. And, if you think "It's not my problem" because you don't own an AR-15 or AK-47, you're wrong — you're just a little farther back in the line. If you doubt me, ask anyone from California. (Photo: Gage Skidmore)



## THEY ARE WATCHING YOU

Second Amendment advocates often sound an alarm about government overreach and civil rights being abridged, then the other side scoffs and says, "Oh, you're just being paranoid." I usually respond by saying, "It's not paranoia if people really *are* out to get you."

**"IF YOU OWN A NIGHT VISION SCOPE BY AMERICAN TECHNOLOGIES NETWORK (ATN) CO., THE GOVERNMENT IS OUT TO GET YOU ..."**

If you own a night vision scope by American Technologies Network (ATN) Co., the government is out to get you, or at least your information. They want your personal identifiers, not because you've committed any crime but because a few people *might* have.

On September 5, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency requested Apple and Google share information on who downloaded Obsidian 4, an app which allows users to control their ATN Night Vision scope via a cell phone. The apparent reason was to investigate violations of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), i.e. people taking ATN scopes to other countries. The problem here is the vast majority of people who own an ATN scope or downloaded the app have done nothing wrong, so the government's request amounts to a "fishing expedition" to see if they can figure out who might have committed a crime based on the fact they downloaded software to their phone. Not cool.

## ONE KEY TO CORPORATE VIRTUE-SIGNALING

I got an email from minuteKEY, one of those do-it-yourself key-making kiosks at a big "box" hardware store. The product worked, the process was quick and I'm happy with the result. As typical, my email address was added to their newsletter rolls and I recently received a message. It said — "The first six weeks of school are when the most sexual assaults occur on campus. And for too long, women have been taught to use their keys for self-defense on a walk home alone. This cannot be."

As a retired cop, I'm not sure they're correct on the yearly timing of assaults but what really drew my eye was the apparent sentiment saying keys shouldn't be used as a weapon. I have a mother, a wife, a daughter and six granddaughters and tell all of them to fight back against any assault using whatever they have on hand — gun, backpack, passing stray cat or house keys.

Hey minuteKey: Whether you like it



or not, your product makes a moderately useful weapon and I highly encourage anyone to use as such! One can only guess what they're smoking in the Company's Colorado headquarters.

*continued on page 81*



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