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1911 DROP-IN TRIGGER SYSTEM

By Craig Enloe

As with all parts of society, the gun industry is evolving as technology continues to grow. Firearms are becoming lighter, smaller, more durable, more accurate and more versatile than ever. The leaps forward in firearm technology won't be slowing down, either. But not every platform has reaped the rewards of increased technology.

The 1911 model has largely been left behind when it comes to innovation. After all, it's called "1911" for a reason. It's been in service for over a century. John Moses Browning's design has remained relevant yet left little room for evolving.

Nighthawk Custom, makers of top-of-the-line, high-end 1911 pistols, has produced the first giant leap forward in 1911 technology, the Drop-In Trigger System.

"It is absolutely phenomenal," exclaimed Rob Potter, lead instructor at RRT Firearms Training in Lakebay, Wash. "I took one look at it and knew Nighthawk Custom had hit it out of the park on this one. Your entire ignition system on a 1911 is replaced by a cassette-style drop-in trigger. It is very simple."

The Drop-In Trigger System, or DTS as it is called, is a self-contained unit that took many years of development. The traditional sear, disconnector, and springs have been removed from the equation. Inside the steel housing of the DTS unit, a new disconnector, sear, hammer, and hammerstrut are assembled with independent springs for both the disconnector and sear. The traditional sear spring is replaced by a grip safety spring featuring a single leg.

Installation is completed in around 10 minutes and then the true brilliance of the DTS is put on display. Squeezing off the

first round, not an ounce of creep is felt. As Potter explained it, "The benefit of this is that for any production pistol, the holes in the frame are not in perfect alignment. That makes it very difficult to get a good trigger pull with no creep. This eliminates that."

The trigger breaks cleanly at 3 3/4 to 4 pounds and resets flawlessly for round after round. If a shooter didn't know any better, they would swear this was a gunsmithed trigger job.

"The trigger is absolutely phenomenal," Potter added. "I can't tell the difference between a finely gunsmithed trigger and this trigger."

Nighthawk Custom has delivered the first truly drop-in trigger. For the first time, novice gunsmiths and tinkers can give their 1911 the feel and performance of an expertly gunsmithed trigger job, with the pistol never leaving their home.



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LIPSTICK LOVE

Mr. Taffin, after reading your article "Lipstick Bullets" in the most recent issue of *GUNS Magazine*, I was intrigued and ended up ordering 1,000 bullets of various "flavors" and styles. With shipping \$116, I thought this was a good deal. You were spot-on regarding the wooden boxes they come packed in. I could not believe it, nor the craftsmanship. Anxious to see how they run through several different pistols and revolvers.

Ron Bruce

LIKE A WHAT?

I got a kick out of your article in *GUNS* about the 71/84 Mauser.

I was 14 years old back in 1956 when I bought mine. At the time there was a surplus firearms store called Golden State Arms in Pasadena, CA. I would ride the bus from my house in LA out there and "shop" until they closed. They had enough firearms in crates and racks to keep central America at war for a century.



I was walking up and down the aisles when I came upon a stack of crates marked "Spandau" and sitting on top was this beautiful Mauser. It was love at first sight. These rifles were absolutely primo, unissued and wrapped in oiled brown paper.

When I got home I went to work. The rifle had been stored in heavy grease which had hardened until the bolt would not open. I separated the stock from the rifle and soaked the action in a bucket of kerosene for several days. I completely disassembled the rifle, cleaned and lightly oiled it. It shone like a diamond in a goat's butt!

The 71/84 is a work of art! Mauser engraved a serial number on every part including screws that had the last two numbers cut into the heads.

I enjoyed shooting that rifle more than any other rifle I have owned, but I don't think I could replace it new for the \$35.94 I paid for it.

KIND WORDS

I know you are busy, but I just had to comment. The *GUNS* of April was the best. Every author wrote something grabbing: Ayooob on mating a Colt barrel to a Smith and Wesson frame! Who knew? Denny Hansen on turning .22LR casings into bullets. Miraculous! Taffin on lever actions. I finally succumbed to buying one. And the dreams of some promising young man with a backyard, a BB gun and a mission. There is little that I read twice. I read April *GUNS* more than I have read the book of Matthew!

I try to write the humorous pieces for my local men's club monthly newsletter so I

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AN ULTIMATE FIGHT STOPPER.

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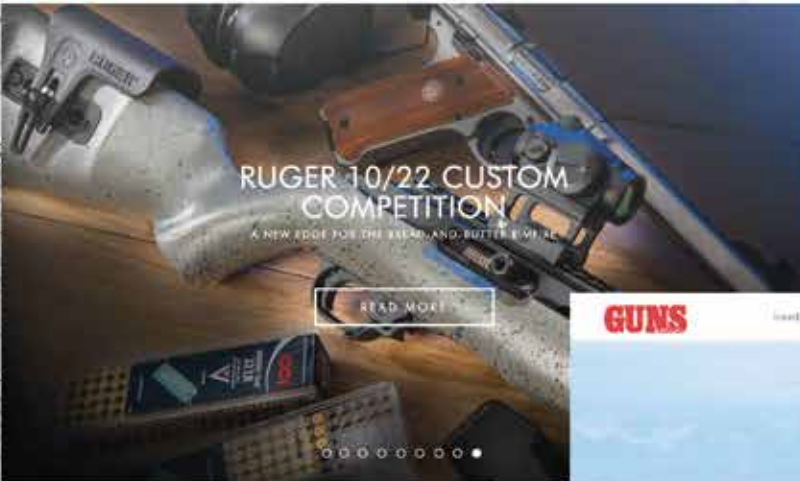
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KISMET, COINCIDENCE – OR? THINGS HAPPEN FOR A REASON ...

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

I try to live my life by faith daily, as all of us do one way or the other. At the very least we have faith in the physical. We sit in a chair expecting it to hold us, we eat in a restaurant expecting the food to be good and we drive in traffic expecting the other fella to also do the right thing. Sometimes our faith in these proves to be groundless as the chair collapses, we get sick from the food and we have to take our vehicle to the body shop — or worse. There are things I definitely do not have any faith in such as global warming, major news media and politicians. I also do not believe in coincidence. Rather, everything happens for a reason. We may not know the reason at the time, we may never know the reason, but it's always there.

COUSIN CHARLIE

I grew up in Ohio where my uncle had a farm outside of Homerville. He had three kids, my older cousins, Betty Sue, Frances, and Charlie. I spent much of my summertime on the farm with Cousin Charlie. He was about eight years older than I and our relationship did not get off to the best start, at least on my part. Apparently he had to break me in first. The first time I was there we took a walk in the fields, he stopped when we got to a wire fence and

then he grabbed my hand with one of his and the fence with his other.

I received a very unpleasant tingling. Then, he said “Let’s go for a ride,” and set me up on the back of the wagon as we headed out over the field. The wagon happened to be a manure spreader and the chicken coop had been freshly cleaned out. When the wagon started up, I got splattered. I was thankful he had not just cleaned out the cow barn.

Then, on Saturday afternoon, we were all cleaned up and ready to go into the town of Lodi for a movie. While we were waiting for the girls, Cousin Charlie and I took a walk and stopped to watch the old sow with her piglets in the pen. He told me to smack the old sow on her rump with the hammer, which I stupidly obliged. She did not like it at all, busted through the pen and came after me. I went up the ladder onto the roof, lost my footing, rolled off into all the pig slop. Now 70 years later I can still remember my aunt’s fussing and fuming as she tried to clean me up.

FINALLY FRIENDS

One positive thing was the fact it must’ve been the last test and from then on, Cousin Charlie and I were the best of friends and he never did anything to me again. Charlie became one of my heroes just like my two other cousins who dropped out of high school, lied about their age and entered WWII. I was very envious then, still am, of



Cousin Charlie’s artistic skills, as demonstrated by this tanned cowboy he carved, were a target of John’s envy.

his artistic abilities in drawing and wood carving.

He taught me how to drive the tractor, he took me shooting and hunting and fishing, he let me ride in the back of the old farm pickup truck, and one thing I really enjoyed was riding in the rumble seat of his old car. If you’re too young to know what a rumble seat is, look it up.

The years passed as they always do. My uncle and aunt got divorced, which was virtually unheard of in those days, and the family split into two factions. I did not see Cousin Charlie again for several decades. I married, attended college and worked full-time in a tire factory to support my growing family of three kids by the time I graduated.

Following graduation, Diamond Dot and I packed up the three kids in the back



of our '65 Ford Station Wagon, hooked on a U-Haul and headed for Idaho. More years passed and when I did get back to Ohio for a visit, I decided to look up Cousin Charlie. It wasn't difficult to find him as he was attending church where our friend was now the pastor. When we got together we found out blood really is thicker than water and we had the same basic beliefs, the same books on our shelves and many of the same guns. Charlie was also a shooter and hunter and his passion was groundhogs, which we call rock chucks. He kept a record and had taken over more than 10,000.

The years passed again and Cousin Charlie wound up in a nursing home where he lasted a few more years. Meanwhile, his two boys had grown up, married and had families. One of them moved to Colorado.

TODAY

Fast forward to the present. My granddaughter Katie is married to Tyler who is an apprentice lineman with just a few hours to go to complete his apprenticeship. A few years ago they sold their home and bought a fifth-wheel travel trailer that allowed them to travel from job to job. Katie also works for a company doing billing and payroll that allows her to do everything online so her office is in the trailer and goes wherever they go.

This past winter was especially brutal and Tyler was laid off for several months. He was called back to work in early March, they hooked up the fifth wheeler and headed for Colorado. The first week there Katie drove to one of the small towns and found a quilt shop.

As Katie entered the shop she noticed business cards on the counter which said: "Rachel Taffin, Quilter." She asked the clerk about it and was informed Rachel was actually in the store at the time. Katie went to talk to her and told her she was also a Taffin and told her about her Papa.

Rachel asked Katie if her grandfather was the man who wrote gun articles. As they talked some more, they discovered Rachel was married to Cousin Charlie's grandson. They made arrangements to get together the following Sunday for dinner and they called me and asked a lot of family questions. How did they get together? How did these two girls find each other in a population of 300 million? Coincidence? I don't think so!

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7mm-08 Remington	165 gr., GAMECHANGER
7mm Remington Mag.	165 gr., GAMECHANGER
.308 Winchester	165 gr., GAMECHANGER
.30-06 Springfield	165 gr., GAMECHANGER
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REMINGTON MODEL 1890 DUKE FINALLY COMPLETES HIS OLD WEST COLLECTION

In my gun'riting career I've tried to experience all of the Old West sixguns and their most noteworthy cartridges. Besides the omnipresent Colt Peacemaker, there were quite a few other holster-size revolvers on the market back in the late 1800s. Colt also marketed a Model 1878 DA, a smaller Model 1877 DA and several versions of Conversions, i.e. cap-and-ball designs converted to fire metallic cartridges. Smith & Wesson had at least four different types of No. 3 .44 top breaks plus the famous .45 Schofield.

Lesser known were Merwin & Hulberts with their twist frame .44s such as the Pocket Army. The Remington Model 1875 was very distinctive with its large web between frame and barrel. I've owned shooting samples of all mentioned in this paragraph.

MISSING FROM THE COLLECTION

The one Old West sixgun I've never owned is Remington's Model 1890. Many sources I've consulted say the Model 1890s were only made in .44-40s with 5 3/4" barrels and to the tune of a couple thousand built. As many gun shows as I've attended, even some of the big antique ones in Las Vegas, the Remington Model 1890s I've seen could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Back in the late 1980s or early 1990s Uberti made some Model 1890 replicas. I had one but for reasons now unremembered I didn't like it. It got traded or sold somewhere along the way.

More recently, however, I've seen some copies of old Remington advertisements dated the 1890-1892 time frame. They

definitely show Model 1890s offered with 7 1/2" barrel lengths. Get this — customers had to pay 20 cents more for the longer barrel. Why I was pleased to see this information will be discussed shortly.

A TWIST

Furthermore, a very helpful reader informed me of a Remington revolver I'd never heard about. It was the Model 1888 also termed in Remington ads as their New Model Pocket Army Revolver. This version came about after Remington discontinued production of the Model 1875 in 1887. According to an article by Don Ware in the *Remington Society of America Journal* titled "Variations in Remington Model 1875, Model 1888, and Model 1890 Revolvers," someone found a stash of Model 1875s at the Remington Factory in Ilion, NY. Instead of offering them to the public as is, they were remodeled to have the large web cut mostly away and barrels shortened to 5 3/4".



Duke found these very rare Hartford Armory reproductions of Remington 19th century revolvers on the Internet and nabbed both. Top is the Model 1875 .44-40, bottom is the Model 1890 .45 Colt.



According to the meager research available, Model 1890 Remingtons were not chambered for .45 Colt but Duke's Hartford Armory reproduction is.

Chambering could have been .44-40 and perhaps .45 Gov't (.45 S&W). These were the Model 1888 and by what I see in Mr. Ware's article, it would take someone very familiar with these rare sixguns to discern between '88s and '90s.

Now why would I care Remington Model 1890s were offered with 7 1/2" barrels? To answer this we must go back almost to the turn of our current century. A fellow called saying he had founded a company named Hartford Armory. Its purpose was to reproduce Model 1875 and 1890 Remington revolvers. He asked to visit and I was more than happy to host him. We fired his prototypes and I thought they were fine and asked to get a sample from standard production when they became available. Never happened — I never heard another word from the fellow. However, I did hear a small quantity of repro-Remington sixguns had been made. Then, either the company folded or just gave up revolver manufacture. I never saw one.

Then in 2019, I heard about two Hartford Armory revolvers for sale. One was a .44-40 Model 1875 and the other a .45 Colt Model 1890. Naturally I bought both. When they were delivered and boxes opened I saw both had 7 1/2" barrels. It was a disappointment in regards to the Model 1890 until reading Mr. Ware's article. I'm still a little off about the Model 1890 being a .45 but I will bravely live with it. Both of those sixguns were built to excellent quality standards.

So now I can say I've experienced Remington's Model 1890. Well, sort of. It's wintertime in Montana as I write this so a shooting report is going to have to wait. 🦋

Editor's Note: To learn more about the above revolvers, check out Duke's Shooting Sixguns of the Old West on amazon.com.

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MOUNTS COUNT!

A BORING BUT CRITICAL PART OF THE EQUATION

Like racing tires and blue-ribbon taxi-dermy, a costly scope awaits you to nothing if stupidly attached.

Not until after I laid the scope in the rings did it look tilted. The rifle was level. A scope not pointing where the barrel points has limited utility, so I boxed the tilted optic for immediate return. Then, clever lad I am, and with the assistance of another scope that also tilted, I discovered the tall rear ring was in front, the short front ring in back.

SIMPLE AS IT GETS

In this age of drones, smart phones and automobiles who squawk at center stripes and roadside weeds, a scope mount is downright primitive. No moving parts. No invisible parts. Assembly instructions in English, Spanish and Neanderthal.

Still, mounts do not suffer fools. Piqued because glass gets all the attention, they cackle silently when a scope carelessly attached slips or rattles loose from its moorings, scuttling an important shot. Herewith a few observations on this unglamorous but essential link between your sight and your bullet:

MOUNTS 101

Steel and alloy mounts are alike worthy. Steel is heavier and sturdier. It can be

machined to more petite dimensions without sacrificing requisite brawn. Steel bases and rings can be cinched tighter without distortion. But tightened too ambitiously or misaligned, steel rings can mar scopes. Ditto when they're not concentric or their edges properly finished, even if you install them perfectly.

Alloy (aluminum) is softer, lighter, less expensive in raw and finished form, and kinder to scope tubes. Alloy bases and rings don't appear as crisp as the best steel mounts. No matter how hard you try to match it, an anodized finish can't replicate the look of blued steel. Scarred, alloy is harder to touch up. On classy rifles, most discriminating shooters prefer the look of steel. They're snobs. Me too.

How you install mounts matters more than which you prefer. Some tips:

1. Check first the bases fit the receiver contour, holes align, and front and rear bases are of correct height.

2. Lay your scope across the bases. Will rings support the scope where you want them? An extension ring or base can shift ring position.

3. Use a hard, close-fitting screwdriver tip. Bases must be tight! A torque wrench from Brownells helps.

4. I don't use Loc-Tite or other thread-seizing compound. Think! You may later



Repeatable? Picatinny rail and ring should mate perfectly. Tug the scope rearward when joining them.

want to take things apart.

5. Check ring edges and interiors for burrs. To get a perfect fit, lap split rings with a kit from Brownells.

6. These days, mixing ring halves may be OK; but I keep ring halves paired as packaged.

7. Ring liners to grip or (per Burris) better align scopes fill a need you may or may not have.

8. When slipping a Weaver Tip-Off ring onto a scope, pad the lip with a slip of paper to protect the scope finish.

9. Grease the dovetail on a ring before turning it into its slot with a 1" dowel. (Don't use the scope!)

10. I wipe rings and screws with an oily rag, then rings with a dry rag, and ensure the scope tube is clean.

11. With horizontally split rings, leave the bottom halves or bases loose on the rifle to let the scope align itself before you snug top halves.

12. Vertically split rings should grip



Talley rings tastefully and securely anchor a Swarovski to a Remington Custom Shop 7mm Magnum.



Don't damage a scope by using it to turn a dovetail ring into the base. Keep a 1" dowel for this job.



Picatinny rails accept Weaver rings. But the reverse isn't always true. Pic slots are .206, Weaver's .180.



This QD Blaser mount is beautifully engineered to ensure repeatable hold on a hardened Blaser barrel.



Use hard, close-fitting magnetic screwdriver bits, here from Brownells. Tighten screws alternately.

at top and bottom evenly, and be solidly locked to the base!

13. Locate the scope in the rings; leave 1/8" free tube between the rings and turret and tube junctures.

14. Snug one ring and cheek the rifle fast. If you don't get a full field of view, move the scope. Check all clearances: power ring/base, objective bell/barrel, ocular bell/bolt knob (cycle the bolt!).

15. Use a level or eyeball the reticle to square it up without letting the scope slide forward or back. Before cinching a Weaver ring, rotate the scope slightly toward the lip side; cinching will rotate it back.

16. Snug one ring, cheek the rifle with your eyes closed, open them to check eye relief and reticle. Adjust.

17. Tighten both rings, alternating screws as you would lug nuts when installing a tire. No need to make them cry for mercy, per base screws. Over-tightened rings can dent, even crush scope tubes.

18. Rings tight, and ready for cinching to a Weaver or Picatinny rail, tug the scope against the rail's lugs as you snug rail screws. The lugs will jerk against the rings in recoil. Deny them a running start.

Before you give screws their final turns, leave the rifle overnight then cheek it fast. If the reticle got crooked as you slept, adjust. I often fire from slinged-up prone so check eye relief in this position.

YOU'RE NOT DONE

Afield, check screws periodically. No need to play gorilla. Indeed, if you nudge a screw, you may change point of impact. If a screw doesn't yield to firm (not vigorous) pressure with a screwdriver, it's in no danger of coming loose. But do check! Even modest recoil can work screws loose over time.

One Namibian evening long ago, I took careful aim at an eland 70 yards off. An easy shot. A soft thud signaled a hit too far back. At dawn a tracker helped me trail the beast. I managed to break its neck as it burst from cover. My failing of the day before puzzled me, as the killing shot hit where I'd called it.

Soon thereafter the .300 sent another shot awry and I checked zero back at camp. The bullet hit center. Off to the bush I went — and muffed yet a third chance! The next shot drilled a paper bullseye. Only then did I check the Redfield mount's windage screws. One was on the verge of falling out. The ring thus had nearly 1/4" of play. Recoil bounced it from the snug screw to the loose screw, the next shot bouncing it back. The wagging scope sent every other bullet off-target.

Another time, benching a .416 Rigby, I was beamed by a scope flying end-over-end from the rifle to bloody my noggin before spinning off into the bush. A wakening. Checking screws is now routine.

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Dave has owned or tested 15+ Weatherby Vanguard rifles and has yet to see one which would not shoot under one MOA right out of the box.

DON'T BE A (FOULED) BORE!

KEEPING RIFLE BARRELS CLEAN IS EASIER THAN EVER

Nostalgia is all very well. Looking back, we tend to forget the bad and remember the good maybe a little better than it really was. I'm as sentimental as the next guy but I don't miss typewriters, film cameras, vinyl records and four-barrel carburetors.

TRANSFORMATIONS

Some changes are fast and dramatic.

Others occur so slowly you are hardly aware of them. One such change occurred to me as I was putting a rifle away after doing some testing. I remember a time when copper fouling was a constant issue. It used to keep me awake nights worrying. Now it seems I hardly ever give it a thought, at least not as a serious problem. So what happened? I don't think there is one big factor but rather an accumulation of a

number of small factors.

In my experience new barrels with rough bores from the rifling process are prone to copper fouling. I've known some so bad copper fouling would seriously affect accuracy in as few as 10 or 15 shots. On the positive side such bores tend to smooth up after a couple of hundred rounds, though by then you'll have used a lot of patches.

GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME

Probably the single biggest firearm technical improvement over the last decade is more consistent barrel quality. Modern



Another approach to reduce copper fouling is by coating the bore and/or bullets. These .223 Rem. loads use the Hornady 55 V-Max bullet which Dave moly-coated.

manufacturing methods such as computer-controlled tooling have given us barrels with consistently close tolerances. Certainly we've had good barrels available for a long time, both factory and custom — pre-war Winchester 70 barrels, for example, are highly regarded to this day.

Barrel making used to be as much art as science. In a way I suppose it still is an art, though now the “artists” are relatively unknown technicians. Their genius is in designing, building and programming the amazing CNC machines and in developing high quality steel alloys and precise heat treatments. Start with good materials, precision machines programmed right and good barrels come out one after another like beads on a string.

For a couple of decades now when I want to experiment with a cartridge, I just buy a Weatherby Vanguard or a Tikka T3, bolt a Picatinny rail on top and attach a proven Nightforce scope. Clean the bore, maybe tweak the trigger a bit, tighten all screws using a torque wrench and they all shoot. No fuss, no drama, just go right into



Many modern powders such as Hodgdon, Alliant and IMR incorporate anti-copper fouling technology in several of their rifle powders.

trying various bullets and loads. Don't misunderstand, I like many other makes and models as well and generally get results just as good. I just like the Vanguard and

Tikka because they are reasonably priced, available for a wide range of cartridges, and after owning a dozen or 15 of each they have never let me down.

An advertisement for the North American Arms Ranger II Break-Top 2.5 revolver. The image features a silver revolver with a wooden grip, shown with its cylinder removed. Several .22 Magnum caliber bullets are displayed in the foreground. The North American Arms logo is in the top left corner. Text on the revolver includes ".22 MAGNUM" and "NAA, PROVO, UT". Below the revolver, it says "Actual Size Shown with LR Conversion Cylinder". In the bottom left, there are social media icons for Facebook and Instagram, and the website "www.northamericanarms.com". In the bottom right, the text "Convenient, Reliable, Effective!" is written in a stylized font.

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EXPANDING HORIZONS

More recently I've been having just as good results with even less-expensive rifles. Every one of the half-dozen or so Ruger American rifles I've owned or tested has shot sub-MOA. When the 6mm Creedmoor cartridge came out, I bought

a standard Ruger American, a few boxes of factory Hornady ammunition and got groups consistently under one MOA. Moreover, bore cleaning was fast and easy with little indication of copper fouling. The T/C Compass is another moderately priced gem.

POWDER PREVENTS

Another boon was the development of powders with anti-copper fouling technology. Hodgdon has its CFE (copper fouling eraser) series which includes the CFE 223 powder. Several of the Alliant RL series powders incorporate technology



This 6mm Creedmoor Ruger American Predator model is a "budget" rifle but easily achieved sub-MOA accuracy out of the box with factory ammo.

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When copper fouling does occur ammonia-free cleaners remove the copper with less danger of bore damage.

to reduce copper fouling, as do the IMR Enduron series. This technology really works. It is particularly useful in rifles shot a lot, or with ultra-high velocity cartridges.

Another way of reducing copper fouling is by coating bullets and/or rifle bores. Molybdenum sulfide (Moly) bullet coating got a lot of press a decade or so ago. Unfortunately much of the coverage focused on potential velocity gains instead of the real advantage, which is being able to shoot more with less fouling. Since most rifles don't actually get shot very much, many shooters gave moly a try, found their lives pretty much unchanged and decided it was a waste of time.

Today there are other coatings such as Tungsten Disulfide and Hexagonal Boron Nitride that some feel are superior to Moly. Personally I use coated bullets only in rifles I shoot a lot, as in 1,000 rounds or so annually. For the typical hunting rifle which might get fired 20 or 50 times a year. it hardly matters.

PUT ON YOUR COAT

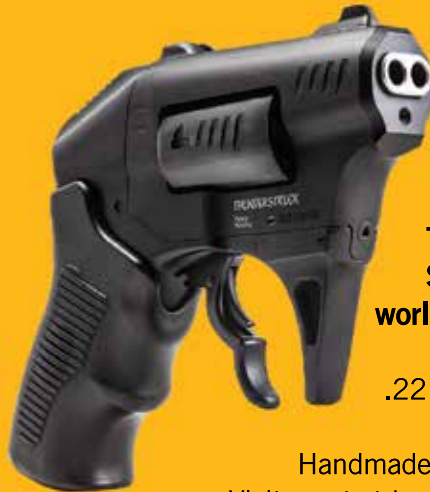
Alternatively or additionally, consider coating the bore. I've read positive reviews of Dyna-Tek bore coating though I can't yet speak from personal experience. It's been getting favorable reviews from people whose opinions I respect, including John Barsness, so I am going to have to give it a try.

I'm maybe a victim of habit. I have a couple of .223 and .308 rifles I shoot regularly to maintain shooting skills — and because I enjoy shooting. New, out of the box, I cleaned the barrels assiduously, coated the bores with moly paste and shoot moly-coated bullets exclusively. But hey, I don't fear change; I now use CFE 223 powder instead of old favorite H-335 in my .223 loads. I may never have to clean them again! (I'm joking, I'm joking!)

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THE SHEEPDOG BARKS! A REALISTIC TEST FOR COMPACT DEFENSIVE HANDGUNS

“Humanity is divided among sheep, wolves, and sheepdogs,” I wrote in the mid-1980s. The great Col. David Grossman popularized it but philosophers said it long before either of us were born. The sheepdog is simply the domesticated creature with fangs who plays with the children, lives peacefully with the family and is prepared to neutralize wolves before they can harm the lambs. Some debate the metaphor but this writer believes right-thinking armed

citizens (and of course, cops) truly fit the sheepdog analogy.

AT THE TRACK MEET

In 2015, armed citizen Rick Denny began shooting “the concealed carry sport” of the International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA). IDPA had been started by Bill Wilson, famed gunsmith and action pistol shooting champion, who was saddened to see the replicated gunfighting contests pioneered by Col. Jeff Cooper turn into a track-and-field event with a huge, highly specialized target pistol. He wanted to see a return to practical self-defense hardware drawn from concealment and fired in courses rewarding center hits, use of cover, and realistic survival strategies such as shooting “threat targets” in tactical priority.

Gun-type divisions, almost from IDPA’s beginnings in the mid-1990s, soon became infested with target pistols masquerading as concealed carry guns. The time came when IDPA surveyed attendees at a major match and determined what most of them actually carried in real life was a compact 9mm pistol, most commonly the GLOCK 19. A new division, Concealed Carry Pistol (CCP) was introduced around this size of gun.

Fledgling IDPA shooter Denny, despairing because so few competitors seemed to enter the CCP division, set out to create a match requiring a CCP handgun. Rick Lund, then Florida State Coordinator while quickly rising to East Coast Coordinator for IDPA, enthusiastically supported him. The first “CCP Only” match, appropriately called “The Sheepdog Challenge,” is now known to competitors as simply “The Sheepdog.” The Florida event drew 130 competitors in its first outing in 2017 and 150 the following year. In 2019 at Valdosta, Georgia there were 252 registered contestants.

THE GUNS

The bark of a sheepdog (small “s”) sounds like “woof” but at The Sheepdog (capital “S”), it sounds like a compact 9mm pistol. In a division inspired by the GLOCK 19, we should not be surprised the G19 and some of the smaller 9mm GLOCKS dominate the field to the tune of nearly 50 percent according to a survey at the 2019 match. S&W pistols, the Shield and M&P Compact, came in second, followed by other compact pistols including those of 2019 match sponsor Walther. The survey showed fully 99 percent of the contestants shot 9mms, including this writer (G19 Gen5). The sole defender of the large bore faith I saw at the match was Dr. Ken Kelly, who shot a .40



Mas (above) managed to clean the Standards, but not as fast as he’d have liked. This shooter (below) chose to advance on targets partially concealed behind cover.



caliber HK. He was true to the concept of the match, too, because the USP40C pistol is what he uses as his everyday carry — the heart of the Sheepdog event's intent.

It should be noted the first event was won by Brandon Reynolds with the .40 caliber clone of the GLOCK 19, the G23. Brandon, however, subsequently adopted the 9mm G19 for these matches, and ...

THE WINNER IS —

... Brandon Reynolds won this third Sheepdog in Valdosta, too. The man dominates The Sheepdog the way Jerry Miculek owns revolver matches in IDPA, the way Doug Koenig owns the Bianchi Cup and Rob Leatham owned the late, lamented Single Stack championships. Brandon first entered competition in 2014, goes through 10K–15K rounds a year, and shoots both IDPA and USPSA.

This particular match reflected the street reality IDPA's founders had in mind — many obscured targets; many targets exposed only briefly; heavy emphasis on use of cover. On one stage I got a "flagrant"



On this stage the shooter had to negotiate a maze of corners and cover.

violation penalty for being out of cover. One little glance would have shown me I was over the line — learning experience reinforced. The Sheepdog is a prime example

of IDPA competition as survival skill testing. I'll try to be at the next one in the first week of December in Valdosta. Keep an eye on the schedule page at www.idpa.com. 🔫

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THE CONTENDER AND THE .22 JET

NOT WHAT THE INVENTORS WANTED, BUT BETTER THAN THEY HOPED

In the early 1960s sixgun manufacturers began searching for better varmint hunting cartridges than the big magnums. The revolver was about to become a real varmint with the introduction of not one, but two bottle-neck cartridges, both based on a necked-down .357 Magnum.

TALE OF TWO GUNS

From a joint venture between Smith & Wesson and Remington came the .22 Remington Jet and from Colt and Winchester came the .256 Winchester. *Almost*. Colt chambered at least three sixguns for the .256 and then abandoned the project. Ruger saved it for a while with the single-shot Hawkeye. Smith & Wesson was far more bold and amidst much fanfare unveiled the Smith & Wesson Model 53 in .22 Jet with an announced muzzle velocity of 2,400 fps!

Even before these cartridges arrived, sixgun genius Jim Harvey was using

shortened and blown out .22 Hornet brass to form his .224 Harvey Kay-Chuk for use in converted Smith & Wesson Model 17 revolvers.

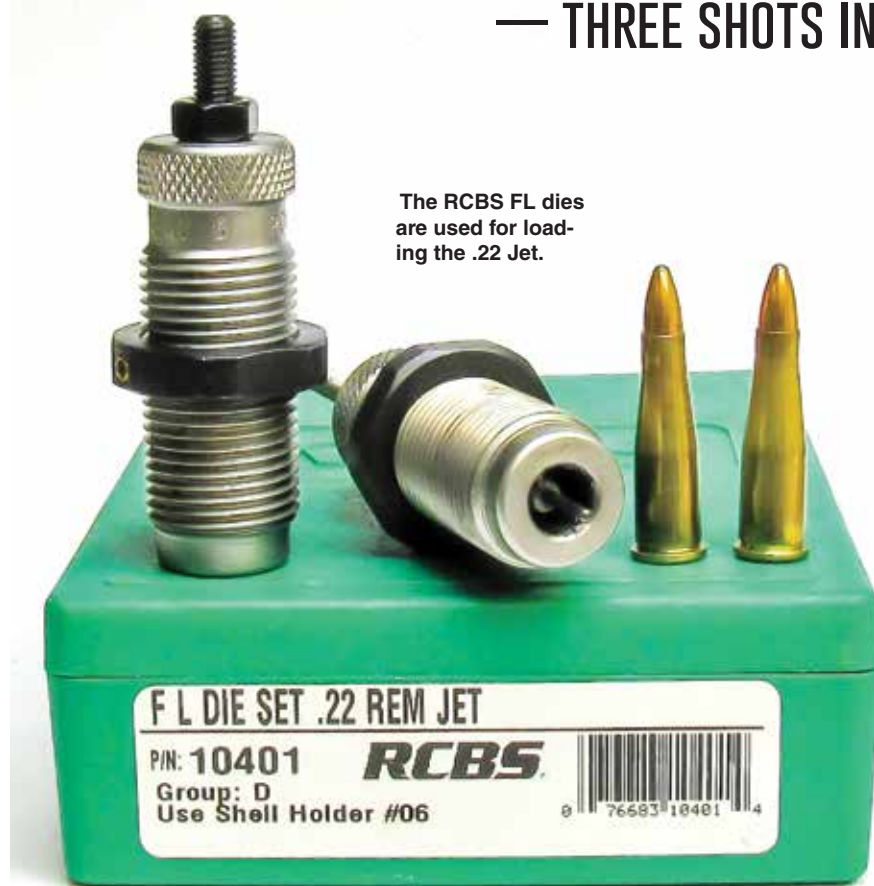
Although the .22 Jet was advertised as obtaining 2,400 fps with a 40-gr. bullet, actual ballistics never even came close to this — more like 1,800 fps and serious problems developed. The .22 Jet was arrived at by necking down the .357 Magnum case to a .22 shaped like a milk bottle. The major problem with the .22 Jet was set-back.

IT JUST DON'T WORK

Due to its shape, upon firing the head of the cartridge would jam against the recoil shield, thus tying up the sixgun and the cylinder could not be rotated. The Smith & Wesson .22 Jet Model 53 was a beautifully made sixgun that could be purchased with an extra cylinder in .22 Long Rifle (perhaps the powers that be already saw trouble ahead?). Even if one did not opt for the extra cylinder, all Jets came with chamber inserts to allow the use of the .22 Long Rifle and the

“SWITCHING TO THE SLIGHTLY HEAVIER 45-GR. BULLET OVER THE SAME POWDER CHARGE SEES THE MUZZLE VELOCITY GO UP 50 FPS WHILE THE GROUP WAS CUT IN HALF — THREE SHOTS IN ONE-QUARTER INCH!”

The RCBS FL dies are used for loading the .22 Jet.



standard cylinder. The dual firing pin was frame mounted, but a clever lever located on the hammer allowed the choice of using rimfire .22s or centerfire Jets.

I gave up trying to make the .22 Jet cylinder work and since I did not have the auxiliary Long Rifle cylinder, I packaged up the Smith & Wesson Model 53 and sent it off to Hamilton Bowen to have him craft a .22 Long Rifle cylinder for it. It works just fine as a .22 Rimfire.

THE REAL ANSWER

I gave up on the .22 Jet in the Smith & Wesson but I did not give up on the cartridge. The answer was not a sixgun but a single-shot, namely the Thompson/Center Contender. My particular Contender .22 Jet barrel is a 12" octagon version. I would prefer it to be a Bull Barrel but I certainly cannot fault the way it shoots with carefully selected loads.

My powders of choice are typical for loading the parent .357 Magnum, namely #2400, H110 and IMR4227. For reloading



The .357 Magnum case is the parent case for the .22 Jet.



John's most used powders for the .22 Jet are #2400 and H110.

dies I use a two-die RCBS set as no expanding die is needed for this milk bottle-shaped case. There is certainly no lack of choice when it comes to .22 bullets and both Hornady and Speer offer ones in the proper range of 40 to 45 grains. Hornady also offers of choice of diameters, 0.222" and 0.223" while all of my Speer bullets are of the 0.224" variety. All of these work well in the Contender barrel.

With the Hornady 40- or 45-gr. bullets I use either 10.0 grains of #2400 or the same amount of H110 for a slightly lighter load. With #2400 these two bullets give muzzle velocities of just over 2,300 fps and 2,230 fps respectively with groups of 1" for three shots at 45 yards. This particular Contender barrel really prefers Speer 40- and 45-gr. Spitzer bullets especially over 10.5 grains of #2400. These loads are so accurate I wouldn't even mention how well they shoot if I did not have a witness.

BETTER AND BETTER

With the Speer 40-gr. Spitzer over 10.5 grains of #2400 the muzzle velocity is just under 2,400 fps, which was the original



The .22 Jet was originally chambered in the Smith & Wesson Model 53 which was available with an extra .22 Long Rifle cylinder as well.



With the right loads the .22 Jet is exceptionally accurate in the Contender.

muzzle velocity for the .22 Hornet in a long rifle barrel, and groups three shots in one-half inch at 45 yards. I thought this would be about as good as it gets, at least with me doing the shooting, actually better than I had any right to expect but would you believe things actually got better?

Switching to the slightly heavier 45-gr. bullet over the same powder charge sees the muzzle velocity go up 50 fps while the group was cut in half — three shots in one-quarter inch! In 40 years of shooting Contenders in everything from .22 Long rifle up to and including the .500 Smith & Wesson

Magnum, this is the most accuracy I have ever attained.

BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL

The .22 Jet may not work in a revolver as it was intended, however it certainly leaves nothing to be desired in the Contender barrel. If the .22 Hornet was good for varmints and small game in the 1930s, the Jet Contender is just as good more than 90 years later. I may wish the relatively thin original octagon .22 Jet barrel was a Bull Barrel, however it's a good idea not to attempt to fix what ain't broke!

LEVER GUN RESURGENCE SURE, FOR JOHN WAYNE; BUT WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

If I were to pick one class of long guns as my favorite, it would have to be lever-action rifles. They can be chambered in everything from .22 Long Rifle up to Big Horn Armory's 500 S&W Magnum. There is a caliber just right for your purposes.

To paraphrase an old country song, I liked lever-actions before lever-actions were cool. And, in the last few years, there has been a resurgence in the popularity of lever-actions.

FAVES

My favorite lever guns are a Winchester Model 71 in .348 Winchester, a Model 92 in .45 Colt, a Winchester Model 94 in .30-30 Winchester and a Henry Classic in .22 Long Rifle. I've hunted with all four for game, ranging from feral hogs to rabbits and I have trained with the Model 92 and Model 94 at Gunsite.

The .22 also serves as a good sub-caliber

trainer for its bigger brothers in addition to being good clean fun.

PRACTICAL USAGE

One reason the lever-gun remains popular for those on horseback is it's thinner than any other design. It also has less height and does not require the mounting of scopes, red dots, lasers and microwave ovens to get the job done.

When riding fences, a Winchester Model 94 went with me snuggled into my saddle scabbard. Unlike the movies, when I was actively working cattle the rifle came off as there was too much of a chance my rope may catch on the stock and cause a wreck in the corral — something to be avoided around sharp horn Brahma-cross cows.

I believe lever actions are a good choice for private citizens for self-defense, and also fill the role of patrol rifle for law enforcement. I can almost hear some people

screaming the ammo capacity of lever guns is too low and lever guns are not accurate enough unless they have optics. For the private citizen or patrol officer, I disagree.

Most law enforcement shootings with rifles are within 100 yards with only a few shots fired. This is well within the capacity and distance of a lever gun. If you are a private citizen, unless your assailant also has a rifle, you'll be hard pressed to make a case for self-defense at less than a quarter of this distance.

TECHNIQUE

Unlike what is portrayed in movies, the lever-action (like bolt-action rifles) should remain on the shoulder while the action is worked. Lowering it and then bringing it back into the shoulder takes more time to reacquire the target.

The extra time off the shoulder may result in not getting a follow-up shot on game or, if used in a defensive role, allow a bad guy to put more holes in you than you were issued at birth.

With little practice rounds can be placed on target quite quickly with a lever gun. The





Typical Buckhorn sight (left) is adequate, but the Skinner Sights ghost ring is faster to pick up under speed and increases accuracy.

addition of a ghost ring sight from Skinner Sights will decrease the time it takes to get on target while increasing accuracy over the buckhorn type sights usually found on lever-actions.

AMMUNITION

For economical practice, I handload hard-cast bullets for both the Model 1892 and 1894. For the .30-30, I use 168-gr. round nose and for the .45 Colt I load 230-gr. round or flat nose and 255-gr. semi-wadcutters. Even though hard-cast, I load the .30-30 to very moderate velocities to



Top to bottom:
Winchester Model 71,
348 Winchester; Model
92, .45 Colt; Winchester
Model 94, .30-30 Win-
chester; Henry Classic,
.22 Long Rifle.

Ex-CIA Giving Away Free Book That Reveals The #1 Most Devastating Self-Defense Technique Ever Developed

Inside this book, which I'm going to send you for free, former CIA Officer Jason Hanson reveals, "The Trident" — A confidential trade secret of the U.S. intelligence community and the #1 most devastating self-defense technique ever developed.

But, before I tell you how to claim you free book, I must warn you that The Trident '3 move' sequence could be dangerous in the wrong hands. In other words, this book is for responsible American citizens only.

The fact is, this book is a 520-page "Survival Bible" that covers more than 100 spy, military and security secrets to keep you and your family safer. So, when you get your copy of this book (it's called ***Alone and Unafraid***) open it immediately to page 179. That's where you'll find complete step-by-step instructions and illustrations to make sure you master The Trident — 3 defense moves that can take down any attacker and give you the upper hand, any time you're threatened.

These are 3 extremely simple... *but deadly*... tactical fighting moves. The first move in The Trident will disorient and blind your attacker. You'll be

shocked how simple it is. The second move takes his breath away in an instant. The final move is the most devastating of all. It will drop him to the ground and make it impossible for him to hurt you.

I think you'll be amazed to find that mastering these 3 moves requires no special abilities, athleticism or strength. Anyone can use The Trident to disable an attacker, it's virtually foolproof. The fact is, the specialized Trident moves use advanced bio-knowledge of human "pain points" to immediately disable any attacker. That's why I ask that you use them only when threatened... *they are that powerful.*

So, when your free 520-page copy of ***Alone and Unafraid*** arrives in your mailbox a few days from now, open first to the section on page 179 that shows you The Trident secret. But, immediately after that, I want you to flip to page 109 where you'll learn home defense secrets from former CIA and former Navy SEALs. The bottom line is, go to this website now to get your free book while supplies last: www.FreeWarriorBook.com.



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Two styles of butt cuffs — Simply Rugged Holsters' (above) has an integral sling. More traditional cuff from Andy's Leather. Both attach securely to the end of the stock.

reduce the chance of leading the bore.

For years the standard loading for the .30-30 was a 158-gr. round-nose jacketed soft-point bullet. Ballistically, it's on a par with the 7.62x39mm cartridge.

Only round-nose or flat-nose bullets could safely be used in the tubular magazine because, under recoil, a cartridge loaded with a spire point bullet could ignite

the primer of the next round in the magazine with disastrous consequences.

This all changed several years ago, when Hornady introduced the LEVERevolution for lever-action rifles. The patented elastomer Flex Tip technology of the FTX and MonoFlex bullets makes spire points safe to use in tubular magazines. The bullets feature higher ballistic coefficients and

dramatically flatter trajectory for increased downrange performance.

They are available in 140-gr. (Mono-Flex) and 160-gr. (FTX) weights and are suitable on big game up to and including elk, breathing new life into the over-century-old cartridge.

CARRY THE SPARES

When hunting with the Model 71, I normally just place an extra half-dozen rounds in my pocket. The Model 92 and Model 94, however, often ride in my truck for defensive purposes as well as for critter control. With this in mind they both have butt cuffs for quick access to reload.

One word of caution on butt cuffs: Make sure it is attached in such a way it will not slide forward and interfere with the functioning of the rifle. A cuff sliding forward cost me winning a man-against-man shoot-off at Gunsite. In the real world it could have cost me much more ...

It's high time to bring "Grandpa's rifle" out from the back of the safe and put it to use. Lever-action rifles remain viable for most any task you choose to use it for. 



Although the Henry Classic (bottom) does not have a side-loading gate, it still serves well as a sub-caliber trainer.

www.simplyrugged.com
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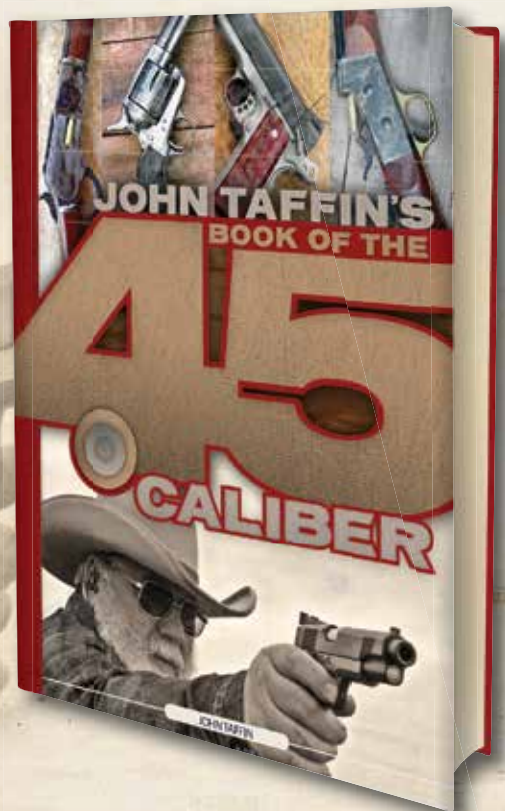


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THE DEAD SPEAK

COLLECTING BYGONE ORDNANCE FROM WWII

Maybe it never got closer to the action than guard duty at an ammo dump. Or perhaps some poor dogface clutched the thing desperately close in the frozen wastes around Bastogne or the fetid jungles of Peleliu. Regardless, a soldier's individual weapon is his most intimate tool. To heft such an artifact is to physically connect across the decades to an era of unimaginable significance.

WORLDS APART BUT SHRINKING

We have a tough time comprehending the breadth of the Second World War today. During the course of the horrible conflict the world's governments produced enough bullets to shoot everybody on the planet 40 times. We laid one landmine for every three humans. We built enough rifles to arm one-seventh of the world's population. While the majority of those who actually served have passed on, many of their weapons remain to this day.

The Internet has revolutionized everything about our world. Previously folks with quirky hobbies might

have thought themselves alone. Nowadays, however, a few mouse clicks can connect you with somebody on the other side of the world who shares your particular curious interests.

Fake animal noise competitions, conjuring art from magnetic VCR tape, extreme ironing wherein the participant irons clothes in exotic settings, and Hikaru Dorodango (compulsive dirt polishing) are all real things more than a couple of folks apparently do. As it relates to collectible firearms, sites like gunbroker.com and gunsamerica.com are like nationwide gun shows running 24/7. The treasures they offer are like little history batteries.

ARISAKA TYPE 99 RIFLES

Tests conducted by the NRA after the war showed the Arisaka action was stronger than any other bolt-action rifle fielded by a major combatant. Early Type 99 rifles were things of beauty, sporting such niceties as folding monopods, anti-aircraft sights and checkered safety knobs. Late-war last-ditch guns were horribly bodged-together

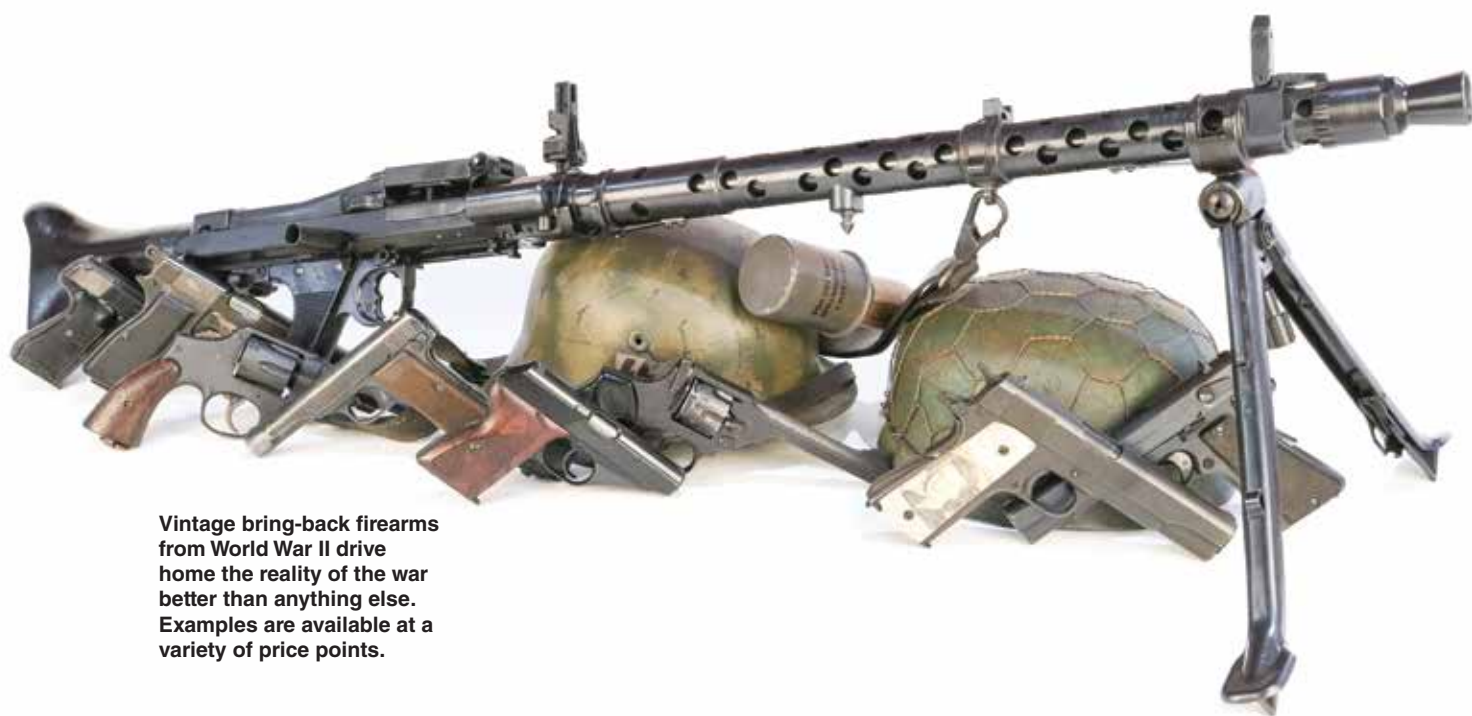


affairs with wooden buttplates held in place by nails. The catalyst driving this sordid transformation was countless waves of B29 bombers.

Beater guns with ground-off mums can still be found for a couple hundred bucks. A Type 2 Paratrooper takedown version with matching numbers will set you back as much as a used car. However, a guy of modest means can still get into a genuine Japanese-surplus combat rifle for beans if he is patient and stalks his prey.

THE CIVILIAN MARKSMANSHIP PROGRAM

The CMP is a throwback to a previous era. Back when America was indeed a nation of riflemen, the government began this program to sell military surplus Infantry rifles and ammunition directly to



Vintage bring-back firearms from World War II drive home the reality of the war better than anything else. Examples are available at a variety of price points.



A beater Arisaka Type 99 rifle can still be had for a couple hundred bucks. Such an artifact will lend insight into the desperation of Japan at the end of WWII.

the public. Back in the 1980s a really nice M1 Garand cost \$165 through the CMP.

Like everything the government does, there is an onerous paperwork requirement. The details are available online. As I was pulling this article together much of the CMP inventory was depleted but they still had rifles starting at around \$650. CMP guns do not have import marks and just drip with personality. Mine is fairly high mileage but sports an armorer's repair to the upper handguard giving it special

character. It also shoots like a dream.

THE BIG LEAGUES

If you have really deep pockets there are yet available some of the most tantalizing WWII-era German machineguns. I acquired my own modest collection over a long period of time using the proceeds from my writing gig. I am blessed with a day job which feeds my family so I can fold my writing cash into guns.

The MP40 submachine gun is a personal

favorite. Long, front-heavy, and fairly ungainly, this iconic German subgun nonetheless cycles at a sedate 500 rpm and is eminently controllable. I got mine years ago when it was just plain expensive. Now they are ludicrously thus. However, it's not like they're making any more. Classic machineguns are reliably good investments.

Not unlike a supermodel, my MG34 belt-fed machinegun is both beautiful and finicky. The MG34 was the world's first true General Purpose Machinegun and the workmanship and complexity of the design must be seen to be appreciated. A recoil-operated gun wherein the fire selector is built into the trigger, the MG34 is a complicated beast indeed.

Spare parts and accessories are still available, as is a .308 conversion kit. Serious collectors can drop a fortune on period accessories for classic guns and the MG34 is worse than most in this regard. However, it all melts away when you settle in behind the monster and launch 50 of those finger-sized rounds downrange at 900 rpm.

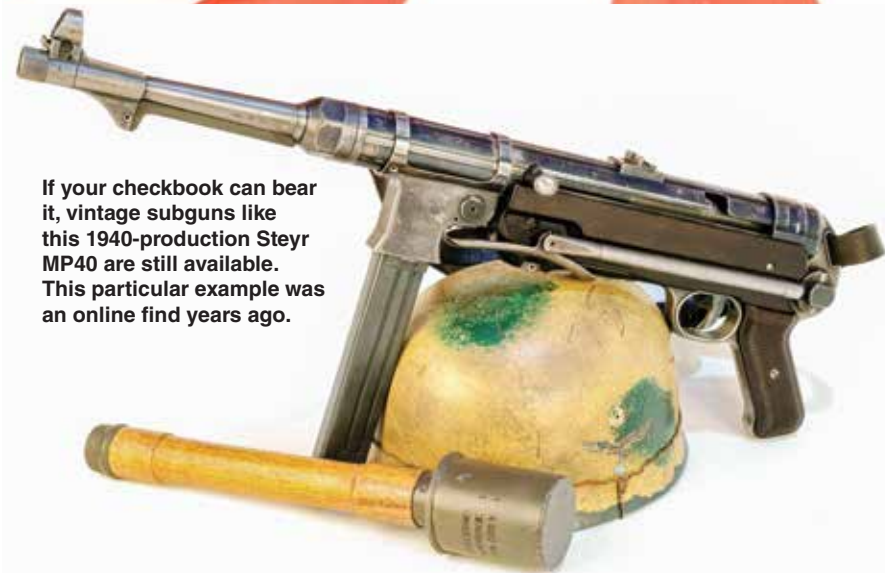
DENOUEMENT

It has been said "The Germans fought for Hitler, the Japanese fought for the emperor, the British fought for their king, and the Americans fought for souvenirs." Once the new wore off, many of these old bring-back guns were sold off to pay for diapers and baby formula. Lugers, Walthers, 1911s, Nambus, Enfields, Nagants, Thompsons and Stens are all still floating around out there waiting to be collected and revered. Be patient, save your pennies, and strike when the opportunity arises. Quite literally anything is available, at a price. 

Special thanks to www.worldwarssupply.com for the period gear used in our photographs.



Sometimes you can happen upon a true gem. This high-mileage Type 99 sports a pair of .30-caliber bullet scars.



If your checkbook can bear it, vintage subguns like this 1940-production Steyr MP40 are still available. This particular example was an online find years ago.



SWISS MODEL 1889 RIFLE

GRANDPAPPY OF THE SCHMIDT-RUBIN CLAN

Frank Jardim

The Swiss *Infanterie Repetier Gewehr M1889* (Infantry Repeating Rifle Model 1889) and its M90 (7.5 x 53.5mm) smokeless powder cartridge were the mountainous little nation's fledgling step forward into the post-black-powder era. They were a close third place behind the German 1888 Commission Rifle but years ahead of the British Lee Enfield Mark 1, Russian M1891 Mosin Nagant, Italian M1891 Carcano and numerous Mausers and Mannlichers selected by other nations. It's notable the German and Swiss rifles, so quickly fielded, were also obsolete the day they were issued and were quickly phased out of production while the later designs stayed in use through World War II.

A NEW ERA IN RIFLES

Though the Swiss M1889 was approved for issue in 1889, it didn't make it to the troops until 1891. In some ways it was ahead of its time. It featured a fast, straight-pull, bolt-action; a 12-shot detachable magazine with a cut-off to allow single

loading; it could be fully loaded in three seconds from a pair of easy-to-use, six-round, disposable, charger clips made of resin impregnated cardboard edged with metal; the muzzle was deeply crowned to protect it from damage, and the full-length stock and handguard was designed to minimize changes to bullet impact due to barrel deflection by generous inletting and fitting a loose brass bushing at the front.

The M1889 rifle and smokeless GP90 cartridge were Swiss born and raised, the products of the imaginative minds of two Swiss Army officers. The rifle was designed by Colonel Rudolf Schmidt. In 1885 it was being tested with the innovative, smallbore (7.5 and 8mm) metal jacketed bullet, black-powder, cartridges developed by Major Eduard Rubin. When the French started a new international small-arms race in 1886 with the smokeless powder 8x50mm Lebel, Schmidt's rifle looked like the best candidate the Swiss had for adapting to the new type of ammunition.

By 1890, the Swiss settled on Rubin's new 7.5 x 53.5mm cartridge, designated the *Gewehrpatrone 1890* (GP90). It





Bigger than average even for its time, the M1889 was 10.7 lbs. empty and 51" long. It was noteworthy for its straight-pull bolt action and 12-round detachable magazine.



The M1889 was unique in locating the action locking lugs at the rear of the bolt. The large ring cocking piece/safety was rotated a quarter turn to lock the action.



Talk about one long bolt! The 1889 bolt is about 3" longer than your average military rifle but its fatal flaw was the rear-mounted locking lugs.



The rear sight was graduated to 2,000 meters while the 1889's detachable magazine was also a novelty in its day, featuring an arched release/operating lever.

in military storage, seeing little use. Aside from a brief emergency issue in World War I, they stayed there until sold off as surplus.

A GREAT BARGAIN

The M1889's short period of service as Switzerland's primary military rifle, very limited use in the hands of the reserves and the meticulous care they generally received while in Swiss hands means you can often find these 120+-year-old rifles in extraordinary condition. Like any antique, they should be inspected for safety before shooting. Be warned the M1889 will chamber modern Swiss 7.5x55, but it's too powerful for the gun! Use the same brass, trimmed to 54mm, for reduced velocity handloads.

Retail prices for a good-looking, good-shooting gun ranges from \$400 to \$600. I found mine at centuryarms.com's Surplus Corner. Century Arms started business in 1961 and is among the last of the great old-time military surplus importers. Opportunities to buy century-old military arms are few and far between these days but Century Arms always seems to be a magnet for such stuff and it's well worth bookmarking their Surplus Corner on your web-browser!

www.centuryarms.com



fired a 211-gr. round-nosed, steel-capped, lead bullet with an exposed paper-lubricating patch to minimize barrel wear. Reminiscent of the black-powder era, the GP90 used a heeled bullet, rebated at the base to fit in the case mouth, in the manner of the .22 LR.

Muzzle velocity from the M1889 rifle's 31.7" barrel was a respectable 1,970 fps. It doesn't seem like much today, but black-powder, lead bullet cartridges

pretty much topped out at 1,500 FPS and had trajectories rapidly becoming rainbow-like beyond 100 yards. Long range hits were very unlikely without precise range estimation. By comparison, to the Swiss 10.4 x 38mm black-

powder, rimfire Vetterli rifles preceding it, the new, flatter shooting, M1889 rifle and M90 cartridge vastly increased the effective range of the average rifleman.

SHORTCOMINGS

Though a great leap forward, both the new rifle and cartridge showed themselves deficient in just a few years. The cartridge was improved and eventually became the modern Swiss 7.5 x 55mm in 1911, but the rifle proved fatally flawed and could not be upgraded to handle higher pressure ammunition. The crux of the problem was an inherent weakness in the unusually long bolt locking up at the rear of the receiver instead of the front like all other contemporary bolt action designs. The 1889's bolt and action are about 3"

longer than the typical bolt and might be the longest in history for an infantry rifle. With no rigid support at the bolt face and the locking lugs mounted on a rotating collar, weakened by an angled slot cut clean through to engage the external actuating rod, the bolt was susceptible to compression, wobble and excessive headspace.

By 1896 a complete redesign of the action moved the locking lugs to the midpoint of the bolt, improving accuracy and allowing the use of higher pressure ammo. As the new and improved Model 1889/96 rifles came off the production line at Bern, they were issued to active duty units, replacing the antiquated M1889s and were relegated to the reserves. By the 1920s most of the M1889s, like the reservists who possessed them, were retired from service. Some of those men bought their rifles for personal use. This is the case with my rifle. It bears a "P/25" stamp indicating it left government inventory in 1925. Many M1889s just sat



The Benelli LUPO .30-06 paired with a Steiner 3-12x56 scope served Mark well in Africa while taking a range of plains game.

MARK HAMPTON

When I first heard Benelli was introducing a new firearm, I automatically assumed it was a semi-auto shotgun of sorts as the name Benelli is synonymous with premium shotguns. From their ever-popular Super Black Eagle and Super Sport to a variety of Performance Shop models, Benelli has produced some of the finest scatterguns available.

When I discovered their newest addition to the lineup was actually a bolt-action rifle, it was quite the surprise. Benelli is introducing the LUPO, a bolt-action rifle dedicated to the serious hunter. By the way, *LUPO* means wolf in Italian.

WOLF ON THE HUNT

I had the opportunity to field-test one of their prototypes on an African safari. If there is a better way to fully test a dedicated

hunting rifle than an African safari, I'm not familiar with it. Upon receiving the test gun, I found the new LUPO appeared somewhat utilitarian. The rifle came with a black synthetic stock, blued receiver and barrel, topped with a Steiner scope. At first glance, it doesn't look anything out of the ordinary — a practical, functional hunting rifle perhaps. However, once I began scrutinizing the many features it became evident there was more to this rifle than meets the eye.

The LUPO is full of features making the rifle adaptable to a variety of shooter needs. The synthetic stock incorporates the company's soft Combtech cheek pad, allowing the shooter to custom fit the rifle to particular needs. I threw the gun to my shoulder and had trouble looking through the scope. No problem — the LUPO comes with interchangeable cheek pads with three options. When a higher pad was installed, the scope



 **Benelli**

LUPO

**THIS LONE WOLF PUTS
THE BITE ON BIG GAME**

was perfectly aligned when the stock hit my shoulder. The soft cheek piece is a nice touch too.

Benelli has also designed a soft recoil pad with an integrated recoil reduction system they call Progressive Comfort. It works! The length of pull can also be adjusted for a wide range of adjustment from 14.2" to 15.2" with standard stock spacers. You can adjust the length of pull and the comb height for a custom fit but there's more — you can even adjust the trigger reach with a stock extension system. Benelli includes spacers to provide optimum finger position on the trigger. This adjustable drop and cast feature makes for a near-custom fitting.

The stock features textured checkering around and underneath the wrist while the sleek, slender forearm is checkered with Benelli's Air Touch Grip, textured checkering for a solid grasp. Integrated swivel mounts make sling installment painless.

You can't see the tapped hole in the forend but it's there and ready for bipod attachment if desired.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

The LUPO launched initially in .30-06, .270 Win. and .300 Win. Mag. The .30-06 and .270 both come with a 22" cryogenically treated barrel while the .300 Win. Mag. will support a 24" tube. It also features an exclusive barrel attachment system with rigid steel recoil lug. My test gun came in .30-06 with a free-floating Crio barrel having a 1-11" twist. The barrel is threaded and ready for muzzle accessories with a 5/8x24 threads.

The LUPO features a two-position, ambidextrous tang safety conveniently located directly behind the action and the rifle can be loaded and unloaded with the safety on. The trigger guard is integrated in the aluminum chassis and there is enough room to

pull the trigger while wearing gloves. My rifle had a sweet trigger with no creep, breaking around 3 lbs. Like other features on the LUPO, the trigger is adjustable from 2.2 to 4.4 lbs. and can be adjusted for position as well.

The prototype came with a one-piece Picatinny rail and I've been informed future models will be supplied with two-piece mounts. There were six holes drilled to accommodate the Picatinny rail. This would be my first experience peering through a Steiner optic and I wasn't disappointed. The LUPO was fitted with an H4Xi 3-12x56 scope with illuminated reticle. The compact design, wide field of view and incredible light gathering capabilities made this a superb choice for the African adventure. The LUPO weighs 7 lbs. without optic and once the scope was mounted, the rifle tipped the scales a little over 8 lbs.

Another interesting feature is the sculpted 60-degree throw bolt with three large locking lugs. The unique curvature of the

bolt makes for smooth and flawless manipulation. This distinctive curvature allows the shooter to run the bolt several different ways. The LUPO is supplied with a detachable magazine holding five 30-06 rounds.

RIGHT OUT OF THE BOX

While it is obvious the LUPO is designed with a ton of practical features, I was interested to see how well she performed on the range. After all, if the gun is not accurate, all of these features are nothing more than window dressings.

With a box of Hornady's new Outfitter Ammunition utilizing their 180-gr. GMX load (2,530 fps), I hit the range with fingers crossed. Not wanting to waste ammo, I first shot the rifle from 50 yards, hoping it would be on paper. The first shot hit inside the bullseye so I moved out to 100 yards. The first three shots were well inside an inch with two holes touching. I was more



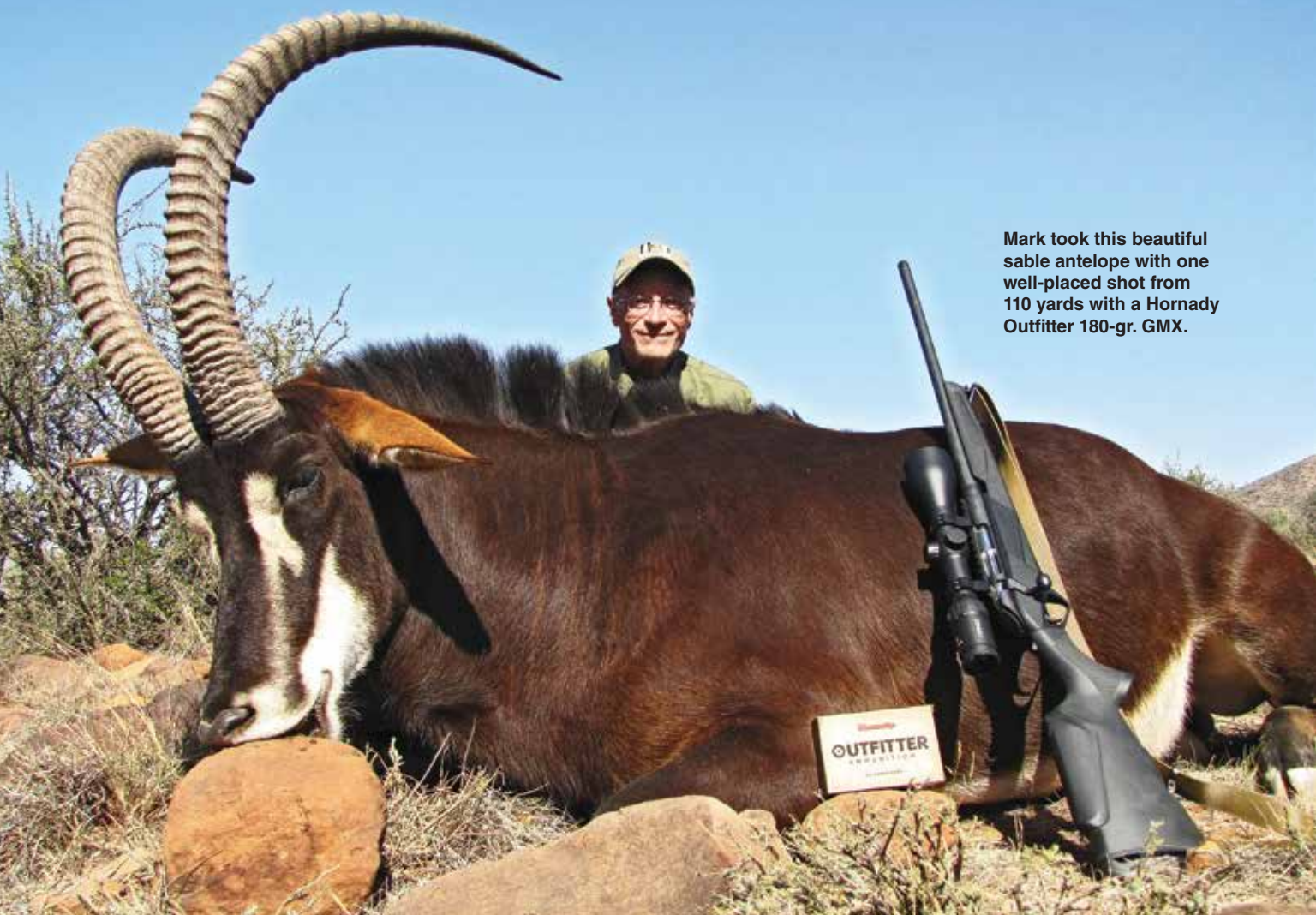
The unique bolt curvature allows easy manipulation with a 60-degree bolt-throw while the two-position ambidextrous safety is conveniently positioned directly behind the action.



The Steiner 3-12x56 was a perfect match. The wide field of view, light gathering capability and compact design proved to be the ideal optic for the African hunt.

The LUPO exhibited superb accuracy with Hornady's 180-gr. GMX ammo.





Mark took this beautiful sable antelope with one well-placed shot from 110 yards with a Hornady Outfitter 180-gr. GMX.

than pleased and it turns out the LUPO was sighted-in from the factory. With the African hunt approaching, I practiced shooting steel out on the farm and was confident when we touched down on the Dark Continent.

OUT IN AFRICA

Our group of three writers, along with Benelli and Hornady personnel, made it to the shooting range for sight-in and were happy to find all rifles endured the rigors of travel and were still hitting. The other writers all commented on the superb accuracy they experienced during initial range sessions.

We were hunting with Wolma Kemp's Africa Anyways outfit. The first couple of days I had the honor of hunting with Hornady's Jayden Quinlan. I watched Jayden take his first head of African game, an impala, with one well-placed shot from a little over 100 yards. Later in the day we sneaked up on an old warthog. The pig stayed around too long as Jayden placed a 180-gr. GMX bullet in his ribcage. Shortly after lunch I was fortunate to take a nice impala. We finished the day by taking two really big roans. Not only did Jayden and I have a great day, the others did as well. Gathering around the skinning shed confirmed the LUPO combined with Steiner optics and Hornady ammunition was off to an incredible safari.

TOUGH LUCK

The gusty winds hampered our second day of hunting and

all game was exceptionally spooky. I guess after enjoying such success on the opening day, we were due to slow down a bit. Neither of us fired a shot.

The morning of day three turned out to be a repeat of day two so we all loaded up and drove to another concession. Before the sun set I watched Jayden take a monster springbok from 517 yards. It was an amazing shot but Jayden shoots a lot at long-range competitions and knows his stuff.

As the days wore on — far too quickly — I had the opportunity to take a magnificent sable bull. The shot was just a tad over 100 yards and the bull went down quickly with one shot. The last day of our safari a huge eland bull was taken. These brutes are massive, weighing over 1,500 lbs. and the GMX ammo performed perfectly — just like the LUPO.

WINNING WITH THE WOLF

The African safari had been very rewarding and the new Benelli LUPO proved to be an ideal companion. There were eight prototype rifles on the hunt and they were exposed to a lot of dust and some abuse. Not one malfunction was encountered.

If you're serious about hunting, Benelli is serious about rifles. The LUPO is inextricably linked to Benelli's legendary firearms and it's a genuine hunting rifle loaded with features. 

www.benelliusa.com



The advertising people at Colt must have known just exactly how much I could stand. In 1956, I was straight out of high school and a Colt Python and the Colt Single Action Army each carried a price tag of \$125. I wanted both of them, however I was in my first job making 90 cents an hour so I had to make a choice. Actually the choice was easy — Gunsmoke's Matt Dillon did not carry a Python!

By 1959 I was married and had added two more single actions, Ruger .357 and .44 Magnum Flat-Tops and the much more reasonably priced, \$85, Smith & Wesson .357 Highway Patrolman. By 1960 we had our first baby on the way and I was working full time at the General Tire factory and attending college during the day.

GUNS OR GRUB?

By 1963 we had three little babies and there was no disposable income for such a

thing as a Python because all three of those kids insisted on eating regularly. I had traded in the stick-shift '58 Chevy Coupe for a '61 Chevy Station Wagon and was shopping at the factory store for new tires. I had to drive 30 miles one way every day to school in all kinds of weather so I needed good rubber, General Tires of course. While I was waiting for my car to be finished, I looked around the factory store. Remember this was the 1960s and practically every store, including grocery stores, had gun departments.

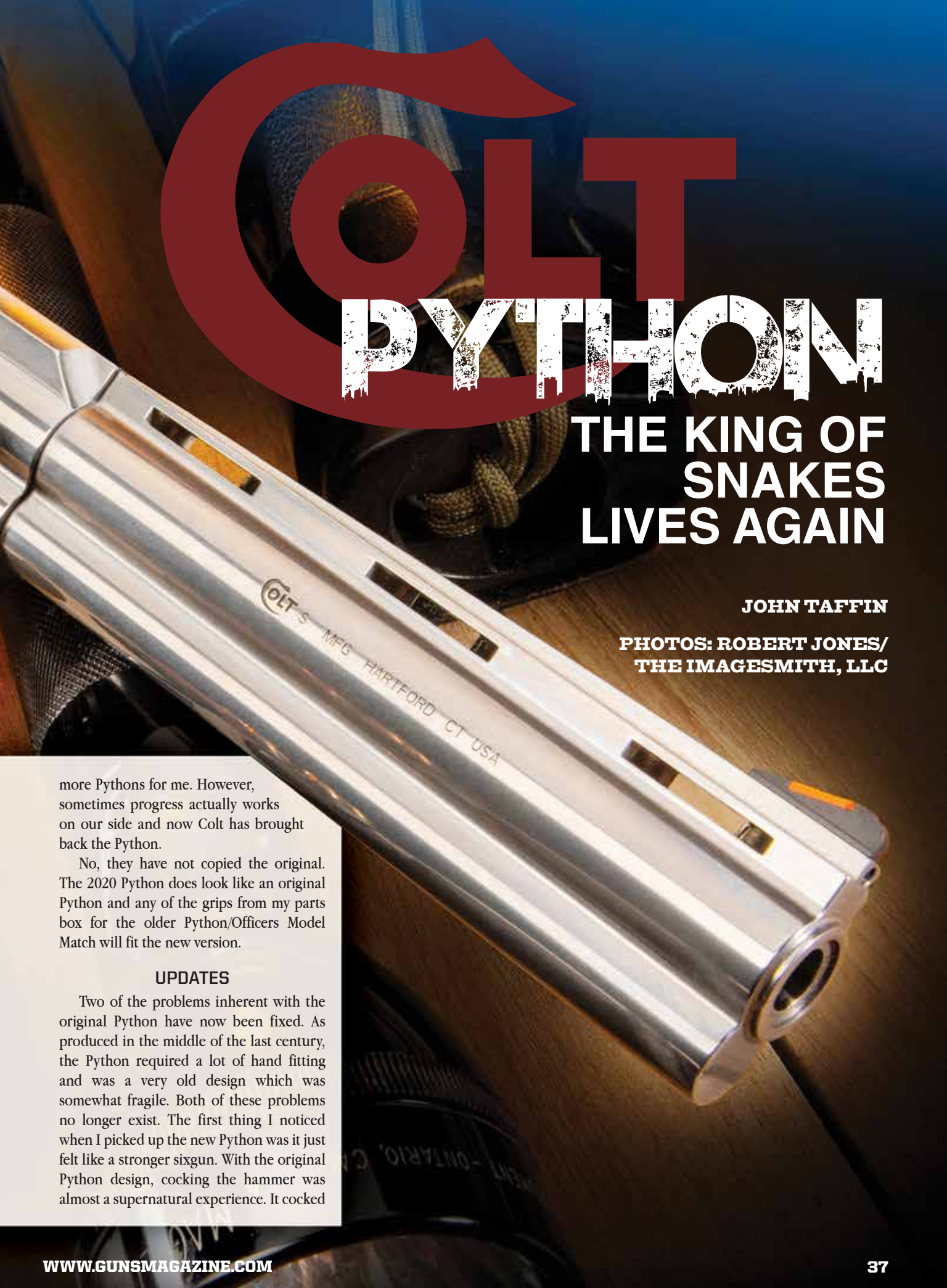
Colt had recently come out with a 4" version of their Python and the advertising folks at Colt were picturing the sixgun with a little added teaser of a top view of a .357 Magnum cartridge. I wanted the gun so bad it hurt. As I looked around the store I walked over to the gun department and there in the display case was a beautiful, brand-new 4" Royal Blue Colt .357 Magnum

Python and, if this wasn't bad enough, right next to it was another brand-new Bright Blue Magnum, a Smith & Wesson 6-1/2" .44 Magnum. There was no such thing as credit cards then but this was the factory store and there was payroll deduction. On top of the cost of the tires I added \$125 and \$140 for the two Magnums. It only cost a few dollars a week and I now had my Python with an extra added bonus.

So now I had a Python and someday I planned to add others. Someday is a very elusive creature and before it arrived two things happened.

THE END OF THE LINE

Colt stopped production of the Python in the closing years of the last century and collector prices soon kicked in. The \$125 stopping me in the late 1950s looked awfully puny stacked up against collector prices of \$3,000 or more. There would be no



COLT PYTHON

THE KING OF SNAKES LIVES AGAIN

JOHN TAFFIN

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

more Pythons for me. However, sometimes progress actually works on our side and now Colt has brought back the Python.

No, they have not copied the original. The 2020 Python does look like an original Python and any of the grips from my parts box for the older Python/Officers Model Match will fit the new version.

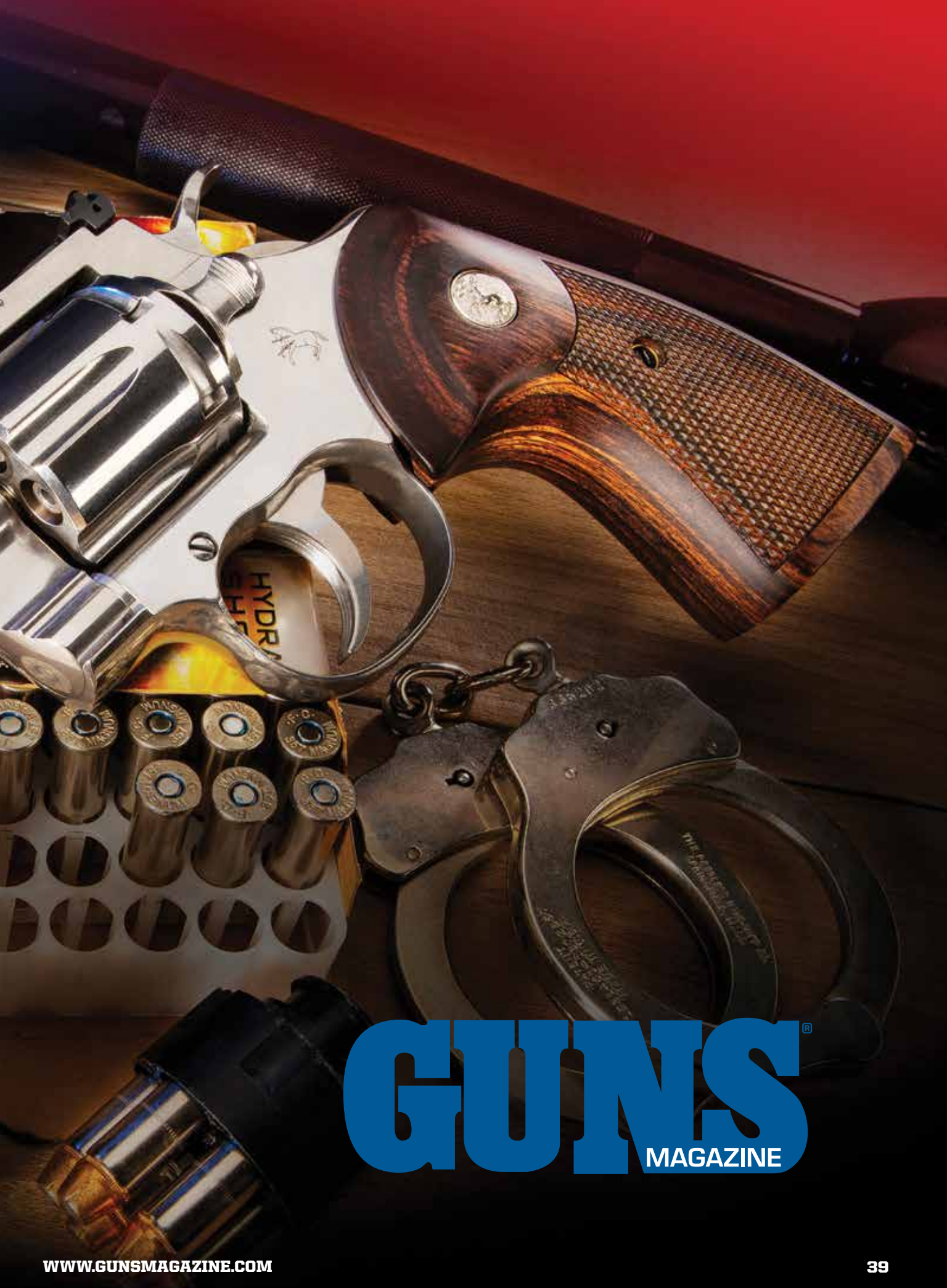
UPDATES

Two of the problems inherent with the original Python have now been fixed. As produced in the middle of the last century, the Python required a lot of hand fitting and was a very old design which was somewhat fragile. Both of these problems no longer exist. The first thing I noticed when I picked up the new Python was it just felt like a stronger sixgun. With the original Python design, cocking the hammer was almost a supernatural experience. It cocked

COLT PYTHON

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SNAKES
LIVES AGAIN





GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE



Though virtually indistinguishable from yesterday's Pythons, there is 30 percent more steel on the top strap on the new Python, making for a vastly stronger frame.



The distinctive Python cylinder latch (above, right) and rampant Colt horse logo let you know you're dealing with the king of snakes!



The fit and finish of the new Python is impeccable, just like the old guns. Some folks don't care for the etched barcode, believing it takes away from the beautiful polished stainless.

so smooth and easy no other revolver even came close. The first thing I did with the new Python was cock the hammer.

It doesn't feel like the old Python but it's very similar. With the original action, a double action shooter could easily learn to take up the slack until arriving at a point when the hammer was about to drop. The new action is different, with no stacking, which provides a straight pull-through rather than a seemingly two-stage operation. The original may have been best for a target shooter who preferred to shoot double-action but the new operation feels much better to me.

KEEPING THE GOOD STUFF

The original Python was a departure in several ways from the standard Colt double action design. Ever since the 1890s Colt's double action sixguns had an ejector rod just sticking out in space with no protection. Smith & Wesson's ejector rod locked at the front with a catch under the barrel and in 1907 Smith & Wesson started providing enclosed ejector rods on most of their N-Frame sixguns. Colt did not follow suit until 1955. The original idea for the Python was a heavy barreled .38 Special target pistol. When they realized what they had, they decided to make it a deluxe .357 Magnum complete with the full under lug,

ventilated rib barrel, which was subsequently copied by other manufacturers, and an enclosed and protected ejector rod.

Colt has maintained this one-piece, heavy under-lug rib barrel on the new Python and it is still machined from bar stock. They did not take the path others have now taken, using a two-piece system with a barrel and the shroud. Sometimes change should not happen.

The action has been redesigned with fewer parts and should definitely be stronger, avoiding the timing problems the original Python was plagued with. Even though it still looks like the original Python, the top strap has been beefed up 30 percent. The rear sight is still fully adjustable and is now mated with a red ramp front sight held in place by an Allen screw. Colt offers other interchangeable front sight options including a fiber-optic style.

The new Python is offered in two barrel lengths, 4 1/4" and 6", and only in stainless steel. Unloaded weight is 42 and 46 oz. respectively. My test gun is quite attractive with no polishing mistakes. Grips have been somewhat redesigned with room at the top cut out for the thumb, which also makes ejection of spent cartridges easier. Gone are the days from most manufacturers when grips were nicely hand-fitted to the grip frame. These are fitted with two pins as well

as a grip pin to maintain a tight fit. They are classified as "walnut," however, again as with most manufacturers, today's walnut is nowhere near what we used to see.

ON THE RANGE

Shooting the Python was pure pleasure with one caveat. When I was in my invincible period .357 Magnum factory loads were at the bottom of the recoil ladder; now they are at the top and full-house loads do get my attention simply due to the fact my hands have been beat up so much over the past 60-plus years. I did manage to concentrate and get some very good groups. My testing was done with both .38 Special and .357 Magnum loads.

My most accurate .38 Special load proved to be the Speer Gold Dot Hollow Point 125 Plus P clocking out just over 1,121 fps from the 6" barrel and grouping five shots in 1" at 20 yards. Switching to .357 Magnum factory loads saw the Black Hills 125 JHP and the Black Hills 158 JHP clocking out at 1,584 and 1,410 fps respectively with groups of 1" and 1 1/4" also respectively.

The first load is my Texas turkey load as it is accurate enough to head shoot turkeys and there is no doubt in my mind the same could be accomplished using the new Python. Due to time restraints I did not shoot any



The redesigned grips with embedded Colt medallion (above, right) have a larger thumb cut-out, giving the shooter more room to brace while making reloads faster and easier.

handloads of either .38 Special or .357 Magnum but those tests will come shortly. These days I load my .357 Magnum brass to about 1,200 fps as they are so much more user friendly, meaning kinder to my hands. These will come as the weather changes.

GOOD LUCK GUN

I do not believe there is a such thing as luck; life is much deeper than that. However, notwithstanding this, the new

Colt Python is hereinafter known as the Good Luck Colt, GLC for short. I was facing a very tight deadline with not much window of opportunity available. The Python arrived on Tuesday. I checked the National Weather Service Tuesday evening hopefully to be able to shoot on Wednesday. The forecast was rain and wind. However, I got everything prepared and ready just in case. Rising early on Wednesday I rechecked the National Weather Service and found the

forecast had been moderated to no rain nor wind until noon. It was still dark when I left the house and by 9 a.m. the sun was shining with a temperature in the very low 40s.

I was able to shoot for 2 1/2 hours testing both the Python and three other new guns. The weather stayed nice the rest of the day. I awoke on Thursday to fresh snow. If the Python had arrived one day later nothing would've worked out the way it was supposed to. By the time you read this, hopefully good spring weather will be here and I will be shooting the GLC with much hand-loaded ammunition.

TAKEAWAY

MSRP is \$1,499 which looks like a lot of money compared to the original price of \$125. However, when we compare the minimum wage in 1955 to the minimum wage today it is not only not out of line, in some states it is actually less expensive now than it was 65 years ago. Actually, it is about \$500 cheaper than today's very limited production Single Action Army which was the same price way back then.

The original Python was referred to by me in my first book as the *Cadillac of Colt Revolvers*. Even so, as mentioned, it was somewhat fragile. The new Python maintains the classic look of the original while providing a much stronger sixgun. 



The most accurate round in John's testing was the Speer Gold Dot Hollow Point 125 Plus P. At 20 yards, five shots grouped 1", good enough for a Taffin Texas turkey head shot!

HENRY ~~AXE~~ LEVER-ACTION .410

JUST PLAIN SHOOTING ENJOYMENT ...
MAYBE MORE!

DENNY HANSEN

When I was just a pup one of my favorite TV shows was *Wanted Dead or Alive* starring Steve McQueen as bounty hunter Josh Randall. McQueen carried a Model 92 Winchester Mares Leg (shortened barrel and stock cut off just behind the pistol grip area). Although the Model 92 was chambered for pistol cartridges, McQueen's belt held .45-70 shells — apparently for dramatic effect.

One of my first cap guns was a replica of the TV gun made by Marx toys. Many a *desperado* was brought to justice on the family farm.

Not all firearms need to fit neatly into categories like hunting, home protection, tactical or plinking. One category often overlooked is plain, old fashioned fun — and the Henry Lever Action Axe .410 defines fun. However, if you prefer a bit more usefulness don't start looking elsewhere quite yet.

WHAT IT IS — AND ISN'T

The "axe handle" pistol grip gives the firearm its name. Per the BATF, the Lever Action Axe .410 is classified as a non-Class 3/NFA "firearm."

The Axe has a five-round capacity of 2 1/2" (only) shells. Like other Henry Lever Actions the .410 Shotgun has a tubular magazine and can be unloaded or loaded through this magazine. The addition of a side-loading gate, however, means you can keep the capacity topped off at all times without needing to remove the tubular magazine. The receiver is tapped for an optic if desired.



While a .410 slug (left) at 88 grains is paltry compared to a 1-oz. 12-gauge slug, it still packs a wallop at close ranges.

One advantage is its size. With a barrel length of just under 16" and an overall length of just over 26" the Axe can be stored in far more places than your average long gun. Weight is approximately 6 lbs.

CHOPPING IT DOWN

The "axe handle" pistol grip and forend are made from American Walnut. The Henry Cowboy logo is engraved at the rear of the handle for the unmistakable touch of Henry class.

The barrel is finished with a brass bead front sight and Invector-style threads fitted with a removable full choke right out of the box. A choke wrench is included. A sling swivel stud is attached to the forend cap and a second stud is located on the handle. My sample had an average trigger weight of 9.5 lbs.





Iconic Henry Cowboy logo engraved at the rear of the handle for an unmistakable touch of Henry class.

The Axe can be fired from the hip and with enough practice and ammo, one can become fairly good using this technique out to about 10 yards. It's also a blast (pun intended) peppering hostile soda cans and watching them explode. A better way to fire the Axe is to bring it up to eye level and use the bead sight. This is not only more effective, but does not require a large expenditure of ammunition to get good results.

PRACTICAL USES

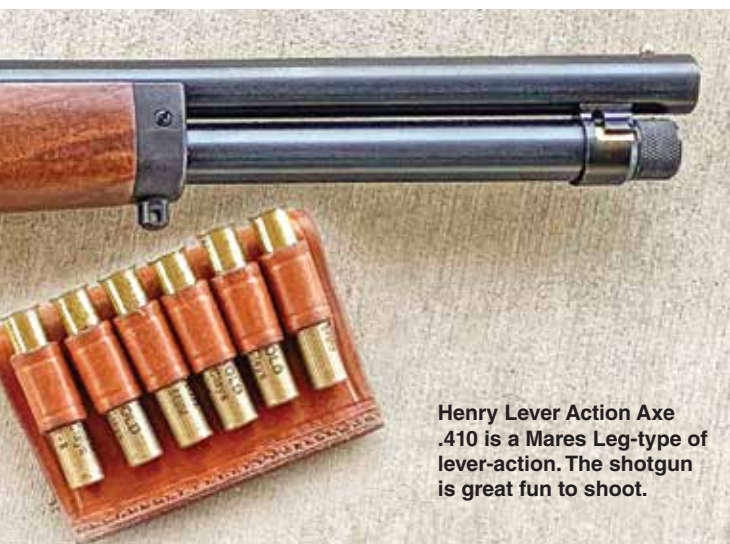
If using birdshot, the Axe would be capable of taking game and dispatching poisonous snakes. With a larger shot size, say #4 or #6 shot, small game such as rabbits would be reasonable. When throwing fewer pellets into a small area, stalking skills are very important — the closer the better.

Buckshot is available for self-defense. The 2 1/2" shells contain three 000 (.36 caliber) buckshot pellets at an advertised 1,300 fps. This is like three simultaneous hits from a .38 Special. Since factory velocity figures are based on a longer barrel the actual velocity is probably slightly less and round balls being less aerodynamic, they will lose velocity faster than a pistol bullet.

I tested the Axe with some Winchester 000 buck. At 30 feet I was rewarded with a pattern of three inches. Moving back to 45 feet the pattern grew to 12" with one pellet completely off the target.

SLUGGING IT OUT

The legendary stopping power of slugs does not apply to the .410. Slugs for the 2 1/2" weigh a mere 1/5 oz. (87.5 grains).



Henry Lever Action Axe .410 is a Mares Leg-type of lever-action. The shotgun is great fun to shoot.



Fit and finish is what has come to be expected by Henry. Side-loading gate makes the Axe easy to load. A Sling swivel stud is located on handle.



If desired the Henry Lever-Action Axe can be loaded and unloaded from the end of the tubular magazine. Brass bead front sight is standard. Sling swivel stud is attached to the forend cap.

Compare this to the 1 oz. (437 grains) 12-gauge slug.

Moving out at around 1,800 fps the slug's flat, light projectile bleeds velocity quickly and offers minimal penetration. It's never recommended to shoot a slug — regardless of gauge — through a full choke so remove the choke tube with the included choke wrench before shooting slugs through the Axe.

My results using Winchester slugs at 25 yards was somewhat dismal with the average of three, five-round groups measuring 6". Whitetail deer *can* be taken with a .410 slug, but with the Axe I would limit it to common bow hunting ranges of 30 yards or less to ensure an ethical kill (in states where .410 slugs are legal).

RUNNING THE GUN

With the Axe, it's fairly easy to manipulate the lever quickly from the hip but not while holding it at eye level because there is no stock to brace it against the shoulder while doing so. I found it requires upper pressure on the forend to compensate for the downward motion of the lever. As you might expect with a lever gun, functioning was flawless.

As mentioned at the beginning, the Axe can be unloaded through the end of the tubular magazine. I never used this feature because the Axe was simply too much fun working the lever and firing it until it was empty.

The Axe might be a good choice for a backpacker, but I cannot honestly recommend it for self-defense or hunting anything except small game — but if you want an addition to your gun safe for pure, unadulterated fun, the Henry Lever Action Axe .410 might be just the ticket.

www.henryusa.com



SIG SAUER

TANGO6T 1-6X24

HELPING UNCLE SAM CAN THE TALIBAN

WILL DABBS, MD

Back when I wore the uniform, our weapons were the end result of laborious and protracted selection processes. You couldn't rig a top-mounted sling on your rifle without a staff study, a detailed engineering review and a note signed by the President. My, what a difference two decades of war has made.

NEW WAR

We entered Afghanistan armed with Cold War gear shaped by our experiences in Vietnam. The maximum effective range for the M4 Carbine is listed as 500 meters, and I think this distance might be a bit optimistic. Once we started swapping lead with the Taliban between terrain features, it became apparent American grunts needed something with a bit more reach.

Army procurement is much more agile these days and has a much deeper commercial pot from which to draw. The new Squad Designated Marksman Rifle (SDM-R) hits the streets in May of 2020. A tricked-out 7.62x51mm HK G28 with all the bells and whistles, the SDM-R substantially increases the reach of the American Infantry squad while reliably punching through body armor that could stop legacy weapons. One of the greatest enhancements over previous rifles is the SDM-R's dedicated optic. A militarized version of SIG SAUER's Tango6, this is some seriously butt-kicking glass.

THE TANGO6T 1-6X24

The new SDM-R is a system comprising a host weapon, an optical sight and a bevy of cool-guy accessories combining synergistically to become more than the sum of the individual parts. The SIG SAUER Tango6T optic is the brains of the monster. This scope reflects the current state of the art in close to mid-range tactical glass.

The Tango6T is a 1-6X variable power riflescope featuring a Second Focal Plane (SFP) reticle. This means the size of the reticle does not change with power adjustments. While this can make for a lot of extraneous math if you are trying to ring steel at a kilometer, it works perfectly for the SDM-R application.

The tube is aircraft-grade aluminum anodized in Flat Dark Earth. The Power Selector Ring includes a throw lever for quick adjustments and an ultra-bright Hellfire battery-powered



The scope includes the Alpha4 Ultralight Mount cut from a single piece of 7075 aluminum for mounting the glass on your favorite Picatinny rail.



Shown in military Flat Dark Earth finish, the SIG SAUER Tango6T 1-6x24 riflescope has been chosen as the optic for the new Army Squad Designated Marksman Rifle.

The matte black civilian version of the Tango6T mounted atop Will's SIG SAUER MCX Virtus rifle is what stands between his family and the zombies. There is no higher endorsement.

illumination system makes the SDM-R a room-clearing hotrod at bad breath ranges. The illumination dial on the left side of the scope locks in place and offers scads of brightness settings as well as NVG compatibility. There is an "Off" position between each increment, so the scope is easy to operate even in a rush.

A built-in bullet drop compensation reticle helps with holdover estimates on the fly. The SFP design means the holdover stadia are true only at the highest magnification but this is obviously the setting you would be using to shoot at distance anyway. Thanks to the generous throw lever, it's easy to make power changes without breaking your concentration through the optic. The scope is fog-proof and can live underwater at 20 meters indefinitely.

The optics package also includes an Alpha4 Ultralight Mount optimized for strength and modest weight. This mount is cut from a single piece of 7075 aluminum and attaches directly to a MIL-STD-1913 ("Picatinny") rail. The scope body has the niftiest laser etched line on its left aspect to automatically true the scope to the mount, eliminating cant. Every scope maker in the industry should do this.

HOW DOES SHE RUN?

SIG's HDX glass sets the industry standard for optical quality and light transmission, and it shows. You can heft a scope off a table at a gun show and tell with a glance whether the glass is the good stuff or some cheap knockoff. The Tango6T sucks up light like a chimp on a donut.

T120 adjustment turrets are protected with aluminum caps and can be readily manipulated without tools. Clicks are easy



The SIG SAUER Tango6T is designed to be infantry-proof and user-friendly. The controls are easy to use with a generous throw lever making power changes easy.

to feel and everything is big enough to run in gloves should the need arise. The eyepiece includes a fast focus adjustment so you can dial the optic in to your particular eye geometry.

I mounted the Tango6 atop my trusty SIG MCX Virtus rifle. Amidst a veritable sea of cool black iron in the personal collection, this is the gun sitting next to the door patiently waiting for the zombies to arrive. I can think of no higher accolade.

At 1X with the aiming dot activated, the rig is the equal of any red dot-equipped room-clearing carbine. I can instantly spin the power adjustment knob up to 6X and drop rounds out to the effective limits of the cartridge. Starting in May of 2020 American grunts are going to become a lot pricklier. In classic SIG fashion the very same optic is also available to American civilian shooters directly via their website. I do so love those guys!

www.sigsauer.com



PROTOTYPE 1911

HERE'S ONE
YOU HAVEN'T
SEEN!

JEREMY D. CLOUGH

It was 2006, well within striking distance of Smith & Wesson's at-long-last decision to offer its own M1911. The M&P series was brand new, side extractors on M1911s were popular and I was at Smith's Performance Center booth at the SHOT Show when I saw the flyer for a series of three different new models being introduced. Ranging from a base model to two more highly optioned pistols, the idea was to introduce a gun with all the basics covered — a turnkey pistol that could be slowly upgraded as the shooter's needs grew, but didn't need to be.

Being intrigued, I promptly got an assignment to cover the base model and a test gun arrived in short order. While it was a little different from the gun in the flyer, it had all the advertised features.

A BEAUTY

Housed in a distinctive aluminum Performance Center hard case, the full-size .45 sported a fine matte black bead-blast finish. Checkered reddish-brown laminate grips added a touch of color as did the lightweight aluminum trigger and polished hammer. The upswept beavertail grip safety made the gun nestle right down into my hand. The checkering on the front strap and flat mainspring housing was well cut but not too sharp and while the gun wasn't fully beveled, the sharp edges were removed from the muzzle, slide stop, thumb safety and other high-traffic areas.

It had a Novak fixed rear sight and proprietary S&W dovetail-mount front sight, both in a white-dot pattern while the other models could be had in plain black, white dot, night sight, or

The unnamed gun consumed over 400 rounds with only a single misfeed, using defensive ammo fed from every brand of magazine I could find — all nine of them.

In addition to the clean magazine bevel, the side of the mainspring housing has been machined so the shooter can add on a funnel later if desired.



Long gone — The prototype from a canceled series of S&W Performance Center 1911 pistols. The knife is an AI Mar Shiva, also now out of production.

fiber optic configurations. Of course it had the S&W-designed pivoting extractor to replace the internal extractor traditionally used in the M1911. The extractor was significantly larger than even the one used on the regular-production SW1911 with a huge, well-shaped hook which worked well enough not to be noticed.



The S&W-designed pivoting extractor was significantly larger than even the one used on the regular-production SW1911s, with a huge, well-shaped hook.



The PC gun averaged under 2" at 25 yards in the Ransom Rest. From the bench, Jeremy put 5 out of 8 shots into 4" at 100 yards.

The trigger was crisp, the slide and frame tight both fore and aft and the hand-fit barrel rolled smoothly into place while locking up like a bank vault. At first blush, it was a good-looking, well-thought-out gun.

BANG, BANG

I picked it up on a Friday evening and shot it for the first time the next morning in the local defensive pistol match — and won. The performance wasn't an outlier, it consumed over 400 rounds with a single misfeed from an off-brand magazine (I shot it with every one of the nine brands of magazines I had on hand). It averaged under 2" at 25 yards in the Ransom Rest, using defensive ammo — not target stuff. Handheld, my best group was 2 1/2" at 25 yards, and from the bench, I put 5 out of 8 shots into 4" at 100 yards.

The trigger broke like glass, the gun ran like stink and it hit like it meant it. What wasn't to like?

BUT ...

I'll never know — all I *do* know is by the time my article went to the editor, the pistol series had been canceled. I also learned the gun I had been sent was a prototype, one of perhaps three of this model. The total number of prototypes for all three models fades in my memory, but it was in the single digits. Since there's no sense creating demand for something people can't get, the article was canceled along with the series.

Which means — except when I was shooting it — the gun never saw the light of day.

Until now.

NEW LIFE FOR A NEW SERVICE

A FACELIFT FOR A 113-YEAR-OLD PONY

BEFORE



The bottom of the frame showed dents as if it had been used as a hammer. Maybe from hanging up a wanted poster from a long-gone outlaw?

AFTER



Look Ma! No dings! All the dents were removed from the frame.



DENNY HANSEN

Starting in 1976 I have been to Gunsite more times than I can remember. Besides meeting life-long friends, one of the best things is the networking always taking place.

At a three-day revolver/lever-action rifle event last year, I took my Colt New Service and a Model 92 Winchester, both chambered in .45 Colt. Records show my revolver was made in 1907 — roughly half a century before I was born. Two years after this one was made, the U.S. Army adopted it as the Model 1909, two years before the iconic 1911 became the standard issue sidearm.

I love my Pythons, and K- and L-Frame Smith & Wessons, but I have a soft spot for the older revolvers, especially the large frame Colts. Mechanically this revolver was in good shape and I have used it at several Gunsite events.

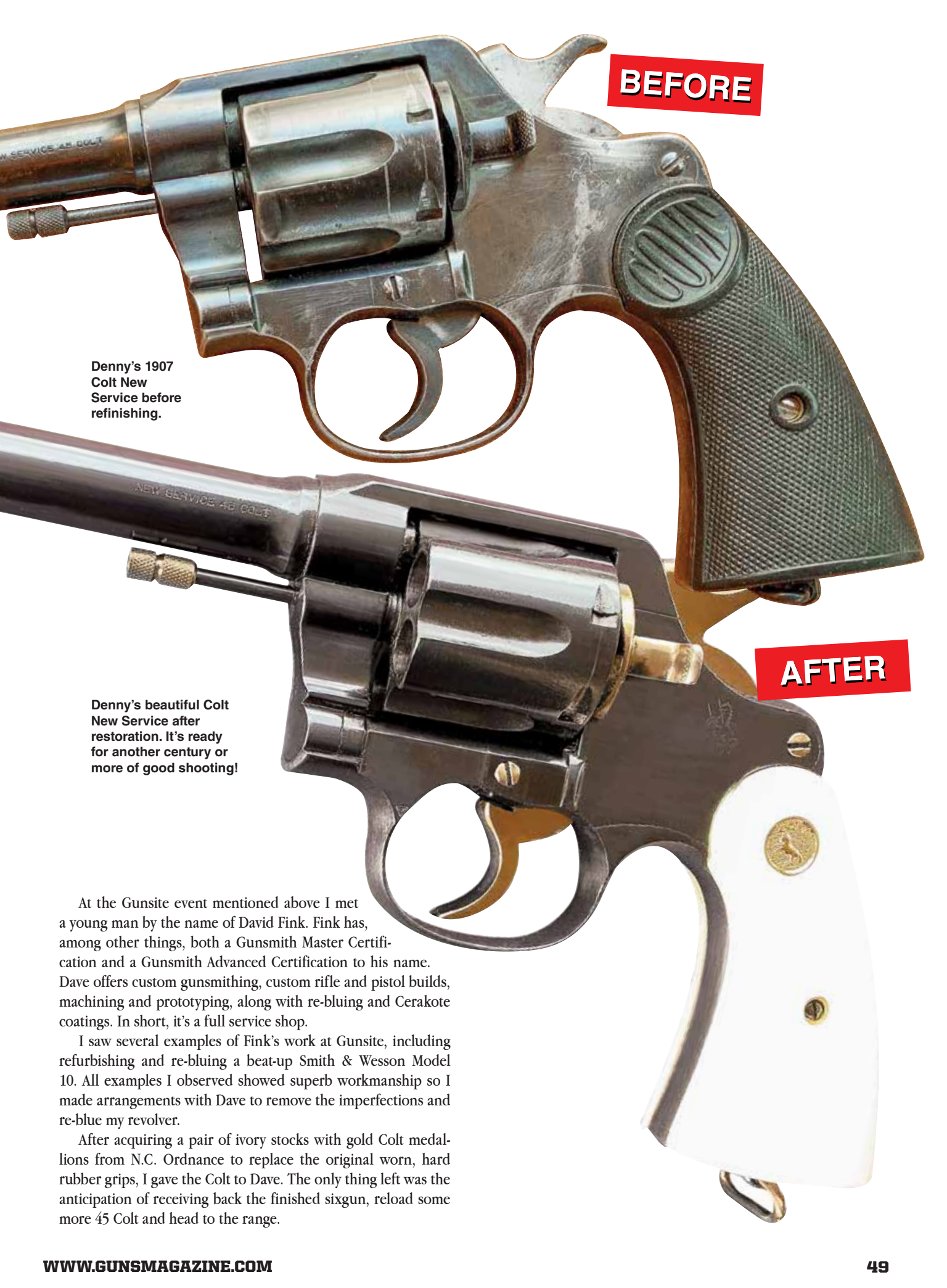
HOWEVER ...

The exterior was another story and I confess toying with the idea of refinishing the big Colt. The original blue was about 60 percent and showing honest use. This was not a concern as I believe such wear shows character. There were, however, some nicks and scratches I wanted to correct.

Among other things the bottom of the frame appeared as though it had been used for hammering something — I like to think it was from hanging up a wanted poster from some long-forgotten Arizona *desperado*.

DECISIONS

After much internal debate I finally decided to give the old war horse a facelift.

**BEFORE**

Denny's 1907
Colt New
Service before
refinishing.

AFTER

Denny's beautiful Colt
New Service after
restoration. It's ready
for another century or
more of good shooting!

At the Gunsite event mentioned above I met a young man by the name of David Fink. Fink has, among other things, both a Gunsmith Master Certification and a Gunsmith Advanced Certification to his name. Dave offers custom gunsmithing, custom rifle and pistol builds, machining and prototyping, along with re-bluing and Cerakote coatings. In short, it's a full service shop.

I saw several examples of Fink's work at Gunsite, including refurbishing and re-bluing a beat-up Smith & Wesson Model 10. All examples I observed showed superb workmanship so I made arrangements with Dave to remove the imperfections and re-blue my revolver.

After acquiring a pair of ivory stocks with gold Colt medallions from N.C. Ordnance to replace the original worn, hard rubber grips, I gave the Colt to Dave. The only thing left was the anticipation of receiving back the finished sixgun, reload some more 45 Colt and head to the range.

As custom work goes, I didn't have long to wait as Dave completed the revolver in six weeks!

THE FACELIFT

In addition to the damage on the bottom of the frame mentioned above, the cylinder had deep scoring caused by a sharp burr on the front sideplate screw from a previous owner. There were some small dings on the top strap of the frame as well as on the barrel towards the muzzle.

The Rampant Colt logo and inspector stamp were very shallow and I asked Dave to retain them during finishing if at all possible. He was able to retain the markings on the sideplate and the marking "New Service 45 Colt" on the barrel is still crisp and clear.

Dave recontoured the previously burred sideplate screw and fit it flush with the frame. The overall finish is a bright, polished blue and is so deep it is reminiscent of the finish applied to Colt and Smith & Wesson years ago.

The nitre-bluing process (sometimes referred to as fire bluing) can produce a wide range of colors from light yellow to super bright "peacock" blue. Dave finished the screws, trigger, hammer, cylinder release, lanyard ring and ejector rod head in a gold color to contrast with the bright blue and compliment the gold medallion in the stocks.

The completed restoration was more than I could have hoped for. At the risk of sounding melodramatic, it was simply stunning.

100-LB. TRIGGER

The double-action trigger pull on my New Service was light — as long as you had a mule handy to hitch to it! The pull weight bottomed-out every gauge I own. The single-action pull wasn't much better, being roughly the same as the double-action pull in many revolvers. I asked Dave to lighten it up some if he could.

Colt revolvers use a "V"-shaped main-spring. One method of lightening the trigger pull is to put something between the upper and lower leg of the "V" and bend the top leg upwards. This method sometimes barely lightens the trigger pull and if bent too much, it results in unreliable ignition.

Dave tried the above technique, but because the 112-year-old spring was so brittle, it snapped before any bend could be made. He ordered a new main spring and much to his and my surprise, the



double-action trigger pull was now at a very manageable 9 lbs., with single-action breaking at a crisp 2.5 lbs.

PROOF TEST

I couldn't wait to shoot it and despite the temperature being in the mid-30s with drizzling rain, I went to the range the same day I picked it up, along with a quantity of Keith-type 255-gr. semi-wadcutter rounds. To my great satisfaction the old revolver was more accurate than before. The restoration itself had nothing to do with the increased accuracy but it can be attributed to the much lighter trigger pull, allowing a

smoother press while the sights were on the target.

Any new finish will add a few thousandths to the thickness on the metal surface. As a result, there was a barely perceptible hitch in the cylinder release. I have no doubt this will disappear with use as the parts wear in.

A friend remarked the old Colt is now too pretty to carry. However, I don't own any "safe queens" and I'm looking forward to more trips to Gunsite to put some honest holster wear back on the old warhorse. 🦏

www.finksguns.com

"You asked for it so we built it!"

~ Roy Huntington
Publisher



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

Among the many features are:

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- Baer extended ejector
- Baer speed trigger with crisp 4-lb. pull
- Baer deluxe Commander-style hammer
- Beveled magazine well

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These are a Henry (top) and a Winchester Model 1866 SRC (bottom). Both chambered in .44 Henry Rimfire.



The pistol caliber carbine concept is alive and well in 2020, exemplified by the extremely popular — and handy — Ruger PC9 9mm.

One of the first semi-autos chambered for pistol cartridges was WWII's M1 .30 Carbine. From left to right are U.S. M1, M1A1, M2, along with Ruger Blackhawk and AMT pistols.





PISTOL CARTRIDGE CARBINES

TODAY'S HOT, NEW IDEA FROM THE 1860S!

**MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
PHOTOS BY YVONNE VENTURINO**

Almost simultaneous with the appearance of metallic cartridges there came a firearms genre popular to this day — the pistol cartridge carbine. There is an irony about their advent. Military forces had developed carbines, shorter, lighter rifles for horse troops, long before metallic cartridges were invented. The first (successful) repeating metallic cartridge carbine was chambered for the puny .44 Henry Rimfire. The irony is the round was not a pistol cartridge. It was developed for repeating rifles and carried over into the new Winchester Model 1866 because its design was only strong enough for a cartridge so weak it was later adapted to revolvers.

RIDE 'EM

An aside about carbines is necessary here. Until the 1920s when modern vehicles became common, all land travel except by railroads was either on or behind horses. Hence, lightweight firearms were more than handy. They were often attached to saddles by leather thongs to a ring set in the left sides of carbines' receivers. Thusly carbines from the era were known as saddle ring carbines — SRCs.

Winchester Repeating Arms dominated pistol cartridge carbines for about 20 years. In 1873 a new model was introduced of slightly stronger design. Its introductory cartridge was .44 WCF which we all know today as .44-40. The best improvement concerning .44 WCF/.44-40 was it was brass cased, centerfire and reloadable whereas .44 Henry was rimfire, copper cased and not reloadable. Winchester Model 1873s were so popular production lasted 50 years and almost three quarters of a million were made. A significant number were SRCs.



This well dressed cowboy from the late 1800s shows him with a holstered Colt SAA and Colt Lighting SRC.



Back in frontier days the logistics of having a carbine and revolver chambering the same cartridge made good sense, thus the pistol caliber carbine was born.

PAIRING UP

Many of today's shooters think Colt's adaptation in 1877 of .44-40 to their big single-action revolver made possible the first pistol/carbine combo. Not so — the first factory-made revolver compatible to Winchester's Model 1866 carbines came in 1870, the Smith & Wesson Model #3 .44 Henry Rimfire sixgun. Furthermore, in 1875 Colt followed with a special run of 1,800 of their new single action sixguns (SAA to us) for .44 Henry. Why Colt waited so long to jump on the .44-40 bandwagon is a conundrum to me. After the .44-40, Colt waited till 1884 to chamber .38-40 and .32-20 rifles. In a time of difficult logistics, the idea of rifles/carbines and revolvers chambering the same cartridge had considerable merit.

Other noteworthy happenings in the 1880s were Colt

introducing their pump-action Lightning, while Marlin also joined in lever-action competition. The Lightning came in three frame sizes, the middle one taking the same three pistol-cartridge rounds, offered in WRA's Model 1873. Back then, when a company used another company's development, they didn't like to give the parent company free advertising. So Colt stamped Lightnings simply as .44 CAL. When Marlin started making pistol-cartridge lever guns with the Model 1889, the caliber marking became .38-40 instead of .38 WCF. Of course Marlin and Colt offered their respective new models as carbines.

Whereas carbines were already "shorter, lighter rifles," Winchester, Colt and Marlin carried the idea further. Winchester offered SRCs with barrels as short as 12" and the other two manufacturers made "Baby Carbines." Their versions had very



More recently Miroku of Japan started recreating the Winchester Model 1873 SRC (bottom). This one is in .357 Magnum, shown with Duke's original Winchester Model 1873 .44-40.

lightweight barrels and sometimes half-length magazines. I've owned samples of both and they weighed between 4.5 and 5 lbs.

REVOLUTIONS

In the 1890s there came changes in the pistol cartridge long-gun genre — smokeless propellants were making their debut. Winchester was first with the Model 1892 and Marlin followed with their Model 1894. They differed from earlier pistol cartridge carbines in their basic strength — they were designed with smokeless powders in mind. In fact in Winchester's catalog of 1899 there is a clear divide between '73s and '92s. Ballistic information was given for Model 1873 with black powder loads only, but with smokeless powder factory loads for the Model 1892.

Interestingly Winchester's first three chamberings for Model 1892s were the time-tested trio of .44, .38, and .32 WCFs. Marlin used the same cartridges in their Model 1894 but labeled them .44-40, .38-40 and .32-20. As mentioned, saddle rings on carbines died out in the late 1920s but pistol cartridge carbines themselves persisted till about the World War II years. About 30 to 40 years later, they began to reappear.

RESURGENCE

About the same time, reproduction imports steadily flowing from Italy almost identically recreated those of the late 1800s. If memory serves me well I think the first were Model 1866, manufactured with a design change to accommodate .44-40. A brief time later Model 1873s began coming from Italy.

Marlin resurrected the Model 1894 and Winchester adapted the Model 1894 to pistol cartridges. In the case of American versions, chamberings were magnums; .357 and .44 with Marlin making a brief smattering of .41 Magnums. In my opinion the Italian reproductions were intended for us historically minded shooters while the new Winchester and Marlins were aimed largely at dense woods deer hunters.

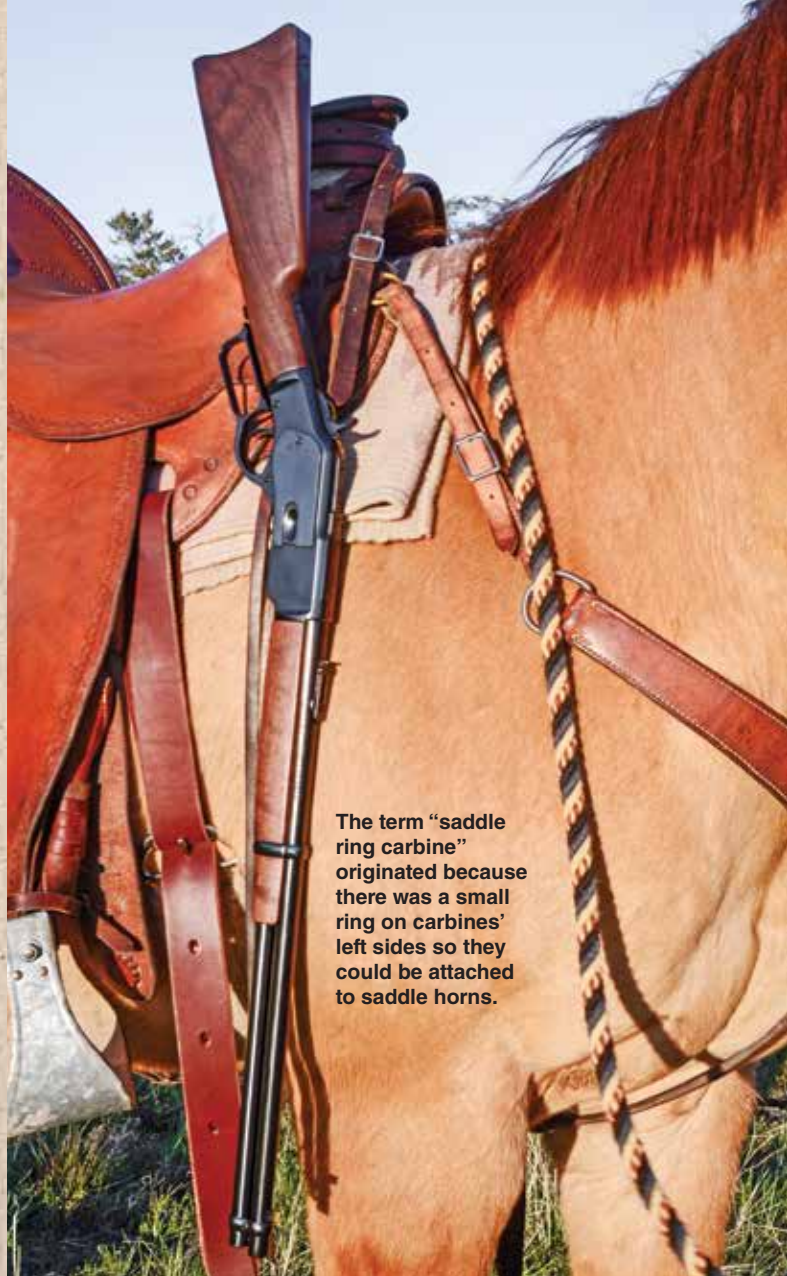
Around 1990 the cowboy action sport became a rage and the market for pistol cartridge lever guns exploded. Space won't allow coverage of all available now but rest assured if a saddle ring carbine was made in olden days replicas of it have been offered in modern times.

In recent years Browning has gotten into the act with Japanese Miroku saddle ring carbines in .357 Magnum .44-40 and .45 Colt in both Model 1866 and Model 1873, plus they are licensed to put the Winchester name on Miroku lever guns. Several companies have also reproduced Colt Lightnings. In fact I had the very first saddle ring .44-40 carbine made by the now defunct U.S. Firearms Company.

A newer name on the Italian scene is Chiappa and when I told Yvonne about their take-down replicas of Model 1892s, she wanted one. And, when Yvonne wants a gun by-golly she gets it! Hers is a .44 Magnum offered by the Skinner Sight Company as part of their "Bush Pilot" kit.

THE SELF-LOADERS

Although pistol cartridge semi-auto carbines are not new, the overall trend towards self-loaders nowadays is causing more to appear. In my mind the first pistol cartridge semi-auto carbine was the famous World War II era M1 .30 Carbine. Like the .44 Henry, the .30 Carbine began as a rifle cartridge but was small enough and weak enough to enable its use in a limited number of handguns.



The term "saddle ring carbine" originated because there was a small ring on carbines' left sides so they could be attached to saddle horns.

However, most semi-auto carbines are chambered for such rounds as 9mm Parabellum, .40 S&W and .45 ACP. Marlin actually offered a .45 ACP and 9mm "Camp Carbine" in the mid-1980s. It didn't last long but was actually a decent little semi-auto. Some of the AR manufacturers also chambered for semi-auto pistol cartridges. The only one I fired was a Colt 9mm. A few years back a friend loaned me three Beretta Storm carbines in all three of the above calibers. He did so mostly because I jabbed him about how ugly they are. He paraphrased Forrest Gump by saying, "Ugly is as ugly does." I admit they shot well and were handy.

BARING HIS SOUL

And finally, I must admit this — for some time I've considered searching out one of the AR 9mm rifles for a home defense carbine, then Ruger announced their PC9. I tried one on consignment, liked it and bought it to add to my assortment of pistol cartridge carbines. A benefit to some is it can be altered to accept GLOCK magazines. This was a non-factor to me since I own none.

Developed for 18th century horsemen, pistol cartridge carbines obviously have their place in the 21st century.



Aside from the faux slide lock, the HK416 .22 Pistol closely mimics its big brother, the .556 HK416, one of the premier counter-terrorist guns in the world.

“THIS MAKES IT A PRETTY GOOD AND INEXPENSIVE OPTION FOR TACTICAL TRAINING AS WELL AS A TON OF FUN FOR THOSE OF US WHO DON’T CLEAR HOUSES AND BUST BAD GUYS FOR A LIVING.”



DAVID FREEMAN

I've never been much of a black gun guy. Even in Vietnam I got my hands on an M2 Carbine and made it my primary weapon but something about the HK416 in .22 LR caught my eye. It's available as a carbine or a pistol. I chose the pistol and it arrived two days before Christmas. My sons and grandsons are all into video games like "Call Of Duty" and "Apex" so I figured they'd enjoy shooting a real gun representing one of the guns available to them in their video games. I was right. What surprised me was how much I enjoyed shooting it.

RIMFIRE WITH A GREAT PEDIGREE

The HK416 .22 LR has the look and feel of the HK416 used by many of the world's most elite fighting forces, including DEVGRU ("Seal Team Six"), who were using HK416s when they killed Osama Bin Laden. Now HK has partnered with Umarex to design and build a .22 version of the HK416 which is both realistic and made with the quality for which H&K is known. Although the

inner workings are obviously different, the externals of the .22 version are true to its big brother counterpart.

The HK416 .22 has an aluminum receiver — no plastic like so many other .22 lookalikes. It is equipped with the same M-LOK rail interface system on the HK416 5.56 model. There's a 90-degree manual safety, functional dust cover, threaded muzzle and threads compatible with most AR-style arm braces. The barrel is 8.5" long and total weight of the gun with a magazine is about 6 lbs. Trigger pull is 7 lbs. with less than 1/4" take-up and a crisp break. The sights are flip-up with the rear one being fully adjustable. They flip down out of the way if you want to mount an optic on the top rail. There is also the HK AR pistol grip a lot of guys like to install on their ARs because of its angle, texture and the storage compartment within.

There was a little tool packet with the gun. It contained a wrench for removing the flash hider — off it came, and in its place I screwed on a Tactical Innovations suppressor. Now the kids and I had a real tactical-looking machine pistol that wasn't really tactical because it was a .22 LR and wasn't really a machine pistol because it wasn't fully automatic, but our imaginations made up the difference.



HK 416

.22 LR PISTOL

DOWNSIZED COUNTER-TERRORIST FAVORITE OFFERS PURE FUN!

REALISTIC "LITTLE BROTHER"

The gun uses a short gas-stroke piston versus the direct-impingement gas operating system of the M4, making the HK416 run much cooler and cleaner and rendering it a favorite with military and law enforcement units around the world. Of course, this .22 version is not the same gun but it does make the same size holes in paper and it handles the same. This makes it a pretty good and inexpensive option for tactical training as well as a ton of fun for those of us who don't clear houses and bust bad guys for a living.

I dug around and found a Bushnell Trophy Red Dot sight and installed it on the gun. I did have to remove the existing sights to make this change but this was no problem. Just loosen a screw on each and slide them off the back of the rail. HK Parts supplies a pistol brace adapter for this gun, and I found a reasonably priced stabilizing brace at Midway USA. There is also a 30-round magazine available from HK Parts and other distributors. With the CCI suppressor ammo loaded in the HK416, my crew is ready to ping steel plates and just have fun in general, with safety always the number one priority.

SHOOTING FUN FOR ALL AGES.

When shooting a semi-automatic .22 for the first time, I choose my ammunition carefully. You can't go wrong with CCI as long as you choose some of their high velocity rounds. I chose a box of their Suppressor rounds along with some Mini-Mags, Stingers and the new CCI clean rounds with the polymer coating. On the HK416 there is a bolt speed adjustment screw to compensate between standard and high velocity ammunition but in all my shooting, which has to be more than 400 rounds now, I've had no need to make an adjustment.

The first crew to shoot with me the day after Christmas included my middle son, his youngest son and my grandson's best friend. While they were getting guns laid out on the bench, I loaded the magazine with .22 Suppressor rounds. I handed



The included flash hider is easily removed from the standard 1/2x28 barrel threads to accept a suppressor.



The storage compartment in the pistol grip is just like the .556 HK416 (above). Thumb tabs (below) make the 20-round magazine easy to stuff with .22 LR cartridges.



With a Bushnell Red Dot sight installed it was easier to put rounds on target, but the HK416 was accurate regardless.



Standard AR takedown bolts are there for cleaning, but the process is much simpler than the .556 version.

the magazine to my son and waited for him to start shooting. I wondered if something was wrong because he seemed to be hesitating. Then, I noticed there were holes in the target.

Sitting right behind him with hearing protection on, I did not hear the gun go off. It was just like in the movies! Phhht! Phhht! Now that was fun. Unfortunately, we only had one box of those rounds. CCI Stingers are notoriously loud for a .22, but even they were pretty quiet through the HK416 with suppressor. We had to adjust the sights a little, which was very easy using the twist knob. Shooting first at seven yards and then at 15 yards, none of us had any trouble putting our rounds within a reasonable group. There were smiles on faces, including mine. Maybe playing army could be just as much fun as playing cowboy.

TEAR DOWN

Cleaning the gun was super simple. It has the standard AR pins for removing the upper from the lower, but this is as far as the similarity goes. First off, the bolt lock on the side of the receiver is a dummy, just there for looks. The only way to lock the bolt back is to insert an empty magazine and pull the charging handle back. You can then remove the magazine and the bolt will stay back. Keep in mind the gun *will* shoot with the magazine removed.

To put the gun into battery, pull the charging handle back and let it go. The cleaning procedures as described in the manual calls for removing just the rear pin and pivoting the upper forward. This provides access to the barrel, which can

be cleaned from the breech end. The bolt is not removed for cleaning. In fact, I'm still trying to figure out how to get it out. After cleaning the barrel, spray the bolt area with a good gun cleaner, brush away any dirt or grime, apply two drops of oil on the main spring, one drop of oil on the extractor and you're ready to pop the upper down. Reinstall the rear pin and you're done. I like to cycle the bolt a few times to spread what little oil is in the receiver area.

A .22 FOR "SERIOUS" USAGE?

I've been watching the recent introduction of many new .22 guns which mimic models of higher-caliber firearms and thinking not only about their use for training, but for certain classes of people for home defense. There's no doubt a .22 with exacting shot placement could be an effective defensive round, even though we always want bigger calibers. Now I'm in my 70s, I'm shooting a lot of .22s though still carrying a 9mm. Will I ever carry a .22 for self-defense? I don't think so, but I'm not making any promises. I do know for home defense, the HK416 with .22 High Velocity Hollow Points loaded would do the job if necessary.

This gives me ample reason to practice with it. Never mind practicing with the HK416 is more fun than I could have imagined. It's priced reasonably, uses cheap ammo and overall would make a good addition to your .22 arsenal. With an MSRP of \$449, you'll see them at prices under \$400 around the country.



www.hk-usa.com

ACTING WITH ONE VOICE

IT'S TIME FOR 2A SUPPORTERS TO UNITE!

If you're not angry about what happened in Virginia earlier this year, you ought to be.

Only about 40 percent of Old Dominion voters bothered to cast ballots and as a result, anti-gun Democrats took over the General Assembly and immediately started talking gun control. As a result, more than 100 counties, cities and smaller municipalities declared themselves "Second Amendment Sanctuaries." While it may have no force of law, it makes a powerful statement.

WELCOME TO THE NEW ORDER

On the very first day of their session this past January, Virginia's majority Democrats pushed four gun control bills through the Senate Judiciary Committee, wasting no time following through on their threats of more gun control.

This November, you've got a chance to make sure it doesn't happen in your state. Get mad and stay mad. Channel your frustration into political action, and get your friends and voting family members energized. And then, get behind pro-2A candidates, even if they're not your first choice.

Remember this: Virginia was just a warm-up for gun grabbers but their entire agenda is now out there for everyone to see.

Democrats gather for their national convention in mid-July while Republicans will meet Aug. 24-27 in Charlotte, N.C. In the aftermath of both, one thing should be foremost on the minds of anybody who considers himself or herself a Second Amendment activist — Set aside any squabbles you might have and unite with a single voice!

Millions working together are a formidable force. By now you've got a pretty good idea about which party is on your side and which party wants to place a boot on your neck.

NEXT STEPS:

- Contact gun shows in your area and ask about doing a voter registration drive at

the shows in September and October. Some readers might be shocked at the number of gun owners who are not registered to vote. To save the Second Amendment, you must do your part. Remember, we're talking about a fundamental individual right so each individual is responsible for protecting it.

- Volunteer to help a candidate and make sure the candidate knows you're a gun owner who supports his/her stated position on the Second Amendment. If a candidate asks you to be his/her "policy advisor" on gun issues, jump at the opportunity.

- If a candidate holds a "Town Hall"



gathering in your town, be there. Question their position on your Second Amendment rights, and don't be shy about it. You can be polite, but firm. Better still, if there is a debate between two candidates, insist moderators allow questions about gun rights versus gun control.

Find out via your state's election office or public disclosure commission which candidate receives contributions from gun control groups or gun rights organizations. It's public information and we've discussed this previously. If you have the opportunity to ask a candidate face-to-face about this, don't hesitate. If they try to dance around the subject, just say this: "That's

very interesting, but you didn't answer my question."

THINK NATIONAL, VOTE LOCAL

The late Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, an affable old-style Boston Democrat, understood something about politics all grass-roots gun rights activists need to embrace: "All politics is local."

Want to change Congress and be rid of Nancy Pelosi and her anti-gun-rights majority? Be sure you vote in your local Congressional race. Want to continue seeing conservative judges appointed to federal court vacancies? Be sure the U.S. Senate doesn't flip — the only way to make sure this doesn't happen is by voting.

Maintain focus on your state legislature and remember Virginia. Sit this one out and you could wind up with a situation like they had in Richmond this year.

If you have a problem voting just on the gun issue, think taxes. Whatever else you are, you're a taxpayer. Want to pay higher taxes? Vote for the candidate who likes taxes and hides it by arguing "we have to invest" in this or that cause. Want to pay lower taxes? Vote for candidates representing this perspective, someone who offers a plan to maintain services without soaking you and your neighbors.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

Want to confront anti-gun candidates with facts? At the Second Amendment Foundation's website (saf.org) under the heading "Protect Your Rights," you will find each state's constitutional right to keep and bear arms provision and the states without such a provision.

Using your favorite search engine, call up "FBI Uniform Crime Report for 2018," the most recent year for which data is available. Late next month, the FBI will release the 2019 data, which still gives activists plenty of time to find out the murder and weapons data nationally, and in your state.

On the main page, go to the box headlined "Offenses Known to Law Enforcement." Under the subhead "Expanded Offense Data," click on "Weapons." When the page opens, go to Expanded Homicide Data Tables and you will find the following:

"Weapons: Expanded Homicide Data

continued on page 64



The TOPS Poker is a unique, hybrid blend of the Indonesian Karambit and Japanese Kiridashi, custom made for both combat and utility.

TOPS POKER

A MASHUP OF TWO POPULAR BUT UNLIKELY BLADES

TOPS Knives General Manager Craig Powell likes to tinker around the shop on the weekends and has even had a hand or two in several of the company's designs. One weekend while working on a sheath project he had an "Aha!" moment. "What," Craig asked himself, "if I combined a Karambit handle with a Kiridashi blade?" While not something you or I would ponder, it made perfect sense to Craig and the TOPS Poker fixed-blade was born. The Indonesian Karambit is a popular

Hawkbill-style fighting knife style with a ring at the base which serves as a pivot point for accessing the knife in a variety of grips. The Japanese Kiridashi is a straight edged, bevel-bladed knife most often used in woodworking.

Powell's hybrid Poker combines these two knife styles in flawless fashion, retaining the combat abilities of one with the utilitarian traits of the other. The Poker is 6.88" overall, 2.5" of the total in a chisel ground Kiridashi blade of 1095 Carbon Steel with

TOPS POKER

MAKER: TOPS Knives, P.O. Box 2544, Idaho Falls, ID 83403. Ph.: (208) 542-0113. Web: www.topsknives.com

BLADE: 1095 Carbon Steel/
Acid Rain finish.

BLADE LENGTH: 2.50"

OVERALL LENGTH: 6.8"

WEIGHT: 2.7 oz.

HANDLE: Tan Canvas Micarta

CARRY: Black Kydex w/ Beta loop

PRICE: \$95 MSRP

the company's rust-preventing Acid Rain finish. Sandwiched between the blade and ringed Karambit base are nicely sculpted Tan Canvas Micarta scales. Delivered with the Poker is a black Kydex sheath with a Beta loop for multi-positioning.

The Poker's nifty Kydex sheath with Beta loop allows the fixed-blade to be carried in multiple positions.



WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT.

What Karambit user wouldn't like to have an EDC version offering more utility than the standard Hawkbill blade? By the same token, what Kiridashi user wouldn't like to add a bit more tactical ability to the handle of their daily carry? The TOPS Poker is the best of both worlds. A *Karam-Dashi* if you will. Ingenious. The Poker comes with a user friendly price tag of \$95 and is also available in stealthier Black Canvas Micarta handle scales.

BENCHMADE BAILOUT

Brent T. Wheat

Their product literature asks, "Looking to fly under the radar?" When you heft the Benchmade 537 Bailout knife, you'll understand what they're saying!

The 3.38" tanto CPM-3V blade fits into black Grivory handles with an aluminum pommel for a total package tipping scales at a mere 2 oz. While I'm not a huge fan of tanto blade profiles, the stout blade coupled with slimness and incredible light weight make this knife a strong contender for my new everyday carry blade, especially in lightweight pants. With an overall length of just 4.7" and handle thickness of 0.4" you usually forget it's there even when wearing a suit.



My current favorite "dress" blade is a stiletto-style pocket folder which, frankly isn't good for much, but it's lightweight. Now, with the 537 Bailout, I can carry a serious blade capable of any reasonable chore without causing my khakis to sag like a second-rate white middle-aged rapper. Retailing around \$144 online, it's a winner!

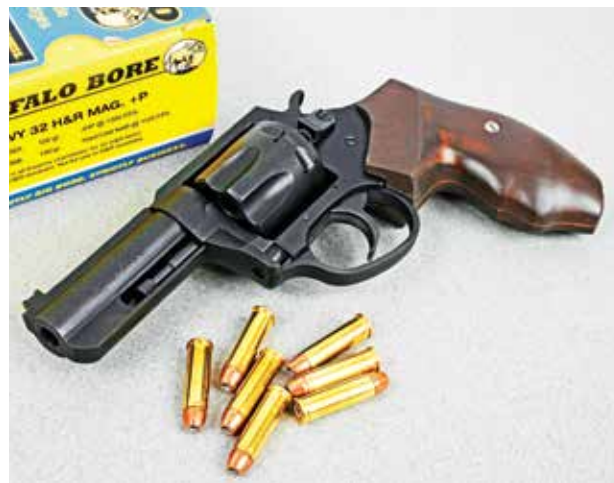
www.benchmade.com

CHARTER ARMS 'PROFESSIONAL' .32 MAGNUM

Roy Huntington

Let's think outside the box here. Pocket revolvers are swell — you bet. Most are five- or six-shot and we've always thought of that as "enough." How about a 7-shot .32 Magnum rendition? Huh? What? Exactly what I thought.

Charter's version of the classic pocket wheelgun tucks seven significant .32 Magnum loads into its tidy cylinder. Think — a 100-gr. JHP at 1,300 fps and you begin to get someone's attention. Multiply this times the lucky seven number and you've just solved a concealed carry problem



very neatly. My test gun shot just fine, with very mild recoil, perfect for a smaller shooter or someone with weaker hands.

At about 22 oz. unloaded, the Charter's got a Black-nitride+ finish, LitePipe front sight, 3" barrel and walnut grips. If I was keeping it, I'd put standard smaller grips on it, making it even handier. MSRP is about \$438 and you can find it at your favorite dealer.

www.charterfirearms.com

TRUGLO TRU-TEC MICRO RED DOT

Brent T. Wheat

Red dot sights are all the rage because they offer quick target acquisition under a variety of lighting conditions alongside unlimited eye relief. The market is currently offering red dot sights ranging from many hundreds of dollars down to \$14 Chinese knockoffs. However, our current favorite affordable red-dot is the TRUGLO Tru-Tec Micro.

Retailing for \$148 on Amazon, the Micro equips your pistol with a high quality red dot with all the usual "bells and whistles" at a price allowing you to buy more boxes of practice ammo. Ours currently resides on a Taurus TX22 using a Lakeline LLC



mounting plate. The RMR-pattern mounting holes line up perfectly.

The result? A tremendously fun gun for whacking all sorts of targets. In fact, my beloved wife thinks she wants to use it as a carry gun. I dissuaded her from the idea but both of us purely love the quality and ease of use with the Tru-Tec Micro — but especially the price! 🔫

www.truglo.com

CROSSBREED HYBRID ST2 HOLSTER

Brent T. Wheat

A new month, another CrossBreed holster! Last month we did a short review of the CrossBreed SuperTuck. We're still getting used to the big hunk of leather against our skin but we definitely see its charms. Then, just as I was getting comfortable, the Big Brown Truck of Joy arrived and I found another CrossBreed holster awaiting a test drive — the Hybrid ST2.



Mine is a good-looking rig with brown leather and a Kryptek gun pocket but looks aside, the idea behind this holster is combining the highly adjustable pocket of their Reckoning holster with the backer from the SuperTuck. It also features "Combat Cut" leather to assure a better gun grip during the presentation.

Frankly, if forced to choose, I like this holster a bit better than the SuperTuck. Nothing wrong with the bigger holster and I'll agree it's a bit better in the all-day comfort department, but I prefer the more minimalist design of the ST2. Either way, comfort, quality, security and adjustability make CrossBreed my new fave for concealed carry. 🔫

www.crossbreedholsters.com

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Tables 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15 and 20." Under Table 8 you will find five years' worth of data on total homicides and a breakdown of weapons and how many were used in what sort of crime. Under Table 20 you will find the state-by-state breakdown of homicides, so find your state. Memorize this information so you can debate with anti-gunners as an informed activist.

Keep this figure always in mind. According to a report by Summit News earlier this year, there are now more than 422.9 million privately owned firearms in the U.S., including an estimated 17.7 million modern sporting rifles (aka "Semiautomatic assault weapons").

"WHY SHOULD WE BAN ANY FIREARM, ESPECIALLY THE SEMI-AUTO MODERN SPORTING RIFLE WHICH IS USED IN A FRACTION OF ALL MURDERS?"

This would make the 10,000–12,000 guns used annually in homicides a tiny fraction of all the guns in private possession, which begs the question: Why should we ban any firearm, especially the semi-auto modern sporting rifle which is used in a fraction of all murders?

KNOW AND ACT

Study this data. It is very good debate fodder and can be used to leave anti-gunners tongue-tied. It looks good, when used in context, in a letter to the editor. And, you didn't make it up!

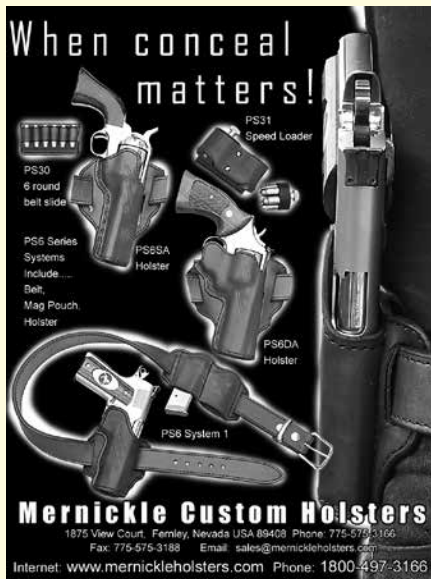
Go to a candidate's forum and ask them to discuss their position on gun control versus gun rights and how it squares with your state constitution and the FBI crime data. If they can't provide a straight answer, they flunk the test.

Be sure to vote in the primaries in your state, then make sure you vote in the general election. These people can be defeated, but it's up to you to make it happen! 

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The Model 2020 K6s is an OWB Holster for the Kimber K6s. Handcrafted from fine American leather, the holster is contoured to the hip for comfort and concealment with a slight FBI cant to minimize profile. The Model 2020 K6s is hand molded to fit with no break-in required. For more info: (956) 723-6893, www.kirkpatrickleather.com



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The RMR Optic Holsters from Remora offer comfort as well as concealability. The IWB or OWB holsters enclose the optic to keep the user from being gouged or irritated and protect the optic itself from sweat and body oils. Remora will modify/customize the holsters to users' needs. For more info: (239) 316-7770, www.remoraholsterstore.com



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The Invader 400 from Wicked Ridge Crossbows delivers 400 fps and features a built-in cocking device and a lighted scope. Built to perform in tight shooting situations, the narrow 185-lb. bow assembly consists of a lightweight riser and machined aluminum limb pockets with 11" WRX double-laminated limbs. For more info: (330) 628-9245, www.wickedridgecrossbows.com

SWARM MAXXIM GEN2

GAMO ADULT PRECISION AIRGUNS

The *Swarm Maxim GEN2* from Gamo is ideal for small game hunting, backyard target shooting and pest control. The breakbarrel air rifle with a 10-shot mag is an upgrade of the *Swarm Maxim*. The GEN2 offers a more consistent horizontal mag alignment and open, fiber optic sights. Offered in .177 and .22 calibers, the air rifle has an extra magazine storage compartment in the stock. For more info: (479) 636-1200, www.gamousa.com



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PUNA

3COIL

The *Puna* is an ideal everyday carry tool. Modeled on an assault rifle, this multi-tool is 3.15" long and can fit in the palm of your hand. Made of stainless steel, it has six built-in functions including a scalpel, hex tool, bottle opener, keychain attachment and breakaway handle. The *Puna* comes with a protective hard case. For more info: www.3coil.com



SIG P320

GRIP MODULE

WILSON COMBAT

Wilson Combat's *SIG P320 Grip Module* will enhance grip and improve recoil control. The molded polymer grip was designed based on the suggestions of tactical trainers, champion shooters and firearms experts. Features include an upgraded, high-cut 1911-style beavertail grip tang; undercut front strap; reshaped, radiused trigger guard and more. The grip sports Wilson Combat's exclusive Starburst pattern. For more info: (800) 955-4856, www.wilsoncombat.com



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Hogue Knives' *Deka ABLE Lock Folder* is ideal for everyday carry. Its 3.25"-long wharncliffe blade has a 59-61 HRC and made of CPM 20CV stainless steel. The 0.094"-thick blade is controlled by the ABLE locking mechanism with lock bar and Wolff wire-form springs. Handle is G-Mascus Dark Earth G10 Scales. OAL is 7.5"; weight is 2.3 oz. For more info: (800) 438-4747, www.hogueinc.com



STREET SPIKE

TOPS KNIVES

TOPS Knives' *Street Spike* is a basic, no-frills tool combining concealability, strength and utility. The knife's EDC blade is 1095 RC 56-58 steel with a black traction finish. It comes with a black Kydex sheath and multi-position clip. OAL is 6.75"; blade length is 2.75"; weight is 2.0 oz. For more info: (208) 542-0113, www.topsknives.com



PISTOL KIT

FROGLUBE

FrogLube's *Pistol Kit* includes cleaning and lubricating sprays for pistol care. Redesigned for 2020, the kit is packaged with a 2-piece, high-density plastic tube for cleaners and lubricants along with cleaning tools. The Pistol Kit comes with a 2-end brush, a 5" brass rod with handle, multi-caliber bronze brushes as well as swab bore tips and a microfiber towel. For more info: (855) 376-4582, www.froglube.com

GLOCK G45 MOS PACKAGE

GLOCK's G45 MOS basks in the spotlight as the main prize in this issue's giveaway. It's a gun anybody would love to own. Offered in 9x19mm, the G45 MOS sports the design and engineering GLOCK developed for its G19X military pistol. Combining a compact slide with a full-size frame, the G45 MOS has all the benefits of a Gen5 model. Both its frame and slide are black: the former with a flared mag well for fast reloads; the latter with front serrations for positive traction. Other features include a smooth trigger pull, a reversible magazine catch, an ambi slide

stop lever, a Modular Backstrap System and a GLOCK Marksman Barrel. With the gun's Modular Optic System (MOS), mounting a reflex sight on the slide is easy. In fact, the prize gun comes with a DeltaPoint Pro scope and Ameriglo backup sights attached.

With its wide field of view, crystal-clear glass and aluminum housing, the DeltaPoint Pro performs well even in harsh conditions. Ameriglo's GL-808 is a 9XL iron sight set for GLOCKS with black serrated-front and flat-rear sights for use with slide-mounted red dot sights.

You also get 250 rounds of ammo if

you win this giveaway! Doubletap 9mm 77-gr. Solid Copper HP is a defensive load made to feed 100 percent in small and large pistols. It is not a +P load, so it will work in all 9mms.

Carry your new GLOCK and extra mag in Blade-Tech's Signature Holster and Single Mag Pouch. The OWB holster with Tek-Lok boasts a speed cut, optic compatibility and more. The mag pouch has a flared rim for fast holstering and reloads. Blade-Tech even added a nylon Ultimate Carry Belt to complete the set.

The Fastball from Gerber Gear is a knife that's modern yet practical. It has a finger flipper opening, a wharncliffe blade and aircraft-grade aluminum handle.

Imagine winning this GLOCK G45 MOS giveaway package! But imagining is all you'll be doing if you don't join. So take a step toward your computer and go to www.gunsmagazine.com/giveaways. Or mail a postcard!

—Jazz Jimenez

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www.gerbergear.com

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MAKER: Ameriglo Sights
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www.ameriglo.com

VALUE: \$60



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G45 MOS

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us.glock.com
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TIPS & TALES ON THE .480 RUGER BISLEY

SANTA, A LOVING WIFE AND RUGER MAKE FOR A HAPPY TANK!

For many, 2015 became a colossal year when Ruger relented, finally releasing the long awaited 5-shot, single-action Bisley. The rumor mill speculated a chambering in *what else?* the .480 Ruger, a 0.015" shorter version of John Linebaugh's famous .475 Linebaugh.

Born in 2003, the .480 Ruger cartridge was first used in the 5-shot Super Redhawk. Single-action fans were licking

their chops at the 5-holed cylinder of the Bisley, waiting. Good thing single-action shooters are patient because it took Ruger 12 years to finally give us what we wanted — but they did!

TWINS?

Ruger was slick, pulling a fast one on us as rumors of a 5-shot, big-bored beast spread fast, far and wide among the

big-boomer crowd. Surprising everyone, Ruger released not one 5-shot Bisley, but twin baby boomers.

Calling them "Thunder and Lightning" wouldn't be a stretch, but their proper names are the .480 Ruger and .454 Casull. Oh, baby! Can you sadistically say knuckle-busting fun for everyone?

Enthusiasts now had factory, affordable, big-bore 5-shot single-actions chambered in two powerful cartridges, something once a custom, or semi-custom proposition. I say "semi-custom" referring to Freedom Arms, the mighty fine guns manufactured in Freedom, WY.

HOW IT HAPPENED

Lipsey's, a large Ruger distributor, has a secret weapon named Jason Cloessner, the VP in charge of Product Development. Jason has the ability to persuade Ruger and other manufacturers to tweak their products for those special "Lipsey's Exclusives" we all love.

The reason for his success? Jason's a true-blue gun guy like you and me, and he knows what we want. It's this simple and it's how we ended up with factory 5-shot thumb-cockers. Life is good!

THE CATCH

June 2015 — I bump into Jason in Raton, NM and he has a suspicious grin on his face. He says there's some pilot guns he needs shot for a durability test of sorts and needs some help.

Some catch! Fly down to Baton Rouge, shoot free ammo on a prototype pistol, eat Cajun food for a couple days and fly back home. Sounds like a dream vacation, right? The catch? Jason wanted 5,000 rounds of ammo shot through Ruger's newest Bisley.

Now I love to shoot, but in the two days my sidekick, Doc Barranti and I had to shoot, we only managed 2,500 rounds between us. We'd shoot those guns so hot you needed gloves from burning your hands.

The guns held up and Lipsey's received their first order of Ruger 5-shot Bisleys in .480 Ruger and .454 Casull a few months later. Santa, along with a loving wife, left both caliber Bisleys under the tree that year. I know, you hate me.

HANDLOADED HEAVEN

One of the nice things about the .480 Ruger torture test was the mounds of spent

Handloads are basic and simple. Molds by Lee and MP-Molds cast great bullets. On the right is the longer .475 Linebaugh brass next to the .480 Ruger.



Factory ammo is available from several sources for the .480 Ruger. The Bisley is riding in a Barranti Leather NW Mountain Companion holster.



We were once told Ruger would release a 5-shot Bisley when "pigs would fly" Well, here you go.



brass Jason divvied up among the hardcore handloaders at Lipsey's and some for Doc and me.

As far as handloads go, I have two favorite loads featuring home-cast bullets from Lee and MP-Molds. The Lee is a 400-gr. LFN design and the MP-Mold is a 385-gr. HP with a dual crimp groove for either .480 Ruger or .475 Linebaugh. Powders include Alliant Unique and Hodgdon HS-6.

The loads are safe, simple and satisfying. The 10 grains of Unique with the Lee slug runs 919 FPS while the MP-Mold HP runs 971 FPS. These are easy recoiling loads, accurate and will knock down just about anything needing it.

The Hodgdon HS-6 load is 14.5 grains as it falls from my Lee auto-disc dispenser, and the Lee bullet goes 1,096 FPS while the MP-Mold HP goes 1,162 FPS. My cast bullets are powder coated and sized 0.476" with Lee push-thru sizing dies.

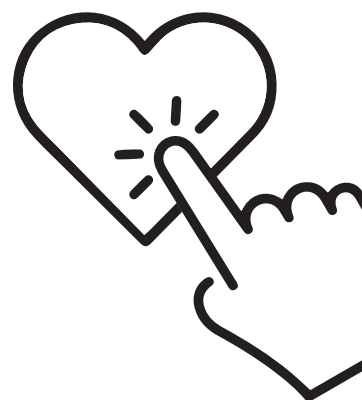
THE GUNS

Ruger did an exceptional job on these 5-shot Bisleys. The Bisley grip-frame is a favorite for many when shooting heavy recoiling guns. The grip gives you more to hang onto and disperses recoil over a wider area, seeming to come straight back at you instead of flipping like a plow-handle single-action. It's a knuckle-saver for sure.

The 6.5" straight barrel adds weight for balance while lessening felt recoil. The base-pin has a locking setscrew to prevent the pin from launching under recoil. The cylinder is unfluted for good looks and extra weight.

Ruger hit a homerun making 5-shot Bisleys a factory option to the millions of working men and women out there. It makes a once-unreachable custom gun obtainable for those who thrill in shooting large diameter hunks of lead downrange. Now if we can only get Jason to persuade Ruger to release a .500 Ruger ...

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GUNS[®] MAGAZINE

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“OUR CREW STAYED OUT UNTIL A BLEARY-EYED 4 A.M. AND WROUGHT SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE ON THE PIG POPULATION WHILE SEVEN COYOTES ALSO FELL TO OUR EFFORTS. IT WAS TRULY ONE OF THE MOST MEMORABLE HUNTS IN MY 40 YEARS OF BLOOD SPORT.”

When it was over, a grinning Heath asked, “What did you think of that?”

Through chattering teeth, all I could manage to say was a strangled, “Ung-ummph, pgwaaaf” which roughly translates to “Wow, that was cool!”

I was shaking like a hypothermia victim, my ears tinkled from the permanent damage done by more than 60 rounds of rifle fire (I’d forgotten my ear plugs) and my chest heaved like I had just run a marathon. I also knew most types of hunting had just gone down several notches in my book

Our crew stayed out until a bleary-eyed 4 a.m. and wrought significant damage on the pig population while seven coyotes also fell to our efforts. It was truly one of the most memorable hunts in my 40 years of blood sport.

Best of all, I discovered zero could be a pretty exciting concept.

BITS AND PIECES

First off, let me discuss our reader mail policy. As you can imagine, we get tons of both email and “snail mail.” In fact, due to the more “experienced” nature of our readers, we probably get more physical mail than virtually any other magazine. I know this is the case for firearms magazines as I’ve discussed the matter in depth with my fellow competing editors while sitting around campfires and greasy spoons.

Anyway, at both *GUNS* and *American Handgunner*, we have a policy of the actual editors reading our mail. The task is not delegated to a Junior Assistant Associate Deputy Editor, because we don’t have any, plus we feel communication with readers is a critical matter.

Having said this, please note we are one of the leanest “top tier” magazines in the business, which is one reason we’re still in

business. We don’t have to support a large editorial bureaucracy so we still have money to buy paper and ink. However, it also means reader mail sometimes has to take a back seat to other more time-sensitive tasks such as editing stories.

Rest assured every letter and email gets read. Sometimes immediately, sometimes a month later. Unfortunately, without excess time on my hands, I simply can’t reply to everyone, especially those occasional letters starting with “Dear dumb stupid head ...”

So—your input is valuable, a real human will read it but sadly, we don’t always have the time to return the kindness. Of course, if anyone wants to make a huge endowment to us, I’d be happy to spend all day on a beach, sipping frozen drinks and reading letters ...

IN OTHER NEWS

We just received word Naroh Arms has closed-up shop while Jimenez Arms, a descendant of the Jennings, Raven and Bryco lineage, has filed bankruptcy, some claim due to a lawsuit filed against them by Kansas City and bankrolled by Everytown for Gun Safety. Did you hear FLIR won’t sell civilians any thermal weapon sights as of January 2020? We tried to watch some of the Democrat Party debate the other night but got tired of constantly hearing how evil gun owners are. We were sad to hear Taurus retired their CEO David Blenker in January as he’s been instrumental in increasing quality at the Brazilian-owned gun maker. 

appreciate the author’s dilemma. It must be an amazing experience to be surrounded by all of the giants of the writing industry.

Bill Rogers

You’re right — it’s an amazing experience, blessing and honor to (attempt to) fill the shoes of giants. My family and friends get tired of me wondering aloud, “Just how in the world did I end up with the greatest job in the shooting business?”
—BW

Hello Bill! Thank you for taking the time to let us know you enjoyed the 71/84 article in GUNS Magazine. I enjoyed your handwritten letter even more. I wish we could have walked down those isles at Golden State Arms and bought those guns together. Your description was spot on, making me feel like I was with you. —Jeff Hoover

TAFFIN KUDOS

Mr. Taffin, I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed your articles in both *American Handgunner* and *GUNS Magazine*.

As I am almost 62 years old, I have read most of the old-time gun writers. I believe you are every bit their equal! You have Elmer’s knowledge without the ego. You are the dean of gun writers!

Dean Hudepohl

Thank you for the kind words!! I am 81 so I met most of the old-time writers (Applegate, Askins, Lachuk, Cooper, Skelton, Keith) and many were personal friends. —JT

OOPS

I’m a little behind in reading. But I just had to write, being a cheese-head and a former SCCA course marshal, about an error from the December 2019 issue of *GUNS*, page 81, “A Not-Nice Surprise.” Henry Repeating Arms is in Rice Lake, Wisconsin while Road America is in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin.

Tom Abel

The only Waunakee in the World!!

Tom, that was my fault. I mentally transposed Rice Lake and Elkhart Lake. Having spent a lot of time fishing, drinking Old Style and gnawing on summer sausage in Wisconsin, I should have known better!
—BW 

FLORIDA HOG HUNT

THREE, TWO, ONE, MAYHEM!

From the backseat, it felt like one of those nightmares you have after eating pickled jalapeños right before bedtime.

It was darker than the inside of my credit rating as strange trees whizzed by the windows like a bad dream. We bounced along on one faceless road after another and I had no idea where I was, where I was going or what would happen when I finally got there. Two near-strangers were chatting in the front seat and several military-grade weapons were strapped right behind my head as I futilely looked around, trying to make sense of the surroundings.

WHERE AM I?

I wasn't being taken to a lonely spot by anti-government rebels in some southern hemisphere backwater, to be tortured and ultimately shot as a Yankee spy. In spite of obvious similarities to an over-wrought secret-agent drama, my current situation didn't involve any international drama. I was going hunting — specifically night-time feral hog control hunting in northern Florida.

This was definitely a high-adventure activity and I soon discovered chasing groups of nuisance porkers in the dark is just behind defusing nuclear weapons and right ahead of alligator wrestling in terms of sporty adventure. In all, it is a fine and heady mix of exhilaration, fear and hearing loss.

Our guide for the night was Heath Porter, the president of Night Ops, Inc., a Florida-based manufacturer of custom AR-platform rifles built specifically for predator hunting and feral pig control.

Heath used to guide hunters professionally on his pig control hunts but soon realized leading strangers armed with semi-automatic rifles around in the dark wasn't the best way to maximize your lifetime memberships. "The money was good," Heath noted, "but I want to live."

Our hunt started well after sunset north of Choctawhatchee Bay in the Florida panhandle. Heath is hired by area farmers to maintain some semblance of control over the pigs, which are a major nuisance. If you haven't seen what pigs can do to farm field, it's stunning — the end result looks like somebody used the field for artillery



practice. Meanwhile the pigs are next door, doing the same thing.

LATE NIGHT GUNFIRE

After dodging through the trees on a rutted sand road leading into an old phosphate pit, Heath, myself and another writer checked the zero on our rifles near what appeared to be a dangerous hobo camp. Nobody bothered us, nor appeared bothered by the rifle fire at 10 p.m. Shortly thereafter we headed out.

Heath has a large selection of fields where farmers want him to cull porkers along with livestock-killing coyotes. The operation is a simple spot-and-stalk but as with most things, "simple" isn't the same thing as "easy."

We began driving around in the dark on lightly traveled rural roads, scouting passing fields with thermal imaging scopes. We soon spotted a "sunder" of 30 or so

pigs then parked and rapidly shambled semi-quietly through pitch-dark fields until within 80 or so yards of the grunting porkers. The pigs were clueless on the inky moonless night as they went about their business destroying the peanut field and driving the farmer to bankruptcy.

DOWN TO BUSINESS

We set up in a line abreast, resting our rifles on shooting sticks. After making sure everyone was ready, Heath explained he would count down and on "zero," we would all fire. After verifying in hushed whispers we understood the plan, he began:

"Three-Two-One ..."

Nothing. "You guys were supposed to fire on zero," Heath said in a gruff whisper. We all nodded in agreement.

"Three-Two-One ..." Silence again.

"Are you guys messing with me?" the increasingly aggravated Porter asked. He then paused — "Okay, I get it. I'll say 'zero' this time."

When "zero" was finally uttered aloud, we all fired simultaneously and the biggest pig instantly dropped. Within a half-second, a hurricane of pork pandemonium whipped across the field.

FLORIDA BEDLAM

Pigs ran everywhere, like angry fire ants after you kick over the anthill. Though ants do sometimes bite, they don't weigh north of 200 lbs. nor sport fighting tusks. It was a highly exciting moment — a mixture of gunfire, snorts, shouts, squeals and general mayhem. Some pigs dropped instantly, others took a few more shots to connect as you figured out the lead and angle through the thermal scopes. I was surprised to discover, from a standing start, pigs are much faster than thoroughbred racehorses or so it seemed.

I was using a Ruger Model 556 lower with a home-built 300 AAC Blackout upper receiver, mated to a FLIR Apollo Pro 100mm optic (which they won't sell to ordinary civilians anymore as of January 2020). If I did my job, the 300 BLK is pure poison for pigs.

continued on page 73

CONFIDENCE ACHIEVED



We know the decision to own and carry a firearm is not made lightly. To do so with confidence, you rely on the proficiency that can only be achieved with practice and use at the range. That's why we've developed the new Lite Rack™ LCP® II, a low-recoil pistol with an easy-to-manipulate slide that shoots comfortably regardless of your hand size or strength. Whether used as a training tool for your existing LCP® or LCP® II, or as a concealed carry option, the new LCP® II in .22 LR allows you to train with and operate your pistol with confidence.

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