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WHAT AGE?

I read the article by John Taffin, one of my all-time favorite gun writers, regarding the Ruger Bearcat. He states he presented his granddaughter a Bearcat at age 10. I know countless children have been successfully introduced to firearms at a very early age. Nevertheless, I've personally struggled with when to allow my children, and now grandchildren, to first fire a gun (under my supervision of course). I have historically waited until they were 16 at least. In the age of videogame character instant resets, at what age do children really grasp what death means should they make a mistake? I'm not an anti-gun crackpot, just the opposite, but I truly struggle with the concept of when to introduce children to target shooting. Maybe Dr. Dabbs can weigh in? Keep up the good work! You publish my favorite gun magazine hands down.

John Nagel

That's a great question, brother. This will seem unduly verbose because I'll likely cut and paste some of it into a column.

Seems to me it all depends upon the kid, the parents, and the environment. My homeschooled kids were raised way out in the boonies in the Deep South (an area steeped in the gun ethos) by parents who were totally immersed in their upbringing. Our world was awash in weapons, all of which were properly secured. Proper gun handling was ruthlessly enforced. They could play with the guns any time they

wanted so long as I was there supervising. My boys could field strip an AK blindfolded by age 8. My daughter thought it was silly and never would participate.

I had a little exercise I would run from time to time. I'd clear a handgun and leave it on the dinner table. The first kid to spot it was expected to report to me that there was an unsecured gun in the house. Failure to do so resulted in a gentle non-threatening discussion and corrective action.

By contrast, there are some teenaged males I wouldn't trust unsupervised with gum, much less a live weapon. Were the kid in question a grandchild over whom I had little day to day supervision I would make a sober assessment as to whether tasting guns during infrequent visits might help or hinder based upon their personalities.

Kids are fascinated with firearms, particularly little boys. To fight that is to push against our very natures. Homo sapiens is a warrior species. A former Delta Force commander once wrote that you can try to raise your manchild without toy guns if you like, but just don't be surprised when he chews his toast into the shape of a pistol and shoots you with it.

Kids are concrete thinkers and are unable to process higher order concepts like life and death before a certain age. That certain age varies by the kid. I once met a 12-year-old who tried to stab his mother to death with a pencil. The ER was

continued on page 71



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CORPORATE OFFICERS

Thomas Hollander
Randy Moldé • Marjorie Young

EDITOR Brent T. Wheat

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Jazz Jimenez

ART DIRECTOR/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Joseph R. Novelo

ADVERTISING & MARKETING MANAGER Paula Iwanski

PRODUCTION MANAGER Jennifer Phillips

DIGITAL CONTENT EDITOR Joe Kriz

WEBSITE MANAGER Lorinda Massey

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Denny Hansen

GRAMMAR GURU Gwen Gunn

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR Roy Huntington

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

John Taffin • Holt Bodinson • Dave Anderson
Massad Ayoob • Mike "Duke" Venturino • Will Dabbs, MD
Shari LeGate • Dave Workman • Jeff "Tank" Hoover

FIELD EDITORS

Payton Miller • Sam Fadala • Mark Hampton
John Sheehan • Mike Cumpston • Aimee Grant
David Freeman • Dave Douglas • J.B. Wood



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PRODUCTION

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EMAIL: jennifer.phillips@pubdev.com

NATIONAL AD SALES 800.537.3006

NORTH EAST Tom Vorel • tom.vorel@fmghq.com

SOUTH EAST Paula Iwanski • paula.iwanski@fmghq.com

WEST Delano Amaguin • delano.amaguin@fmghq.com

INTERNATIONAL Amy Tanguay • amy.tanguay@pubdev.com

ONLINE TRAFFIC MANAGER

Kevin Lewis • 858.842.3941 • FAX 858.842.3916
kevin.lewis@pubdev.com

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Amy Tanguay • 888.651.7567 • FAX 858.842.3916
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PERSONIFICATION OF THE PERFECT PACKIN' PISTOL

THE .38 SPECIAL

From the Taffin Dictionary of Six-gunning — “Perfect Packin’ Pistol is a title given to a sixgun or semi-automatic with a barrel not less than 4”, nor more than 5-1/2”, which can be carried easily all day in a well-designed holster, placed under a bed roll comfortably at night and can be expected to handle any situation which should arise.”

This definition takes in a lot of territory and obviously it depends where the bearer of such a PPP normally finds himself/herself. Whether daily travels take one on concrete, sagebrush, foothills, forests, or mountains, the encounters likely to occur have a great bearing on the caliber chosen have the duty. We will be taking a look at the epitome of Perfect Packin’ Pistols, namely the 4" Double Action Smith & Wesson.

IN THE BEGINNING

To come up with the .38 Special, D.B. Wesson, along with his son, took a good look at the .38 Long Colt, the official U.S. Military Chambering at the time. The brass case was lengthened to accommodate 21-1/2 grains of black powder instead of the standard 18 and the bullet weight was

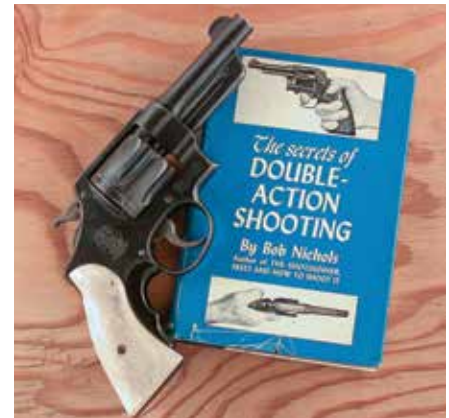
increased from 150 grains to a round-nosed 158-grain bullet.

The new revolver was the first K-Frame and was given the name of Military & Police. For the next half-century plus, it would be found in the holsters of thousands upon thousands of police officers. Over the decades it would be made in the standard barrel configuration as well as a heavy barrel model in both blued and stainless finish. Bill Jordan especially liked the 4" Heavy Barrel Military & Police in his exhibitions of fast double-action shooting.

With the coming of smokeless powder, the .38 Special was found to be especially accurate and from the very beginning the M&P was offered with target sights. Production of all civilian revolvers was shut down during WWII, however with the end of the war S&W began the development of what would become one of the finest target revolvers ever offered — the K-22.

A MASTERPIECE

The K-22 was introduced in December 1946 and six months later the first K-38, followed almost immediately by the K-32, arrived. These were all given the title of



This pre-war long action .38/44 Heavy Duty is probably the finest double-action shooting sixgun ever offered.

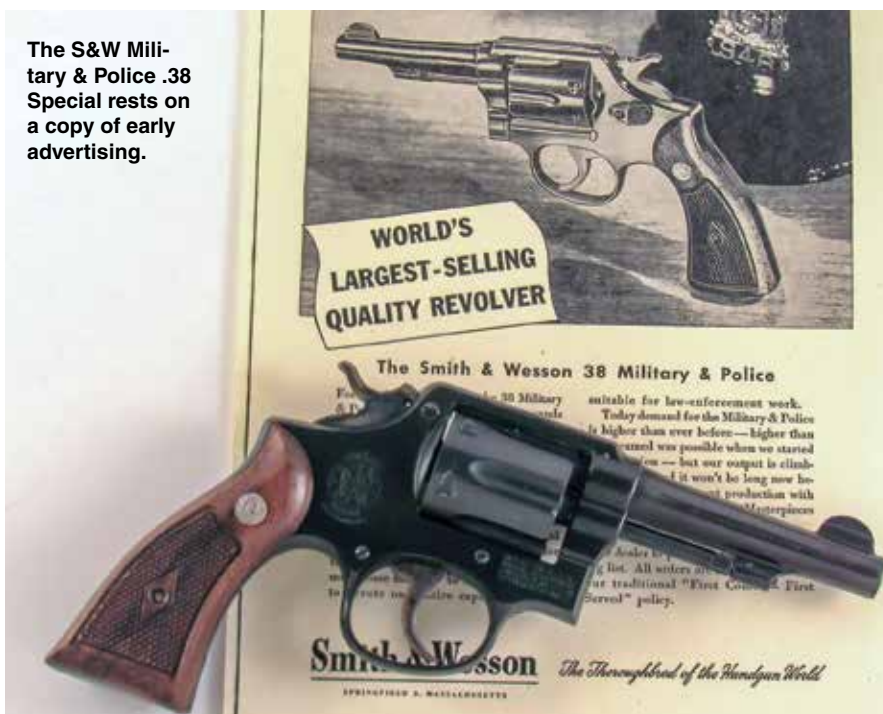
Masterpiece, which was definitely fitting. I have examples of all three revolvers chambered in .22 Long Rifle, .32 Smith & Wesson Long and .38 Special. They were and are excellent target pistols but too long to be classified as a PPP. This matter was handled in 1950 with the arrival of the 4" Combat Masterpiece. This magnificent revolver was available in both .22 and .38 with a few examples and .32 Long.

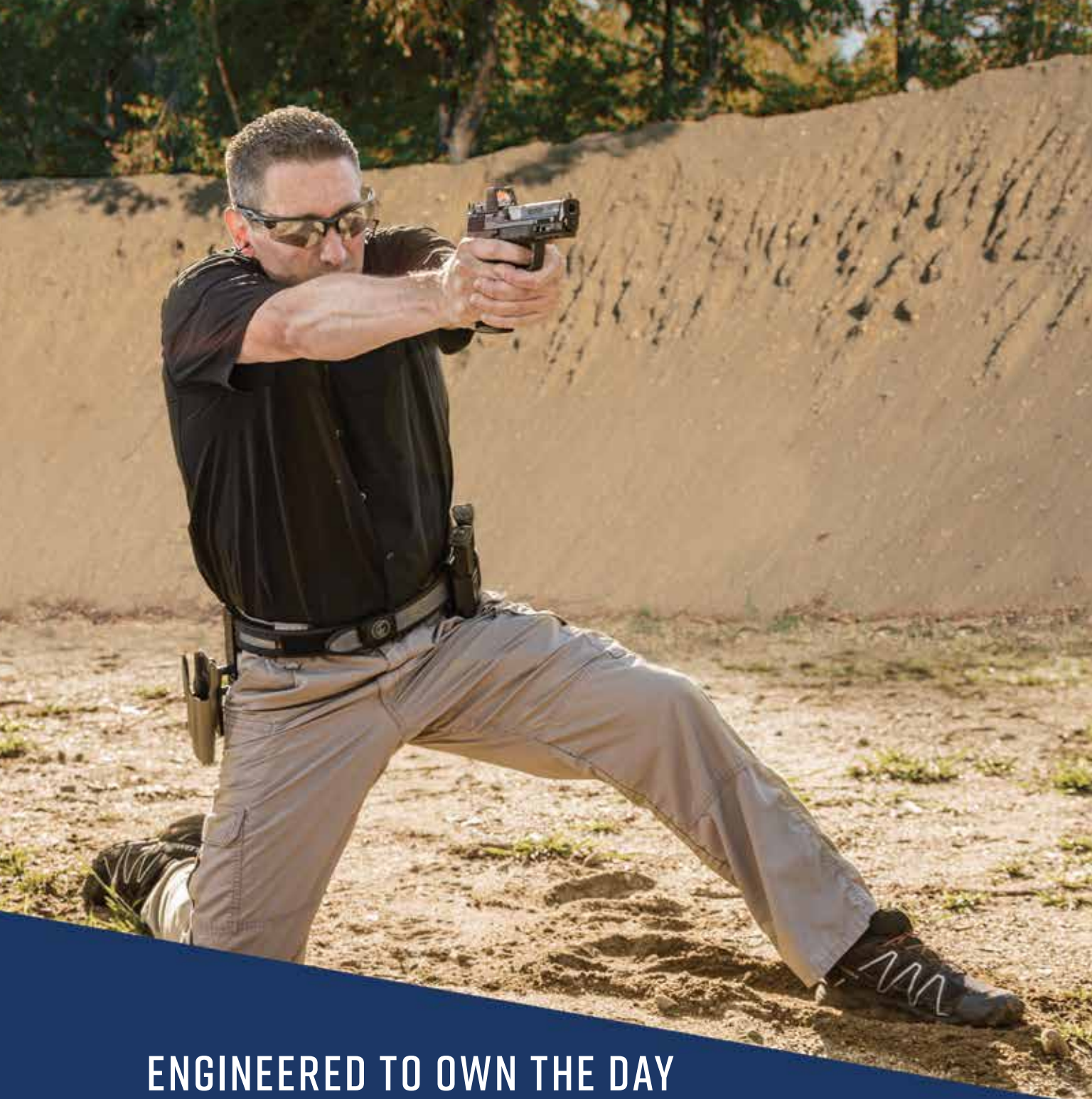
In 1957 the .38 Special Combat Masterpiece became the Model 15 with the .22 Long Rifle version known as the Model 18. For situations where either one of these chamberings will suffice, it would be pretty difficult to find a better choice than the Combat Masterpiece.

The .38 Special, although a great choice for target shooting or plinking, left a lot to be desired in its original round-nosed 158-grain version. After WWI ended, our society was rapidly changing from an agrarian one and many of those who had been content to stay on the farm were now gravitating to the large cities; couple this with Prohibition and the easy money to be made outside the law — as well as the arrival of a new breed of criminal robbing banks escaping in a super-fast V8 powered sedan — and peace officers certainly found themselves behind the times.

The standard .38 Special that had served law officers for nearly 30 years suddenly had to compete with criminals firing .45s and automatic weapons from an automobile. Those little slow moving .38s either bounced off car bodies and windshields or at the very best, offered shallow penetration. Something had to be done to help officers. Smith & Wesson decided a newer and, more powerful, .38 Special was needed and the result was the .38/44 Heavy Duty.

The S&W Military & Police .38 Special rests on a copy of early advertising.





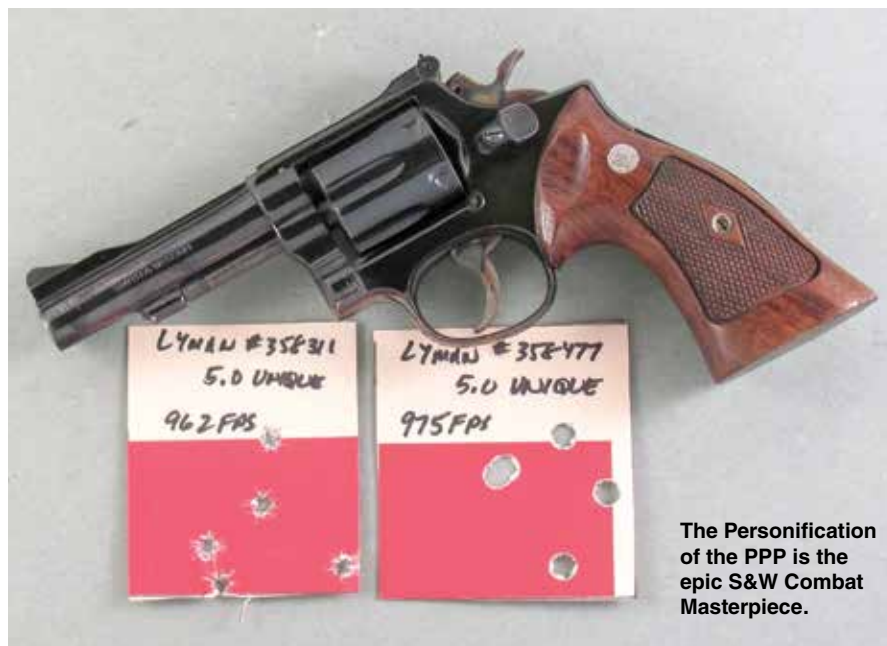
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Smith & Wesson, in conjunction with Winchester, in 1930 changed the standard .38 Special using a round-nosed bullet at around 850 fps to a flat-nosed semi-wad-cutter design traveling 300 fps faster, and also added a metal-penetrating version. To house this new round, S&W simply used their 1926 Model, or 3rd Model Hand Ejector .44 Special with a .38 Special barrel and cylinder. The result was a much heavier sixgun than the S&W Military & Police and it did an excellent job of dampening recoil even with the new load.

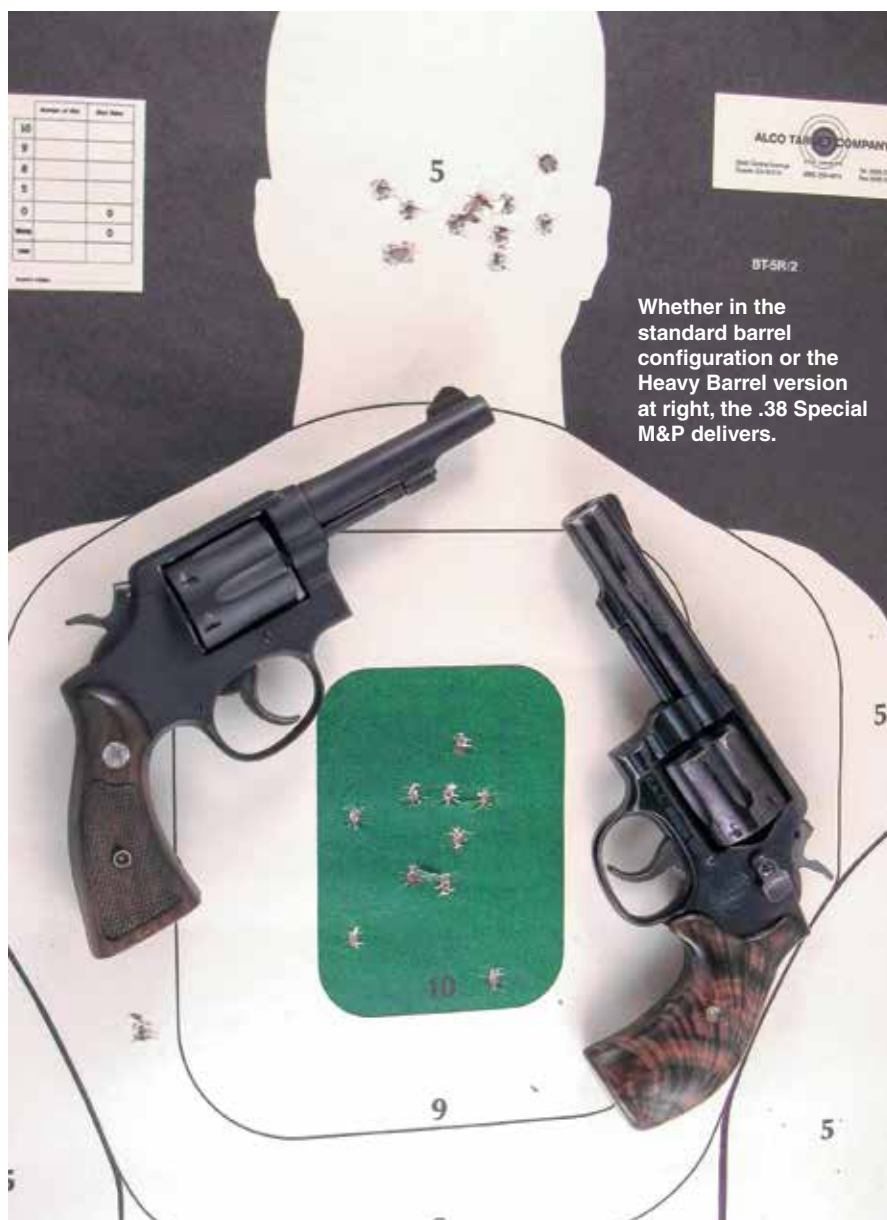
The Military & Police has always been a relatively easy gun to shoot, however this new .38/44 had such a slick action and heavy cylinder it almost seemed to shoot by itself once the trigger action is started. From my perspective it is the finest .38 ever produced; and I am certainly not alone in this assessment. The following came from Elmer Keith.

"About a year ago Smith & Wesson heeded the demand for a heavier .38 with their new .38/44. This weapon was designed primarily as a police weapon and brought out on their .44 Military frame, to my notion the best sized and shaped frame of any double action for my individual hand."

A NEW START

The introduction of the .38/44 sixgun and cartridge did get the .38 Special up off its knees. However, this was only the beginning. The fixed-sighted .38/44 Heavy Duty was offered in barrel lengths of 4", 5" and 6-1/2". In 1931 this latter model was upgraded with the addition of adjustable sights and introduced as the .38/44 Outdoorsman. Just as its name suggests, it became very popular as a field and hunting sixgun. A few were made with the 5" length and I am certain there were those who shortened the barrel to an easy packing 4". I had planned to do this someday, however someday has not yet arrived. My itch has been scratched with the use of .38 Special loads in the 4" S&W Highway Patrolman.

In the early 1930s Col. Doug Wesson and writer/ballistician Phil Sharpe began working together on a new project using the .38/44. Sharpe had the .38 Special lengthened and their work together resulted in one of the finest sixgun/cartridge combinations, the .357 Registered Magnum and the .357 Magnum itself. Smith & Wesson Historian Roy Jinks called it the greatest six-gunning development of the 20th century. I will not argue with the assessment!



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THE RISE OF THE POLYMER STRIKER NINE IS THERE A WORD BEYOND 'UBIQUITOUS?'

In October of 2020 I taught a MAG-40 class at Tallgrass Shooting Sports facility near Manhattan, Kansas. The 16 students, as usual, came from all walks of life but there was one thing they had totally in common in addition to having taken responsibility for the safety of themselves and their loved ones.

They were all carrying one or another polymer-framed, striker-fired 9mm pistol.

Every. Single. One.

My carry and teaching gun for that particular tour was a Wilson Combat Beretta 92 Compact Carry. It worked fine, as usual, and gave me a perfect 300/300 on the pace-setter demonstration of the qualification, also typical for the pistol. It was the only gun in action in the whole place with a hammer, the only one with all-metal construction. I was ready to turn myself in to the archaeologists who probably would have said, "Look! A fossil!"

Now, I've taught classes before where everyone had the same pistol — all Berettas when I taught a class for the Army. All SIGs or whatever when I taught for police departments. This was because all the attending personnel were carrying the same issue sidearm but in this class, the closest I saw to diversity was brand. We had GLOCKS and Springfield Armory guns, S&W M&Ps and Walther PPQs, SIG P320s and Heckler & Koch VP9s. Why

all 9mm, with the bullets blasting out of striker-fired Tupperware?

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Being of modern design, most pistols in this category are relatively ergonomic. If you like a thumb safety, the ones optional on the Smith & Wesson M&P series or standard on the Sarsilmaz SAR9 are natural to operate like what you find on a 1911. By contrast, the upward-flipping safety on a Beretta 92F, a Walther PP series or some older model Ruger and S&W 9mms are more difficult to master.

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Mas with his Wilson Beretta Compact and his demo 60-shot target at the Kansas class in October 2020. Should we have captioned it “Fossil with relic”?



A striker-fired 9mm will get you through the day, as Mas demonstrated with this 60-round qual target shot (above) with a stock Gen5 GLOCK 19 at a Mississippi class in March 2020. Mas appreciates polymer striker “nines.” Below, his working battery includes SAR and Kahr, GLOCK and S&W M&P, Springfield XD-series and Walther.



joint of your trigger finger — the spot old-time double action revolver shooters called “the power crease” — the Springfield XD series and the S&W M&P are made for you. Speaking of double-action revolvers, if this is the sort of trigger pull you prefer, the Kahr pistols and the front-loaded trigger stroke of the S&W SD9 are both things you should try.

Light weight is another biggie. In its time, the six-shot S&W Model 10 was all but the universal six-shot .38 Special police service revolver. It weighed 34 oz. unloaded. The GLOCK 17, which holds 18 rounds of 9mm, weighs 22 oz. loaded — less than an empty Model 10 when it has three times as many torpedoes on board. In so-called “pocket size guns,” the GLOCK 26 is about the same size footprint, and loaded with 11 rounds of 9mm, about the same weight as a six-shot .38 Colt Detective Special. It holds the payload of the DS and a Smith & Wesson five-shot Chief Special, combined.

The shootability of the striker-fired polymer 9mm auto is a huge factor in its popularity. Recoil is mild. Recovery time is quick. Look at the major action shooting wins amassed by folks like Max Michel and Lena Miculek with the SIG P320, by Julie Golob and Jerry Miculek with the M&P9 or Dave Seigny with the GLOCK. Plus, the trigger pull is consistent shot to shot.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE NINE

As early as the 1980s, slaughterhouse testing and — more importantly — street feedback showed the best-performing 9mm hollow-point loadings caused more traumatic wound channels than some .45 rounds and could even rival some .357 Magnum loads. Today, I load my 9mms with one of three preferred loads: the Winchester 127-grain Ranger-T +P+ known for tearing wound channels similar to those of .357 SIG; the Speer 124-grain +P Gold Dot, which works well through barriers and expands well; and the Federal 9BPLE 115-grain +P+ producing short but wide wound paths whenever over-penetration is an overriding concern.

The choice depends on where I am, what I'm doing, and the threat profile there. All are thoroughly “street-proven.” And, despite my fondness for the Beretta and, indeed, for the 1911 .45 auto, the one pistol I've been most likely to carry on my own time over the last couple of years has been an out of the box Gen5 GLOCK 19!

And above, you'll find the reasons why.



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KELTEC SU16C

CAPABLE, COMPACT 'TRUCK' GUN ON A BUDGET

Even as a small boy I cannot remember not having a rifle in the truck. In those early years the rifle was kept for the occasional predator or pest. It still serves well in those roles, but in the turbulent times we live in it also serves in a defensive capacity.

I keep a semiautomatic rifle contained in a compact bag, behind the seat, but still in easy reach.

BUDGET CONSCIOUS

Due to possible theft I don't keep a pricey AR-type rifle in the truck. The weapon I settled on as a "truck gun" was the less expensive, but still very capable, KelTec SU16C.

Chambered in 5.56 NATO, the rifle comes with adjustable front and rear sights and a Picatinny-style rail. A cross-bolt safety is utilized and the firing grip need not be altered to disengage it. All KelTec SU16 models are gas-piston operated.

The KelTec "Charlie" model has an under-folding stock for compact storage and is slightly over two-feet long with the stock folded. It can be fired with the stock folded if you want to cosplay like a *Hollyweird* action hero. However, since it takes less than a second to fully deploy the stock, it is highly recommended to do so as a full stock

is more conducive to accurate shooting.

Folding and unfolding the stock could not be simpler. The stock lock consists of a tab located behind the pistol grip. Push down on the lock and fold the stock. To deploy the stock simply grasp the forend and snap it into place.

LOAD OUT

All KelTec SU-series rifles come with a proprietary 10-round magazine but are fully compatible with all AR-15 magazines. The stock will fold with either the KelTec or a GI 20-round magazine in place. The stock cannot be folded with a Magpul 20-round mag in place due to a wider base plate nor a 30 rounder due to the length. I keep a 20-round magazine in my rifle.

Other particulars include an overall length of 33.5" when the stock is not folded, 4.7 lbs. (unloaded), and a 16" barrel with a 1:7 twist. Trigger pull is approximately 6 lbs.

My rifle came with an A1-type flash hider but looking at KelTec's website it appears current models do not.

Sling swivels are attached at the end of the forend and the pistol grip area. The swivels are not reversible for a wrong-handed person.

The forend features an integral bipod. It is released by pulling back on the sliding



In addition to the factory supplied unit (left), the SU16 will accept all AR-15 magazines.

switches on either side of the forend. It will not collapse accidentally if good technique is used by pulling the rifle to the rear.

For sighting I use an Aimpoint Micro H-2. Due to the straight stock design it can be used without the riser required on modern sporting rifles.



Keep it compact: The right side of the Charlie with stock folded and 20-round in place.



The KelTec SU16C with 20-round magazine inserted. Versus an AR-type pistol, the Charlie gives you compactness with rifle performance at a nice price.

RANGE TIME

I would not consider the SU16C a particularly accurate rifle compared to a quality AR-15. On the average the best I can hope for is around 2" at 50 yards, which equates to about four minutes-of-angle. This is good enough for me as my application for the rifle is purely defensive and it is certainly capable of minute-of-bad guy.

I have run almost every brand and bullet weight available through the rifle. This includes my homemade bullets made from fired .22 LR cases ("Swaging Satisfaction," GUNS April 2020) and the only malfunctions I have experienced have been traced to magazines.

Firearms are curious creatures as it seems like every one will show a preference for one load/bullet over another. This is the reason why top rifle competitors reload and tailor loads to their rifles. My SU16C seemed to have a distinct predilection for heavier, 60- to 77-grain bullets. Your mileage may vary.

The SU16C does not have a manual bolt hold open device, though the bolt will lock to the rear when the last round in a magazine is fired.

While AR-15 pistols are also compact, many versions will sell for twice as much as the SU-16C and I would be hesitant to leave it in the truck. Terminal performance will also be influenced by the shorter barrels used on AR pistols while the KelTec Charlie will give full performance with its 16" barrel.

If you're in the market for a compact rifle for a vehicle, but looking for something that won't break the bank in the event of a break-in, check out the KelTec SU16C. MSRP: \$796

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TO KILL A VELOCIRAPTOR CHOOSING THE ULTIMATE DINOSAUR GUN

You're probably the kind of firearm nitpicker people hate to watch movies with. You count the shots, know when the actor should have reloaded, know if a certain gun is correct for the era,

sneer at sloppy gunhandling and those 100-yard hits from the hip with a snubbie revolver.

I've tried to become a bit more sanguine about it. It's just a show after all. Still, it

can be fun to play the game of what gun would you choose in movie situations. Recently I've been a bit housebound with a minor illness and have been passing the time watching old movies. One of them was the 1993 classic *Jurassic Park*. If you have seen it you may recall the gamekeeper, an ex-Kenyan big game hunter named Nigel Bruce Percival-Smyth, Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts ... sorry, mixing up my movies.

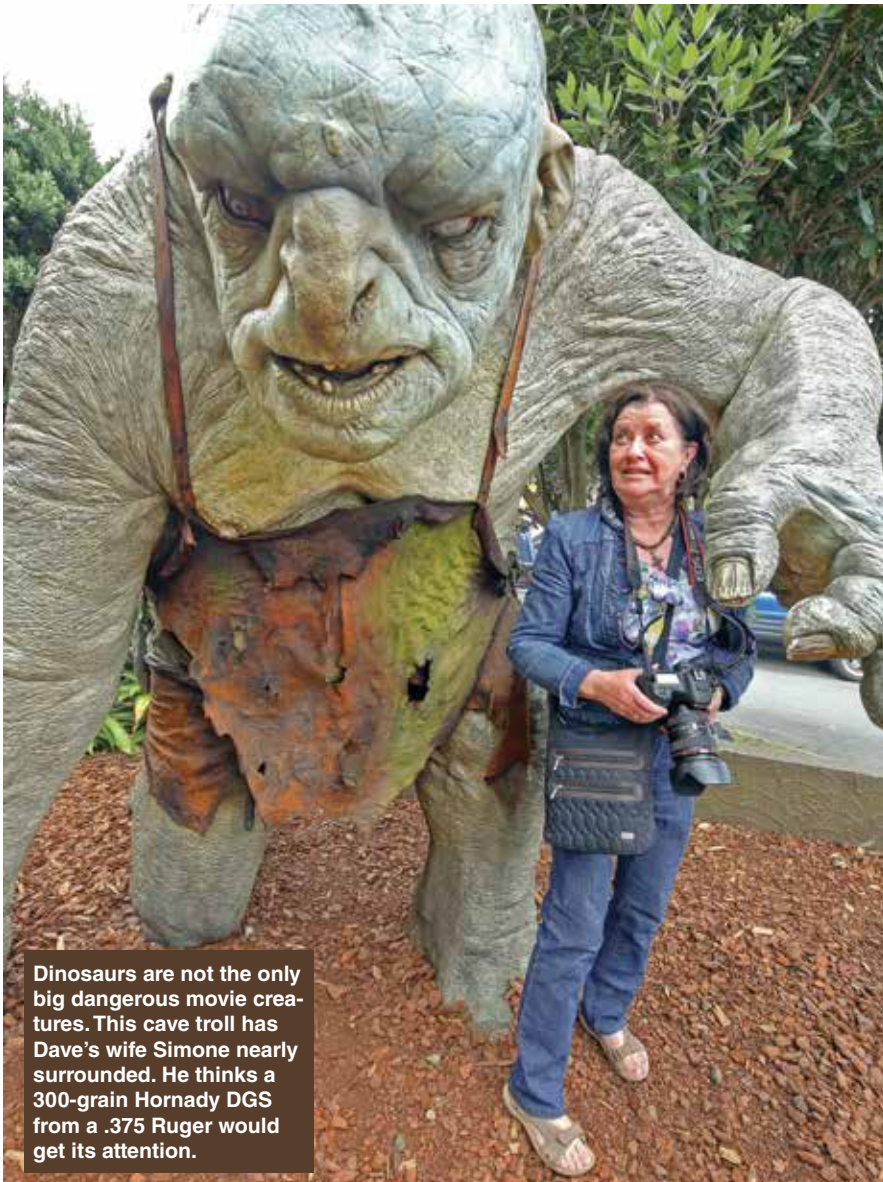
WELCOME TO THE JURASSIC JUNGLE

The gamekeeper has a rack of firearms to deal with dinosaur attacks. When trouble threatens he selects what appears to be a Franchi SPAS 12 gauge with extended magazine and folding stock. It's a fine gun for personal defense against human assailants but for dinosaurs it would be far down my list. Limited range, limited penetration, moderate velocity — and folding stocks are useful only when storage is an issue, which is not the case here. I will concede with modern slug loads you could do a lot worse.

So what would I choose? I'd want a rifle, not a shotgun. Let's look at the situation. It is on an island surrounded by an ocean and with lots of rain. Right away we are thinking stainless steel and either laminated wood or synthetic stock. I want the simple reliability of a bolt-action and I'd like it to have controlled-round feed. It should be reasonably portable, maximum weight in the 10–12 lb. range.

The biggest dangerous dinosaur is the *Tyrannosaurus rex* which, from what I can find online, would weigh 18–20,000 lb., half again the size of a really big African elephant. There's really no one-man portable firearm that could deliver reliable stops with body shots, although a .50 BMG might do it. Better I think to use a smaller cartridge and plan on precise bullet placement as did the old-time ivory hunters.

The predator the people seem to fear most is the velociraptor, which appears to



Dinosaurs are not the only big dangerous movie creatures. This cave troll has Dave's wife Simone nearly surrounded. He thinks a 300-grain Hornady DGS from a .375 Ruger would get its attention.



The Ruger Guide Gun is ideal for protection against big dangerous creatures such as dinosaurs, trolls, bears, lions, tigers and sharks. Available in powerful rounds such as .375 Ruger and .416 Ruger, it's a well-thought-out package for specialized purposes.

be a bit bigger than a tiger. Now a tiger we know is a creature to be respected but at the same time they are not so hard to kill. Your deer or elk rifle would likely do just fine. Something like a .375 H&H or .416 Rigby provides a comforting bit extra.

MAKING THE CALL

If some dinosaur hunter calls me tomorrow for firearms advice, I'd recommend a Ruger Hawkeye Guide Gun. Personally I'd get it in .375 Ruger but if you'd prefer .416 Ruger, I won't argue. I like the laminated stock, stainless steel construction, Mauser-style action, and overall rugged construction. At 8.1 lbs. it's a bit light, especially as I would not plan on adding a scope. The 3+1 cartridge capacity is a concern, I'd rather have 5+ rounds on tap but I think after firing four rounds there should be time to reload — most of the time. Meantime my solution would be a gun bearer with an identical second rifle.

I'm on the fence about sights. The Guide Gun has a very simple, strong, shallow V rear sight. It should serve very well to provide adequate accuracy very quickly. I like receiver-mounted rear sights and would give a lot of thought to fitting an NCG or XS sight and removing the barrel-mounted sight. The rifle would be loaded with Hornady 300-grain DGX cartridges with five more in a laced-on butt cuff. A solid body shot with such a bullet should take out the meanest velociraptor.

REALLY BIG GAME

And what about the T-Rex? On my belt I'd have a cartridge carrier with 10 Hornady 300-grain DGS solids. I know dinosaurs are supposed to have small brains, but on a



Rain, snow, saltwater spray — this is why synthetic or laminated stocks and stainless steel excel in the toughest conditions.

nine-ton creature even a small brain should be fairly large. When he (she, rather) opens her jaws to roar I'd put one of those bullets between the teeth and hope for the best.

The T-Rex in the movie is bipedal and seems to have knee joints. An alternative would be to shoot the knee joint with a solid to try and immobilize the creature, or at least slow it down. This is one case in which I'd feel justified in shooting from a vehicle.

Okay, planning for dinosaur defense is just silly game. But there are still plenty of wild places on this earth, and some very tough and dangerous creatures. I'd back a grizzly bear against a raptor any day. The Ruger Guide Gun is a specialized tool but very well thought out. I just may have to get one!

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OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

SIMPLE ADVICE IS MOST PROFOUND



This stainless Walther PPK/S in .380ACP was Will's first "serious" concealed carry gun. It's heavy, but Will notes, "Packing that thing, I was pretty darn cool!"



This \$50 .25 ACP FIE Titan (above), a gift from his wife, was Will's first concealed carry pistol. It was all he could afford and he's not certain the folding knife might not have been the more effective weapon. Will's pockets: deep-carry guns like the SIG SAUER P365 (below, left) and the Springfield Armory Hellcat (right) put serious 9mm firepower in an easy-to-hide and carry package.



The year was 1994, and I was in a restroom at a shopping mall in Dothan, Alabama. My wife, young son, and I had just enjoyed a day on the beach and were headed back home to Fort Rucker. As I stood at the urinal doing what guys do, I heard a mighty commotion develop behind me.

The restroom soon filled with boisterous, foul-mouthed hooligans. Before I could really process what was happening, one of them punched me sharply between the shoulder blades. This was about to get interesting.

I put myself back together and slid my hand into my right front pocket, slipping the latch on the butterfly knife that was my constant companion. As I turned around I was startled to see a dozen rough-looking gang members arranged in a semicircle facing me now quiet as the grave. It was then it struck me I was about to die in the men's room of a shopping mall in Dothan, Alabama.

I was indeed a trained soldier and fit. However, there were a dozen of them and they looked deadly serious. I figured with my knife I could take maybe two presuming they didn't have guns. However, I just didn't see a happy ending while trying to best a dozen gangbangers singlehandedly.

I just did what I always do when life looks bleak — I said a little quiet prayer, readied my knife for deployment and walked straight toward the largest of the lot. I had to turn sideways to squeeze between the big guy and his adjacent miscreant, but they never took their collective eyes off the urinal. It was weird. I figure Divine Providence yet again saved my carcass from a gory demise. No kidding.

As I exited the restroom, there innocently waited my precious wife with my son. An older gentleman who was obviously more turf-savvy than I stopped the next guy heading into the john and announced there was a gang meeting going on in there. As I



Will notes — not ironically — the places with all the anarchy are not those where concealed carry of firearms is ubiquitous. Photo: Amber Kipp

did not care for feeling helpless amidst such stuff, I bundled up my family and headed directly to the local county seat to apply for my first concealed carry permit.

THE APPLICATION

Concealed carry was not the rarefied industry it is now. In Alabama in the early '90s, to receive a concealed carry permit you reported to the local Sheriff's Office, filled out a form, paid \$15, and left everything overnight. The night crew did a background check and you could pick up the completed writ the following day.

The form was simple but it did include spaces for three references replete with addresses and phone numbers. As I had come straight from my near-death experience and this was the era before cell phones I didn't have addresses and phone numbers handy.

When queried on this subject, the sweet lady behind the desk said, "Son, you can put Mickey Mouse on that form if you want. I'm not calling any of them anyway."

Thusly emboldened I hallucinated up some faux demographic data and drove the half hour back home.

A MODEL PUBLIC SERVANT

The following day I made the half-hour trek back to the Sheriff's Office only to find they had gotten busy the night before and had not had time to do background checks. Clearly disappointed given the drive and

my hectic schedule, the lady behind the desk sized me up and said, "Aw, hell. You look like an honest guy." She then signed the card and passed it to me.

I thanked her profusely. However, I then expressed my incredulity she would so flip-pantly grant me permission to carry a concealed weapon. Her response reflects the most profound wisdom I have ever heard from any government employee ranging from my local garbage man up to the President.

She asked me if I had ever been arrested and I said no. She asked if I had ever been frisked by the cops and I likewise answered in the negative. She then went on to explain I could have carried a concealed weapon from the first day of Kindergarten until the present and nobody ever would have known. She said the fact I was standing there meant I needed it. I have not ventured out in public without a firearm since then.

RUMINATIONS

Sixteen states including my own currently allow permit-less constitutional carry of a firearm. Of those 16, exactly none of them are embroiled in the kind of urban chaos and anarchy consuming places like Chicago, New York, Seattle and Portland. Something tells me there's a correlation there someplace. Methinks perhaps it's time to put the lady from the Alabama Sheriff's Office in charge.



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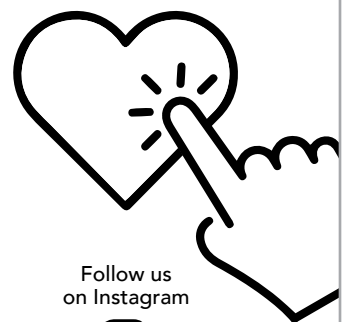
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HISTORICAL GUNS DUKE CHARTS HIS OWN COURSE

Along the way, I've received letters/emails from readers saying things like, "Why have you given up on cowboy guns?" Or, "What caused you to go to the dark side and buy full autos?" The answer is I'm not particularly focused on cowboy guns, or full autos or any other specific genre of firearms.

My focus is historical guns, especially American historical guns. Take my modest assortment of full autos. Does it contain any Uzis, ARs, H&Ks? Nay! What I invested my hard-earned gun'rter bucks in were World War II full autos such as a .45 Thompson, a German 9mm MP40, a Japanese Type 99 7.7mm and so forth. I do admit to fudging just a mite with my M2 .30 Carbine. It's more a Korean War weapon although for sure it was developed at the tail end of World War II.

A DRIVEN NATION

As for guns of the Old West, my strongest interest is in the Plains Indian Wars of the post-Civil War era. It was a fascinating time in American history, the collective energy of the nation directed westward. Railroads grew daily, cattle drives north from Texas began in earnest. Outlaw gangs such as the James/Younger bunch were rampant in the Midwest.

The post-Civil War decades were also a time of amazing progression in firearms development. When the immense conflagration ended in 1865 the vast majority of infantrymen on either side were armed with muzzleloading rifle-muskets. Cavalrymen mostly carried Sharps or Spencer breech-loading carbines; the first used paper cartridges but the latter actually

fired new-fangled metallic cartridges. Civil War horse soldiers were also armed with revolvers. Again they were front loaders, mostly made by Colt but with Remington being a major player too.

Fast forward 10 years. Muzzleloading military rifles and revolvers were considered archaic. The new firearms still relied on black powder for propellant but all shot metallic cartridges. Repeating rifles were common. The forend-less Henry .44 Rimfires actually appeared during the Civil War in modest numbers but by 1875, Winchester had put out thousands of their new Model 1873. Not only was it a repeater but it fired a .44 centerfire cartridge denoted on their barrels as .44 WCF (.44 Winchester Centerfire). Not only was it more powerful than the .44 Henry Rimfire but it was also reloadable.

The same was true in spades with revolvers. Front loaders were out. By 1875 Smith & Wesson was selling their top break No. 3 revolvers chambered for .44



A rainy day in March 2008 found Duke on the black sand beaches of Iwo Jima with Mount Suribachi looming in the background. Inset: Duke's interest in the Battle of The Little Bighorn not only led him to Montana but also caused him to buy and learn to shoot — accurately — this Model 1873 .45-70 "trapdoor" carbine.



American, .44 Russian and a newly introduced .45 S&W; today better known as .45 S&W "Schofield." Colt dragged their feet a mite because S&W owned a patent for bored-through chambers but with the new .45 Colt Single Action Army, they hit a 150-year home-run.

And let's not forget the big bore single shot "buffalo rifles." Without the Sharps Model 1874 and the Remington No. 1 firing huge .44, .45 and .50 caliber cartridges, slaughtering vast herds of plains bison would not have been possible. With the free roaming bison serving as the warring Indians' mobile grocery supply, settlement of the plains might not have been stopped entirely but it would certainly have been delayed significantly. Such ideas aren't considered PC today but it was back then.

HISTORY AT HIGH SPEED

Consider all this as evidence of rapid change during this historical period. In 1911 the U.S. Army adopted the much-beloved .45 Auto pistol. Fifty years prior the U.S. Army adopted the Model 1860



These six cartridges have all served as standard issue to the U.S. Army at one time or another. Duke has shooting and handloading experience with all. Left to right: the .50-70, .45-70, .30 Krag, .30-06, 7.62mm NATO and 5.56mm.

.44 cap and ball revolver. The most used rifle-musket in the Civil War was the .58 Model 1861 Springfield. Only 42 years later the U.S. Army adopted a .30 caliber bolt-action rifle still popular today among gun folks as the U.S. Model 1903 .30 Springfield. Compare this — the standard load for a Model 1861 rifle-musket was

a 450-grain pure lead Minie ball with a muzzle velocity of about 950 fps. The .30-06 military ball load fired a 150-grain bullet at 2,700 fps.

CIRCLING THE GLOBE FOR GUNS

Fort Phil Kearny in Wyoming, the Little Bighorn Battlefield in Montana, Adobe Walls in Texas, Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, Omaha Beach in Normandy, the town of Bastogne in Belgium and the island of Iwo Jima (now again a Japanese possession) — I've spent considerable treasure to visit those sites because of my desire to understand American history. Also long ago I set a goal to shoot as many as possible of the small arms American fighting men used in those battles. As things turned out, I've been able to also become familiar with a considerable assortment of the small arms turned against those men.

My writing interests don't bounce around. They follow the historical events I'm studying at the time. Of course, I've also written here and there about modern guns — editors must be kept happy too! 





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LEVERGUN LOADS: .38 W.C.F. .40 CAL CLASSIC STILL WORTHWHILE

Reloading the .38-40, more commonly known as the .38 WCF, is not quite the same as loading, say, the .44 Special or .45 Colt. Not difficult, just different. Since the .38 WCF is a bottleneck cartridge, carbide sizing dies are not available. This requires case lube before sizing and I use Hornady Spray Lube exclusively. It doesn't take much experimenting to find out just how much lube is required. I place

a layer of empty cartridges in a plastic box, spray, shake, spray, shake and spray again.

PROBLEMS

In the past, one of the problems was the fragile case mouth. Contact the die slightly off-center and the case is gone. This was especially true with older Remington and Winchester brass. Today, I buy only Starline brass which is the strongest available. This is

strong brass without the inherent weakness of earlier offerings and works extremely well in the RCBS Model 2000 Progressive Press. Another warning is offered for those who may try to reload once-fired .38-40 brass. For some reason, Winchester's factory loaded rounds have primers which seem crimped-in. If the primer pocket is not reamed before re-priming these cases, it's very easy to bend or break a priming punch.

Earlier bullet molds for the .38-40 drop bullets without crimping grooves. Newer molds today from both Lyman and RCBS do have crimping grooves. Jacketed bullets made for the .40 S&W or 10mm also do not have crimping grooves, however CMA offers custom bullets at reasonable prices with the crimping groove wherever it is desired. I just told them I wanted to use the bullets with the .38-40 and the groove was placed exactly where it needed to be.

When loading bullets without crimping grooves I find it necessary to do two things. After resizing and depriming, I use the Lee Universal Expanding Die to just kiss the mouth of the case enough to allow the bullet to enter. This provides the tightest case-mouth-to-bullet fit possible. Once the case has been primed and the proper powder charge placed, I then use the seating die to seat only and not crimp. Once I have a supply of loaded rounds properly seated, I then add the extra step of using the Lee Factory Crimp Die. This, along with the very slight expansion of the case mouth, goes a long way to prevent bullets from seating deeper into the case while traveling from the magazine tube, to the lifter and on to the chamber. It also prevents bullets from moving forward under recoil.

POWDER

There is a wide range of powders to choose from when reloading the .38-40. My most used powder is Alliant's Unique with the most used powder charge being 8.0 grains. This load, with a 180-grain Oregon trail RNFP, works quite well as an everyday load for .38-40 sixguns or leverguns and is also quite safe in Model 1873 replicas. Other powders used for 1873 level loads are Hodgdon's Trail Boss, TiteGroup and H4227; Winchester's 231; and Alliant's Red Dot and Bullseye. For heavier loads for use in the Winchester Model 1892, I go with Unique, #2400 and H4227. Model 1892s, both original and Miroku replicas, are



Bullets used for loading the .38-40 include Lyman #401452, MM Keith, Lyman #401043, Lyman #401088, Oregon Trail 180 and CMA 180.



This Miroku/USRAC Model 1892 (above) is an excellent shooting .38-40. Pleasure shooting loads at 30 yards (below) with a 100+ year old Marlin Model 1894 .38-40.



strong guns that can be used with heavier loads for hunting.

LOADS

Specially selected loads, both powerful and accurate enough for hunting deer-sized critters, are assembled with Aliant's #2400 and Hodgdon's IMR4227. These loads are only used in my Winchester Model 1892s. Hornady's 180 XTP clocks out at 1,761 over 19.5 grains of #2400 and puts three shots into 7/8" at 50 yards. Moving up to 20.5 and 21.5 grains of #2400 results in muzzle velocities just over 1,800 fps and 1,900 fps respectively. The latter load is still 10% under maximum loads listed in reliable sources. With this same bullet and 22.5 grains of #4227 muzzle velocity comes in at 1,600 fps with a group just over 1".

Another jacketed bullet I like is Speer's 180 GDHP. With 20.5 grains of #2400 the muzzle velocity is 1,825 fps and results in a group just under 1" while 23.5 grains of #4227 is just under 1,700 fps with a group just slightly over 1". CMA's 180 jacketed hollowpoint shoots exceptionally well with both



John uses RCBS dies (above) for reloading the .38-40. John uses the Lee Factory Crimp Die and the Lee Universal Expanding Die (below) when loading jacketed bullets for use in the .38-40 levergun.



#2400 and Unique. Using 20.0 of #2400 gives a muzzle velocity of 1,765 with a three-shot group at 45 yards of just over 1" while 10.0 grains of Unique gives a very pleasant shooting 1,430 fps and a group well under 1".

Milder shooting loads are assembled with cast bullets, with most of my loads being assembled with Oregon Trail's 180-grain RNFP. My standard 8.0 grains of Unique gives a very pleasant shooting 1,233 fps while placing three shots in a very tight 1/2" at 45 yards; 6.0 grains of Red Dot is right at 1,200 fps with three shots just under 1"; a milder shooting load, also under 1", is 6.0 grains of Trail Boss at just under 1,000 fps.

Currently, Cimarron offers both the Model 1866 and Model 1873 replica Winchesters in .38-40 but this caliber is not cataloged in the current list of Winchester/Miroku leverguns. I found my original .38-40 Winchester 1892 at a gun show in the closing days of the last century and my late good friend and talented gunsmith Keith DeHart was able to put it back in first-class shooting shape.

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BABY MY SCOPE?

MOST DAMAGE OCCURS AWAY FROM THE FIELD!

It's vacuum-sealed and built to brook recoil from loads capable of flooring elephants. So what's to baby?

A rifle sank when a canoe swamped in 9 feet of water. Dug from the gravel bottom some weeks on, the action was welded shut by sand and rust but the scope hadn't fogged.

An Alaskan hunter saw his horse tumble 400 yards down a rock-slide. As the rifle slipped its scabbard and clattered on the basalt, Dobbin bounced on it several times. Horse and rifle emerged bruised, but the scope held its zero.

These accounts came from Leupold customers but other scopes also endure hardship. A Kahles I inspected had weathered years in the Alps after a hunter lost the rifle. Optically, it seemed good as new!

Modern scopes are so tough, you'll work hard to wound them afield. The biggest threats to their health precede opening day.

No scope is impervious to screwdrivers, solvents and slipshod handling.

CHEMICAL WARFARE

Except in very wet conditions, I seldom use lens covers on hunts. But they're useful at the bench, to prevent a screwdriver or other hard object from accidental contact with glass. Also, an emerging bore brush releases solvent spray that can attack exposed lens coatings.

MOUNTING MISHAPS

Joining rifle and scope imposes hazards. Most rifles are drilled and tapped for 6-48 screws, "6" denoting shank size (albeit, like #6 shot, not the measure of diameter). The "48" means there are 48 threads per inch (tpi). The higher the tpi number, the stronger the screw.

I'm told 6-48s hailed from Winchester for sight and scope mounting. In a perfect world 6-48s would withstand the stiffest



This shooter wisely covers his scope at the cleaning bench to protect lenses from solvent spray.

recoil — but surface irregularities exist. Mounts don't all hug receivers like skin on a peach. Imperfect matches in contour reduce contact whose friction helps screws bear shock.

Drills and taps must allow for



Work environment: Blast and recoil from a Barrett .50, a continual bath of dust and powder residue test optics. However, most scope damage occurs elsewhere!

dimensional variation in screws. Hole depth is another issue. As a 6-48 screw is 0.130" in diameter; a hole just 0.130" deep gives it maximum resistance to failure. But the bridge on one of my rifles is 0.090" thick — 0.040" shy of this depth. A similar shortcoming exists where bases with countersunk holes leave wafer-thin webs under the screw heads. If head and shank are smaller than base holes for them, the underside of the head and a sliver of base must stand alone against the slam of recoil.

Growing use by manufacturers of 8-40 screws helps mount bases stay put and reduces the jarring effect on the scope of even slight shifts during recoil. Keen to replace 6-48s with 8-40s? Engage a careful gunsmith — more than one weekend tinkerer drilled the mount base through to the chamber. Upon firing, the cartridge case ruptured, launching the screw and it punched a neat hole in the scope tube.

Shooters commonly over-tighten screws — use a torque wrench! Gunsmith catalogs have affordable, firearms-specific torque wrenches. They help you snug screws uniformly and brake your zeal before you strip threads, disfigure the screw head or lose control of the bit, scarring mount or rifle.

How much torque? Depends on the screw and what is absorbing the pressure. Bases of scope mounts should be tighter to the receiver than rings around the scope tube.

Cinching base to rifle, I bring 6-48 screws to 25 inch/pounds — more than advised by Leupold and Badger but in line with recommendations by Nightforce and Warne. Leupold suggests snugging 8-40s to 28 inch/pounds, or 20% tighter than 6-48s.

Torque recommendations for ring-to-base attachment vary from 14 to 65 inch/pounds depending on mount design. Ring diameter can make a difference too. Weaver advises 30 inch/pounds for crossbolts attaching 1" rings, but hikes the number for 30mm rings and again for 34mm. Talley recommends 30 inch/pounds for the bottom screw gripping the base of its vertically split rings, 20 for the top. For 10-32 screws in QD mounts, the numbers are 35 at bottom, 20 at top. According to one source, the crossbolt nut cinching rings to Picatinny rails merit 65 inch/pounds.

Joining the halves of horizontally split rings, you needn't exceed 20 inch/pounds.



Use hard, hollow-ground bits to protect screw heads. A torque wrench and screwdriver set give you mar-free scope mounting and a secure optic.



Turn dovetail rings in with a 1" dowel — not the scope — lest you bend it or damage it internally.



Torx wrenches are kind to screws. Use the short end for leverage on rings. No more torque needed.



Leave at least 1/8" between rings and scope tube flares and junctures. Snug screws alternately.

In fact, Vortex sends a note with its competition scopes, warning shooters not to exceed 18. Leupold and Badger advise 15 to 18. Snug these as you would lug nuts on a truck wheel: alternately, diagonally and, as you approach "tight enough," incrementally.

PREHISTORY CHEMISTRY

In the early Pleistocene, shooters applied iodine to keep screws from backing out — it rusted them in place! Loctite Threadlocker is a more civilized option and Henkel Corp, which makes this anaerobic adhesive, now has several kinds. "Red" is still the stoutest option; screws stay put until you heat them with a torch. Medium-strength "Blue" allows screw removal without heating. "Purple" (Loctite 222) has endeared itself to shooters who view it as a useful hybrid of "Red" and "Blue." It shouldn't require heat to disengage. All these Loctite products cure within 24 hours.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Snugging base and ring screws, use a hard, hollow-ground bit that fits the slot or recess exactly. I favor magnetic switchable bits in screwdriver sets from Brownells and Real Avid. You'll leave the screw looking new and protect surrounding metal.

Turning a dovetail front ring into position, use a section of 1" dowel, not the scope! The tube wasn't designed to withstand force applied at right angles to its axis.

Slips of thin, oiled paper under Weaver Tip-Off rings, hooked on one side, protect the tube as you snap the rings over it. Tightening the twin screws on the other side can spin the scope slightly so I rotate it a tad to the hook side — before picking up a screwdriver — to compensate.

Leave rings loose until you've "squared up" the reticle and double-checked eye relief.

Keep rings at least 1/8" from the tube's turret and bell junctures, to avoid over-stressing them or pressuring lenses.

While windage and elevation knobs are finger-friendly, vintage dials are slotted for coins or bits. When you head for the range, bring a tool to fit the dial snugly. Turret caps should be only finger-tight.

Scopes aren't handles. Lift and carry rifles accordingly.

On second thought, you needn't baby a scope. Intelligent treatment will do. 

M1891 CARCANO RIFLE

STILL WORTHY OF RESPECT

Frank Jardim

Like cats, people seem to dislike Carcanos for no good reason. Unfortunately, the weapon's main claim to fame among Americans is forever tied to an M38 found on the sixth floor of a Dallas school book warehouse on November 22, 1963. As if such ignominy wasn't enough, during America's golden age of military surplus bolt actions in the 1950s and 1960s, it was frequently the butt of jokes going something like this: "Italian Carcano Rifles For Sale: Excellent shape, barely fired, dropped once."

Compared to the Germans and Japanese, Italy's military performance in WWII perhaps warranted the zinger but the Carcano never deserved the reputation it had by the 1970s of being weak, unsafe and badly designed.

This was about the time I got really interested in military guns and if you mentioned you were looking at a Carcano, some gun wag would claim anybody foolhardy enough to shoot one was asking for a bolt in the cranium. For me, such criticism never passed the common sense test. It was, in fact, completely false.

The Italians made most of their Carcanos, over two and a half million, between 1893 and the end of World War I and used them for over half a century with no significant changes aside from sights, stocks and barrel length. Does this sound like a bad gun? I'd like to set the record straight and elevate the Carcano back up to its rightful place among its first generation, small-bore, smokeless powder peers — the French 1886 Lebel, the German Gewehr Model 1888, the Russian Mosin Nagant M1891, the Danish Krag-Jorgensen and the Austro-Hungarian M1895 Mannlicher.

HISTORY

In response to France's revolutionary 1886 Lebel rifle, Italy created a new smokeless, small bore, 6.5 x 52 mm rimless cartridge and rifle to shoot it. While the United States, France, England, Germany and Austrian Hungary were going with

various .30 caliber projectiles, the Italians opted to go small with a long, skinny, round-nosed 162-grain 0.268" bullet traveling around 2,300 feet-per-second. They were the first nation to do so and were ahead of their time in recognizing the military advantages of sub-.30 caliber projectiles — flatter trajectory, less recoil, less weight for the soldier to carry and from a strategic standpoint, smaller ammunition required less material to manufacture.

Their new rifle was the Modello 1891 (M91). Weapons engineer Salvatore Carcano was largely responsible for its design which was well suited to Italy's industrial capabilities. Italy was a world power, but the weakness of its economy put it substantially behind its European neighbors in the where-withal to produce, much less pay for, new armaments. When viewed through this lens, the simplicity — and one might even say relative crudeness — of the Carcano put it within Italy's reach. While it lacked the mechanical refinement and precision of other designs, it did the job. Unlike Japanese Arisakas or German Mausers, there are no "last-ditch" Carcanos. The Italian design was minimalist right at the start which — to me — demonstrates practical brilliance at the strategic level.

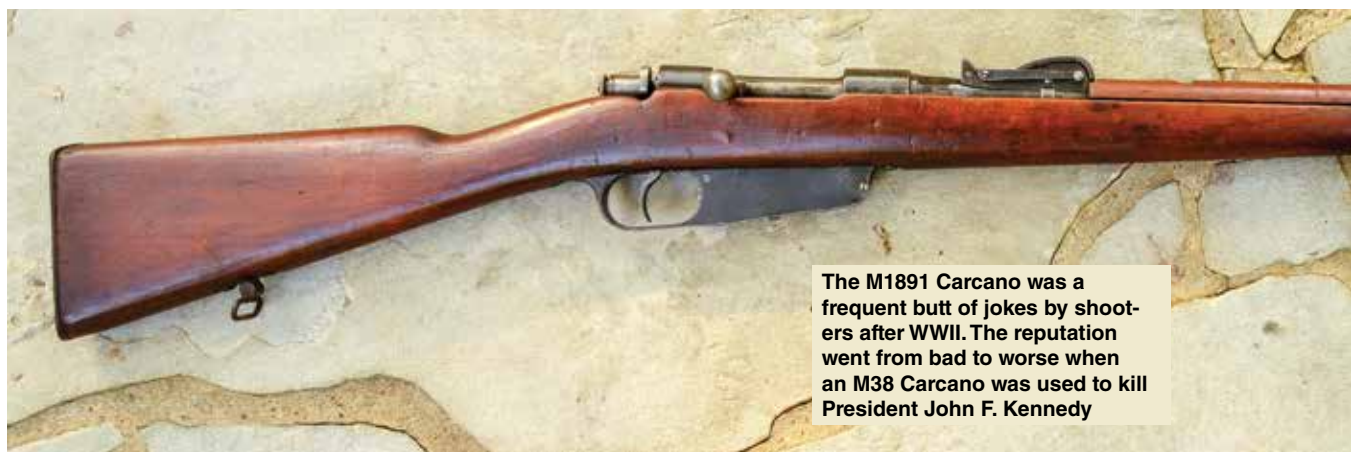


The 6-round Mannlicher clip made from brass or soft steel. They were easier to load than stripper clips and gave the Italians a slight ammo superiority, but also rendered the rifle a single shot if no clips were available.

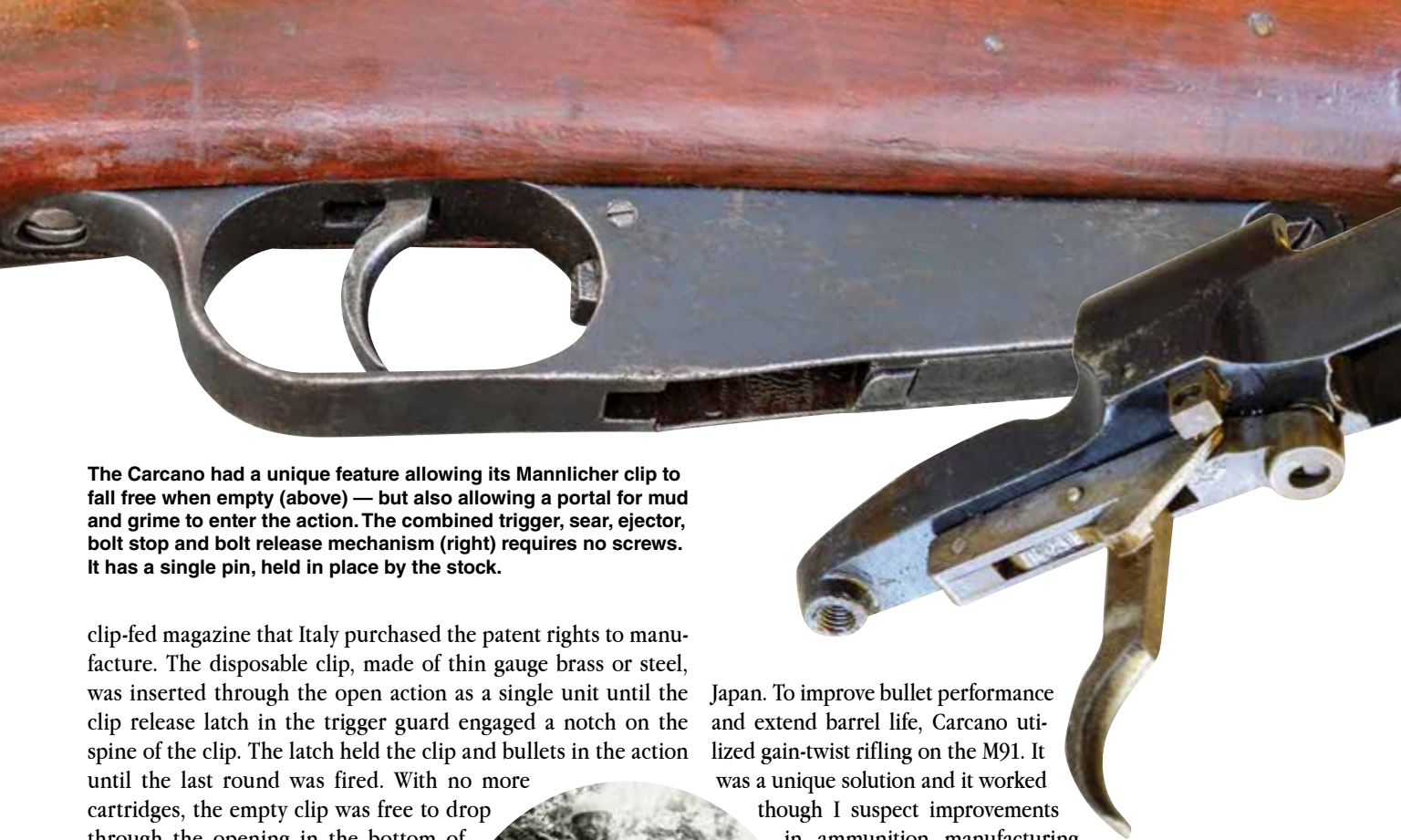
MINIMALIST MAXIM

The Carcano's design simplicity is immediately apparent in its combined trigger, sear, ejector, bolt stop and bolt release mechanism. With no screws, it is held in place by a single pin you can usually pull out with your thumbnail. When the action is in the stock, the wood keeps it from falling out. In addition, every Carcano I ever examined had a lot of play in parts fit but they worked fine. As loose tolerances are easier and cheaper to maintain in production than tight tolerances, nothing is gained by keeping tight tolerances where they aren't needed — a lesson the Germans never fully learned.

The Carcano was also easier to load than a stripper-clip-charged gun thanks to its modified Steyr-Mannlicher



The M1891 Carcano was a frequent butt of jokes by shooters after WWII. The reputation went from bad to worse when an M38 Carcano was used to kill President John F. Kennedy



The Carcano had a unique feature allowing its Mannlicher clip to fall free when empty (above) — but also allowing a portal for mud and grime to enter the action. The combined trigger, sear, ejector, bolt stop and bolt release mechanism (right) requires no screws. It has a single pin, held in place by the stock.

clip-fed magazine that Italy purchased the patent rights to manufacture. The disposable clip, made of thin gauge brass or steel, was inserted through the open action as a single unit until the clip release latch in the trigger guard engaged a notch on the spine of the clip. The latch held the clip and bullets in the action until the last round was fired. With no more cartridges, the empty clip was free to drop through the opening in the bottom of the magazine. The Italians modified the clip design so it could be loaded regardless of orientation, as long as the bullet's pointy end was toward the enemy.

Loading a Carcano was idiot-proof, a desirable characteristic for a military weapon. Better still, Italian clips held six rounds instead of the typical five, giving their soldiers a slight edge in firepower. The downside of this system was the open bottom of the magazine allowed mud and sand to infiltrate the action and, without clips, the rifle became a single shot.



WWI Italian troops in a trench armed with the then-new M1891 Carcano. It was one of the first sub-.30 caliber main battle rounds.

IN THE FIELD

Though Italy's 6.5 x 52 mm cartridge had some growing pains, it became a model for the other military 6.5 mm cartridges later adopted by Sweden, Portugal, Greece, Romania, Holland and



Japan. To improve bullet performance and extend barrel life, Carcano utilized gain-twist rifling on the M91. It was a unique solution and it worked though I suspect improvements in ammunition manufacturing eventually made its value moot.

In combat, the rifle and cartridge performed adequately except in areas where heavier bullets excelled. I had the pleasure to know a Brooklyn gentleman by the name of Vincenzo Vella who fought in the Italian Army in World War II. He was an infantry sergeant among the 10 divisions sent by Mussolini to fight with the Germans on the Eastern Front. He was wounded and evacuated just in time to miss the spectacular axis disaster at Stalingrad. Vella had no complaints about the Carcano, finding it comparable in weight to the German Kar98 and Russian Mosin Nagant 91/30, but faster to shoot and reload than either, along with six shots to their five. The Carcano action was not as smooth as a Mauser, but better than the Mosin Nagant.

TODAY

Original Carcanos in good shape and in their original chambering are pleasant and safe to shoot but stick to modern commercial ammunition. Don't mess with any military surplus ammo. Prvi Partizan of Serbia makes cases and 0.267" jacketed bullets for handloading as well as finished ammo. It's all available through Graf and Sons (Graf.com). Reduced power, gas-checked cast bullet loads are domestically produced by Steinel Ammunition (SteinelAmmo.com) but cost a little more.

Be aware some Carcanos were even rechambered in 8x57 mm Mauser by the Germans in World War II. They seem to have fared well despite the higher pressure cartridge, but again, I would never shoot any military surplus ammo through these guns. For example, the Germans made many types of 8x57 mm during the war, some of which were NEVER intended for rifles. Stick with the original Italian 6.5mm (or 7.35mm) chamberings and modern factory ammo, or downloaded handloads for the sake of safety. Remember the newest Carcano is 76 years old!

THE IDF MEKUT

The raw material — The U.S. gave Israel thousands of Vietnam-era M16A1 rifles in the 1970s. The Mekut'zar is a locally crafted derivative.



The IDF Mekut'zar Carbine is a unique hybrid rifle made from American M16A1 rifles.



'ZAR CARBINE

GUNS FOR THE FOLKS WHO REALLY RUN GUNS

Will Dabbs, MD

Israel is a beleaguered nation forever at war. Her sundry neighbors invaded a mere 24 hours after she declared independence in 1948 and the Israelis have been fighting pretty much ever since. The only functional democracy in the Middle East, Israel also sports a gun culture like no other.

Actually, it's not terribly easy to carry a gun in Israel. A permit is required and you have to show need. However, showing need is a fairly forgiving standard. Front desk staff at museums you visit are all armed as is the concierge at your hotel. Teachers frequently pack heat on field trips and tour guides are authorized weapons as well. What seemed really weird when I was there, however, was the remarkable prevalence of assault rifles amidst civilized Israeli culture.



When Will toured Israel several years ago, the stubby little Mekut'zar rifles were everywhere. He even got to shoot one himself!



All of the weapons Will encountered in public in Israel featured orange chamber flags (above) secured with dummy cords.

Israel mandates universal conscription and Israelis enjoy a healthy Mediterranean diet, so almost all adults are military veterans trained in the use of firearms. As terrorism is an omnipresent threat, the Israelis embrace the concept of an armed society. Soldiers home on leave typically keep their service rifles close when out in public. It is not unusual to be standing in line at McDonald's behind some young stud with a full auto assault rifle on one arm and his hot date on the other.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) used a wide variety of weapons in the past. It is currently transitioning over to the Tavor X95 bullpup. However, there is one particular weapon unique to Israel that still sees widespread use.

THE DIY ASSAULT RIFLE

Since Operation Nickel Grass during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the United States has provided tens of thousands of M16A1 rifles to the IDF. Over time the Israelis realized these full-sized



rifles were not the ideal solution for a nation of riflemen forever packing their weapons. For citizens trying to manage public transit, commerce, restaurants and the like, the 39.5" weapon grew cumbersome. Ever the pragmatists, the IDF bodged together a solution — the *Mekut'zrar*.

Mekut'zar is IDF slang for the CAR15 rifle. Add an extra "r" and Mekut'zrar literally translates to "sawed-off" or "shorty." These unique rifles began life as full-size American M16A1s.

To undertake the conversion IDF armorers replaced the solid stocks with collapsible versions. The 20" M16A1 barrel was pruned back to just behind the gas port, while a new gas port was drilled to accommodate a carbine-length gas system as the front sight base was pinned in place. The barrel was also threaded for a standard M16A1 birdcage flash suppressor and the resulting tube was just shy of 13" overall.

These carbines usually retain the standard M16A1 upper receivers and include round polymer handguards. Optics typically mount directly to the carrying handle. The end result is a remarkably lightweight and easily portable rifle.

BALLISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Down here in the American Deep South where I live, a substantial percentage of the general population is armed all the time. In every crowd in every restaurant, at little league ball games or in department stores somebody will be packing a concealed handgun. An entire thriving industry supports the practice. The hallowed tome you are currently clutching stands in mute testament to this fact. Now imagine the same situation but those armed citizens are packing assault rifles rather than concealed handguns. There you have Israel in a nutshell.

The guns these guys carry are not necessarily designed to most efficiently clear buildings or win three-gun matches. They are intended primarily to be comfortable. Like our concealed carry handguns, the weapons represent a compromise between portability and tactical efficacy.

Most of the rifles I saw in public in Israel eschewed lights, lasers, or similar cumbersome rail-mounted accessories. Many to most sported a basic optical sight but otherwise remain fairly austere. Most of the sights were either Israeli Meprolight units or Trijicon ACOGs.

All of the weapons I encountered in public in Israel included a loaded magazine underneath an empty chamber. The chamber was closed on a prominent orange empty chamber indicator secured to the weapon with a dummy cord. Occasionally there might be a weapon with two magazines clamped together, but this was the exception. Should they be called upon to use their weapons Israelis expect the engagement to be violent, chaotic and brief.

ACCESSORIZING

There is an entire array of unique and eminently practical accessories IDF troops use to customize their rifles. Many rifles



This elastic band thingy around the handguard softens the grip and ameliorates rattling. The Meprolight M21 reflex sight doesn't need batteries while Meprolight tritium sights provide nighttime capability as well.



Short and lightweight, the IDF Mekut'zar carbine (left) is better rigged for combat than the old U.S. M16s and much easier to tote all day. A loaded magazine (below) is secured to the rifle via this nifty elastic rig from Zahal.org.



in the same unit sported unique stocks, foregrips and pistol grips clearly reflecting the individual users' tastes. Most of this furniture was from FAB-Defense, an Israeli concern.

Slings were wide and even included a little pouch for ear-plugs. They were often padded for extended comfortable carry. Many sported unique unit insignia or cool-guy stuff like the Punisher emblem. Slings attached to the front and rear of the weapons via steel hooks and nylon loops or 550 cord.

Most rifles I encountered had green or black elastic bands wrapped around the forearms. These sleeves soften the handguards a bit and prevent rattling. They also look really cool.

Magazines include their own elastic bands connecting to the weapon via a dummy cord. Israelis really embrace dummy cords. Frequently you could tell somebody in public was carrying a concealed pistol by the little loop of curly cord drooping out from underneath an untucked shirt. Every component of a rifle that might potentially be lost was secondarily secured via a short length of nylon cord.

BUILDING MY OWN MEKUT'ZAR

My IDF clone began life as a Troy Industries XM177E2. This provided period authentic features for both the upper and lower receivers as well as plausible receiver markings. Troy receivers even have the auto sear pin etched in place to complete the charade. The buttstock is of the early rubber-coated aluminum style found on Vietnam-era CAR15 rifles.

The new thin-profile barrel was pruned back to 14.7" and the flash suppressor is pinned permanently in place to obtain the legal-minimum 16". The lower receiver could be registered as a short-barreled rifle and a realistic 13" tube crafted. However, to me the extra 3" was not worth \$200 and the interminable wait for the forms to come back.

The sight is an Israeli Meprolight M21 reflex sight powered by fiber optics and an internal tritium lamp. The standard sights have been replaced by Meprolight tritium night sights. Once

nicely accessorized with gear from Zahal.org, my rifle becomes a proper legal facsimile of the Israeli Mekut'zar.

PRACTICAL TACTICAL

The overall package is less than 7 lbs. and remarkably compact. With the wide padded sling in place, the rifle is comfortable to carry on protracted walks around my rural farm. However, should it ever be actually called upon for real, this lightweight stripped-down rifle is both an efficient and effective combat tool. Two or three guys armed with such weapons would be a formidable force in the face of urban terrorist activity. While terrorism is a perennial part of the Israeli experience, it seldom lasts very long.

We Americans are bad about hanging superfluous stuff onto the railed handguards of our tactical weapons. If there was a rail-mounted espresso machine, somebody would buy it. However, we could learn a thing or three from our Israeli pals about the practicality of carrying and using a long gun for real. When it's something you'll actually have to hump through a long day of work or recreation, sometimes "thin is in" and *less* really is better.



Zahal.org



ROY HUNTINGTON
PHOTOS: ROB JONES
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

Ruger has made “well over” 7 million 10/22s of all sorts since their introduction in 1964. Each one is roughly 32” long, depending on the model. Laid end-to-end, they’d stretch some 4,500-plus miles — very definitely on the plus side of that number. You could drive for two-and-a-half days — non-stop — at 70 mph and still barely be able to go from one end to the other. That’s a whole lotta’ 10/22s.

The Marlin Model 60 .22 beats it in sheer numbers (something akin to 9 million or so), but when you look around you sure don’t see any mods or after-market parts for the Model 60.

The lesson? Ruger built an entire industry around the 10/22 by accident. Because the barrel is easily removed and the entire design user-friendly to work on, legions love to customize them. Look at the Brownells’ catalog and you’ll see AR parts, 1911 parts — and 10/22 parts. Over the decades Ruger didn’t let a little bit of design excellence slip by them either. They’ve introduced the original Carbine, Competition, Compact, Sporters, Tactical, Target and the amazing Take Down models. There are also iterations of the “Charger” pistols and even countless special editions and special “Collector’s Series” like our test rifle. I’ve likely missed some too.

I’ve owned 10/22s of all sorts since the late 1960s. Each has been as reliable as a rock, affordable to buy, easy to maintain — if you choose to maintain it — and accurate enough to tally mountain-sized piles of plinked targets, dancing cans, weekend competitions, tasty rabbits and just plain fun. If you said “American as apple pie” and substituted “10/22” for pie you wouldn’t be far off the mark.

But how’d all this actually happen?

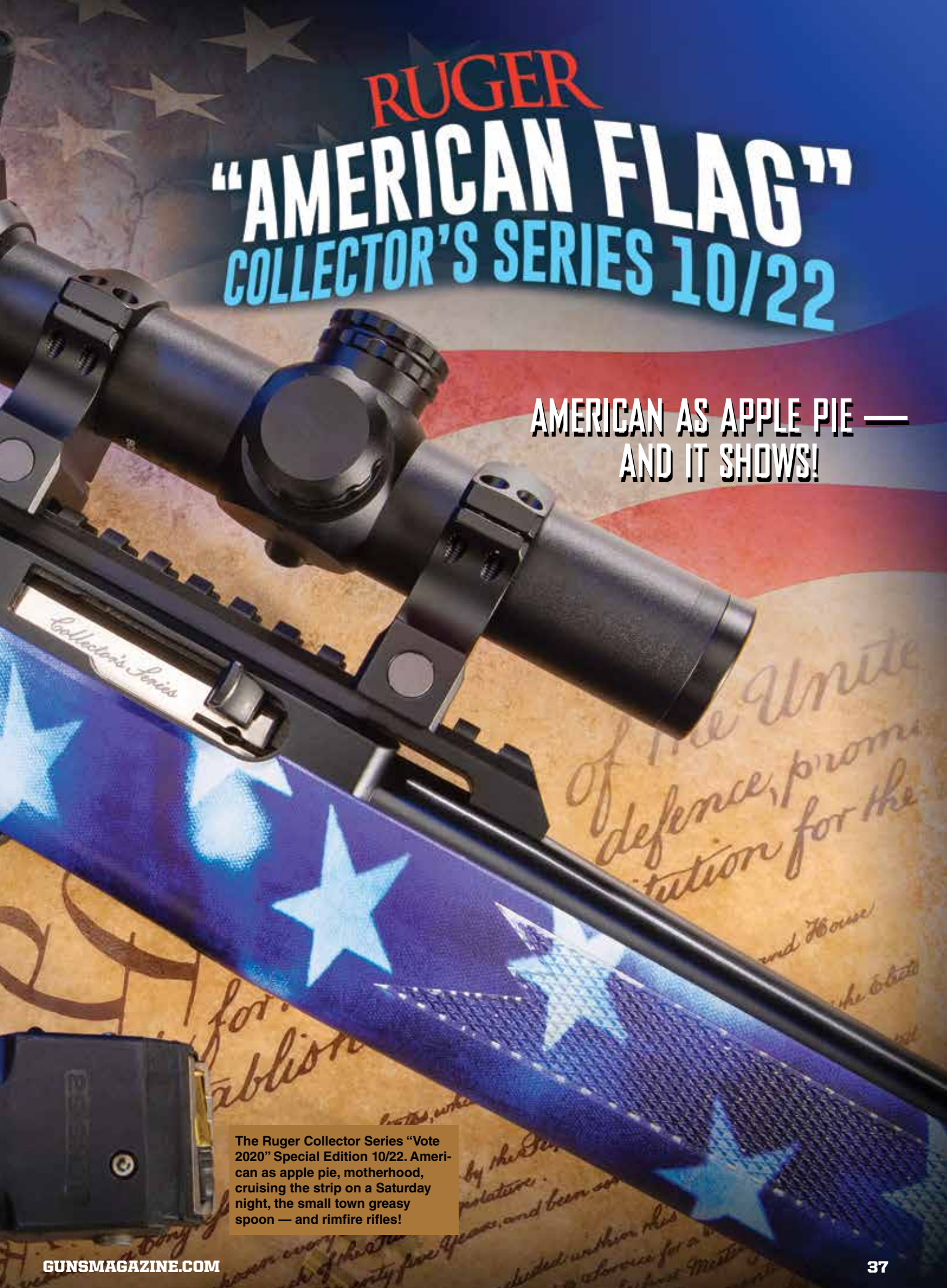
BILL THE INVENTOR

In 1963 Bill Ruger figured a lightweight “carbine” in .22 LR would sell. Being Bill Ruger, he was right. His success with his Standard Auto in .22 established the company and Bill was branching out constantly.

A bit of history is in order here. Fortunately, my old friend Walt Kuleck, was kind enough to give me his book, *The Ruger 10/22 Complete Owner’s and Assembly Guide* (Scott-Duff.com) a few years ago. Walt’s book on various guns are always a fun read and besides the nuts and bolts, he always gets into the history — much of which can be surprising.

RUGER "AMERICAN FLAG" COLLECTOR'S SERIES 10/22

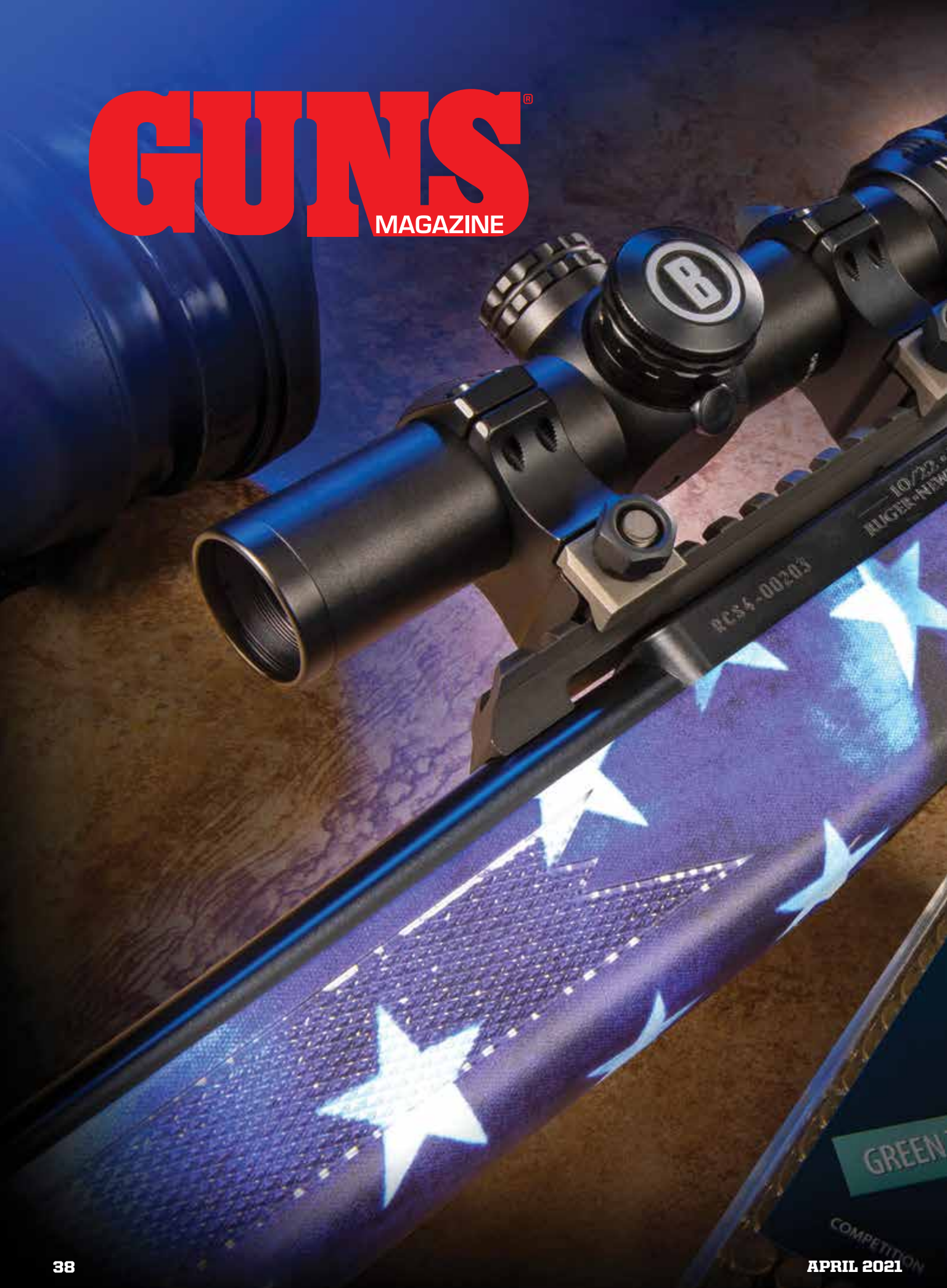
AMERICAN AS APPLE PIE —
AND IT SHOWS!



The Ruger Collector Series "Vote 2020" Special Edition 10/22. American as apple pie, motherhood, cruising the strip on a Saturday night, the small town greasy spoon — and rimfire rifles!

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RUGER
"AMERICAN FLAG"
COLLECTOR'S SERIES 10/22



AS IT WAS IN THIS CASE

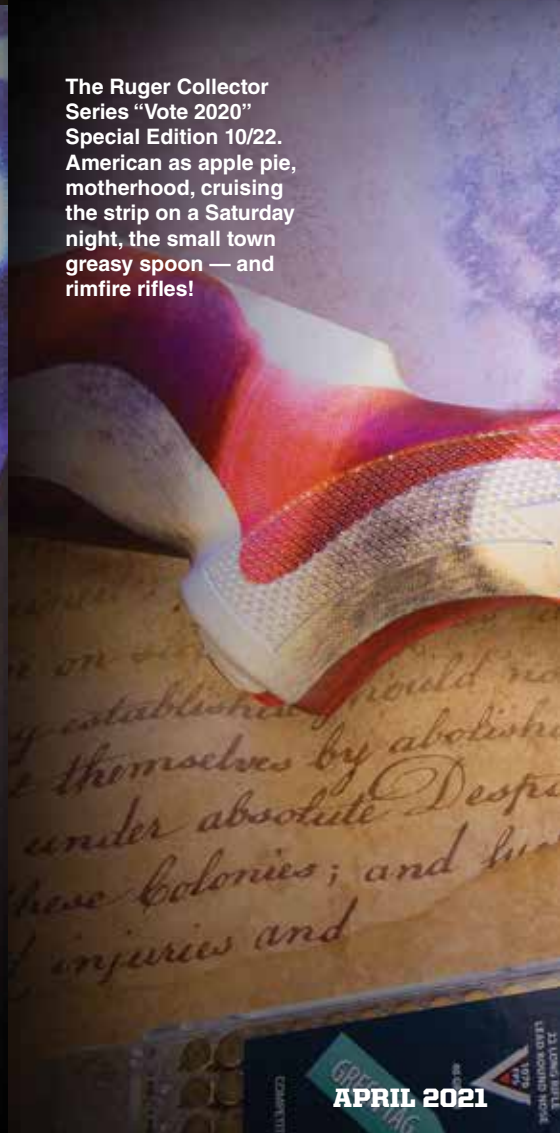
In WWII, Mr. Ruger spent time at Auto Ordnance designing a gun — Bill was a brilliant designer, in the same category as “His Browningness,” John Moses. Interestingly enough, Auto Ordnance made M1 Carbine receivers for IBM for the war effort. Hold that thought.

As the .22 Carbine project came together for Bill, I think it’s obvious he called on his experiences with the .30 Carbine for some design ideas. When you first lay eyes on a 10/22 it’s easy to see the .30 Carbine lines hiding in plain sight. Indeed, there are conversion kits today turning a 10/22 into a convincing “GI” Carbine, good enough to need to take two or three more looks just to make sure it’s not.

Ruger’s ground-breaking “.44 Magnum Carbine” was introduced in 1961. Called the “Deerstalker” the stock is a dead-ringer for the later 10/22 stock. Indeed, it looks the same because it is the same — exactly. Except for inletting to accommodate the different actions, the stock is identical.

The attractively-etched bolt of the Flag-motif 10/22 (above) notes it is part of the Collector’s Series. This Collector Series 10/22 comes equipped with a receiver Picatinny rail for mounting your favorite scope or red dot optic. Roy also likes the integral accuracy-enhancing adjustable ghost ring sight.

The Ruger Collector Series “Vote 2020” Special Edition 10/22. American as apple pie, motherhood, cruising the strip on a Saturday night, the small town greasy spoon — and rimfire rifles!



Now for another bit of interesting history — the stock was made by the S.E. Overton company. Guess what they made in WWII? Yup — .30 Carbine stocks. Bill was an original thinker but he was also sly enough to take advantage of existing technology.

This also explains why I've always felt the 10/22's original style wooden stock was always a bit too thick through the grip area — just like a .30 Carbine's stock.

A TIDBIT OR TWO MORE

According to Walt's book, Ruger also experimented with a couple of pretty darn innovative calibers for the .44 platform. Both based on the .45-70 case, one would have a .357 bullet and one a .40. Two guns were built, but alas, Ruger couldn't get any ammo makers to buy into it. It's definitely in the "What could have been" category and I'm calling out Ruger to look into it again! Please.

Ruger designed lever action versions of the 10/22 in the 1990s but they sort of came and went. They also made the "10/22 Magnum" from 1998 to about 2006 but discontinued it.

I had heard it was a tough cartridge to contain in the action, at least it was the gossip at the time, but I also confess I'm surprised it wasn't sorted out and brought back.

Few people also know the Israelis also used suppressed wooden-stocked 10/22s with modest scopes on them for "less lethal" riot control. Tired of being rock targets — and with rubber bullets not as effective as they sometimes wished — they fielded these 10/22s to selectively hit legs and extremities of key riot leaders. As someone said, "You pretty much lose all interest in throwing rocks when you're dealing with a 40-grain .22 LR in your throwing arm!" Israel has since changed the platform, modernizing it — and has also mandated it can only be used in cases where lethal force is called for. I thought the original concept was a pretty good idea — and might have come in handy during 2020. Just sayin'.

TODAY'S GENERATION

Ford brought us the Mustang in 1964, the same year the 10/22 was introduced, and I'm guessing both caused the same sort of stir — the Mustang among the young-at-heart car enthusiasts and the 10/22 among the shooting fraternity. It exploded across the gun press and soon Ruger was churning them out. Priced at \$54 initially, today's basic 10/22 is in the \$300 range. Interestingly enough,



The 10/22 is famous for its rotary magazine. The standard 10-rounder stays flush to the bottom but there is a whole universe of after-market magazines holding up to 70 rounds of .22 LR.

the \$54 original price translates into about \$450 today so while it sounds "cheap" today, it wasn't. In this case you got a high-quality, well-designed .22 semi-auto — for what might have been close to a month's wage in '64.

The original 10-shot rotary mag is still used, with just a touch of design changes. There's still no bolt-lock back on the final shot and it's still a simple blow-back action. Our test gun, while treated with an eye-catching flag theme, seems to essentially be a standard .22 Carbine with synthetic stock. But Ruger has tossed in some very practical and fun accessories.

The sights have been upgraded to an adjustable ghost ring rear mounted integrally into a Picatinny-type rail, coming pre-installed. The front is a "winged" protected blade (think .30 Carbine again folks), and the muzzle is threaded for what Ruger whimsically calls a "muzzle accessory."



TEST GUN TOUCHES

The box has a metal sign — also themed red, white and blue — saying “Ruger Vote 2020” which we all hope you did. The barrel is 18.5” and is of the new hammer-forged type, done in-house by Ruger. Rifling is 1:16” (RH) and the barrel finish is a nice satin black but I’ll be honest and say I can’t tell if it’s blued or some sort of baked or other magic finish. It’s handsome nonetheless.

Other controls are standard 10/22, with a cross-bolt push-button safety and mag release lever. You can lock the bolt back by pressing the bolt lock lever under the action, releasing it the same way. The trigger housing is glass-filled polymer and while not the old-school aluminum, it’s evidently more stable and rugged. Such is life today, eh?

My trigger pull gauge showed right at a 4-lb., 10-oz. average over 10 pulls, which is a tad lighter than the “5 to 6 lbs.” commonly cited. But alas, in typical 10/22 fashion it’s gritty and creepy. But fortunately there’s a slew of after-market drop-in kits, parts and shops all able to give you a crisp, match-grade trigger. And like all things, the more you pay the better it gets. One drop-in “chassis” kit I have from Powder River Precision delivers a crisp 2-lb. pull feeling like a well-tuned 1911 match trigger. It’s worth it, trust me, changing the entire shooting experience.

Otherwise the sample rifle didn’t deliver any surprises, other than the fact the combination of the sights and installed rail made it very easy to scope it or just shoot it with irons. I’ve always found the standard flip-up Ruger open rear and blade front to be crude at best and will never allow most of us to shoot up to the rifle’s ability.



The rifle features a threaded muzzle for your favorite accessory, plus a protected blade front sight clearly channeling the venerable .30 Cal. Carbine.

The trigger, like most 10/22s, is adequate but there are numerous after-market upgrades available such as drop-in units from Powder River Precision.

An advertisement for MTM Case-Gard ammo boxes. The top half shows a workshop scene with a laptop, a printer, and a reloading press. The bottom half shows several MTM Case-Gard ammo boxes in green, blue, and red, some open to show internal compartments filled with ammunition. A large blue box is labeled "#P200". A black box with white text says "NEW FOR 2021 200 ROUND AMMO BOXES". The MTM Case-Gard logo is in the bottom left, and "MADE IN THE USA" with an American flag is in the bottom right.

FROM 17 HMR TO 50 BMG
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200 ROUND
AMMO BOXES**

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QUALITY SHOOTING SPORTS ACCESSORIES

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**“I’VE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO THIS ENTHUSIASTICALLY AMERICAN FLAG RIFLE
LEANING AGAINST MY DESK THIS PAST MONTH OR SO AND FIND I JUST
CAN’T LET IT GO BACK TO RUGER. SAY HELLO TO MY NEW LITTLE FRIEND!”**

SHOOTING

The test rifle seemed to have a bit of an edge on most of the stock 10/22s I’ve shot on targets. Most will deliver in the 1.5" to 2.5" range at 50 yards, with 3" (or even a bit bigger) fairly common if you’re using the stock open sights. The ghost ring rear and bold front on the Flag rifle helped me to get 1.5" to 1.75" groups depending on the load. I found good old CCI Mini-Mag HP ammo (as opposed to the round nosed) paired up neatly and gave group after group in that 1.25" to 1.5" range at 50 yards. I swear this was ammo was made for Ruger’s 10/22 carbines specifically!

I scoped the Flag rifle with one of Skinner Sights’ new very affordable hunting scopes. For around \$279 you get the 1x6 scope (with 30mm tube) and mounts, with a rail to fit many rifles. I merely unlocked the quick lock mounts and moved it to the rail on the Flag rifle from another rifle. Presto, about two minutes and the scope was on. After zeroing, I re-shot it at 50 yards.

Presto ... suddenly I saw some 1" groups and even a couple a tad smaller. But I was also reminded of how a good rear aperture can shoot close to a scope at the 50 to 100 yard range. Out of curiosity, I fired 50 .22 CCI Mini-Mags at one target at 50 yards and

ended up with a total group of 1.4" — mostly thanks to my aged eyes and the trigger pull! I suspect with a good trigger and better eyes (and the right ammo) this is easily a reliable 1" 50-yard gun. This could allow you to remind the neighborhood squirrels to “Say hello to my leetle friend.”

FINISHING UP

MSRP for the Flag rifle (complete with the “Collector’s Series” logo on the bolt) is right at \$369. I’d very definitely do something about the trigger with a drop-in kit or professional trigger work of some sort. I’d also add some sort of red dot or cross-hair optic if you’d like to take advantage of what might just be a real tack-driver if you get a bit lucky in the draw.

I’ve grown accustomed to this enthusiastically American Flag rifle leaning against my desk this past month or so and find I just can’t let it go back to Ruger.

Say hello to my new little friend!



Ruger.com
SkinnerSights.com

The Lagoon Corps!™ *Join It!*



For more bumper stickers and other novelties
visit my **Zazzle** store at:

<https://www.zazzle.com/store/lagooncorps>

**ROSSI**

R92

.454 CASULL LEVER GUN

JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

As American as Chevy's 454 big-block engine, the lever gun has been around since before the Civil War. Nothing stirs the spirit of a rifleman more than a lever. All true riflemen have at least one, with most having several stowed away. I know I do!

Picking one up, sheer instinct takes over, making you work the lever no matter how hard you resist. Doing so magically transforms you to bygone days when all kids wanted to be a cowboy, trapper or dog-musher, carrying his faithful and reliable lever gun.

John Wayne — "The Duke" — carried one, as did perhaps

the most iconic of all lever gun loonies, Chuck Connors, in his portrayal of Lucas McCain in *The Rifleman* TV series. Connors kept the popularity of the lever gun going with his snappy show opening scene, walking down Main Street, shooting a dozen cartridges from the hip as fast as he could work the lever. It was mesmerizing for kids of all ages!

The common thread? Both men carried Winchester model 92s, both being chambered in .44-40, or .44 WCF, whatever your preference.

BACKDROP

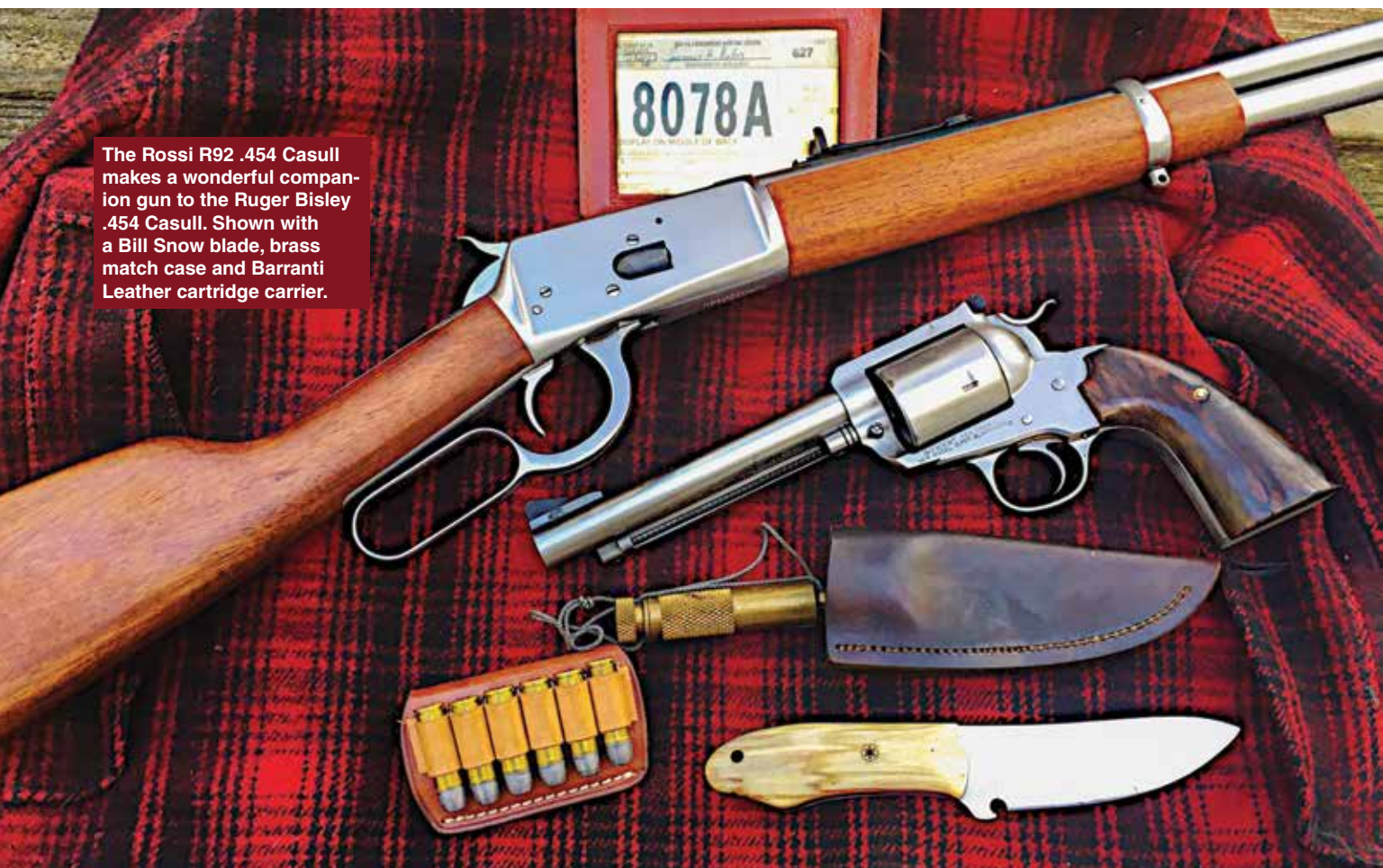
The Winchester Model '92 was designed by John Moses Browning and manufactured by Winchester from 1892-1945 with just over 1 million made. A smaller, trimmer version of the 1886, and chambered in shorter pistol calibers, the '92 was favored by horsemen, farmers and ranchers for its convenient size and ability to shoot cartridges the same as their sidearm.

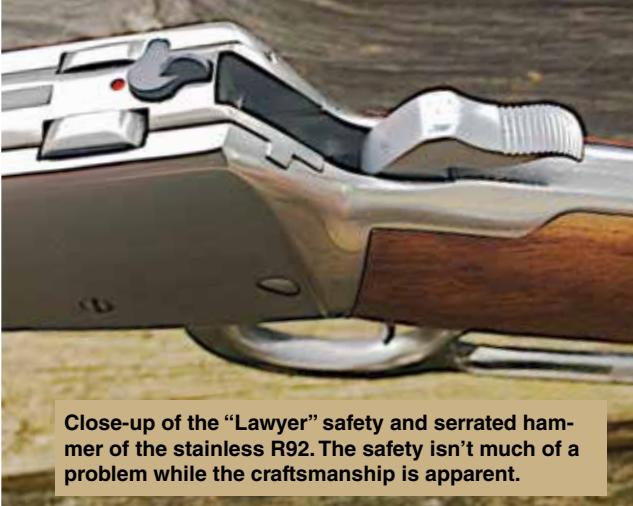
Today, these rifles are out of reach from most mortal men pricewise but luckily we have companies like Rossi making renditions of their own version of the '92.

A BIGGER BORE

But how about a lever gun chambered in .454 Casull? Rossi has been making blued R92s for over 25 years in .454 Casull but what if the gun was made with stainless steel, making it immune to the environment? This is exactly what Rossi has done with

The Rossi R92 .454 Casull makes a wonderful companion gun to the Ruger Bisley .454 Casull. Shown with a Bill Snow blade, brass match case and Barranti Leather cartridge carrier.





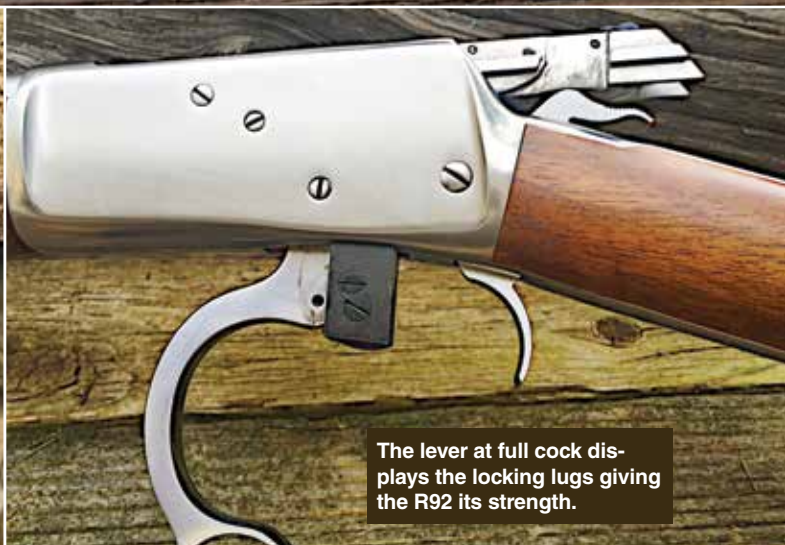
Close-up of the "Lawyer" safety and serrated hammer of the stainless R92. The safety isn't much of a problem while the craftsmanship is apparent.



Here's the magazine tube removed alongside the loading port, if you don't want to load from the side port.



The brass bead dovetailed front sight is traditional and well executed, as is the knurling on the removable magazine tube.



The lever at full cock displays the locking lugs giving the R92 its strength.

BIG-TIME PERFORMANCE IN A RIFLEMAN'S RIFLE

their new R92 stainless-steel .454 Casull lever gun.

Able to drive 300-grain bullets in excess of 2,000 FPS, this small dynamic package has better ballistics than factory-loaded .45-70 cartridges, in a more compact package. Being chambered in .454 Casull, it also has the ability to shoot .45 Colt rounds, making it both versatile for hunting and cheaper to practice with. Being designed to cycle the longer .454 Casull cartridge, the R92 cycles .45 Colt loads like corn through a goose.

CARTRIDGE HISTORY

Dick Casull, along with Jack Fullmer, worked on developing the .454 Casull cartridge since the 1950s. After years of experimentation, the .454 was put into production in 1983 and was first available in the Freedom Arms Model 83 revolver. The .454 Casull case is slightly longer, thicker, stronger than the .45 Colt case and uses a Small Rifle Primer for better ignition and adding strength to the cartridge head.

DETAILS

I was pleasantly surprised pulling the Rossi R92 out of its cardboard shipping box. The stainless-steel rifle was beautifully

finished with tight wood to metal fitting.

The action was smooth when working the lever and the trigger was crisp, creep-free and smooth, breaking at 3.5 lbs. What was going on here? It was beginning to look like love at first sight after the precursory handling/fondling.

The compact stainless R92 carbine comes with a Brazilian hardwood stock. My sample had a touch of figure, with a smooth, even, attractive finish. The black rubber buttpad was nicely fitted to the stock and appreciated for taming the recoil generated by stout .454 loads. Overall length is 38.5" and length of pull is just over 13".

Eight rounds can be loaded from either the side loading gate or by removing the magazine tube. This is done by unscrewing the knurled knob of the magazine tube and lifting it out, inserting cartridges into the port and screwing the tube back in. It also allows you to unload your rifle without having to cycle the rounds out by working the lever. It's a nice feature.

Newer Rossi R92s have a safety on the bolt, which is obviously something to keep the attorneys happy. It can only be activated when the gun is cocked but its position makes flicking it with your thumb quite easy. The hammer is nicely serrated, providing



As these 1" groups at 50 yards attest, the R92 is accurate.

positive purchase for thumb-cocking.

Sights consist of blued buckhorn rear with stepped-wedge adjustment and the front sight consists of a traditional brass bead. Both sights are securely dovetailed, contrasting nicely with the stainless-steel barrel.

Rossi cold-hammer-forges the 20" barrel and uses magnaflux testing on every one. Magnafluxing is an advanced procedure using strong magnetic fields to test structural integrity of metals. Assembled guns are then proof-tested before leaving the factory.

SHOOTING

For test ammo, I had three different loads of .454 Casull, two .45 Colt loads from Buffalo Bore and two handloads of my favorite .45 Colt and .454 Casull loads. I used the factory open sights.

My .45 Colt handload consist of a LEE 255-grain radiused flat-nose slug loaded over 8 grains of 231. This load generates around 900 FPS from pistols but broke 1,150 FPS from the Rossi. Accuracy was good, running about 1.5" at 50 yards for five

shots. My .454 Casull load consisted of a 320-grain LBT LFNGC bullet loaded over 30 grains of H110. Velocity runs just under 1,600 FPS from most pistols but went 1,910 FPS from the Rossi. Accuracy was exceptional, running just over an inch at 50 yards.

The factory .45 Colt loads from Buffalo Bore consisted of their .45 Colt +P Outdoorsman, a 325-grain hard-cast LBT-LFN which runs 1,325 from a handgun and broke 1,630 FPS from the Rossi, shooting just under 2" at 50 yards. The Heavy .45 Colt +P load consisting of a 260-grain JHP bullet runs 1,450 from a handgun and went 1,750 out of the Rossi. Accuracy was 1.5" at 50 yards.

The Hornady .454 Casull loads contained XTP bullets weighing in at 240 and 300 grains. The 240 version clocks out at 1,900 FPS from a handgun, while going over 2,200 FPS from the Rossi. The 300-grain slug goes 1,650 from a handgun and broke 2,000 FPS from the Rossi. Both loads shot under 2" at 50 yards.

LAST WORD

The Rossi R92 .454 Casull is a great gun for those wanting a Model 92 but either don't want, or can't afford, a true Winchester. Rossi did an excellent job building these guns and I didn't have a single malfunction. The gun shot as accurate as I could hold.

A true truck gun if there ever was one, you won't mind getting it scratched or dinged, as your new faithful companion gains a few character marks by always traveling with you. But that's what makes it so charming! Since you won't mind the wear marks, you'll be more prone to have it with you, no matter the conditions, weather or terrain.

And, since it's loaded with nine .454 Casull cartridges, you've got the firepower to take care of most anything in a slim, trim ready-to-go package. The stainless-steel Rossi R92 in .454 Casull is a great gun for guys who don't baby their rifles.

MSRP: \$896



RossiUSA.com

Get JOHN TAFFIN'S Book of the .45 Caliber

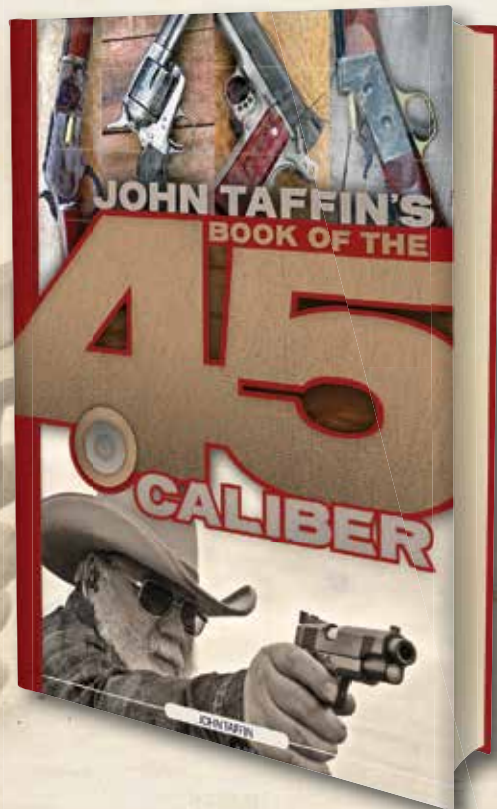


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on the .45 caliber! This beautifully-colored
book is hardbound with over 350 pages.

\$58.49
price includes \$8.50 shipping (U.S. only)



fmgpubs.com/TAFFIN45



SUPPRESSOR CLEANING

Get the Lead Out



Sound suppressors are designed to contain all the sundry byproducts of a gunshot — and get utterly filthy as a result.



Brake cleaner, penetrating oil, a stiff brush and some dental picks are safest for both the gear and the operator. I use the old Thermos to soak my cans overnight in penetrating oil.



Behold The Dip. A 50/50 mixture of white vinegar and hydrogen peroxide will chemically excise lead residue but creates toxic byproducts in the process.

WILL DABBS, MD

Phil Dater — the veritable founding father of the modern sound suppressor — says you should clean your suppressors like you clean the catalytic converter on your car. In other words, just leave them alone. However, for those of us who just cannot abide all the carbon and lead buildup on our sound and flash suppressors, here are a few pointers.

Getting lead inside you is bad. Most occupational lead exposure comes from getting it on your hands and then rubbing your mouth. Gloves and a dust mask are good ideas when working with lead.

GET STARTED

Rimfire cans are the worst. They grab lead and carbon like politicians grab money. Brake cleaner, soapy water, a brass brush and dental picks are undeniably tedious but also safest for both you and your gear.

Giving your cans or flash suppressors an overnight soak in penetrating oil helps to get things started. You can build a soaking vessel out of a PVC pipe and a pair of end caps. I use an old Thermos.

Harbor Freight sells a tabletop ultrasonic cleaner for \$80. These things work great but can eat up both Cerakote and aluminum baffles. The same goes for a mechanical tumbler (about \$50).

Harbor Freight sells a benchtop bead blasting cabinet for \$120. The blast gun alone is only 20 bucks. You'll still need an air compressor, but a bead blaster will eventually remove most anything. Be forewarned, however. Aluminum baffles are soft. Let them linger unduly using hard media and you'll turn them into paperweights. However, exercise discretion and a blast cabinet will do the trick.

JUST DIP IT

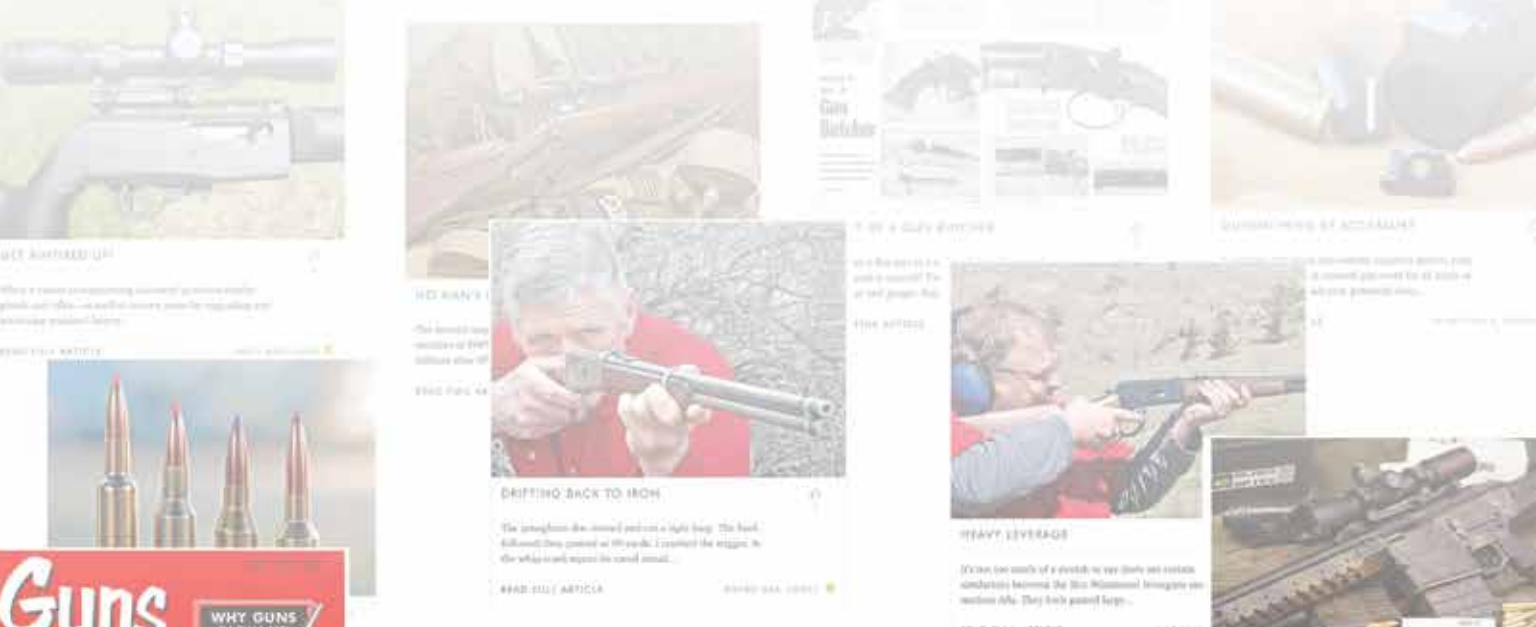
The most radical way to remove lead is The Dip. This is a 50/50 solution of hydrogen peroxide and vinegar. This vile concoction will happily bubble away lead from stainless steel. Leave it overnight for best results and neutralize everything afterwards in a bath of baking soda and dishwashing detergent. The Dip will dissolve aluminum and can potentially damage titanium. Use it for stainless steel components only.

Warning — I'm freaking serious here. The Dip produces lead acetate as a byproduct. Lead acetate is just crazy poisonous. It's a neurotoxin that can be inhaled or absorbed through the skin. It will cause cancer, damage your internal organs, and give you gimpy kids. It killed the Pope in 1047 (no kidding). DO NOT USE THE DIP unless you have proper protective gear and access to a hazardous waste disposal facility in which to discard the effluvium. Some machine shops maintain the capacity to dispose of hazardous wastes such as these.

I have a .22 suppressor weighing twice what it did when I bought it, and a 9mm can I haven't been able to disassemble for a decade. They both still run like crack-addled ants. However, if you just can't stand a dirty can, these techniques will tidy them up.

Lastly, I'm not a chemist. Please don't write Editor Brent a bunch of agitated emails citing such stuff as covalent bonds and electron shells. Just be careful with The Dip.

HarborFreight.com



Guns

WHY GUNS BLOW UP

CAN WOMEN OUTSHOOT MEN?

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

READ FULL ARTICLE

DRIFTING BACK TO 180H

The prototype design of the 180H is a light bag. The bag followed the design of the 180H. I tested the design in the 180H and it was a great success.

READ FULL ARTICLE

HEAVY COVERAGE

It's not too much of a stretch to say that the 180H is a great success. The 180H is a great success. The 180H is a great success.

READ FULL ARTICLE

AN ULTIMATE FIGHT STOPPER

I finally found it. This is the one. After years of evaluating guns and writing about them I've finally found the bag gun of my dreams. It's in 200.

READ FULL ARTICLE

WANT MORE?

RUGER 10/22 CUSTOM COMPETITION

A NEW EDGE FOR THE BREAD AND BUTTER RIFLE

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THE NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM AGENT 2

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THOMPSON/CENTER COMPASS II

BUDGET- AND MAYBE TOOTH-FRIENDLY

MARK HAMPTON

So my wife and I were filling out applications for Wyoming antelope tags when she caught me off-guard. We both enjoy hunting speed goats in the wide open spaces of the west — and greatly appreciate the delicious table fare. Karen has taken several nice bucks in the past with her T/C Encore in .260 Remington and she is hooked on the total experience.

She interrupted and stunned me while completing the application by saying, “I want to try a new gun this year. And I don’t want something that will kick my teeth out.” Well, her Encore doesn’t have a lot of recoil and she has been very successful shooting it in the past. I guess she just wanted to make it perfectly clear about the recoil. Apparently Karen is like so many of us — she wants to try something different for a change. So, with these marching orders, I started searching for a rifle meeting her criteria.

Perhaps it was just luck or coincidence when the opportunity came to test T/C’s new Compass II. It was difficult to imagine I had accidentally stumbled across a rifle ideally suited for Karen and fulfilling her criteria. Upon receiving the test gun, I immediately realized this would have more applications than just a good option for hunting antelope.

TIME FOR TRIGGER

This new rifle in T/C’s extensive centerfire line-up incorporates

T/C’s Generation II trigger system. This trigger system is new for T/C and provides a crisp, light trigger-pull breaking a tad over 3 lbs. on my test gun.

Lane Tobiassen, President of Smith and Wesson (T/C parent company) said, “For decades, Thompson/Center has been known for its innovative firearm designs and legendary accuracy. New for 2020, T/C builds upon this legacy with an update and expansion of its bolt-action rifle line. A key feature within the update is the new T/C Generation II trigger system. Taking cues from the long range shooting world, the Generation II trigger has been designed to improve in-field accuracy, building confidence to make the shots that count.” Well, I was impressed with the trigger and I know Karen would appreciate it too.

PLAIN JANE

The Compass II is a bit utilitarian in appearance. A black composite stock with matte finish barrel has all the makings of a serious hunting rig and there are many features incorporated in this budget-friendly rifle. The lightweight stock features textured grip panels providing a secure grip for sweaty hands or inclement weather. A contoured cheek piece along with a nice, soft recoil pad are welcome additions. Front and rear sling swivel studs are installed and ready for a sling to be added if desired.

T/C’s Compass II is a budget-friendly bolt-action rifle providing great accuracy in a variety of calibers.





The composite detachable magazine (above) on the test gun holds five .243 Win. rounds. Magnum calibers hold four rounds. The detachable rotary five-round magazine (below) fits flush but drops easily using a prominent release lever.



A three-lug bolt design is featured on the Compass II and we are seeing more manufacturers adopt this concept. It's not new by any stretch as both American and European manufacturers have embraced the design as it produces a shorter, faster bolt manipulation. In the Compass II, a 60-degree bolt lift allows more clearance between the hand and scope. No need to worry about bumping the scope with the bolt or your hand. An experienced shooter will definitely be able to cycle the action more expeditiously. The bolt handle is also sculpted on the end and angled somewhat for easy, painless operation.

I appreciated the 3-position safety with bolt lock allowing the shooter to load and unload in the safe position. The safety latch is stainless with serrations. A bolt release, also stainless, is situated on the left side of the receiver — another nice feature when it comes time to clean the barrel.

FOUNDATION

An aluminum pillar bedding system positions the receiver and free-floats the sporter-style barrel. The blued, 22" tube features a button-rifled 5R rifling with 1:10 twist tapering to 0.700" at the muzzle, which is threaded and ready for suppressor or muzzle brake. The company guarantees 3-shot minute-of-angle accuracy with premium ammunition. The Compass II comes with a Weaver-style, 2-piece scope mount already installed.

I mounted a Leupold VX-III, 3.5-10x40 scope with B&C reticle using Warne horizontal rings. The gun weighed 7 lbs. before adding the scope and measures 41" in overall length. It balances well and I couldn't wait to take the Compass II for a range session.

A flush-fit composite rotary magazine holds five rounds and it was easy to load full. The mag was very easy to feed and remove from the gun thanks to the prominent latch you can work with one finger.

CHOICES

Remembering Karen's criteria of wanting something that didn't kick her fillings loose, I chose a .243 Winchester. This



The stainless bolt release (above) is located on the left side of the receiver. Mark's 243 Win. is topped with a Leupold 3.5-10x in Warne rings. The stainless 3-position safety (below) is a nice feature on the Compass II. The sculptured bolt handle is stylish and easy on the hands.



would not only be an ideal antelope rig but I certainly could put it to good use on coyotes and other varmints at the farm. Two different loads were tested — Federal Premium with the 85-grain Barnes TSX and the Berger 95-grain Hybrid Hunter. I had confidence one or both of these loads would produce pleasing results.

The range session proved and confirmed the new Compass II shoots well. Both Federal Premium offerings shot within minute-of-angle. The Compass II behaved well and the lack of recoil made the shooting session enjoyable. Karen really liked shooting the rifle and did not experience any issues running the bolt. Loading was quite easy thanks to the well-thought-out design of the detachable magazine.

The crisp pull of the trigger enhanced our bench shooting and would be most welcome in hunting situations. After sighting-in on paper and doing a few three-shot groups, Karen and I headed to the farm for some steel banging. It was quite easy for Karen to ring steel plates out to 250 yards off tripod shooting sticks. This would more than likely be the type of rest utilized if we're lucky enough to hunt antelope. I think Karen enjoyed shooting the Compass II as much or more than I did.

It's going to be a while before Karen and I know if we were successful drawing an antelope tag. If we're lucky, Karen is already practicing with the rifle and she really appreciates the accuracy and the lack of recoil. I know what she will be packing in Wyoming.

I'm going to continue taking the rifle to the farm and someday, a coyote will make a mistake and I'll introduce him to the Compass II. The Compass II comes in eight different offerings including .223, .243, 6.5 Creedmoor, .270 Win., 7mm Remington Mag., .308 Win., .30-06, and .300 Win. Mag. It's a user-friendly rifle loaded with features hunters and shooters appreciate at a price-point that won't deplete the kids' college fund. Whether you're looking for a rifle to carry around in the truck for ranching duties, sitting in a blind waiting for whitetail or choosing a gun for your wife or daughter, the Compass II is a worthy candidate.

MSRP: \$405



TCArms.com



A SYSTEM FOR SUCCESS



Above, all four BDX scopes have plenty of free tube and deliver bright, color-true, clutter-free fields of view. Legal in all 50 states because they contain no lasers, BDX scopes like the one below look much like “ordinary” variables.



WAYNE VAN ZWOLL

You’ve had days that profited nothing. This one was casting long shadows behind the hills north of Craig. Then — “There!” Cory and I pointed in sync. The buck rocketed over the ridge in the dusty wake of a dozen does. Christina caught up as we scurried, bent low, along the lee side. I slipped ahead and went to my belly, wriggling through cactus toward a hump falling off into a deep draw. The herd was looking my way when I peeked over, a doe blocking the buck.

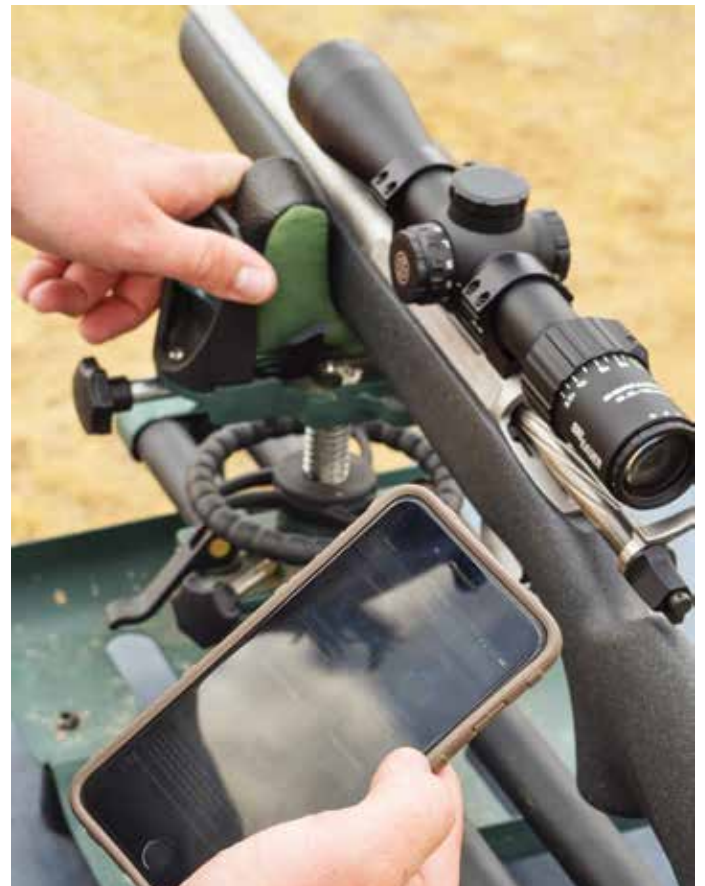
“Got the range,” came a whisper. Gamely, Christina had endured the cactus too. The does sifted away, egg-walking. Years hunting pronghorn told me this buck would dash off without pause. A dot lit up in my scope as his chest came clear. The 6.5 Creedmoor bounced; the buck fell dead.

It would be the first of eight Colorado pronghorns taken in a short hunt with RTS Outfitting — and an ingenious SIG rifle scope.

LOOKS ARE DECEIVING

“You can’t know what it does by looking at it,” said product manager Joe Fruechtel. Explaining nuclear fusion to a beagle might have been easier but he and Christina Rhine patiently led me through a primer on her 3.5-10x42 BDX. If you’re smart-phone friendly, you’ll catch on in a snap. If, like me, you’re still sweet on Depression-era Hensoldts, the magic in this tube will truly astound.

“It starts with SIG’s BDX app,” Joe explained. “Android or iOS. Downloaded in your phone, it lets you configure your load’s ballistic data and pair — think synchronize — your phone with one of SIG’s BDX Kilo laser rangefinders.” Use factory data or the bullet specs with your own chronograph readings. Following simple



First BDX step: Pair the app on your smart phone with a BDX Kilo Bluetooth-equipped rangefinder.



Christina got her buck at over 350 yards.



Christina Rhine glasses Colorado hills before a long shot with a BDX took her first pronghorn.

“There I went prone, sling taut. The 10x10 plate was now tiny. Christina ranged the steel; another dot lit up. My pulse bounced the first shot a tad high; the follow-up connected solidly.”

protocols, he said, you then “bond” the rangefinder with your BDX rifle-scope, which lets you know when it’s comfy with the union by flashing a blue OLED (organic light-emitting diode). At this point, “the scope is slave to the rangefinder. Range a target and a red dot appears on the scope reticle. Put the dot where you want to hit and that’s where the bullet will land. Simple.”

More like voodoo, thought I. But we hied off to the range with Christina’s Bergara for a hands-on tutorial. “A BDX rangefinder can bond to only one scope at a time,” she said. “But one scope can bond to multiple rangefinders.” Maximum range for a ballistics solution is 800 yards, although BDX rangefinders deliver reads beyond that. I figured 800 was far enough.

Unlike big, heavy laser-ranging scopes with all functions in the tube, SIGs have traditional lines. The four 30mm BDX scopes have brilliant optics, rear-plane reticles and they’re reasonably priced (\$600 to \$960). All but the 3.5-10x model feature a focus/parallax dial.

LEAD MEETS STEEL

After checking the 100-yard zero of the 6.5 Creedmoor, I swung to a 300-yard plate. Christina read it with her rangefinder. Voila! A red dot appeared on the plex reticle’s lower stem. I steadied it and pressed the trigger. Dust sprayed as bullet met steel, followed by a Whap! “Let’s back up to 430,” said Joe, clearly bored with the predictable. There I went prone, sling taut. The 10x10 plate was now tiny. Christina ranged the steel; another dot lit up. My pulse bounced the first shot a tad high; the follow-up connected solidly.

“What about wind?” I asked, having shaded left in a freshening breeze.

“No instrument can read wind down-range,” said Joe. “But if you have a read on prevailing wind at the line — say, with a Kestrel — you can plug that into the app and the rangefinder tells your scope. A dot off the main reticle stem then appears.” There are 18 “addressable” wind hold indicators in a BDX scope field and 78 vertical hold points.

I noticed two dots on either end of the horizontal wire. “Those are Level Plex indicators, to help you avoid canting,” Joe told me. “You can switch them off or boost their sensitivity — from a 3-degree cant to 2-, 1- and ½-minute for greater precision at distance.” He demonstrated a routine checking the illumination of all dots in a few seconds.

"But these aren't like Christmas tree lights; you won't get any tired bulbs!"

BDX reticles have 10 brightness settings and "off" stops between, so you're just a click from the setting you want. Powered by two CR2032 batteries, scope illumination automatically shuts down after a period of inactivity to conserve power. Movement wakes it up.

But what about ...

"Yes, the rangefinders are special," Joe said, anticipating my next question. "There are four BDX Kilo models with Bluetooth chip extensions up front. They range in price from \$300 to \$960." I looked them up, there are four. "You can use the 2400 7x25 with an Applied Ballistics program in your Kestrel to engineer hits beyond 800 yards," Joe added. "Applied Ballistics now has SIG ammunition in its suite of factory loads." SIG lists three BDX "Combo Kits" with a scope and a Kilo rangefinder, from \$840 to \$1,680.

BDX rifle-scopes boast 50 to 60 minutes of elevation adjustments in quarter-minute clicks. But once you're zeroed, you won't need to dial as the rangefinder does the work. You can specify rangefinder reads in minutes, mils and centimeters and, of course, use the scope without rangefinder assist, for quick shots in cover or point-blank range. The reticle appears clean, as if there were no OLED dots in the field.

Besides keeping a lid on scope weight and bulk, said Joe, "separation of rangefinding and aiming processes enabled SIG to sell the scopes at competitive prices. The system is also more flexible than what you get with single-unit alternatives." Because there's no laser in the rifle-scope, SIG's new BDX system is legal for hunting in all 50 states.

IN THE FIELD

The final day of our hunt, Christina Rhine got her chance with the BDX. Hours of glassing had drawn us on sneaks within rifle range of several bucks. Cory shook his head every time. "We can do better." But as the day spooled out, it seemed big, mature pronghorns had abandoned the prairie between Maybell and Craig. Then, as light dimmed, we hit paydirt.

A bachelor group of a dozen fine bucks fed across a distant slope. Quickly we reeled in a quarter mile, across a basin affording scant cover. Christina wisely declined a poke at 440 yards. We slipped into a valley and swung wide to intercept the herd, now ascending a steep draw. "Left! Left!" I cried. Despite our caution, we'd stumbled



SIG BDX scopes, such as this 6.5-20x52 above, are incredibly powerful when paired with a matching SIG rangefinder and make tough shots just a little easier. SIG's BDX scopes, including this illuminated 3.5-10x42 below, have a traditional profile to permit low mounting, unlike some other electronic scopes.

into their midst! They swept by us, down into a valley, across our front. "Get set. They'll stop." I was talking to myself as Cory hustled Christina into position. She steadied the rifle on a rest and immediately read the range. Beyond 350, I guessed. Her scope "knew" the yard, and a dot on the BDX reticle lit up. When she fired, a beautiful buck collapsed, its horns the biggest taken on the thousands of RTS acres that week. Her first pronghorn!

My next look at game through a BDX scope came at around 200 yards. With no time or need to range it, I aimed and fired as instinctively as with any other sight, no

illumination except the Level Plex dots inconspicuous on the field rim. The buck fell dead.

Among the most appealing features of BDX scopes are their traditional profiles. They sit as low as other variables with same-size objectives. Inside, a clean field of view yields sharp, brilliant, color-true images. No matter the distance, you're ready for the shot and your rifle handles as nimbly as with scopes that don't talk to rangefinders!

If you don't remember Depression-era Hensoldts, that's okay. SIG's new BDX scopes are better.

SIGSAUER.com

WALTHER Q4 SF

BETTER THAN 007 DESERVES?

DAVID FREEMAN

What does the name of the Walther Q4 SF tell us about the gun? Walther is the short name for the German firm building high-quality handguns treasured by military, law enforcement and discerning civilians for more than 100 years. The “4” in the name indicates it has a 4” barrel. “SF” stands for steel frame. “Q” indicates this is the gun Q keeps for himself after giving 007 a wimpy gun to perform his mission. What? You don’t believe me? It’s certainly a gun I’d keep for myself, whether I have a mission or not!

ALL IN THE TITLE

Guns are named what they are for marketing reasons as much as anything else, so I suspect Walther perceived a demand for a 4” version of the Q5 SF, their highly successful competition model. Just looking at one of the Q5 competition guns evokes a sense of awe and richness. It’s not a custom-made gun, but it sure looks it. Five inches is just a little too much for most of us to carry daily but put it together with a 4” barrel and with a good belt and holster combo and you can carry it all day. To me, everything about the Walther Q4 SF looks and feels like a



The high-quality all-steel Walther Q4 SF ships with two magazines and a magazine loader.



The size of the Q4 SF is similar to a GLOCK 19. David found it easy to grip and a delight to shoot. The weight of the gun helps to mitigate recoil even with +P loads.

“Q INDICATES THIS IS THE GUN Q KEEPS FOR HIMSELF AFTER GIVING 007 A WIMPY GUN TO PERFORM HIS MISSION.”

top-end pistol.

The Q4 arrived in a plastic case with the requisite lock, a couple of 15-round magazines and a magazine loader. Everything on the gun is black except for the three large white-dot night sights. If there's any plastic on the gun, I can't find it. Even the checkered wraparound grip panels are made of steel. The front strap adds to the grip function with checkering of its own, a little more aggressive than on the side panels and back strap.

The gun is 7.4" long and 5.4" high, approximately the same as a GLOCK 19 but what I notice right away is how balanced the Walther feels. The weight of the gun forces you to lock in a good grip while on target and it absorbs recoil so well, getting back on target happens almost without conscious effort.

The weight is 39.7 oz., which is almost 2.5 lbs. Some might think there's no way you could carry a gun so heavy but consider a SIG P226, a Colt 1911 or a Beretta M9 are all in the same weight range and people carry them all the time. If

The top of the slide has rounded sides, anti-glare stripes on the full length and is topped with highly visible white dot sights.

you are serious about carrying a gun and like a particular gun, you'll find a way to carry it.

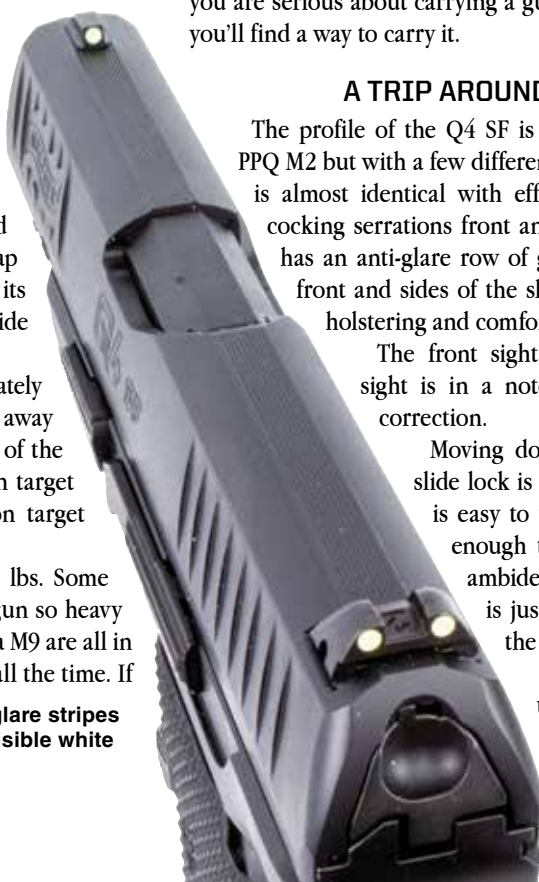
A TRIP AROUND THE GUN

The profile of the Q4 SF is similar to the very popular PPQ M2 but with a few differences. The slide configuration is almost identical with effective but easy-on-the-hand cocking serrations front and rear. The top of the slide has an anti-glare row of grooves the full length. The front and sides of the slide are rounded to assist in holstering and comfortable carry.

The front sight is pinned, while the rear sight is in a notch to allow drift-adjustable correction.

Moving down to the steel frame, the slide lock is a long, recessed lever which is easy to thumb but doesn't stick out enough to get in the way. It is also ambidextrous. The takedown lever is just ahead of the slide lock on the left side of the frame.

Field-stripping the Q4 gives us a chance to explore the internal workings of the gun. The internal trigger



block safety is on the right side of the slide just behind where the firing pin exits. On the frame you see the extension on the trigger bar. It deactivates the safety as the trigger is pulled all the way to the rear. The rail guides, the trigger bar and the barrel lock mechanism are all beefy to match the ruggedness of the frame. This is a gun to easily last several lifetimes. Factor this into the cost of the gun — you're buying something your great grandchildren may someday enjoy.

Cleaning is standard. Swab out the barrel, remove residue from the gun's inner workings, add a touch of oil to all the contact points and put it back together. For now, let's pop the barrel back in place, snap in the recoil spring assembly (the smallest end goes to the front), push the slide on the frame and lock it back. Rotate the takedown lever counterclockwise until it's aligned with the frame and we're done.

MORE FEATURES

Continuing the external exam, we find a 3-slot Picatinny rail system up front. The trigger guard is large enough for gloves and the rear of the trigger guard has a bit of an undercut to facilitate a high grip. The oversized magazine release button is reversible. Since there is no external safety, the reversible mag release button and the ambidextrous slide lock make the Q4 a perfect pistol for the southpaw.

The Q4 has Walther's Quick Defense trigger system that

David found the weight of the gun a non-issue when carrying in this IWB holster by D.M. Bullard Leather Company.



A takedown lever on the frame rotates 90 degrees to facilitate easy disassembly for cleaning.

A black Walther Q4 SF handgun is shown in profile, pointing left. It has a textured grip and a slide with 'WALTHER' and 'Q4 SF' markings. Below the handgun is a box of Speer G2 9mm Luger 147-grain ammunition. The box is black and yellow, with 'SPEER', 'G2', and 'NEXT GENERATION DUTY AMMUNITION' printed on it. To the right of the handgun is a red target with a white bullseye and a crosshair. Several bullet holes are visible in the target, mostly clustered around the bullseye. The background is a white grid pattern.

The Q4 SF handled any 9mm ammo but particularly likes 147-grain loads such as the Speer Gold Dot G2. The target was shot at 10 yards.

became popular on the PPQ M2. The Quick Defense Trigger works like a 2-stage trigger. The first stage allows for a consistent movement of the trigger up to the “wall” with the second stage being a crisp break followed by a quick reset. The reset is only 0.10” which on some guns might result in an unintended follow-up shot but it doesn’t on the Q4. The break comes with a 5.6-lb. trigger pull — for me, the perfect amount in a carry gun.

Moving to the rear of the frame an extended beavertail with a smooth, rounded design allows a high grip without any pinching or other irritation when shooting. It helps mitigate recoil as well. Walther’s description says it’s optimized for duty retention holsters, providing clearance for retention hoods often used by law enforcement. I’ll have to take their word for it as I don’t use any of those types of retention holsters. I’m carrying the gun in a D.M. Bullard Leather Company IWB holster — it works very well for me at the three o’clock position.

After seeing some attractive blue grips on a Q5, I wondered about the possibility of trading out the grips on the Q4 SF. I found an interesting option with LokGrips (LokGrips.com). They make blue and black G10 grips in two different textures for the Q5 competition gun that also fit the Q4 SF.

TIME ON THE RANGE

I’ve enjoyed shooting the Q4 SF at both indoor and outdoor ranges. I tend to visit with people in the lanes around me and for people who are open to trying something new, I always offer them the chance to shoot any gun I might be evaluating. Almost everyone I’ve shared the Q4 with shot it well. It’s designed to take advantage of a shooter’s natural point of aim. With more than 600 rounds of combined factory ammo and reloads through the gun, I’ve not experienced any glitches. It’s as accurate as the shooter with any of the ammo but it tends toward tighter groups with 147-grain SIG or Speer JHPs. I took advantage of the Q4 to burn up some Hornady Critical Duty ammo festering on my shelf because I didn’t like the recoil. The Q4 digested it like popcorn. I heard the noise but didn’t feel the sting.

With an MSRP of \$1,399 this is not a gun for everyone. However, discerning shooters will appreciate the bragging rights of owning a gun with exceptional quality, knowing it will last a lifetime and more.

WaltherArms.com



The Zero Tolerance Anso 0235 — with its slick styling, top shelf materials and cool mechanics — exemplifies the breed of modern slip joints.

ZERO TOLERANCE ANSO 0235

THE SLIP JOINT ROCKS MODERN

The rising trend in modern non-locking slip joint folders is a joy to watch. Some say it's just another branch of the long-running modern tactical movement but it could just be knife manufacturers are spreading their wings to add butter to their bread. The Zero Tolerance Anso 0235 slip joint featured here demonstrates just how far we've come from Granddad's traditional pocketknife by blending a classic concept with highly contemporary design and materials.

The Anso 0235 is a design by custom knifemaker Jens Anso of Denmark. Jens is wildly popular worldwide and has quite a few collaborations with cutlery manufacturers on his tally board. His

The Anso 0235 features eye-pleasing spot color in the form of a blue anodized back-spacer replete with lanyard loop.

designs are known for their simple perfection which you can see in the 0235's stark, graciously curved lines on both handle and blade. Rather than use the typical back-spring found on 99.999% of slip joints, Anso designed a mechanism with double detente balls for keeping the blade closed between its rigid carbon fiber frame. This makes for a clear, open frame, enhancing its clean design.

On the back of the 3.80" handle there's an anodized blue back-spacer at the base with a lanyard loop designed in — making for a cool use of spot color. There's also a tip-up pocket clip for ready carry or the Anso 0235 can be easily toted loose in the pocket. The leaf-shaped 2.60" Spear Point blade is of CPM-S20CV tool steel

made by uber powdered steel manufacturer Crucible Industries and also features a hat tip to the classic nail nick for opening. Zero Tolerance is known for not cutting corners in the material and fabrication departments and the Anso 0235 is no exception.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

The Anso 0235 personifies the modern slip joint breed by melding slick design, state-of-the-art materials and envelope-pushing mechanics into one eye-pleasing package. It's a gent's folder, cool enough to please the ladies and at a featherweight 1.80 oz. it poses no burden for pocket or purse. You won't find yourself needing to sharpen the blade's CPM-S20CV steel often, as Crucible's fine-grained powdered offerings are known for their excellent cutting ability and toughness. This is a pocketknife that will own the office cooler. At \$225 suggested retail, the Anso 0235 is a bargain for the technology wonder it is.

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THE SHIFTING SEMANTICS OF ANTI-GUNNERS

WE HAVE FACTS BUT THEY'RE SLICK WITH WORDS

Dave Workman

First it was “gun control” and the “National Coalition to Ban Handguns,” the latter being a group formed back in 1974 that included religious, nonprofit and —according to an online history of this movement — labor organizations; 30 in all, determined to rid the country of privately owned sidearms.

Then it became “gun safety” because “gun control” was politically toxic. The effort to ban handguns became the “Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence.” It was the same group with the same goals but a different name, sort of like Ted Bundy changing his name to Tom Brown and dyeing his hair blond.

Of course there were exceptions to the desired handgun ban. Police, the military and licensed private security guards could have handguns in working condition, but nobody else. There could be, as the online history explains, “licensed pistol clubs where firearms are kept on the premises.”

But public attitudes about personal protection began to change, thanks largely to groundbreaking research and education efforts by folks such as David Hardy and the late Don Kates. They had the audacity to challenge the popular notion the Second Amendment applied to a mythical “collective” right of states to form militias. It was nonsense then, and thanks to the 2008 Supreme Court ruling in *District of Columbia v. Heller* which specifically says handguns are protected by the Constitution and the right to keep and bear arms applies to individual citizens not affiliated with a militia, it is even more nonsensical now.

WEASEL WORDS

So gun prohibitionists started changing their rhetoric and repackaging their extremist crusade. What was “gun control” has become “gun safety,” “gun responsibility” and “gun reform.” But, like bags of horse manure relabeled “natural organic fertilizer,” the smell remains the same, rubber gloves are still required and you don’t walk in it without ruining your shoes.

The worst example of this clever social bigotry is the widespread use of the term “gun violence.” It has infested news reports and political discourse; a disturbing broad-brush slur now encompassing homicide, suicide, accidents and even the justifiable use of force by peace officers and private citizens. How many times in recent history have we heard or read reports that described the number of victims in a multiple shooting “including the shooter”?

Ask a reporter, politician or anti-gunner why they can use such a reference applying to firearms-related homicides and assaults while never alluding to other weapons used in thousands of fatal and non-fatal crimes, including knives, hammers, crowbars, golf clubs, baseball bats, hands, fists or feet. They’ll stare dumbly back at you, unable to answer, their tongues tied by years of subconscious social conditioning leaving them convinced the gun is at fault rather than the individual pressing the trigger.

It is the subtle, and admittedly clever, changes in the anti-rights rhetoric keeping this prejudice alive to feed the irrational fear of firearms. It has divided friends and even family members — and gun prohibitionists love it.

"IT IS THE SUBTLE, AND ADMITTEDLY CLEVER, CHANGES IN THE ANTI-RIGHTS RHETORIC KEEPING THIS PREJUDICE ALIVE TO FEED THE IRRATIONAL FEAR OF FIREARMS."

NEWSPEAK

Instead of "assault weapons," it is now "assault-style weapons" one reads about. Instead of "gun control advocate" it is now the "gun sense candidate" seeking your vote.

You can turn this tide, but it takes discipline. Be careful with your own words.

When someone says he/she supports "gun reform," you reply, "What does that mean? Oh, well, that's the same thing you wanted last year, isn't it?"

When someone insists people should get a permit before purchasing a firearm, counter by asking whether we should require a permit to run for public office, work at a newspaper or broadcast news facility, or attend church services.

If we shouldn't require photo ID to vote, why demand it to purchase a gun?

As this column has explained in the past, have your facts straight and keep them in your gray matter to be used at a moment's notice. Always refer to the annual FBI Uniform Crime Report for data on homicides so you can speak with authority about how many more people are murdered with knives or blunt instruments in any given year than are killed with rifles or shotguns of any kind, not just semi-automatics. Someone may call you a liar but they're not likely to declare FBI data to be fraudulent.

LOAD UP

Question: "You need a license to drive, don't you?"

Answer: "Driving is a privilege, not a right listed anywhere in the Constitution. And besides, requiring driver's licenses hasn't stopped drunkards from driving without a license and killing somebody in an accident, has it?"

And when they say, "But we put those

people in prison," you energetically reply, "Damn right we do, but we don't blame each other for what they did, do we?"

Statement: "We have a right to protest."

Response: "We sure do, it says so in the First Amendment. I might even protest along with you. What are we protesting? But, you know, we don't have a right to destroy property, steal beer, clothing or tennis shoes. We have no right to set fire to someone's business or their car, or throw bricks at police officers. Those things are crimes, and you can count me out."

You've just put yourself on equal footing with the other guy, and he didn't even realize it. Before you know it, you might have him saying, "Hell, NO, they're not taking our guns!"

STATUS NO

Today's gun prohibition movement has refined its message, but instead of "proponents" — a term making movement leaders sound oh-so reasonable — this crusade is now led by extremists who have decided they have the right to erase your rights.

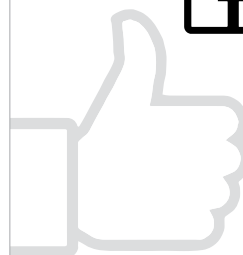
Gun prohibitionists are hoping the public remains foolish to their mission. But someone is standing in their way. You, and millions of other savvy gun owners, can fight back as you have been fighting, not just to protect your rights but the rights of everyone you know, their children and their children's children.

Understand this: Defending your rights is a full-time commitment, and nobody can state your case better than you can. Don't depend on some tailored suit from back east to come to your rescue. The fight is on, the first punch was thrown long ago and it's up to you to knock the other guy out cold.

Let's work to put the other side down for the full count.

Your Momma

... reads about guns on our Facebook page.



See what you've been missing



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ALPS OUTDOORSZ GHOST 30 PACK

Brent T. Wheat

It's been noted I take to packs like a Kardashian takes to free publicity. My backpack collection was recently ranked as the Number Seven Largest Privately-Held Collection in the U.S. but there's only one thing missing: a perfect EDC (everyday carry) pack.

For daily use, I needed something with adequate storage — but not too big — with enough pockets and dividers my stuff doesn't end up in one large jumble, sunglasses smashed by a laptop, or just missing in action. Above all, it can't look "tactical" because of my whole "gray man" preparedness philosophy — plus I'm at an age where trying to look like a Super Ninja Operator is simply silly. Alas, of the packs in my stable, all had serious shortcomings in this one role.

Then, I fell in love with the Ghost 30. Having now taken it on a long-distance train trip, a flight and lived out of it on a multi-day road trip, it meets all my requirements. One unique feature, sure to appear on every other EDC pack within a year or two, is the hidden paracord loops — you can carry bulky things like jackets but without looking too MOLLE-fied. There are a host of other features — plenty of pockets, two padded laptop compartments, front-load zippers and even an integral rain cover — plus a reasonable price point for such a feature-rich, high-quality bag. I'm hooked!

MSRP: \$149.99

AlpsBrands.com



CROSSBREED CHEST RIG

After trying every way known to man, including a few clearly violating the laws of physics and common decency, I've finally settled on the idea a chest rig is the *only* way to carry a serious social firearm while engaged in outdoor pursuits or work. Nothing against all other methods of carry but when you're hiking, fishing, bowhunting, bushwacking on horseback or riding your ATV, the only way to keep your sidearm handy, comfortable and out of harm's way is by stationing it in the middle of your sternum.

I recently got ahold of what might be the stoutest model in the lot, the CrossBreed Chest Rig. Taking it out of the package, it's immediately apparent this thing is probably going to outlast my newest fly rod and could be used to pull my truck out of a mud hole in an emergency.

The holster is stout CrossBreed Kydex, mounted to a heavy padded leather and breathable suede backer. It uses three of the aforementioned King Kong elastic straps for support and a metal buckle for ease of entry. The remaining leather bits are heavy-duty and attachments are made with machine screws. I've decided to sew a dog tag into the rig because, regardless of the trauma endured, Search & Rescue might not find my wholly intact body but they'd certainly find the chest rig no worse for the wear!

MSRP: \$149.95

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minimizes weight for a successful mountain hunt. The 110 Ultralite Camo comes with Savage's AccuFit technology, a KUIU Verde 2.0 Camo stock, an adjustable length-of-pull and comb height to provide hunters with optimum fit and performance. Offered in .308 Win., 6.5 Creedmoor, 28 Nosler, 6.5 PRC and 30-06 Spfld. MSRP: \$1,349 for all calibers. For more info: (800) 370-0708, SavageArms.com



BRISTOL SIDE-BY-SIDE SHOTGUNS

TRISTAR ARMS

TriStar Arms has released the *Bristol Side-By-Side Shotguns* in two formats and four gauges. The line delivers competition-grade craftsmanship with field-grade pricing thus reducing the cost barrier in the shooting sports. Each gauge is built on a steel frame

ensuring the shotgun handles and weighs appropriately. The shotguns share key features like auto ejectors, a brass front sight, a single selective trigger, a Turkish walnut stock, and five Beretta-style Choke Tubes. In picture is the 20-gauge TriStar Bristol. MSRP: \$1,064 for the 12ga and 20ga; \$1,100 for the 28ga and .410. For more info: (816) 421-1400, TriStarArms.com



Z-10 BAG RIDER

MCMILLAN FIBERGLASS STOCKS

The Z-10 *Bag Rider* is based on McMillan's A-10 tactical stock but replaces the A-10's butt hook with a swept butt profile to more easily accept rear bags for bench or prone shooting. Part of the McMillan Z-series line, the Z-10 Bag Rider features a universal inlet design fitting most Remington and Remington clone barreled actions accepting a wide range of barrel contours. The Z-10 Bag Rider features an adjustable cheek riser height and length-of-pull, a forward-positioned vertical grip, multiple color/finish options and more. For more info: (877) 365-6148, www.mcmillanusa.com



Z365 OCTANE GUN MOD

ZEV TECHNOLOGIES

ZEV Technologies has launched the *Z365 Octane Gun Mod*. Chambered in 9mm, it comes standard with the ZEV Octane Slide and RMSC optic cut compatible with the Shield RMSc, SIG Romeo Zero, Holosun HS407K, PRO Barrel and Zev's fiber optic Combat Sights. The grip module uses ZEV's diamond pattern, laser cut grip to keep hands secure. Aggressive slide serrations help with manipulation and create a lighter slide. MSRP: \$1,199. For more info: (805) 486-5800, ZevTechnologies.com



R-700 BILLET ALUMINUM CHASSIS

RIVAL ARMS

Rival Arms' *R-700 Billet Aluminum Chassis* is designed to accept the Remington 700 short-action barreled action. CNC-machined from aluminum billet, the chassis is offered in Type

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Maglula has added a new color to its M4/AR15 5.56/.223 *LULA Loader and Unloader*: dark green. The loader and unloader are more compact, lighter and operate more smoothly. The new loader fits and releases from both magazines held by a magazine-coupler. MSRP: \$29.95. For more info: 972-8-6488001, Maglula.com



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Kershaw Knives' *Launch 13* is slim, but full size in cutting ability. Made of CPM 134 powdered metallurgy steel, its 3.5" Wharnccliffe blade is corrosion and wear resistant. The lightweight aluminum handle is sculpted with a low-profile push button preventing the blade from being accidentally launched. The *Launch 13* with an OAL of 8" is ideal for fine work, yet it's slightly angled for more versatile cutting. MSRP: \$189.99. For more info: (800) 325-2891, Kershaw.KaiUSA.com



MARKSMAN 6-POSITION STOCK KIT ROCK RIVER ARMS

The *Marksman 6-Position Stock Kit* features a 6-Position mil-spec receiver extension, adjustable cheek piece and buttplate/plate plus a QD socket on both sides. (This is not for use with RRA LAR-8.) The kit is offered in two colors: black and tan. MSRP: \$210. For more info: (866) 980-7625, RockRiverArms.com



AC-800-CF-S BEAR OPS

The *AC-800-CF-S* pocketknife from Bear OPS boasts a sleek, lightweight design with minimal imprinting. The knife features a 2.5" smooth, fast-action Sandvik blade; the handle is stainless steel with carbon fiber. With a push of the recessed button, the blade deploys on demand, firmly locking back to withstand heavy loads. A pen-type clip allows for deep carry. The pocketknife measures 4" closed and weighs 2.7 oz. MSRP: \$274.99. For more info: (265) 435-2227, BearAndSonCutlery.com



LIFELITE MOBILE PEPPERBALL

The *LifeLite Mobile* combines an LED flashlight and aiming laser with a PepperBall launcher. It is smaller and sleeker than the regular LifeLite, making it ideal for home, auto and RV defense. Great to carry when walking at night, camping or traveling, it also comes at a lower price. The LifeLite Mobile weighs 1.4 lbs. (loaded) and is effective at a range of 0-40 feet. The irritant cloud it releases reaches up to 12 feet while the flashlight can produce 350 lumens of light. MSRP: \$199.99. For more info: (888) 874-3491, PBLifeLite.com



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The *ReadyAir Portable Compressor* from Umarex gives you a worry-free and endless supply of air. The oilless design means you'll spend more time shooting and less time on maintenance. The auto shutoff means your compressor won't overheat and will last a long time. The ReadyAir airgun compressor delivers extreme pressure for high-pressure airguns. MSRP: \$549.99. For more info: (479) 646-4210, UmarexUSA.com

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Real Avid's *GUN Boss Multi-Kits* include a caliber-specific Bore Boss for quick cleaning. There's also an expanded kit with all the tools for fully cleaning the firearm's bore, action and chamber. The kits are available in .22-caliber, .223/5.56mm, .270/.280/7mm, .30/.308/7.62mm and .357/.38/9mm. MSRP: From \$29.99. For more info: (800) 286-0567, RealAvid.com



FLEX IWB MAG CARRIER N8 TACTICAL

The *FLEX IWB Mag Carrier* from N8 Tactical combines function and comfort in a compact, easy-to-conceal platform. Features include a comfort backer, a polymer clip and the ability to secure different magazines. This magazine carrier can keep pace with changes in your carry gun choices. Switch from a GLOCK 17 to an XDM to a SIG P365 to a Springfield Armory Hellcat — the FLEX IWB Mag Carrier has you covered. MSRP: \$34.95. For more info: (888) 732-5011, N8Tactical.com



X-TRA CONCENTRATED MASKING SCENTS WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER

Wildlife Research Center has released a line of *X-tra Concentrated Masking Scents*, potent formulas to help mask human scent. The scents have appealing smells that attract even big game animals. They reduce a target's fear so you can get closer to take a shot. The X-tra Concentrated Masking Scents include Pine, Earth, Acorn, Cedar and Apple. MSRP: \$8.99 for a 4-fl. oz. bottle. For more info: (800) 873-5873, Wildlife.com



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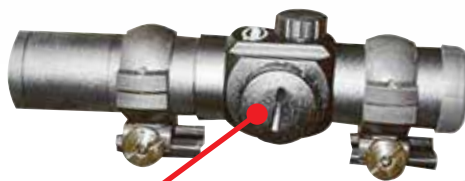
ADCO BH BEST ARMS SEMI-AUTO SHOTGUN GIVEAWAY

The *BH Best Arms Semi-Auto Shotgun (BA 312-PG)* from ADCO is what you'll need when firepower counts. This gas-operated shotgun is our prime prize for the April issue of *GUNS*. It carries 5+1 rounds of 12-gauge shells with your choice of small shot to 3" slugs. The Best Arms shotgun with a black-anodized finish has a barrel length of 20" and OAL of 40". It is offered with or without a pistol grip. A tactical sight also comes optional.

The shotgun we're giving away comes with an *Alfa Dot Sight (Model A30 B)*. The 30mm sight gives a field of view of 44 feet at 100 yards, about 20% more objective view over a 1" tube sight. The 3 MOA dot is zeroed in for service for fast accurate shots in all conditions.

Wear a *GUNS Magazine* shirt from Nine Line Apparel to complete your setup. This limited edition shirt sports the *GUNS* logo in front and a quote from John Wayne on the back: "Courage is being scared to death & saddling up anyway."

Enter the giveaway and win the ADCO BH Best Arms Shotgun with Alfa Dot Sight and a Nine Line *GUNS* T-Shirt. All you have to do is go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or send us a post card. —Jazz Jimenez



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DIY HEAVY HITTERS FOR YOUR .45 COLT HOT LEAD MAKES FOR HOTTER LOADS

I could happily end my shooting days with the .45 Colt cartridge and never feel cheated. With handloads, the .45 Colt offers a versatility many cartridges lack. Sure, some cartridges may be better for certain jobs but we have the ability to load the grand old .45 Colt up or down depending on what's required. There's a reason this cartridge is my favorite!

From 700 FPS target/utility loads with 200-grain cast slugs to 350+ grains at over 1,200 FPS for big critters, what other cartridge can offer such flexibility, performance and good manners as our friend the .45 Colt?

WHY CAST BULLETS?

Cast bullets offer as much versatility as the classic .45 Colt itself. We can use 200- to 250-grain SWC slugs for light/practical target loads. When we cast our slugs over 300 grains, we have a bullet with all the penetration capabilities we'll ever need. Add a hollow point to the mix and we have the finest of both qualities — an expanding slug with all the penetration necessary for quick and humane kills of game. Plus, nothing's more satisfying than taking game with a bullet you cast yourself. You'll feel more connected to the hunt by doing so, trust me.



Casting and handloading your own bullets provides a freedom and versatility like no other. You get to decide what bullet, alloy, powder and power level you want.



The simplicity of a cast bullet handload has the ability to perform as well as the best factory fodder, while instilling a sense of independence and pride. Tank used his Ruger Bisley Hunter with a Leupold 4X scope, as well as a TC Contender with a 14" barrel and a Ruger/Turnbull Bisley for testing. Here's the 45 Marlin Carbine and 45 503 slugs (below). Both are very accurate.



THE LINE-UP

The five slugs I'm about to share with you are fairly new to me. I've been experimenting with them the past few years besides my usual cast of characters. Who doesn't enjoy experimenting with new bullets? These bullets are accurate and up to any job I could ask them to perform. The trick is knowing what slug to use for which particular shot.

Admittedly, Elmer's 454424 has provided excellent results on several deer and a cow elk, providing total penetration on side lung shots, the elk from over 120 yards away. But what if the angle isn't perfect and we need more penetration from a cross-raking shot? This is where heavier bullets are worth their weight in gold.

The five slugs I'm going to tell you about come from MP Molds. All are capable of 1" to 1.5" for five shots at 25 yards or around 2" at 50 yards. The loads are for large-framed Ruger revolvers or equivalent.

RCBS 270 SA

Designed by Dave Scovill and made by RCBS initially, this slug drops at 285 grains when cast of WW alloy and around 277 grains in HP configuration. This bullet is a great all-around slug! For deeper penetration stick with the solid and for a nastier wound cavity on deer-sized game the HP from MP Molds will do the trick.

503 .45

This is simply a .44 slug in the same

CROSSFIRE

continued from page 8



It's easy to see these bullets are very accurate (above), whether shot from a scoped handgun or "iron" sights. The line-up, below, from left to right — .45 Marlin Carbine, 503 45, 45 270 SAA, 310 "K" in solid and HP, and lastly, the .45 Ruger Only slug.



style of Elmer's famous .44 slug, as made by Hensley & Gibbs, but in .45 caliber dimensions. The larger caliber drops these slugs at a hefty 290 grains of Elmer perfection. A good shooter, 20 grains of 2400 or 22 grains of H110 will easily go over 1,200 FPS in most handguns and provide all the accuracy you can hold.

MARLIN CARBINE

As the name states, this bullet was made as the perfect Marlin Carbine slug. The bullet nose is a cross between a WFN and LFN design and feeds perfectly in lever guns. As an HP, the slug weighs 265 grains and 273 grains in solid form. Loaded over 20 grains of 2400 or 22 grains of H110, the slug goes 1,250 FPS from handguns. Carbiners give it an extra 350 FPS.

310 "KEITH"

As the name states, MP Molds made this mold with true "Keith" characteristics, meaning three full-diameter equal-sized driving bands with a square lube groove. With WW alloy, my slugs drop out at 310

grains, and 303 grains in HP style. I could probably spend the rest of my hunting days with this bullet in .45 Colt quite splendidly, but what fun would that be?

This bullet is sure to add some thump to your favorite large-frame .45 Colt. Again, 20 grains of 2400, or 22 grains of H110 will get you over 1,200 FPS.

RUGER ONLY SLUG

This bullet was designed specifically for the long cylinder Ruger Blackhawk sixguns are known for. Most of the weight is outside, saving case capacity for powder and lower pressures. It's the heavyweight of the bunch, weighing in at 330 grains. Twenty-two grains of H110 pushes this slug over 1,230 FPS from my Ruger Bisley Hunter and is very accurate.

CAST IS COOL

Shooting bullets made with your own hand gives you the freedom and versatility of always knowing you'll have ammunition. You'll also sleep better knowing ammo is just a few steps away.

filled with 17-year-old gladiators who had given or received gunfire. There were consequences to all of that, but none of them really appreciated the gravitas of their actions. That's honestly why 19-year-olds make the best soldiers.

Should we eventually be blessed with grandchildren we will likely shoot together. We'll do that carefully and under controlled circumstances. However, if that kid played violent video games all the time and talked incessantly about stylized killing that would obviously shape the narrative.

Your mileage may vary, but that's what worked for us. —Will

Coincidentally, I covered the same topic in the GUNS Insider this month (see p. 74)! —BW



TRAVELIN' MAN

Reading Brent Wheat's article "To become an editor" in the Feb 2021 issue, I concur with his assessment travel for work certainly can get old, having done much for a couple of years after I retired from the Police Department. I have to argue being stranded in Wichita is not such a bad thing, as I have been "stranded" here since 1968. Wichita is a great town, having served 33 ½ years with the Wichita Police Department. If you get stranded here again, give me a call, I can show you the sites, and the sights!

Captain Darrell Haynes (Ret.)

I hope "stranded in Wichita" didn't sound like I hated the town — it was a matter of being stranded ANYWHERE right before Christmas, plus I was going to miss a granddaughter's birthday party. I was there for a media event and things were wonderful; I was very pleased with the Hard Rock and the airport was simple to navigate. But — I just wanted to get home!

I'll keep your email bandy next time I'm there! —BW

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GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE

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Talking to grandkids about guns is a delicate subject to broach if the parents aren't shooters. However, I've found the parents are much more understanding when you point out it's an important safety matter for visiting Grandad's house.

When talking to kids about guns, a common mistake even among some gun owners is treating firearms as "forbidden fruit." If something is off-limits, dangerous, *verboden* and generally treated as something totally illicit, children of any age will expend all manner of energy and

talk" with their kids. They especially agreed after I pointed out it was much better to anticipate a child might someday end up around an unsupervised firearm — not at grandad's house, but anywhere from a playground to a friend's house — than to hope such a situation never arises.

BUT – DON'T TRUST

However, the ultimate onus of safety is still on the gun owner to never allow kids and unsupervised firearms to mix. In this regard my vote for the most glaring example of poor judgment is the parent or grandparent who simply says, "my kids know not to touch my guns."

"I DARE ANY MAN OF A CERTAIN AGE TO CLAIM INNOCENCE ABOUT BEING UNAWARE OF THE 'PLAYDUDE' MAGAZINE THEIR DAD HAD HIDDEN IN HIS SOCK DRAWER."

ingenuity to explore the taboo object. It's a simple fact of childhood psychology — if you say "don't touch" without giving a rational explanation, a child will immediately seek it out the first moment you aren't looking.

Whenever kids inquire about your guns, use age-appropriate, non-dramatic language to explain they are dangerous if misused, much like cleaning chemicals, electricity and the family car. Then, if the kids are old enough, explain the basic firearms safety rules starting with "An adult has to be there." I also use this moment to discuss enrolling them in a shooting sports program so they can learn both the fun and responsibility of firearms.

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

In this regard, the NRA's Eddie Eagle Gunsafe Program (eddieeagle.nra.org) shines. In a nutshell, the program teaches children to "Stop! Don't touch! Run away! Tell a grown-up!" if they discover an unattended gun. The website has extensive information for parents about how to talk to their kids about firearms in an effective and fun manner. There are also resources for youth group leaders.

In my case, I was pleasantly surprised when I explained Eddie Eagle to my non-shooting children and suggested I have "the

Really? You *really, really* believe the assurances of a child in such a life-or-death matter?

I dare any man of a certain age to claim innocence about being unaware of the "Playdude" magazine their dad had hidden in his sock drawer. Likewise, by the time you were an early teenager, you probably knew where the Christmas presents were concealed, where the key to the liquor cabinet was hidden and how to slip out of your bedroom window without raising parental suspicion — and you had *at least* contemplated sampling each prohibited object or activity.

So, you still believe your kids "would never touch your guns?"

Sorry, you're just wrong. I know — they're nice kids, respectful, honest as the day is long and they've been taught properly but you're just mistaken in this regard. Keep your guns locked up until your children and (often more importantly) their friends truly grasp the significance of firearms and the dangers therein. I'd say around age 20 would be fine, except in the case of my friends where 70+ is a more appropriate age.

And, by the way, I'm not saying *my* dad had anything hidden in the sock drawer.

It was the underwear drawer. 

EddieEagle.NRA.org

LONG MEMORIES

Reader Domenichelli is correct. Colt made some mistakes by abandoning the civilian market (*Crossfire*, Feb 2021). When they made the decision, I was very upset but they aren't the only major manufacturer to make boneheaded moves. I recall during "Slick Willy's" administration, the owners of Smith and Wesson made a deal to try and prevent frivolous lawsuits so popular at the time. They faced a huge amount of backlash, and I said I'd never own an S&W firearm. Cooler heads have prevailed and S&W was able to get



out of that agreement, and have kissed and made up with the industry as a whole.

Both companies' executives made decisions based on the ability to turn a profit in the era they were in. I've been a business owner in the past, and I understand, the ability to make a profit is what allows them to employ people and provide us with quality products. I think we need to do the same thing we did in the late '90s and welcome the prodigal son back.

William Carmickle

Great job on dowsing the anti-Colt barn fire. You handled the response well.

I felt for the reader but you were right in your thesis. I am a small-time collector of S&W revolvers and when Smith opted for the side-plate safety, I felt betrayed. As time went on, I started buying the newer versions. Of note was a new mod 29-10 classic 6-1/2" blue that sports eagle heritage grips. I bought it as a regular shooter to prevent wear and tear on my older models and yes, I reload my own ammo.

The model 29-10 shoots very well and is very well made. My older models 29-2 and 1959 Model 29 pre-dash are fine mechanically but the new MIM and CNC wins honors over the older guns. I guess you have to look at gun companies over the long run before judging them too harshly and forever.

Joe L. 

PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, KIDS AND GUNS

THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ERROR

Now that I've officially earned my field commission as a Grandfather, First Class, the subject of children interacting with firearms takes on a new importance.

Firearms safety was never an after-thought in our house when my own kids were young. But today, facing periodic household assault by a half-dozen sugar-fueled youngsters, I've started to re-examine how I did it before and how I now plan to successfully integrate a whole new generation with firearms.

Obviously, the primary concern is making sure they can't access guns without proper supervision until they're old enough to merit such an important trust. This point is pounded home constantly by actual gun safety organizations such as the NRA, and several states have enacted laws criminalizing unsafe firearm storage. Yet, tragedies still occur. Aside from the just plain stupid people who leave guns lying around when kids are present, let's take a closer look at how non-stupid, properly trained, more-or-less intelligent people occasionally fail and how to better address the issue of child gun safety.

SURPRISES EVERYWHERE

Like many people without little ones underfoot, I have firearms stashed throughout my house. After several decades as a cop I've made a few sworn enemies and if you add in the general insanity currently afflicting our world, I feel compelled to keep firearms handy and ready to use in several locations around our residence. The guns aren't lying around in the open but they're also not secured enough I'd even remotely consider them "child safe."

This raises our first point, a very common yet erroneous belief among gun owners — don't ever think placing a firearm "up high"

will keep it away from small hands. If you've ever watched a toddler build an improvised ladder out of toys to reach the cookie jar on the kitchen counter, you know the "safe" top shelf of the closet or bookcase is just a challenge rather than a deterrent to a yearling on a mission.

Trigger locks are a start but if you keep guns around for defense, a trigger lock is only an impediment yet doesn't prevent unauthorized handling. While none of my loaded guns should go off with rough



treatment, I would instantly faint dead away at the sight of a grandkid messing around with a locked but loaded pistol from the bedside dresser. Therefore, physically removing guns from reach is the only reasonable assurance of keeping children safe.

THE SWEEP

This means we've got a new unique responsibility as grandparents — "the sweep" we conduct before any small visitors are allowed into the house. I keep a laminated list of all the places I have hidden firearms so nothing is overlooked in the busy moments prior to a family visit. After

gathering up the various pistols, rifles, shotguns and anti-tank weapons, then locking them safely away, my wife and I cross-check each other to make sure we actually gathered up every weapon (with very young kids, we also collect the various sample knives lying around the office). It's much like the checklist process pilots use in flight. In our case, the outcome would be equally as tragic if something was overlooked or forgotten.

This checklist and counter-check process might seem a bit over the top but we've also seen how unsecured guns can be forgotten when unexpected visitors show up. After a few scary "wait right here" moments, my wife and I have both committed to making the sweep our highest-priority "Immediate-action drill" (IAD) whenever we hear a tiny knock on the front door.

Of course, we don't necessarily tell our friends we have established an IAD procedure for toddler attack, but they probably wouldn't be surprised. After all, I'm the gun writer who once put a gas mask on my elementary-aged daughter and posed her sitting sweetly on her bed with a teddy bear to illustrate an article on preparedness. Don't judge me.

We've also told the various parents we will not be offended if they inquire about the status of our guns. In fact, we asked them to ask us every time they come through the door. Hopefully, among four otherwise grown

adults, someone would remember this important point in spite of the rush to the candy dish and obligatory round of hugs and runny-nosed kisses.

TEACH THEM WELL

With all kids — including grandchildren — another important safety backstop is training. From a young age, children should understand the danger of firearms. We teach them about stuff under the sink and electricity in wall sockets so why shouldn't we talk to them about firearms?

continued on page 73

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