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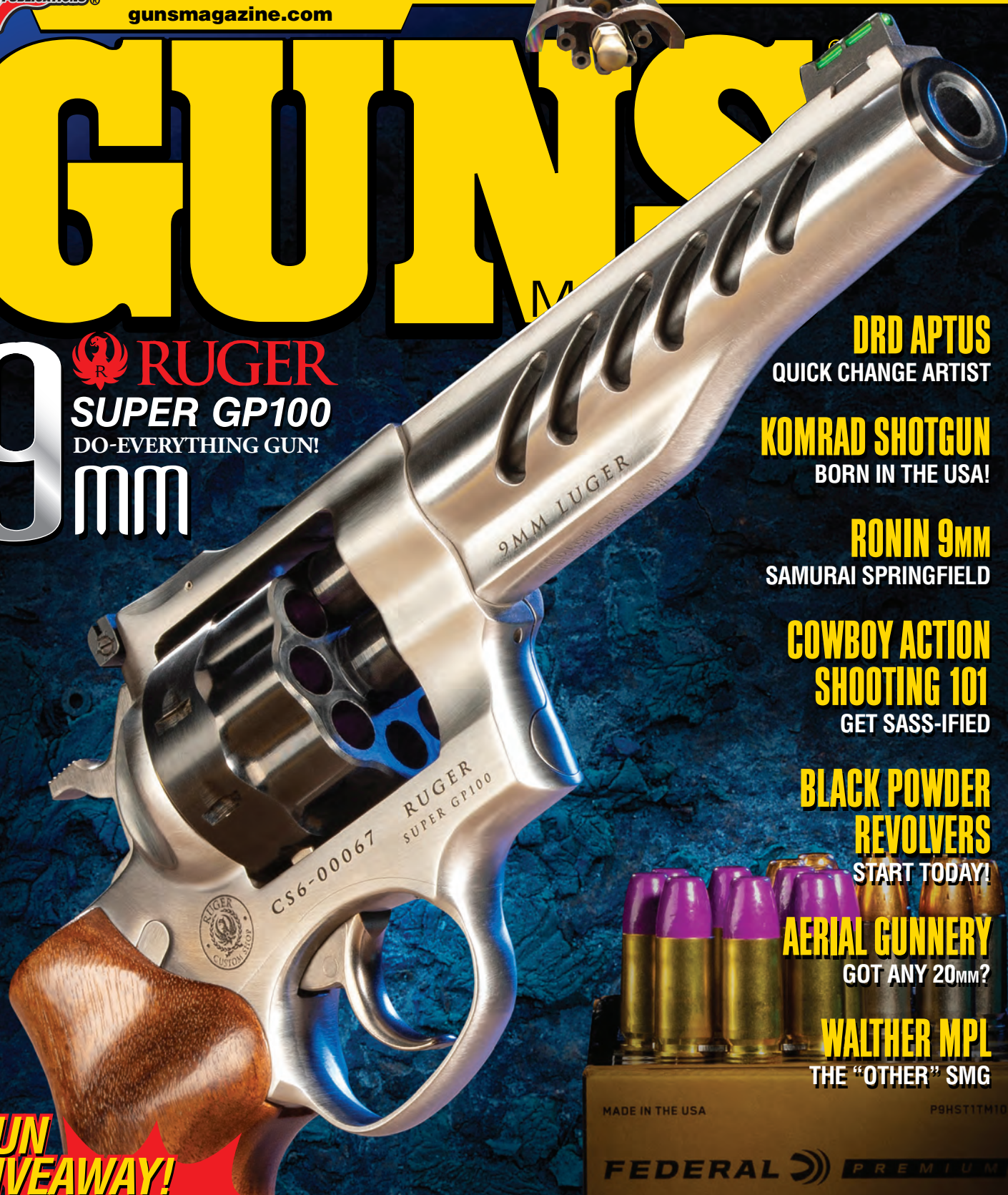
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Perhaps the mythical “all-purpose” 9mm wheelgun, the Ruger Super GP100 is pure fun — and practical!

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SITTING DOWN ON THE JOB

Funny thing about Thrones ("Surviving on the Throne," Insider Dec '20 issue), I do more reading in The Throne room than anywhere else. On the outside Throne Room I try to be overly cautious. On the stand up end, say rest stop, I'd say I take an end as a defensible position, protecting my firearm. You know the back to the wall restaurant thing. I must say this gave me a laugh knowing it's not just me.

Jim Lieto



Your "Surviving on the Throne" in the December 2020 issue was a fine example of original thinking. I don't recall ever coming across this topic in print before. However, you have overlooked a simple, though currently out-of-fashion solution: the shoulder holster. No matter where one's trousers are, with a shoulder holster one's handgun is always in its proper, easily reached place.

Eugene Souberman

Good point on the shoulder holster. As a "cop of a certain age," I had boxes full of them but they're not really my cup of tea however, if you're sitting for long periods (in the car, at a desk or indeed "on the throne"), they are very handy. —BW

Laughed my head off reading Brent's comments on "the Technique." A couple of years ago I was at LAX also sitting on the throne. However, in Los Angeles you do not bring a firearm onto the airport property. As I sat there contemplating the world as we know it, the door to the stall next to me opens, closes and someone starts to sit down.

Suddenly at my feet arrives a lovely semi-automatic. I asked cautiously, "I hope you are a LEO (Law Enforcement Officer)?"

The reply was a very sheepish "Yes."

I slide the pistol back under the partition, immediately pulled up my pants and left.

Ed

I really enjoyed Brent Wheat's article on staying safe while using public bathrooms. Having spent my entire life as a girl, and knowing perhaps hundreds of other girls, I need to correct a misapprehension. In his article Mr. Wheat says, "Women are obviously way ahead of men on this point although I'm fairly sure it isn't for tactical reasons." No! Girls do go to the bathroom together for tactical reasons. Sometimes we only go together for tactical reasons. This is why:

1. A strange man could follow us into the

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TYLER GUN WORKS .22 MAGNUM RUGER BEARCAT BUILDING MEMORIES PAST AND FUTURE

Bill Ruger apparently always looked back into history to find inspiration for many of his projects. In 1958, probably after studying the Remington .31 cap-n-ball pocket pistol, Bill did the same thing as he had done with the Single-Six. He brought out an up-to-date .22 version and called it — this also came from history, cars not guns this time — the “Bearcat” after the Stutz Bearcat automobile. It was fitting such a beautiful car would lend its name to Ruger’s second .22 revolver.

BABY OF THE FAMILY

The little Bearcat is very small. The cylinder is inscribed with a picture of both a bear and a mountain lion, the frame is one piece with the grip frame monolithic to the mainframe just as the old Remington and the removable aluminum trigger guard is brass colored. Barrel length is 4", sights are fixed, and although it looks like it was made to only fit very small hands, it actually somehow manages to feel good in hands as large as mine.

Kids and .22s go together. They always have, they always will — unless political correctness totally corrupts us. Great memories come from friends and families enjoying things together, and firearms

and being outdoors are grand memory builders. Moreover, there is no firearm as good as a .22 for building those memories. Inexpensive to shoot and low recoil, they are a great match for families on a budget and with young kids not ready for anything larger.

SPANNING THE YEARS

Bearcats have had a special significance in our family for generations. By the 1970s my son was 10 years old and ready for his very own first revolver. Since my first revolver was a .22 Ruger Single-Six in the mid-1950s, I knew it had to be a .22, it had to be a single action and it had to be a Ruger.

The bargain we struck was I would pay half if he would save up the other half. It took him quite a few odd jobs to come up with his part but on his 10th birthday, we bought a brand-new Ruger Bearcat. The shop owner threw in a box of .22s, I fashioned a belt and holster, a friend made custom grips, and another generation was ready to enter the satisfying world of six-gunning. He still has the Bearcat.

My granddaughter, his youngest, also has a Bearcat as her first firearm. I presented her with a Ruger stainless steel, round-butted Shopkeeper’s Models from Lipsey’s



John presented his youngest granddaughter with a Bearcat when she was just a young shooter; she is now a Doctor of Pharmacy.

when she was 10. She is now a pharmacist. Diamond Dot also has a Super Bearcat and my old Bearcat is well-worn but still shoots the way we expect any Ruger to do.

In 2014 Ruger introduced the adjustable-sighted Bearcat. Since I had been asking for one for so long, Ruger presented me with one. It has now been fitted with custom grips and put away for my first great-grandchild when she reaches shooting age.

DESIGN TWEAKS

Unlike the Single-Six, the Bearcat featured a one-piece grip frame/mainframe combination, originally cast from aluminum alloy, which later was replaced with steel. The Bearcat has especially been popular with those who must consider every ounce important — backpackers, hikers, fishermen, smokejumpers, anyone who wanted a lightweight .22 to carry unobtrusively.

When Ruger switched to New Model production with a transfer bar safety in both the Single-Six and Blackhawk series, they elected to drop the Bearcat rather than add a transfer bar. The Bearcat was then resurrected in 1993 complete with a transfer bar safety, however, unlike the Single-Six and the Blackhawk, the Bearcat features a half-cock notch on the hammer.



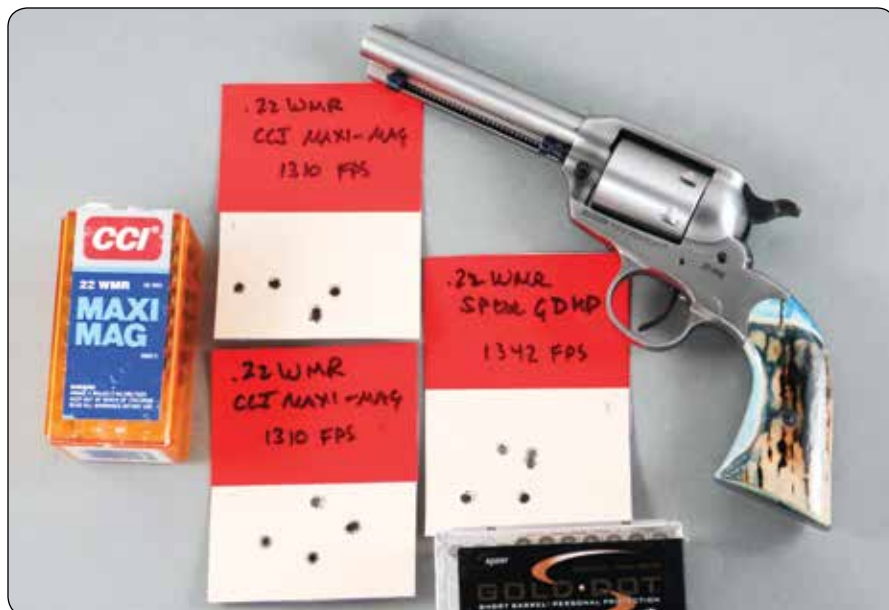
The Ruger Bearcat (bottom two sixguns) is significantly smaller than the Single-Six (top two).

The Bearcat is rarely seen in holsters. Instead it can be found in backpacks, fishing tackle boxes, pockets, anywhere a small space will accept this diminutive .22. All Ruger Bearcats made since 1958 have been chambered in .22. However, about 1,000 were made with an auxiliary .22 Winchester Magnum Rimfire cylinder. These are now very rare and if one wants a .22 Magnum Bearcat it is strictly a custom proposition. Enter Bobby Tyler of Tyler Gun Works in Friona, Texas. Bobby is converting current production Bearcats to .22 Magnum and one of his customers for one of these exceptionally handy and potent Kit Guns allowed me the privilege of testing it first.

TYLER TEST

Starting with a stainless-steel .22 Long Rifle Bearcat, Bobby maintains the factory barrel and re-chambers the factory cylinder to .22 WMR. After considerable experimenting and re-barreling several with custom barrels, he found accuracy using the original parts was just as good as building a custom cylinder and custom barrel. This saves a considerable amount of money.

In addition to converting the cylinder the action is tuned and tightened along with a smoothing of the trigger. With the action work and trigger job, this little Bearcat also receives the accuracy package consisting of adjusting the barrel/cylinder gap, re-crowning the barrel and aligning the cylinder as perfectly as possible to the forcing cone. Bobby says he will re-barrel and re-cylinder when asked to do so, however he finds it is not necessary to replace the originals. He also offers this conversion with



The Custom Tyler Gun Works Ruger Bearcat was test-fired at 12 yards with several types of .22 WMR ammo; all groups were just over an inch.

two cylinders chambered in .22 LR and .22 Magnum.

The top of the barrel is now marked "Tyler Gun Works Friona TX" in two lines and the left side of the frame says ".22 Mag." The gun itself is all stainless except for the trigger and hammer, which are case-colored while the cylinder pin, ejector rod head, and all screws are nitre-blue. The cylinder pin is from Belt Mountain.

All of the Old Model Rugers — Single-Six to Blackhawk to Super Blackhawk — produced from 1953 to 1972 are known as "Three-Screw Models" due to the three screws in the side of the frame. With the introduction of the New Model the three screws were replaced by two pins. The New

Bearcat is not only unique in the fact it has both a transfer bar and half-cock notch, it also has two screws instead of two pins.

BEAUTIFUL BEARCAT

With its stainless-steel finish matched with blued screws, this is quite an attractive little .22 Magnum. So what does one do to finish the project and make it especially eye appealing? For Bobby, the answer was found in the grips, which I, as a grip connoisseur, find especially attractive. Bill Ruger often reached back in history for inspiration and to name his firearms, however Bobby went back even further and chose woolly mammoth ivory for the grips. This particular ivory was buried in soil that gave it a blue cast, resulting in a uniquely beautiful set of grips.

This Tyler Gun Works .22 Magnum was fired with a variety of factory .22 Winchester Magnum Rimfire loads at a distance of 12 yards. Some of the best shooting loads were from Armscor with a muzzle velocity of 1,260 fps and groups of 1" or less; while Remington Accutip, 1,427 fps; Winchester JHP, 1,289 fps; CCI Maxi-Mag, 1,310 fps; and Speer GDHP at 1,342 fps. All group just slightly over 1" for five shots at 12 yards.

This is a grand little sixgun that increases muzzle velocity significantly over the .22 Long Rifle. It is not going to be easy to send it back.



Bearcats have been offered in both stainless steel and blued finishes.

Ruger.com

GLOCK 26

POCKET GLOCK PUNCHES ABOVE ITS WEIGHT CLASS

The service-size 18-shot GLOCK 17 9mm pistol soared to popularity in the U.S. in the mid-1980s. Demand immediately arose for a smaller version, and circa 1988 they introduced the G19 with barrel and butt slightly shorter and capacity cut by two rounds. The shooting public wanted smaller yet, so the mid-1990s saw the introduction of the further chopped Baby GLOCK, and therein lies a tale.

THE NURSERY

The first Baby GLOCKS were introduced simultaneously, the G26 with 10+1 rounds of 9mm and the G27 with 9+1 rounds of .40 S&W. They were an instant hit. The 10-round mag limit of Bill Clinton's egregious Assault Weapons Ban was in play nationwide and these guns optimized size and power with mag capacity under those rules. The .40 S&W cartridge was on the ascent in law enforcement and for a while G27s outsold G26s. Today, of course, the 9mm is ascendant, the .40 is increasingly seen as outré, and for some time the 26 has been far outselling the 27. In 1998 the G33

was introduced, a Baby GLOCK holding 9+1 .357 SIG cartridges.

LEARNING TO APPRECIATE

I bought my two gun-test samples, a G27 and G26, when they came out in 1995. I confess I preferred the more potent .40, and the 27 got an NY-1 trigger and Trijicon night sights while the neglected 26 remained bone stock. The .40 got a lot of carry time because for quite a while I used a full size GLOCK 22 .40 for daily wear, even on duty, with the 27 for backup in an Alessi ankle holster; all the Baby GLOCKS will run with the higher-cap magazines of their larger brethren in the same caliber. Except when I felt a need for larger capacity and went with a G17 and +2 magazine with G26 for backup, my 9mm languished in the gun safe for the most part until the second decade of the 21st Century.

What changed things for me began in competition. My friend Danny Ryan runs the GSSF (GLOCK Sport Shooting Foundation) competition section at GLOCKTalk.com. A few years ago, he commented



Nearly 100 rounds of rapid fire from assorted G26s (Gen4 shown below) from 15 yards — all in the A-zone.

more than once the overall best score at matches had been won by GLOCKmeisters like Bryan Dover and Mike Ross with stubby G26 pistols, beating every score fired with longer barrel GLOCKS including their own. Intrigued, I shot my next GSSF match with a G26 in all the 9mm events ... and had the same average score I'd been getting with the full size G17. I got into the habit of doing the same thereafter in all my GSSF shoots — running the 26 against 5.3" barrel G34s in Competition to warm up, then in Master Stock against 4.5" G17s, and finally in the Baby GLOCK's own event, Subcompact, now thoroughly dialed in. Won some guns, too. (Why the 26 as opposed to the 27 or 33? Cheaper ammo and less recoil.)

EXPLAINING "SHOOTABILITY"

The little snubby with its short sight radius and truncated two-finger grip shouldn't shoot as well as, say, a G19 or G17 — yet it does. When the Babies came out, I discovered immediately from the 25-yard bench the 155-grain .40 Silvertip gave me a 1.5" five-shot group, far tighter than what I could get from my 4.5" G22. The 26 averaged 2.5" groups, a little better than my 4.5" G17. Two things were going on: 1) The short 3.6" barrel was proportionally thicker and more rigid than the longer ones; and 2) The Baby GLOCKS' double captive recoil springs better guarantee unlocking would not occur until the bullet leaves the muzzle. This latter feature was later incorporated



Grasp secrets: Arrow shows how curved backstrap locks into hollow of palm; pinky finger is tucked under butt with standard G26 magazine.



The G26 takes all standard width GLOCK 9mm magazines.



The Ayoub household has found use for six assorted G26s — plus a G33 and a couple of G27s (not shown).

into larger Gen4 and Gen5 GLOCK service pistols.

This accounted for intrinsic accuracy, but what about human factors? I do find in the 30- to 50-yard range and greater distances, I get tighter groups with longer GLOCKS. However, under 25 yards, the short sight radius of the G26's 3.6" barrel is compensated for by ergonomics. There is a curve at the lower backstrap of the Baby GLOCK that perfectly nestles into the hollow of my palm, absolutely locking the gun in place with the hard crush grip I prefer. This added stability seems to compensate for increased human error due to shorter sight radius — at least for this shooter. The stubby grip? I find tucking the pinky finger tight under the butt sympathetically tightens the grasp of the other fingers, another compensation effect.

WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?

You have "ankle gun sizing." The G26 is roughly the size and weight of a six-shot



Progression of front grip-strap on G26 over 25 years. From left to right: Smooth front original, checkered Gen3 and Gen4, flat front Gen5.

Detective Special .38, but contains the round count of a DS plus the five shots of a J-Frame. Recoil of 9mm in the 26 is milder than service loads from a small-frame .38 Special. It has the established GLOCK reliability. The 26 accepts 17-round G17 or even 33-round G18 magazines. Yes, it's a little fatter than the Slim-Line G43X and G48 9mms with their 10-round mags, but I for one seem to shoot it a bit better.

If you haven't already, give the G26 a try. Between my lovely bride and I, we've accumulated six of 'em from various generations — I'm currently partial to my latest 26 with its wonderful Gen5 trigger — because we've come to appreciate the subtle advantages found in its combination of features.

GLOCK.com

BUYING THE PERFECT SPOTTING SCOPE

DOES SUCH A THING EXIST?



The old way: A gillie in Scotland steadies his traditional collapsible scope on a walking stick to glass for stags. Today there are far better optics to aid the hunt.



Along with fine- and coarse-focus dials, a scope should have a jacket that can be left in place during use.

A spotting scope does what a binocular can't and a rifle scope shouldn't. A bino helps you spot game, handily and from any position, using both your eyes. A rifle scope is a sight, ever-aligned with the barrel. Glassing through a rifle scope puts everything you see in your bullet's path, a transgression by any measure. It is awkward and tiring and restricts you to monocular vision. It makes your rifle a semaphore, drawing attention when you'd as soon remain unnoticed.

For most hunts, a bino is enough. But more power is useful for selective hunting of prairie and mountain game, to assess horns or antlers across seas of sage or basins blue in the distance. High power — say, over 15x — demands bigger front glass than you'll find in binoculars. Objective lens size affects exit pupil, the diameter of the bundle of light reaching your eye and a common measure of light transmission: Exit pupil (E) = front lens diameter in millimeters by magnification.

THE PHYSICS

Healthy young eyes dilate to about 7mm in total darkness. An EP of 6mm, even 5, is all you need on most hunts. It's easy to get in binoculars and rifle scopes but the high magnification of spotting scopes throttles brightness. A 20x60 spotting scope has a 3mm EP, big enough for glassing on sunny days, but limiting in poor light. An 80mm lens at 20x brings EP to 4mm — but of course adds weight and bulk to your pack.

Big front glass yields higher resolution than do smaller lenses of equal quality. In other words, it reveals more detail, crisply. Resolution helps you ensure a ram's curl clears the bridge of his nose or the hooks on a pronghorn buck are long enough to offset weak cutters.

Save in very poor light, dialing power above 20x behind 80mm glass increases resolution without costing you brightness — but there's a limit to usable resolution.

Your unaided eye can distinguish about a minute of angle (60 seconds of arc, or about an inch at 100 yards). Many moons ago a fellow named Rayleigh came up with a constant — 114.3 — which, divided by objective lens diameter in millimeters, yields actual resolution in seconds of angle. Divide 114.3 by 65mm (lens diameter on mid-size scopes) and you get a resolution value of 1.76 seconds. To find the highest



A folded light path keeps Leupold's (front) 12-40x60 short while 82mm front glass on the Meopta (rear) adds resolution.

power at which this resolution is useful, divide 60 seconds by 1.76. Result: 34x.

More power makes images bigger but not clearer. Larger front glass — say, 80mm — boosts both resolution and highest useful power: $114.3/80\text{mm} = 1.43$ seconds. Then, $60\text{ seconds}/1.43 = 42\text{x}$.

For example, to identify an obscure

detail on a computer image, you may have bumped power above the “point of diminishing return” in resolution. Sometimes bigger is better even if blur increases apace. In the field, however, the little benefit you get from blurry enlargement is offset by magnified mirage and image movement, and reduced exit pupil.

BUYING TIPS

Resolution in spotters is worth comparing before you buy. Focus on distant details like insulators on power poles or automobile license plates, in varying light conditions.

While variable power can be an oversold feature in rifle scopes, it's essential in spotting scopes. I like a spotter whose bottom end is no more than double the power of my binocular. A broad, bright field makes finding animals easier. Rayleigh's rule applies at the top end. A 65mm scope with magnification higher than 35x is overpowered. Ditto 45x in 80mm glass.

Even if resolution limits didn't apply, wobbles would put a practical lid on magnification. In windy conditions, steadying a scope to clarify detail can be a chore at 25x. Beyond 35x, the optic can develop a pulse strong enough to dislodge rocks. Chowder-thick mirage also puts a leash on usable power.

CRITERIA

For hunting, I've yet to find a scope underpowered at 45x. My Leupold 12-40x60 remains at its lowest setting until it's on game and I need more magnification. Only ideal conditions justify 30x.

As to objective size, 60mm seems a useful minimum. At 15x, you get a 4mm EP, adequate for all but the dimmest of light. Top names in optics — Leica, Swarovski, Zeiss — offer scopes with 62 to 65mm



An image is only as good as the tripod! This lightweight, fully adjustable model cradles a 60mm scope.

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OPTICS



On the range, an angled eyepiece lets you check mirage and targets without getting out of position.

"THE WORLD IS AWASH IN FINE SPOTTING SCOPES. SOME COST MORE THAN A NEW FORD MUSTANG AT ITS 1965 DEBUT. BUT VALUES ABOUND."

objectives, a useful compromise between girthy, high-resolution 80mms (and now 95s) and handier 60s.

Like cameras, the best spotting scopes have removable lenses, to change power ranges. They're in a spotter's eyepiece, straight or angled. Straight is best for hunting. An eyepiece aligned with the barrel helps you locate game quickly. It also keeps a low profile as you peer over a ridge. An angled eyepiece excels in competition. Set the scope close to your left eye, and with a slight tilt of the head you can check mirage and spot hits. No need to shift your position.

For field use, you'll want an adjustable collar so you can rotate the scope body on the tripod. Dual focus wheels (fine and coarse) help you focus efficiently. ED (extra-low dispersion) lenses, also listed as APO (apochromatic), correct for color fringing, yield the sharpest images. Exterior lens coatings bead or slip water can be exceedingly useful.

WAYNE'S PICKS

The world is awash in fine spotting scopes. Some cost more than a new Ford Mustang at its 1965 debut. But values abound.

Leupold's Gold Ring 12-40x60 has an edge on most mid-size competitors, with

a 5mm EP at low power. A folded light path keeps scope length to a minimum. It scales a modest 37 oz. The protective soft-sided case need not be removed in use. The eyepiece accepts an adapter for digital cameras.

The Bushnell Elite Tactical 8-40x60 appeared a few years ago, with a low-end magnification matching common binocular power. It features ED Prime glass and RainGuard HD coating with a heavily armored chassis. Similar in weight to the Leupold, it travels in a canvas soft case that can be quickly folded back on the tripod.

I have an Alpen 15-45x65 that punches above its price. Of traditional design, it has a convenient forward focusing dial — easy to reach as you steady the scope with your hand. Resolution matches costlier scopes. A simple sighting tube on the side helps you direct this scope fast, accurately.

Among other mid-size spotters, Nikon's 16-48x60 Prostaff 5 Fieldscope has impressed me. Ditto the newer Vortex Viper HD 15-45x65.

For extended glassing, bigger scopes make sense. Meopta's MeoPro HD-80 20-60x80 is a champ. Another fine but modestly priced optic: Zeiss's Conquest Gavia 20-60x85 HD. While such scopes weigh about 4 lbs., their big objective (and ocular) glass helps you endure long sessions in the lens.

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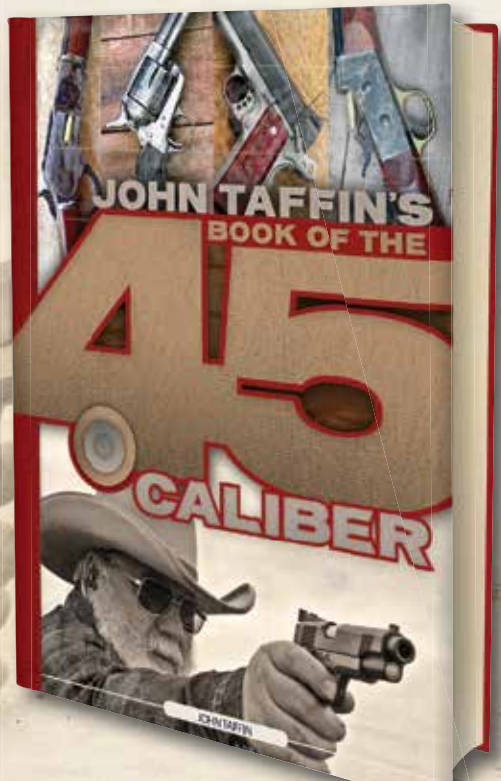
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LEVERGUN LOADS: .45 COLT PART II – CAST BULLETS

MORE LEVER LOADS FOR A JOHNNY-COME-LATELY

In part one of this series we saw the history of .45 Colt leverguns, which turned out to be quite recent, beginning in the early 1980s. We switch now from the use of PC (Powder Coated) bullets to cast bullets. The original Winchesters, whether chambered in .44 Rimfire or .44-40, all used cast bullets as jacketed bullets did not start appearing until the early part of the 20th century.

BACKGROUND

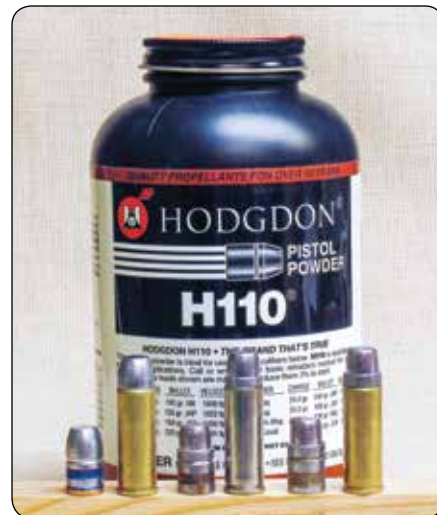
Beginning in the early 1980s both Winchester and Marlin began offering .45 Colt leverguns. Those first Winchesters were 16" Trapper Models, with mine being purchased in 1985. By this time Winchester had changed its name to USRAC (United States Repeating Arms Co.) and the Trappers were offered in two versions, a blued receiver or a case-colored receiver. I was fortunate to find one of each. With their 16" barrels the Winchesters weigh right at 6 lbs. and while they do not have the slick action of the slightly smaller Model 1892, they are fast handling and come up to the shoulder quickly. Even with their short barrels,

they still carry nine rounds in the tubular magazine.

About the same time the Winchester Trappers arrived, Marlin had a very limited run of 500 each of .44 Magnum and .45 Colt Trappers. I found both of these on the shelf of a little gun store, actually a small gun department, in a local grocery store. Alas, the days of gun departments in grocery stores, department stores and drugstores are long gone.

However, in those long-gone days I was able to find two Winchester Trappers both in .45 Colt and the Marlin versions in both calibers mentioned. Over the past 35 years all four of these leverguns have shot extensively with both jacketed and cast bullets. Marlin and Winchester 1894s will both handle heavier-than-standard .45 Colt loads but 1860, 1866 and 1873 replicas are for standard loads only! That is — black powder loads or Black powder level only.

The 1894 Winchester Trappers have a long, strong action and even though the chambers are somewhat over-size, they will handle any load you can *normally* load in a .45 Colt case



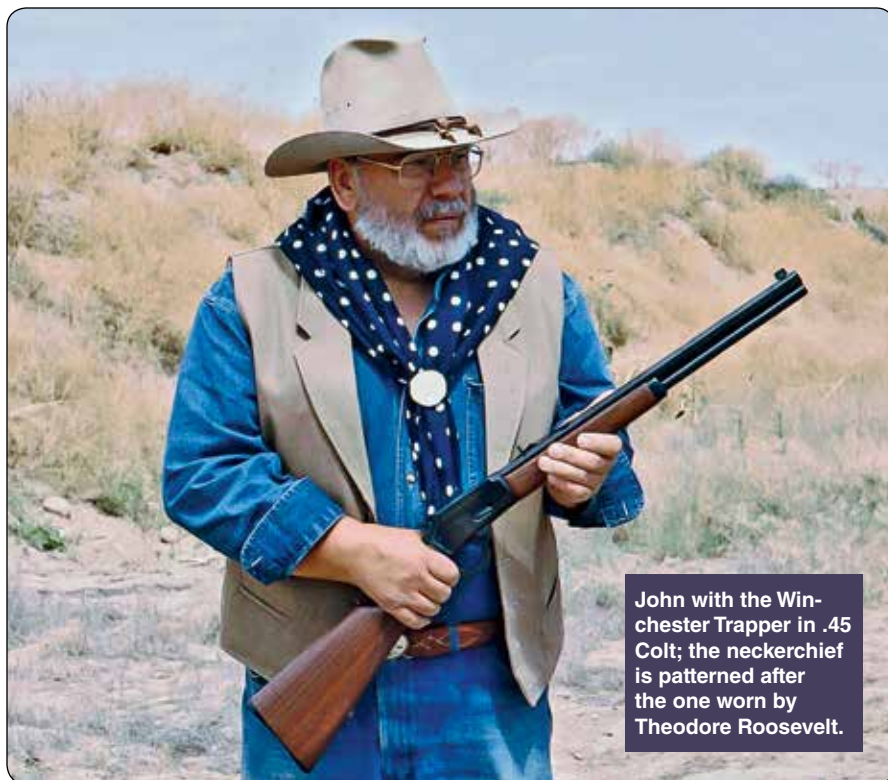
H110 works well for heavy bullet loads in the .45 Colt levergun.

for use in sixguns with six-shot cylinders. I advise staying away from loads intended for custom sixguns with five-shot cylinders and it has also been proven the lever-action is not strong enough for .454 loads.

STARTING OUT

I custom tailor my loads for the Trapper to match with the sixgun I am using alongside. However, none of these loads should be taken for granted and should be worked up very carefully. For example with the 4-5/8" Ruger Blackhawk, I use the NEI 310-grain Keith bullet over 21.0 grains of WW296 or H110 for 1,125 fps in the sixgun and 1,445 fps from the Trapper Barrel. I certainly don't know of anything in the lower 48 that cannot be handled with this load.

Before loading any ammunition for leverguns, I first make dummy rounds to be able to check both feeding through the action and chambering. It takes at least two rounds to be able to see if the rounds are too long to accomplish both operations. I found the following heavyweight bullets all would work through both the Winchester and Marlin actions: NEI 310 Keith, NEI 325 Keith, Lyman #454629GC 300-grain FN, RCBS #45-270 SAA weighing around 284 grains with my alloy, and I also checked the #454490GC design by Ray Thompson, which is a 255-grain Keith-style gas-checked bullet. All of the Keith-style bullets



John with the Winchester Trapper in .45 Colt; the neckerchief is patterned after the one worn by Theodore Roosevelt.

mentioned feed and chamber even though they have shoulders in front of the case. However, I crimp the #45-270 over the front band to ensure trouble-free feeding. None of these loads will work through the action of my Rossi .45 Colt Model 92.

CLOSE RANGE WORK

I use my Winchester and Marlin Trappers for relatively close-range shooting. With the Winchesters, equipped with receiver sights, most of my shooting is done around 30 to 35 yards with relatively mild loads. Oregon Trails 250-grain RNFP over 8.0 grains of W231 clocks out just under 1,100 fps with three-shot groups of 1" or less. For little more power I move up to the above-mentioned #454490 GC with 10.0 grains of Unique for just over 1,235 fps and groups of less than 1". This load will certainly handle deer-sized game. When the Marlin and Winchester Trappers first arrived in the early '80s, the #1 .45 Colt bullet was still Elmer Keith's #454424 weighing about 260 grains from my alloy. This is a plain base bullet and I found out very quickly it was not very accurate in either rifle.



Cast bullet loads in the Marlin .45 Colt — all the power and accuracy you'd need for most critters in the lower 48.

I have been pleasantly surprised by the Marlin Trapper. Marlins from the era have Micro-Groove rifling which may or may not work with cast bullets. I have found two things necessary — gas checks and hard

alloys, also in most cases muzzle velocities over 1,200-1,300 fps. I have been surprised by the fact the Marlin feeds Keith-style bullets perfectly. My most used powders for these loads are #2400, #9, #4227 and H110. For testing I go with three shots at 45 yards. Yes, these loads in this rifle could be stretched farther, however for feral pigs or white tail deer from a stand one would rarely have to shoot any farther than this.

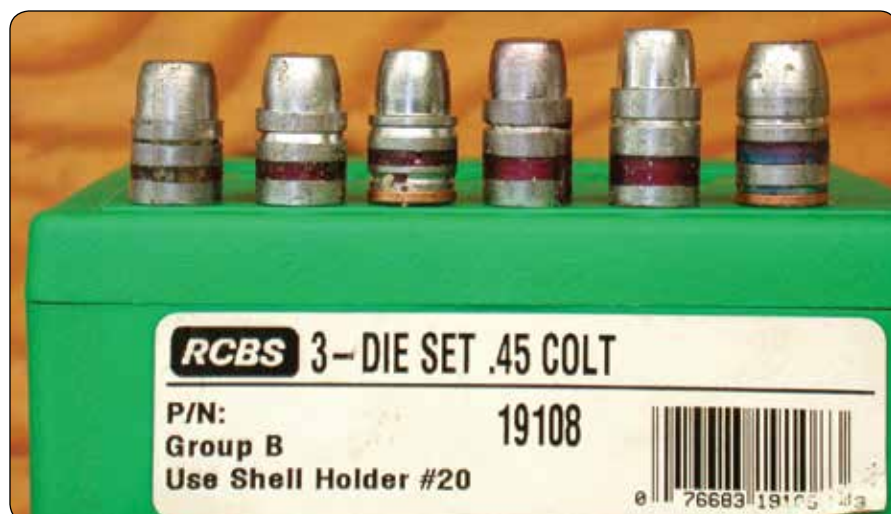


John makes up dummy loads using available cast bullets (above) to make sure they will feed and chamber through levergun actions. Cast bullets in both plain-based and gas check versions (below) are available from 260 grains to 325 grains.

PEAK ACCURACY

Some of my most accurate loads are as follows: The Lyman/Thompson #454490 GC over 20.0 grains of #42274 gives a 3/4" group at 1,275 fps or 20.0 grains of #2400 for 150 fps more velocity and a group just over 1". I especially like the 260-grain Keith gas-check bullet which shoots exceptionally well using #4227, 20.0 grains is 1,115 fps for 5/8" and then it gets even better! Moving up to 22.0 grains increases the muzzle velocity to 1,300 fps and then 24.0 grains is right at 1,400 fps with both putting three shots in 1/2" at 45 yards. I didn't think I could shoot this well!

For a heavier bullet with #4227 I use 22.0 grains with the 305-grain Lyman #454629 gas check at 1,315 fps while grouping in 5/8" for three shots. I have yet to find any levergun or sixgun that does not shoot this Dick Casull-designed bullet exceptionally well. Next we will look at jacketed bullets in .45 Colt leverguns. Stay tuned.



ONE-PIECE SAA GRIPS AN OBSESSION CONFESSION

Like so many readers of my age I grew up on Skeeter Skelton's great articles. One that has influenced me unto this day came out in the late '60s or early '70s. It showed an exquisite set of one-piece grips on a Colt SAA. Of course I was aware of one-piece grips as they were

on virtually every replica Colt revolver coming from Italy. The difference was Skeeter's were beautiful.

Skeeter mentioned the company in Idaho made his. So, in the spring of 1973 I made a lengthy detour on my travels to visit the outfit. When I explained why I

walked through their door, the greeter said, "Sure, we made those for Skeeter but we won't do it for you." With the dash of cold water, I left. At the time I'd had a mere three articles published in firearms periodicals. Now I've had over 2,000 published and still have never mentioned the company's name!

Like most things you can't have, my desire for one-piece Colt SAA grips became a near-obsession. On another trip, I tried a fellow in California. He was a lot friendlier but just didn't want to mess with making one-piece style single action grips. Therefore, I decided to try my hand at it. At the end of the day, I'd ruined valuable vintage grips from a sample Colt by dropping them on concrete, and my block of wood looked like a chainsaw maniac had been turned loose on it.

WHY?

The California grip maker explained it. In the early days of Colt revolvers, the grips were actually cut from a block of wood and inlet so the grip frame fit around it. The Italian Colt replica grips I've examined are made the same way. However, to simplify matters grip makers today produce each side's panel and then glue them together with a spacer. The look and function is the same. Even better; I've never seen a glued set separate.

Right now I have one-piece Colt SAA grips made of water buffalo horn, elephant ivory, bison thigh bone, stag antler, hard rubber and various types of wood. My favorite wood is usually fancy walnut but rosewood is beautiful also. My one-piece-style grips have been made by a variety of craftsmen. The first finally came in the early '80s — a talented stock maker for Shiloh Rifle Manufacturing, the producer of those beautifully crafted Sharps Model 1874 recreations, made some for me. The wood was fancy walnut salvaged from rifle stocks broken in shipment. Another time the nice folks at Eagle Grips sent me a set of panels made of rosewood. With my history of wood butchery I prevailed on another stock maker to fit them for me.

One reason after-market grip makers might shy away from Colt SAAs is this — at the factory, grips are fitted before the final polishing of the grip frame. In other words the final polishing is done with the wood fitted so the end result is a perfect fit. Aftermarket



Duke has many types of grips on his single actions but one-piece style wood is his all-time favorite. From top clockwise: Eagle Grips buffalo horn, bison bone, stag, Colt hard rubber, ivory and fancy walnut.



This set of one-piece style grips are Duke's most recent. They were built by Bill Fuchs of Spring Creek Armory in Ten Sleep, Wyo.



Duke obtained a set of rosewood panels from Eagle Grips and then had a local stock maker fit them as one-piece style grips on this Colt Sheriff's Model .44-40/.44 Special.

grip makers have to be exceptionally careful in fitting grip panels lest they get into the metal and leave a major boo-boo.

COME LATELY

And this brings us to my most recent set of one-piece style Colt SAA grips. In 2019 I

acquired a 1926 vintage Colt SAA .38 WCF (.38-40) wearing a set of modern so-called Colt hard rubber grips. With its 7½" barrel, the Colt turned out to be a fine shooter but the grips not only didn't suit the revolver's era, but their fit to grip frame was atrocious. I said to myself, "One of these days

I'm going to have a set of straight-grained walnut grips put on this Colt." After all, a Colt of such age and wear wouldn't look correct with grips of fancy wood.

Luckily, I dallied because just recently I discovered a fellow named Bill Fuchs doing business as Spring Creek Armory in Ten Sleep, Wyo. Among the many services he offers for single-action shooters is making one-piece style grips. The .38 WCF was sent down to him and returned with grips exactly as I had envisioned.

They feel good, fit well and best of all, have made me happy. As this is being written, I'm preparing to send him a Colt Frontier Six-Shooter made in 2008. It has some of the best color-case-hardening I've seen on an SAA along with lovely deep blue. I told Bill to pick out the wood and make me some beautiful one-piece style grips to go with it.

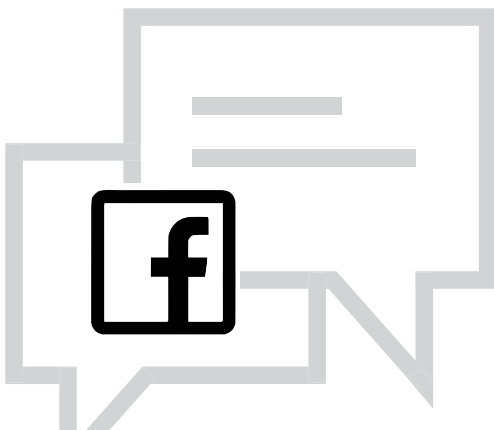
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RUGER 10/22 TAKEDOWN

FUN GUN WITH A SERIOUS SIDE

Since its introduction in 1964, more than 5 million Ruger 10/22 rifles have been sold. This makes it one of the best-selling civilian rifles of all time, second only to the Winchester Model 94 at an estimated 7 million rifles.

Where the 10/22 outshines the Model 94 is the number of versions available — Sporter, Carbine, Tactical, Lite, Target, Takedown and more. Stocks have been made from Birch, Fancy French Walnut, laminated and synthetic materials. Finishes include, among others, matte black, stainless steel, camouflage and American flag-themed rifles.

The number of accessories available for the 10/22 is only rivaled by the 1911 pistol and AR15.

THIS IS MY RIFLE

While I have several versions of the 10/22, my favorite is the Takedown. Mine happens to be a Black Hills Ammunition Commemorative model.

The rifle has a Birch stock and is finished in matte black. Like most 10/22s it has an 18" barrel and has an overall assembled length of 37". Weight is about 4.5 lbs.

The front sight is a post with a gold bead, with an adjustable rear sight. Not standard on all models, my rifle came with a Weaver-style rail on the top of the receiver.

Although generally satisfactory, the Weaver-style rail limits what type of optics can be used. I replaced it with a Picatinny rail for use with an Aimpoint Micro H-2 red dot sight.

The Micro H-2 keeps the profile of the rifle low and adds very little weight. Turned to a lower brightness setting, to give the illusion of a small dot, it provides all the accuracy I am capable of with a .22.

The Black Hills 10/22 has two short rail sections incorporated into the barrel band at the end of the stock. I can activate a white light attached to the left rail easily with my thumb without changing my firing grip. I have attached a Streamlight TLR-1 HPL. With its cone shape reflector and putting out almost 800 lumens, it's like turning on an aircraft landing light. The barrel band also has an integrated Lasermax laser.

BREAKDOWN

Taking down the rifle is simple. After removing the magazine and ensuring the

rifle is empty, lock the bolt to the rear. Push a button located in the forend forward, twist the forend approximately 45 degrees to the left and remove the barrel and forend. It takes more time to read this than accomplish the takedown.

Using the standard 10-round rotary magazine, and the Ruger BX-15 and BX-25 (15 and 25 round) magazines, I have put a wide variety of different .22 ammo through the 10/22. Malfunctions have been such a rare occurrence it's hardly worth mentioning.



When taken down, the rifle will fit in a case only 22.5"x7"x7.5".



Regardless of ammunition or magazine type, the Ruger 10/22 Takedown is nearly malfunction free.

The padded carrying case is the same as the standard Ruger case for the Takedown 10/22 except it is more of an Earth-tone brown instead of black and red. With an overall size of 22.5"x 7"x7.5" it carries the Takedown 10/22 in a very compact package.

There are two large pockets on the outside, one with MOLLE webbing and three compartments on the inside to house the receiver, barrel group and a third to carry a scope, bipod, etc. D-rings at the top of the case allow it to be carried over the shoulder or backpack-style with the included strap.

BUT WHY?

Since this column is about defensive rifles, you may be wondering why I'm writing about "just" a .22.

To begin with, although not as powerful as many other cartridges it is still capable of great damage. Fish and Wildlife agencies report the majority of deer poaching is

"AND, IF A .22 IS CAPABLE OF MAKING A HEADSHOT ON A SQUIRREL OR RABBIT, IT IS CERTAINLY CAPABLE OF MAKING A HEAD SHOT ON A BIPED AGGRESSOR."

done with a .22 rifle since it is quieter than centerfire rounds and poachers don't want to bring attention to themselves.

With almost nonexistent recoil, a great number of rounds can be accurately placed in almost the blink of an eye. No one likes getting shot at. And, if a .22 is capable of making a headshot on a squirrel or rabbit, it is certainly capable of making a head shot on a biped aggressor.

In World War II the United States manufactured a crude, single-shot pistol named

the "Liberator" to be dropped to resistance forces in enemy occupied territory.

The Liberator was packed in a waxed cardboard box with 10 rounds of .45 ACP, five of which were stored in the grip. The effective range was only 25 feet so the Liberator's mission was to kill an enemy soldier at close range, then allow the partisan to become better armed by taking the soldier's weapon and ammunition.

While no one in their right mind wants a breakdown of society, if it ever came to such a state, a .22 carried in a compact package — such as the Ruger 10/22 Takedown — could fill the same role as the Liberator did in World War II.

Perhaps over and above all else shooting .22 rifles are fun. And be honest, isn't this why most of us began shooting in the first place?



The barrel band on Denny's 10/22 (left) incorporates a Lasermix laser and short Picatinny rail sections. When the bolt is locked to the rear, this button (right) is pushed forward and separates the barrel group from the receiver by a simple twist.

Ruger.com

Black-Hills.com

Streamlight.com

GUNS AND ROTORS

THE DARK MAGIC OF AERIAL GUNNERY

What's the most fun thing you've ever done? Might want to keep it to yourself just in case there are sensitive ears about. One of my hands-down coolest experiences was running belt-fed machineguns out of a helicopter.

There are really only two ways you might ever have an opportunity to burn thousands of rounds out the side door of a \$26 million helicopter. One is to have a

name like Gates or Trump. The other is to be an unwashed redneck kid like me who signed his name, slipped into a military uniform, and got really familiar with Uncle Sam's helicopters. The end result was fun on an apocalyptic scale.

THE EQUIPMENT

All U.S. Army tactical utility helicopters are equipped with door guns. The SpecOps

Bad Boys of Task Force 160 rock M134 miniguns but the Big Army used D-model M60s in my day. These airborne versions of the classic Vietnam-era M60 Pig were, in my experience at least, steaming piles of ballistic feces. Thankfully nowadays our boys and girls going downrange wield FN M240H machineguns that are vastly better.

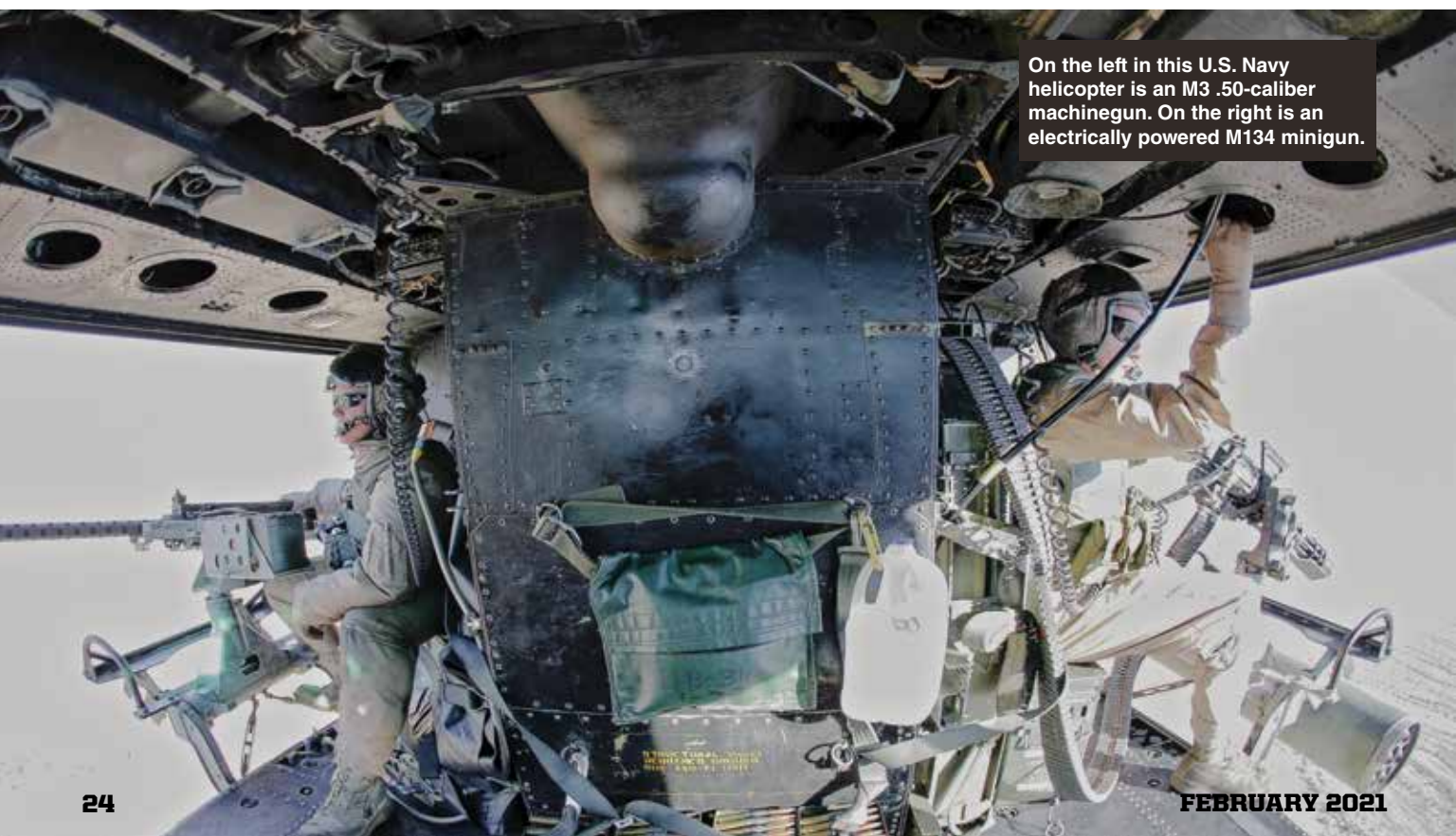
In my first unit we were allotted 24 M60D door guns. These weapons used a common M60 receiver but eschewed the standard rubber-coated forearm. They also employed spade grips and a ring trigger in place of the standard pistol grip of the ground gun. Out of 24 meticulously maintained and perfectly lubricated, we had maybe five that ran well. Those five were a wonder to behold, however.

The M60D uses standard removeable M60 barrel assemblies replete with bipods. Mounting the M60 bipod to the barrel meant our poor unfortunate grunt brethren had to hump an extra bipod with each spare barrel assembly. Up close, it was just sad.

A series of cams unique to each mount limited the gun's travel so you didn't shoot up your own rotor system. Ejection control bags caught the empty cases and links so they wouldn't clutter up the aircraft. With the guns mounted up, ample ammo onboard, and scads of range space cleared just for us, it was time to rock and roll.



The M230 Chain Gun on the AH64 Apache gunship is slaved to the gunner's helmet and is capable of firing off-axis while in flight. Photo: Yari Samurai



On the left in this U.S. Navy helicopter is an M3 .50-caliber machinegun. On the right is an electrically powered M134 minigun.



Door guns on tactical aircraft are designed to provide suppressive fire to keep an enemy occupied during critical operations in and around landing and pickup zones.

A WEE SPOT OF SCIENCE

The practical physics governing aerial gunnery out of a moving aircraft is absolutely fascinating. Our M60 machineguns sported barrels rifled with a 1:12" clockwise twist. If my math is correct it means each M80 147-grain FMJ bullet travelling around 2,800 feet per second is spinning at 168,000 rpm. Any object freely subject to gravity accelerates toward the center of the earth at 32.17 feet per second squared. This is why when we shoot our weapons the bullets invariably arc downward until they eventually strike the earth. Factor in a 160-knot (184 mph) crosswind, however, and some of the most amazing things occur.

When firing bullets with a clockwise spin out the right side of a moving aircraft, the airflow across the spinning projectile creates a low-pressure area on the top of the bullet. Driven by the Magnus Effect, this causes each bullet to behave like its own miniature aircraft and fly upward. The practical result is a gunner trying to hit a target on the right side of a moving aircraft actually has to aim underneath it and let the bullets fly upward to impact where desired.

The same effect is manifest in the opposite direction on the left side of the aircraft. The low-pressure area is on the bottom of the bullet and causes the round to plunge precipitously toward the ground



Door guns in Will's day were D-model M60 machineguns — and horribly unreliable.



Early door guns were simply ground guns suspended via bungee cords from the ceiling of the aircraft.

sooner than might be the case if fired from a stationary platform. The faster the aircraft the more pronounced the effect. In practice this makes a huge difference.

REAL WORLD APPLICATIONS

Helicopter door guns are by their nature suppressive tools. The intent is not to pick off some bad guy two kilometers distant. The purpose of door guns is to keep the enemy's head down long enough to get into or out of a landing or pickup zone. Also, from a thermodynamics perspective the rapid airflow across hot barrels does a splendid job of keeping the guns cool even at high round counts.

The M230 30mm chain gun on an AH64 Apache or the M197 20mm Gatling gun on the AH-1S Cobras of my generation will both fire off-axis while the aircraft is in flight. The fire control systems on these gunships compensate for these slipstream effects along with all manner of other variables.

So long as you aren't getting shot at for real, running machineguns out of combat helicopters is more fun than a barrel of monkeys. However, I can personally attest firing tracers into grassy spaces will inevitably start a truly epic brushfire — a tale for another day.

Photos in this article are in the Public Domain from the Department of Defense.

MISTAKES TO MAKE GUIDES CRINGE

ARE YOU *REALLY* READY FOR THE HUNT?

In 60 years of big-game hunting, the equipment I use and the skills I practice have evolved. I don't obsess over cartridges anymore. For most big-game hunting it would be easy to list 50+ satisfactory cartridges. I do obsess over bullets, ballistic coefficients, twist, rifle fit and balance, and trigger quality. Most of my shooting practice is offhand with .22 rifles.

MORE MISTAKES

A while back I wrote about hunting guides and the mistakes they see made by their clients. I'll reiterate a couple of these and add a couple more. The most common complaint I hear from guides is about clients being slow in getting the shot off. Personally I'm not sure this is a fault as I see an accurate first shot as a prime goal.

Slow fire — Apparently some hunters just cannot get the shot off in a reasonable time frame. They change shooting position, fiddle with the scope, check and recheck a round is chambered and safety off, and aim interminably until the game gets spooked or just wanders off. I think this is partly a psychological issue for which the only cure is experience.

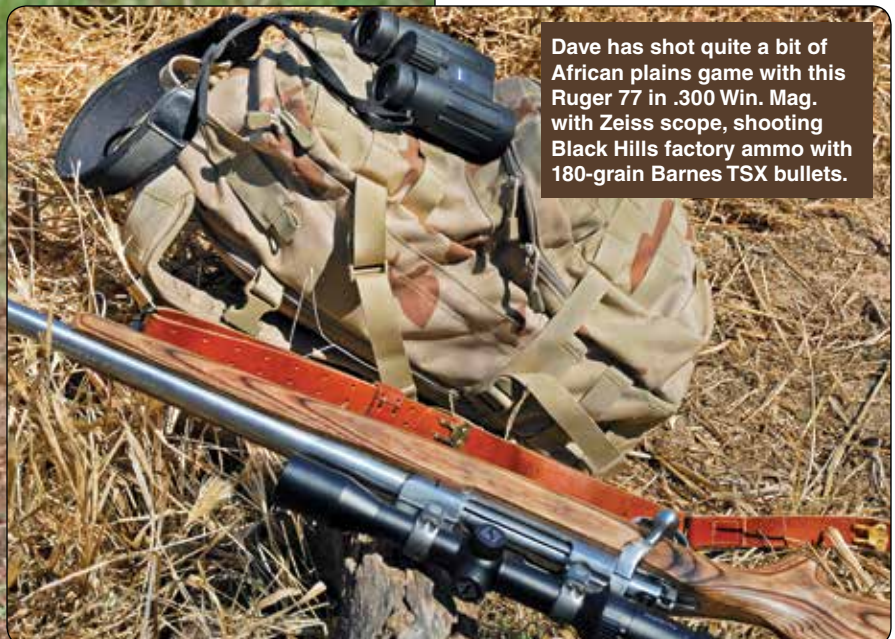
Not knowing where to aim — If you want to see a guide lose his mind, have him find a fine game animal, lead you on a stalk to sure shooting position and then whisper in his ear, "Where should I aim?" Long before, in fact before you get on the plane to your hunting grounds, you should have studied photos and read articles so you know where to aim. I know of no better resource for an African hunter than Kevin Robertson's book *The Perfect Shot*.

Using too much gun — For an African plains-game hunt, your guide will be very happy to have you show up with a .30-'06, .308 Win. or 7x57 Mauser — or anything similar, up to about a 7mm Rem. Mag. or .300 Win./Wby mag. Go much bigger and alarm bells start ringing. One guide said he wouldn't let his clients hunt eland with less than a .375 H&H. After I'd run off a dozen or so one-shot kills with a .300 Win. Mag. he said he'd let me hunt eland with it — but "next trip bring your .375". I knew his personal rifle was a .375 and I was unworthy enough to wonder if he was hoping I'd leave a box or two of ammunition behind.

Another guide said when a client shows



Dave's friend, the late Barrie Gwillim, competitor and world hunter, demonstrating offhand hold and stance. If you can't shoot offhand, you're not really field-ready.



Dave has shot quite a bit of African plains game with this Ruger 77 in .300 Win. Mag. with Zeiss scope, shooting Black Hills factory ammo with 180-grain Barnes TSX bullets.



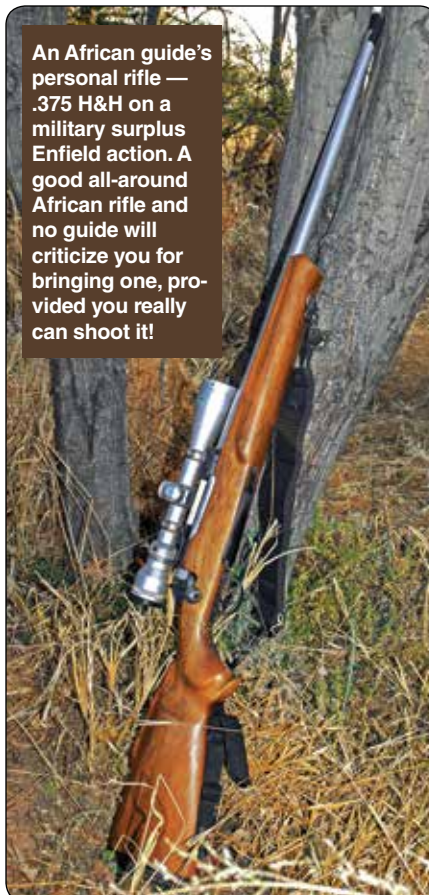
Dave checking a borrowed Tikka T3 .243 Win. before a Scottish stag hunt. Suppressor is virtually standard equipment; guides seemed surprised snuffers are uncommon in America. "Don't you have mufflers on your vehicles?"

up for a plains game hunt with a .416 or larger he knows he is in for trouble. People do kid themselves, and some see recoil tolerance as a test of manhood. Some shoot their big guns very well at the range, often with the aid of added weight, and if limited to a shot or two a day in the field, they can get by. But recoil effect is cumulative and the old devil flinch is always waiting for an opportunity.

Another guide said the best game shot he ever saw was an American using a 7mm-08 rifle, with Barnes bullets as I recall. He took around 20 game animals, all one-shot kills, and it made no difference if the game was standing, running, near or far.

Inability to shoot offhand — I'm a bit skittish to mention this as I'll always recommend using a rest if at all possible — and in Africa where the guide will have a tripod or bipod a rest is almost always available. But if game gets up suddenly, especially when following up wounded game, the ability to place a fast offhand shot is a good tool to have. Yes, it is a skill needing practice — and, while competitive offhand shooting is really hard, practical game shooting skill is not so difficult. If a moose or elk appears

An African guide's personal rifle — .375 H&H on a military surplus Enfield action. A good all-around African rifle and no guide will criticize you for bringing one, provided you really can shoot it!



at 50 yards, rather than hunt around for a rest, just shoot it. Hitting a vital area the size of a microwave at 50 yards should be fairly straightforward.

SKILL BUILDING

Offhand shooting with a .22 rifle develops this skill and can also help overcome slowness in getting the shot off. I like to shoot at 8" steel plates at 100 yards. A shot timer to show time from start signal to shot is a useful tool. Start with the rifle held in both hands as you might carry it when following up wounded game. At the start buzzer smoothly raise the rifle, release the safety and press the trigger. A good initial goal is four seconds from signal to shot, with all or most shots hitting the plate.

I know an 8" target sounds too easy, but if you are hitting every shot, most of the hits will be within a 4" to 5" group, with just the occasional shot slipping out near the edge. If it starts seeming too easy, don't make the target smaller, cut the time. When you can hit every shot in two seconds or less, from buzzer to shot, you're flying in some rare air. The trigger control you'll develop will help your shooting from any position. 🦏

THE WALTHER MPL STAMPED-STEEL COLD WAR WONDER

WILL DABBS, MD

In the 1970s West Berlin stood 100 miles inside communist-controlled territory, a tragically flawed testament to post-World War II geopolitical acrimony. The Berlin Brigade was a token NATO force billeted in this surrounded, beleaguered city. Their mission was not so much their combat effectiveness as it was what they represented. Attacking the Berlin Brigade was tantamount to attacking the United States. However, chances are things would not have ended well for these isolated grunts had the Cold War suddenly turned hot.

Operating in the shadows in West Berlin was a small contingent of Special Forces soldiers known as Detachment A. Theirs was the archetypal Green Beret mission.

Should the balloon go up and Warsaw Pact forces roll over West Berlin like a juggernaut, Detachment A troops would melt into the population to foment a covert underground war. To pull this off, these iron-willed studs had a 10,000-weapon stash of military firearms hidden for distribution to would-be partisans. Thank the Good Lord it never came to pass.

There were never more than about a hundred Special Forces operators assigned to Detachment A. Given the unique nature of their mission they were authorized some comparably unique weapons. One of those unique firearms was the Walther MP submachine gun.



There are always comparisons between the HK MP5 (below) and the Walther MPL. Both guns weigh about the same and have similar geometry but the MPL is a much simpler design. Unlike the MP5, the barrel on the MPL (right) is easily replaceable in the field without tools.





The Walther MPL is an underappreciated gem. Inexpensive to produce and reliable, the modest rate of fire and low bore axis make it unusually controllable.

THE VAGARIES OF FATE

The HK MP5 got all the serious press, but it was an iffy thing. The Walther MP was used by West German police during the 1972 Munich Massacre of Israeli athletes by Palestinian Black September terrorists. It was also carried by U.S. Army Delta Force operators during Operation Eagle Claw, the

failed attempt to rescue the American hostages held in Iran in 1979. By contrast, the British SAS wielded MP5s in 1980 as they successfully stormed the Iranian embassy at Princes Gate in London live on international television.

Munich was a massacre and Eagle Claw came up dry, while the SAS Operation Nimrod was lyrically successful. As a result, everybody with a badge wanted an MP5 in the trunk of his squad car and the Walther

MP died a natural death. However, with the benefit of hindsight and a lot of trigger time on both weapons, I'm not so sure the best gun won.

THE WALTHER MP

Walther produced the MP in West Germany from 1963 until 1985. MP stands for *Maschinenpistole* or "Machine Pistol" after the wartime German nomenclature for submachine guns. The MP came in two

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broad flavors.

The MPL ("Lang") sported a 10.2" barrel and 29.4" overall length with the stock deployed. The MPK ("Kurz") featured a stubbier 6.8" tube and a 25.9" overall length. Both guns cycled at a sedate 550 rounds per minute.

The MP was built predominantly of pressed steel components welded in place. The side-folding stock was formed out of steel tubing and encased in a rubber coating. The bilateral fire selector was located underneath the thumb and operated a bit differently from our familiar M4. Safe is pointing backwards. The first 90-degree position is full auto, while rotating the lever through 180 degrees places the gun on semi.

Takedown is simple and straightforward without tools but the gun's design is fairly unconventional. The MP fires from the open bolt via advanced primer ignition, but the bolt is relatively small and lightweight. However, there is a fairly massive counterweight rigidly affixed to the top of the bolt reciprocating inside the tubular portion of the receiver. It is this counterweight keeping the rate of fire so dawdling.

The gun's sights are also eccentric. On the top of the sight assembly is a forward notch and a pressed steel rear triangle. While effective, this setup is obviously backwards from most conventional military arms. There is also a tiny peep sight arranged underneath this wide battle sight featuring its own front post. This peep sight is suitable for precise work at a relatively long distance. In the days before glass optics, this reflected the state of the art in mechanical SMG sights.

The sling swivels are left-side only, and the barrel shroud is amply ventilated. The magazine release is a thumb lever located behind the magazine well philosophically similar to the AK-47. The magwell is flared



The fire selector rotates through 180 degrees like an M4 but the semi and full auto positions are reversed.

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Most of the Walther MPL, including the trigger and fire controls, is formed from inexpensive pressed steel components.



Left-handed shooters must reach across the weapon.

for easy access even in the dark. The non-reciprocating charging handle is located on the front left aspect of the weapon in the manner of an MP5.

HOW DOES SHE RUN?

The Walther MPL is my personal favorite submachine gun. The ergonomics complement the human form nicely, and the controls are well-engineered and handy. Additionally, the slow rate of fire lends itself to easy burst control without profligate ammunition expenditure. The wire stock is not the most comfortable ever designed but it is stable, rigid, and easily deployed in a rush.

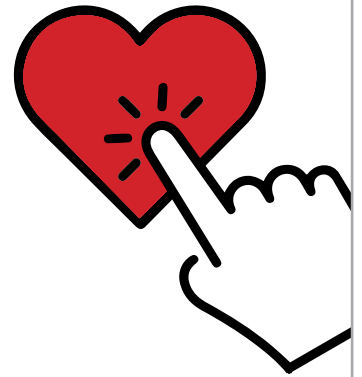
There will be inevitable comparisons to the HK MP5. Call me a heretic if you wish but the MP5 always seemed a bit overly complex to me, kind of like driving nails with some complicated mechanical

contraption when a good old-fashioned hammer might do just as well. Additionally, at 700 rounds per minute the rate of fire of the MP5 is just a bit spunky for my tastes. An experienced operator can indeed write his name with the thing but I find the Walther gun to be a bit more forgiving.

The open bolt design does offer a tiny little jar every time you touch it off, but this effect is minimal with attention to technique. Running both guns side by side I shoot about the same with each while enjoying the MPL a bit more — and my magazines last longer as well.

Had fate intervened these various operations might have gone a different way — it might have been the overly complex MP5 going the way of the dodo while the pressed steel Walther endured. Regardless, the Walther MPL remains a simply superb Cold War-era subgun. 

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ONLINE

public restroom.

2. We go to the bathroom together to escape strangers.

3. We go to the bathroom to speak about people we're interacting with and make sure our friends are comfortable with them.

4. We go to the bathroom together so no one is left waiting alone in a public place.

5. If we're lost, going to the bathroom gives us a chance to figure out where we are without anyone thinking we're lost.

6. We also check our makeup and use the toilet.

Anyway, I hope this gives you a female perspective. Thanks again for the fun read.

Emma Morris

Great points, I'm going to include this one in Crossfire! —BW

Thoroughly enjoyed your back page column on "Surviving the Throne." It was very entertaining and even politically correct. I hope to read more of this type of entertaining and educational material in future issues.

BT Lewis

I'm horrified!!! I wrote a Politically Correct story?!? I need to put on my hair shirt and offer prayers of absolution to Charles Askins and Skeeter Skelton! —BW

MODEL 58 WOOD

Payton Miller — I enjoyed reading your article about the Winchester M58 ("Surplus and Classic," Dec issue). I don't have one



of those but do have an M67 I had always regarded as rather homely until I learned its action had its parentage from John Browning. Great little rifles! I'm writing because the M67 pictured in your article says it has a walnut stock. The grain on that wood sure doesn't look like walnut. It looks just like mine before I refinished it. The wood on my M67 was some kind of light hardwood, maple, birch or something. But my Winchester is a Model 67A. Maybe that was some kind of lower-cost production run with less-expensive stocks?

Cordell Roy

Glad you liked the article. I love old Winchester .22s, but to be honest, my old 67A could be either low-grade walnut or "high-grade hardwood." Mine was a "got at auction" item for about a C-note. At that price, I'll take all you can find! —PM

ALL AGES

Mr. Dave Workman — I am writing to you to complete my communications merit badge for my Eagle Scout rank. As a member of the Boy Scouts of America, I am pro 2nd Amendment. I have enjoyed all of the Firearm-related merit badges. I recently read your article "The 2A Acid Test" in the July edition of GUNS Magazine and I found it very interesting on how to deal with the uninformed. Thanks for all the tips and keep up the good work.

James Reid

NOT A COLT FAN

I don't understand the entire gun community fawning all over Colt. Oh look at their new Python. Colt is doing this and



Colt is doing that. Am I the only one that remembers not too many years ago Colt, out of fear of law suits, pulled out of the civilian market? They didn't need us, they had enough Government contracts.

I don't think Colt is on our side. I don't think they support the 2nd amendment or the rest of the industry. I feel very betrayed by them and as a result will never own another Colt. The way I see it they betrayed us twice. They already had their second chance.

Please correct me if my recollection is incorrect.

Kerry Domenichelli

I understand the gist of your point but you might be throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

This is a common problem in the industry, most recently illustrated by the bankruptcy and breakup of Remington Arms: venture capital (VC). Many of our favorite and largest gun companies have been or are currently owned by money managers rather than "gun people." This leads to poor decision making and lukewarm support of the Second Amendment because "the suits" don't understand firearms in the first place. To them, firearms are a commodity no different than tractor engines or toilet paper. Meanwhile, the people actually running factories and the administrative staff are always hardcore shooters and hunters. Unfortunately, the "money men" from New York, L.A. or Aspen frequently have other concerns aside from making a great product, brand history or the constitution. Not all venture capital

or capitalists are bad, but many of the bad things in the industry were the result of venture capital getting involved.

All of this isn't to absolve Colt (or any other company) of their previous missteps, but the people running the show now are likely different, and if they were in place at the time, probably gritted their teeth in order to remain employed.

One nice thing about the current social

When I had the gun "lettered" 18 years ago, Browning's historian, Glen Jensen, called to ask me how I acquired the shotgun. Browning's records showed they shipped the firearm to themselves at the Morrison Hotel in January of 1955 and he didn't know why.

I told Mr. Jensen the story and he told me the Browning Museum did not have photographs of those brightly colored



stigma against firearms is that VC is rapidly stepping away from the industry, so we're finally beginning to see serious firearms enthusiasts getting involved on the ownership side. Let's hope the trend continues. —BW

UNIQUE BROWNING

I thoroughly enjoyed Greg Moats' article on the Browning Double Automatic shotgun.

My grandfather, Leslie V. Tracy, was the gun buyer for Marshall Field & Company in Chicago during the 1950s. The Sportsman Show (precursor of today's SHOT Show) was held in January of 1955 at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago.

Val Browning presented his Double Automatic in many different colors to gauge the attendees' reaction. My grandfather took photographs of them all on their display racks. Because my grandpa was a top Browning buyer, Val Browning gave him an early prototype in Velvet Grey (with an exposed rivet on its forearm) used at their trade show booth for demonstration.

Double Automatics. I gladly sent him copies for Browning's archives. Jensen advised me the Dragon Black Double Automatic at the top of the attached photo was Val Browning's personal gun and a closer look shows its extra engraving.

Last year I was able to visit the Browning Museum in Utah after a successful elk hunt and I was pleasantly surprised to find Jensen still working there and he even remembered me and my grandfather's rare photographs!

Steve Tracy

Since you thoughtfully enclosed a photo of the letter from Browning regarding the shotgun Val gave to your grandfather, I hope I'm correct in assuming it is still in your family. — WOW, what a back story. I'm envious.

I'm also envious of your trip to the Browning Museum and interview with Mr. Jensen. My wife and I recently drove to Utah for a visit to the museum only to

continued on page 61

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HOWER.22LR GATLING GUN

CLINT THOMPSON

The business end of the Hower Gatling gun features ten 22.-caliber barrels similar in configuration to the original Gatling design. Hower designed his own working 24-round drum magazine.



The hand-built elevation and traverse mechanism allows aiming and closely echoes the original design. Left, the hand-built .22 LR Gatling gun built by farmer, gunsmith and machinist Kenneth Hower. Below a closeup of the breach of the .22 LR Hower Gatling gun. All parts were hand-fabricated from blueprints, which turned out wrong in many cases!



A FRUSTRATING LABOR OF LOVE!

IN 1861 Dr. Richard J. Gatling built his namesake invention, the Gatling Gun. The good doctor rationalized if he created a weapon with firepower equal to many soldiers, it would ultimately reduce the number of soldiers needed. This would decrease the size of armies and therefore reduce the number of deaths by combat and disease. Gatling felt his revolutionary weapon would show the futility of war — unfortunately his belief didn't work out too well.

Yet the hand-crank proto-machine gun is still around. Kenneth Hower of Arkansas City, Kansas is a skilled machinist who likes to challenge himself by building different types of firearms for personal use and his latest project is the well-intentioned gun of Dr. Gatling.

DESIGN-SPECS: WRONG!

Hower started out by purchasing blueprints for the Gatling gun. Once he started to machine and manufacture this very ambitious project, he quickly realized the

expensive plans he bought were simply wrong. Not to be stifled, Ken used his mechanical intuition and plenty of internet research to draw up his own set of plans. While working the kinks out, Hower would fabricate a new part and when it did not work, he machined another based on the previous failure.

Being a full-time farmer who likes to hunt, Hower could only work on the Gatling gun project intermittently. During the lengthy process, Ken returned to Trinidad State College for follow-up gunsmithing lessons and to also show others what he had in mind. After three long years, the 10-barrel, 30-lb. Hower .22 LR Gatling gun was heading for the firing line.

MAGAZINE WOES

Part of the problem was the gun's magazine. Ken liked the drum design over the easier-to-build "stick" model so he had to work out how a round magazine would actually feed .22 LR ammo. After much

experimentation, he finally fabricated a working 24-round version.

Ken has told me if he builds another Gatling gun, it would be for the .38 Special cartridge. Building a .22 LR Gatling gun required smaller-than-normal parts that are difficult to manufacture due to the close tolerances involved. A .38 Special version would use larger, somewhat-easier to fabricate parts plus the cartridge has a crisp rim making the extraction of fired cases mechanically easier. One final bonus: Factory .38 special rounds are more expensive to purchase but can be reloaded many times, making the Gatling gun cheaper to shoot in the long run.

A FUN GUN RUNS

Without a doubt, the Hower Gatling gun is fascinating, cute, authentic in design and I found it impossible not to smile while cranking off a steady stream of .22 caliber bullets from the 12" barrels. This is one very cool firearm and a blast to shoot! 🔫



RUGER SUPER GP100 COMPETITION REVOLVER

Roy Huntington

**Photos: Rob Jones/
The Imagesmith, LLC**

I've had the pleasure of chatting with Bill Ruger and his sons Tom and Bill Ruger at the legendary Ruger parties at the SHOT Show in years past. These intimate gatherings in a Ruger suite showed me one thing for sure — Mr. Ruger Senior ran the show with an iron fist. Period. Affordable, reliable, traditional designs geared to the “everyman” hunter or shooter was always his goal, and every resource of the company appeared dedicated to the cause. He accomplished his goal then — and they still do today — but have opened new doors.

When Mr. Ruger passed, the company seemed to take a collective breath, then pushed forward, almost immediately breaking the mold. They pushed Mr. Ruger's iron-clad rules into history as they surprised us all with bold, new concepts and designs. You only need to think of the Ruger American, AR and Scout Rifle series, their amazing precision rifles, no end of innovative handgun designs and other eye-catching notions announced virtually daily to see the change in tenor at Ruger.

This has benefited we shooters tremendously, presenting us with a bounty of exciting new guns to choose from. One thing Bill Ruger Senior always liked was a “good” revolver. His original Security Six, followed by the burly GP100 series, the Redhawks, the ground-breaking polymer-framed LCR revolvers and hosts



REVOLUTIONIZING REVOLVER-TECH

of others Ruger has created, still has him smiling from above, no doubt.

With the creation of the Ruger Custom Shop, Ruger has taken the idea of “affordable” quality to new levels, launching the shop with their SR1911 Competition Pistol (*American Handgunner*, July/Aug 2019). The Custom Shop quickly added competition-ready 10/22 models, other 1911 ideas and an “improved” GP100 in .357 Magnum using the Super Redhawk action. Seeing revolvers embraced by the Custom Shop made us round-gun aficionados smile, and with the introduction of the newest version in 9mm, made some of us grin shamelessly.

I’m one of those.

9MM APPEAL

After the introduction of the 8-shot .357 “Super GP100 Competition Revolver” in 2019, I know the USPSA, Steel Challenge and ICORE crowd had their collective fingers crossed for a 9mm version. Someone was listening and this latest in 9mm is also an 8-shot version, using full moon clips to speed things along. The sound you hear would be applause coming from the ranks of many competitors.

I carried an early GP100 as a duty revolver in my San Diego

PD days, transitioning to it from a S&W 64. I found the slightly beefier heft of the Ruger settled into my hand well, and once I slicked the action up, I found it to be a reliable, rugged holster gun for daily duty carry. Plus, I swear, I could have easily used it as a defensive club if I’d had to. This sort of strong-featured utility instills confidence.

If you’ve been living under a rock, though, let me bring you up to date. The GP family is an all-steel DA/SA revolver design, complete with *de rigueur* transfer bar safety and a coil spring action design. Unlike most revolvers, take-down is actually an option for an owner and the entire action “block” can be removed from the frame from the bottom. It takes a bit of fiddling but you can work through it if you have your brain on and find the right YouTube video.

The cylinder has a “triple lock” feature (front, rear and the underside) and being built on the Super Redhawk action, the 9mm Competition model offers the two-spring lockwork action of the parent model, keeping things smoother and even more reliable than the original GP100 — if that’s possible.

THE MECHANICS

There are some differences between the .357 and the 9mm



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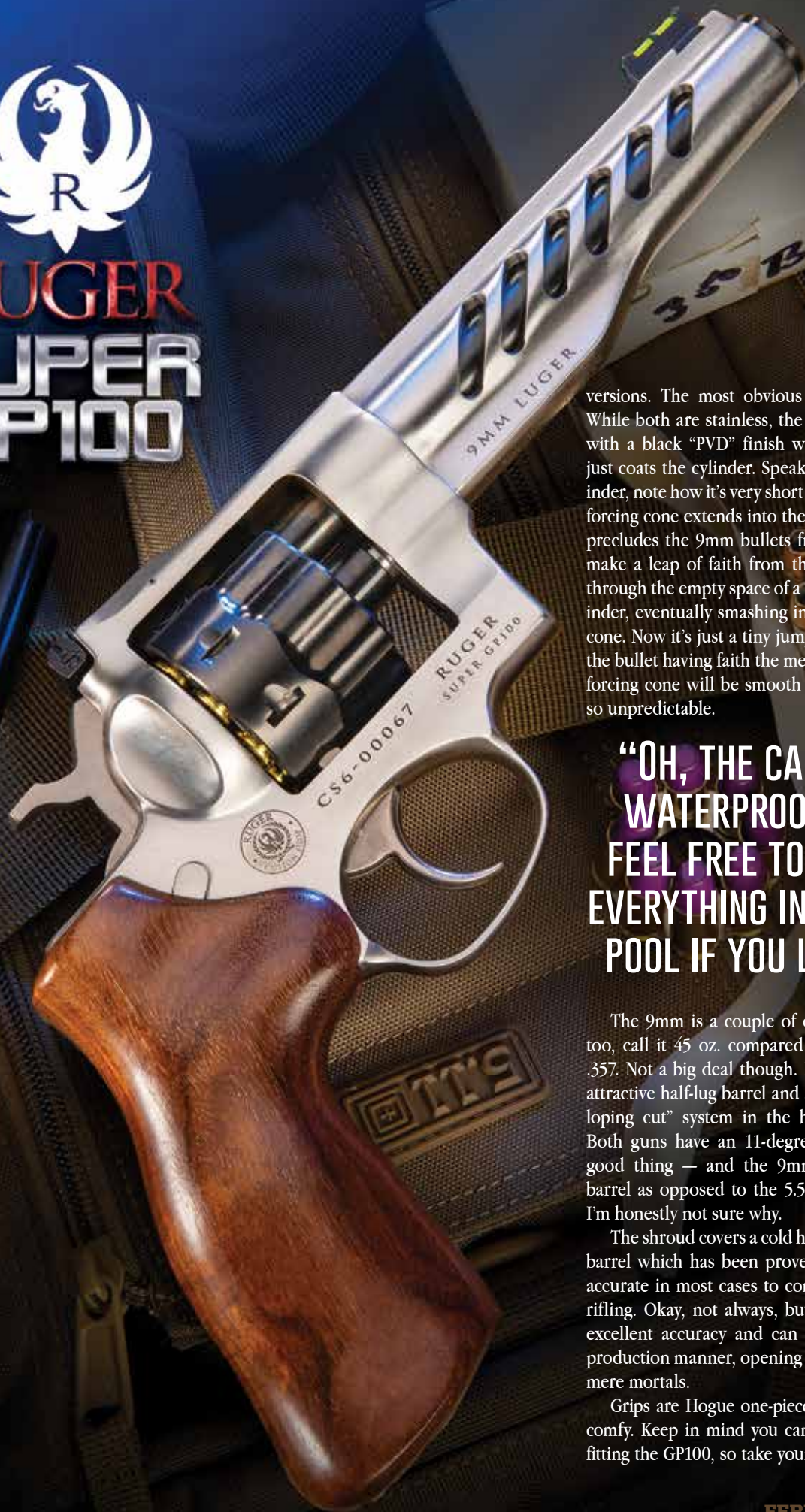
A detailed photograph of a Ruger Super GP100 Competition Revolver. The revolver is shown from a side-on perspective, highlighting its silver-colored metal frame and barrel. The barrel features a series of seven elongated, teardrop-shaped ventilation holes. The words "9MM LUGER" are engraved on the side of the barrel. The revolver is resting on a dark, textured fabric surface, possibly a tactical vest or bag. In the lower-left foreground, several 9mm Luger caliber bullets with purple-tipped brass casings are arranged in a fan-like pattern. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some indistinct shapes and colors.

RUGER SUPER GP100

COMPETITION
REVOLVER



RUGER SUPER GP100



versions. The most obvious is the finish. While both are stainless, the .357 is coated with a black “PVD” finish while the 9mm just coats the cylinder. Speaking of the cylinder, note how it’s very short and the barrel forcing cone extends into the window. This precludes the 9mm bullets from having to make a leap of faith from the case mouth through the empty space of a “too-long” cylinder, eventually smashing into the forcing cone. Now it’s just a tiny jump of goodwill, the bullet having faith the meet-up with the forcing cone will be smooth and not quite so unpredictable.

**“OH, THE CASE IS
WATERPROOF SO
FEEL FREE TO TOSS
EVERYTHING INTO THE
POOL IF YOU LIKE.”**

The 9mm is a couple of ounces lighter too, call it 45 oz. compared to 47 for the .357. Not a big deal though. Both have the attractive half-lug barrel and a sort of “scallop cut” system in the barrel shroud. Both guns have an 11-degree crown — a good thing — and the 9mm offers a 6” barrel as opposed to the 5.5” for the .357. I’m honestly not sure why.

The shroud covers a cold hammer-forged barrel which has been proven to be more accurate in most cases to conventional cut rifling. Okay, not always, but it does offer excellent accuracy and can be done in a production manner, opening the door to us mere mortals.

Grips are Hogue one-piece and are very comfy. Keep in mind you can use any grip fitting the GP100, so take your pick. The DA

pull on our sample gun was about 11 lbs., 4 oz. give or take, and quite smooth. The Custom Shop spends some time assuring the trigger and hammer are centered on their bosses, and polish and tune things nicely. Being an old PPC shooter, I found working this gun's DA to be a delight, reminding me of a tuned PPC gun action from the old days. The SA pull is a tad less than 3 lbs., but I'm not sure why you need to care since I doubt you'll ever shoot it in SA mode.

I'm thinking working with the springs (easily replaced by the owner) and a bit of judicious action work (don't touch a stone unless you know what you're doing!), could easily bring the DA pull down into the 8- or 9-lb. range. But you'd best make sure it runs with whatever load you're going to shoot if you lighten things up this much.

ASSORTED DETAILS

It handles full moon clips perfectly and the supplied "de-mooner" does make taking empties out of a clip easy. Loaded rounds snap in easily enough, although if I were loading hundreds of clips, I'd want to invest in a clip loader too or risk sore fingers.

Overall, the gun shows the Custom Shop touches like consistent polishing, the smooth action and attention to general details often let go in run-of-the-mill production guns. I've handled three of these models and honestly couldn't tell one from the other, which is a good thing.

The sights are a replaceable fiber-optic "rod" front and the Ruger adjustable white outline rear. For competition work, I think the fiber optics work fine. They're bright and easy to find. But I find them a challenge if you're really doing precise accuracy work. The bright colors tend to "flare" a bit in my eyes in the sun and it's hard to get a consistent sight picture. I think if I were going to do some serious target work, or even some small game hunting — what fun this gun would be chasing squirrels — I'd install some sort of black front sight. But hey, that's just me.

Being a Custom Shop gun, and retailing for about \$1,549, the gun ships in a very nice fitted hard plastic case, three moon clips (yes, you need to buy more), a Custom Shop "Certificate of Authenticity" showing it's the real deal, a challenge coin (I don't understand challenge coins, but like Pogs, people do collect them so I'd call this a benefit, I suppose), a mandated cable lock, the owner's manual, a cleaning cloth, a gun "peg" and a nice Ruger decal. Oh, the case



is waterproof so feel free to toss everything into the pool if you like.

SHOOTING IT

This is a big gun and the 9mm is a small cartridge so recoil, even with "heavy" loads is essentially zero. Can you say heavy loads and 9mm in the same sentence? At any rate, I fired a bunch of ammo, from high-performance defensive stuff to some from my stash of "certifiable" odds and ends from partial boxes I collect all year.

I'm not a competitor in today's rapid-fire world but know my way around a round-gun pretty well. I found I could shoot this "Super" gun as fast as I could pull the trigger smoothly and things stayed right where they should have stayed. The gun's weight, persuasive action and overall ergonomics work hand-in-hand, making the chore of hitting the target a joy to behold. I kept smiling — except when I was laughing out loud. Don't believe me? Watch the YouTube video I did on it.

I had my best groups using Federal 147-grain Sub-Sonic ammo, which didn't surprise me as it always seems to shoot well. Using my "computer" glasses and a new-fangled sort of "peep" sight sticker on my glasses called an "EyePal" the sights were sharp enough to show me a few sub-2" groups at 25 yards. I honestly think it'd do better and I'm dying to put some sort of cross-hair optic on it once I figured out how to do it. I have a 100-yard torso-shaped gong and from a rest, it was easy to ring with every single shot. Hell, I even hit it pretty regularly off-hand. You could too.

This gun is a shooter, and that's a fact.

DO YOU NEED ONE?

If you compete in action shooting events using a revolver, take a hard look here. You essentially get a full custom-shop gun for \$1,500, which is lots less than you'd pay for this work on a base gun. Trust me on it.

If you just like nice things and have been known to challenge the weekend ne'er-do-well competition crew at your range, take a look too. If your biggest challenge is just hitting a target at 25 yards, you just might be surprised at what having a gun like this can do for you. The "big" guys use things like this for a reason, and it's because they work — great.

Oh, and if 9mm squirrel hunting is in your future, have I got a wheelgun for you!



Ruger.com



Jeremy D. Clough

DRD APTUS RIFLE

ACCURATE, RELIABLE QUICK-CHANGE ARTIST

The great strength of the AR is its modularity: By simply pushing two pins, the upper receiver comes off the lower and can be quickly replaced with another one in a different barrel length or caliber. This also makes it easy to break the gun down for compact storage or discreet transportation.

The barrel and buttstock, however, are a bit of a fly in the ointment as neither is readily removed from its respective receiver half. In the case of the barrel, changing calibers requires an entirely different upper assembly. Similarly, since the AR stock contains the critical buffer spring, the stock can only be so short.

Both problems have been rendered moot by DRD Tactical and demonstrated by their Aptus rifle. Breaking down to less than 19" overall and a snap to reassemble into a working gun, DRD rifles offer speed, compactness and accuracy in a variety of calibers.

WHAT IT'S NOT

The Aptus — Latin for “Ready” — is not an AR, although it bears some similarities and some parts interchange including the barrel, trigger group and magazines. The rifle functions with the familiar direct gas-impingement system but eliminates the T-shaped charging handle, replacing it with a non-reciprocating FN FAL-style folding cocking handle. This is complemented by a one-piece extended bolt release from Phase 5 Tactical.

The extended release ranges down into the top of the trigger guard opening and can be operated with the trigger finger, though those who wish can still use the familiar pad on the left side of the gun. The extended release is a necessary accessory — with the left side cocking handle it would be very difficult to operate the charging handle and bolt release to lock the gun open.

DIFFERENCES

Visually, the first thing you notice about the Aptus is the height of the billet upper receiver. It is taller than an AR receiver to make room for the recoil spring above the proprietary bolt carrier. The rear of the spring assembly is capped by a locking piece protruding into the vertical face of the lower receiver, creating a third lock between the upper and lower in addition to the two familiar pushpins.

The bolt itself is a standard AR piece while the M-Lok forend has a raised rail along its top length to provide a continuous plane



The Magpul ACR stock is both folding and collapsible, with a collapsed length comparable to a standard M4 stock. The adjustable cheekpiece is a stroke of brilliance.

The Aptus rifle combines proven elements of the AR platform with DRD's patented QD barrel and recoil systems.



down the top of the gun. This combination of a slightly bulkier forend and the folding/collapsible Magpul stock make the gun look closer to an ACR or SCAR than a traditional AR.

Cheek weld is something of a universal problem with collapsible buttstocks. The Magpul stock found on the Aptus, however, eliminates the problem with an adjustable cheek piece. The cheekpiece has only two possible settings, but adjusts quickly and easily without tools. The stock also extends and collapses by pinching two locking tabs on either side and has a QD sling mount reversible for use on either side. It locks up solidly when folded out into place and stayed this way throughout the test.

LOWER

The billet lower has a flared magazine well and an integral trigger guard eliminating the uncomfortable gap found on the traditional AR winter trigger guard and uses a Magpul MOE pistol grip with a small storage cavity. The sides of the lower are marked with DRD's logo, with the safe/fire safety positions engraved with the HK bullet/X iconography. The front face of the magazine housing has Gary Paul Johnston's 1* logo, a tongue-in-cheek reminder to be careful.

BARREL BE GONE

Barrel removal is simple and fast. Lock the bolt to the rear and pull back the latch located on the lower right side of the forend ahead of the receiver. Push out the captured crosspin underneath the latch, then pull the forend forward and off. Unscrew the barrel nut and pull the barrel forward and out. Reassembly is in reverse order, making sure to align the gas tube with the hole in the receiver during barrel assembly.

All this can be done without tools, but the Aptus does come with a wrench to help snug up the barrel beyond what can be done by hand. The barrel nut uses the same slot pattern as an AR castle nut so any AR multitool will do. This particular barrel is 16" in length with a 1/7 twist and has a three-prong flash hider.

Since the Aptus uses a standard AR barrel, it can be reconfigured in any caliber working in a standard AR chassis. Barrel nuts are available separately for those who wish to assemble their gun in calibers other than the 5.56 or .300 Blackout currently offered by DRD.

DOES IT WORK?

All this quick-change ability raises some interesting questions about accuracy and longevity but fortunately, I've had a long time to answer them. My experience with DRD's quick-change barrel system isn't limited to just this test — I have an earlier DRD rifle set up in 5.56, .300 Blackout, .338 Spectre and .22 LR.



The barrel nut can either be tightened by hand or an AR castle nut wrench. The forend is held in place by a crosspin secured by a latch covering it and clamping the forend onto the barrel nut.



The Aptus uses a non-reciprocating FAL-style folding cocking handle. It's much easier to reach and doesn't require lowering the rifle to cycle.



The left side of the gun makes it clear the Aptus isn't an AR. Note the folding cocking handle, extended bolt release and third latch where you'd usually see a charging handle.

In spite of being taken apart and reassembled many, many times over the past several years, the gun still shoots sub MOA with a red-dot and has never malfunctioned with 5.56 ammo.

We likewise gave the Aptus a good run at the range over the course of a few months, putting about 700 rounds through it, mostly Black Hills soft point, hollowpoint and ballistic tip configurations in weights ranging from 50 to 75 grains. During the first magazine, there were two failures to eject. After this, there



The APTUS field-strips similarly to an AR, but not exactly. The rifle breaks down into an extremely compact package (below) and fits into a briefcase-sized hardcase. Note this gun is not a pistol — it's a 16" barrel rifle!

were zero malfunctions of any kind. As is my custom, I never cleaned or oiled it during the test.

ACCURATE

For optics, we used a Trijicon 4x32 ACOG — my choice for a defensive rifle — switching to a Weaver 2-10x36mm tactical scope for accuracy work. Groups were fired from prone, using a range bag as a front rest. On average the APTUS shot 1.7" at 100 yards with nine different loads tested. The best group was with 60-grain V-max and measured an impressive 0.64" center to center. The 50-grain V-Max also shot well, producing two groups

measuring around 1". The 69-grain Sierra MatchKing, 62-grain TSX and 68-grain Heavy HP were also capable of posting groups measuring around an inch.

STAY TIGHT

For best accuracy, the barrel nut should be tightened with a wrench — if tightened by hand, it can shoot loose after a few mags. Interestingly, when it happened to us, we still produced 50-yard groups measuring around an inch or so, often with four rounds in a single hole and with a flyer around ½" to 1" away. This is well within the designed performance envelope but if you want the best accuracy from the APTUS, keep the wrench in the case with the gun.

However, accuracy and reliability are only part of the equation for a gun intended to be run in a hurry. A close look at the APTUS reveals attention to detail. First, you'll be hard-pressed to find a sharp edge. From the front edges of the magazine well to the end of the forend and the inside edges of the ventilating slots on its top half, virtually all corners of the gun have been carefully beveled to remove sharp edges.

BOX IT UP

The APTUS is a very well thought out package — it's exceptionally reliable, can be changed quickly from one caliber to another and breaks down to a very small package for discreet carry in the included hard case. All this practicality is achieved while delivering accuracy more than adequate for anything this gun is likely to be used for. With a suggested retail price starting at \$2,250, it provides features generally not found on comparable rifles.

DRDtactical.com



"You asked for it so we built it!"

~ Roy Huntington
Publisher



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

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9MM RONIN 1911

70-YEAR-OLD CONCEPT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Take the 9mm lightweight Colt Commander of 1950, update it, make it work with a cartridge shorter in overall length (OAL) than it was originally designed to cycle and feed. Give it slim grips to fit more hands better, replace the horrid little hand-biting stub of a grip safety plaguing the first generation of Commanders. Build it so you can retail for \$150 below the thousand-dollar mark. *Et voila!* — You have the 4.25" Ronin Operator 9mm from Springfield Armory.

UNBOXING

The test sample, serial number LW 170908, came with a two-tone finish popularized by Jeff Cooper, the man who really led the mid-20th Century renaissance of the 1911 pistol. The aluminum frame is a satiny silver, the top-end a pleasing blue steel. No forward slide grooves and no unnecessary full-length recoil spring guide, to which this traditionalist can only say "Yay for both."

"IT RAN 100% WITH ZERO MALFUNCTIONS IN THE HANDS OF TESTERS MALE AND FEMALE RANGING FROM BARELY FIVE-FEET TALL TO SIX-FEET PLUS, AND EVERYONE WHO SHOT IT REALLY LIKED IT."

It came with three nine-round magazines with bumper pads and a spacer in the back of the magazine cavity that compensates for the 9mm cartridge's short OAL while still keeping the bullet nose close to the feed ramp. Only one of those nine-rounders was used in testing — I went with 10-round Wilson Combat mags for the rest of the shooting. Since the butt of the gun is going to be lengthened by a pad anyway, I want another cartridge out of the deal. The magazine well was slightly beveled for smoother reloading.

Sights were fixed — two big white dots straddling a wide rear notch, and a red fiber optic rod in the front post. The rear sight has a ledge to allow one-handed “wounded defender” slide cycling against belt or holster. The trigger is medium length but easy to reach thanks to the slim wooden grip panels that seem to be a standard feature on all the Ronin models. Pioneered by shooting champ and pistolsmith J. Michael Plaxco back in the '80s for IPSC/IDPA pioneer John Sayles and his wife Sally, these slim grips feel “different,” but I like how they let you get “more hand around the gun” and “more finger on the trigger.” By the way, trigger pull weight averaged 4.49 lbs. — “good to go” for street carry with its liability concerns, but no impediment to good shooting.

ACCURACY

I ran the lightweight Ronin at 25 yards from a Caldwell Matrix rest on a concrete bench. Each five-shot group was measured overall and again for the best three hits, because the latter has been shown to roughly equal what the same gun and load will do from a machine rest at the same distance. A time-saver for the tester, obviously, but more importantly, something easier for the reader to comparison-test with their own samples of the same firearm and ammo. The protocol tends to factor out unnoticed human error.

Testing encompassed the three most popular bullet weights for the caliber. Everything was well under the popular formula of “4” at 25 yards equals adequate service pistol accuracy.” The 147-grain Winchester FMJ delivered 3.45” for all five and 1.05” for “best three.” SIG 124-grain V-Crown jacketed hollow point was a 10th of an inch tighter overall, five hits 3.35” apart with the same 1.05” best three cluster. Black Hills 115-grain JHP at +P velocity shot tightest of all: 2.15” for all five and 1.35” for the three closest. A “best three” average of 1.15” tells me this is, mechanically, a “sub-two-inch” gun for grouping capability, and, for a 4.25” barrel 9mm 1911, folks, “Dat’s sumpin!”

If grouping is one side of accuracy, the flip side is POA/POI: point of aim vis-à-vis point of impact. For this tester the gun shot center for windage but high with 124-grain at 25 yards, high and right for some reason with the 115-grain +P, but spot on with the 147-grain.

Since shot placement is the first imperative for “stopping power,” when I did the “carry” part of the test it was loaded with Federal HST 147-grain, which seems to be unexcelled in street performance with a “heavy for caliber” bullet weight. I was suffering some lumbar spine issues at test time so this retro-lookin’ gun went into a retro kind of shoulder holster, the classic Bianchi X15. The light weight of the aluminum-framed 1911 was something I learned to appreciate in a lifetime of carrying 1911 pistols and it held true with the Springfield Ronin aluminum-frame 9mm.

Original Browning-designed bushing and recoil spring system are present, forward slide grooves are not (right), and author appreciates both features.

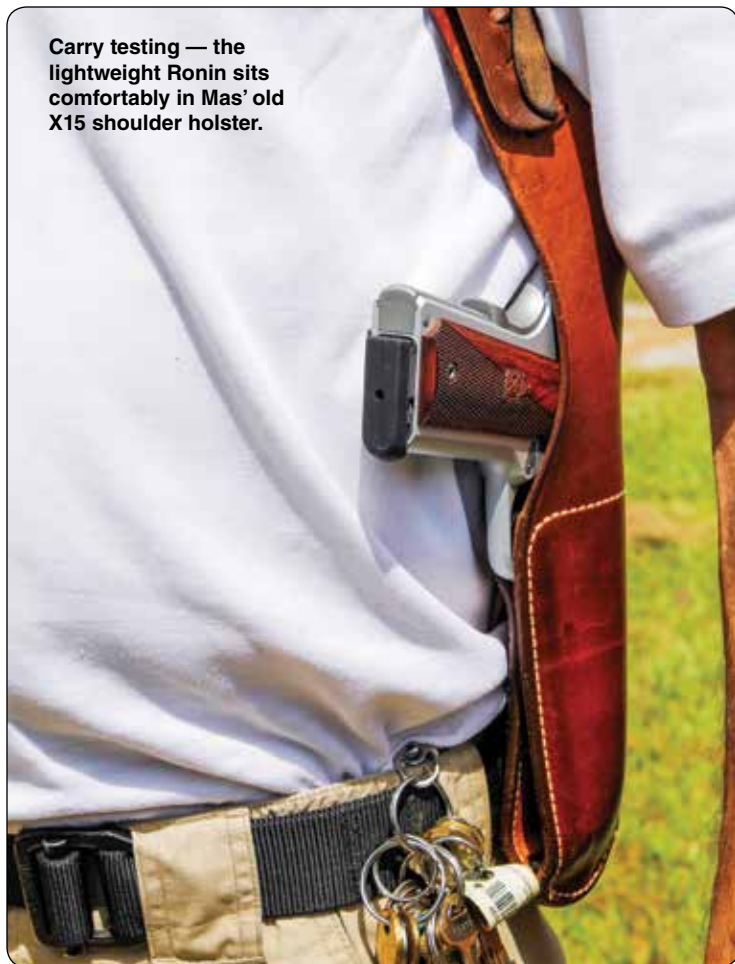
STRESS TEST

I like to test a gun’s handling under pressure, either in a match or demonstrating to a class of paying customers, but neither was possible in this case. Pandemic closures had cut down both classes and tournaments. With the meteorologists forecasting an oncoming hurricane where I was, we accelerated the testing, shooting the hell out of the Ronin in just a few days. The best I could do for stress was to shoot a drill, promising myself it would be like a live performance — one chance only to do it right. I chose the Dave Spaulding Fade-Back drill Tom Givens had shared with me. Three shots per run, at 3/5/7/10/15/25 yards each — on a 3x5 card.

The feathery 9mm gave me good hits til 25 yards, where I pulled one out so close a .45 slug would probably have cut the edge — I could almost hear Jeff Cooper saying “I told you to use a .45!” — and on the last shot, I honked the bullet high left. The result was 16 out of 18 on the card, which rounds up to 89%. I can assure you the two bad hits were my fault, not the pistol’s.

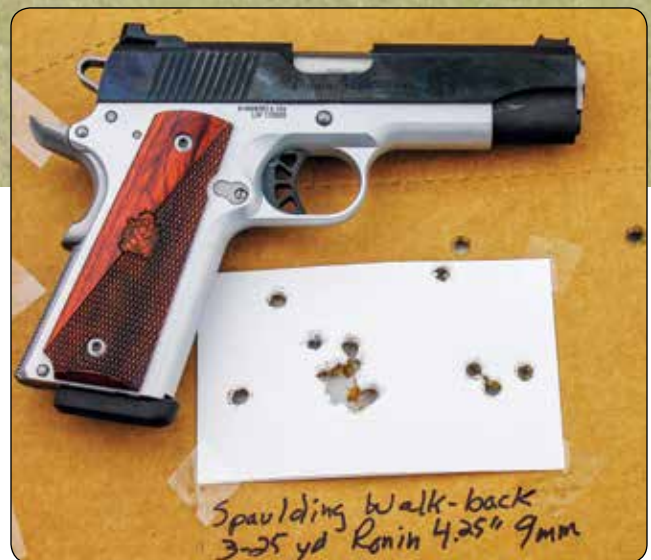


Carry testing — the lightweight Ronin sits comfortably in Mas’ old X15 shoulder holster.





Mas demonstrates the high level of controllability with the 9mm Ronin. Circled brass from last 2 shots are still in the air near gun while the muzzle is still on target. Mas shot an 89% score on 3X5 card drill (below) with 18 rounds from 3 to 25 yards.



RATIONALE

Why buy this gun? Recoil is ridiculously mild. It ran 100% with zero malfunctions in the hands of testers male and female ranging from barely five-feet tall to six-feet plus, and everyone who shot it really liked it. The best 9mm rounds have exceeded the old .45 hardball in terms of fight-stopping damage inflicted and have gotten better still in recent years. The timeless ergonomics of the 1911 design are still in play.

The Ronin Operator comes from the same Springfield Armory that gave us the little scaled-down 9mm EMP (Enhanced Micro Pistol) that has gladdened handgunners' hearts for 15 years. It



Slim grips, a Ronin feature, allowed primo trigger reach.

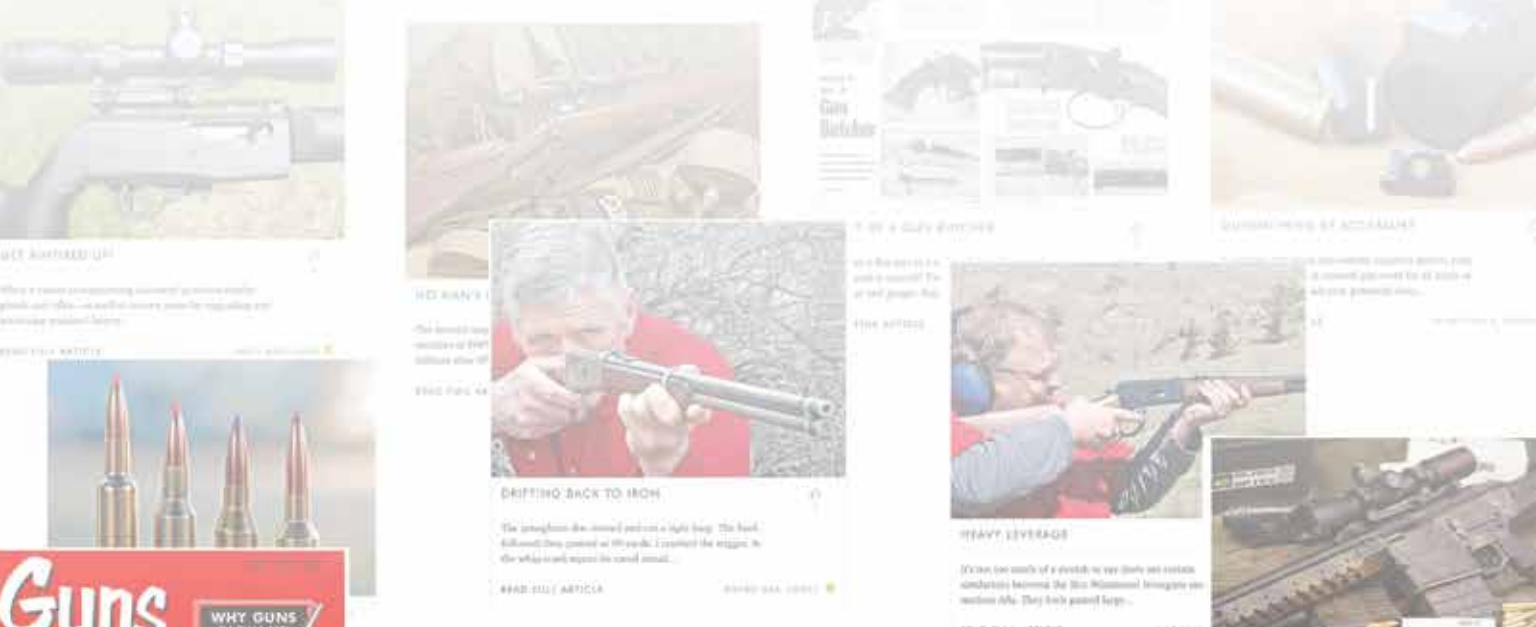
carries the same 9+1 rounds of the same ammo and can now be had in a 4"-barrel version with 10+1 of the same stuff. I am fond of the EMP because it fits my hand superbly, comes with ambisafety (the Ronin doesn't) and is as reliable and accurate as I can ask for. So why buy the Ronin instead?

Glad you asked. The Ronin's MSRP is \$849 while the EMP starts in the low \$1,100 range. Made on specialized machinery, EMPs are naturally more expensive. EMPs have proprietary magazines and parts, including grips; the Ronin can accept lots of aftermarket 1911 9mm mags and generic 1911 stocks and other parts.

Choices are good.

So is the Springfield Armory Ronin 4.25" lightweight 9mm. It's also available in .45 ACP; look for a test article in our sister publication, *American Handgunner*.

Springfield-Armory.com



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Fun with BLACK POWDER REVOLVERS

Getting started, six shots at a time

David Freeman

I've been mentoring a grandson and a couple of his friends in shooting, gun cleaning, reloading and DIY gunsmithing. It had been on my mind for a while to add black powder shooting to the items we learn about but I faced a challenge — I had absolutely no experience with it. The simple solution was we'd learn together!

AFFORDABLE

One of the easiest ways to get started with black powder also happens to be the most affordable. Italian companies Pedersoli, Pietta and Uberti make excellent replicas of early black powder revolvers made by Colt, Remington and others. These revolvers are very affordable and some can be bought for less than \$250. They are not considered guns by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms therefore they can be delivered right to your door.

I had been eyeing the Pietta .36 caliber 1851 Navy Colt, which to me is one of the prettiest of the black powder revolvers and historically significant as Wild Bill Hickock's favorite gun. Right in the middle of the COVID-19 gun shortage, Cabela's put it on sale for \$199.95. Decision made.

It's called the Navy Colt because the cylinder has an engraving of a Naval battle between Texas and Mexico at the Battle of Campeche on May 16, 1843. The frame has a beautiful color-case-hardened finish and the grip frame is brass. The barrel is octagonal in shape and blued. It's a beautiful gun to own even if you never shoot it.

I picked up a starter kit containing a powder flask, powder measure, inline capper and nipple wrench, plus a few balls and patches. Cabela's had no percussion caps and this brought about the first learning experience. Percussion caps come in different sizes and nothing in the Pietta instruction manual indicated what size to use. An Internet search came up with two recommended sizes — #10 and #11 — with some preferring #10 and others preferring #11. When I went to order some, you'd have thought it was 9mm ammo as no one had any in stock. Persistence paid off, and I finally found some #11s at a Bass Pro shop and they worked perfectly.

TROUBLES

The second learning experience also came before shooting the gun. The barrel on this and most black powder revolvers



Pietta's replica of the 1851 Navy Colt is an inexpensive and authentic way to get started with black powder muzzleloading.



This is a typical 10-yard target resulting from shooting the revolver as a .36 caliber muzzleloader.



David purchased a .36 Caliber kit from Cabela's containing most of what he needed to get started.

is locked on with a wedge through both sides of the barrel and the base pin which the cylinder rides on. The wedge has a piece of spring steel to keep it in place. To clean the gun, you need to take the barrel off. Squeeze the little tab on the right side and pull the wedge out from the left. This is what you're supposed to do, but I couldn't budge it.

It became obvious from YouTube and various black powder forums I'm not alone in encountering this issue. I solved my problem with a bit of judicious Dremel grinding.

For gun powder, I bought Pyrodex. Pietta's handbook recommends 17 grains of Pyrodex with a .36 caliber round ball. It is also recommended to shoot a blank cap on each cylinder prior to loading the gun for real. This is to burn out any oil left from cleaning, or in my case, manufacturing. The caps go on a device at the back of each cylinder called the nipple. Pressing a cap on each nipple and firing it was a simple task.

When you load a black powder muzzleloader, the powder goes in first, followed by the ball, then something to keep the powder blast from lighting off adjacent cylinders — bad news if it happens. After using the cotton patches from the starter kit, we switched to Bore Butter patches. They were more difficult to compress in the chambers, and they flew down range so far, they added extra holes in our targets. Bore Butter not only does the job of containing the burning powder in each chamber but aids in cleaning the gun.

The percussion caps split upon firing and can fall between



When fired as a muzzleloader, the 1851 Navy revolver (above) depends upon percussion caps pressed on the nipple for each chamber to ignite the black powder. When equipped with a conversion cylinder, each chamber has its own firing pin (below).



the hammer and frame. Just watch for it and dump it if it happens by turning the revolver upside down while carefully keeping the muzzle pointed downrange.

VALUE ADDED

There is another benefit to buying this type of revolver. Taylor's, Howell and Kirst Konverters all offer conversion cylinders allowing most black powder cap and ball muzzle loading .36 caliber revolvers to shoot .38 Long Colt or .38 S&W cartridges, or .44 caliber revolvers to shoot .44 or .45 Long Colt cartridges. I ordered a cylinder for my gun from Taylor's, paying \$215 plus shipping. It doesn't have the naval battle engraving scene on it but was nicely blued and shipped promptly.



Each reload of the conversion cylinder requires removing the barrel and cylinder as shown here. Here is the conversion cylinder (right) loaded and ready for the back to be put back into the revolver frame.

I had some .38 S&W rounds on hand but they wouldn't fit in the cylinder. I began a search for .38 Long Colts and found nobody had them in stock. Starline had some brass but I was at a loss because load data for .38 Long Colt is noticeably missing from all my reloading manuals. Never fear, I asked John Taffin if he had any .38 Long Colt cartridges he could send me to shoot for this article. JT had a better idea, suggesting I shoot .38 Special 158-grain wadcutters. I had some on hand and those cartridges dropped right into the conversion cylinder.

Now, back to the importance of being able to easily remove and insert the wedge. The conversion cylinder loads from the back like a normal metallic cartridge revolver, except there is no gate on the gun to load the cartridges. To compensate for the way the gun handles nipples and caps in its native state, this cylinder has a removable back allowing the chambers to be loaded. To load the cylinder, it must be off the gun — this requires removing the barrel — which is why you need to be able to easily remove and reinsert the wedge.

RANGE TIME

Shooting the gun was interesting. We started by loading .36 caliber round lead balls over 17 grains of Pyrodex, topped off with patches from the starter kit. I had my chronograph set up to see how this load performed and was surprised at how consistent the measurements were. Over 24 rounds, the low was 438 fps and the high was 468 fps with most in the 442–446 fps range.

The rear sight on the gun is notched into the hammer and the

front sight is a brass pin. The combination works quite well when shooting black powder from 10 yards, allowing us to keep our shots within a heart-sized group.

After each of us had fired 12 rounds with black powder and lead balls, we switched to shooting the .38 Specials. Even though we had to remove the barrel to load the cylinder each time, it really went a little faster than loading the black powder. The sights didn't work the same for these higher-pressure cartridges, which averaged 744 fps over 16 rounds. Once we learned to adjust our sight pattern lower, the .38 cartridges were decently accurate.

CLEANUP

After the first session shooting, I washed the gun in hot soapy water, rinsed it with water as hot as I could stand, and after drying wiped it down with a light coat of oil. The next time, I used Simple Green cleaner instead of soapy water and it worked just as well.

This is a fun gun to shoot and, compared to a lot of other things you can do in the shooting game, very economical. At the public range where we shot, we attracted a lot of attention from people who recognized the historical Colt 1851 Navy.

If you've been thinking about it and have not yet walked down this path, go for it!



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KALASHNIKOV USA KOMRAD

MAKING SAIGAS GREAT AGAIN

Jeremiah McCarthy

At first glance, some might think the Saiga-patterned 12-gauge from Kalashnikov USA (K-USA), dubbed the Komrad, would classify as a shotgun — but it's not. Others, noticing the adjustable SBA-3 brace, might call it a pistol — nope, try again. "Whatever it is, that barrel only measures 12.5" long, so you'll have to fill out a Form 4" — not even close. Believe it or not, the sum of all its parts — the SB Tactical SBA-3 brace, CAA vertical foregrip, overall length more than 26" and 12.5" smoothbore barrel — means the Komrad simply classifies as a "firearm" and is part of a growing trend of "shorties" that can legally be purchased sans tax stamp.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Kalashnikov USA has been in the business of firearms since 2011, when they got their start with imports. Now strictly a manufacturer, the K-USA product lineup consists of the KS-12 Saiga-patterned shotgun and the KP-9 9mm rifle, pistol and short-barreled rifle (SBR) models patterned off the original Vityaz sub-machine gun. Based out of Pompano Beach, Fla., K-USA is about

as American as it gets and the appropriately named, compact new Komrad packs some serious gusto. We were excited to get some range time with it a few months prior to its launch, and we've been just as enthusiastic since then.

OUT OF THE BOX

If you're familiar with the Russian Saiga, a lot of what the Komrad brings to the table will be familiar as well. The Komrad feeds both 2¾" and 3" 12-gauge shot shells from a detachable box magazine. Unlike the similar Vepr-12, there's no magwell here and bolt hold-open duties have been tasked to the notched safety lever. Other Saiga-esque features of the Komrad include a side-mounted optics rail, smooth top cover, standard bead-and-notch iron sights and a two-position gas regulator with "H" and "L" markings to adjust between high- and low-pressure loads.

The fit and finish of our Komrad gives a nod to its American pedigree. While calling Russian Saiga "rough" would be putting it nicely, our test gun boasts masterfully set rivets topped with a glass-smooth finish — quality craftsmanship also extends to the inside of the gun as well.

The Komrad's trigger is top shelf. For a moment, we even thought our trigger pull gauge might need to be recalibrated after seeing readings on our test gun. Early versions of the Komrad shipped with the Tapco G2 trigger group, which typically measures around 4 lbs. of pull. However, shortly after the Komrad's initial release, K-USA moved forward with their own trigger group — one possessing a smooth, moderate amount of travel and topping out just a hair over 2½ lbs. before dropping the hammer. The reset on this trigger is so tactile and audible you can't miss it. In fact, company CEO Johnathan Mossberg takes quality control so seriously he personally applies the proof mark to K-USA barrels during the assembly process.

Because shotguns were designed to be fired from the shoulder and pistols were designed to be fired one-handed, the inclusion of the SBA-3 brace and CAA's EVG (Ergonomic Vertical Grip) play a critical role in helping the Komrad achieve status as a "firearm."

Options for mounting accessories and methods of carry offer nearly as much versatility as the 12-gauge shells it shoots. Quick-detach sling sockets can be found at the 3-, 6- and 9-o'clock positions on the handguard, along with three Picatinny rail sections



The package comes with two 5-round magazines, a gas wrench and various sizes of pistol-grip inserts.

S&B OO buckshot made a nice dinner-plate pattern at 10 yards from the cylinder-bore barrel.



in the same locations. Another QD point can be found on the SBA-3 brace, which rides on an adjustable six-position tube from TDi Arms that also sports a left-side sling loop.

K-USA rounds out the package with a traditional 10-slot flash hider and supplies two of their own five-round magazines with the gun. K-USA also offers 10-round magazines for purchase and because the Komrad uses the traditional rock-and-lock method of insertion, any Saiga-patterned magazine should work as well.

RANGE TIME

“Never trust a used-car salesman or a semi-automatic shotgun,” is paraphrased life advice a good Army buddy of mine once shared with me. The Russian Saiga is notoriously finicky, especially when it comes to low-recoiling loads. Would we find our Komrad to be as reliable as a sleazy salesman, or would it pass the test and break the mold?

On our first trip to the range, we decided to go straight for the big stuff — a mix of 3" 546-grain lead slugs, 300-grain Federal Trophy Copper and some 2¾" Hornady Critical Defense 00 Buckshot. As previously noted, the Komrad has an adjustable gas regulator and rotating the gas regulator to the high-pressure

setting for the stiff loads we were about to shoot was a simple enough affair. Savvy shooters already know shooting high-pressure loads with the gas regulator in the low-pressure setting is a surefire recipe for premature parts failure of the firearm. Changing settings requires a simple press down on the detent lock with the K-USA provided tool, then rotating the regulator to the appropriate position.

The Komrad weighs less than 8 lbs. thanks to the short barrel length, and it felt downright diminutive when locking in a magazine filled with magnum loads. Because the size of the Komrad and the power it packs lends itself perfectly to the home defense scenario, we set our targets up a mere 10 yards away. Naturally, there were some concerns about the recoil such a compact package would produce.

A SMALLISH MULE

She kicks — not like a turkey gun, but there's a decent amount of felt recoil nonetheless. The stiff upper portion of the SBA-3 brace handled the recoil of the magnums nicely and the Komrad cycled every magnum load we fed it like a champ.

With the high-recoiling loads out of the way, it was time to adjust our gas regulator to the low-pressure setting and put the Komrad to the real test with some light target loads. For this part of the evaluation, we selected some standard 2¾" Winchester white box filled with 1⅞" oz. of 7½ shot and were pleased with the results. As long as we maintained a proper stance and held the Komrad tight into the shoulder, she was as reliable as any good 7.62x39 AK. However, it should come as no surprise as soon as we became lazy and relaxed, we'd eventually experience the occasional failure to eject.

Our target loads — sans choke — printed a nice torso-width pattern on paper at 10 yards from the short barrel. Meanwhile, Hornady's Critical Defense Buckshot loads printed an intimidating fist-sized pattern at the same distance.

The Komrad is a finely assembled, reliable powerhouse packing a serious punch. The compact package points fast and shoots well. Fans of the original Russian design will be thanking K-USA for “Making Saigas Great Again.”



The K-USA Komrad is a non-specific “firearm” by virtue of the sum of its parts — SBA-3 brace, vertical foregrip, OAL more than 26" and smoothbore 12.5" barrel — with no Form 4 needed!

Kalashnikov-USA.com



The author, aka "Cholla," on the lookout for rustlers and *desperados* while holding his modern Winchester Model 1873 lever-action rifle. Alan competes in the SASS Classic Cowboy category.



Tyler "P.R. Undertaker" Tutterow prefers using a cross draw with his left Ruger Vaquero. The targets are close but still easy to miss, especially when you shoot fast. Photo: Amber Nicole Black



As one of the top shooters in the USA, Mike Cannon is a great competitor to emulate. Notice the four spent cases still in the air as he transitions to his next gun. Photo: Amber Nicole Black

COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING 101

Alan "Cholla" Garbers

Sweat slowly slithered down my back as I squinted in the sun. Heat waves shimmered in the distant tallgrass prairie. My breaths came deep and controlled as I steeled myself for what was about to happen. A crowd had gathered behind me and I forced their talk from my mind. My guns were placed strategically and within easy grasp. I heard gunfire in the near distance and knew my time had come.

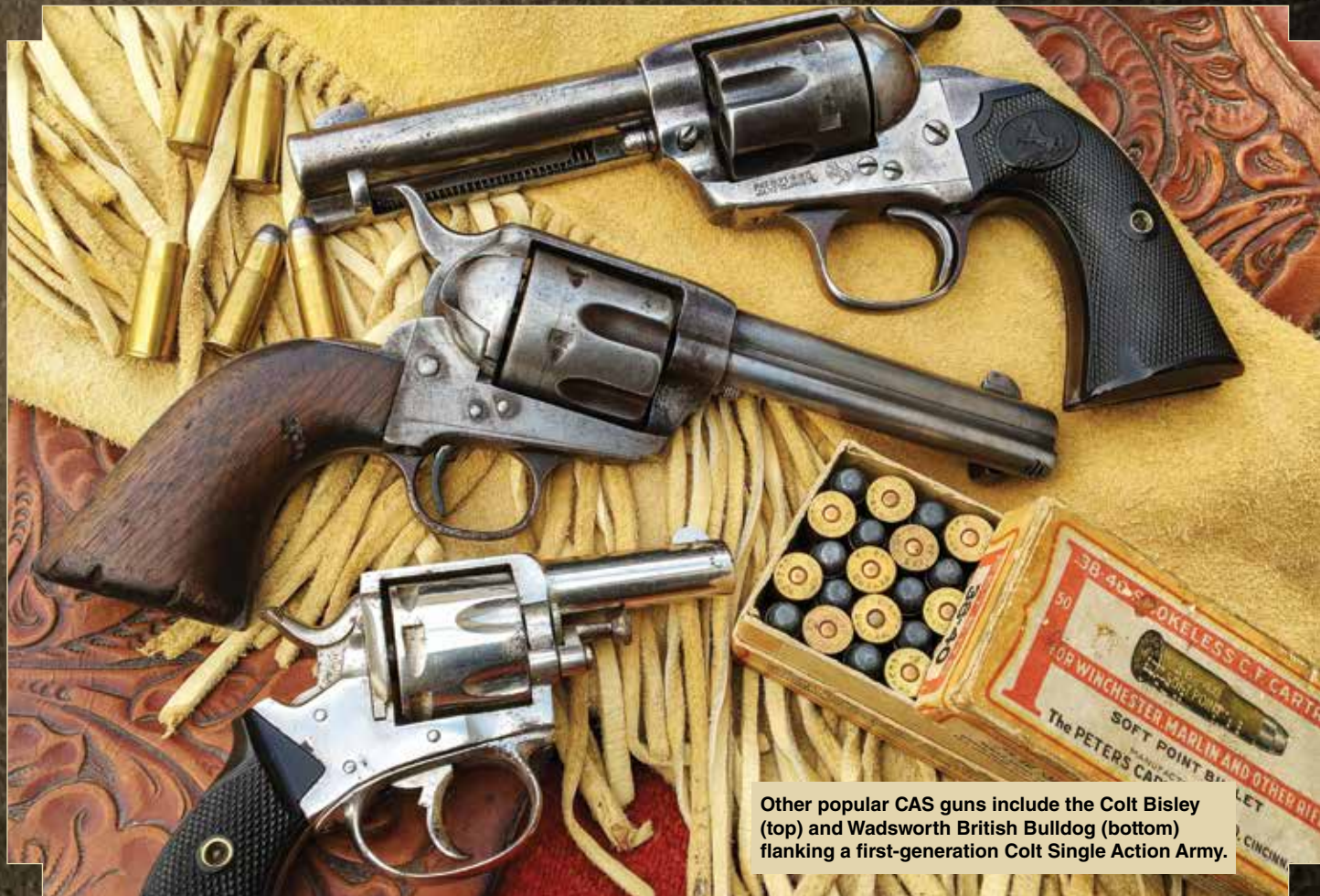
GUNFIGHT!

"That's a pie crust promise," I muttered, "Easily made and easily broken." Suddenly there was a buzzing. I took a step forward and swung my 1873 Winchester rifle, levering a round as it came on target. As fast as I could work the action the rifle spat lead. In seconds, it was empty. I pulled my six-shooter, cocking the hammer as it came up to eye level.

The smoke from the gunfire was starting to obscure my vision but I had to keep fighting. I pulled my second revolver and kept up the barrage, the heavy .45 bucking like a living thing trying to escape my grasp. Too soon, it was empty. I sidestepped and picked up my shotgun, shoving the shells home as I pulled the stock to my cheek. The two blasts sounded almost as one and hadn't echoed away before I slammed two more shells home and fired.



Carolyn "El Paso Susie" Lockman is tough to beat. She won the SASS World Championship in her class in 2016. Photo: Amber Nicole Black



Other popular CAS guns include the Colt Bisley (top) and Wadsworth British Bulldog (bottom) flanking a first-generation Colt Single Action Army.

SADDLE UP FOR FUN!

It was over. I was alive. I'd won. Suddenly I heard someone shout out, "Thirty-five and spotters say clean! Thirty-five seconds and clean." Someone else yelled over, "Nice job, Cholla!"

DRESS UP AND SHOOT

That's me. My alias is Cholla. Two Saturdays a month I dress up like a cowboy and shoot in a four-gun competition with firearms designed before 1899. I love it. For brief seconds I'm Alan Ladd, John Wayne, Hopalong Cassidy, or whoever western hero I'm identifying with at the moment.

Cowboy Action Shooting (CAS) is fairly unknown in the shooting world, but once someone discovers it, they often become hooked for life. Why? Tex, one of the founders of the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) sums it up in a nutshell. "Yes, it's a competition, we keep score, but it is first and foremost a fantasy sport for the whole family. It's meant to be fun."

So just what does a normal CAS event consist of? First, it isn't a quick-draw competition. Second, we don't ride horses, at least not real horses. Third, we don't twirl our pistols like Doc Holliday or our rifles like Lucas McCain. Safety is of paramount importance at any CAS match.

There are two major organizations in the CAS world. The largest is SASS. Next is the National Congress of Old West Shootists (NCOWS). SASS and NCOWS are alike in many ways and different in a few. Many shooters, myself included, are members of both.

There isn't enough space in this article to go into the ways SASS and NCOWS differ. The biggest difference is this: NCOWS strives for historical accuracy in dress and in firearms, to the point many NCOWS clubs also perform historical enactments. SASS is more liberal on what is acceptable in dress and firearms so members have fun with the costumes and firearms seen in B-grade western movies and TV shows, authentic or not.

In general, a CAS match is made up of six stages. Each stage includes a series of targets to be shot using pistols, rifles and shotguns. To make things interesting the location of the targets and the order they are shot in changes from stage to stage. To make the event feel "Old West" many of the stages are shot from small western town settings, from saloons to jails, from churches to cemeteries.

The score for each stage is the time to shoot it, so like golf, the lower the time, the better the score. Top shooters can easily clear an average stage in roughly 15 seconds. Slower shooters, like myself, get to enjoy the match a little longer!

THE GUNS

The most popular pistol used in CAS is the Colt Single Action Army and its countless reproductions. With prices hovering around \$2,000 for a real Colt SAA, most shooters choose to buy a reproduction.

The most popular rifle is a reproduction of the famous

Winchester Model 1873 or Model 1866. Both are quick to load and dozens of companies have created modifications to shorten lever times and improve speed in a match. The Marlin 1894 is also very popular. Avoid any rifle without a side-loading gate. Some stages require loading a few rounds on the clock and having the ability to just shove a few more rounds in the loading gate shortens the time required to clear a stage.

Most shooters pair their pistols to the same caliber as their

rifle. The most popular cartridge is the .38 Special. Brass is cheap and easily found. The second most popular cartridge is the .45 Colt. The .44-40 Winchester, .357 Magnum and .44 magnum are also popular, but here's the caveat: All bullets have to be lead and loaded at or below the equivalent black powder load, which means no copper jacketed bullets and no magnum loads.

Just about any modern side-by-side shotgun will pass muster

Top: The HRA New Original is a beautiful copy of the Henry 1860 used during the Civil War. Middle: The Uberti Winchester 1873 rifle. Bottom: The CZ Hammer Coach has the 1800s style in modern steel.





Tools of the trade: Only in CAS can you compete with reproductions of the Colt 1872 Open Top. These guns have the grace and style of older cap-and-ball pistols but the convenience of using brass cartridges.

for CAS. The preferred barrel length is 20" and they are often referred to as coach guns. Baikal shotguns are popular, reliable and inexpensive. My personal choice is the CZ Hammer Coach. Yes, it's twice the cost of other cheaper coach guns, but I feel it's worth it.

If pump shotguns are your thing, the Winchester Model 97 is highly prized by CAS shooters. They were used by the U.S. Military and produced into the 1950s so it doesn't take much shopping to find one. There have been reproduction model 97s made but their quality ranges from great to poor so do your research before buying.

COST

No one can deny the expense of two pistols, a rifle, a shotgun and leather holsters is high. NCOWS and many local SASS clubs have taken some of the sting out of it by making a "Working Cowboy" category, which only requires one pistol and a rifle to compete.

If you haven't figured it out yet, you'll want to reload your own ammunition. You can buy CAS ammunition from companies like Black Hills Ammunition, but considering each match will take about 120 rounds (not counting shotgun shells), buying ammunition can drive the cost of a match to \$100 per shooter. Reloading your own knocks the cost down significantly.

ON THE LINE

All CAS targets are steel, some static and some knockdown. At many events, they are close enough new shooters assume they can't miss—right up until the moment they do. In fact, a clean run (no misses) is statistically low at most major events. Unlike other shooting venues there isn't much movement on the part of the shooter, which is a big reason CAS attracts so many older shooters. The majority of the shooters range from 50 to 80 years of age.

In general, the shooter might have to move 10–20 feet during the stage. At "Stand and Deliver" stages, the shooter doesn't move at all. In other events, the shooter might have to punch a bartender (dummy), throw a stick of dynamite, or ride a horse (a saddle on a stand) during the stage. It's all for the fun of the game.

SADDLE UP

If you like watching westerns, reading westerns and shooting "Old West" guns, Cowboy Action Shooting is your game. Luckily for you, CAS events can be found around the USA and even overseas. I encourage you to visit the SASS and NCOWS websites, find a club match nearby and check it out. You can thank me when we're shooting on the same posse someday. 

NCOWS.com
SASSNET.com



A.G. RUSSELL SANDBOX DAGGER DOUBLE-EDGED DANDY!

One of A.G. Russell's great talents was making modern send-ups of traditional patterns — in this case the legendary Fairbairn-Sykes Dagger of WWII fame. Russell dubbed his the "Sandbox Dagger" in reference to the Middle-Eastern theater where much of our U.S. military action has been focused. One major change A.G. and his designer Phil Gibbs made was to add a slightly wider blade with a thicker, beefier spine to dispel any doubt of the sturdiness, or lack thereof, sometimes associated with these old daggers. The result is the stout dagger (a take-off of the Marine Raider Stiletto version) you see here.

Russell's revised perspective on the classic Fairbairn-Sykes is 10.8" long — 6.0" in blade length and with a noticeable increase in blade width of 1.20" at the base. The blade grind is 4.0". The steel is proprietary DM1

high carbon steel developed by knifemaker/metallurgist Dan Maragni and a black DLC top coat keeps the rust monster away. The handle scales are Olive Drab Rucarta (like Micarta), nicely sculpted with a machined



The Sandbox Dagger's scales are Olive Drab Rucarta comfortably sculpted and topped with omni-directional grooved texturing.

A.G. Russell's 10.8" Sandbox Dagger is a modern version of the original WWII Fairbairn-Sykes dagger in a beefier overall design.

omni-directional groove texturing. To keep the beast contained when not in use Russell designed a MOLLE-compatible ballistic nylon sheath with a front pouch to house a sharpening stone or whatever essential(s) you please.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

First, the Sandbox Dagger is extremely tough. In testing prior to manufacturing Gibbs was able to push the blade through an AK-47 magazine with zero damage to the tip. Secondly, the overall materials and construction are first-class — reflecting A.G. Russell's demand for his least expensive knives to exceed his customers' expectations. Not being inexpensive, the icon's Sandbox Dagger had to have the top-shelf quality and finish to please the pickiest of owners — and it does. The A.G. Russell Sandbox Dagger is priced at \$375.

AGRussell.com

find its hours severely cut back due to the pandemic. Unfortunately, we couldn't stay for three days until it reopened and are planning a better-prepared return trip next spring! —Greg Moats

WHY BUY?

I will never be able to afford a Wilson or Nighthawk 1911, or attend Thunder Ranch or Gunsite. The truth is, I make 25K a year building cabinets and the firearms I do own I've had to save like crazy to purchase. I primarily read your mags on my Kindle, it's easier to afford monthly for me.

I'm not whining. My life is what it is because of choices I myself made, some good and some poor. Here's my question. Do many people actually purchase the expensive firearms you reference each month? No one I know can, truthfully.

Keep up the good work. I enjoy your mags and the Guncranks podcast.

My best friend's dad told us 50 years ago that the veneer of civility is paper thin.

Tom Stuart

Yep, I actually get mail every week from folks who buy the stuff on our pages. Granted, when you're talking about some of

the really expensive guns, they're probably not flying off the shelves like a typical 9mm pistol gracing our cover but some folks find them intriguing and buy them.

My overall editorial strategy at GUNS is to let shooters see the big, wide world of firearms, not just the hottest black rifle and the smallest black 9mm pistol. We've covered \$5,000 semi-custom revolvers, \$139 single-shot pistols and custom guns worth considerably more. Currently we're working on a double-rifle feature — I don't know many folks who could pony up the high six-figure sale prices but it's fun to "window shop" and dream, regardless. I remember doing the same thing as a kid, thinking "Someday, I'm gonna ..." —BW



organs and continue on the path to almost endless destruction.

I have seen .45s hit dead center in a victim's forehead and, yet, not penetrate the skull. Massive headache but not much more. I have seen .22s on the other hand enter in the bicep muscle and before its energy was expended traverse the torso ending in the heart — fatally.

Keep up the good work with the magazine.

Jerry Boyd

Will Dabbs: You're right about the .22 LR being a killer. My father grew up in the piney woods of Arkansas, and they used to use a .22 rifle to kill big hogs for butchering. They would get close and place that little pill in the ear or eye socket. Straight path to a brain-dead hog.

As an ER doctor, you'll appreciate this. When I was in college in Tucson, Ariz. in 1958-1962, I belonged to the Tucson Gun Club. We had a guy who fancied himself as a latter-day Wyatt Earp and liked to practice fast-draw with a .45 Colt S&A. One day while practicing, using *live* ammo (!), he cocked the big Colt coming up out of the holster, hung the front sight on the holster hammer loop, and of course the gun fired.

The 250-grain Lubaloy went in his right thigh, missed all the bones and arteries, exited his thigh, entered his calf, continued its merry way downward, and exited the heel of his boot. He managed to drive himself to Tucson Medical Center ER, staggered in, and went face down on the floor. After two pints of blood, some fancy embroidery work by the staff, and three weeks of sleeping on his left side, he was somewhat recovered. We all called him "Chester" after the gimpy guy on *Guns* magazine.

Clete Davis



.22 LR - DON'T MESS WITH IT!

Dr. Dabbs' article in the December issue of *GUNS* regarding the lethality of the "lowly" .22 caliber was right on! In the 1960-70s, at the outset of my law enforcement career, I was assigned as a Deputy Sheriff, and later as a Sergeant, to patrol the second most violent crime jurisdiction in the United States.

We had a lot of shootings. I have responded to shooting victim calls in which almost every caliber imaginable was used. The most common? The .22. Dr. Dabbs pointed out the penetration the round is capable of. When I attended autopsies of those murdered with a .22 the coroner would always point out how such a light round could easily bounce off even soft internal



DEMONSTRATING THE PURPOSE

ARMED CITIZENS A DETERRENT TO SUBURBAN VIOLENCE

DAVE WORKMAN

The immediate aftermath of last year's rioting in several cities, caused by Antifa thugs who exploited what began ostensibly as peaceful demonstrations, reminded the country what the Second Amendment is really all about — and it isn't hunting.

STEPPING UP

In several communities, when reliable intelligence warned of planned property destruction and looting in suburban business districts, armed citizens came to the aid of local businesses. Granted, not everyone was happy to see this, but as things turned out, this show of force was a deterrent to violence. In places such as Kirkland, Snohomish and the Tri-City area of Washington, and in Coeur d'Alene in neighboring Idaho, what didn't happen made all the difference.

Naturally, those who don't care for the appearance of armed citizens contended there was never a real threat, but there is another — and more credible — explanation the media and the gun control crowd were loathe to acknowledge. Faced with the possibility of confrontation with people prepared to fight back, the masked cowards decided to behave themselves and simply depart before stupidity got them into trouble.

Liberal municipal officials, some business people and local "community activists," and the press, simply could not bring themselves to admit the obvious: A show of force prevented trouble.

CASE STUDY

Among the most likely targets were suburban gun stores, where at least some of these people expected to steal firearms and ammunition. One of those establishments is a gun and pawn in Washington State, owned by a friend of this columnist, Melissa Denny, a retailer and Second Amendment activist.

When several gun stores in her region were tipped off they might be targets for gun thieves, word spread quickly through the local firearms community. Denny told me in an exclusive interview the rioting in Seattle unnerved the region, and the threat of targeted burglary was very credible.

What happened at her store was a textbook example of neighbor-helping-neighbor.

One evening, she recalled, "A little black car showed up in the parking lot, waited for a bit and then peeled out. We thought that was kind of strange, so I called the police department and talked to the sergeant on duty and they put an extra officer on duty that night."

She got off the phone, called the store manager, and 30 minutes later, another black car "came rolling through the lot really slow."

"We thought, this isn't good," Denny recalled. "I called a friend of mine who said 'You can't stay there by yourself.' He said 'I think you're being cased.' I decided to stay there and as we were talking, a third car rolled through really slow. My friend called several of his friends and in about 30 minutes there were a half-dozen guys there. We were all outside talking when a fourth car rolled through."

Cut to the chase; Denny and her friends decided to stay through the night, and it was an interesting several hours until daylight. There was an unusually large amount of traffic and a drone even flew over the area. People in some passing cars yelled at the crowd outside of Denny's shop.

"This was not a normal situation," she sagely observed. "There was an obvious interest in the store."

Several gun stores in Denny's region were apparently targeted. In the aftermath, she has improved the store security system, and at this writing, she had spent many nights at the store — with company, of course. On some nights early in the process, there were as many as dozens of friends and customers gathered in the parking lot.

As with Denny's experience, the turnout of armed citizens protecting small businesses was not designed to create conflict, but to create a deterrent. It obviously worked.

"We are very clear we're not law enforcement," she explained. "We're simply here to create a barrier. I'm there every night. There's a (store employee) there 24 hours a day."

LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS?

In some instances where this phenomenon unfolded, those citizens who turned out to prevent violence were predictably branded "vigilantes." It was a deliberate effort by those opposed to gun ownership to demonize good people interested in sparing their communities from property destruction, looting and other criminal acts.

But there could be legal ramifications, which armed citizens must consider. In many instances, some of these efforts were actually joined at times by law enforcement. In every situation, everybody had cell phones to immediately contact



“AMONG MANY, IF NOT MOST, AMERICANS THE SPIRIT OF SELF-RELIANCE IS ALIVE AND HEALTHY.”

authorities if trouble did occur, while others might use the camera features on their phones to record incidents.

Always know the law in your jurisdiction, especially about open carry. Don't push the envelope and don't be stupid. Don't approach suspicious vehicles — it could be construed as instigating an incident — but try to get a license plate number and report it to police or sheriff's deputies.

Cameras can be a deterrent, too. There is no privacy protection against being photographed in a public place day or night. In today's environment, being “on camera” in any location is pretty much a given.

Self-defense expert Massad Ayoob's discussions have appeared in this magazine for many years. Pay attention to the lessons he offers every month in these pages.

TROUBLING TIMES

When the forces of anarchy and hysteria began demanding the defunding or dissolution of police departments, the nation experienced a predictable rush to gun stores.

The same people hoping to be rid of police are typically

those wanting to rid society of firearms (except, perhaps, for themselves and people they control), but they seem incapable of grasping the obvious. Faced with the potential of being left to defend themselves, people are going to take increasing responsibility for their own safety. For many Americans, this has meant buying a gun, even if they previously wanted nothing to do with guns. Self-preservation is the strongest motivation for doing something you might have never previously considered.

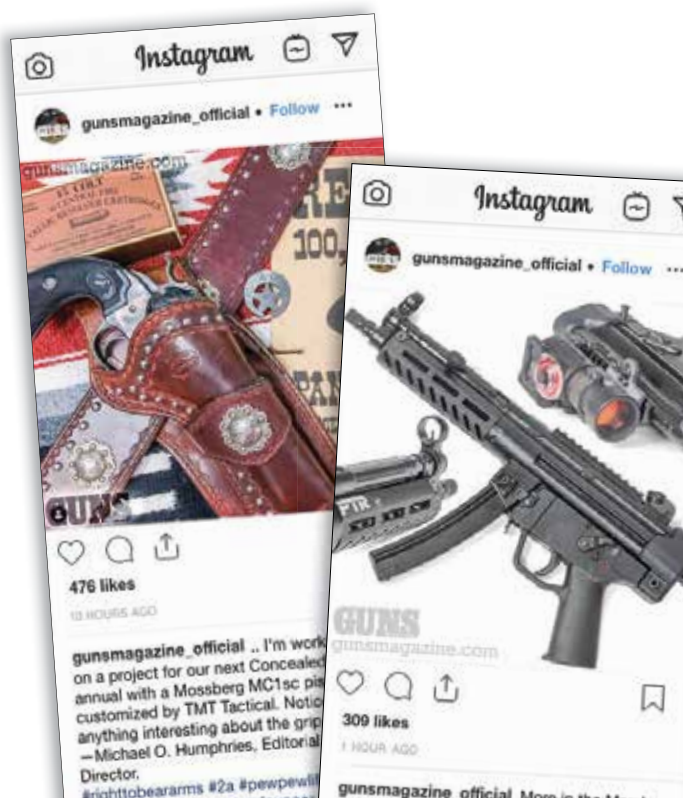
Nobody can predict what the future holds but last year taught us a couple of things. Among many, if not most, Americans the spirit of self-reliance is alive and healthy. There also thrives a spirit of community, where friends and neighbors show up to protect each other from irrational violence and destruction.

The Second Amendment isn't just there as a defense against tyranny, be it foreign or domestic. As last summer proved, the right to keep and bear arms can be a formidable tool of crime prevention.

With state legislatures now at full speed, last year's lessons can be this year's ammunition in the fight to protect your rights. 🔫

Want More Guns?

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today online!



[instagram.com/GUNSmagazine_official](https://www.instagram.com/GUNSmagazine_official)

TRIJICON RMRcc

WAYNE VAN ZWOLL

Alternating live rounds and empties, then clearing jams by pounding the pistol sight on a wooden post to free the slide, I left the post for dead. The RMRcc looked like new. Same zero.

Famously durable, Trijicon's RMR overhangs compact pistols the way a 5-25x56 scope dwarfs a saddle carbine. The new 1x, 1¼-oz. RMRcc is but 0.9" tall, 0.9" wide, with a 0.76x0.56 window. It's a snug, near-seamless match to Springfield's Hellcat, GLOCK's 48, the M&P Shield — carry-clan autos stay concealable!

Next thought: "I won't find the dot!" But two days' shooting proved me wrong. The small screen narrowed my focus. "Dot acquisition is a grip issue," said Scott Jedlinski of Trijicon. "Pressure the gun's toe. The dot comes from 12 o'clock." And it did!

The RMRcc has a unique footprint, Trijicon has oodles of adapter plates, no gunsmithing required. I like that. Nine



brightness settings suit the dot (3¼- or 6½-minute) to any condition.

MSRP: \$699

Trijicon.com

GOZENTA MULTI TOOL

BRENT T. WHEAT

Lots of people carry hidden inside their car, within arm's reach, "just in case." However, most haven't yet realized in even a moderate crash, their gun will likely end up out of action and out of reach. It's happened many times before, which is why undercover cops stopped doing it following the 1986 FBI Miami shootout.

You can prevent inadvertent loss of firearm, while keeping it extremely handy with the Gozenta multi tool from HAWG Holsters. The simple device clips into the seatbelt buckle of an unoccupied seat and keeps your HAWG Holster secured via the holster's Ulticlip. Put a hat or jacket over the gun and you're ready for car trouble. The device also has wrenches, bottle openers, a paracord and possibly a cappuccino maker



(we made up this last thing, but it's still awfully handy!).

MSRP: \$20

HAWGholsters.com

SNAGMAG MAGAZINE HOLSTER

BRENT T. WHEAT

Let's be honest — at the range, you use a standard magazine pouch for your auto pistol reloads, but in the real world, it doesn't always happen. One of the main reasons is it's awfully difficult to conceal a magazine clipped onto your belt or pocket. Your gun might be hidden but a container of



bullets on your belt is as subtle as a nudist taking communion at your church.

With the Snagmag, a simple plastic bikini for your magazines, you wear your spare on the belt or clipped in your pocket. The design conceals the nature of the device as it looks like a common pocketknife, but holds your magazine ready for action. The "snag" part of the name comes from the fact it hooks to your clothing, leaving the holster anchored while the magazine comes free. All in all, it's a deceptively simple triumph of good design principles.

MSRP: \$34

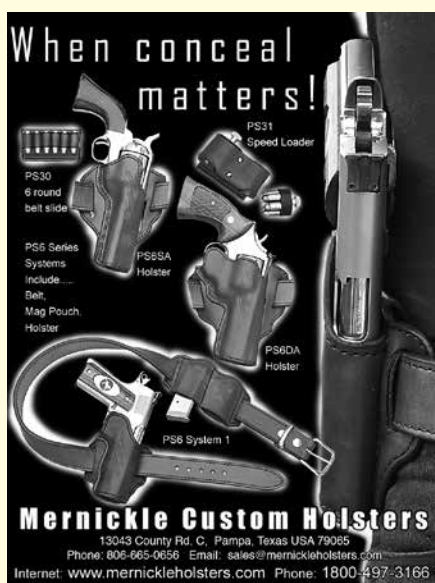
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FXH-45M MOXIE AMERICAN TACTICAL INC.

The *FXH-45M Moxie* is a full-size hybrid 1911 from American Tactical. It's a single action, semi-automatic pistol chambered in .45 ACP. With an OAL of 8.7", it weighs 1.95 lbs. unloaded and without the magazine. The Moxie has black polymer grips and a removable top plate for an optics mount. It has a patented polymer frame with two metal inserts and a 4140 steel slide with a parkerized finish. The Moxie ships with one 8-round magazine. MSRP: \$399.95. For more info: (800) 290-0065, AmericanTactical.us

NITROFIRE WITH FIRESTICK SYSTEM TRADITIONS PERFORMANCE FIREARMS

Nitrofire with the Firestick System makes muzzleloading safer, more accurate and reliable. The .50 caliber rifle from Traditions Performance Firearms has a 26" ultralight chromoly steel fluted and tapered barrel, 1:28" twist rifling, a Dual Safety System and many other features. It is equipped with Traditions' Elite XT trigger system designed with a rebounding hammer and a manual cross block trigger safety. MSRP: from \$549 to \$1,202. For more info: (860) 388-4657, TraditionsFirearms.com



SHAPESHIFT MODULAR HOLSTER FOR HELLCAT ALIEN GEAR HOLSTERS

Alien Gear announces the *ShapeShift Modular Holster System* for the Springfield Hellcat and Hellcat OSP. The Hellcat OSP holster has a pocket for an optic compatible with the Shield RMs or a compact optic of the same dimensions. The pocket protects the optic, keeps the user from being poked or prodded and prevents clothing from being torn by the optic when carrying the pistol. MSRP: \$45.88. For more info: (208) 215-2046, AlienGearHolsters.com



SLX 1X PRISM SCOPE PRIMARY ARMS OPTICS

Primary Arms Optics has just released the *SLx 1x Prism Scope* with ACSS Cyclops reticle. Weighing 9.7 oz. with a massive eyepiece and compact body, the prism can recreate the speed of red dot and holographic optics with the etched ACSS reticle. With the green-illumination option, users can choose between a red or green reticle depending on their preferences. Both color options come with 11 brightness settings. MSRP: \$239.99. For more info: (713) 344-9600, PrimaryArms.com

HOLSTERS FOR THE SIG P365 KINETIC CONCEALMENT

Kinetic Concealment now offers *Holsters for the SIG P365*. The Hybrid IWB holster, KC Baby Appendix Carry or the OWB holster complement the 9mm micro-compact P365. The Hybrid and KC Baby Appendix holster features a patented neoprene-backed leather and Kydex combination. The OWB holster is made with Kydex shells mounted to a cowhide leather backing. MSRP: Hybrid IWB, \$65.95; OWB, \$44.95; KC Baby Appendix Carry, \$52.95. For more info: (731) 388-9693, KineticConcealment.com



POINTER KST-1230 LEGACY SPORTS

Legacy Sports International introduces the *Pointer KST-1230*, a single-barrel trap gun. It comes in 12 ga. with a 2¾" chamber, a 30" raised and vented wide rib barrel and a fiber optic front sight. The

Pointer KST-1230 features five extended screw-in chokes, a walnut stock with adjustable cheek piece as well as a walnut beavertail forend and ejector. MSRP: \$599. For more info: (800) 553-4229, LegacySports.com

For more New Products visit us
online at gunsmagazine.com

GEN II MICRO HOLSTER

REMORA HOLSTERS

The *Gen II Micro Holster* from Remora offers low profile concealment. It is draw side-specific with a swivel metal clip to adjust for preferred cant. Made of soft lightweight material designed for semi-automatics or revolvers, the Gen II Micro Holster is also available in Remora's original classic signature material. MSRP: \$26.95. For more info: (239) 316- 7770, RemoraHolsterStore.com



TRAPPER JOHN'S ULTIMATE BUCK LURE

WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER

Wildlife Research Center introduces *Trapper John's Ultimate Buck Lure*. Part of the new line of Micro Brew Craft Scents, Trapper John's Ultimate Buck Lure combines secrets from trappers of long ago, highly attractive oils and premium doe urine with estrus secretions. This line of high-performance lures is crafted in small batches to optimize their strengths in various attraction qualities. MSRP: \$29.99 for a 4-fl. oz. bottle. For more info: (800) 873-5873, Wildlife.com



STANDARD ISSUE

WE THE ESSENTIALS

We The Essentials introduces *Standard Issue*, their first apparel collection. With pieces for both men and women, the new line ranges from hats to hoodies representing the American spirit. We The Essentials products are handpicked for quality and customer comfort. In picture is the Standard Issue Black T-Shirt. MSRP: \$25. For more info: WeTheEssentials.us

XTREME WATERFOWL GEAR

BERETTA USA

Beretta launches the *Xtreme Waterfowl Gear*, a clothing line featuring jackets, sweaters, vests and bibs as well as hats, neck gaiters and gloves. Made of windproof, waterproof, abrasion-resistant and breathable fabrics, the new clothing line uses Veil Camo's Veil Avayde camouflage pattern for reed and marsh environments. In picture is the Beretta B-Xtreme GTX Jacket. MSRP: \$499. For more info: (301) 283-2191, BerettaUSA.com



PRO-CAM 24 BUNDLE

MUDDY OUTDOORS

The *Pro-Cam 24 Bundle* from Muddy Outdoors is a camera system for capturing wildlife photos and video. The budget bundle includes a 24-Megapixel trail camera along with six AA batteries and a 16-GB SD card. The camera is easy to program and can deliver 1,280x720 HD video with sound or 32 FPS VGA video with sound to capture wildlife action. Flash and detection range out to 70 feet. MSRP: \$129.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, Shop.GoMuddy.com



MINI SLING

TOPS KNIVES

The Mini Sling is a shrunken version of TOPS Knives' full-sized slingshot released in 2017. Designed by knifemaker Leo Espinoza, the Mini Sling comes in a brown leather sheath to make it easier to carry in a pocket or belt. The black powder-coated structural steel with Tan Canvas micarta handles give the Mini Sling the TOPS "bushcraft" look. With an OAL of 3.5", it weighs 3.2 oz. with the sheath. MSRP: \$100. For more info: (208) 542-0113, TOPSknives.com



ESTRUS SQUEEZE ME ELK COW CALL

CARLTON'S CALLS

Carlton Calls introduces the *Estrus Squeeze Me Elk Cow Call*. The handheld elk call makes big, authentic, nasal cow sounds bull elk find irresistible. It's easy to use and also creates high-pitched, long-distance fighting cow calls to up-close estrus whines and calf calls. The Estrus Squeeze Me is tuneable. Just dial in the pitch you want by adjusting tone slots. MSRP: \$29.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, HunterSpec.com

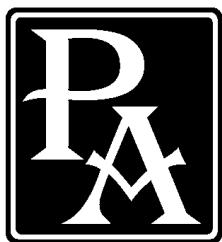


SKINTIGHT POCKET HOLSTER

CCW BREAKAWAYS

Eliminate accidental or negligent discharges with CCW Breakaways' *SkinTight Pocket Holster*. The thin, hard-core, soft-skin pocket holster features a hard Kydex core for safe trigger protection. A soft-to-the-touch outer skin tightly fits around the gun and a formed site channel ensures no snags. Holster features ensure unobstructed entry and smooth-sliding withdrawal of the gun. The SkinTight Pocket Holster can be used for GLOCK 43, 43X, 42, SIG P365, P938, GLOCK 26, 27, SCCY CPx-1, Taurus G2c and more. MSRP: \$24.99. For more info: CCWbreakaways.com





PRIMARY ARMS GIVEAWAY!

Savage MSR 15 Recon 2.0 w/ Primary Arms Scope & Mount

The Savage MSR 15 Recon 2.0 comes standard with upgrades demanded by serious shooters including a nickel-boron coated trigger, a free-float M-LOK handguard and an upgraded 16" Savage barrel. With a capacity of 30+1, the Recon's 5R rifling and Melonite finish ensure consistent and accurate performance in any condition. Adding Primary Arms' GLx 2.5-10x24 Rifle Scope and GLx 30mm Cantilever Scope Mount makes the Recon ready to handle challenges in real world situations.

The Primary Arms GLx 2.5-10x24 has a 4x magnification range that enables the user to make quick snap engagements up close and make accurate hits on medium- to long-range targets. Any

gun with Primary Arms' Advanced Combined Sighting System (ACSS®) reticles becomes ideal for hunting, competition or target practice at the range.

Made of lightweight 6061-T6 aluminum, the Primary Arms GLx 30mm Cantilever Scope Mount pushes your optics forward over 2" to ensure you get the eye relief you need with your favorite scope. The skeletonized 4-screw cap rings reduce weight without sacrificing strength to keep your scope where you want it.

Win this giveaway and you'll be ready to hunt, compete or aim at targets at the range. To enter, go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or mail a post card.

—Jazz Jimenez



PRIMARY ARMS GLX 30MM CANTILEVER SCOPE MOUNT

Manufacturer: Primary Arms
(713) 344-9600
PrimaryArms.com
VALUE: \$99.99

SAVAGE MSR 15 RECON 2.0 RIFLE

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(800) 370-0708
SavageArms.com
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WEIGHT: 7.3 lbs., **VALUE:** \$999

ENTER TO WIN!

If you are unable to enter online, mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please). Entries must be received by February 28, 2021. Limit one entry per household.

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A well-adorned .22 rimfire capable of taking your breath away is just the ticket to stir both your heart and soul. Everyone should have one special gun.

YOU DESERVE A PLEASURE PLINKER! GO AHEAD AND SPOIL YOURSELF — WHILE YOU CAN

Sometimes the urge to break away from the norm is overwhelming. We want something different — something capable of bringing out the green-eyed monster in our friends with its *wow* factor, while at the same time, putting a contented smile on our face. Sure, we all have working guns, guns we’ve carried for years and have special meaning to us. But deep down, we want *one* special gun ... shouldn’t everyone have one?

Weapons adorned with ornamentation is a tradition as old as man himself. Unfortunately, the receiver of such special weaponry wasn’t given it until his very death; he was buried with the fancy weapon worked over by family and friends. Wouldn’t you rather enjoy your “one of a kind” spirit-slayer while you’re alive, instead of during the afterlife? I know I would! That’s why the time to get your fancy shooter is now!

CALIBER?

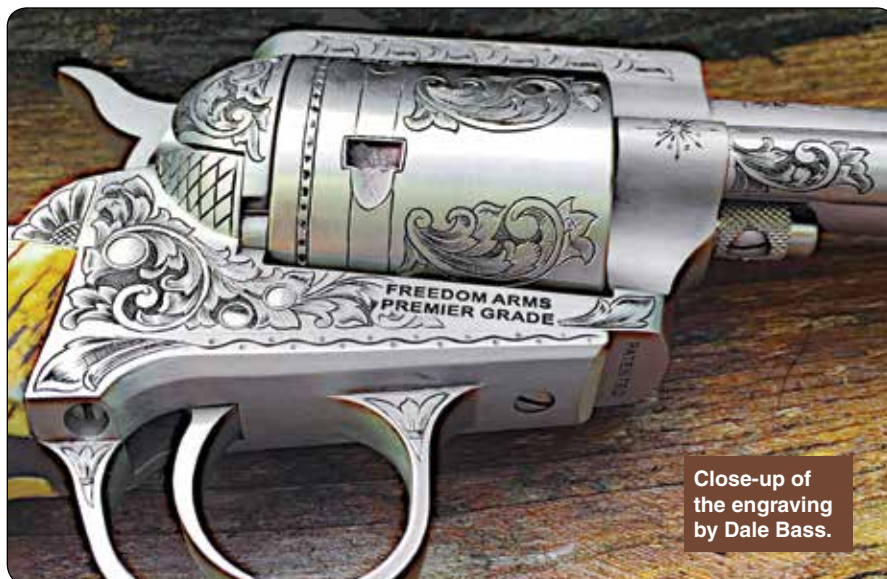
What caliber would you get for your special shooter? Would you use your favorite cartridge, or the caliber you shoot

the most? Many times they aren’t the same. In this case, we went with the most popular cartridge of all time, the .22 LR. Everyone loves shooting a .22! It’s how most of us got our start in shooting, making it hold a special spot in our heart, especially when it’s adorned like this one.

FREEDOM ARMS PRECISION

Ask any single-action shooter who makes the best “precision-made” revolver and chances are “Freedom Arms” will escape their lips. Bob Baker and his crew are known for making tight, precise and accurate guns. Best known for their Model 83, chambered in .454 Casull, Freedom Arms also chambers them in smaller caliber guns like the .22 rimfire, which happens to be the beauty you’re drooling over now.

Freedom Arms does something pretty unique for their rimfire guns, giving them



Close-up of the engraving by Dale Bass.



The barrel and ejector rod housing are well adorned. Imagine wrapping your hand around such a pretty shooter. Makes you want to pick it up through the pages, right?



two firing pins for consistent ignition. How many times have you had a misfire with a .22 round, only to turn it a quarter turn so the firing-pin strikes a different part of the rim, and it fires? It's why they do it!

From the factory, Freedom Arms does a wonderful job with their trigger and action work. Even Bobby Tyler states, "you can't improve on pure perfection," when talking about the guns from Freedom, Wy. Freedom Arms provides the perfect canvas for someone to turn it into the once-in-a-lifetime "precision plinker."

WHEN DINOSAURS ROAMED ...

During the Miocene, or late Pliocene period, around 10,000, maybe 11,000 years ago, mastodons roamed the earth. For this, we can be extremely grateful. You see, their recovered tusks make beautiful gun stocks to ogle and appreciate for their beauty. And, the "anti's" can't complain because it's recovered artifact — but boy is it pretty!

When skillfully fit and shaped to a gun it gives new life, feeling wonderful in the hand and invitingly telling you, "pick me up and hold me!" The stocks were shaped and fitted in-house by Tyler Gun Works.

SKILLFUL SCRATCHER

Engraving is nothing more than the

skillful scratching of metal into wonderful patterns. Sure, it's easier said than done, but when the right tools are used by a talented person, the results are spectacular! Many people think engraving is out of hand pricewise but if you explore the different options available, it's not as expensive as you think. There's no denying how it makes a gun extra "special" by adding three-dimensional depth with this coverage.

Adding ink to the scrolls gives it a shadow effect on stainless guns for a look more beautiful than the deepest blued gun, in my opinion. Dale Bass was the engraver in this case.

YOU DESERVE IT!

So, if you've ever pined away for a special, one-of-a-kind shooter, the time to do it is now. Whenever picking up your special shooter, the price will be long forgotten as satisfaction fills your heart. Your gun will speak to you like never before. Are you listening? As they say, "life's too short" to not have one special gun, to truly enjoy, whether shooting it, or not.

Bobby Tyler, of Tyler Gun Works, has the crew turn a favorite gun into family heirloom status with his ministrations — while you're still this side of the dirt, able to enjoy it.



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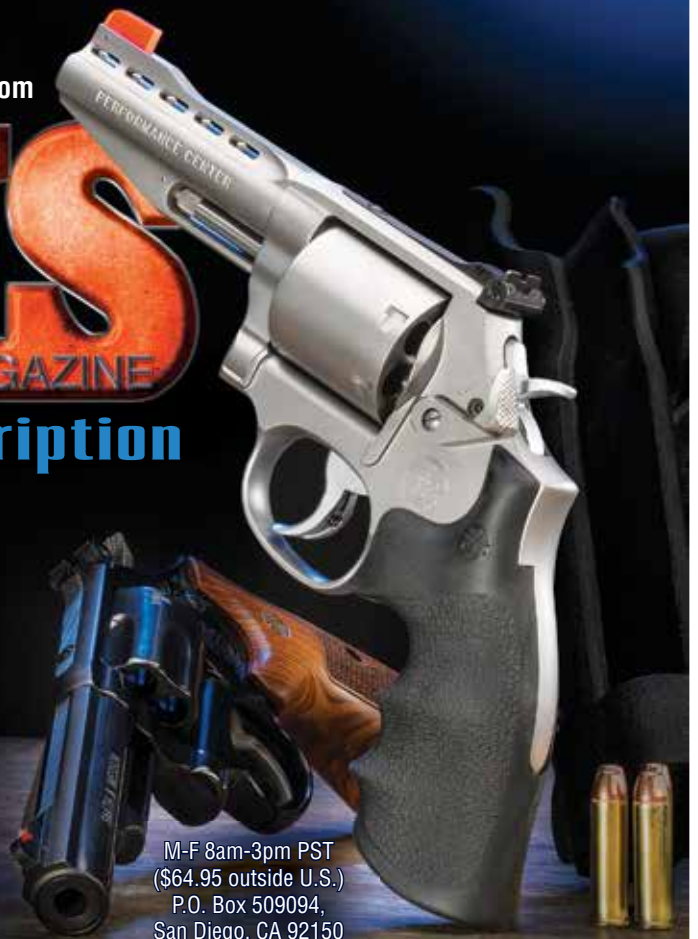
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doing it for work. As any corporate road-warrior will tell you, when you *have* to travel, especially on back-to-back trips on someone else's schedule, it quickly takes the shine off the apple. If you doubt this, try getting stranded in Wichita a few days before Christmas because your flight was cancelled due to a pending snowstorm. Standing in the gate area as flakes start to fall seems very far away from a glamorous corner office on Fifth Avenue.

READ THE MAIL

One other interesting part of the Editor's job is interacting with incoming mail. The vast majority of letters offer praise along with the occasional constructive criticism but approximately 0.01% come from people with no sense of humor who love to share their abundant supply of disdain. In fact, this very story will likely receive an email complaining about the droll mental health reference in the opening paragraph while another one will point out improper use of a compound-coordinating split infinitive

conjunction rising in the lunar sector of Scorpio.

So far, the *best* email of all time was a vicious diatribe cutting down the magazine, making nasty personal remarks about the editor and generally spewing venom in carload quantities. The writer then proceeded to ask for a job. Seriously.

BENEFITS

However, please don't take this laundry list of minor gripes as an indication I dislike being editor. I don't — I have loads of fun and get to work with an incredible team of professionals. There are also the abundant intangible benefits: Waking up to a postcard sunrise over the mountains, seeing a monster buck over the sights of a prototype rifle or simply hanging out with interesting people

"FOR SOMEONE WHO BELIEVES THE NUMBER OF FRIENDS YOU CAN CLAIM PROPORTIONALLY INCREASES YOUR LIFESPAN, I RECENTLY TOLD MY DOCTOR I ANTICIPATE LIVING ANOTHER 100 YEARS."

and a draught of Kentucky's finest on a boat dock while the rest of the country is slowly freezing to death. Those memories can't be purchased, only earned.

Even better are the people. As editor, you meet everybody from the guy running a CNC machine in the gun factory to world-famous personalities. Some of them turn out to be great, some turn out to be wretched and occasionally a few become good friends. There is also our huge reader family, incredibly interesting folks who have some remarkable stories to share.

For someone who believes the number of friends you can claim proportionally increases your lifespan, I recently told my doctor I anticipate living another 100 years.

Not a bad trade in my book, whether you're wearing pants or not. 



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TO BECOME AN EDITOR ... LIFE BEHIND "THE DESK"

A few months ago I wrote the definitive treatise on "How to become a gun writer." The story received rave reviews, including several from people who aren't currently residents of a locked mental health facility.

Now, in a follow-up effort, I'm going to take the next step and share some insights on the business of being the editor of a real-deal, big-time, serious-business shooting magazine. I am eminently qualified for the task because I've now served two years at the helm of our prestigious magazine, though I am also still blinking in shock at having achieved such a high honor.

A good analogy for our situation would be if an alien spaceship were captured by the military and painstakingly pried open, only to find "Goober" from the old *Andy Griffiths Show* sitting at the controls inside. Fortunately, a goofball may be running our show but the incredible cast of support characters is of such sterling quality, we still manage to put out a pretty darn good magazine.

GETTING THE JOB

First, to become a gun magazine editor, you obviously must be hired. In the magazine business it's not like YouTube, where you can build an entire brand on your own initiative by placing consumer fireworks in proximity to your nether regions and recording the results with a cell phone camera. To get hired as a magazine editor, you need to have pre-existing and in-depth knowledge of journalism, firearms, history, story planning, audio-visual skills, budgeting, business relations and how to safely open reader mail containing venomous scorpions.

The road to becoming editor is long and fraught with obstacles. Yet, if you put your nose to the grindstone and work hard every day, year-in and year-out, eventually you'll get passed over for the nephew of the

Chairman of the Board. This is when you should start a YouTube channel.

On the other hand, you can use my career path — I got a phone call out of the blue. This is literally how it happened with me. Granted, I'd been working hard for decades as a freelance writer and had established a decent, if somewhat oddball, reputation. There is also the indisputable idea of "luck favors the prepared," but regardless,



I wasn't looking for a job when it suddenly found me. The rest is history. Some might think my rise to the top was a bit premature and I'm not ready to head up such an important franchise in firearms journalism history, but we'll just ignore my mom.

I highly recommend my technique for becoming an editor, though you might have better odds playing the lottery.

THE GLAMOR

As a youngster, I read all the outdoor and shooting periodicals obsessively, imagining what it would be like to be the editor of a major magazine — hanging out in Manhattan, taking three-martini lunches with famous hunters and then jetting off in the afternoon to bag a record-book aardvark. It seemed both highly civilized and wildly untamed. I so badly wanted to be part of this glamorous world of full-blooded scribes.

Fast forward 50 years — as reigning editorial deity for one of the most revered names in shooting history, I'm sitting in my home office at 7 a.m., pounding out 1,500 words while drinking black coffee and wearing torn sweat pants. Things have definitely changed. However, as the oldest newsstand shooting magazine, at least *GUNS* is still around, unlike most of the competition.

Changes aside, many people still believe I've got one of the coolest jobs in the world of firearms — and they'd be right. However, just like anything, there are parts of the daily routine closely resembling work and sometimes I'd rather be mucking out a pig barn than dealing another vicious nest of dangling participles.

I'm reminded of a friend who used to be one of the assistant photographers on a famous magazine swimsuit issue. I asked him about it and he said, "Yeah, it was great but you found yourself occasionally drinking coffee before work and thinking, 'ho-hum, another long day shooting pictures of scantily clad women in a tropical paradise.'" Apparently most of the models were either horrible people or clinically insane — or both — and

he dealt with them continually. Even fantasy jobs have their drawbacks.

THE DAILY GRIND

In my case, this manifests itself in the frequently asked question, "I'll bet you go shooting and hunting all the time!" In truth, the main job of an editor is to sit in front of a computer screen for endless hours, cell phone glued to your ear, wading through hundreds of emails a day. You read a manuscript, make some edits, try to fix a horribly out-of-focus photo (or shoot your own replacement in the spare bedroom studio) and repeat *ad nauseum*. Nowadays, you can add countless video meetings to the mix. Just for fun, since I'm only seen from the waist up, I seldom wear pants.

There is still lots of travel, one of my favorite things — at least until you're

continued on page 73

A man with a beard, wearing a red and grey plaid shirt over a grey t-shirt and blue jeans, stands in a room. He has a black handgun holstered on his right hip, which is visible through the open waistband of his jeans. He is looking down at the gun. He is also wearing a black smartwatch on his left wrist. In the background, there is a lamp with a grey shade and a framed picture on the wall.

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