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DON'T PUT YOUR EYE OUT!

In your November issue regarding the CZ 457 Dr. Dabbs makes reference to purchasing his first BB gun "from our local OTASCO...." For those unfamiliar with OTASCO the name is an abbreviation for Oklahoma Tire and Supply Company and it's my understanding their first store opened in my hometown of Okmulgee, Okla.

Although my parents would not let me have a BB gun (You'll put your eye out!), for some unexplained reason they bought me my first rifle circa 1968, a Winchester Model 131 bolt action .22, from (you guessed it) our local OTASCO store. I still have it, my son and daughter have shot it, and it shoots just fine. Needless to say, Dr. Dabbs' fine article sent me on a pleasant trip right down Memory Lane. You need to keep him on your payroll — he's not only insightful, he's also hilarious.

Jack Scott

LIGHTNING FROM COLT

Thank you, thank you, thank you! I've been unsuccessfully searching the web for information on ammo for a firearm I inherited from my father, a Colt DA .38.

Based on the serial number I figured the year of manufacture was 1892 and it's a Model 1877 "Lightning" 38. That is, until I read the article written by Mike "Duke" Venturino. His article is spot on regarding my firearm. The problem I'm having is identifying the correct ammo and where to purchase it. There were a couple of rounds in a plastic bag that appear to fit the cylinder: the "Peters .38 L." With limited knowledge on weapons and ammo it's been very difficult solving the problem. I've sent a note to Buffalo Arms in Sandpoint, Idaho per Mike's article but unfortunately they are out of stock. Can you or Mike make another recommendation as to where I can purchase the correct ammo for this weapon?

Al Traxinger

The only proper hollow base .38 Long Colt factory ammo or reloads I could find are on GunBroker.com. There are a couple of boxes that aren't outrageous in price.
—Mike

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Great editorial on "How to be a Gun Writer" (*GUNS Insider*, September 2021). Informative, funny, witty and insightful. I look forward to more from Brent: "Awe and respect, though concealed beneath a veneer of indifference or outright hostility." Sounds like my life :)

Steve Pew

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GUNS

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THE FINEST IN THE FIREARMS FIELD SINCE 1955

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EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON – PART II

FROM INJURY TO IDAHO

When we left off last month I had a bandaged foot with orders to stay off work for a week. It had only been less than two days and I'm already sitting there feeling sorry for myself, and trying to find some reason for this to happen.

NEW JOB

I found out on Monday morning when Dot called me from her office to tell me "get down here and apply at the factory" since they were hiring. I soon was hired at a job making three times what I had been making. Now we could start a family of our own. If Dot had not left the keys in the apartment perhaps none of this would've happened.

The downside to my new job was I

hated every minute. There had to be a better reason for winding up there besides financial. I dreaded going to work — was there really a reason for this? Had I taken the wrong fork in the road? Would I be spending the rest of my life working six nights a week in a tire factory and hoping someday to get enough seniority to actually work days? There had to be a reason. I was about to find out.

The only positive reason I could find was financial. I was now making enough money Dot could quit work, stay home and we could start a family of our own. We soon had a baby on the way.

THE VOICE

In the summer of 1960 we were sitting in church on a Sunday evening and I heard

an audible voice — I could still hear in those days — however it would not have made any difference because this was a voice only for me. I do know God speaks to us in many ways — through other people, through His Word, through his beautiful creation and perhaps sometimes directly.

As I sat there I heard the voice say to me "I want you to teach." It seemed strange as I was already helping Dot teach preschoolers in Sunday school but this wasn't what the voice meant. "I want you to go to school and become a teacher." Say what you will about this, I can only say it was definitely real to me. Now I had my reason for what had been happening. Now I knew why I was working nights. I did not hesitate, but rather drove 30 miles to Kent State University the next morning and registered for fall classes.

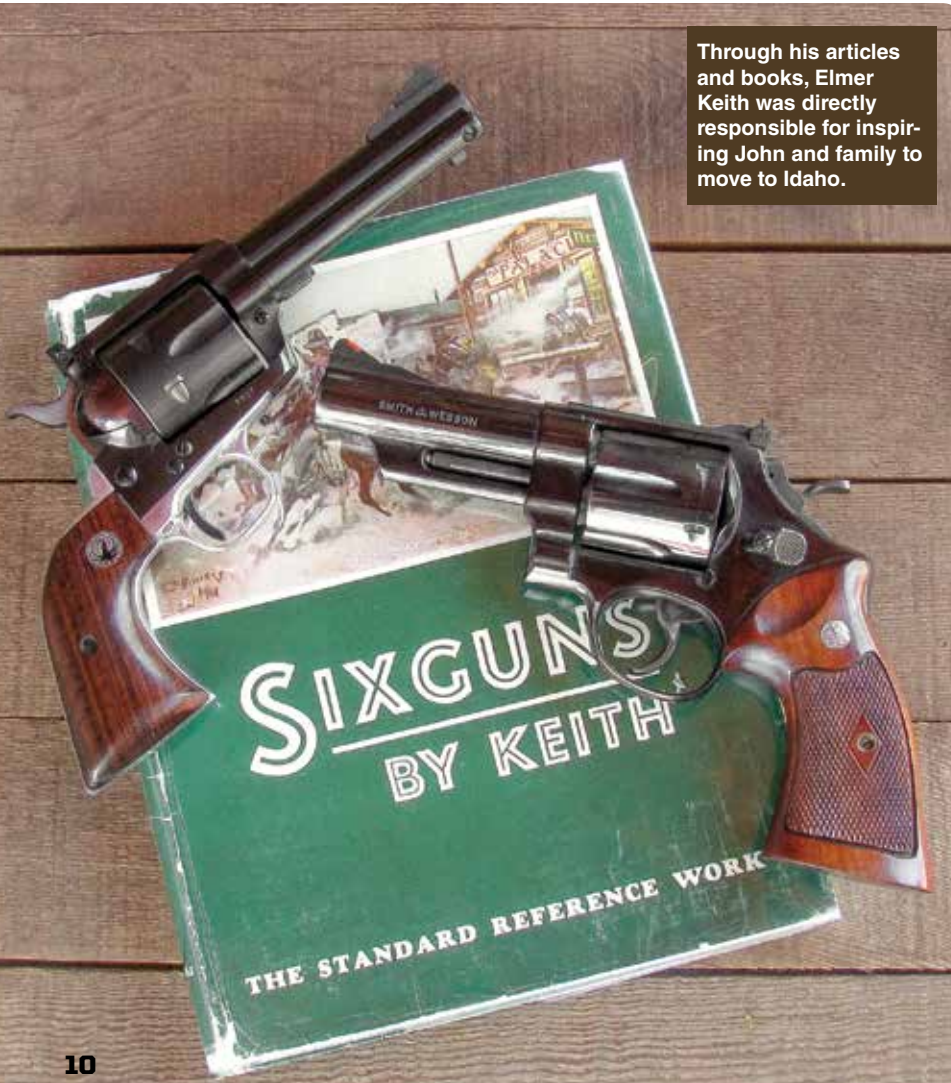
CLASSES

From the very beginning I did not like the classes. I hated my job but my work schedule allowed me to go to school full-time. It was a toss-up which I disliked the most — my factory job or college classes. Kent State required 192 hours to graduate, which figured out to 16 hours per quarter. I signed up for only nine hours the first quarter to see how it would go. I thought I had my reason but maybe I wasn't quite sure.

That first quarter worked out pretty good because the excitement of having direction even, if I didn't like the road I was traveling, helped carry me through. The second quarter I signed up for 17 hours and my so-called Advisor told me it was impossible, and I couldn't take more than eight hours. I took this as a challenge and told him: "Just sign the card and get out of my way!" I took the 17 hours and made the Dean's List with a grade point average of more than 3.6.

It was tough and many a night I had tears running down my face as I went to work. I was always tired, but Dot and I made it together. During this time we never went anywhere except church and grandma's house. Dot had to take up a lot of slack doing things around the house as I was busy with work, school and trying to sleep whenever I could. There were times I didn't remember driving to school. There were times when I looked at my notes and they didn't make any sense.

Through his articles and books, Elmer Keith was directly responsible for inspiring John and family to move to Idaho.



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John's first article, "4 x 44 = FUN!!!" was written about the four .44 Magnums which accompanied John, Diamond Dot and their kids during the move to Idaho.

TEACHING AT LAST

In my last year I had to do 12 weeks of Student Teaching at a primarily black school. It turned out to be a wonderful experience with great kids and the supervising teacher was like a mother to me. I was always tired and there's a definitely a reason we do things like this when we are young, but we made it! I got an "A" for my student teaching. When I graduated we had three young kids, were buying a house and we also had a brand-new 1965 Ford Station wagon for which I would soon have a most important reason.

I graduated on a Friday morning in March. I no sooner got home and there was a phone call asking me to come to work in a neighboring school district. I was hired immediately and started to work on Monday morning, teaching junior high mathematics. Now certainly everything would be great! Or would it? When I reported for work, I found out the previous teacher had been run out by the kids. I looked at them and said I was staying — I never had a problem

with any of those kids for the rest of the year.

I held onto my factory job working the evening shift through the 2-1/2 months left in the school year and then through the summer. When September arrived, I was overjoyed to say goodbye to the factory job. The downside was financial — leaving the factory job and going to teaching, I had to take a 35% pay cut. Everything was looking good except for the money, however a fork in the road was about to arrive.

GO WEST YOUNG MAN

Ohio had been a great place to grow up when I was a kid, however things were not looking so bright as to where our kids would be going to school. I had been reading a lot of Elmer Keith and he was my inspiration to apply for a job in Idaho. I was hired over the phone, took another pay cut — this time 20% — to go from Ohio to Idaho. However, I've never regretted the move.

We hooked a U-Haul trailer to the Ford, folded down the back seats for the kids

and headed for Idaho. We looked like a modern rendition of the Beverly Hillbillies. Elmer Keith had influenced me enough I had four .44 Magnum sixguns, two Rugers and two Smith & Wessons in the car. We spent the summer of 1967 — the first of 29 years teaching in Idaho — in the Payette National Forest and it was where I wrote my first article: "4 x 44 = FUN!!!" It was the beginning and now more than 53 years later, I can look back on over 3,000 articles and nine books. Yes, there is definitely a reason for everything.

THE LESSON

As long as we live, there will be forks in the road. I have learned the best way to know which fork to choose is by making sure the four things most important to me all line up — Faith, Family, Friends and Firearms. I have been thoroughly blessed with an abundance of all four and I don't want to think about what my life would've been if I only followed my own instincts instead of these guideposts.

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LEVERGUN LOADS: .45 COLT PART I

A MODERN REINVENTION OF OLD TECHNOLOGY

The levergun that never was, is. It took over a century, however it finally happened. Why did it take so long?

IN THE BEGINNING

The first Winchester lever-action rifle — Model 1866 — used the rimfire .44 Henry round. Starting with the Model 1873, Winchester used a cartridge that was basically sixgun length — the .44 WCF (Winchester Center Fire), or as it is mostly known today the .44-40. It was basically the same length as the .45 Colt. This did not go unnoticed by Colt and by 1878 they were offering the Single Action Army chambered in .44-40. Now shooters could have a rifle and revolver chambered in the same centerfire cartridge which was quite a bit more powerful than earlier rimfire cartridges. Winchester also soon offered the Model 1873 in two other new cartridges, the .38-40 and .32-20. Colt followed suit and chambered the Single Action Army in these two cartridges.

Now you would think Winchester would reciprocate and chamber the model 1873 in

.45 Colt. It never happened. Why not? One of the possibilities is the differences between the .44-40 and .45 Colt. The former is a tapered cartridge, meaning it's almost a .45 necked down to .44. This design results in a cartridge which feeds through the action of a levergun much easier and smoother than a straight-wall cartridge such as the .45 Colt.

Another problem was the design of the .45 Colt cartridge itself. The rim was very thin and not much larger in diameter than the base of the case, which meant there was not much for the extractor to grip. A look at today's .45 Colt brass shows a thicker rim and also a moat-like recess cut around the base of the cartridge case, in front of the rim, which helps to give more area for the extractor to grasp.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Had it not been for the popularity of Cowboy Action Shooting especially in the early days, we may never have seen a .45 Colt levergun. Beginning in the 1980s they started to appear and today we have a long list to choose from. The three original

Winchesters, Models 1860, 1866 and 1873, are now available in replica form chambered in .45 Colt.

Rossi was one of the first, probably the first, to offer a Model 1892 Winchester replica in .45 Colt and Chiappa also now offers a .45 Colt Model 1892. Winchester, about the same time, brought out the 1894 (mostly found in .30-30) in the shorter .45 Colt. Marlin also offered their Model 1894 in several barrel lengths chambered in .45 Colt and Henry Repeating Arms also offers the Big Boy .45 Colt.

CHOICES

Before choosing a .45 Colt levergun, it is necessary to decide just what one expects from the choice. Copies of the original three Winchesters are basically for standard loads only. More modern versions of the 1892 and 1894 Winchesters as well as the Marlins and Henry Big Boy will handle heavier loads than the original Winchesters. One also has to decide whether loads will use longer, heavier bullets or be confined to standard length cartridges.

Almost any length of .45 Colt cartridge will feed and chamber in a Winchester Model 1894, while the others require shorter cartridges. I have considerable experience over the past 40 years with all action styles and lengths of .45 leverguns



A somewhat modern version of the sixgun/levergun combination is the Ruger Bisley Model and the Winchester 16" Model 1894 both chambered in .45 Colt.



Here are some of the bullet shapes and styles (above) that can be powder coated at home. Targets shot with powder-coated bullets in Winchester Trapper .45 Colt.

In the last quarter of the last century Winchester offered the 16" Model 1894 Trapper chambered in .45 Colt with both case colored and blued receivers.

and have loaded dummy cartridges from 200-grain to 340-grain weights — and more — and use these dummies to make a GO/NO GO chart which tells me exactly which loads will work through which action. The Marlins and the 1892 replicas are quite picky about cartridge length.

Another thing to consider is whether one will be shooting mostly jacketed bullets or cast bullets, or even the relatively new powder-coated bullets. Also, even if standard length cartridges are used exclusively, there are some bullet shapes such as Keith and Keith-style which will not feed and chamber through all .45 Colt leverguns. In other words, it pays to know

exactly which loads will be used before choosing a .45 Colt rifle. We will be looking at all three types of bullets, and herein take a really quick look at the latest rage — powder-coated (PC) bullets.

GET PC

Many of the commercial bullet companies are now offering PC bullets and mold makers are offering PC molds with no lube grooves. I am just getting started making my own PC Bullets using the “shake and bake” method. For this method a plastic container (which will create static electricity) is needed to bond the paint to the cast bullets. Something as simple as a Cool Whip container will hold 75 bullets or so. Add paint powder like Harbor Freight Red or Black and then shake. Next, the bullets are dumped into a colander so the excess paint can be shaken off, placed on aluminum foil and baked at 400 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes. Cool and size as normal cast bullets. They should be sized as soon as they are cool because they will age-harden in a few days, making them harder to size. If they size hard, simply spraying them with Hornady One Shot Case Lube will prevent

sticking in the sizing die.

LOADS

For use in the 16" Winchester 1894 Trapper .45 Colt, I have thus far only used relatively mild loads just to see what can be accomplished. Acme offers the two standard .45 Colt bullets, 255-grain semi-wadcutter and a 250-grain round-nosed flat-point. For both of these I go with 7.5 grains of either True Blue or Unique. Muzzle velocities from a pair of Trappers, one with a case-colored frame and the other blue, are right at 960–975 fps with my best results at 30 yards being groups right at 1". I have also had access to a homebrewed 272-grain Powder Coated Hollow Point which shoots exceptionally well using 7.5 grains of Unique for right at the same muzzle velocity and very close to 1" groups from both leverguns. Syntech's 230-grain .45 ACP lipstick bullets also work well, giving the same muzzle velocity range when loaded over 7.0 grains of Green Dot. Next we will be looking at both cast bullets and jacketed bullets in the Marlin and Winchester leverguns — stay tuned.

CHIAPPA LITTLE BADGER

MINIMALIST VIBE, MAXIMUM UTILITY

Have you impulse-bought any rifles recently? I like to think I plan such purchases sensibly and rationally, determining needs, comparing features and prices, knowing pretty much what I want before ever going to the gun store. Buying a rifle on the spur of the moment seems like grabbing a pepperoni stick at the grocery store checkout just because it is handy.

THE EXPERT

I remember one impulse buy. Many years ago I stopped in at a favorite gun store to pick up a Redfield 6-18 scope I had ordered for use on a .220 Swift. As it happened the store had marked down the price of a Ruger

.44 carbine, and on impulse I decided to buy it. By chance as my purchases were being rung up for sale, one of those experts who haunt all gun shops walked in, and (unasked) loudly provided his opinions, the main one being I was an idiot to put such a scope on a .44 Magnum rifle.

Not at all, I said mildly, this should be a perfect combination for a long-range antelope and mule deer rifle. After all, as was well known, the .44 Magnum is the most powerful handgun in the world and it was only logical it would be even more powerful in a rifle. The expert left the store sputtering and probably relates the story of the gun shop moron to this day. After he left the storeowner grinned and said, "God will punish you for that someday." I guess it was kind of mean.

ANOTHER WHIM

Well, I made another impulse buy a few days ago. By chance while idly looking up survival rifles online I'd come across some reviews of the Chiappa Little Badger rimfire rifle. Oddly enough there were few middle of the road comments. Reviewers either loved it or hated it. I noticed the haters for the most part had never owned or even fired the rifle, while those who actually tried the rifle raved about it. A couple of days later, since I'm now one of those tiresome experts who haunt gun stores, I was browsing the



racks and noticed one on the rack. I asked to look at it.

The Chiappa Little Badger (LB) is a rimfire single-shot rifle, lightweight (2.9 lbs.) and compact with a 16.5" barrel and 31" overall length. It can be folded to a length of under 17" for storage. It is about as basic as a rifle can get, made entirely of metal and plastic. It has a wire skeleton stock, a break action for loading and unloading, and a hammer with an external spur for manual cocking.

Initial inspection and handling gave mostly favorable impressions. There is some plastic used in construction including the rear sight and the four accessory rails. I'm not crazy about plastic on firearms but considering the quality of modern synthetics I know better than to make hasty judgments. Metal surfaces were smoothly finished,

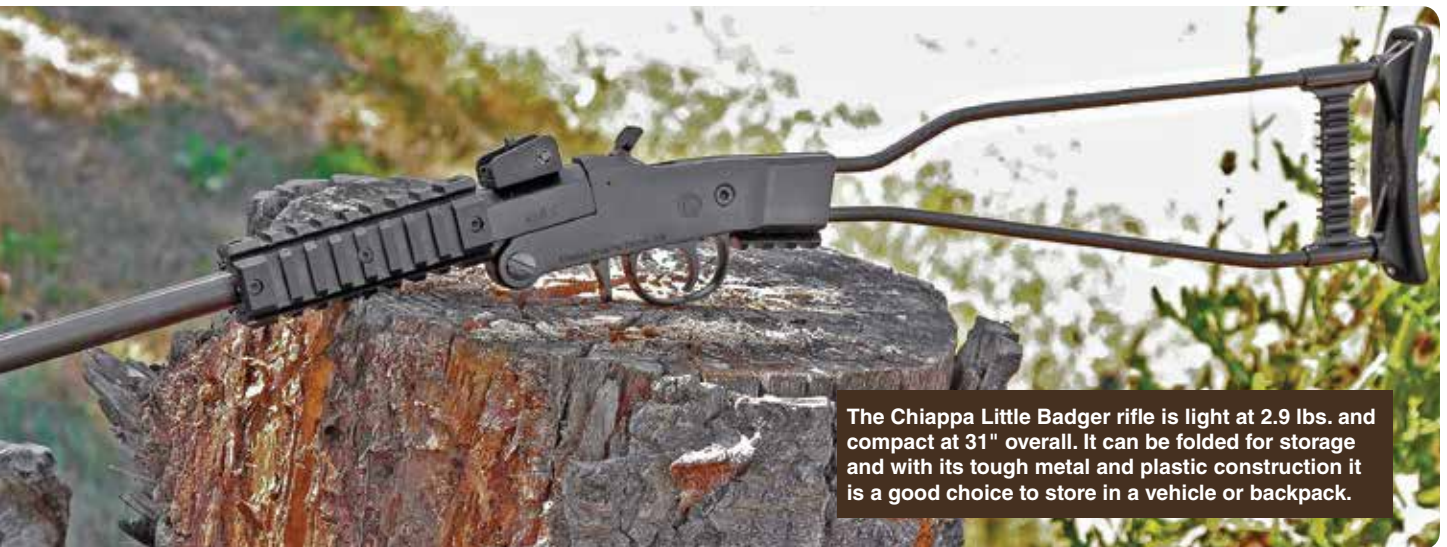


Rotating the barrel about 90 degrees lets the extractor lift the fired case from the chamber so it can be easily removed by hand by the shooter.



The four Picatinny-style rails of the Little Badger let Dave add a Surefire light on the right rail, a Vortex red-dot sight on top and a Gerber fire-starting kit on the left.





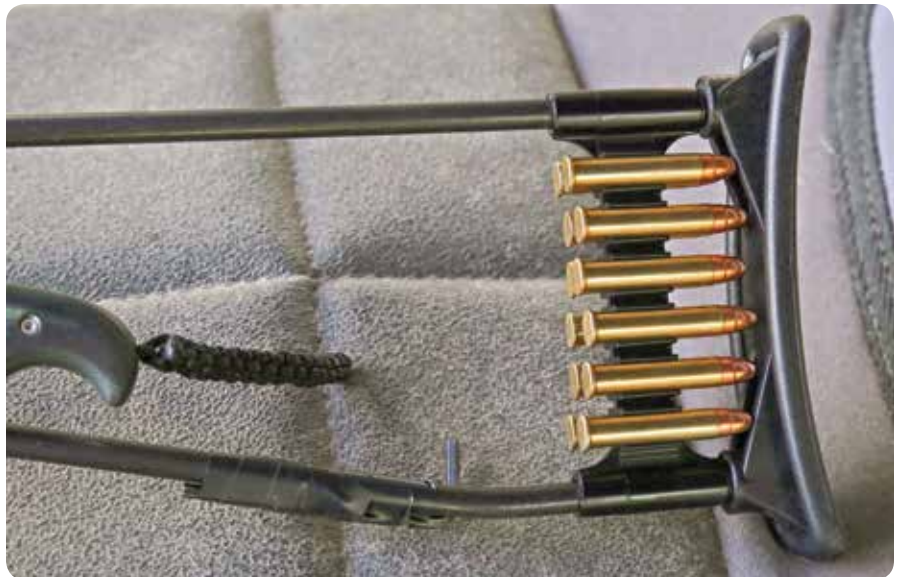
The Chiappa Little Badger rifle is light at 2.9 lbs. and compact at 31" overall. It can be folded for storage and with its tough metal and plastic construction it is a good choice to store in a vehicle or backpack.

parts fit seemed very good and the barrel locked and unlocked solidly.

TRIGGER TIME

What really impressed me was the quality of the trigger pull. Generally it is easier to get a good pull on a single shot than with a repeating action in which the sear and cocking piece disengage and re-engage when the action is cycled. Even considering this, the trigger was remarkable — a light, crisp break with minimal overtravel. The display rifle was in .22LR; I wanted a .22WMR which the store clerk got from inventory.

When I got the rifle home and checked the trigger with my Lyman gauge, weight of pull was almost exactly 2 lbs., consistent and clean. This is not a selected or specially prepared test model, just an example picked



Plastic loops in the stock provide storage for a dozen cartridges, in the case of Dave's rifle, the more potent .22 Mag.



The firing pin won't contact the cartridge rim unless the hammer is manually cocked and the trigger deliberately pulled. Dave even tried the "hammer test" and the gun did not fire!

at random from dealer stock. I have rifles costing well into four figures that don't have pulls as good.

Everything functioned as it should. The barrel unlocked easily and locked up solidly, there were no misfires, fired cases were pulled from the chamber by the extractor. There were no failures of any kind. Accuracy was very good with groups at 50 yards in the range of 1" after I fitted a Vortex red dot sight.

CHANGES

There were a few things I felt needed improvement. The rear sight is a peep, adjustable for windage and elevation, but at least for my eyes the 1/16" hole in the peep sight was too small. Since it is plastic, drilling it out is simple. I'm trying a 3/32" hole and if it's still too small after some testing I may go

a bit larger. Also the elevation slide moves a bit too easily, so remember your setting using the number scale on the sight. In fact once you have an adjustment you like, it might be an idea to superglue the sight in place.

The four accessory rails look cool, though the bottom rail seems kind of useless to me as putting anything on it makes the rifle more bulky when folded. The rails are held by three "Torx" screws so I removed the bottom rail so the rifle will fold more compactly.

A good quality fabric carrying case is included. I'm having fun adding various accessories such as a Gerber fire starter, a CRKT Minimalist knife and a SureFire light. Add a box or two of cartridges, ear and eye protectors, and it makes up into a handy package for a vehicle or boat.

STILL CARRYING THE '92

Loved the article by Mike Venturino on the .38-40 (*Montana Musings*, November 2020). I have a 100+ year-old Winchester 92 that used to belong to my Grandfather as well as my Dad. It's a joy to carry in the Maine woods (especially at my age).



Furthermore, you people put out the best magazine on guns. You've earned the name "GUNS Magazine." The others seem to be more devoted to tactical weapons but I can always count on you to publish articles on old-school firearms. Thank you.

Dave Glidden

Nice, the kind of message I like to hear.
—Mike.

CANADA IN WWII

The article by Frank Jardim on the Number 4 Lee-Enfield rifle (October 2020 *Surplus and Classic*, "Lee-Enfield #4") was illustrated by a photograph that caught my eye because it looked familiar. A check in the book *Canada's Army Overseas 1939-45* identified it as being members of the 48th Highlanders of Canada, part of 1 Canadian Division, waiting to start the attack on San Leonardo, Italy in 1943. I just thought you might be interested in this bit of information.

Patrick McManus



THREE, NOT FOUR

I read your article by Denny Hansen on the Browning Auto-5 (*Shotguns* column, November 2020) with interest because I quail hunted with a lightweight 20-ga. from 1962 until just a few years ago. I just wanted to point out the Migratory Bird Act states the firearm may hold no more than three shells, not the magazine. Three shells in the magazine would get you a citation and healthy fine.

Fredrick Roberts

Yep, and as a duck hunter myself, I should have caught it during the edit. Sometimes you don't see the forest for the trees. —BW

SPECIAL EDITIONS AND 'CRANKS KUDOS

I just received my copy of the *Old West History Guns and Gear* and after leafing through it quickly I am impressed. I did have to stop and enter the contest for the Bad Boy Revolver. Hopefully the "Bad Boy" is not illegal here in California.



I'm a big fan of the Gun Cranks and look forward to each week's edition which I catch on YouTube on the weekend. I have a suggestion — it would be great to have someone like John, Duke or Massad on with you. I've found getting to know the "cranks" a little personally makes reading their articles a little more interesting.

Jeff Hamann

Thanks Jeff, I'll forward your email to Tom McHale as he handles the special editions such as *Old West*.

We've discussed having some of the guys on *Gun Cranks* but there are a few "behind the scenes" technical issues we'd have to resolve to make it work. Maybe one of these days! —BW

EDITOR'S NOTE — You can watch *Gun Cranks Live* every Wednesday at 8 p.m. eastern time on the FMGPubs YouTube channel.

WILDCAT FAN

I hope this is the correct place to send a comment or attaboy. Longtime subscriber, first time commenter!

I really liked Wayne's Van Zwoll's "Keeping Up With Cartridges" (November 2020)

article. Is this a new feature? If so, awesome. Keep them coming. I love to read about wildcatting, slightly obscure rifles and cartridges. The black guns, polymer and Creedmoor-everything craze just doesn't do it for me. Keep up the good work. Love the magazine!

"Mike4570"

That was a feature by Wayne but we always try to keep things interesting with such stuff. —BW

AGREEING TO DISAGREE

Enjoyed your article "The Rifle." Unfortunately, in the time in which we live, I feel the need to caution y'all about the tag line: We don't own guns, we care for them.... Words matter and words can come back to haunt us. I can see some flaming gun-grabber asserting the Fourth Amendment doesn't apply while enforcing Red-Flag orders of gun confiscation because a widely quoted gun magazine editor claimed gun owners don't actually own guns, they're just custodial items. In other words, NOT property.

I know the Fourth Amendment does not mention "property" per se, but why should we open the door for even more egregious forays into our rights by any means?

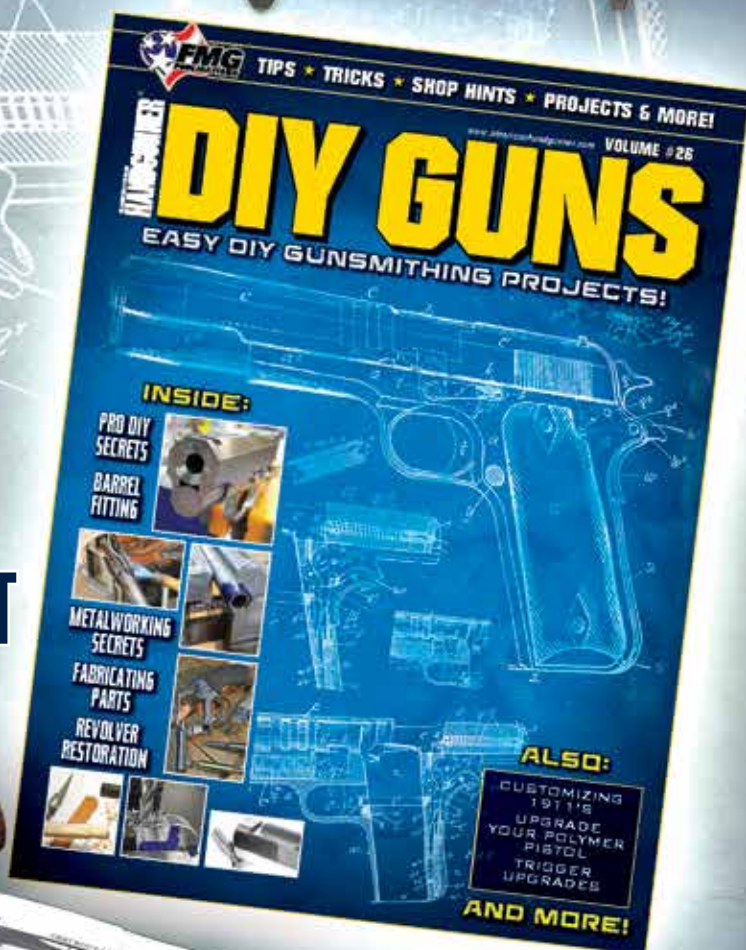
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MOSSBERG 590A1 TOUGH ENOUGH FOR COPS AND SOLDIERS

It's been said if you give a soldier or cop an anvil for Christmas, he'll break it by Valentine's Day. Their equipment necessarily has to be reliable and capable of withstanding the rigors of hard use, day-in and day-out.

My shotgun of choice for the last several years meets the above criteria. It is a Mossberg 590A1. I'm not alone as it is the duty shotgun of choice for military and law enforcement agencies worldwide. It is the only pump action shotgun to pass MilSpec 3443E in the shotgun selection process.

HARD-USE GUN

Most readers are probably familiar with the Mossberg 500/590 series. They are almost as prevalent as Ruger 10/22 rifles. The difference in the 590A1 from their siblings is an upgrade with heavy walled barrels, metal trigger guard and safety. The trigger guard and safety on standard models are plastic and although the plastic parts will serve well in most roles, I have seen both parts break. The metal will hold up better with hard use.

All 590A1s have a nine-shot capability — eight in the magazine and one in the chamber — and 20" cylinder-bore barrels with 3" chambers. A bayonet lug is affixed to the magazine and with a bayonet attached, might be enough to cause a social justice warrior during a "peaceful protest" to move along.

Various models feature tactical tri-rail

forends, six-position adjustable stocks, Picatinny rails on top of the receiver, specialty sight packages and either Parkerized or Marinecote finishes. Weight as it ships from the factory is 7.25 lbs.

My personal 590A1 (Mossberg model #51663) has a Parkerized finish with and adjustable rear ghost ring sight. The front sight is a blade on a serrated ramp with a red insert.

I think one of the best features of all 500 series Mossberg shotguns is the placement of the safety and action release. Located on top of the receiver, the safety can be manipulated easily by both right- and wrong-handed persons without changing the firing grip. The action release, located behind the trigger guard is equally ambidextrous.

LOP IT OFF

The 590A1 has a 14.25" length-of-pull (LOP). Truthfully, it's at the outer edge of comfort and good technique for me in shirt sleeves. Add a heavy coat, armor or load-bearing gear and the LOP becomes too long for almost everyone. It's possible to shoot very well with a short stock (the Russian/Chinese SKS is an excellent example), but it's hard to maintain good technique with a too-long stock. With a shotgun, a stock causing the shooter to reach farther to the trigger also increases perceived recoil.

To solve this, I added a Magpul SGA stock and MOE M-LOK forend. With two removable spacers the LOP can be changed



from 12.3" to 14.3". I removed both of the spacers from my shotgun. The SGA stock has sockets for stud-type sling attachments on both sides and I used a Magpul forward sling attachment for the muzzle end.

The MOE M-LOK forend allows for the placement of a white light — a necessity on a fighting shotgun. I use a SureFire 500 lumen Mini Scout Light Pro. I also added a six-round TacStar SideSaddle to have extra shells immediately available. A Blue Force Gear Vickers tactical sling completed the package.

LOAD OUT

I carry shells in the SideSaddle with the brass heads of buckshot facing down and the heads of slugs facing up. The person who taught me this technique explained in the dark, the shells can be told apart tactically. This is logical and a good practice.

Along the same lines, feel the brass



The Magpul SGA comes with removable spacers to adjust the LOP (LEFT). Sockets for stud-type sling attachments are on both sides of the stock.





“IF YOU’RE IN THE MARKET FOR A SHOTGUN TOUGHER THAN AN OVERCOOKED STEAK, THE MOSSBERG 590A1 WON’T FAIL YOU.”

head of the shell as it is pushed into the magazine. Inadvertently placing it in backwards will result in a true jam, versus a malfunction that an immediate action drill can reduce. The open lifter on the 590A1 makes clearing the jam easier, but it is an involved process and takes time. In a critical situation it's wiser to transition to a sidearm.

A common malfunction with the shotgun is short-stroking the action. The cure is to work the action like a rented mule; don't worry, you won't damage the gun, it was designed to be worked this way.

One downside of the shotgun is the amount of ammo on tap and it is wise to keep it topped off: shoot one, load one; shoot two, load two. In other words, load

when you can, not when you have to.

CONTROLLED FLIGHT

There was a time when I suggested buying several brands of shotgun shells and pattern them in your shotgun to see which load performed best.

As they say, “that was then and this is now” and you can save yourself considerable time and money by going straight to the Federal Law Enforcement Tactical round with the FliteControl wad.

Federal offers this in both eight- and nine-pellet loading. I prefer the eight-pellet load because, although rare with the FliteControl wad, there is always a chance of a flyer and you are morally and legally

responsible for each and every projectile launched.

Because of the way the FliteControl wad is constructed, there is virtually no spread at 10 yards. At 25 yards the pattern rarely opens up more than 8". A side benefit is the Tactical load has less recoil.

Although it's still not a rifle, with the adjustable ghost ring sights hits out to 50–75 yards are possible using quality slugs.

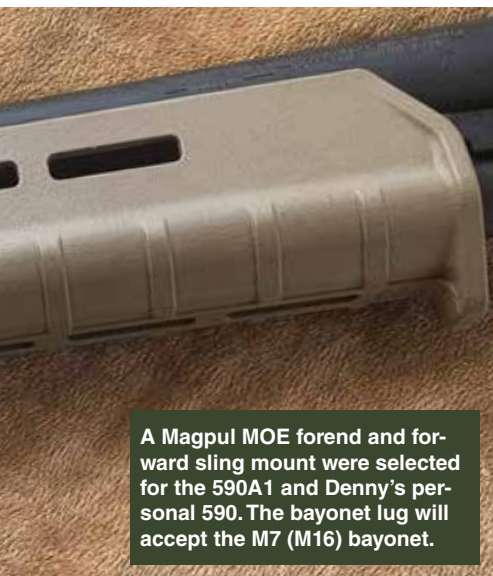
The Hornady American Gunner 1-oz. slug is designed to hit point of aim at 50 yards with no hold over/under while still traveling at 1,038 feet-per-second with 1,046 foot-pounds of energy.

HEAVY DUTY

The only drawback I have found with the 590A1 is during a shotgun course, with a full payload and the 20" heavy-walled barrel and magazine tube, it becomes heavy during repetitious range drills.

I also have a Model 500 with 18.5" barrel and five-shot magazine to which I have added ghost ring sights and Magpul furniture. It duplicates the action and feel of its larger brother without the fatiguing weight after a long day on the range.

If you're in the market for a shotgun tougher than an overcooked steak, the Mossberg 590A1 won't fail you. The suggested retail price is \$759.



Mossberg.com
Magpul.com

RETHINKING THINGS

MAYBE CHANGE ISN'T A BAD THING?

Teaching firearms and deadly force has been my primary occupation for a few decades now. One thing I've learned is this: Sometimes, what they taught us in the old shooting manuals doesn't work as well as those who wrote them thought they would. I offer in example:

Way back when Moses came down from Handgun Instructor Mountain it was written on one of the stone tablets, "Thou shalt never lower thine eyes to the sights; thou shalt always keep the head erect and raise the gunsights to thine eyes." Today, anyone who lowers their head between hunched shoulders is derided as a "tactical turtle" and mockingly asked, "Where'd ya learn that, YouTube?"

HEAD DOWN

Dunno about anyone else, but I learned it in 1984 from world speed shooting champion and national IPSC champ J. Michael Plaxco. After noticing his winning form included shooting with his head forward and down, I asked him why. He replied it kept him from looking over the gun when shooting reaction targets, which would have caused his shots to go high. I discovered he was right, and ever since taught this head position as an option to my students. I tend to default to it myself.

In addition to Mike's stated reason, because "where the head goes the body follows" the forward and down posture carries more body weight into the gun, controlling muzzle rise and thus increasing rate of accurate fire. It also fits perfectly into a fight or flight response: More than a century ago when he defined the concept at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Walter Cannon told us in such a state our shoulders would hunch up to protect the head, which would instinctively go forward and down. In this case it makes sense to go with instinct.

The only problem with this head posture comes for the shooter wearing multi-focal lenses, where the level allowing front sight focus is on the bottom, thus requiring a rearward head tilt. For decades I've recommended having the optometrist



The "Tactical turtle" gets head down on sights, body weight into gun — in this case, a Langdon LTT Beretta 92 with SRO carry optic.



On twin slim-line GLOCK 9mms, distal joint on trigger (left) affords more leverage than pad (right).



White fingernails show crush grip on this Wilson Combat Beretta 92 Compact 9mm.

put this plane on top of the lens, an option you can get from SSP (SSPeyewear.com). Head up, normal distance vision, threat identified; head down, focus on front sight. It all works.

GRASP

For decades shooting books have told us to use 40% grasping strength with the firing hand and 60% with the support hand. The percentages vary but still add up to only half your grip strength applied to the gun. And, we still see the most common miss pattern clustering low and to the shooter's weak hand side. This is often the result of

"milking": when the trigger finger moves, the other fingers on the hand tighten also, like milking a cow's udder, which pulls the shot low and left for the right-handed shooter and low right for the southpaw.

One cure is the crush grip, applied with maximum force. At maximum flexion, those other fingers can't tighten anymore. Voila! The instant cure for "milking the shot."

Crush grip also seems to stabilize the gun better against a trigger pull weight greater than that of the firearm itself, a result becoming more valuable the faster you shoot. Most of us find it also controls recoil better. If you've been using the 40/60

thing or some variation thereof, spend a few hundred rounds shooting with 100% grip force applied with both hands. Don't be surprised if your shooting improves.

TRIGGER FINGER PLACEMENT

Many books teach us to apply the pad of the index finger to the trigger. It works best with short, light trigger pulls on heavy single action target pistols. With a longer 5- to 7-lb. pull on a less than 2-lb. polymer pistol, not so much. Try the distal joint of the trigger finger instead. Double-action revolver shooters dubbed the sweet spot the "power crease" because it gives you much more leverage. Your trigger pull will feel a few pounds lighter. Don't be surprised if you shoot straighter this way.

Yes, I know — double-action revolver wizard Jerry Miculek uses the pad of his trigger finger. You and I are not Jerry Miculek. I told him a few years ago, "Jerry, I've found the secret to beating you; I'm just having a hell of a time finding the Kryptonite!"

Shooting is not a religion, it's an evolving art and science. Shooting manuals aren't Bibles, they're a collection of well-meant suggestions. Some of the pages therein are gold, and some of them would serve better on the bottom of a bird cage than as Scripture-Which-Must-Be-Obeyed. 



SSP shooting glasses, seen here with a GLOCK 43 9mm, allow sharp front-sight-focus with the head in aggressive fighting posture.



Three of Duke's .45-70 Sharps. Top is the original Model 1874. Middle is the Shiloh Model 1874 "Roughrider" mounted with 6X Montana Vintage Scope and bottom is the C. Sharps Arms Model 1874.

ME & SHARPS RIFLES A LONG STORY STILL IN PROGRESS

One evening almost 50 years ago while working as a dude wrangler in Yellowstone National Park, two friends and I were driving over Dunraven Pass in my pickup. I remember the conversation from the day like it was yesterday. Our usual conversations were girls, horses or guns. This time it was guns, specifically replicas of Old West firearms. I distinctly remember saying,

"Mostly I don't care about them but if they ever bring out copies of Sharps buffalo rifles, count me in."

ALL TALK?

In actual fact I knew next to nothing about Sharps rifles except what they looked like. Unknown to me were their weights, barrel lengths, sights or even

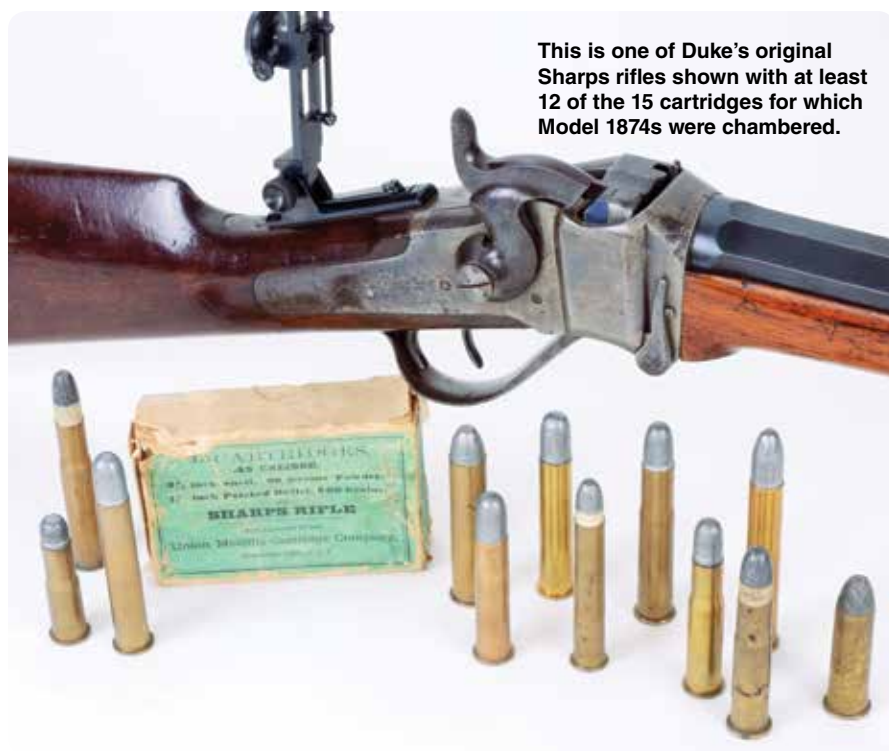
specific cartridges but still I wanted one. Therefore it was a very pleasant surprise to me eight years later when perusing the aisles at the 1980 SHOT SHOW held (of all places!) in San Francisco, I stumbled upon a display of very handsome and newly manufactured Sharps Model 1874 rifles. The maker was Shiloh Rifle Manufacturing of Farmingdale, N.Y.

If you think this was fortuitous, get this — a mere three years later Shiloh moved to Big Timber, Mont., which by local standards is practically in my back yard. They still reside there along with another company named C. Sharps Arms located on the same street. Both produce Model 1874s among other variations. Here is a confusing fact: The moniker Model 1874 was an afterthought. They were actually introduced in 1871.

IMPATIENT

In 1980 there was a waiting period for those fine Shiloh Sharps so I set about finding a used one. As usual, *Duke's Luck* trumped and got one in my hands in February 1981. It was a .50-90 and caused me to dive completely into Sharps rifles — their history, their specifics, vintage ones, domestically made ones and Italian-made ones. To date I've owned over 50 collectively from all the mentioned sources. They have ranged from 7-lb. carbines to one 14-lb. "Big Fifty."

Most especially, I dived into shooting them and *I mean shooting all of them*. In its production time between 1871 to 1880,



This is one of Duke's original Sharps rifles shown with at least 12 of the 15 cartridges for which Model 1874s were chambered.



The Sharps factory-marked chamberings by case length and not by powder capacity. This one was a .40-70 Sharps Straight.

vintage Sharps Model 1874s were chambered for 15 cartridges in .40, .44, .45 and .50 bore sizes. To date I've handloaded for and shot extensively 13 of those 15 cartridges. The only ones missed were what we term today the .40-50 Sharps Straight and the .44-60 Sharps Bottleneck. A small chart at the end of this column will list the 15 different Sharps cartridges. Literally, I have fired tons of lead alloy and hundreds of pounds of black powder downrange from Sharps rifles.

NOMENCLATURE

Back in its era, the Sharps Company did not label their cartridges as we do now. Today most of the old black powder cartridge names consist first of the caliber such as .45 and then next by the amount in grains of black powder loaded into them. For instance, we say .45-70 or 50-70. Sharps Model 1874 rifles were not marked in this way. They were stamped on top of their barrels as follows — ".45 Calibre" or ".50 Calibre." Then, if the buyer was lucky, the cartridge case length was stamped either on top of the barrel or sometimes upside down on a flat if the barrel happened to be octagonal. What we call .45-70 now would have been marked "2-1/10" or the .50-70 would have been stamped "1-3/4." When I say "if the buyer was lucky" it's because not all Sharps rifles got the cartridge case stamp. It seems strange today but back then, evidently the Sharps factory expected gun buyers to know more about what they were purchasing.

An advertisement for XS Sights. It features a close-up of a hand holding a black handgun with a red dot sight. The background is dark and out of focus. The text "DAY OR NIGHT, CARRY WITH CONFIDENCE." is written in a stylized, glowing font at the top. The XS Sights logo is in the bottom right corner, along with the website "xssights.com" and the phone number "888-744-4880".

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An advertisement for Spartan Blades. It features a person in a ghillie suit holding a large combat knife. The background is dark. The Spartan Blades logo is in the top right corner. The website "WWW.SPARTANBLADESUSA.COM" and the phone number "910-757-0035" are at the bottom.

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An advertisement for Simply Rugged Holsters, LLC. It features a collection of leather holsters, a gun, and a magazine. The background is dark. The text "SIMPLY RUGGED HOLSTERS, LLC." is at the top. The website "www.simplyrugged.com" is at the bottom.

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MONTANA MUSINGS



Duke firing one of his many Sharps rifles at one of the national championships. The distant black specks are the metallic silhouettes.

SHARPS RIFLE CARTRIDGES

SHARPS DESIGNATION	MODERN DESIGNATION
.40-1-5/8 Bottleneck	.40-50 Sharps Bottleneck
.40-1-7/8 Straight	.40-50 Sharps Straight
.40-2-1/4 Bottleneck	.40-70 Sharps Bottleneck
.40-2-1/2 Straight	.40-70 Sharps Bottleneck
.40-2-5/8 Bottleneck	.40-90 Sharps Bottleneck
.44-1-5/8	.44-60 Sharps
.44-2-1/4	.44-77 Sharps or Remington
.44-2-5/8	.44-90 Sharps
.45-2-1/10	.45-70 Gov't
.45-2-4/10	.45-90 Sharps or Winchester
.45-2-6/10	.45-100 Sharps
.45-2-7/8	.45-110 Sharps
.50-1-3/4	.50-70 Gov't
.50-2.00	virtually unknown today
.50-2-1/2	.50-90 Sharps

TAKEAWAYS

At first, my Sharps were used for hunting and I have been successful in taking game ranging from small Texas whitetails to African kudu and a one-ton free-ranging bison bull. However, in 1985 the NRA put forth a game using black powder-era single-shot rifles and cartridges on the standard metallic silhouette course of fire. It was titled "NRA Black Powder Cartridge Silhouette." The

new game consumed me and still does. I've fired hundreds of matches all over the west and loved every minute of it. I've never been one of BPCR Silhouette's top shooters but I do have a few trophies and plaques. Along with dozens of good friends spread around the nation.

In our paths through life we encounter many milestones which affect us thereafter. I was fortunate one of mine was Sharps rifles.

"You asked for it so we built it!"

~ Roy Huntington
Publisher



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HOME ON THE RANGE

SERVICE PISTOLS YOU CAN SHOOT WHEREVER YOU LIVE

As if the world wasn't dangerous enough, 2020 pulled one of those "hold my beer and watch this" moments. The COVID panic, resulting unemployment, race riots and anti-police protests are threatening even historically peaceful communities. Oh, and all of these things have gifted us yet another firearm and ammunition shortage. High-volume practice at the range is less feasible than it's ever been. Enter at-home air service pistols.

ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Companies like Umarex, SIG SAUER and Air Venturi have been making air clones of centerfire pistols for quite some time now, but we're entering a whole new age. Partially as a result of SIG SAUER's dramatic entry into the air market, companies in the space are focusing more than ever on creating mirror image air versions of common centerfire handguns and rifles.

From a training perspective, features and function are becoming darn close to what one might expect for a fire and

brimstone handgun. Reciprocating actions simulate some level of recoil. Captive air source and BB or pellet magazines allow magazine changes without loss of air. Dimensions are consistent down to the hundredths or thousands of an inch so you can use new air-powered handguns with your existing holsters or light and laser accessories.

The biggest benefit of service air pistols is at-home training flexibility. You'll find options "chambered" for standard .177 caliber BBs, .177 and occasionally .22-caliber pellets, and even Airsoft plastic pellets. Yes, Airsoft. Like Toys R Us, the days of Airsoft being relegated to the gimmicky toy pile grace our rear-view mirror. Today's Airsoft handguns can be serious training tools with reliability and combat-range accuracy to surprise you.

What these calibers have in common is low energy, at least compared to traditional firearms. Yes, BBs and pellets will put an eye out, or in the case of Airsoft, leave an attractive welt. But they're

unlikely to inflict mortal damage. From a "home range" point of view, they're equally unlikely to fling projectiles over long distances into unsafe areas. Yes, it's important to use a proper backstop, but the energy levels involved allow shooting safely in the backyard, the basement, the garage, or even inside the home when your significant other isn't home.

Let's take a look at a few.

SIG SAUER P365

The SIG SAUER P365 quite literally blew up the subcompact market. With its tiny form factor and double-stack capacity, it, and others like it, suddenly becomes a concealed carry standard. If you've got a centerfire version, or something similar like a Springfield Armory Hellcat, get yourself an air-powered P365. It's not just photo-realistic, it shares the same weight and operating characteristics with its louder sibling.

A .177 semi-automatic BB pistol, this one features blowback operation, so the slide reciprocates with every shot. Like others in its "service air pistol" class, it features a removable magazine containing a reservoir for 12 BBs and a standard 12-gram CO₂



Which is which? The Springfield Armory XD(M) by Air Venturi (bottom) is a near-perfect functioning replica, excepting the .177 BB caliber.



This SIG SAUER P365 is a BB pistol perfect for home training. If your airgun will feed them, try out the Dust Devil BBs. As the name implies, they turn to dust on impact and are great for close-range shooting.

cylinder. This one will get you close to 300 fps. There's an ambidextrous manual frame safety so it's lefty friendly.

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY XD(M) BY AIR VENTURI

At first glance, and even after hefting this air wonder, you'll be certain you're hoisting the real thing — similar weights included. Dimensions are near exact, or as close as I can tell as are all the cosmetics. Side by side, it's impossible to tell which is a centerfire and which is a BB pistol until you read the ultra-fine print on the frame.

The operating controls are also near identical. The BB-version field strips like the real deal and features a grip safety, striker status indicator, trigger safety and slide lock lever. Heck, it even includes interchangeable backstraps for custom fit and a front fiber optic sight.

Shooting this .177 BB pistol also offers an impressive degree of realism. The reciprocating slide simulates recoil and the magazine release functions as it should. The magazine includes both the CO₂ canister and BB reservoir and air remains captive when you drop it. If you want to develop blistering reload speeds or work

on malfunction drills, pick up a spare magazine or two and get busy.

Each magazine holds 20 "rounds" and a CO₂ cylinder will get you about 70 shots. As for velocity, depending on your BB style, ambient temperature and CO₂ cylinder status, figure about 325 fps at the top end.

SIG SAUER P320 FAMILY

Thanks to the recent U.S. Military adoption of the P320 (M17) platform, these pistols and their numerous variants have taken off in the civilian space too. SIG SAUER hasn't been asleep at the switch developing air equivalents. As I write this, there are at least five different varieties of P320 family air pistols.

The standby, and my personal favorite for at-home training, is the standard P320 full-size model. A dead ringer for the centerfire cousin, this is a .177-caliber pellet pistol. Its removable magazines include the 12-gram CO₂ cylinder air supply and a 30-round pellet magazine. It's easy to load thanks to its removable belt. Instead of painstakingly inserting each pellet into a tiny hole in the magazine, remove the entire belt, lay it on a table and drop them in. The system works easily enough

and is plenty fast. You'll get over 400 fps depending on your choice of pellet.

The standard P320 comes in Coyote tan or black. If you want something different, check out the X-Five competition model. Or, if you want to go the M17 route, the company also makes a replica of the new standard service pistol. This one looks and operates like the real thing and word is there's an optic sight in the works, so stay tuned for news.

Last but not least, you can pick up an Airsoft version of the P320. The SIG Pro-Force comes in two power plant varieties. One uses standard CO₂ cylinders while the other is powered by Airsoft green gas. If you want to take your at-home training to the next level with some force-on-force, check these out. Be sure to wear safety gear — these aren't toys!

There's another appealing attribute of air service pistols at these unpredictable times. Cost. A standard BB will set you back about one-sixth of a cent. A .177 pellet might run about a penny. Add another penny per shot, give or take, for CO₂ and you're up to a whopping two cents per shot at the high end. It's hard to argue with that.

THE G43: WWII'S RUNNER-UP

GERMANY'S TOP BATTLE RIFLE COMBINED INNOVATION WITH EFFICIENCY

Payton Miller

This is quite a gun. Quite a gun. I did a lot of choppin' in the war with a gun like this."

This quote took place in the movie *Suddenly*. Although the nominal stars of the 1954 thriller about a failed presidential assassination were Frank Sinatra and Sterling Hayden, a major player in the proceedings — at least for gun guys — was a scoped and modified German G43, the weapon of choice for the mercenary assassin played by Sinatra.

SELF-LOADERS ON BOTH SIDES

The M1 Garand obviously wasn't the only semi-auto battle rifle of the Second World War. There were several — the most notable and heavily employed being the Soviet Union's SVT-38 and SVT-40 and Germany's G41 and G43.

The Walther-designed G43 was arguably the most

successful on the Axis side. Germany's "other" more revolutionary Sturmgewehr 44 — the select-fire godfather of the "assault rifle" concept chambered to the intermediate 7.92x33 Kurz — is justly credited as groundbreaking. Of course, the STG 44 was late in arriving to all the action. The G/K43 is certainly a more "rifle-like" item in terms of conventional appearance, and classifies as a "battle rifle," being chambered to a full-length, full-power 7.92x57 cartridge.

It was a substantial improvement over its predecessor, the G41, and featured a redesigned short-stroke piston gas system and weighed about 1-1/2 lb. less. And although the G43 is often referred to by the "G" prefix, the Germans changed things to "K43" in 1944.

By any model designation, the G/K43's design owed much to the Soviet SVT-40, of which the Germans had tons of captured specimens to inspect. However, aesthetically the G/K43 was arguably sleeker and more attractive than its clubby Soviet



counterpart. This isn't surprising as ergonomics and beauty are seldom associated with Soviet small arms of the period.

The respective cartridges of all three self-loaders — Axis and Allied — represent the most potent of WWII rifle rounds. The M1 employed a 150-gr. .30-06 at 2,800 fps while the G43's 7.92x57 featured a 198-gr. FMJBT at 2,600 fps. The Soviet 7.62x54R generally propelled a 150- or 181-grain spitzer at 2,800 or 2,600 fps.

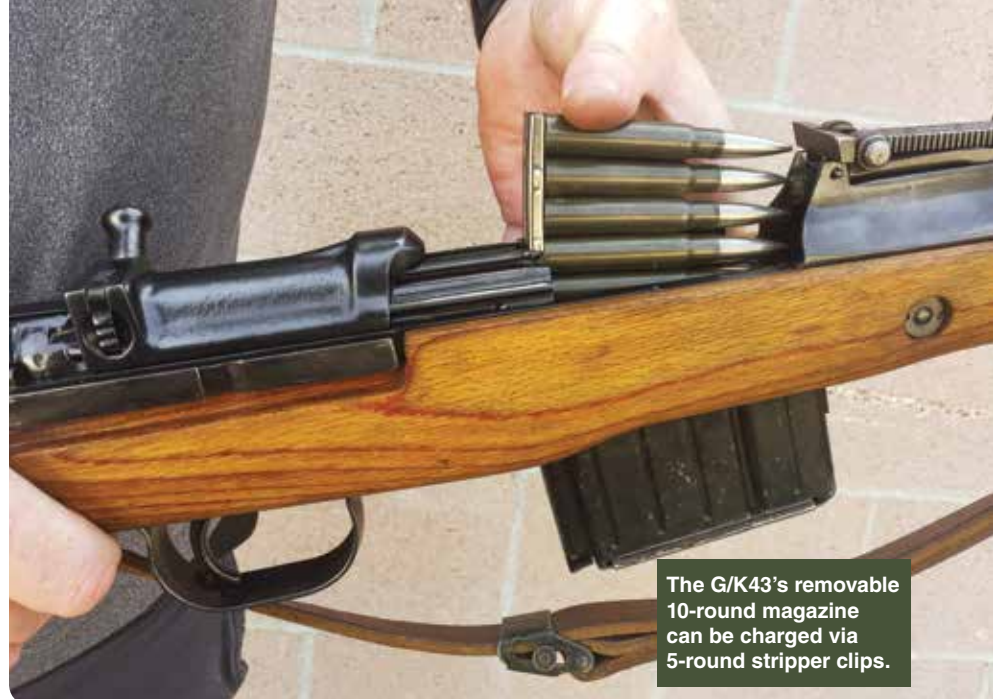
We'll leave it to ballistic obsessives to determine which was the superior number, but all three were in the top-tier of period small arms cartridges.

BELLS AND WHISTLES

Our particular G/K43 was courtesy of its owner, Edward Komperda. It was in wonderful condition and Edward was kind enough to include several original accoutrements with it — magazines, magazine pouches, oiler, side-mounted sling, etc., but the corker was an original ZF4 4X scope and QD mount.

All the rifles featured a mount rail. According to W. Darren Weaver in his exhaustive, 361-page, lavishly-illustrated *Hitler's Garands: German Self-Loading Rifles of World War Two* (Collector Grade Publications), "Clearly the intent was eventually to issue all G43s with telescopic sights ... the G43 concept spawned parallel optical sight developments which resulted in the Zielfernrohr 4 fach, or ZF4 scope, and its peculiar mount."

The reticle was the signature Germanic



3-post arrangement. Those pointy posts are thick and challenging for us elderly American sporting-rifle types who cut our teeth on fine crosshairs and Duplex reticles. One other Euro-touch: The arrangement results in a higher-mounted scope than many heads-down Americans are used to.

Our 198-grain ammo for the G43 was courtesy of Serbia's *Prvi Partizan* (PPU). It did not measure up to the figures given for the original heavy German service load, averaging 2,150 fps.

However, we also had some of Edward's handloads, employing a lighter 175-grain PPU spitzer in PPU cases backed by 49 grains of Hodgdon 4895, which averaged 2,470 fps. It's a bit on the mild side for this bullet weight,

which is fine with Edward, as he'd rather not have his brass beaten up on ejection.

SHOOTING THE G/K43

In terms of felt recoil, our G/K43 was fairly pleasant, somewhat less than an M1 when using the 198-grain PPU commercial stuff. One ahead-of-its-time feature of the rifle was the Durafol handguard — an early German plastic material which, as we found, does a pretty good job of heat dissipation. Although the issue magazines were 10 rounders, they could be charged quickly using 5-round stripper clips.

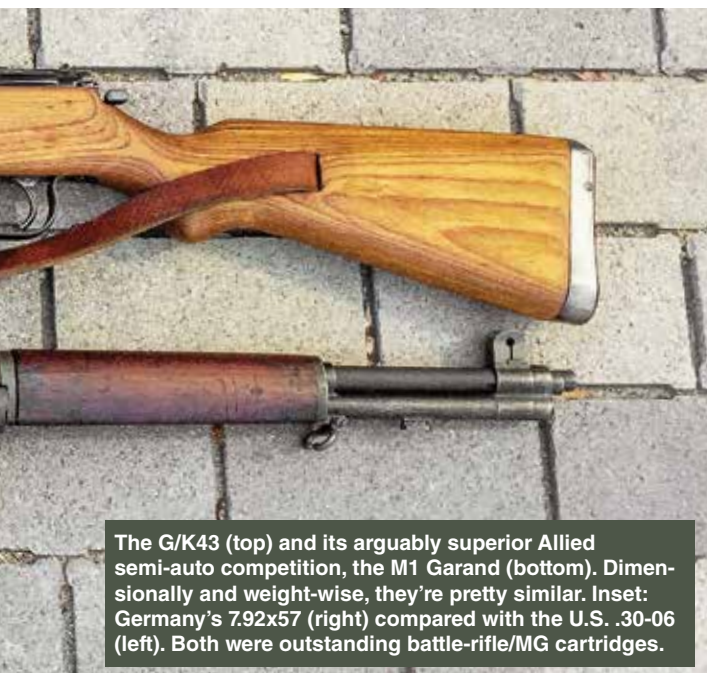
Dimensionally, the G/K43 was fairly close to the revered M1 Garand: 9.7 lbs., a 43.8" OAL and a 21.5" barrel.

As a serious sniper's tool, the G43 certainly wasn't in the same class as its scoped turnbolt contemporaries — the K98k, Mosin-Nagant or Enfield No. 4, let alone a Springfield M1903A4. In fact, Weaver states, "As a dedicated sniper rifle, the mass-produced G/K43 was a total failure."

Our range results bore out this harsh observation. Using PPU 198-grain ammo the best overall 5-shot group using the iron sights at 50 yards was superior to the scoped group at the same yardage, provided you discount the 3/4" 3-shot cluster in the "X-ring." At 100 yards, groups were about identical. In the case of the iron sights, this was perhaps more a function of Edward's younger eyes! At any rate, our best scoped group was a hair over 3", provided you exclude a seriously errant 5th shot flyer.

CAVEAT

In all fairness, however, sniping during





Owner/operator Edward Komperda lines up for a shot with his pet G/K43. Note the ahead-of-its-time plastic handguard. Photo: Doug Fee



One hundred yards scoped: Four of five are within 3", a pretty solid performance for a G/K43 using a standard service round equivalent.

the Second World War usually involved considerably closer yardages than some of the mind-boggling distances attributed to Vietnam-era snipers, let alone later Iraq or Afghanistan instances. Assuming 100 to 300 yards to be "about right" for WWII, the scoped G/K43 is generally adequate, and the semi-auto feature certainly can't be discounted in situations involving multiple target opportunities.

At least the two highest scoring German snipers of WWII employed the G/K43 successfully on occasion. Matthaus Hetzenauer used a G/K43 with a 4X scope as well as a scoped K98k to amass 345 kills on the

Eastern Front. Josef "Sepp" Allerberger who obtained 257 kills also on the Eastern Front, used a K98k primarily, but toward the end of hostilities, employed the self-loader as well.

However, the metallic sights are very effective in conventional small unit engagements and the G/K43's rapid-fire capabilities certainly gave German infantrymen a welcome boost in the face of superior numbers, particularly in the East.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Despite its shortcomings, the G/K43 exhibited some fairly remarkable features

for a mass-produced military rifle such as an adjustable trigger and a hammer-forged barrel. The 2-stage trigger on our test sample broke at a surprisingly tractable 4.5 lbs.

The G/K43 served from 1943 to 1945 in various theaters and over 402,000 were built. It's interesting to speculate the eventual outcome of the war had the majority of German troops had one from the get-go. It may have altered their doctrine of the MG42 being the centerpiece of small-unit firepower in which K98ks played a supporting role — but it probably wouldn't have changed the eventual outcome. 



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CROSSFIRE

continued from page 18

The Fifth Amendment however does point to “property” as protected from seizure without Due Process. Again, if WE don’t own guns, then they are not property that is protected from outright seizure.

We gun enthusiasts all understand the sentiment behind your article, it’s warm and fuzzy and feels good. Just don’t feed the animals looking to devour us.

David Smarr

Thanks for writing Dave but we’re going to have to “agree to disagree.” I’ll grudgingly eat a heaping helping of crow if those words ever get thrown back at us by anti-gunners. —BW

THE RIFLE

I have to say I really enjoyed the story of “The Rifle” (*GUNS Insider* November 2020). I didn’t come from a gun ownership-type of family. Growing up in the NJ suburbs, walking distance to Palisade Amusement Park, there wasn’t much of a family gun

culture there. Don’t get me wrong, I don’t think anyone was against guns but the Daisy BB rifle and numerous toy guns was the extent of our armory. I do remember my father having a shotgun but that’s about it.

Your story reminded me of a Tom Sawyer adventure — the solitude of the woods and your own hideout, so to speak. Our woods was a

patch of trees with a creek running through it where we ventured to play Army, plastic guns in hand.

Now to the rifle: the memories of shooting the arcade guns at different locations. I must say, my father always put up the money to let me shoot wherever there was a shooting gallery, encouraging me to knock everything down. Thanks for bringing back the memories of simpler times. Now I have to find a good arcade gun.

Jim Lieto

“The Rifle” was one of those stories you write mostly for yourself, and it’s great when it inspires a reader to think back on their own adventures! —BW

NIGHTHAWKS AND GLOCKS

I receive several gun magazines every month, and I savor all of them. Above all, I find *GUNS* and *American Handgunner* to contain well-written and researched articles, excellent photography and a delicious balance of articles covering a wide range of guns.

continued on page 73



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BULLET SELECTION FOR .44 MAGNUM LEVERGUNS

RANDY GARRETT

TO GO DEEP AND WIDE, CHOOSE THE RIGHT PROJECTILE

When hunting in the brushy areas of western Washington the .44 Magnum revolver tends to be my first choice, but the added barrel length and extra velocity of the .44 Magnum Carbine can add nearly an extra 100 yards to the effective range of the caliber. I have a blued Marlin 1894 with the very fine Skinner aperture sights and its light weight of 6 lbs. is an easy carry for the day while the extra barrel length is quite useful, producing velocities at 100 yards rivaling revolver velocities at the muzzle.

Not surprisingly, the gun makes for a fine deer and black bear combination out to 150 yards and certainly makes connecting with the target easier at ranges beyond 75 yards. When using the best bullets available, .44 Magnum carbines are excellent for deer, hog, or even black bear.



Skinner Aperture Sights as mounted on Randy's blued Marlin 1894 in .44 Magnum chambering.

BUYING BULLETS

When selecting or building big game hunting ammo for the .44 Magnum carbine, extra care to find the best in bullet quality is a must as the muzzle velocities of the carbine are a couple hundred feet per second faster than the revolver. The stress of impact on the bullet is a product of the speed of impact and the toughness of the target. So, any increase in impact velocity or increased toughness of the target will increase the stress on the bullet. Greater bullet stress is consistent with increases in bullet failure, so when driving your bullets to full speed and facing big game, pay special attention to make sure the bullet is plenty strong to withstand the stresses of impact and properly complete its task.

Additionally, almost all builders of .44 Magnum carbines use very slow twist barrels, which will not stabilize the heavy bullets used for big game with the revolver. Indeed, the Marlin has a barrel twist rate of 1-in-38" instead of the much faster 1-in-20" twist rate common to .44 Magnum revolvers. A 1-in-20" twist works fine for bullets up to 330 grains but the much slower 1-in-38" of the .44 Magnum Marlin is far too slow for heavyweights, so those shooting the Marlin Carbine are best advised to use standard weight bullets, around 240 grains, but only ones with exceptional build-quality.

TESTING

I gathered several brands of premium bullets and one factory load to test them for accuracy and penetration. The results are



Marlin 1984 and the four loads tested (left to right): Swift 250-grain A-Frame; Garrett Cartridges of TX 250 grains; Cast Performance 260-grain WFNGC; LeHigh 220-grain Penetrator.

not terribly surprising. The non-expanding bullets penetrated very deeply while the expanding bullet was last in penetration. As the photos show, the Swift Bonded Core A-Frame doesn't just expand — it widens into a huge “flat nose” bullet rather than a mushroom. The expanded flat nose of the A-Frame produces more peripheral damage in wet newspapers than does the much smaller front end of the expanding Barnes X-Bullet fired from the .30-06, despite the differences in impact velocity. Experience indicates the same is true in animal flesh.

ACCURACY

Whenever I am shooting groups at 100 yards using aperture sights, I am quite satisfied with 1.5" 3-shot groups. As purchased, my Marlin 1894 had a very heavy and rough trigger pull as well as a rough lever-action, but a trip to Firemaster's Firearms in Cinebar, Wash., fixed it, smoothing out the roughness in the transit of the bolt to give me a smooth and very usable 4-lb. trigger pull.

The Marlin liked every brand of bullet tested as all produced 100-yard, 3-shot groups of about 1.5-2.0".

PENETRATION

The clear winner of the penetration contest was Garrett Cartridges of Texas with their 250-grain Hammerhead bullet, getting 32" of penetration from the 20" Marlin. Close behind at 29" was the 260-grain Cast Performance FNLBT bullet. The 220-grain LeHigh Penetrator came in 3rd with 23". Penetration channels were all very similar with the three non-expanding bullets but my choice for deer hunting would be the 240-gr. Swift Bonded Core A-Frame. It produced penetration depth similar to the .30-06 control load (18"

Post-Penetration Tested Bullets (right, top to bottom): Swift, LeHigh, Garrett, Cast Performance. The Garrett Hammerhead was the winner with 32" of penetration.

penetration with a 180-grain Barnes X-Bullet) but achieved this with a much broader penetration channel. Also, the expanded bullet was not a mushroom shape but a near perfect flat nose. Recovered bullet weight for the two were 219 and 210 grains.

The Swift bonded A-Frames expanded to nearly identical diameters with one achieving 0.603" in diameter and a second achieving 0.626". The nearly identical weight retention, penetration depth and expansion make this a very reliable load for deer, hogs and black bear.

CONCLUSIONS

Since all SAAMI-compliant .44 Magnum ammunition will chamber and fire from the Marlin 1894, shooters must take special care to select the finest hunting bullets, which in this shooter's opinion should be a bonded-core bullet if selecting an expanding bullet, or the finest casting available. The LeHigh Penetrator turned in a solid performance with reliable and deep penetration, and no significant deformation of the bullet.

When hunting in thickly forested country, where long-range shots are uncommon, a lever-gun can be an excellent choice, and a lot of fun. The Marlin 1894 can put meat in the freezer with the best of them and do so with a little flavor of the Old West.

Looking down the sights of the Skinner Medium Aperture



Editor's Note: Randy Garrett is the founder and former owner of Garrett Cartridges.



ROY HUNTINGTON
PHOTOS: ROB JONES/
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC



GUNCRAFTER INDUSTRIES

EXECUTIVE SERIES

RE-IMAGINEERING THE CZ 75 AS A CUSTOM

I was fortunate enough to tour the CZ factory in the Czech Republic some years ago after this beautiful country was freed from the yoke of Communism. During my drive to the massive factory complex we passed block after block of depressing grey concrete “apartment” housing units. In the grey morning light, they looked more like prisons, courtesy of their former Russian rulers. It was sobering, and frankly, I wasn’t sure what to expect at CZ.

SURPRISES

What I found was a vibrant work place, populated with friendly, interested, open-armed people, quick to welcome me and proud to show what they were accomplishing. During the next couple of days I was privy to the reference vault, where I handled serial numbers 1 and 2 of the CZ 75 design, the pro-

handled automatically — while other aspects needed the careful eye of a veteran gunmaker.

I understood completely, and applauded their commitment to keep quality first rather than speeding production and lowering unit costs to chase what was rapidly turning into today’s “commodity gun” marketplace.

CZ still adheres to the same principle and guns built by them today mirror the care put into those of 20 or 30 years ago — yet ramps up the game to even higher levels. I have several personally owned CZ rifles and handguns and would put them up against any factory-made firearm from any manufacturer anywhere in the world.

GUNCRAFTER INDUSTRIES

So this is where things get really interesting. If you start with



totypes of the famous Skorpion sub-gun and countless other designs — some never having made it to the public’s eye. At the range, I tried out a host of old, new and pending designs and even ran a mag or two through a full auto Skorpion. Great fun, indeed.

What I saw at the factory itself left a lasting impression. During my visit, some 15 years ago, I saw the highest technology CNC machinery available in use, CAD/CAM equipment and cutting-edge engineering and R&D facilities. Yet, on the very same production floor, I saw manually controlled lathes, milling machines, precision drill presses and files and stones on work benches — all manned by obviously seasoned, skilled workers. This collision of old and new was explained to me as being necessary as it was felt some facets of the manufacturing was best

the raw material coming out of CZ’s hands, then treat it to world-class customization, what do you end up with? Take every design element the original displays and continue the quality and engineering line even further up the scale — and you end up in the rarefied air of the work embodied by Alex Zimmerman’s team at Guncrafter.

“We’re diversifying and adding CZ 75’s to our repertoire,” Alex told me. Alex founded Guncrafter on the premise he could build a better 1911. He’s not only done it but has improved on the concept mightily. His “.50 GI” cartridge was and still is groundbreaking, and his HOSS “over-built” 1911 — as featured in the Nov/Dec 2016 *American Handgunner* — turns the 1911 design into a literal tank-tough machine with heavy-duty critical parts.



GUNS[®]
MAGAZINE

GUNCRAFTER INDUSTRIES

EXECUTIVE SERIES



My personal “FRAG” 9mm 1911 model from Guncrafter shoots sub-1" groups at 25 yards seemingly effortlessly and has never jammed — not once. His customers are fiercely loyal, owning multiple pistols from Alex's shop and for good reasons. Adding the CZ designs to his stable is a smart move because, as Alex told me, the design is elegant but needed the touch of a customizer to push the performance envelope out to where it belongs. I agree completely.

“Basically we take the steel-framed CZ 75s, the full-size, compact and light-railed versions, and work them over for function — and looks,” explained Alex. A quick look shows the Guncrafter team offers a palette of options and base work. Each base gun is meticulously inspected and test fired and then, in the Executive Series we tested for *GUNS*, receives a long list of treatments.

Each one has a color-case-hardened frame with clear Cerakote, hot salt-blue slide with polished flats, flush cut and crowned barrel, DLC (Diamond-Like Coating) on the barrel and small parts, Guncrafter logo applied and GI Slim-Tac G10 Grips.

More options are Cajun Gun Works Pro or Defensive Carry packages (new action parts), trigger job on stock parts done by GI, new sights, GI aluminum grips with Frag pattern, GI Exhibition Grade wood grips and GI/Bitterroot CZ leather holsters with exclusive patterns matching the color case hardening! According to Alex, more options are pending. Our test guns hover in the \$2,000 range but since they're customs your results may vary.

THE SP-01 PISTOL

CZ took the redesigned grip frame of the compact pistol, incorporating it in this more full-sized “holster” gun. Enhanced handling and an exceptionally comfortable grip showcases just why this made perfect sense, and in my opinion, a great change from the standard CZ 75. An enhanced beavertail on the back of the grip allows both a high and tight grip and solid recoil control.

Since it's part of Guncrafter's “Executive Series” it gets the GI custom touch. The color-case-hardened frame and clear coat

application, hot salt blue slide with polished flats, flush cut and crowned barrel, DLC treated barrel and small parts, GI logo, GI Slim-Tac G10 grips and a GI trigger job on the factory parts is the basic package. But being a custom gun, you can add many things, among them the Cajun Gun Works Pro Pack trigger work. The test gun has the GI “Frag” pattern grips installed and are simply delightful to use.

The stock trigger can be worked by GI's team to deliver around a 3.25-lb. SA pull and about a 7-lb. DA pull. The DA pull is smooth and silky and feels about what a good PPC DA revolver trigger feels like. The SA pull sort of “rolls off” and is smooth, not gritty or

grabby like the stock trigger.

However, the Cajun action set can be tuned to deliver about 2.5 lbs. in SA mode and about the same 7-lbs. in DA. But the Cajun action is crisper, with minimal pre- or over-travel in SA and a touch smoother in DA if such a thing is even possible. Think of your favorite “perfect” 1911 trigger and this is what the SA feels like. I'm familiar with the CZ family and feeling actions like the ones on the GI guns surprises me every time I try them. They're good.

At about 40 oz. the SP-01 isn't a lightweight, but the “full-size” feel and light rail easily qualifies it as a premier self- or home-defense auto. Sights are fixed “night” sights





and the 4.6" cold hammer-forged barrel can really shoot. Magazine capacity is 18 in 9mm.

THE CZ 75 COMPACT

A true daily-carry premium defensive handgun, the basic model gets all the "Executive Series" enhancements and comes standard with the Cajun Gun Works Pro Pack action. At 32 oz., it's a few ounces lighter than a full-size CZ 75, with the weight savings from the shorter 3.75" barrel/slide and 1/2" off the height. A more modest beavertail helps concealability too. Magazine capacity is 14 rounds of 9mm.

Both this model and the SP01 have the unique CZ-style action. The guns can be

cocked and locked like your favorite 1911 (safety is on when it's up, so thumbs off normally), or carried with the hammer down (lowered manually) for a DA first shot, followed with SA shots. There's no need to keep the safety on in DA mode, although you can if you like. There's a firing pin safety too, so when lowering the hammer, you start it going by holding it and pressing the trigger, then allow the trigger to sort of follow the hammer forward slowly. This prevents the firing pin from moving forward if the hammer slips. It's safe — as long as you keep your brain in gear.

I envision this being used as a police officer's off-duty gun, an armed citizen's

primary defensive handgun, a weekend match gun for fun and practice and even for serious target shooting at a range. They shoot that well.

SHOOTING

It's nice to handle all-steel handguns now and again. You're reminded of how much easier they are to shoot. Recoil is minimal, they're extremely controllable and the added heft helps to steady them during both moving or static aiming. They simply feel like "real" guns in the hand and on your hip and in spite of common sense knowing otherwise, this same heft installs a certain confidence in the tool. I'm sure you know what I mean.

Our test guns ran absolutely 100% with a wide range of 9mm ammo — typical of Guncrafter guns. I've never had a single malfunction with any test gun I've gotten from them — period. Alex knows his stuff, and it shows. While both guns shot easy 2" groups at 25 yards, the SP-01 really liked 147-grain sub-sonic ammo. With my "good" glasses on, I managed a couple of 1.5" or a tad-better groups. I only wish I could put a cross-hair scope on it to see what it could really do.

PARTING THOUGHTS

If you have a fixation on 1911s — and custom ones in general — I promise you it's time to break out of the rut. I know ... I know ... heresy, and I've heard it all, I promise. "If you don't carry a 1911

you're an uncouth savage, nay, a barbarian even." But it's worth a risk to be ostracized by the range gang. At the first sound of their harrumphing, finger-pointing and mumbling, simply hand them your new custom CZ. Things will get quiet — very quiet. Then suddenly shy voices will slowly mumble, "Um ... uh ... mind if I shoot it?"

Appropriate smirking would then be allowed, along with "I told you so's" and "But I thought you only shot 1911s?"

Sometimes it pays to think outside the box.

GuncrafterIndustries.com

Rate your own OPTICS

FIELD TESTING: TRUST AND VERIFY? OR JUST TRUST?

The view was instantly brighter, details sharper. In hand, it was lighter than any binocular I'd yet carried afield. And it was less expensive! A field test came to mind...

But, to use a product well — certainly to test it intelligently — you must know something about it. So began my slow journey down the path to optical literacy.

GLASS 101

Years ago, optical engineer Bill Perkins at Bausch & Lomb explained crown glass to me in “plain” words. “A specific range of refractive and dispersion values defines crown glass — *Kron* in German. Hence the letter K in BK 7 and BaK 4. You can tell which is used in a binocular's prism by looking into it from the front. If the exit pupil appears round, it's BaK 4 glass; if it's square, it's BK 7. Advertisers want you to think BaK 4 is special. It's really just a barium-silicate glass. It can cost a little more than BK 7; but the ‘best’ glass depends on application. For some purposes, BK 7 is better.”

Then there's flint glass, typically heavier and more brittle than crown glass and thus ill-suited to exposed lenses. “But as the second half of a doublet or achromat lens,” said Dr. Walter Mergen of Zeiss, “flint, with as much as 70% lead oxide, corrects for aberrations. Crown and flint glass cooperate to deliver the best image.”

Engineers test not only for the action of optical glass on light, but for other lens properties. “We measure elasticity, thermal expansion and conductivity, stain and moisture resistance, the effects of acids,” Mergen said. Even water vapor can cloud a lens, he told me, “condensing, it can draw alkali ions that form a solution, which erodes the silica gel layer of the polished surface.”

This polished surface can be spherical or aspherical (center curvature differing from the periphery). “Aspherical internal lenses can produce sharper resolution, a flatter and sometimes even a

After engineering, manufacturing and Quality Control marathons, a GSO scope (above) comes together in a clean-room. You can check things like build quality and mechanical fit (below) — dial clicks should be crisp, uniform and reliably go back to zero after adjustment.

A man in camouflage gear and an orange cap is standing in a forest, holding binoculars and a rifle. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**“DON’T BELIEVE ALL
YOU READ — BUT DON’T
DISMISS IT ALL AS HORSE
APPLES EITHER!”**

wider field than spherical,” said B&L’s Bill Cross. “In some rifle scopes, these lenses are plastic, which can be molded to shape inexpensively.” Forrest Babcock at Leupold & Stevens explained an objective lens can account for a quarter of the manufacturing cost of a rifle scope. “So expensive aspherical lenses are typically used only inside, where lenses are both small and protected.”

Also costly, Forrest added, is ED glass. “Extra-low-dispersion glass is often joined with a doublet to form a triplet or apochromatic lens. A 6” blank of ED glass costs about \$5,000, or 170 to 200 times as much as a blank of ordinary crown or flint glass. Installing it in a big objective bumps scope price beyond what many shooters want to pay.”

HUH?

About then it occurred to me I was unqualified to report on optical instruments of any kind, and “field tests” aren’t really tests at all. Like proof-firing of rifles and track trials for automobiles, the testing that really mattered was extraordinarily severe and conducted before product release, done by people equipped to destroy the unfortunate specimens chosen for sacrifice.

Glass hardness, for example, is gauged by pushing a diamond point into the surface and measuring the damage. This test, however, tells nothing about abrasion resistance, which is



The logo promises great optical performance in this Zeiss Conquest V4. What more can a field test tell you?



measured by putting a grinder to the lens under controlled pressure for a specific time. Ouch!

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Generally, a competitive market guards against easily-broken optics or those delivering poor images. These days you get bright, crisp views even from entry-level binos and rifle-scopes. Off-center reticles are decades in the past. Mechanical failure and fogging get no mercy now.

You get a lot for your money in mid-priced, plain-Jane optics from companies with reputations worth protecting. The high standards of revered brands mandate considerable quality control measures and surprising rejection rates. Even the least expensive optics from a celebrated name must reflect well on it.

Once, for a spur-of-the-moment hunt far from home, I bought a rifle scope at the nearest Walmart. It was the least costly in Leupold's stable. I stuck it on a Marlin lever rifle, zeroed it and from the bonnet of a pickup sent three soft-points into a 5/8" group. "Shootin' above yer pay grade, aren't you, Bub?" drawled my partner. "Shucks, no," I deadpanned. "Y'oughta see what I do with a good outfit."

My working-man's Marlin and its \$100 Leupold still deliver accuracy beyond my ability to test under hunting conditions.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Which leads us to reviews of optics. Seldom are writers permitted to destroy an optic, or push a diamond into glass to get the "Knoop reading." Nor are they equipped to check company claims of superiority. If told they get "98% light transmission," they're expected to repeat the number. How do they know the



You have limited access to the “guts” of most optics but what you see while adjusting the focus tells you volumes about the internals of this Vortex binocular.

actual figure isn't 89%? The writers don't. Over a cool mug of Bavarian amber, a fellow who'd spent years assembling optics told me 90% transmission is *ver' goot* and 94% is hard to top. “But who cares the number?”

Indeed. Don't believe all you read — but don't dismiss it all as horse apples either! Features, specifications and prices in reviews help narrow your search for a binocular or rifle scope.

DIY TESTING

As to optical performance, you can verify some claims yourself: magnification, field of view, eye relief. You can calculate exit pupil (objective diameter in mm/magnification) and relative brightness (EP squared). Your eyes will tell you if binocular barrels are out of collimation.

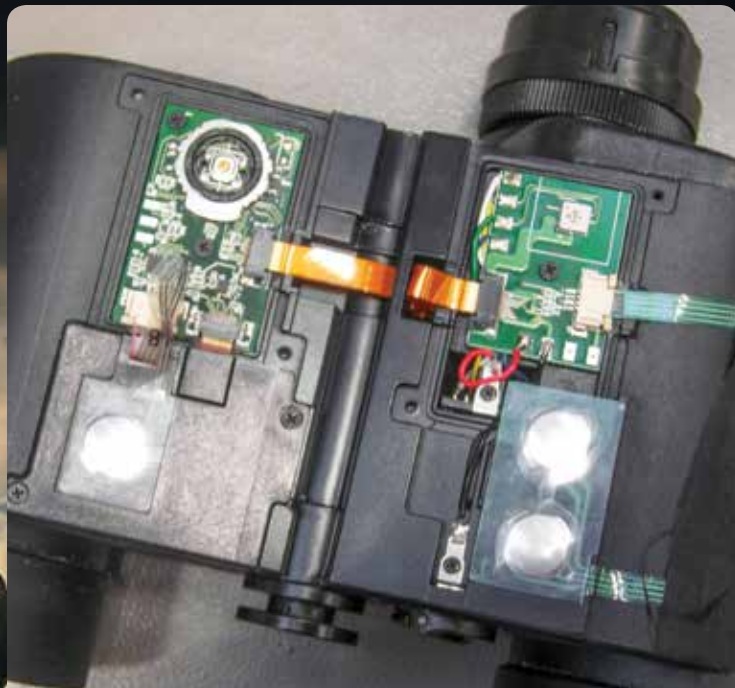
You can overnight an optic in your freezer, then extract the poor, shivering thing to check fog-proofing. You can sprinkle a lens to see water slip on its hydrophobic coating. You can “shoot around the square” to determine click values and repeatability of scope dials. (Fire a group, come 20 clicks up, 20 clicks right, 20 clicks down and finally 20 clicks left, firing at each stop. Ideally, the last group lands atop the first.)

But you can't put a number on light transmission or assess glass composition or predict an optic's durability. Your eyes are the final arbiter and brand reputation backs up your choice.

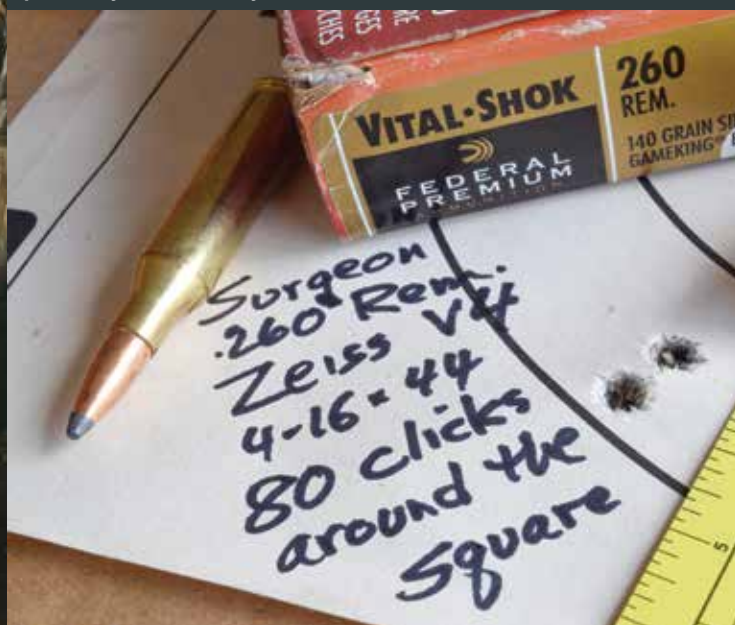
CHECK YOUR RESOLVE

Resolution tops any list of optical qualities. While you can't gauge it as precisely as do aproned crews in head-nets and slippers tending million-dollar comparators in clean-rooms — it is clear to the eye. So too distortion and parallax error. Check 'em in natural light — just outside the door is fine — where you can look for detail through brilliance and deep shade, and with the sun at a low angle. Look at fences or billboards as you move the optic. Do lines stay straight as they ease from the field? Move your eye slowly off-axis behind a rifle scope so a clamshell of darkness intrudes. Does the reticle shift on the target?

A resolution testing image, like the 1951 U.S. Air Force



Complexity begets trust. The more sophisticated an optic, the less qualified you are to truly test it!



After 80 clicks around the square, Wayne's last shot hit 0.35" from the first. Credit Zeiss dials!

Resolution Test Chart or one your optometrist uses, helps you compare one optic with another. My friend Bill McRae used this procedure: Tacking a grid outdoors at appropriate distance for the magnification, he viewed it at dusk, noting on the clock when he could no longer tell the direction of the bars. The brightest, sharpest optics yielded the latest times.

A SURPRISE

Bill also pointed out even an empty aperture or tunnel can brighten images. To show me, he spray-painted two toilet paper spools black inside, then taped them together parallel, a middle block spacing the tubes for a binocular-like feel.

The view was instantly brighter, details sharper. In hand, it was lighter than any binocular I'd yet carried afield — and it was less expensive! A field test came to mind...

MODEL 57

The new Ruger 57, a unique 5.7 x 28mm semi-auto, brings mass-market appeal to a cartridge previously seen as specialized and prohibitively expensive.

**BRINGING
MASS-MARKET
APPEAL TO
THE 5.7 X 28 MM
CARTRIDGE**



JOHN TAFFIN

What's in a number? There was a time in ancient history, and for some people still today, when numbers were thought to be mystical. Secret societies, cults actually, even rose around worship of numbers.

The number 57 has some special significance for me. After WWII we lived in a housing project specially constructed for returning veterans. Although I was just learning to read, my mother could send me to the store to get a certain yellow or red bottle which I could recognize by the 57 on the front. In the infant days of television, one of the shows on the old Dumont Network was "Studio 57," which introduced many young actors who would eventually become quite famous.

Also the same year, one of the most beautiful cars ever designed arrived with the '57 Chevy V-8 Convertible and two-door hardtop. In those days it was quite an occasion each fall to go down to the local car dealer and see the new models.

In 1963, which was 57 years ago, we had the arrival of the first attempt to produce small-bore long-range handguns with the arrival of the .22 Jet, .221 Remington and .256 Winchester. These are only rarely seen today but Ruger has now come forth with their new Ruger Model 57, a semi-automatic pistol chambered in 5.7 x 28mm. The 5.7 chambering gives us the Ruger 57 nomenclature — the number 57 is about to gain new significance!

CARTRIDGE CREATION

The .22 caliber 5.7 x 28mm cartridge goes back over 30 years when it was developed by *Fabrique Nationale* and chambered in the FN P90 semi-automatic pistol. It was originally designed for military and law enforcement use, especially in sub-machine

guns and I have heard from several sources it's the pistol of choice for the Secret Service. The new Ruger chambered in this cartridge can certainly be used for self-defense but is basically designed for the field. Actually, I see applications for both and if used for self-defense and touched off in an enclosure with no ear protection, it would certainly be an attention getter!

Currently, the cartridge itself is available from Federal in the American Eagle 40-grain FMJ and the FN 40-grain Hornady V-Max. Speer has announced a version specially designed for self-defense that should arrive shortly. Originally, 27- and 28-grain bullets were loaded to 2,000 fps, however the 5" barrel of the Ruger Model 57 gives muzzle velocities for the 40-grain loads are in the 1,600 to 1,700 fps range.

I have extensively fired the new Ruger with both ammunition versions with almost flawless performance. I say "almost" as I have experienced two failures to completely chamber, both of which required a simple push on the back of the slide to override, along with a couple of failures to completely eject. Both of these may simply be due to the newness of the pistol.

SPECS

The frame of the Ruger 57 is what the company describes as High-Performance Glass-Filled Nylon while the slide and barrel are both Alloy Steel, the former finished in Black Oxide and the latter in Black Nitride. The grip is finely textured for a secure hold, although recoil is exceptionally mild and the slide has cocking serrations both front and rear.

The barrel has a 1:9 right-hand twist with eight grooves. With a weight of only 24.5 oz., the Ruger is very easy to carry

in a properly designed holster. Rather than being a striker-fired pistol, this Ruger features an internal hammer with an ambidextrous thumb safety. Ruger calls this the Secure Action Fire Control. There is also an inspection port allowing one to tell if the chamber is loaded. The trigger is excellent with a short, crisp pull and a positive reset. Two 20-round steel magazines are provided and the frame is fitted with an easily accessible, reversible magazine release that also operates positively to allow the magazines to easily drop free.

SIGHTS

The front of the frame features a Picatinny accessory rail for easy mounting of a light or laser. Sights are excellent, very easy to see and acquire, consisting of a green fiber-optic front sight matched with an adjustable for both windage and elevation rear sight. I found it quite easy to sight-in the Ruger 57. In addition to excellent factory sights, this Ruger is also drilled and tapped in front of the rear sight for the mounting of a base plate and a red dot sight. Both of these are available from Ruger with the red dot sight being a Vortex Viper.

For testing I fired the Ruger with both iron sights and the Viper. The Viper has 10 different Red Dot illumination levels and shuts down automatically after 14 hours. It is powered by a CR2032 battery, with an anti-reflective, ultra-hard ArmorTek lens coating and is advertised as shockproof, waterproof and weighs just one ounce. It installs and adjusts easily with a click value of 1 MOA, and weight is just 1 oz. For me, the red dot sight is quicker to acquire than the factory sights, however it does not extend my range over the factory sights — it simply makes shooting a little more precise at relatively close range. On and off controls are on the left side and it's not turned on quickly, at least for me.

I would like to see some sort of arrangement for mounting a pistol scope. At one time, too many years ago, Burris offered a 3/4" pistol scope which I have mounted on a .22 revolver. If I had known it was going to be dropped from production I would have purchased a couple more. Its light weight and compact size would be a perfect choice for this pistol.

HALF PRICE SALE

At an MSRP of \$799, the Ruger comes in at just over 50% of the original cost of the FN M90 pistol. This alone should certainly



Targets shot at 25 yards with the Viper Red Dot equipped Ruger-57. The unique round offers high velocity, low recoil and excellent accuracy.



The Ruger 57 was fired with the only two factory loads John found available — made by Federal American Eagle and FN, both sporting a 40-grain FMJ bullet.

make it a very popular pistol. As far as ammunition cost I have found both currently available versions at \$20 to \$22 per box of 50 rounds. With the arrival of the new Ruger, I expect two things as far as ammunition goes — the price to come down and more versions being offered.

RANGE TIME

Firing the Ruger 57 with the available ammunition reveals several things. The gun is quite accurate, actually more accurate than I am, recoil is exceptionally mild, and examining fired brass reveals something I've never seen before. The shoulder of the fired case moves forward far enough to be easily detected. The original FN pistol had a delayed blowback which allowed the shoulder to move forward as the gun was fired and this Ruger is also blowback operated. I do not know if it's true of every FN 5.7 x 28mm pistol, however one reliable report from over 10 years ago revealed fired cases had a reverse taper which means the front of the fired brass case was larger in diameter than the base of the case. In measuring fired brass from the Ruger 57 this proved to not be the case with the forward diameter being 0.314" and the base 0.316".

I am set up for reloading the 5.7 x 28mm brass with dies from Lee Precision and also a Lee Universal Expanding Die for bellining the case mouth instead of excessively working the brass with the standard expander ball. I hope to do some reloading of this cartridge in the future, however it will be a different story for a different time.

To sum up, the Ruger 57 is lightweight, easy to shoot, serves well as a relatively close-range varmint/small game pistol, can be used for self-defense and perhaps most importantly — is a lot of fun to shoot.

Ruger.com



Turnbull's Deluxe takedown 1892 Winchester is made to order and features high-grade walnut, Turnbull's magnificent metal finishing and elimination of the troublesome tang safety. Photo: Turnbull Restoration

TURNBULL RESTORATION

WINCHESTER 1892 DELUXE TAKEDOWN

JEREMY D. CLOUGH

BETTER THAN YOU DARE DREAM

The 1873 Winchester may be “The gun that won the West” but the Model 1892 is the Western levergun that won America’s heart. Yes, the ’73 came first, as did the buffalo-caliber 1886. True, its younger brother, the .30/30 model of 1894 has taken many a young man’s first deer and even has its own Mariachi song (look it up), but the lever-action 1892 is the uncredited hero in most of the Western movies we know. This

makes it the levergun living in all of our memories — it was a ’92 Rooster Cogburn used to invite Ned Pepper to fill his hand, and anachronistically, introduced each episode of *The Rifleman*. It was, indeed, a ’92 that shot Liberty Valance.

Unsurprisingly for a rifle which has been around the better part of 130 years, many versions of the Winchester ’92 are available, including replicas by other makers but none quite



Takedown guns have lost none of their coolness. The ’92 takedown mechanism is identical to the ’86 Winchester and similar to their M1897 and M12 shotguns.

match up to the Turnbull Restoration Company version. Available in limited numbers based on how many they are allotted by Winchester, the Turnbull gun starts as an in-the-white takedown rifle built to their own specifications.

DESIGN HISTORY

There's more than just nostalgia to the '92. Like all of the lever guns designed by mechanical genius John Moses Browning, the 1892 has a certain timeless elegance. Born from Winchester's desire for a stronger gun based on Browning's '86 to replace the aging '73, it was also the subject of a bet between Browning and Winchester's Vice President, resulting in Browning designing and delivering the gun in a scant 30 days. Almost half of its travel time between Winchester in New Haven, Conn. and Browning's home in Ogden, Utah: a genius, indeed.

The largest caliber (and lightest) of the original '92s, the .44-40 is its definitive chambering, with .45 Colt versions being only a recent invention. Like the '73 before it, this gun matched cartridges with the Colt SAA, making the '92 one of the original pistol caliber carbines.

The .44-40 follows the older convention of naming a cartridge by the caliber of the bullet and the charge of blackpowder propelling it. This was not Winchester's original plan — like the .32-20 and .30-30, they originally named it after themselves as the .44 Winchester Center Fire (WCF) only to have this taxonomy overruled by the market and christened as the .44-40. Colt and Remington can sympathize: The .45, .380 and .25 Autos are all properly named Automatic Colt Pistol (ACP) and most people never knew the .44 Magnum was originally the .44 Remington Magnum. Such things happen when competitors start making ammo in your caliber.

INSPIRATION

One of the items in my library is a leather-bound reprint of Winchester's 1916 salesman's catalog. At \$20 from Connecticut Shotgun, you should have one, too, if you like old Winchesters but I digress. The catalog includes a description of the Fancy Sporting Rifle variant of the '92 and its specifications may very well be what Turnbull used as a starting point when they planned out this Deluxe version. Higher grade American walnut is used for the checkered pistol grip stock and it's capped with a steel shotgun-style buttplate. The octagonal 24" barrel is the only length barrel Winchester would then supply for a takedown '92.

Available in either .44/40 or .45 Colt (a generous nod to those of us hopelessly enamored of the caliber, historicity or no), the stock is oil rubbed to the correct shade of red and metal components are given era-appropriate finishes.

FINISHING FIRST

I'm not sure you can overstate how good Doug Turnbull's finishes are — he has devoted a large portion of his life to recreating the fine early finishes no longer suited to modern mass production. As I write this, I possess guns with Turnbull's rust, nitre and charcoal bluing plus the bone charcoal color-case-hardening for which he is so justly famous. All different processes, all done beautifully.

On the Turnbull Deluxe '92, the lever, hammer, receiver and forend tip are all color-case-hardened as is the steel buttplate. The barrel and mag tube are in rust blue which has a darker sheen than the charcoal (sometimes called carbonia) blue on the



It's gone! This is what the tang of a '92 Winchester should look like, once the current tang safety is removed. Just use half-cock and follow the four safety rules!



Interrupted threads make it possible to separate the two halves with about a quarter-turn of rotation.



The magazine holds 11+1 .44-40 cartridges. When loading, leaving the prior cartridge sticking out a little makes it easier to get the next round in.

other parts. The front sight is from Marble's and comes with a gold bead, which I deeply love. It is mated with a traditional buckhorn rear designed for both precise and up close, fast work depending on whether you settle the bead down in its lower pocket or just get the whole post in the wide, upper part of the rear sight. Think of it as the moral equivalent of today's 1-4x optic because these were the serious combat weapons of the day.

A lightened mainspring makes the action easier to work and omitting the current tang safety makes sure the gun actually does work. While I am in support of things to make guns safer, the add-on tang safety found on some newer Winchesters has been justly maligned as it can actually keep the gun from firing at all. It's happened to me. Leaving it off hews closer to the original lines of the '92 and makes it more reliable. Apply the Four Safety Rules to all firearms and you'll be fine.

TAKE IT DOWN A NOTCH

This brings us to one my favorite parts: the takedown system. A surprising number of Winchesters — both shotguns like the 1897 and 1912, and rifles like the '86, '92, '94 and '95 — were designed for disassembly without tools using an ingenious system from Browning. The barrel was screwed into the receiver



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Not Jeremy's best 50-yard group, but representative. It certainly shoots "minute-of-desperado"!

with interrupted threads and the magazine tube, which hung beneath the barrel in a ring of some sort, screwed into the receiver to keep everything in place. Flipping out a lever integrated into the muzzle end of the mag tube gave the shooter a handle to unscrew it, after which the barrel/magazine assembly could be rotated a quarter turn to free the barrel from its threads. It can be adjusted to take up slack as the system wears, so it always stays tight.

It is simple, brilliant and secure — secure enough the 1916 catalog warns prospective buyers they may have to hold the forend in their left hand and beat the receiver with their right to loosen it. This seems bad for the gun and worse for your hand so I'll note I simply squeezed tighter and tried harder to get the Turnbull gun apart — and it was, as advertised, almost monolithically tight.

NO DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

These are the big features, but it really is the details making the gun. The trigger breaks crisply and the slight taper of the barrel, barely noticeable visually, makes the gun lively in the hand even though it's long enough to hold a dozen cartridges full up. Similarly, the stock has a slight swell in the pistol grip I didn't notice for weeks — I only noticed the rifle felt good.

Recoil is soft and the smoothness of the action makes it easy to run through a magazine surprisingly quickly. Using handloads with Starline brass and Hunter Supply bullets as well as loaded ammo from Black Hills, I easily went through some 600 rounds, and was able to shoot as tight as 2" at 50 yards on paper, which is plenty good. This isn't a precision rifle — it's the rifle of our memories, executed better than we could have dreamed.

MSRP: \$3,450

TurnbullRestoration.com

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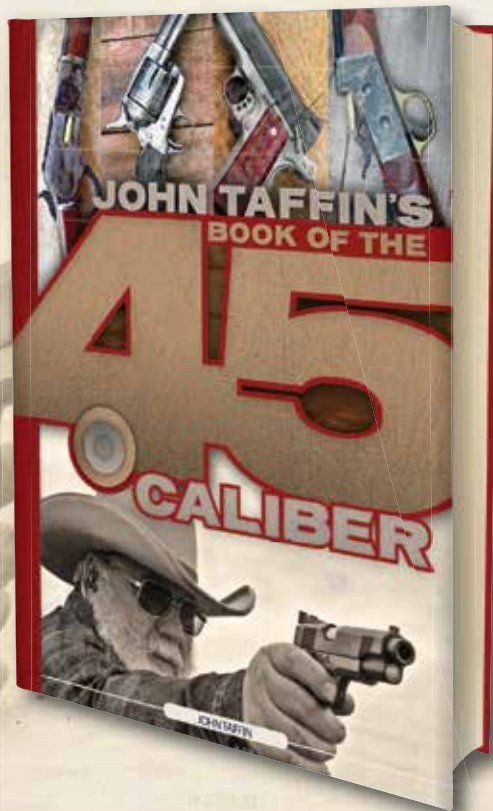


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Jameson Parker WALTHER CCP M2 .380

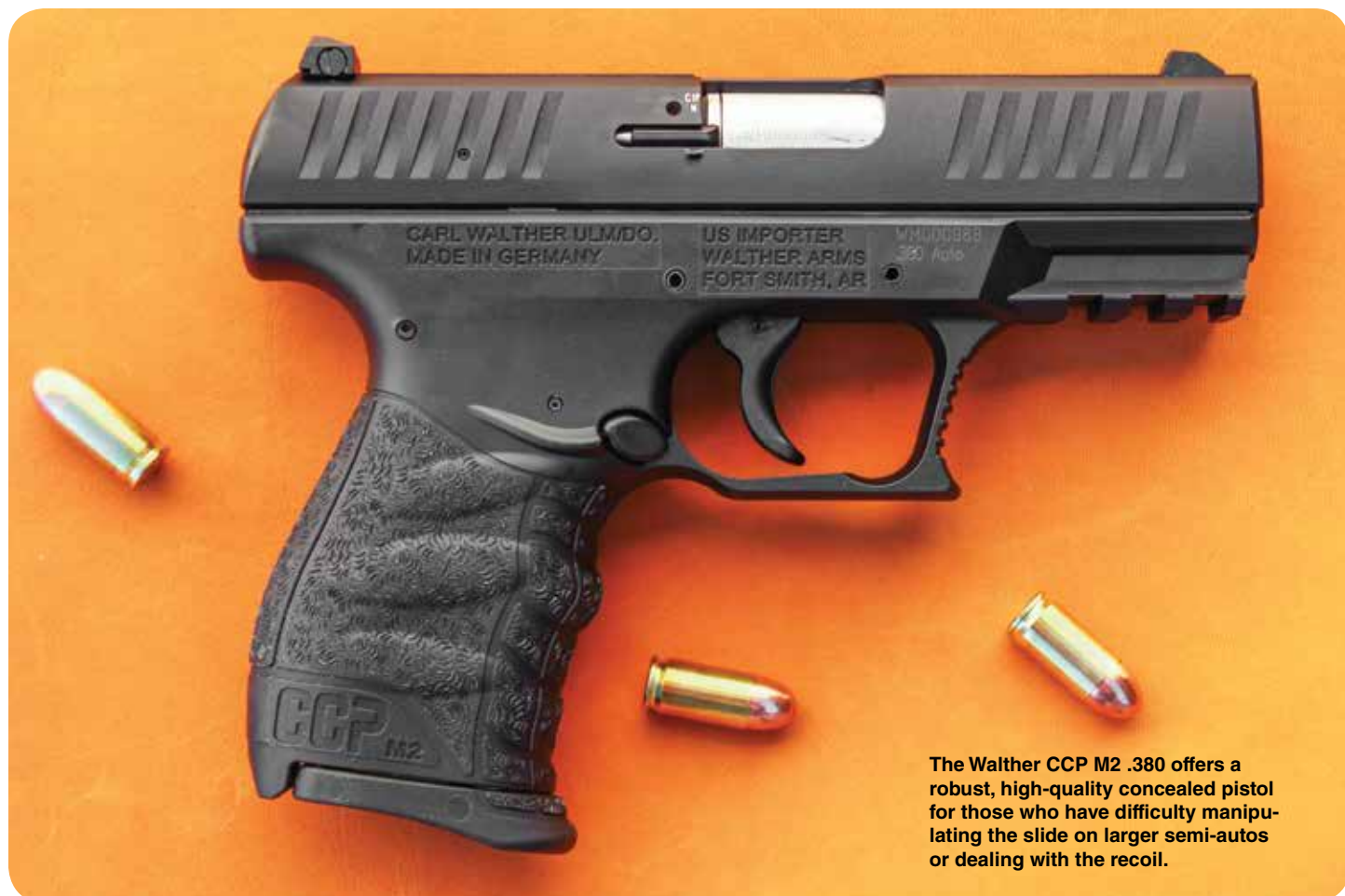
A SERIOUS CARRY GUN FOR 'SEASONED' HANDS

Men and companies alike must be able to adapt in order to survive and the Walther Firearms Company has been adapting steadily ever since it started in 1886, manufacturing single-shot hunting and target rifles on Martini and Aydt breech-block actions.

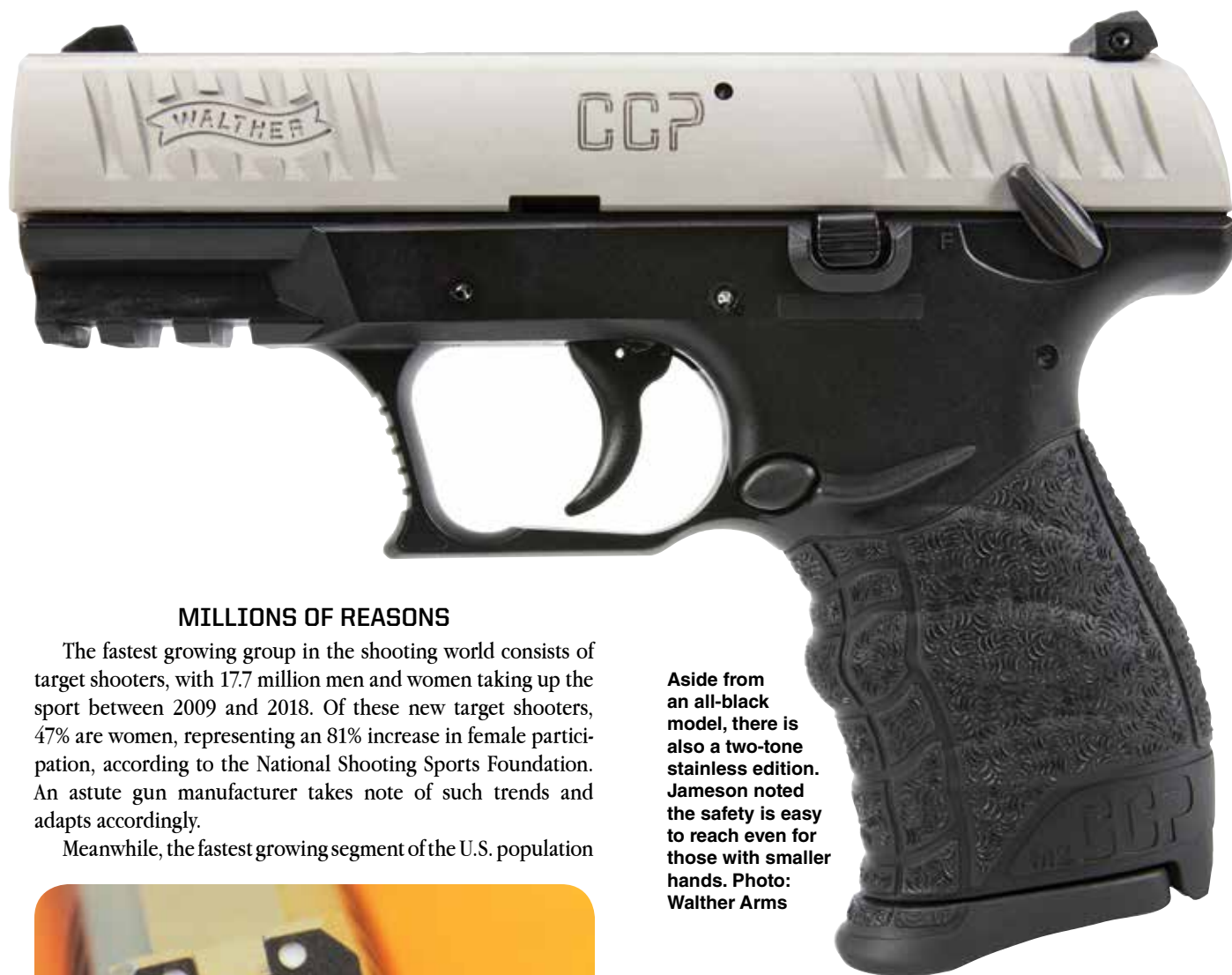
In the late 1890s, any number of people was attempting to create the semi-automatic pistols made possible by the invention of smokeless powder but most of those early guns were large, unwieldy, awkward and commercially unsuccessful. The first

two commercially successful designs to look like modern guns were both, unsurprisingly, designed by John Browning — but Walther was close behind.

Fritz Walther was able to convince his father Carl this design trend was the wave of the future and in 1908 Walther produced the little handgun that became known as the Model 1. Since then, technological advances, two World Wars, the Cold War, the division of Germany and changing consumer needs have all caused the company to reinvent itself over and over.



The Walther CCP M2 .380 offers a robust, high-quality concealed pistol for those who have difficulty manipulating the slide on larger semi-autos or dealing with the recoil.



MILLIONS OF REASONS

The fastest growing group in the shooting world consists of target shooters, with 17.7 million men and women taking up the sport between 2009 and 2018. Of these new target shooters, 47% are women, representing an 81% increase in female participation, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation. An astute gun manufacturer takes note of such trends and adapts accordingly.

Meanwhile, the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population

Aside from an all-black model, there is also a two-tone stainless edition. Jameson noted the safety is easy to reach even for those with smaller hands. Photo: Walther Arms



is comprised of seniors, those of us over 65. An astute gun manufacturer takes note of such trends and adapts accordingly.

Finally, concealed carry permit numbers have been on a steady and dramatic increase over the last 10 years, rising by 1.4 million in 2019 alone, with the number of women getting permits outstripping male applicants by 111%. An astute gun manufacturer takes note of such trends and adapts accordingly.

Walther Firearms is nothing if not astute.

ADAPTING TO NOW

With a semi-auto pistol, recoil, racking the slide and loading the magazine are the three hardest (think painful) aspects of shooting for those of us with weak or compromised hands. I never dreamed I would carry anything but a 1911 until arthritis set in and I noticed an increasing inability to reliably squeeze the grip safety after 200 rounds or so.

Men with worse arthritis than mine, and ladies with minimal hand strength, have trouble above all with racking the slide, even when following the precepts first laid down by William Ewart Fairbairn and Eric Anthony Sykes not long after World War I: Hold the slide stationary in the off-hand (elbow braced against your hip, if necessary) and drive the receiver forward with the dominant hand. Therefore, making a slide easier to

manipulate without compromising reliability was a critical priority for Walther.

The other factor taking a severe toll on weak or compromised hands is recoil. Unfortunately, recoil is recoil, and while there are some mechanical things engineers can do to reduce perceived recoil, Newton's laws will always apply.

BEGINNINGS

The reason almost all police departments and the FBI mandate 9mm pistols is the round provides an excellent balance between effectiveness and ease of control. Because of this and the fact the 9mm is the most popular and common round in the world, Walther introduced their original polymer-framed CCP (Concealed Carry Pistol) back in 2014 in 9mm. It was touted as easier to rack and with less perceived recoil due to a gas-delayed blowback system they called their "Softcoil system."

It was improved upon in 2018 with the CCP M2, which allowed the gun to be disassembled without a special tool. And now, in 2020, Walther has introduced the polymer-framed, fixed barrel, Softcoil CCP M2 in .380 ACP claiming it has "next-to-nothing recoil."

Well, actually, yes. That's accurate — and this is an incredibly light little gun.

HOW IT WORKS

In addition to the polymer frame, the slide is manufactured out of steel-reinforced 7075 aluminum, a weight-reducing detail made possible by the much lower pressure levels of the .380. The lighter slide, coupled with a gas-delayed blowback system,

allows for a lighter recoil spring, making it very easy to manually cycle. The delayed blowback system works due to a hinged piston attached to the front of the slide fitting into a gas cylinder attached to the frame, just below the fixed barrel.

And this brings us to the only tool needed to disassemble and reassemble the CCP M2 .380, a tool Walther does not supply: patience. The piston swings on its hinge so it takes a little trial and error (and your reading glasses, if you're of a certain age) to consistently and quickly fit the piston into the gas cylinder. It's not hard, and it requires no strength, but it takes practice before it becomes natural enough to be done quickly.

Walther lists the trigger pull at 5.5 lbs., but mine, after about 500 rounds, consistently measured a flat six. Ask me if I'm disappointed.

Two features I especially liked were the small port at the end of the slide allowing you to see if a round is in battery without a press-check, and the red cocking indicator at the rear of the slide. Those of us used to more old-fashioned pistols have certain rituals and protocols we do automatically, but for newer shooters, or a younger generation of shooters, both of those are admirable features. The thumb safety is situated on the rear of the frame where your right thumb can actually reach it without hand adjustment (and I have small hands), and the magazine release is ambidextrous.

SIGHTING TIMES THREE

The sights are a standard three-dot system, with the rear sight adjustable for windage. Which brings me to one of the very best things about the CCP M2 .380: It comes with three front sights



Holding eight .380 rounds in total, the CCP M2 offers a self-defense alternative for people with compromised hand strength.

The gun doesn't require any tools for disassembly, but Jameson noted it does require an ample supply of *patience*!



of varying heights. The gun Walther sent me had the lowest front sight installed, so it's what I started with. My first range day, I played with it at different distances, starting at three yards and working my way out to 10. It was immediately apparent the gun was shooting high, and at 10 yards it was consistently almost 5" high, so when I got home, I replaced the front sight with the middle one. My next range day was better, but still high. I installed the highest sight.

This is an easy switch to make. It involves a special TORX

wrench (size 6IP) that comes with the gun, and if I can do it, any fool can.

With the highest sight in place, I still shot about an inch higher than my point of aim at 10 yards, but ...

Because the CCP M2 .380 is intended for those of us with compromised hand strength, I wanted to get a second opinion on how the gun felt, specifically to a lady. Neither the lady I asked to give me her impressions nor her husband, nor the range master, found the gun to shoot high. And the lady in particular was exceptionally accurate and consistent in her shooting.

Watching her, the range master shook his head and said to her husband, "I'd advise you to be very nice and polite to that gal." So I guess it was just me, and with the highest front sight on, it was not enough to bother me.

THE TAKEAWAY

What you get when you buy a CCP M2 .380 is a reliable, lightweight, very accurate carry gun with negligible recoil, comfortable to hold and shoot, a slide very easy to rack, redundant safety features, easy and tool-free disassembly in an easy-to-conceal package. In terms of demographics, it should appeal to a broad cross-section of American shooters, including serious shooters who carry regularly but especially to those of us with, uh, seasoned hands.

MSRP: \$469

WaltherArms.com



With new designs in ammunition, such as the Federal Premium Personal Defense 99-grain (left) or Black Hills Ammunition HoneyBadger 60-grain (right), the .380 can be quite effective for self-defense — and without hand-shattering recoil!

THE TELEOLOGY OF THE GUN NERD

WILL DABBS, MD

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

The Human Genome Project is the largest collaborative biological research effort in human history. Taking genetic material from four randomly selected donors, HGP researchers developed the most detailed human genomic map ever created, cataloging some three billion separate nucleotides. While the results of this extraordinary undertaking promise to shape the way we treat cancer, Alzheimer's disease, cystic fibrosis and myriad other medical maladies, the true depth of this information is at present unknown. One vexing mystery that has yet to be fully understood is the Gun Nerd Gene (GNG).

Though I've never actually seen the Gun Nerd Gene, I know it to be real. If you're currently clutching this hallowed tome you've seen it as well. At least your spouse has. The GNG is

the mystic force driving us to devour untold pages of arcane minutiae like ballistic coefficients, bullet weights and muzzle velocities which would render any normal human comatose. Those of us with the GNG spend inordinate amounts of money on anything that appears old, blued and greasy. We also feel the hallowed likeness of John Moses Browning should grace American currency. After a lifetime of living with this condition, I feel like I am qualified to expound on what this quirky little world is really like.



The SP1 AR15 took Will an entire year of working as a janitor in a drug store but he says it was worth it.



GunBroker.com is a Pandora's Box for Gun Nerds. Will's Bushmaster Arms Pistol is on the left while the High Standard Model 10B police shotgun is on the right.

ORIGIN STORY

I bought my first Daisy BB gun at age seven. My first handgun was a Colt 1851 Navy revolver in kit form bought without my parents' knowledge at age 13. I shouldn't have bothered with all the subterfuge. My folks didn't care. It seems obvious my Gun Nerd Gene came from someplace.

Dad and I stalked game all across the Mississippi Delta. Holidays were never without a wild turkey and I shot enough deer to appreciate I'm not too keen on venison. Along the way I also did my utmost to keep the local water moccasin population in check.

I toiled away after school for a solid year during 10th grade to buy my first AR-15. With my 18th birthday the world broadened just a bit — I could now fill out my own BATF Form 4473.

THE EARLY YEARS

The Army put me through college in exchange for the deed to my soul but it left a little extra cash at the end of each semester.



Bookends — the Daisy lever-action BB repeater was purchased by Will at age 7 for \$7 with a partial loan from his dad. The post-sample 9mm HK UMP was a somewhat more challenging acquisition.



Like Alexander or Agamemnon, I set my mind on modest conquests and then moved on once they were secured. The early '80s were the salad days of gun collecting before gun control became a really serious thing.

I have always collected guns to fill some strange ethereal niche. As a result, my collection is broad but shallow. I know a gent who owns more than a hundred Luger pistols — it's just his "thing." By contrast I own three — a 1911 Erfurt, a 1916 Navy and a 1917 *Lange Pistole Artillery* Luger. Now I have one in each category, I can move on to the next conquest. As I said, broad but shallow.

There was the AR15 meticulously revered like the precious thing it was. I added a Chicom Type 56 folding stock AK (\$325 NIB from a stack at a gun show) along with a LAW-12 shotgun (an underappreciated gem). During the era I had very little money so trading was the order of the day. Some trades were great. Most were abysmal. However, I always left with whatever I felt I couldn't live without.

The HK VP70 (the trigger really sucked) became an FIE TZ75 (the only high-capacity 9mm with a decent trigger I could afford). The TZ75 became a .357 Magnum Desert Eagle (just too freaking cool) which eventually became a NIB Beretta 92. (I'm still a bit embarrassed by it.) Mel Gibson carried one in *Lethal Weapon* and he was really, really awesome. However, I found despite my amazing new wonder-nine, I was sadly still just some gooby guy.

EVERYTHING CHANGED

At 8 a.m. on my 21st birthday I presented to the office of my local police chief with the Forms 4 for my first two machineguns. The 9mm MAC10 cost \$650. The stripped M16 receiver set me back \$600. My gun buddies thought I was crazy to drop \$600 on something that wouldn't even shoot. The forms took three months to process back then. Life would never be the same.

THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

In 1991 I published my first gun article in an Army Aviation professional journal. It paid literally nothing. Soon thereafter I penned a piece titled "Class III Bear-be-Gone: NFA Weapons in the Alaskan Interior" in a rag called *Machinegun News* which has since gone out of business. It discussed using a short-barreled shotgun for bear defense and paid enough to cover the gun's transfer tax. I don't know what it's like to do crack cocaine, but I suspect it was something similar.



A Canik TP9 along with a pedestrian Palmetto State Armory AR15 parts gun made the cut in Will's gun collection. This unusual but inexpensive AR was a homeschool project for one of his kids.

Early on, trading was the order of the day. Below, the HK VP70 on the left morphed into a .357 Magnum Desert Eagle which eventually became a Beretta 92.

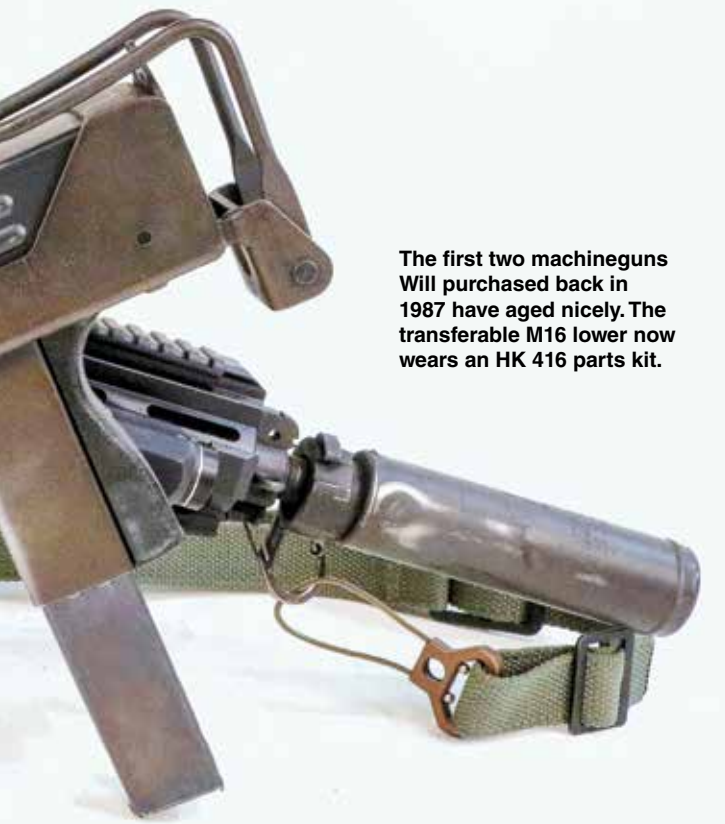




This Colt 1851 Navy .44 in kit form was Will's first handgun; he finished it out with hand tools in his dad's shop.



A Beretta M9 like this one kept Will company around the world in some of the most wretched places.



The first two machineguns Will purchased back in 1987 have aged nicely. The transferable M16 lower now wears an HK 416 parts kit.

For nearly 30 years now I have banged out prose about my peculiar genetic anomaly. I have also always kept a day job to pay the bills. So long as I spend my writing money on stuff I write about, the tax man is happy. It's a dangerous situation for a guy with the GNG.

A business established with some like-minded pals eventually resulted in a 07/02 manufacturer's FFL and the gloves truly came off. The first two years saw an orgy of machinegun building. Along the way we developed a niche reputation for building superbly accurate precision rifles and nice sound suppressors. It covers the expenses and leaves us with a little extra left over.

VARIETY IS INDEED THE SPICE OF LIFE

I have a friend who has an unfired SP-1 AR-15 from each year of its production ranging from 1964 to 1974. He has a separate example of the 1966-vintage SERIAL 66 wherein the serial numbers were briefly stamped by the machine used for military rifles. The font and layout were different, so it warranted a separate rifle. It's his thing.

Another pal has a NIB example of each first-run Gen 1 GLOCK 17, 17L and 17L Ported pistol. He acquired the same array of Gen 2s as well. He recently added one of only 30 or so Gen 1 GLOCK 19s ever produced. His GNG is just a bit different from mine.

"WE'RE ALL JUST GUN NERDS."

Warren Buffett is worth a cool \$71.5 billion. He could easily afford quite literally anything to include his own modest air force. However, Mr. Buffett does not himself own a luxury yacht. When queried about this he said he doesn't need a boat because he has friends who own boats. The same could be said of truly high-end gun collections.

If your proclivities range to classic German machineguns then you'd better have deep pockets. Those puppies ain't cheap. I have a couple, but they took a literal lifetime of saving and scrounging. However, a dear friend has a huge collection of transferable WWII-vintage German automatic weapons. While I don't get to take them home, I know where he lives and he enjoys visitors — it's the next best thing!

RUMINATIONS

I've known hundreds of gun nerds. Without exception each has been respectful, courteous, friendly and safe. A great many don't bother hunting. We just admire firearms because they are such elegant little machines.

Your collection might entail nothing fancier than a pedestrian Canik TP-9 (an absolutely superb combat handgun, by the way) and an unadorned Palmetto State Armory AR15 parts gun. By contrast, I once met a guy who owns FG42s in both their first and second model configurations as well as an StG-44 with a *krummlauf*. His gun collection is what would happen if the FBI joined forces with the BATF and the Smithsonian. Regardless, we all start with the same genetic foundation. We're all just gun nerds. 



The Spyderco Swayback is an ultra-modern take on a traditional pocketknife design and layout known for its hard-working attitude in tough conditions.

SPYDERCO SWAYBACK

SUAVE SWINGER

The Swayback is a traditional pocketknife pattern that stumps some when they first behold it. It looks like a Trapper pattern with the blade on the backside as opposed to the front, but this enigmatic layout has actually been around for many years — the Camillus U.S. Navy Rope knife saw extensive use in WWII and a more bag-handled version is seen on many pruning knives today. In essence, it's a working knife. The Spyderco Swayback, designed by custom knifemaker Marcin Slyz, has brought the pattern into the modern space-age with a high level of perfection.

For starters, this Spydie Swayback eschews the typical slip joint format for a sturdy 4.50" Titanium frame-lock (or integral lock) design often found on the best

of customs. At 8.04" overall, the Swayback is a large folder for tackling much heavier chores than your typical pocketknife. It's 3.53" CTS XHP stainless steel Wharnccliffe blade — a workhorse design — only adds to its ability to roughhouse to your heart's content. A stainless-steel tip-up pocket clip, with ambidextrous mounting front or back, makes for ready-to-grab carry.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT.

The Swayback's blade is hollow ground, adding even more slice-ability to Spyderco's legendary out-of-the-box sharpness. This knife will cut like a barrel racer. The Swayback handle tucks comfortably into the diagonal "life line" of the palm making it ideal for extensive use — the very reason this design finds itself used on rope and



The Swayback sports a sturdy frame-lock design like those found on many custom folders today. The tip-up pocket clip is reversible.

pruning knives. The frame slabs are crowned for added comfort. Then there's the uniqueness factor — you won't fall into the standard EDC groove around the range with the Spyderco Swayback. At \$390 MSRP the Swayback finds itself in the higher end of factory EDCs, but Spyderco has years of experience successfully selling premium fare in this range. Sheer quality sells and Spyderco's loyal following eats up knives like this.

Spyderco.com



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WANTED: 20K GUN OWNERS TO MARCH

VIRGINIA SHOULD BE THE EXAMPLE, NOT THE END

Dave Workman

You read the headline right, 20,000 frustrated, furious, fed-up and energized gun owners in each state needed to coordinate with one another and plan something significant — something to make headlines and leave an impression.

Last year, Virginia activists got about 22,000 of their friends and neighbors to descend on Richmond. Considering there are three or four times as many gun owners in each state, by working together — setting aside personal differences and egos — you really should be able to get this done.

IF VIRGINIA COULD DO IT, SO CAN YOU

Last spring, the Second Amendment Foundation and Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms jointly hired Glen Caroline, a veteran grassroots coordinator who spent 29 years with the National Rifle Association, as their Director of External Affairs. He immediately put together an online webinar program tailored to building grassroots.

SAF's Alan Gottlieb was hoping for good participation and what he got was better, more than twice what was expected. Some of you were probably tuned in as the webinar unfolded in three different time zones at the same hour each evening.

Why 20,000? Because it's a number the media cannot possibly ignore or deliberately underestimate, and because it has already been proven possible. No reporter will be able to look at a crowd and estimate the size to be in the "hundreds."

TAKE A LESSON IN ACTIVISM

Last spring, marchers angry over the death of a man in Minneapolis turned out by the tens of thousands. This went on for weeks.

Where does it say thousands of gun owners can't also exercise their First Amendment rights to peaceably assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances? Nobody has to agree with last year's marchers, but you can learn from them. March or rally for a day, and you get noticed.



Do it every day for a week, and you'll never get overlooked again.

The other side has mastered social media. So can you. The other side has learned how to work with reporters. So can you. The other side raises money. So can you. The other side channels their energy into accomplishing their mission. So can you.

Every movement begins with the first step. Research your state's laws regarding fundraising and political action committees, because these laws are not all the same. When (not "if") you set up such a group, you must actually start doing things, don't just announce your existence and expect everyone to come running and everything to fall automatically in place.

Thanks to email and social media, it's easier than ever before to accomplish this. It's also a way to separate the talkers from the doers. Anybody can talk a good game on Facebook or some other platform. Leaders inspire others to get away from the keyboard and get themselves to the capitol steps.

SET A DATE, TAKE ACTION

Select a date for action while your legislators are in session; let them know you're coming and you expect to meet with them face-to-face. The Illinois State Rifle Association has been doing this for several years and it works. It's called "IGOLD" and thousands of gun owners show up wearing gold T-shirts. Learn about this at isra.org, under "Events."

Make it a weekday and those with jobs should take the day off. Certainly, one day is worth protecting your rights, isn't it? Set up car pools; share the cost of gas and food. Rent buses or vans — but be there.

"WHY 20,000? BECAUSE IT'S A NUMBER THE MEDIA CANNOT POSSIBLY IGNORE OR DELIBERATELY UNDERESTIMATE, AND BECAUSE IT HAS ALREADY BEEN PROVEN POSSIBLE."

By now rights activists should know, or have a pretty good idea, of who the good guys and bad guys are. The ones on our side need to know what you expect for helping to put them in the capitol. The list of proposals might include Constitutional Carry legislation, repeal of “justifiable need” requirements to obtain carry permits/licenses if they exist in your state and prohibition or repeal of gun registration requirements.

PATIENCE

And don't be impatient — be prepared to accomplish your desired goals in steps. This year, pass one bill, and next year, pass another, and in the process, find candidates who agree with these goals and help get them elected.

Regardless whether state lawmakers insist such legislation can't pass, they should introduce it anyway. The reason is simple: Get the idea out there, and find out who supports or opposes it — and why. Some people may have legitimate concerns and it's up to you to educate them with facts. It may require politicians to take uncomfortable positions. Too bad; politicians declare they “support the Second Amendment” without ever having to prove it. Make them prove it.

Here's another suggestion sure to raise eyebrows and smoke out anti-gun-rights sheriffs, police chiefs and state legislators. Remember last month we suggested legislation to prohibit sheriffs and police departments from suspending the application process for concealed carry licenses or permits? To balance it out, ask your lawmakers to introduce a “full funding” measure to provide adequate funds to each agency for the hiring and

training of dedicated staff whose only job will be to process new applications and renewals for concealed carry permits/licenses. This legislation must include a provision to prohibit police and sheriff's agencies from requiring people to make appointments days or weeks in advance for this purpose.

“HOW CAN WE HELP?”

Some states now notify concealed carry licensees several weeks in advance their license is about to expire, giving them time to renew. If your state doesn't do this, work with friendly legislators to make it happen. With legislatures opening up across the country, this is the time to introduce such bills.

Grassroots activism is a gift of our Bill of Rights. The First Amendment makes it possible. Like the Second, it protects rights, rather than grants them. And, as with the Second, rights activists must exercise their rights of free speech and assembly with care, caution and responsibility.

You don't flaunt your rights. You don't march up and get in someone's face, especially if you're visibly armed. Be calm and cordial. Ask how they think the session is shaping up, and what they hope to accomplish, and ask how you might be able to help.

When you find lawmakers who agree to introduce your legislation, be sure to say “Thank you” and then ask, “Now, what can we do for you?”

If you've just appeared at the capitol with 20,000 companions, rest assured, the politicians you're talking to are going to listen. With such a show, they can't afford not to.

This is how doors open and things get accomplished. 



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APEX HELLCAT ACTION ENHANCEMENT TRIGGER

Will Dabbs, MD

The Springfield Armory Hellcat is the world's highest-capacity micro-compact defensive pistol. Packing 13+1 rounds of 9mm chaos into a package that fits in your front jeans pocket, the Hellcat changed the concealed carry game. Now Apex Tactical is offering their premiere trigger upgrade for this fabulous feline.

The Action Enhancement Trigger conversion consists of a new trigger assembly, a redesigned sear spring, and an upgraded striker spring. Installation is not quite as simple as changing your smartphone ringtone, but there's a great YouTube tutorial. It cost me about a half-hour while taking my sweet time.

The result is a smooth unspoiled take-up with a 5.5-lb. duty-grade break. The original Hellcat trigger wasn't bad, but



the Apex version is indeed markedly nicer. Add a 10-spot and they'll even print an American flag on the side.

MSRP: \$79.95

ApexTactical.com

TETRA HEARING PERFECTION

Will Dabbs, MD

Typical box store electronic ear muffs are like hammers.

By contrast, TETRA electronic hearing protection is a scalpel. It carves out the stuff you don't want while meticulously amplifying what you do. These puppies will absolutely revolutionize your time in the field.

TETRA ear pro uses the same technology as modern hearing aids. Using "Specialized Target Optimization" technology, you hear twigs breaking, wings flapping, turkeys gobbling and range commands amplified and enhanced. Damaging noise is surgically

excised. It's like having superpowers. I had never seen anything like it.

I could hear the soft leaves underfoot and notice when every turtle slid off his log into the lake but as soon as I started busting caps, these magnificent rascals shut all that out.

Such stuff isn't cheap but the return is years of pleasant conversation with your spouse and the capacity to detect sounds you wouldn't otherwise notice — and, you don't have to get bitten by a radioactive spider!

MSRP: \$699

TETRAhearing.com



OPTICAL DYNAMICS OD40 ILLUMINATOR

Brent T. Wheat

I've reviewed dozens of lighting devices over the years but I'm finally going to make a surprising declaration: The OD40 is unlike any flashlight I've ever seen.

Switch on the ultra-heavy LED light and you'll see a miniature version of a stage spotlight. There is no center beam or halo of scatter outside the primary focus — instead, you'll see a sharp, uniform circle of white light designed to illuminate objects several hundred yards away. The OD40 beam is so unlike any other handheld flashlights, it's almost hard to describe without seeing it in person.

Designed primarily as a varmint light, the kit comes with a scope-mount bracket, remote tail switch and red/green filters in a fitted case. The light doesn't work well as a



general-purpose flashlight as there is utter darkness immediately outside the circle, but if you need long-throw light, the OD40 is head and shoulders above all else.

MSRP: \$149.99

EXUDElight.com

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(IN \$ MILIONS)		MONTHS ENDING 2002	
16. Fiscal Year Ending 12/31/2002		Average Rate, Current Debt Interest Paying, Preceding 12 Months	% Expense of Single Issue, Predecessor Issued on Filing Date
a. Total Expend of Capital (in millions):			
17. State (includes County)		69980	57800
18. Local (includes County)			
19. State or Local (includes County)			
20. State or Local (includes County)			
21. State or Local (includes County)			
22. State or Local (includes County)			
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MK17 **CMMG INC.**

CMMG introduced the *Mk17* after the U.S. Army and Marine Corps adopted the SIG SAUER M17/M18 service pistols. Chambered in 9mm, it accepts SIG M17/P320 magazines. The *Mk17* comes in *Banshee* (offered as a pistol or short-barreled rifle for personal defense) and *Resolute* (16" barreled rifles for competitive shooters) configurations. MSRP: \$1,199.95 to \$1,549.95 for the *BANSHEE*; \$1,299.95 to \$1,799.95 for the *RESOLUTE*. For more info: (660) 248-2293, CmmgInc.com

HOLSTERS FOR THE S&W M&P 9 SHIELD EZ COMP-TAC

*H*olsters For The S&W M&P 9 *Shield EZ* are now offered by Comp-Tac. These are the MTAC (hybrid, IWB), the Infidel Max (all-Kydex IWB), the Warrior (OWB for CCW), the eV2 (appendix IWB for CCW) and the International (all-Kydex). MSRP: from \$57 to \$80. For more info: (281) 209-3040, Comp-Tac.com



PULTAC MAGAZINE **PULTAC**

*T*he *PulTac Magazine* allows quick and easy reloading at home or at the range. A red lever at the bottom base plate can be removed and used as a "thumb grip" to pull down the bullet follower. The magazine for 1911s is full size and fits all single-stack 1911s in .45 ACP. MSRP: \$34.99 (1911) and \$19.99 (GLOCK). For more info: PulTac.com

LONG RANGE HYBRID TARGET (LRHT) BULLETS **BERGER BULLETS**

*B*erger's *Long Range Hybrid Target (LRHT) Bullets* are now offered in loaded ammo for 6mm Creedmoor and 6.5 Creedmoor cartridges. The high ballistic coefficient, hybrid ogive LRHT bullets are Doppler radar verified to less than 1% BC variation. The Berger ammo is available in 6mm Creedmoor 109-grain LRHT, 6.5 Creedmoor 144-grain LRHT and 6.5 Creedmoor 153.5-grain LRHT. MSRP: around \$48 per hundred. For more info: (660) 450-2800, BergerBullets.com



FASTEEL 2.0 **KENT CARTRIDGE**

*K*ent Cartridge introduces *Fasteel 2.0* line extensions, an addition to their high-performance steel shotshell series. The following load configurations are offered: 1) 12-ga. 3-1/2" 1-3/8oz. 1550 FPS #1; 2) 12-ga. 3-1/2" 1-3/8oz. 1550 FPS #3; and 3) 12-ga. 2-3/4" 1-1/4oz. 1300 FPS #3. Kent Cartridge produces high-quality shotshells for hunters and competitive shooters. MSRP: around \$15.99 to \$24.99 per box. For more info: (888) 311-5368, KentCartridge.com



RANGER **VERSACARRY**

*T*he *Ranger* is an affordable holster from Versacarry. It's made of vegetable tanned water buffalo leather and sewn together with industrial-grade bonded nylon thread. It is for use with a standard 1.5" wide belt and available for a variety of pistols from compact to full size. MSRP: \$44.99. For more info: (979) 778-2000, Versacarry.com



HOWA M1100 RIMFIRE **LEGACY SPORTS INTERNATIONAL**

*L*egacy Sports' *Howa M1100 Rimfire* features an oversized tactical bolt handle, an 18" thread capped barrel and a 10-round detachable mag. With

an OAL of 37", it is offered in .22 LR, .22 WMR and 17 HMR. It has a synthetic Tactical/Carmint style stock with a beavertail fore-end in OD, black, or Walnut. A Nikko Stirling 3.5-10x44 Gamepro Scoped package option

is available. The M1100 rimfire bolt action is made with the same Japanese craftsmanship HOWA owners have come to appreciate. MSRP: \$478 to \$589. For more info: (800) 553-4229, LegacySports.com

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WRAPTER ADHESIVE GRIPS

HOGUE INC.

Hogue's *Wrapter Adhesive Firearm Grips* increase grip and hold while preserving the original condition of the firearm. They are an alternative to custom stippling that can compromise your gun's frame. Each Wrapter grip conforms to the contours and features of popular polymer frame models. The grips are sweat-resistant and non-irritating. MSRP: \$14.95. For more info: (800) 438-4747, HogueInc.com



THE GREAT AMERICAN RESCUE MISSION

FATHERS IN THE FIELD

The Great American Rescue Mission views fatherlessness and generational fatherlessness as the leading societal issue destroying America's families. The book is written by outdoor industry veteran and Fathers in the Field founder John Smithbaker, who himself was abandoned by his father at an early age. He tells how the Fathers in the Field ministry, local churches and volunteer mentors are making positive changes in the lives of abandoned boys across the nation. MSRP: \$39.95. For more info: (844) 472-4241, FathersInTheField.com

SLX PRISM SCOPES

PRIMARY ARMS OPTICS

Primary Arms Optics' *SLx Prism Scopes* undergo rigorous field tests, are reliable and offer great value. The SLx 3x32mm Gen III Prism Scope (pictured) is a general purpose, mid-range prism optic. The SLx 5x36mm Gen III is a long-range optic accurate at any distance. Both are approved for duty use by the National Training Officers Association. MSRP: \$289.99 and \$329.99. For more info: PrimaryArms.com



DPX HEST/F URBAN G10

DPX GEAR INC.

The *DPx HEST/F Urban G10* is small and light making it at home in your jeans as well as in the tackle box. Its CPM 154 steel blade is 2.9" long and 0.16" thick. Handle is Black G10 Phenolic resin with the lock side in Titanium. Designed by author/adventurer Robert Young Pelton, the DPX HEST/F knives are tools for a rugged environment. The initials stand for "Hostile Environment Survival Tool/ Folding" knife. MSRP: \$280. For more info: (619) 780 2600, DPXgear.com



PURSUIT PRO SERIES

BUCK KNIVES

Buck Knives introduces the *Pursuit Pro Series* featuring fixed and folding knives for vigorous use in the field. The hunting line includes two sizes of knives in fixed and folding versions with standard or gut-hook skinning blades. The knives have heat-treated S35VN blades as well as non-slip, highly visible orange handles. MSRP: \$105 to \$140. For more info: (800) 326-2825 Ext. 2, BuckKnives.com

SMART-TORQ

REAL AVID

The *Smart-Torq* from Real Avid is a tool developed for optics mounting and gun builds. It features discrete inch-lb. increment settings for spot-on torque adjustments. The Smart-Torq has a 10 to 70 in-lb. range allowing users to quickly get to a desired setting. A rubberized grip and the Force Assist handle/driver makes tightening screws and fasteners to precise torque settings comfortable and easy. MSRP: \$79.99. For more info: (800) 286-0567, RealAvid.com



PURSUIT HUNTING PACK

ALPS OUTDOORZ

The *Pursuit Hunting Pack* is now offered in Coyote Brown as well as in Realtree Edge and Mossy Oak Country. ALPS OutdoorZ's multi-function pack for the "out-all-day" hunter provides multiple storage solutions. The Pursuit offers hands-free carry of weapons and essential gear. Quiver holders and a dropdown pocket allow bow hunters to carry their bow and quiver while climbing or dragging game. MSRP: \$99.99. For more info: (800) 344-2577, AlpsOutdoorZ.com

WALTHER ARMS

PPK/S STAINLESS PISTOL GIVEAWAY

Walther Arms' classic PPK came out 80 years ago inspiring a new category in the firearm industry — the concealed carry pistol. It has evolved with the PPK/s. The stainless handgun in the *GUNS Magazine* giveaway for this issue maintains the original's features but with an extended grip for a 7-round capacity and improved ergonomics. With its stainless frame and black grip, the PPK/s in .380 ACP looks as elegant as its predecessor. Weighing 19 oz. empty, the pistol has an OAL of 6.1". Barrel length is 3.3". Its double-action/single-action trigger decocks when rotating the safety down into the safe position.

Carry your Walther PPK/s in Versacarry's Comfort

Flex Deluxe, also a prize in this giveaway. The IWB holster has an embedded polymer layer in between two pieces of water buffalo leather. It has a sweat-resistant padded back, a forward cant and an adjustable draw tension to ensure a secure carry.

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

This is definitely one giveaway you'd want to join. Go to GunsMagazine.com/giveaways. Or get a stamp and send a post card. —Jazz Jimenez

GUNS MAGAZINE JOHN WAYNE MEN'S T-SHIRT

MAKER: Nine Line Apparel
(912) 480-4250
NineLineApparel.com
VALUE: \$26.99



COMFORT FLEX DELUXE

MAKER: Versacarry
(979) 778-2000
Versacarry.com
VALUE: \$44.99

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

WIN!



If you are unable to enter online, mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please). Entries must be received before January 31, 2021. Limit one entry per household.

GUNS Magazine
GOM January 2021
P.O. Box 502795
San Diego, CA,
92150-2795

**PACKAGE
VALUE: \$920.98**



PPK/S STAINLESS

MAKER: Walther Arms
WaltherArms.com
(479) 242-8500

CALIBER: .380 ACP, **CAPACITY:** 7
BARREL LENGTH: 3.3", **LENGTH:** 6.1"

WEIGHT: 19 oz. (empty)
VALUE: \$849

FRONTIER KNIVES, HAWKS AND LEATHER DROOL-WORTHY ARTISTRY

Every writer I’ve visited seems to have plenty of “stuff” within arm’s reach of their writing quarters to be admired, picked-up, held and fondled. Perhaps this

common thread of ceremonial “examinations” stimulates the mind, bursting the dam of backed-up words?

Me? My writing quarters consists of my

laptop computer on the kitchen table. Next to me are stacks of notes, magazines, used targets, product printouts, along with an old Jeep console insert. Inside the compartments are numerous cartridges, cast bullets, sixgun stocks, pens, screwdrivers and calipers. My nomadic “office” is functional, easily allowing me to move it at my wife’s whims, such as clearing room for dinner.

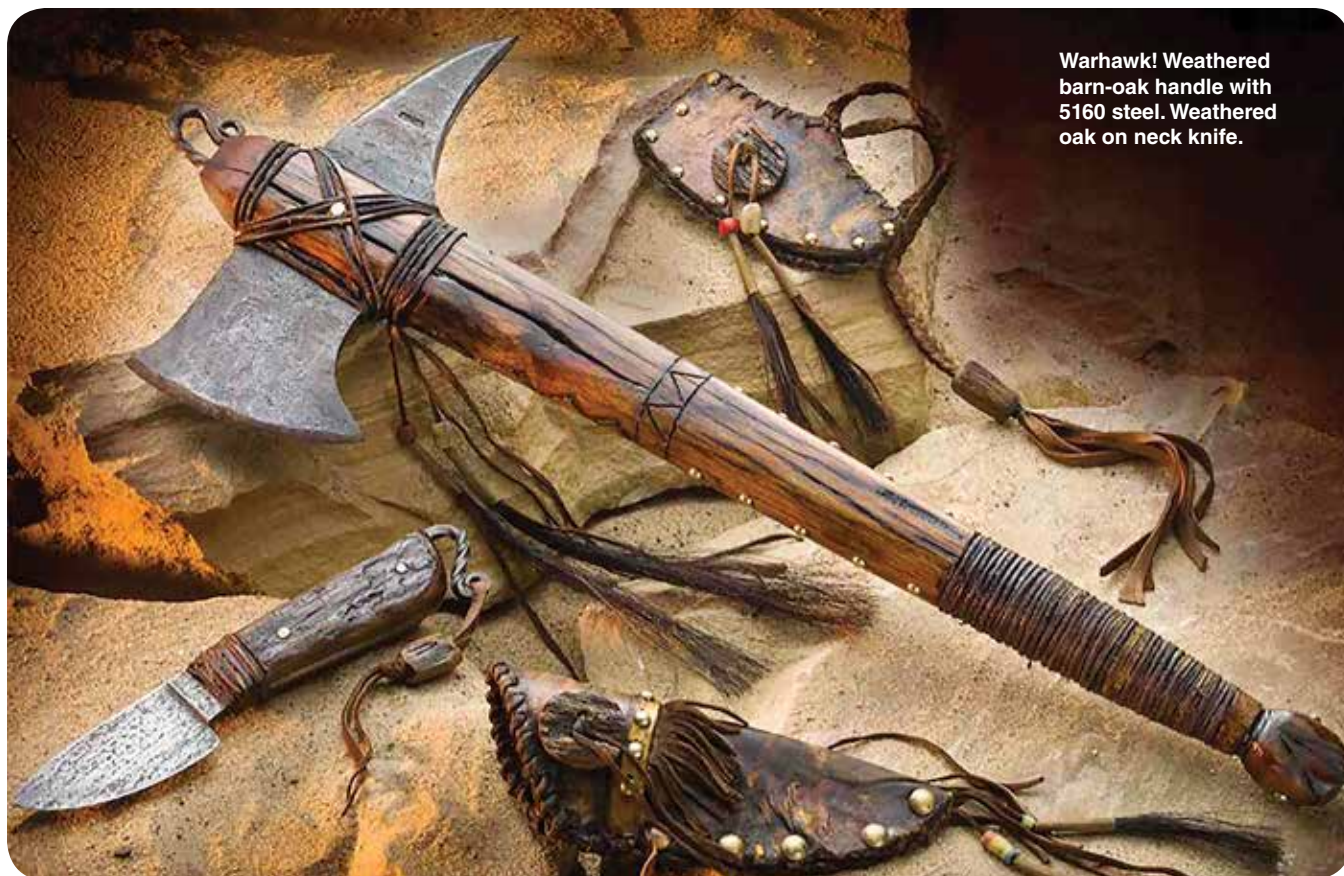
When needing a break, I reach over and fondle something from the console, consoling me until the “damned-up” words start trickling again. Sometimes social media jump-starts flatlined brain activity. Just yesterday, while scrolling, one photo causes me to pause with its “wow” factor ...

FRONTIER KNIVES, HAWKS AND LEATHER

What I see is a Damascus steel bowie with fossilized walrus handle and the most unique forged handguard I’d ever seen. Partnered with the jumbo blade is a sheath looking like its darn near 150 years old, something an old mountain man would carry with its feather, fringe and bead adornments — and who hasn’t fantasized about being a mountain man? I’ve wanted to be a mountain man since I was six.



A 2" Damascus neck knife with a mammoth ivory handle. Photo: Scott A. Roush



Warhawk! Weathered barn-oak handle with 5160 steel. Weathered oak on neck knife.

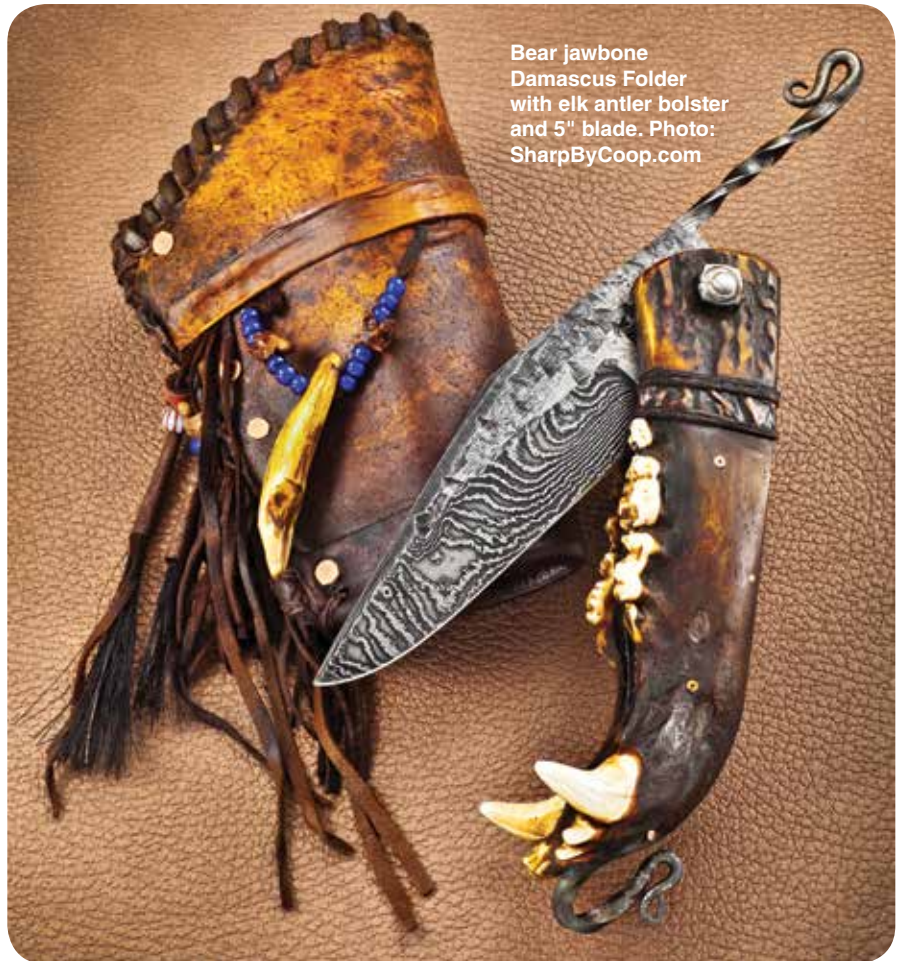
The more I stare, the more I drool, wishing I could grab this beauty from the screen. Talk about virtual brain stimulation! I'm excited, not even holding this rustic pig-sticker. I click on the maker's name, drawing me further into a world of recreated tomahawks, smaller skinner blades, camp blades and utility blades, all with a distinctively unique finish and flair.

These tools are worthy of a shaman's most secret of spiritual rituals, or a sourdough's daily duties. With this modern thing we call the Internet, I contact the maker, chuckling at the irony of using a computer for vintage looking goods.

JOHN COHEA

John Cohea has been making knives for 22 years. Seeing a Fisk Damascus steel blade set him on the path of making a knife looking like it was old. Through trial and error, John succeeded. He gets his Damascus blade blanks from Chad Nichols, who forges them from 1095 and 15N20 Swedish tool steel, for the most beautiful Damascus patterns you ever saw.

Using a propane gas forge, John heats and hammers the blanks into form, grinds for final shape and heat treats them for an extremely durable and sharp edge holding



Bear jawbone
Damascus Folder
with elk antler bolster
and 5" blade. Photo:
SharpByCoop.com



A 5" Damascus
steel blade with
Sambar stag handle
and wrought iron
butt cap. Photo:
SharpByCoop.com

blade. He uses natural handle materials of bear jawbone, fossilized walrus tusk, sambar stag, elk antler or ornamental hardwoods. These blades are working pieces of art. They are made strong to be used hard!

The bolsters, and guards are made of forged wrought iron, many times using age-correct period steel, such as chain links or wagon-wheel hoops, adding to authenticity of the blade or hawk.

VISUAL STIMULATION

Words are useless describing these treasures. Rather than ramble on, I'd rather have pictures do the talking of John's work as they tell the tale better than anyone ever could.

John can be reached through Facebook and Instagram under John M Cohea Frontier Style Knives, Hawks and Leather, or simply call him at (662) 322-5916. Let him fulfill your mountain man fantasies with authentic looking/working knives, hawks and leather. His lead time is anywhere from 1–6 months. One of his knives, hawks and leather may be what I need to keep the words flowing. It couldn't hurt. 🗡️

GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE

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LOOK TO THEM FIRST WHEN YOU ARE READY TO MAKE A PURCHASE.

JANUARY
2021

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hunting, there are no deer but plenty of the feathered sky-carp flying around overhead. Discussion question: What exactly is the definition of madness? Claude needs to watch his back.

Day 7 — I have hunted good and fine and honorably for one week and only seen the four deer on opening morning. Taking an optimistic approach, I realize gun season is only half over and there is plenty of time to take a trophy buck. Everything is fine, I've been in this position before and still scored great trophies before the end of the season.

Day 8 — It rained today. What a wonderful way to spend a portion of the limited

longer audible to those standing more than six feet away. I also must invoke my Fifth Amendment protections if questioned about Claude's disappearance.

Day 12 — What a great day! After 10 days of frustration, I changed my hunting venue to another nearby "backup" property. There, I found where all the deer had been hiding! In one hour, there were about 15 deer seen including three large "shooter" bucks. Unfortunately, no shots were fired due to poor timing and other factors but things are looking up as the season is starting to wind down.

Day 13 — The existential philosophers advocated living without hope to avoid disappointment. I hadn't realized until today Camus and Nietzsche were deer hunters.

Oh, I saw deer, battalions of deer, in fact,

"THIS IS ALMOST AS FUN AS REPEATEDLY STRIKING MYSELF ON THE TEMPLE WITH A 22-OZ. FRAMING HAMMER."

hours of one lifetime, pretending to be a rain-soaked stump being watched by a damn fool squirrel. To heck with optimism — why am I doing this? This is almost as fun as repeatedly striking myself on the temple with a 22-oz. framing hammer.

Day 9 — What do you think happened again today? It has often been noted you could be driving across the Sahara desert at noon on July 4 and still run a significant risk of striking a deer with your automobile. However, when you are totally camouflaged, doused in malodorous doe urine costing \$10 per minuscule bottle and have been sitting immobile for hours in prime woodland habitat, there are no #\$\$%* deer within 100 miles. Claude fled for his life after seeing the look in my eyes.

Day 10 — I watched a snail crawl along the edge of a straight razor. It was laughing at me. Just like the stupid squirrel.

Day 11 — Today I took a midday break from hunting and browsed several self-help websites on the Internet. I feel much better and the voices in my head are no

almost a plague of deer. Unfortunately, they also saw or heard me long before a shot could be taken due to the tag-you're-it distances encountered in the incredibly thick undergrowth of this new area. Seeing deer and not having a shot is aggravating the first couple of times, but after another half-dozen missed opportunities — all ending in loud snorts and flagging deer butts — frustration gnaws at your gut like an angry ferret. I hate ferrets. I'm also beginning to hate deer; and geese, for good measure.

Day 14 — The entry for this day is smeared and unreadable due to what appear to be tear stains.

Epilogue — Honestly, this column was actually written on the eve of Closing Day. Therefore, it is quite possible I will be a very happy camper by the time you read these words, having overcome adversity to feel the self-satisfied glow of success achieved after a long, hard journey.

Oh, who am I kidding? And, just for the record, I deny any knowledge of a tree-dwelling rodent named Claude.

Along the way I also enjoy reading the Letters to the Editor. Some opinions are helpful, or interesting, or even thought-provoking! The letters which most cause me to chuckle are those where the writer is complaining you offer articles on guns they will never be able to afford!

While one might say I have "Nighthawk" tastes on a "GLOCK" budget, the possibility *GUNS* might run an article on a gun with a stratospheric price tag excites me! I want to read about it! I may never own one, but I still have an abiding interest in all the details of its feel, appearance and function!



Folks who complain about your covetage of exotic firepower must have a terminal case of sour grapes, and that is truly sad. One of the great blessings about being a child of God is not just celebrating His blessings we receive, but rejoicing in the blessings others receive or have access to.

Also, you have, as you know, many talented writers, and Dr. Will Dabbs is among my favorites. In fact, it was his article on the Nighthawk Korth .44 Magnum in the October issue of *GUNS* that got me on the path of writing this email.

Bishop David Francoeur (Ret.)

DEER DIARY ...

RANTINGS FROM THE FIELD

As we reach the collective end of the deer season in many locales where this magazine is read — or is otherwise put to good use in the hunting camp outhouse — I believe both regular readers of this column might find it interesting to review the personal journal and expedition notes of an outstanding hunter.

Unfortunately, this hunter didn't keep a written record so I'm forced to share my own rough scratchings from deer season 2020. Here is the unabridged version of the heroic account:

Day 1 — Within moments of sun-up, I see a giant buck meandering around the woods at the edge of visibility. After a few heart-pounding moments, he finally melts back into the undergrowth for good. Later, around noon, I'm nearly trampled by three more bucks in a thicket as I head back to my truck. Unfortunately, no shots are taken.

Reminder to self: If the season doesn't end well, you can always write a column based on today's experience using a

tried-and-true professional outdoor writer literary technique — humble-bragging how you tagged the massive 28-pointer with a 500-yard offhand running shot. I'm confident readers won't mind if the buck in question is actually still mincing around the woods in perfect health.

Day 2 — Lots and lots of deer sign but no sightings. There is an exceptionally friendly squirrel living in the tree next to my deer stand. I've named him Claude. Unlike the other squirrels blithely scurrying around the forest floor minding their own business, Claude realizes what I'm doing and frequently comes by to sit and stare at me. Perhaps he's lonely.

Day 3 — Nearly attacked by a squadron of songbirds. Apparently we're in the middle of a significant migration as there are all sorts of small woodpeckers, chickadees, cardinals, waxwings and other birds I can't identify flitting around my head. Often they are so close I can hear the cat purr-noise of their wings as they fly near my

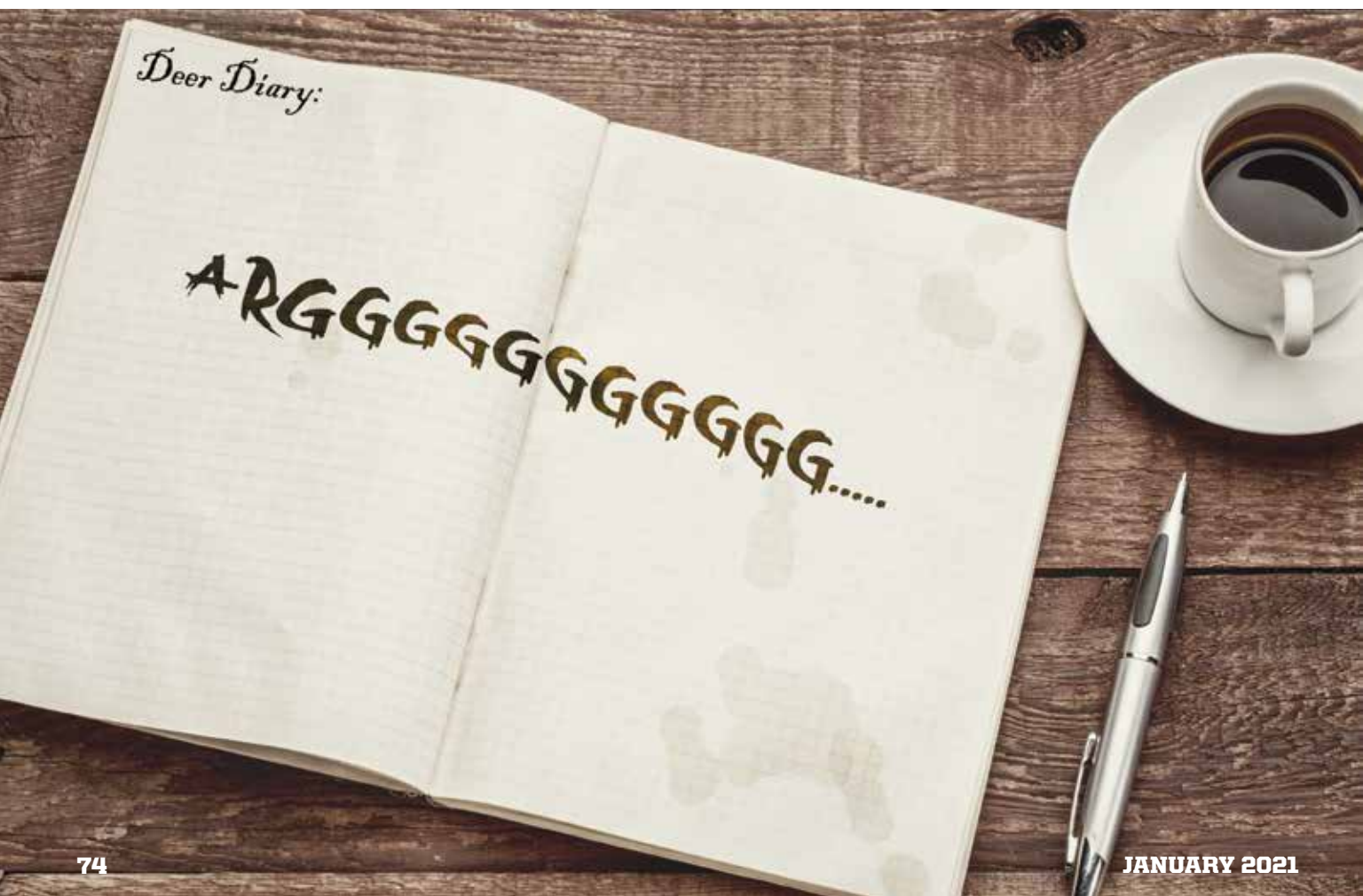
head. No sighting of deer in two days but Claude stopped by several times to say "Hi." He's starting to get on my nerves.

Day 4 — Nearly scared myself to death when I walked past one of my trail cameras in the dark. One moment I'm creeping anxiously along in the pitch-black forest, the next moment a blinding strobe light explodes. This caused my heart to do a series of wind sprints up and down my gullet but otherwise there was no harm done. At least we know there is one interesting picture on the camera. Still no deer seen, perhaps due to a mysterious series of screams heard just before dawn.

Day 5 — What a wonderful sunrise. The indescribable beauty of the morning forest, framed by a watercolor sky and punctuated by the incandescent disk of the rising sun, is impeccable. The moment is breathtaking and sublime, one you could never capture on film but only within a living memory. Still haven't seen hide nor hair of any deer since opening morning.

Day 6 — When I was goose hunting, I saw no geese but ran into five deer. When I'm deer

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