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Cover Photo:
Rob Jones/The Imagesmith, LLC

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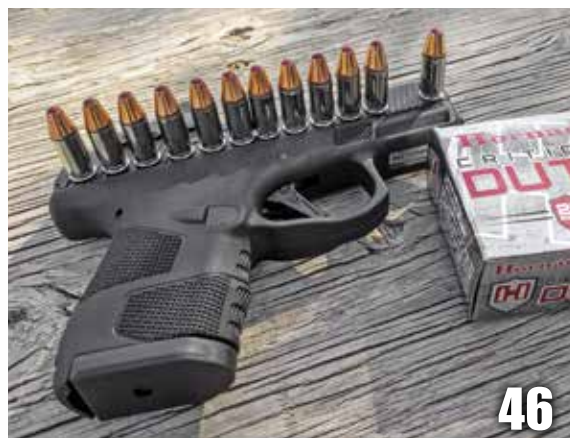
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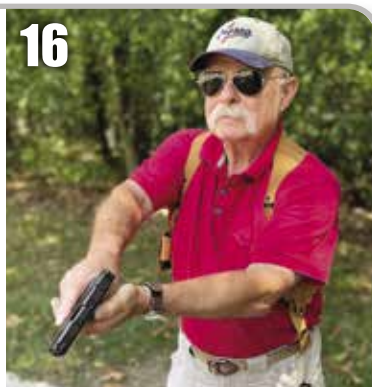


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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER® (ISSN 0145-4250) is published bi-monthly by Publishers' Development Corp., 13741 Danielson Street, Suite A, Poway, CA 92064. Periodical postage paid at San Diego, CA 92128, and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: One year (six issues) \$19.75. Single copies \$6.95 (in Canada \$7.95). Change of address: four weeks notice required on all changes. Send old address as well as new. Contributors submitting manuscripts, photographs or drawings do so at their own risk. Material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. Payment is for all world rights for the material. The act of mailing a manuscript constitutes the author's certification of originality of material. Opinions expressed are those of the bylined authors and do not necessarily represent those of the magazine or its advertisers. Advertising rates furnished on request. Reproduction or use of any portion of this magazine in any manner, without written permission, is prohibited. Entire contents Copyright© 2021 Publishers' Development Corp. All rights reserved. Title to this publication passes to subscriber only on delivery to his address. **SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS:** For immediate action email subs@americanhandgunner.com, write Subscription Dept., 13741 Danielson Street, Suite A, Poway, CA 92064 or call (866) 820-4045. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **AMERICAN HANDGUNNER®**, 13741 Danielson Street, Suite A, Poway, CA 92064. **WARNING:** Firearms are dangerous if used improperly, and may cause serious injury or death. Due to the inherent variables in the reloading of metallic cartridges, verify all published loads with manufacturer's data. Consult a professional gunsmith when modifying any firearm. **Be a safe shooter!**



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HANDGUNNER

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GUNS

GUNSMAGAZINE.COM

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I hate to bother you, but my husband wanted to view a video you had on YouTube, but it apparently has been removed. The title of the video is *Build Your Own 80% Handgun — Part Two*. Is there some way that he can view this video and if so, could you tell us how/where?

Myra & Bill

Well, Myra, you've run smack into the evil censors at YouTube. Apparently, those tech-weenie interns have deemed this video dangerous to society as we know it, or maybe just "wrong-speak." Whatever their reason, they've banned it from the YouTube platform. No worries, we've been working to post our videos at Rumble.com as well. At least for now, they seem to support some semblance of free speech. Just visit Rumble and search for "American Handgunner" and you'll find our channel, which has those two videos and plenty of others. We're working hard to get all of our new content posted there too. —TM



Whinery Backtalk

If Mr. Silverton would google "where do kids get handguns" he could get a better idea of the problem. True, FFL dealers are highly regulated. But kids get guns from sources other than FFL dealers. In Florida we have a problem with kids (and adults) breaking into cars and obtaining guns (stealing). Even a few police cars were broken into and police can carry high power rifles and fully automatic weapons. Two other sources are street sales and "borrowing" guns (stealing from parents or relatives). Obviously, Mr. Silverton has drank the kool-aid and believes all the misinformation.

Douglas Dopkins

Perhaps the good Mr. Silverton is unfamiliar with the following quote attributed to the late Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper, USMC (ret.): "Killing is a matter of will, not weapons. You can't control the act itself by passing laws about the means employed." If the mayhem in the big cities is of concern, one has only to look at 60 years of government social programs that have led to the near demise of the intact, traditional family. Mr. Silverton may wish to acquaint himself with Amity Shaeles book, *Great Society, A New History*. He may even learn the meaning of the word "verisimilitude."

Chuck Naretto

In addition to the points you made in response to Mike Silverton's letter — appropriately in the "Whinery" column (Nov./Dec. 2021), I would point out young men had been "killing and maiming" each other for millennia

before the first gun in history ever fired a shot. Read the Bible. He rightfully accuses those doing the senseless killing and maiming as having "half-baked brains." I would submit those who believe the elimination of guns would somehow eliminate or meaningfully mitigate the killing and maiming by those with the half-baked brains might be suffering from the same disorder.

Chuck Hill

Medical Science

I take issue with what the good doctor writes in "Fantastic Voyage" (Sept./Oct. 2021). "The pistol I was issued when first I donned the uniform was an old WWII-era clunker M1911A1 that rattled like Bernie Sanders' Skull."

First, as the medical doctor he is, I know Dr. Dabbs understands foremost there must be something inside the skull for it to rattle. Phffftttttt.

Peter J. Bertini

Appendix Carry Tip

My preference for appendix carry is the old, now discontinued Blackhawk suede leather holsters with the split J-hook it goes on over a belt loop, and absolutely stays put.

I was late finding out about them and almost missed out. I had to buy up all of them I could find on E-Bay before they totally disappeared.

Having lost 100+ lbs., I wrap the extra length of my belt around the right side and through the belt loops. It covers up any hint of the claws on the split J-hooks ...

Jim Brown

Flag To The Front!



We had a couple of questions about the flag orientation on the Handgunner Nov./Dec. 2021 cover gun. Yes, it's intentional, much like those flag patches on uniform right-side shoulders — the stars proudly face forward, directly "at the trouble." *Staccato 2011* is a vet-led company with 25% of their employees having served, hence "stars forward!" on the right side of the slide. According to them, "The flag on our guns is purposely 'always forward' to honor the flag, our country, and what we value as a company."

The DOD weighs in with, "The U.S. flag embroidered insignia is worn so that the star field faces forward, or to the flag's own right. When worn in this manner, the flag is facing the observer's right and gives the effect of the flag flying in the breeze as the wearer moves forward." —TM

Guncranks

The Cranks, is the best!!! The information is great. The camaraderie, jokes and real-life stories and laughter is a refreshing breath of

fresh air!!! By contrast of this corrupt political time of a few who need to move to Cuba or North Korea. Thanks soooooo much for The Cranks weekly!!! Watching and listening to ya'll cut up and laugh is contagious!!! My wife loves Roy's livestock adventures!!! LOL!!!

Stan McDonald

You can find the Guncranks show on YouTube.com/Guncranks and Rumble.com/AmericanHandgunner. —TM

Wisdom Ahead!

My 82-year-old wife recently asked if I would buy her a gun. My stunned and amazed reply was, "Of course sweetheart, but why?" Note: this is our 51st year of wedded bliss, and even a slow learner knows how to answer. She replied, "With all this craziness going on in the country, sometimes I'm afraid of taking the groceries out to the car."

The search began. All of my guns were too big, too heavy, wouldn't fit in her purse, etc. Several visits to local gun stores were less than fruitful. We ended up with a Ruger LCP .22 Lite Rack, which perfectly fit her quite small hands. Yesterday she had her first orientation session with a professional instructor. One doesn't need 51 years to learn you never teach your own wife! She did spectacularly well; the instructor said, "You actually listen and pay attention!" Last 10 all in the black, three in the 9-ring, one breaking the X line! Next stop, practice, practice, practice, then a CCW class. You're never too old!!!

Mike Quill

Gun Poverty!

Will Dabbs (*Guncrank*, Nov./Dec.) is right: Gunwriting is no path to riches. I've done a bit of freelance work and it takes research, easy access to a range and equipment, travel expense and way more time than most idiots would invest for the modest payoff. Also, ya better get it right or 15 experts and 10,000 know-it-all readers will howl the morning after publication. You will be dead and buried to the editor past whom you slipped the goof, and your name will be mud in the close-knit fraternity of gun publishers. The famous career guys with monthly columns and multiple bylines are slaves to deadlines. But if it's a living and you have a unique perspective to convey, it has its rewards. Just not riches.

Peter T.

Dinosaurs Can Shoot!

I recently finished reading my Sept./Oct. 2021 issue of *American*



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Handgunner. The article "Ruger 9mm Compact Concealment Compadre" had a statement by Roy Huntington that made me think either we both are "old school" dinosaurs or are both people who set a reasonably high bar when shooting modern handguns. I've also questioned the value of "accuracy" testing pistols at 7 yards. I wondered, like Roy, "Is it because they can't shoot?" I recently contacted a manufacturer customer service rep of a well-known handgun manufacturer. I was told their accuracy standard is a 3" group at 10 yards. I couldn't believe standards had been lowered so

much. I don't want my law enforcement officers or military members using handguns that aren't capable of better accuracy out to 25 yards or farther. Keep asking those questions, Mr. Huntington!

Mike Snyder

Feedback

First, I want to say as usual, Dr. Dabbs' writing is phenomenal. In reading his article on that chunk of wood being changed into a jewelry box, his message on how we need to let the master carpenter who truly

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knows us better than we ourselves do is so appropriate in today's world. Second, thank you for allowing the actual message that we do have an all knowing and all loving GOD to be printed. I don't worry nearly as much about the liberal democrats as I do about the American people giving up on GOD. That is when this country will fail.

Terry Gardner

Another terrific issue! I read and enjoyed it from stem-to-stern. You folks have your act together — great choice of topics, terrific writing and super photography.

Somebody deserves real praise for hiring Serena Juchnowski. That young lady is a terrific writer — she brings an unusual self-awareness to the fore as she explores learning to master the handgun. If she ever tires of writing the *Student Handgunner* column, let her take on whatever she wants to while you gather up the entirety of her SH columns and publish them as a stand-alone FMJ book.

Your 45th anniversary commemorative SAA revolver is a tad glitzy for my taste, but showcases some really fine craftsmanship. It was nice to see so many "round gun" features articles in this issue — a really nice balance. All of your "old guys" did their usual really good stuff and Dr. Dabbs has clearly proved worthy of joining their ranks.

Roy, I loved your Budischowsky TP-70 piece. I never heard of that little pistol, but it looks like a real winner. You seem to be pretty damned busy for a retired guy — stop making the rest of us look bad!

George Lang

And For Duke ...

Mike, just a note to let you know how much I have enjoyed your writings over the years. We are about the same age and, to some extent, walked some of the same trails in the gun and reloading world. Enjoyed your most recent article on the .38 Special. I have cast and loaded literally tens of thousands of the Thompson bullet Lyman #358156. When casting I run two sets of Lyman 4 cavity molds. I sure have hated to see the availability of metal composition wheel weights. When I retired from AZ DPS (State Trooper) in May 2002 and made a final move to our place here in Lake City, CO, I brought well over a ton of wheel weights. I've gone through all of those. I've managed to scrounge some here and there, but expect to finally run

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out of those within the next couple of years. After that I'll probably just buy "store bought" cast bullets.

Anyway, never count me as one of your naysayers. I may not always agree, but I always enjoy whatever you pen. God Bless you and all the other masters of the gun world who make *American Handgunner* and *GUNS* magazines the wonderful publications they are.

Ron Bruce

Coffee Spills Ahead

I have had very little to laugh about in the last year, but the "Riding the Lightning" story (Nov./Dec. 2021) made me laugh out loud. Thank you.

John Wagner

I read Will Dabbs' "Suffering for my Art: Riding the Lightning." I'm so glad I wasn't drinking coffee when I got to the article. I would have been shooting coffee through my nostrils. I was laughing out loud! I took my EDC knife and cut the article out for my son. Yes, my son will be getting a gift subscription of your magazine. But, please, some warnings on your articles.

Joe Ernst

Where's the .40 S&W?

I do not own a 9mm but I do have .40 caliber and I love shooting them — a GLOCK and a Beretta. I love them but you very seldom talk about .40s. I don't like the 9mm — just my choice. You still can't find ammo for 9mm and if you do the price is ridiculous.

I subscribe to your magazine and love reading the articles but please give a little more time to the .40s! Have a great day,

George Waters

More "Gun Tech" Content

In the Sept./Oct. issue, I really enjoyed Massad Ayoob's article on armed self-defense when your magazine was born. Very interesting! One clarification: he stated Washington is one of the states that doesn't recognize other states' CCW permits. Did he perhaps mean Oregon? I know Oregon doesn't recognize any permits from other states and will only grant non-resident permits if you live in a neighboring state (CA, NV, ID, or WA) and can convince a police chief or sheriff that you deserve one. Washington has always recognized many other states' permits, although the list is shrinking!

Secondly, I have a request for an article. I've been reading a couple gun magazines a month since the '90s, and there's something I've never understood. Pistol reviews often throw

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around terms like blow back, delayed blow back, locked breech, tilting barrel, etc. when they describe how pistols work. But I don't think I've ever seen a good description of the differences between these types of actions. A thorough breakdown would be really helpful!

Thanks very much for a great magazine. I look forward to every issue and always learn a lot!

Mike Fulton

Great idea! Our own mechanical guru Frank Jardim has just agreed to tackle this topic! —TM

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SHOWERS FOR GUNCRANKS

The big news in my Casa de Joy is the forthcoming arrival of two next-generation Guncranks. Both of my offspring have fired up the mini-me generators and are expecting pocket people — within two days of each other. The expected arrival dates are so close I have to think planning was involved, but as a dad, I really, really don't want to know anything about that.

With both “he” and “she” Guncranks on the way, I've been kicked out of the house twice recently, apparently for some social events called “Baby Showers.”

Being an attentive husband, I tried to help out with planning of the social activities, even to the point of offering to open up my reloading room to the guests, provided, of course, they bring their own primers. Alas, my generosity not only fell on deaf ears — it was outright rejected. It hurts when your own family gives you one of those pity laughs normally reserved for a super-awkward wedding toast about that time when the bride... well, you get the idea.

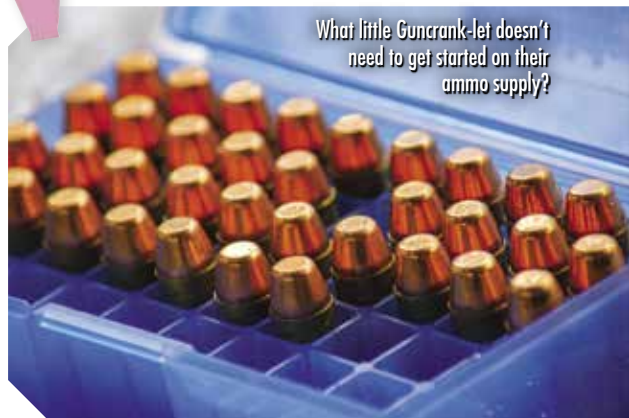
Anyway, I love and treasure the

women in my family, but I'll also say they tend to over-complicate things on occasion. Before I was booted out the door minutes before guests were to arrive, I spotted glittery signs, Instagram photo booths, punch-bowls with sorbet icebergs, and unless I was seeing things, a couple of unemployed wedding planners.

Apparently, turning on the Auburn vs. Penn State game was deemed an unacceptable icebreaker for the guests, so they elected to plan some type of feeling-sharing exercise. Seems like a bit of overkill to me, but what do I know? I suggested a quick range outing. That idea went over kind of like a Bloomberg Everytown booth at SHOT Show.

Refreshments would be easy in my book. Heck, I've got dozens of ammo cans out in the garage and most of them are only lightly rusted. What's wrong with filling up a pallet of those with some Black Rifle Coffee Company CAF? No one needs cream and sugar, so that frees up space on the buffet for hot wings and pork rinds. If the guests don't know what “CAF” stands for, you might want to keep that on the down low. Hint: “Caffeinated As _____” may or may not be the implied translation. Since the kiddos aren't yet born, I think we're on safe ground with the “R-rated” beverages. If nothing else, a few cups of CAF will liven up the party.

Apparently, and I really don't know as I was dis-invited from the festivities, the guests



What little Guncrank-let doesn't need to get started on their ammo supply?

made custom baby onesies with fabric markers and creative stencil work. I'm okay with that as the kids will need clothes. While a bit disappointed none of the stencil kits had a Staccato 2011 or Beretta 92 pattern, I think the idea was sound, but only a partial solution. Which leads me to the correct way to plan a baby shower activity.

If I'm following this shower concept correctly, the goal is to equip mom and bambino with all the gear they'll need to get this next-generation Guncrank thing rolling. And what kid doesn't need to get started on their ammo stockpile right away? I'm thinking a reloading party is a no-brainer here. I know components are scarce and expensive, but if each guest brought just 50 cases, primers, projectiles, and a bit of powder, we'd be off to a booming start. See what I did there? Bad puns are always a party favorite.

I love them dearly, but my wife and sister spent hours stuffing chunklets of bread with gooey stuff and berries, and for what? People just scarf them down and are still hungry. I can solve that problem with one word. Grill. Red meat and a jumbo potato is always a crowd pleaser. If you want to get all bougie, make it a sweet potato. Just be sure to have a Costco-sized bag of brown sugar handy.

I can't for the life of me figure out why my favorite women don't appreciate my ideas.

Oh, one more thing. Anyone know if Brownells has a baby gift registry?



At risk of tooting my own horn, I know how to cater a Tactical Baby Shower.

JAZZ JIMENEZ

REMEMBERING GWEN GUNN

It was in November 2016 when Special Projects Editor Roy Huntington (then editor of *American Handgunner*) informed the editorial and production staff Gwen Gunn will be proofing our magazines. My first thought was: She'll be a good fit. Gwen Gunn of *GUNS Magazine*, *American Handgunner* and *Shooting Industry* — sounds like she was meant to be part of the team. And she used to work with Roy on the San Diego police association newspaper too.

I soon discovered Gwen was a perfect fit, not just because of her name and background, but because she had the same passion for the written word as all of us on the editorial team have. She read every word of each magazine to ferret out mistakes in the headings, in the body of the text, the subheads, the table of contents, the footers, the bylines and on the cover. She cared about a misplaced comma, a missing period, using an em dash instead of an en dash, finding obvious as well as not so blatant mistakes. By the time Gwen read the magazines, I had already reviewed them. Eye fatigue can be a problem, so I appreciated Gwen's fresh pair of eyes! She would find a typo I missed, or we would both spot the same ones.



As we developed a respect for each other's skills, Gwen and I also became friends, although we had never met. Ours was a long-distance friendship. We exchanged emails, text, and pictures. She'd describe the snow in Colorado, and I'd tell her how sunny it was in San Diego. I found Gwen to be kind and endearing. And we had a lot in common too, like faith in God and love for family.

Last July, Gwen told me she had tested positive for COVID-19. She said she didn't have any symptoms except she just wanted to sleep most of the time. I was concerned and

advised her to seek medical attention. She didn't always reply, but I sent her a text almost every day to let her know she was in my thoughts and prayers. I would have continued texting her had Roy not shared this message from Gwen's nephew:

"... My aunt and uncle, Gwen and Joe Gunn, both contracted COVID, and unfortunately, were not able to fight it off. Joe passed away August 9th, followed by Gwen on August 18th."

I couldn't believe it. I had received a message from Gwen on the 13th. But as the sad news sank in, I found comfort in thinking Gwen and her husband are now in a better place. Rest well together, Gwen and Joe.

And Gwen, we will miss you. All of us at FMG appreciate your efforts to make our publications error-free. Thank you for being a valuable member of our team for the past five years.



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OLD SCHOOL IS COOL

I am twice as likely to carry a lightweight .38 Special revolver as any other firearm. When I reload for my revolvers, I deliberately make the cartridges challenging to use.

I carry an old S&W Model .38 — not one of the current “Bodyguard” series, but an old “Humpback” .38. I do a lot of reloading for my various revolvers, and my approach is a bit unorthodox. I reload for practice only. I carry only factory-manufactured rounds for defense. *My reloads are designed to make my training challenging.*

Here are two training methods I use to regularly increase my survivability.

MAKE SPEEDLOADER USE CHALLENGING

I train with speedloaders using wadcutters. They’re hard to align into the cylinder. I have to train my brain to achieve a good “feel” for speedloader practice. While I’m not *Miculek fast*, I am confident I can win a gunfight, even if the gunfight includes re-stoking my wheelgun.

I use an MP Molds 8-cavity, 148-grain wadcutter mold for my load. I use Eastman powder coat paint and often mix colors. Yeah, I like colorful bullets and punching clean holes.

I have found Accurate No. 5 works for my 148-grain wadcutter loads. I load right off the Western Powders *Handloading Guide Edition 8.0*, which recommends 3.7 grains. I have used a similar load for about 40 years.

I don’t load my wadcutters all the way flush to the case because I prefer crimping on a bullet rather than over a bullet. It’s not significantly different, but it is a variation of the load. Handloaders who vary the size of the burning chamber in a cartridge have the responsibility to ensure they are doing this safely.

Accurate No. 5 burns cleaner as it approaches moderate loads, rather than light ones like I’m using. These are mild loads, averaging 674 fps. This gives me a moderate amount of residue.

Why, then, would I use Accurate #5 for this load? Simple. When I stood back at 7 yards with my K6S and fired headshots on the target, 25 of them were touching. Across the screens of my chronograph, the standard deviation is 8.39. They are accurate, reliable and easy to shoot.



Hunters Specialties makes a series of Pentagon Hollow Point bullets with a five-sided hollow point for hunting. On the left is the 115-grain PHP. On the right is the 158-grain PHP.



LWC bullets are perfect for speedloader training, because they are hard to align into the cylinders. Only a good loading technique will work.

Photo: Robert Marulli



The 148-grain wadcutter used in the testing came from an MP 8-cavity aluminum mold.

The bullets were powder coated with a mix of Eastman Ford Blue and Harbor Freight white. After coating, they’re sized using a Lee Lube and Size Kit.

TRAIN FOR HEAVY RECOIL

Besides learning to stuff bullets into cylinders quicker, the other skill one needs to acquire is to resist the recoil of a heavy bullet in a lighter gun. I use a 158-grain LSWC (lead semi wadcutter). This load is right out of the *Hodgdon 2020 Annual Reloading Manual*. The 158-grain cast LSWC starting at 3.1 grains of HP-38 runs well in most snubbies.

Lightweight revolvers throwing out 158-grain bullets give the shooter stout recoil, and that’s great training. Hornady lists this load from 3.1–3.7 grains. For shooters working this load up, I’ve found accuracy is best on the lower end of this scale, from 3.1–3.3 grains. I have not had a problem with leading, provided the bullets are sized properly for the barrel.

I generally size a .38 bullet at .358 for my .38 special revolvers. I ordered some Hunters Supply cast 158-grain SWC to test. These have a Pentagon Hollow Point, which can be used for harvesting game. Not only do they work in lever guns, but my S&W Mod 38 also likes them for target shooting. Use the same loads as standard 158-SWC bullets.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

I use a lot of shooting drills, but I always go back to the *el Presidente*. The *el Presidente* consists of three torso-shaped targets placed a yard apart. The shooter stands facing 180 degrees away from the targets. On the threat command, the shooter spins and engages each target, center mass, with two rounds. The shooter reloads and engages each target with two rounds again. It’s great training with five-shot snubbies as it forces two reloads.

I’m a firm believer in pushing oneself in training, just to be ready for the real thing. Reloading is one instrument getting us there.



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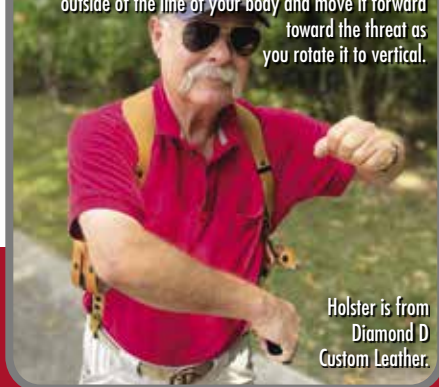
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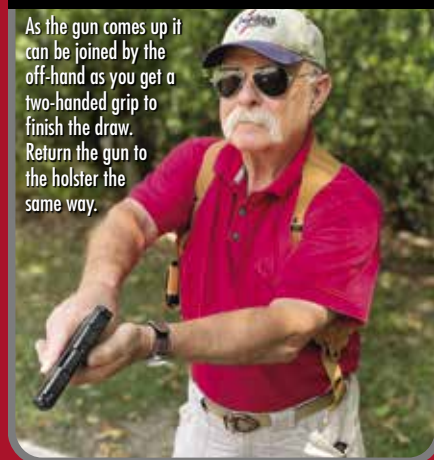
SHOULDER HOLSTER SECRETS

Lift your off-side arm for clearance, get a firing grip and clear leather. As the muzzle frees, push the gun downward outside of the line of your body and move it forward toward the threat as you rotate it to vertical.



Holster is from Diamond D Custom Leather.

As the gun comes up it can be joined by the off-hand as you get a two-handed grip to finish the draw. Return the gun to the holster the same way.



It just *seems* like a good idea, doesn't it? A way to get all the weight off your hips, your long-suffering achy-breaky back not hurting for a change, and the "easy on/easy off" thing a shoulder holster manages is marvelous. Added bonus points are tallied for easy access to your gun while sitting, handy spare ammo under the off-side arm — and adjustments so you can tailor the harness to fit you perfectly. What's not to like?

Yet, there are zillions of shoulder holsters gathering dust, slowly moldering their leather selves into verdigris-laced

oblivion while their synthetic cousins unhurriedly turn brittle — their elastic bits slowly losing their spunk. I present, then, for your perusal, boxes and shelves full of dashed dreams, shattered hopes and unfulfilled yearnings. What "might have been" now dying in place from disillusionment and frustration.

If shoulder rigs are, by design and concept, flawed — why do they remain so popular? Every single maker of any sort lists a shoulder rig — or 10 — among their wares. So, who buys them and why? What is it these astute users know the rest of us uninitiated fail to comprehend?

A COMMON THREAD

Like most things in life, the shoulder holster takes a bit more than a casual glance to understand and eventually live with successfully. A hip rig is pretty much bullet-proof as far as use goes. Using at least a decent belt is important — no, the thin canvas belt didn't work, did it? — and eventually most of us stumble our way through

and learn to live with the thing.

But what is it about shoulder rigs seeming to bewilder so many? First off, they've got bits and parts and swivels and snaps and buckles and elastic and "Chicago Screws" (whatever those are) and it all looks much more at home on James Bond than on us. When you first put one on, you can't move your arms forward, can't bend over at the waist without the gun slapping you on the side of your head, and the holster gets caught

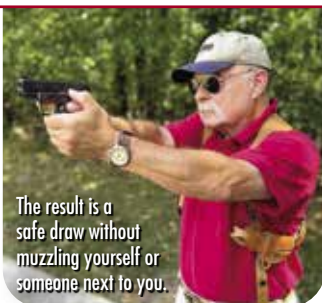
in the sleeve of your jacket when you don it. What would Ms. Moneybags have said?

Like hitting a target with a handgun or negotiating whether your three-year-old will eat his peas — learning to manage a shoulder holster takes experience and training. Alas, we often don't bother with any of that and just assume we'll automatically know what to do. Cue a knowing shake of Ms. Moneybags's head.

WHAT TO DO?

You need to commit to a few things first. A jacket, loose shirt or vest is mandatory, and if it gets hot or uncomfortable, too bad — it stays on. Different shoulder rig designs do different things. A vertical rig is best for bigger, longer guns. A horizontal rig is better for shorter barrels and especially autos. Off-side ammo carry can get out of hand, so do you really need a quad-pack of 1911 mags there? I favor a single mag pouch and tac light pouch together, or a single speed loader and light. Take the time to adjust a rig when you get it. It can be a pain fussing with straps and snaps and such but take the time until it feels right. Once things are dialed in shoulder rigs can be pretty handy. They may not always be completely comfortable, but they can at least be okay. Comforting, not comfortable, remember?

The biggest challenge I see is the draw stroke. There's much fuss about keeping your left (or off-side) hand/arm clear of the gun as you draw and "try not to muzzle your arm." Most advo-



The result is a safe draw without muzzling yourself or someone next to you.

cate drawing and sort of sweeping the muzzle to the left (if you're a righty) while moving it forward toward the target. And yes, if you had your left arm down you'd have muzzled yourself with a *loaded gun on a draw stroke*. But I've never understood doing it that way. Why not just draw so you don't muzzle any important parts?

Follow me here. Lift your elbow a tad to make room. Get a drawing grip on the gun and pull it forward out of the holster. Now — and pay attention — as the muzzle clears the holster simply point the gun down toward the ground just off your left side. Continue moving your arm, pushing the gun forward as you rotate your wrist to bring the sights upright. You just drew your gun and didn't muzzle anything important. Put the gun back into the rig the same way but in the opposite direction.

The beauty of this is you can get the muzzle into the holster's mouth, then use your off hand to safely help secure it, which isn't unusual with a shoulder holster. No drama, no danger and it suddenly turns a shoulder holster into something much safer than it was just before you read this. Now go buy a shoulder holster.



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COLT'S MOST POPULAR CHAMBERINGS ARE ... WINCHESTER?



Duke's trifecta of Colt S&WAs chambered for WCF cartridges. All are 3rd Generation with 7½" barrels. From left, the .32-20, .44-40 and .38-40. Note the one-piece style grips Duke favors.



These are original factory loads. From left, the .32 WCF (.32-20), .38 WCF (.38-40) and .44 WCF (.44-40).

As odd as it may seem, some of the Colt S&W's most popular chamberings have been developed by Winchester; as in Winchester Center Fire or as we know them today .32-20, .38-40 and .44-40. Why? Because in the infancy of repeating rifles such cartridges were as long as Winchester's Model 1873 could handle, which in turn made them ideal revolver cartridges. All three have maximum overall cartridge length limits of 1.592".

Adding those rounds as options in what was quickly becoming America's most popular revolver was a brilliant move by someone at Colt Patent Firearms. It enabled anyone packing guns for serious purposes to stock only one type of ammunition for their rifles/carbines and revolvers. (There's a story of at least one Texas

Ranger who packed a .44-40 '73 Winchester with his .45 Colt revolver. In a gun battle with outlaws, he managed to get a .45 cartridge into his lever action. With bullets incoming he had to remove the Winchester's side plates to get the .45 round out.)

SLOW TO MARKET

What surprises me is Colt was so slow in adapting their new sixgun to the pistol-size WCFs. Perhaps it was because in its early years of manufacture Colt's factory was busy getting the new revolvers into the U.S. Army's hands. Regardless, by my research, the soon-to-become world famous S&W was introduced in 1873, yet it took nearly five years for the .44 WCF to be a caliber choice. The same was true with the .38 WCF. Winchester added it as a '73 option in 1879: not 1874, as often mistakenly written. Colt didn't bring out S&WAs for it till 1884. Naturally the .32-20 came last with Winchester adding it in 1882 and Colt in 1887. (These dates of introduction are taken from several sources. Other sources may vary.)



The primary appeal of WCFs in Colt S&WAs was the ability to have matching repeating rifles and handguns.

HALF WCF?

Colt's First Generation of SAA production lasted from 1873 to 1941. In that time period, and including standard SAAs, Bisley SAAs and target models of both, 71,292 .44-40s were made, 50,402, 38-40s and 43,102 .32-20s. That was of 357,859 made in total. (Figures quoted from *The 36 Calibers of the Colt Single Action Army* by David M. Brown, ©1965.) During the Second Generation of SAA production from 1956 to 1974, none were made for the WCFs as standard. That's discounting 2,002 .44-40s made as part of the special run Peacemaker Centennial Commemorative. My figuring says the WCFs counted for a bit over 46% of SAA production between 1873 and 1941.

People's desire for SAA chamberings changed after the Third Generation of production began in 1976. I was at the NRA Convention in Philadelphia in 1982, where Colt announced the .44-40 was being introduced. I ordered one right on the spot. Also around that time was the advent of cowboy type

competition, which opened up an entirely new market for Colt's SAAs. By 1993, the .38-40 was returned and in 2002, so did .32-20. My understanding now is while the Third Generation of SAA production is still ongoing only .357 Magnum and .45 Colt are caliber options. That's truly a shame.

Be that as it may, there are plenty of Third Generation .44-40s, .38-40s and .32-20s floating about, albeit admittedly the latter one is the most difficult to obtain. As my eyes age, it seems to help to shoot the SAAs with 7½" barrels. So, while I've owned many dozens of Colt SAAs — from both First Generation and Third Generation production — it wasn't till 2021 I had a "trifecta." That's all three Third Generation WCFs with 7½" barrel lengths.

And brothers, let me tell you, they

Even Colt has been confused about naming the WCFs. Top is a 1904 marked .38 WCF. Below is a 2004 marked .38-40.



are all winners. Just recently I put the 7½" .44-40 in my Ransom Pistol Machine Rest and shot 20 handloads through it. Those loads contained four different cast bullets I made and five different powders. The total average of 20 groups was a mere 1.79" at 25 yards. I'll give details someday.

When talking about this subject, I'm often asked, "Which of the three is your favorite?" My usual answer is, "On what day?" Over the years, I didn't feel the need for a .32-20. Nowadays, its mild noise and recoil make it very attractive. As for which is in first and second place, I bounce around. Honestly, I cannot make a choice.



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VINTAGE SELF-DEFENSE

Bill, a neighbor, hunting partner, and certified old-timer, dropped by for coffee the other day. I was surprised when he asked for advice on a handgun for defense.

Bill said, "I'm thinking of a carry handgun. Now our state has constitutional carry, and I don't need to get a license."

I managed to hold back an eye roll. I'd bet a fair sum Bill hadn't stepped out the door without something in his pocket for 50 years.

"Get a medium size 9mm semiautomatic with synthetic frame, rust resistant finish, at least 15-round magazine capacity, accessory rail for light/laser, and maybe tritium night sights, assuming you can still see the sights."

Bill snorted derisively. "You haven't been in a gun store for a while. The shelves are practically bare. And they told me I have to fill out a form to buy a gun! When did that happen?"

"About 50 years ago. Now they do an FBI background check too." I remembered Bill hadn't bought a gun since the 1960s, and they had been used guns even then.

Bill said, "I'm thinking of a revolver my Daddy had, a little S&W Regulation Police. We still have some of daddy's stuff stored and if I looked long enough, I could probably find it. What do you think, is it a decent defensive gun?"

I was thinking, I bet you could find it all right. I could probably find it right now just by reaching into the pocket of the old hunting jacket you're wearing. But he was asking for a lecture, and I dearly love to lecture. This is the gist of what I told Bill.



S&W Regulation Police in .38 S&W made on the Improved I-Frame.

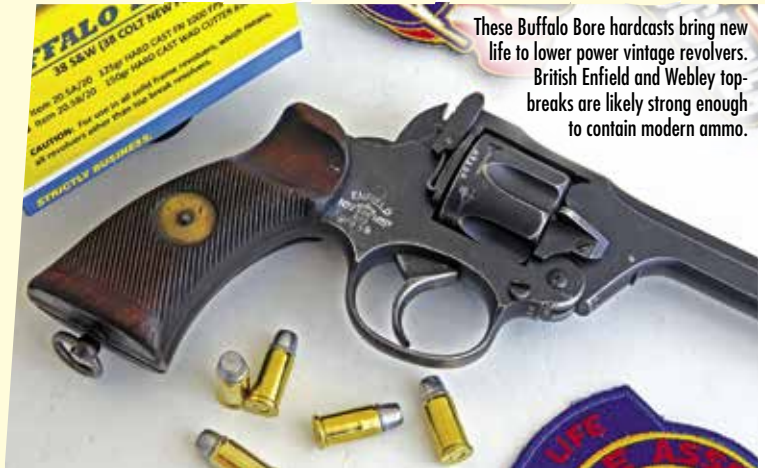
BILL'S DADDY'S GUN

I happen to have a Regulation Police in my modest S&W collection, so I got it out of the safe. "Yep," said Bill, "My daddy's gun looked just like yours. As best I can remember, of course."

"Of course. This one was made shortly before S&W began stamping their guns with model numbers in 1957. Those old boys surely did know how to fit parts and polish steel. Trouble is the most common factory load is a 145-grain lead round nose bullet at about 650 fps. It would be foolish to use such ammo for self-defense."

Bill seemed a bit uncomfortable. "Right, no one would be so foolish. What should I do, assuming I find daddy's old gun?"

"I'd say you have two choices. Sell it to an S&W collector and use the money to buy something modern. Or if you are determined to carry it, get some Buffalo Bore ammunition. They load a hard cast, flat point 125-grain bullet at about 1,000 fps and it's under SAAMI pressure limits. It's great ammunition, in my view, essential in bringing some fine vintage handguns back to life."



These Buffalo Bore hardcasts bring new life to lower power vintage revolvers. British Enfield and Webley top-breaks are likely strong enough to contain modern ammo.

THE OVERLOOKED .38

The old .38 S&W (also called the .38 Colt New Police) is a cartridge I've overlooked for years. I could never see much point in it when .38 Special revolvers and ammunition were readily available.

The .38 S&W has the same limitations as other old timers, such as the .45 Colt, .44 Special and others. Many firearms chambered for these cartridges were made when designs and materials were not nearly as strong as later firearms. When the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI) sets industry pressure limits, it has to keep these old designs in mind.

The SAAMI pressure limit for the 1870s-era .38 S&W is 14,500 psi. Many of the handguns made for it were top break revolvers, some of high quality such as those from S&W, others not so much. Personally, I wouldn't fire a pre-1900 top break except with black powder loads.

There are many fine Colt, Ruger, and S&W small and medium frame handguns chambered for the .38 S&W. Colt offered the Official Police, Police Positive and Banker's Special in .38 S&W (pardon, .38 Colt New Police). S&W chambered the compact I-Frame with 2" barrel (Terrier) and 4" barrel (Regulation Police).

From left, .38 S&W; 9mm Luger; .38 Special. Similar in size, the 9mm offers significantly more energy.



"There's a third option," Bill mused. "You could load me up a box or two of hot .38 S&W cartridges."

"Hmmm, let me think it over. Nope. Not happening."



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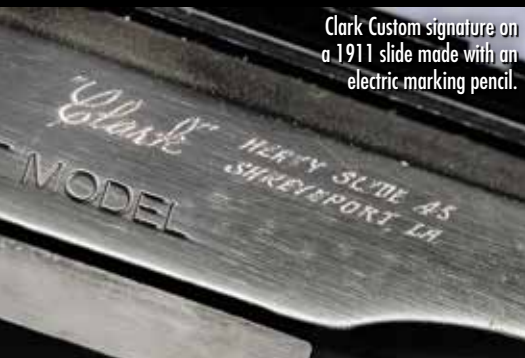
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Clark Custom signature on a 1911 slide made with an electric marking pencil.



An Armand Swenson brand stamped onto a finished custom pistol.

MARKING METHODS

The simplest method might just be to use an electric pen. This is the method Clark used. It is very hard to control and not very neat. Metal stamps which make impressions when hammer struck are simple and effective. They are also inexpensive. Gunsmiths like R.L. Shockey and Armand Swenson used this method to mark hundreds of guns in their careers. I have a small stamp to mark parts and tools in my shop, as well as the interior of a pistol slide. They are available from vendors like Infinity Stamps in California. They can make a punch with your artwork or logo.

A better method is “electro chemical.”



Custom stamping dies by Infinity Stamps can be hammered onto many flat surfaces.

MASTERPIECE MARKING METHODS

Are all masterpieces signed? I would hope so. Many gunsmiths have passed away never signing or branding their work, and that makes it difficult for a collector or shooter to have a full appreciation for the workmanship that went into the masterpieces. Seventy-five years ago, there were very few custom pistolsmiths who did sign their work. Many were known by the features they created or the style of their product. Take a “Fitz” revolver with its cut down Colt barrel and half-removed trigger guard. He didn’t sign his work. The problem now is with limited originals on the collector market, there are hosts of “reproductions” being sold as originals.

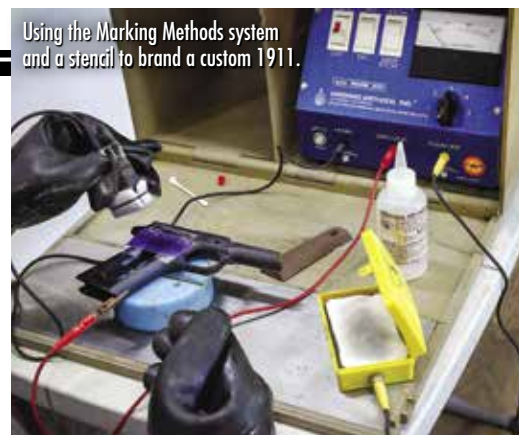
MAKERS' MARKS

Branding or signing work started in the '40s with gunsmiths like Jesse Harpe in Florida who engraved his name on the 1911-barrel bushing. Arnold Capone of Kings Gunworks, Calif., with his “crown” logo. Then came pistolsmith Jim Clark who inscribed and numbered his work in the order of completion. It also helps he dated the work on the inside of the slide. The first thing most serious custom gun lovers look for is the telltale signature or hallmark on the gun.

Today, most custom smiths mark their work not as a sign of pride but as a marketing tool to help their business. I remember my dad buying an NRA match Colt 1911 from gunsmith Alton Dinan of Connecticut. It had two holes drilled through the side of the large front sight. I asked him about it and he said, “Dinan made it so shooters could look down the firing line and instantly know it was one of his guns.” A very good early marketing strategy. There are a number of ways to mark or brand your work. From a simple steel stamp to CNC engraving.

This method uses electric current and chemicals to etch metals conducting electricity. Reusable stencils are custom made for the end user and can be made in a number of sizes and patterns. I use this method for signing my work, as well as labeling barrels and slides with caliber sizes. Some stencils are recreations of long-gone Colt scripts. This process has lots of up-front costs for the Marking Methods kit and stencil production, but will last a lifetime. I bought my kit used from a good friend, the late Jerry Keefer. I then had my stencils made by International Marking Group in New York. Ted Yost has used this method for years, leaving his mark indiscreetly under the grip panel of his custom 1911 builds. This process can be used on parts that might be damaged with a hammer blow when using a punch.

With the advent of small shop CNC



Using the Marking Methods system and a stencil to brand a custom 1911.

machines, there is now a way for smiths to program their own designs and engrave them onto any material they want — metal, wood, plastics and leather. Using a small laptop and a bench top CNC mill, the gunsmith can create all sorts of complicated branding and logos. Once the program is written, you can use it as many times as needed and modified as needed.

Branding or signing work is very important to the craft. It shows the client you are proud enough of your work to put your name on it. It also leaves a lasting legacy on a handgun. The value of custom handguns is continuing to climb, with much of the value being established by the provenance of the maker’s mark.



For more info: IMG-Electromark.com, InfinityStamps.com, MarkingMethods.com

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Getting Away With (Attempted) Murder

Love. It's the glue that binds humanity together. True love is selfless. True love is sacrificial. True love overlooks faults. One chaotic evening in the emergency department, I saw for real the indomitable power of true love.

Our heroine was 29 years old. She arrived by POV (Personally Owned Vehicle) attended by her boyfriend. He was doting and attentive. The fact she was conscious and conversational shocked me. She had been shot in the head.

She was sitting up when we met, a scant dribble of dark blood tracking down the side of her face. Her left eye bulged monstrously. Bullet wounds are almost mystically sinister up close, like the blackness of an evil man's soul. This one seemed about the diameter of a pencil and was centered on her left temple.

Miracle Of Misfortune?

I don't know why, but we always asked what happened. It's not that it really much matters. The type of firearm is germane to a degree, but the psychosocial events leading up to the shooting not so much. However, I just never could resist. I always wanted to hear the story.

It was the boyfriend who provided the details. He said he had come in from whatever it was he did and was unloading his daily gear — a trim little .380ACP pocket pistol part of his daily loadout. He told me he slipped the little gun out of his pocket and set it down sideways on the top of the dresser.

He had no idea how it happened. He strongly suspected the gun was defective and explained he might have a lawyer review the issue. Somehow, when he set the gun down, it went off.

Bullets are the very embodiment of physics. They describe a path based predominantly upon their orientation and initial velocity. Projectiles fall to earth driven by the constant acceleration due to gravity. Like everything

else in the universe, they continue in motion until affected by outside forces. The boyfriend explained the evening's sordid outcome was pure unvarnished random.

"As anyone who has ever watched one of those criminal forensics TV shows might attest, you can ascertain a great deal from an entrance wound."

His girlfriend had been standing across the room inquiring as to the nature of his day. When the gun went off the little bullet had traversed the bedroom and, as foul luck might have it, struck the hapless woman in the temple. After quite a lot of frenetic chaos as well as a trip screaming across town to the ER here we were.

The Truth Hurts

It was indeed a compelling tale. However, *this was not my first gunshot wound*. When I examined the thing closely, I noticed charred flesh with ample powder stippling fanned out from the point of impact. There was even a little tearing of the skin around the wound.

As anyone who has ever watched one of those criminal forensics TV shows might attest, you can ascertain a great deal from an entrance wound. A bullet fired at a distance just punches a hole. *The same thing at contact range will tattoo the surrounding skin with unburned powder and carboniferous ick*. This was definitely the latter sort. Compelling story notwithstanding, this guy had clearly put his gun to this young woman's temple and stroked the trigger.



The lady in question was doing shockingly well, considering. The anemic little bullet had transected her left optic nerve, deflected downward through her maxillary sinuses, and come to rest behind her rearmost right upper molar. I cleaned her up and found a maxillofacial surgeon who popped the spent projectile right out.

I waited until the moment was right and got a pal to remove the boyfriend for a while. Once it was just her and me, I explained my concerns regarding the nature of the wound and how it didn't seem to jive with the boyfriend's story. I assured her we could keep her safe, and if he had indeed shot her intentionally, then we would need to deal with that.

Throughout it all she stuck religiously to the tale. The gun went off when he set it down. He loved her, and she loved him. There's nothing he would ever do to harm her intentionally. I pushed as much as I was comfortable, but then let it drop.

The cops did the same, but when the victim swears it was an accident, there's just not a lot left with which to work. They had likely rehearsed their stories en route to the hospital. I discharged her the following day, now irrevocably half blind, in the company of her boyfriend. He was as attentive and affectionate as ever.



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Defensive training includes the fundamentals: Move, Communicate, Use Cover, Shoot and Think to solve the problem. With repetition, these skills can be applied subconsciously.



Negative targets are great for defensive practice. You can't look to see where the hits went (a bad habit) and you won't get caught up about group size. Shoot fast as long as you don't hit cardboard.

RANGE TEST

Dry practice is your “homework.” Range trips are “tests” to confirm the dry repetitions are paying off. Preparing includes deciding what you’re going to practice. Make a list of drills you’ll practice, number of repetitions and the number of shots fired. This ensures your range trip is productive.

Concentrate on good hits as opposed to speed. Negative targets — you shoot through the holes — help keep you from getting caught up in group size. On the range, you discover areas where you need additional practice. Don’t deviate from your live-fire list. Make note of what needs work and this goes on your dry-practice list.

The only reason to use a timer is for comparisons. Which is more efficient, technique A or B? Don’t get caught up in trying to beat the clock. The timer’s “beep” makes everyone go too “fast.” Mistakes occur, you go faster to catch up, and it’s downhill from there. This is no different from letting the threat dictate the pace of the fight, which is a sure path to defeat.

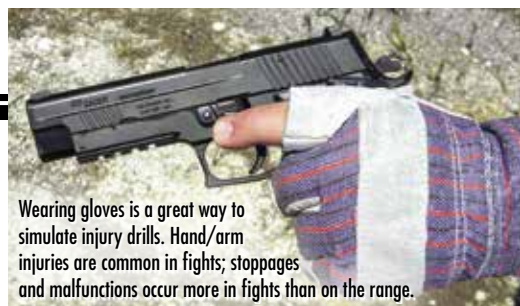
Keep in mind, winning the fight isn’t based on how quick you can draw or shoot. Deciding to draw or

PROPER PRACTICE WITH PURPOSE

Defensive training introduces the mental and physical skills required to use a firearm effectively against a threat. The goal is developing the ability to apply these skills on demand, under adverse conditions, against someone intent on inflicting harm. The only path to this level of skill and confidence is practice — disciplined repetition.

Shooting is fun, too much fun. We go to the range to practice, but it’s easy to get sidetracked, losing focus of our original intent. Blasting away. “How quick can I empty the magazine?” Or perhaps slowly firing one shot after another, seeking tighter groups. This shooting isn’t preparing you to defend against a sudden, violent attack.

A defensive response includes these fundamentals: Move, Communicate, Use Cover, Shoot (if necessary) and Think (problem solving.) Defensive practice should reflect these tactics. It also must include presentation of the pistol from concealment, manipulations — especially single hand drills and clearing malfunctions.



Wearing gloves is a great way to simulate injury drills. Hand/arm injuries are common in fights; stoppages and malfunctions occur more in fights than on the range.

BEST PRACTICE? NOT SHOOTING!

The majority of defensive practice can and should be practiced “dry.” Thousands of proper repetitions are required to learn a sequence where you’re mentally performing at a subconscious level. Dummy weapons like plastic “Red” or “Blue” guns, inert training rounds and devices like Dry-FireMag’s “Reset” magazines are mandatory for banking the required repetitions. After your initial investment for gear, dry practice is easy and cheap. The experts, knowing way more than we’ll ever understand, agreed 90% of practice should be done without firing a shot. Take their advice. Everyone can devote 15 minutes a day for dry practice.

Practice is performed slowly, methodically working through the various steps of a sequence. Speed is your worst enemy. If you’re making mistakes, slow down. Efficiency, not speed, is the goal. Slow, deliberate, mistake-free practice with no wasted motion makes you efficient. Speed or quickness develops with time and repetition.

Training, practice and fighting are performed at a speed that’s mistake free.

“Verbalization” is an excellent technique to slow your brain down. The mind cycles through sequences quicker than we can physically perform. Verbalization, saying each step out loud as it’s performed, slows down conscious thought and helps implant the proper steps.

fire in a timely fashion and acting with resolve is where speed is mandatory. You believe the knife-wielding threat is going to stab you. If you wait for 100% proof of this (knife going in and blood coming out) it won’t matter how fast you are, it’s too late. The fight is won by decision making, cycling through the Boyd’s O.O.D.A. (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) Loop. The goal is to force the threat to react to you.

Proper practice also creates confidence. There’s a direct correlation between your self-image, what you think of your abilities, and your performance. Yes, there are always skills to improve or polish. When practice is over, you should feel good about your progress.

Look up “repetition,” and you’ll discover “mundane” and “boring.” Eventually, practice, both dry and live, should become monotonous. *It should become ordinary for drills to go well.* With repetition, most of these skills shift from the conscious mind, thinking about each step, to the subconscious mind. The conscious mind thinks, “threat.” You’re moving, issuing verbal commands, and presenting the pistol at a subconscious level. This frees up the conscious mind to focus on problem solving.

Practice, and all that it involves, is mandatory for the fight, which we’ll do everything to avoid.



For more info: DryFireMag.com

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COMPETITION! PREPARING TO HUNT

With an upcoming hunt in Africa on the horizon, I wanted to get fully prepared for the adventure — these hunts don't materialize every day. To make the best out of the opportunity, I wanted to spend quality time behind the trigger and build confidence in my capability, so when that big kudu walks out of the bush, things will end successfully.

I recently learned about Handgun Hunters Competition — a match designed specifically for handgun hunters. The match was held in Newcastle, Wyo., and hosted by the owner of Bayside Custom Gunworks, Chris Rhodes. Chris is a handgun hunter, so he knew firsthand proper practice techniques. He designed the course to emulate actual field hunting conditions. There wouldn't be any shooting from a bench or artificial rests of any kind. All shooting was from what you'd expect if hunting in the west, like logs and boulders.

MATCH CONDITIONS

The match consisted of three divisions; revolvers open sights, revolvers with optics and single-shot handguns. The single-shot handguns had to be chambered in anything that was ever offered in the T/C Contender — factory or otherwise and could not weigh more than 7.5 lbs. Shooters could bring small shooting bags, but all rests combined had to weigh less than 3.5 lbs.

In the revolver course, a variety of colored targets in various shapes and sizes were located in and around timber, up on steep hillsides and across valleys. Targets ranged from 20 to 247 yards. The course was well thought out as a novice shooter would experience some success and those with considerable experience would find challenges too. Shooters were allowed only one shot on animal-shaped targets. Squares, triangles and circles accepted two shots max. If that didn't get you out of your comfort zone, a 3-minute time element was added.

Revolvers ran the course of S&W, Ruger, Magnum Research, Freedom

The open sight revolver division was challenging for shooters. Shooting from positions one might encounter in the field provided a variety of rests.



Brad Williams is enjoying the challenge of competition shooting a Magnum Research BFR revolver topped with a Leupold scope.



Arms and a few custom guns. Most of the competitors were shooting .357 or .44 Mags with a few .41s and others. Optics on the revolvers consisted of Burris, Leupold, with several running red dots such as UltraDots. There seemed to be an equal number of variables and straight 4X magnified. Basically you could compete with the same gun you hunt whitetail deer. The gun and caliber weren't the deciding factor — how well you could shoot from field conditions reigned supreme.

In the single-shot stage, different colored targets were employed out to 399 yards. Some of these targets were prairie dog cut-outs, rabbits, raccoons and those small triangle shapes that made me cuss more than once. Single-shot handguns showed up with more T/C Contenders than XP-100s, with a few customs in the mix. You didn't need a \$3,000 gun to be competitive. Many shooters opted for rifle scopes, and I saw several Leupold, Burris, Sightron, as well as a few others mixed in.

CREATIVE RESTING

Over the years, I've observed experienced handgun hunters get creative with building a rest of some sort. Well, this same concept of deciding on how to rest your gun came in play during the match. Those who scored well were the same ones creating a good rest. Keep in mind shooters couldn't move anything in the shooter's box but had to utilize what was available, such as the top of a log or rock. One station only provided a fence rail. If a fire hazard hadn't been in effect, I would have burned the rails to the ground!

A charging bear target had to be shot offhand. A couple of other targets were hidden in a position where the only way to engage them was by shooting offhand. We were placed



All shooting was taken from actual field hunting conditions. Rocks or logs were utilized with small shooting bags.

in groups — five to seven per group. There were a total of 42 shooters participating from all over the country. A shooting match with like-minded folks provided an ideal setting for some great camaraderie. It took the better part of the day to complete all six stages.

The guest of honor was Brad Williams, a physically handicapped shooter from Pennsylvania and all proceeds went directly to the Outdoor Adventures for the Physically Handicapped. The prize table was loaded with goodies and

gear. All participants walked away with something — and many were valuable prizes. Donors were very supportive of this great cause.

Next year Handgun Hunters Competition will add a .22 rimfire division. I'm already looking forward to the challenge. I can't think of a better way to prepare for fall hunting seasons. Right now, I'm anxiously waiting and ready for that big kudu to appear.



For info: BaysideCustomGunworks.com

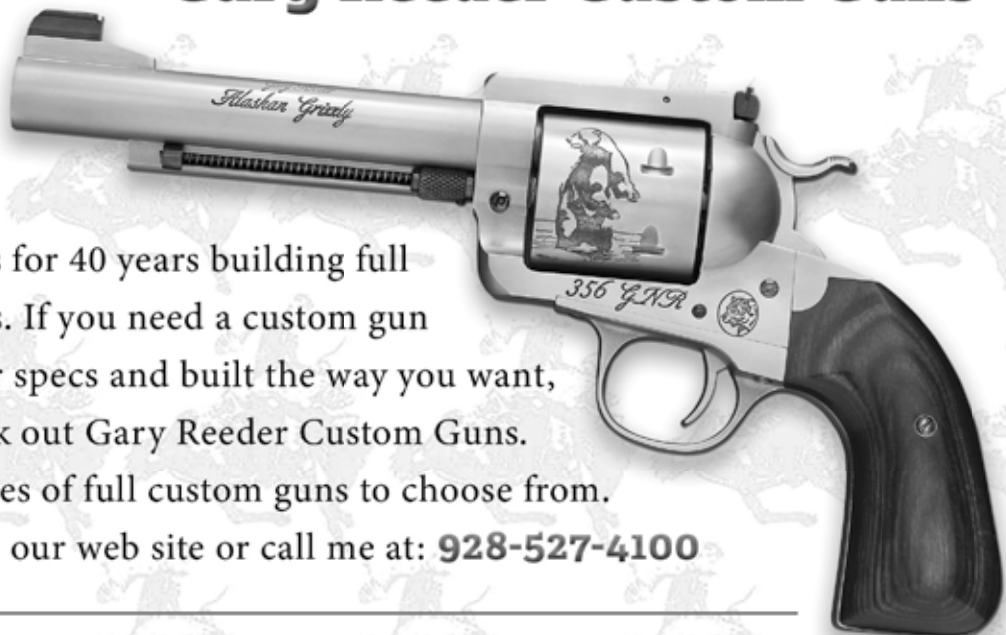
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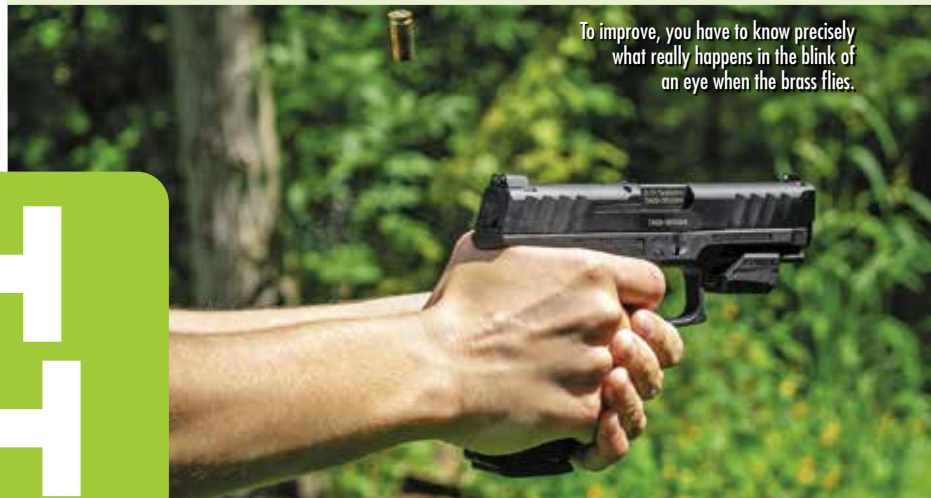
I never realized how hard it is to do something incorrectly when you know better. In the name of education and an effort to refine my grip, I experimented with a variety of different ways to hold the pistol, including some that are just wrong.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In any kind of shooting, you know when something feels right and when it doesn't. Sometimes you must change things in ways that you don't initially favor, but benefit you over time. The question is, how do you prove if something really works?

When I first began my foray into handgunning, like many people, nothing was truly measured. You could measure group size, score a target, report on how it felt, but without isolated variables, determining the main problem is difficult. Having an experienced eye observe and coach greatly facilitates this process, but what about learning on your own?

STYLE	AVERAGE RECOVERY TIME	AVERAGE MUZZLE RISE	AVERAGE RECOIL WIDTH	AVERAGE RECOIL ANGLE
TWO-HANDED	0.42s	22.87°	7.67°	-6.18°
CUP & SAUCER	0.74s	22.41°	6.85°	-13.77°
ONE-HANDED	1.82s	39.42°	17.21°	6.45°



To improve, you have to know precisely what really happens in the blink of an eye when the brass flies.



The rechargeable unit weighs next to nothing and mounts on either rail or magazine base — and even revolvers.

Left: The companion phone app shows you in exquisite detail your recoil control performance — allowing you to experiment and improve.

RECOILMETER

Enter the Mantis X10 Elite. This company has been making waves in the shooting world, providing people with affordable ways to train inside and outside their home with dry and live fire. The small device attaches to any Picatinny rail or magazine base. This USB chargeable sensor communicates with a smart device and app that offers real-time feedback, instruction and a variety of training drills.

The X10 was in its element when Editor Tom assigned me a different challenge: exploring recoil control. To quantify this task, I used the Mantis systems' Recoil-Meter, a drill designed to not only measure the gun's recoil path but my response.

The analysis is given individually by shot and as an average of the number of shots in the session and includes the following:

Muzzle Rise — The peak angular rise of the gun after the shot.

Recovery Time — Time for the gun to return and stabilize to the original point of aim.

Recoil Angle — The angle to the left or right that the gun moved as it recoiled upward.

Recoil Width — The width of the loop formed by the upward and downward movement of the gun.

THE EXPERIMENT

I started with a traditional two-handed grip on my Stoeger STR-9. Most of my shots broke low and left, which Mantis attributed to “tightening fingers.” My average recovery time was 0.42 seconds. The mobile app provided data including a graph displaying the recoil path of my shots. My third shot not only scored the best, but had the smallest muzzle rise and recoil width with a recovery time of 0.38 seconds — in the middle compared to my other shots (0.12 seconds, 0.16 seconds, 1.02 seconds).

My next test was using a “cup and saucer” grip; certainly not recommended, but widely used by novice handgun shooters. A consistent pattern emerged in reviewing the graph and recoil angle. All recoil took place to the left of center whereas it stayed relatively center on target with the two-handed grip.

I’ve watched many a bullseye shooter fire one-handed, so I decided to give it a try myself. Keep in mind I have not been formally schooled in this method, so recoil management was my primary focus. The average recovery time, at 1.70s, far exceeded that of the former two tests. With fewer contact points on the gun, I had less control over recoil, and it showed. The gun moved far more than it did previously. This does not necessarily mean shots are bad, just that it takes longer between them to return to target.

CONCLUSION

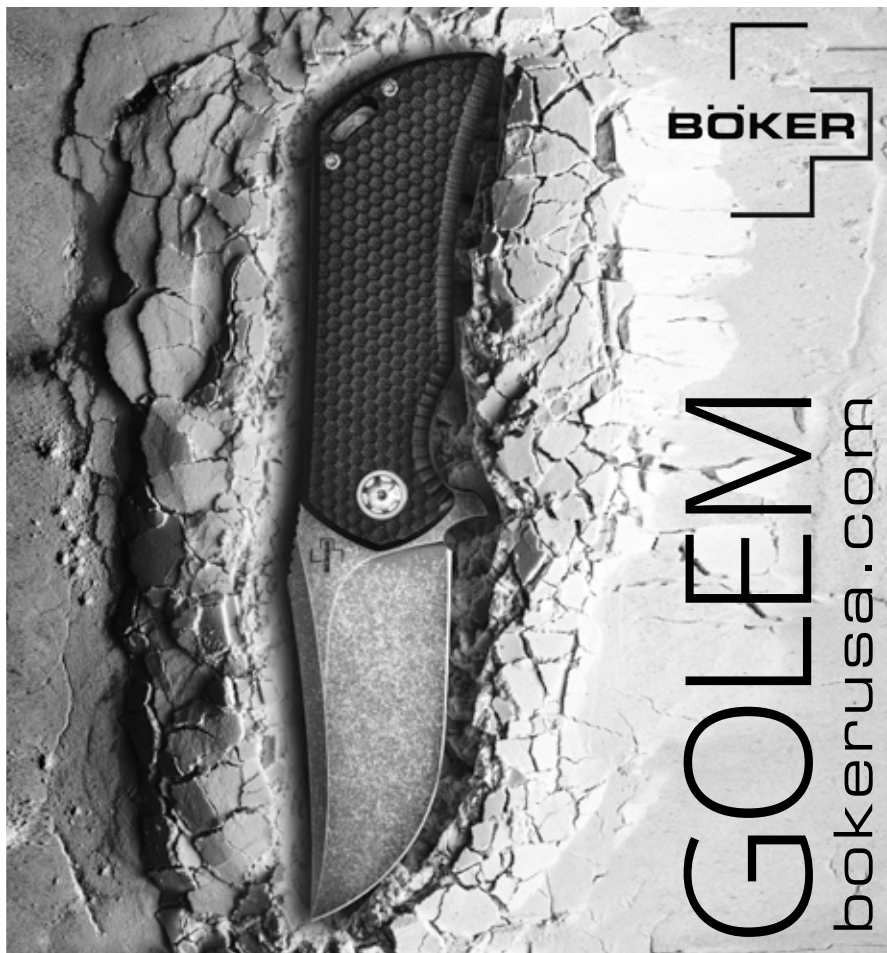
Each grip change came with a noticeably different recoil path. Though the pattern remained similar with the same grip, they were certainly not identical. Much of this is due to my inexperience, but it also proved different grips are more or less effective at managing recoil. Rather than just score, think about what’s happening after the shot, not just during. Technology is changing the way we shoot and train, affording us the ability to collect data never before possible.

Next, I plan to refine my traditional two-handed grip even more. People insist altering pressure between strong and support hands and experimenting with pinky pressure can yield dramatic differences. Stay tuned.



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UNDERSTANDING 9MM SERVICE PISTOL DOMINANCE

It's no secret cops have gone heavily to the 9mm in the last few years, but not everyone understands why.

If you're a gun person who keeps up with the news, you've noticed a swing back to the 9mm pistol from the .40 S&W, the old but reliable .45, the .357 SIG and the .45 GAP. I say "swing back" because this isn't the first time the 9mm was America's predominant police service pistol caliber.

In 1967, the Illinois State Police became the first major agency to adopt an auto as standard issue, the 9mm S&W Model 39. That ripple didn't become a wave until the early 1980s, with Connecticut State Police adopting the 9mm Beretta and New Jersey troopers issuing the HK P7 9mm. As

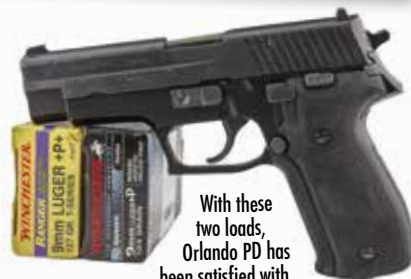
duty autos swept the country through the '80s, trend-setting LAPD and LA County Sheriffs standardized the 9mm, too. That big wave of autos was the 9mm ... at first.

There were enough "stopping failures" with the 9mm to convince many departments to go to the .45 instead. In 1990, S&W and Winchester together introduced the .40 S&W, which was short enough a cartridge to fit 9mm platforms but still carry more rounds than the longer, fatter .45 ACP cartridge would allow. This "compromise factor" made the .40 S&W the most popular standard issue police round for about 20 years.

In the second decade of the 21st Century, FBI put out the word their



The 9mm capacity advantage. With 18-round Mec-Gar magazines, this Langdon Beretta 92 LTT with SRO holds 19 rounds.



With these two loads, Orlando PD has been satisfied with the 9mm SIG P226 for some 30 years.

tests had determined the 9mm was as effective ballistically as anything else and had other advantages, and the 9mm tsunami splashed across the USA.

WHAT'S FINE ABOUT NINE

The 9mm adoption has much logic behind it. Lighter recoil, with attendant ease and speed of training and hopefully, better hit potential. Most cops aren't "gun people" coming into the job. When FBI went back to 9mm from .40 as standard, they were already going with 9mm GLOCKS for those agents who had trouble managing the issue .40 caliber G23.

Cartridge capacity is a plus, because a service-size 9mm GLOCK holds two more rounds than its .40 counterpart, and a .40 caliber Beretta 96 held 11 rounds while the same size and profile 92 held 16 9mm cartridges (19 with the currently available Mec-Gar magazine). Platform availability favors the 9mm, too: There is no .40 caliber analog for a "relatively high capacity" subcompact in the class of the SIG P365, Springfield Hellcat, S&W Shield Plus, or Ruger equivalent in a traditional size backup or off-duty pistol.

WHY SOME WHINE ABOUT NINE

The object of shooting a violent felon with a service pistol is to render him incapable of causing death or great bodily harm, as soon as possible. It follows the round causing the most damage will achieve this goal sooner and more efficiently, saving innocent life and limb. Some police entities remain with .45 ACP because they have been happy with how fast .45 rounds debilitated violent criminal opponents. These range from the northeast, such as the state troopers of New Hampshire and Massachusetts who carry S&W M&P .45s because their institutional histories include bad guys who showed up and running

after solid hits with smaller diameter bullets, to LAPD SWAT with their signature 1911 .45s.

Obviously, shot placement is the single most important element of so-called "stopping power," but more damage per shot is also a consideration. Going back to the 1970s with the guy who took 33 rounds of 9mm (admittedly, poorly expanding misnamed "soft-nose" ammo) and, at the end, a 12-gauge shotgun to stop him, we hear more cases of 9mm stopping failures than .45. The classic case most often quoted of ".45s

failed to stop, too" is the Tim Gramins incident. Some consider it a Black Swan rarity from 13 years ago.

That said, some departments have no complaints at all with 9mm stopping power. Illinois State Police had awesome results with 115-grain, 1,300 fps +P+ 9mm, as did DeKalb County surrounding Atlanta. Orlando, Fla. still fields the SIG P226 9mm they adopted in the late '80s, with 127-grain +P+ Winchester, and I'm told Jacksonville, Fla. and Miami-Dade police have been equally successful with it. Orlando went to +P 124-grain Winchester 9mm a few years ago mainly because the +P+ was beating the hell out of some of the ultra-small off-duty/backup guns they approved, and still get good results.

The 9mm trend is a balance of scales, and perception of needs can tilt those scales either way. For now, the trend has tipped the scale toward the 9mm police service pistol.



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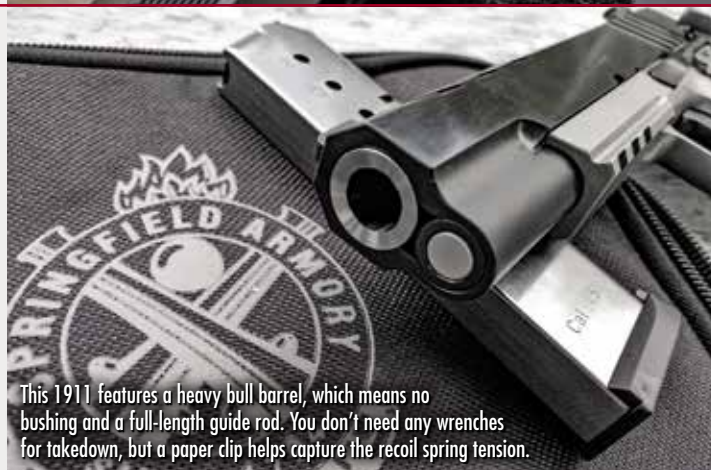
TOM McHALE

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

THIN IS IN



The Tri-Cut slide gives the Emissary its distinctive appearance. The grooves on top help reduce glare.



This 1911 features a heavy bull barrel, which means no bushing and a full-length guide rod. You don't need any wrenches for takedown, but a paper clip helps capture the recoil spring tension.

EMISSARY 1911



Tom did 25-yard accuracy testing using this Ransom Multi-Caliber rest.

Designated agent. According to the word geeks at Merriam-Webster, an emissary is one designated as an agent of another. More specifically, an emissary is one sent on a mission. A secondary definition considers an emissary a secret agent.

Both descriptions work for this spiffy new 1911 from Springfield Armory. The 1911 Emissary not only looks the dapper part of a secret agent on a mission, it's built to perform accordingly.

The first thing you'll notice is the custom-like tri-top slide. Rather than the traditional half-rounded slide top surface, you'll note the slab sides transition to 45-degree bevels, joining into a narrow flat top in the center. That top surface is grooved longitudinally to disperse light and, *ipso facto e. pluribus unum*, reduce glare.

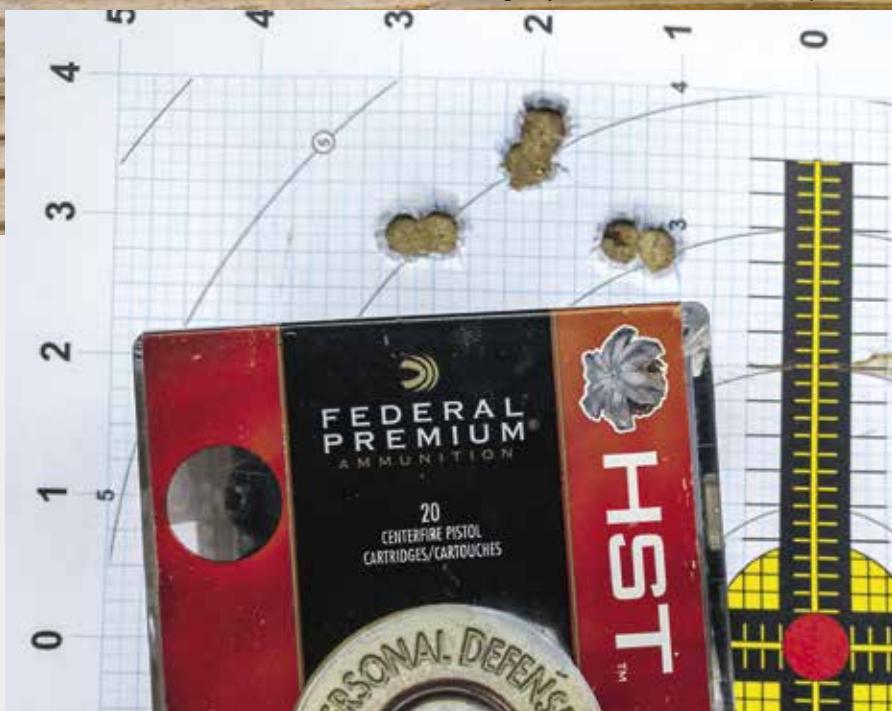
Under The Hood

The Emissary is not just a pretty face on the surface, the custom enhance-

The first thing Tom noticed about the Emissary when hefting it was the thin profile — even slimmer than the Ronin .45.



Below: Six holes in a five-shot group? Yep. Tom was having fun shooting this pistol. Even with the extra shot, it's just 1.78".



ments extend to function too.

There's no bushing as the barrel is a thick and heavy bull style. At least some of the weight lost on the slide from those full-length beveled cuts is regained by the thicker barrel — not a bad thing for a controllable .45 ACP pistol.

This does change the standard take-down procedure a tad from that of a traditional 1911 pistol. With no bushing to twist, you'll need to use the included pin or perhaps a bent paper clip to capture the recoil spring for full disassembly of the barrel, recoil spring and slide. The entire slide assembly comes right off using the same slide lock lever removal procedure as any other 1911.

Thin Is In!

If you're going to carry a full-sized 1911, it might as well be as thin as possible. After the trigger, and proven effectiveness, the inherently skinny nature of the single-stack .45 is right near the top of the benefits list. Especially for IWB carry, where barrel length really doesn't matter as far as concealment goes, the thin profile hides away with ease.

The first thing I noticed, not counting the space-age appearance of

the Emissary, was the thin feel in hand, at least compared to the Springfield Armory 1911 TRP in my carry rotation. Not trusting this admittedly subjective measurement, I broke out my reloading calipers and a good old-fashioned cloth tape measure. I was surprised to learn the overall circumference was only 1/8" less than that of my TRP: 4 3/4" vs. 4 7/8". To figure out what's goin' on here, I graduated to calipers and figured the widest section of the grip is just 1.10"

compared to the TRP's 1.31". Since I was on a measuring binge, I went ahead and checked the grip width of a Springfield Armory Ronin .45 too — 1.145". It's good to know I'm not crazy. The 1/8" circumference difference is smaller than expected as the Emissary grip is a tad longer front to back. Mystery solved.

I spent a hot second on this topic because the slender feel was the first thing I noticed on handling the



The Emissary ships with two 8-round magazines. Add one in the chamber for a carry total of nine big slugs.

pistol, and I liked it. It's super easy to reach the trigger unhindered, leading to better trigger control, and if you do your part, more accurate shooting. There you have it.

Grippin' Blocks

The texture of the grip panels, main-spring housing, and front strap is novel ... and effective. We've seen it all over the years. Smooth panels, checkering on wood, sandpaper and skateboard tape-type finishes, and various other geometric patterns cut, carved, or downright smashed into the metal of the

frame and wood, plastic, or G-10 material of the side panels.

The Emissary defines a new approach. I call them "grippin' blocks." I'm not sure we'll see the term in any Springfield Armory marketing materials, nor is it meant to be derogatory in any way — just descriptive. You also might consider an analogy to "grenade" texturing reminiscent of those WWII-era pineapple toss 'n bombs.

The G10 grip panels feature vertical and horizontal cuts, leaving a series of squares. The cuts are layered so those 0.13" squares decrease in size from the

deepest part of the cut to the surface. Think of those squares rising out of the grip base as beveled if you will. Then there's a cool cosmetic element too. If you look closely, you'll see the top surface of the grippin' blocks featuring a carbon-fiber pattern. They look fabulous in my book.

As for the metal, the same approach applies. The black main-

spring housing features a near-identical "checkering" approach, as does the front of the grip frame. So, all surfaces of the grip, front, back and sides, sport the raised square texturing.

As for effectiveness, it grips. Shockingly well. With a slight bit of pressure, skin of the hands and fingers presses into the grooves between the squares providing a solid grip in wet or dry conditions.

Trigger

New cosmetic tweaks apply in the bang switch area too. The guard sports a squared off shape, presumably in a nod to complementing the grip and strap textures. Holster compatibility may vary depending on how tight a fit your model has in the trigger guard area. Keep in mind the Tri-Cut slide might have something to say about holster choice as well. Just check before ordering any new leather or Kydex.

The trigger itself is completely straight except for small top and bottom ridges to keep your finger pad centered. Like many of the new breed of 1911s, the trigger shoe itself is made from some nylon material.

As for operation, I measure about 3/16" of overall travel from pre-take-up through the break. Reset is crisp and my gauge measured the pull weight at a consistent 4¾ lbs. — perfectly nifty



The "grippin' blocks" on display. Tom loves the texture. And it looks cool. A similar pattern is cut on front and backstraps.



The slide assembly pops off just as with any other 1911.

Note the flat trigger face and squared-off trigger guard.



for a defensive pistol. It's crisp and has no detectable grit or drag. A tiny bit of smooth take-up followed by consistent pressure and a break. I wouldn't change a thing about it.

Does It Shoot?

Yes. It does. Just fine too.

The handling is outstanding, thanks to the overall think profile, but I realize I'm making a subjective call. I shot the Emissary side by side with a 1911 TRP for comparison, and as much as I love the TRP in general, the Emissary was a bit easier to control with precision. Per-

haps you can chalk it up to a subjective preference of the narrower profile.

I did some accuracy testing at 25 yards using an assortment of factory ammo. To remove my foibles from the equation, I used my new favorite general-purpose pistol toy — the Ransom Multi-Caliber rest. It provides a rock-solid adjustable platform without need for heavy sandbags, or as my previous setup leveraged, bags of lead shot. My back is thankful.

The accuracy winner of the day for five-shot groups was the Black Hills 200-grain SWC. From 25 yards, I mea-

sured just 1.6". I also tried three different loads from Federal Premium. The HST averaged 1.9", the 220-grain Syn-tech TSJ 2.6" and the new 230-grain Punch 2.2". Norma's 230-grain Safe-Guard came in at 2.3" while the smokin' fast Black Hills HoneyBadger measured an even 2.0".

The Emissary, with its many custom features, carries an MSRP of \$1,279 — a price point far below what you'd pay for a full custom pistol.



For more info: Springfield-Armory.com

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RUGER LCP MAX: POCKET- SIZED CLOUT

ROY HUNTINGTON

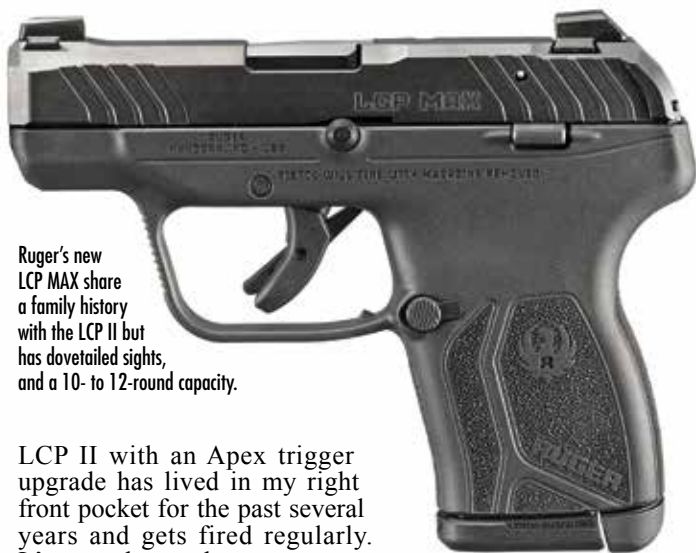
Ruger's LCP MAX builds on the success of the LCP and LCP II models. Note the raised ridges on the slide's rear for easy manipulation.

13-SHOOTER!

Ruger jumped into the .380 pocket pistol fray with the introduction of the LCP at the 2008 SHOT Show. At the time a very small handful of contenders were duking it out for supremacy. In typical Ruger fashion though, they were able to meet a price-point (around \$250), while offering rugged reliability and keeping the supply pipeline filled. The result was a groundswell of happy customers and a huge fire lit under the concept of a pocket .380. The LCP soon became the darling of both casual and serious daily carry customers.

As things are won't do, Ruger upgraded the basic set-up a few times, finally announcing the LCP II in 2016. While both handled 6+1 rounds, the LCP II changed the action format into a sort of "cocked" hammer design, fixing complaints of a difficult to manage trigger on the LCP. I've owned and shot both and can definitely say I like the LCP II better. As a matter of fact, an

Tidy and compact, the LCP MAX fits most of the LCP II holsters. Note the slightly extended 12-round magazine.



Ruger's new LCP MAX share a family history with the LCP II but has dovetailed sights, and a 10- to 12-round capacity.

LCP II with an Apex trigger upgrade has lived in my right front pocket for the past several years and gets fired regularly. It's never let me down.

But what did I hanker for? Better sights, for one, and maybe an extra round or two if possible. I always carry a spare magazine for the LCP II but starting with a couple more rounds would be nice. As Clint Smith always said, having more rounds in the gun just means you don't need to reload as often, right?

They Listened

Just recently, Ruger introduced the LCP MAX, based on the LCP II system. They must have had some secret meetings where they looked into my brain because the new MAX is pretty much what I'd been wishing for. With my exposure to the LCP II, I got over my hesitation with the idea of a .380 for defense and the reliability of the platform. In the bad, old days, .380 pocket guns were infamous for being jamma-matics. Some of that was ammo-related but some was simply because they needed modern design ideas and today's engineering like CNC machining, to get things to work right. Also, modern ammo designs have ramped up the effectiveness of the .380. It's a sort of perfect storm of great ideas, great products and a hot market ready for it all.

The MAX offers 10 rounds in a sort of "mini" wide-body magazine looking dangerously like the old Savage 1907 magazine. Ruger also offers a 12-round mag with just a tiny bit protruding at the bottom of the magwell for your little finger to perch on. Suddenly, I have 13 rounds in the same basic size when I had seven before.

The sights are several levels better than the LCP or LCP II. Made of steel, my test gun has a tritium dot front, serrated and angled rear and both are in dovetails so you can adjust for windage — finally. If you crave after-market sight options, Bodyguard style sights will fit.

Thoughtful Design

At a feathery 10.6 oz. unloaded, it's

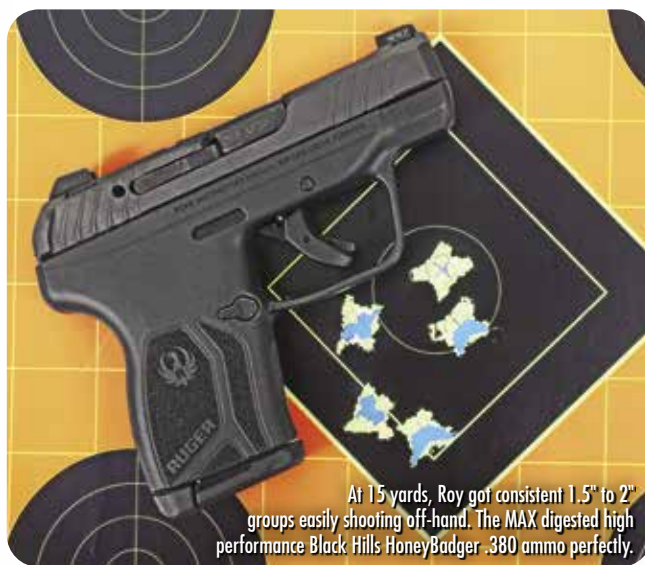
forgotten in a pocket. Mine weighs 14.3 oz. loaded with 11 Black Hills HoneyBadger .380s, which is what I carry in it. The grip frame has good texture on it and is only about 0.2" wider than the LCP II. Frankly, it's just barely bigger enough to be more comfortable — and it fits in all my LCP II holsters. The edges of everything are softened a bit, the sight picture is bold and easy to see, and the slide has "ears" on the rear to help with manipulating it.

Ruger says they've improved barrel cam geometry, delaying unlocking, slowing the slide and ultimately reducing felt recoil. Some people complain about "snappy" recoil in pocket .380s but I've never found that to be the case at all, and the LCP II and MAX are, frankly, fun and easy to shoot. Don't be *askeered*.

They've also improved the magazine feed lips, feed ramp and made the magazine release reversible. The slide locks back on an empty mag, too. As I transitioned from my LCP II to the new MAX during a shooting session, I kept ticking off reasons why the new MAX simply felt better in the hand, was easier to manipulate, easier to shoot and just as easy to carry. Sometimes "new and improved" just means a new color — "Now in Dark Earth!" — but in this case, new and improved really means just that. Well done all around I say.

Shooting Proof

At the time of writing I've got almost 450 rounds through the LCP MAX, bobble-free. It just runs like a champ. At 15 yards shooting off-hand fairly carefully, I got 1.5" to 2" groups with the Black Hills HoneyBadger. This load



At 15 yards, Roy got consistent 1.5" to 2" groups easily shooting off-hand. The MAX digested high performance Black Hills HoneyBadger .380 ammo perfectly.



The mag release is reversible and the trigger has the center lever safety.

has proven to be a solid performer, with great results on gel mirroring 9mm penetration. My chrono shows an average of 1,120 fps (current production ammo) for the 60-grain solid copper fluted bullet out of the MAX's barrel.

I can hit my 80-yard torso gong quite easily with the MAX and I attribute the decent 5.5-lb. trigger pull, good sights and great grip ergonomics and texture for helping. These little guns can shoot, but like a J-Frame, it takes practice, and these aren't good "first guns" for a new shooter. Learn trigger control, gun-handling and skills, then transition to something like the MAX.

Just so you know, the MAX has taken the place of my LCP II for daily pocket carry. And in all honesty, I can't endorse it more strongly than that. It's a lotta' little gun for \$449.

For more info: Ruger.com. Check out Roy's video on YouTube at our FMGPubs channel.

KIMBER'S



R7 MAKO

PLENTY OF TEETH



JEREMY D. CLOUGH PHOTOS: ROB JONES, THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

Kimber's reputation is built on refinement more than invention. They didn't invent the 1911, but their groundbreaking incorporation of custom features on factory pistols set the tone for the entire industry. Nor did they invent the bolt gun, but Kimber's Caprivi express rifle, again incorporating custom design features, is an exceedingly well-made rifle that's hard to equal at the price.

So it is with the R7 Mako, Kimber's recently introduced polymer frame, striker-fired micro 9mm. The alert eye will recognize features from a certain Austrian pistol, such as the blade-type "safety" protruding from the trigger, as well as aftermarket touches like its flat face and the fine, grippy texturing molded into virtually the entire frame surface. Stippling during manufacturing saves the cost of adding it later and

reduces the risk that an excess of enthusiasm or deficit of soldering iron prowess will melt through something important.

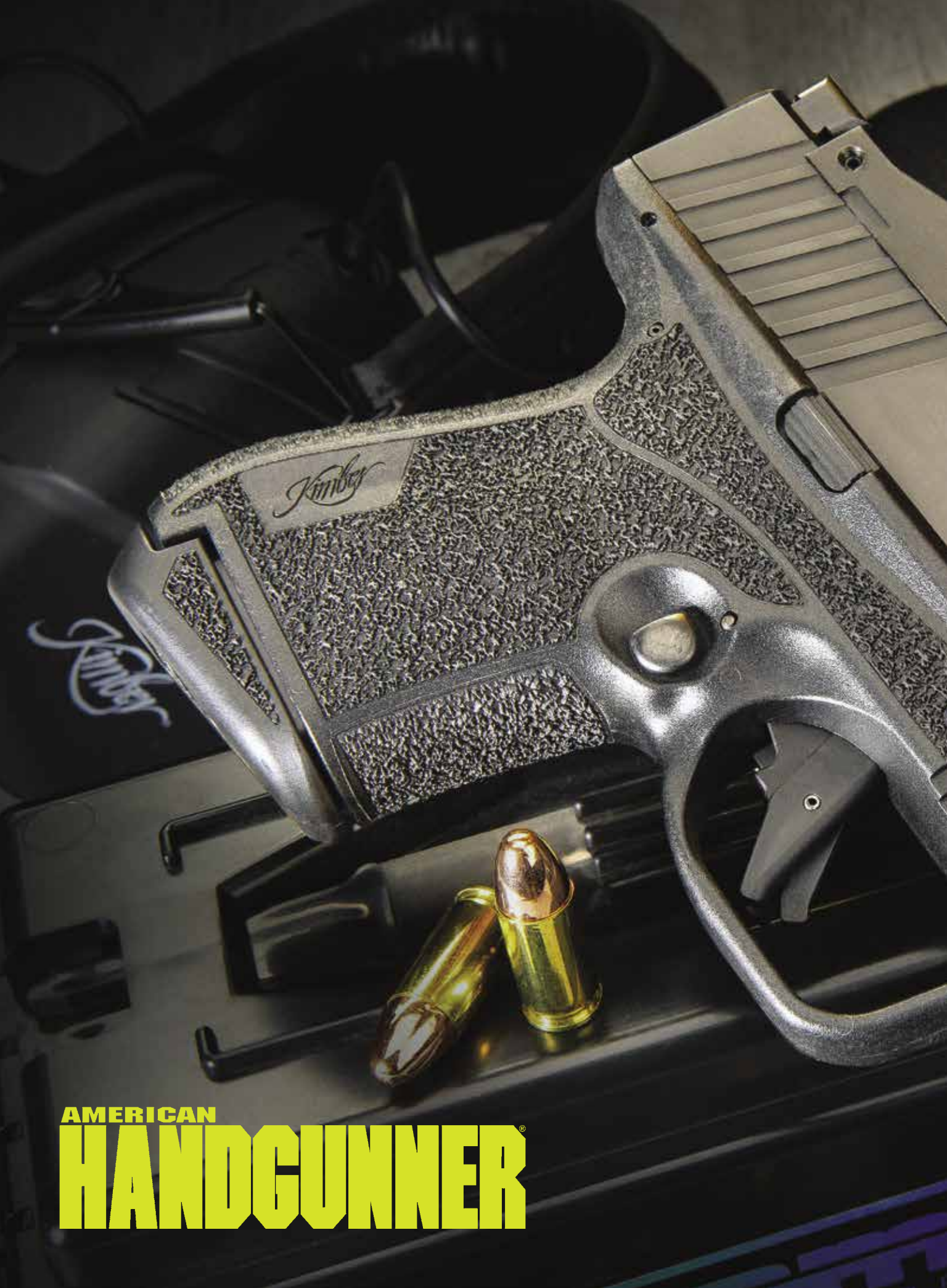
The smooth magazine catch is ambidextrous, as is the slide stop, which is flush with a sleek ridge rising from the sides of the frame to protect it from inadvertent activation. Magazine capacity is either 11 or 13 rounds of 9mm, though the early sample I was sent came with four 10-rounders, two with extended baseplates. Weight unloaded is a svelte 1 lb., 7 oz., and the upward angle on the bottom of the magazine pad gives the matte black gun a rakish look reminiscent of the Devel Socius custom pistols.

Carry Optic Modifications

Carry optics are the current thing, and the Mako was designed for one from the ground up. The slide either comes with the mounting cut (OR) or

with a Crimson Trace CTS-1500 series optic already installed (OI). *Kimber also located the ejection port entirely on the side of the slide, which strengthens it and cuts down on the burned powder, etc., flung back at the front lens of the optic.* Remember, there are reasons some IPSC open guns come with blast shields. It also reduces the chances of an empty case ejecting into the lens and cracking it, something appreciated by all of us who have been centered in the forehead by hot brass before. While it's fair to ask if the smaller port could cause reliability problems, it did not in the 500+ rounds I fired.

Little guns carry easier but are hard to shoot well due to grip size, recoil and the short sight radius. The combination of texture and a mild palm swell kept the Mako locked solidly in my hand, and the high undercut triggerguard keeps the axis of the bore low relative to your hand,



AMERICAN
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R7 MAKO

KIMBER



KIMBER R7 MAKO



which reduces felt recoil. At no time was it uncomfortable to shoot, even though I fired nothing but defensive ammo through it, much of it +P.

Sight Science

On a short gun, the nearness of the front sight to the rear minimizes your eye's ability to pick up on misalignment. If the barrel is twice as long, it's twice as obvious and easier to correct. This is why some target pistols have a front sight sticking out well beyond the muzzle, and why longer barreled pistols are perceived as more accurate. Some are, but the human element is the bigger factor. Here's where the optic makes things interesting.

By replacing two aiming coordinates with a single one, the only alignment required is between dot and target, rather than front, rear and target, which eliminates the sight alignment problem with short pistols. It also means your eye only has to focus on a single plane — the target — instead of three, which is not only faster but means you can see better what the target is doing and how it responds. This is a characteristic shared by the laser and it's particularly valuable for a self-defense pistol.

But that's not the end of the story: mechanical and electrical devices fail. While optics have proven themselves on rifles (some more so than others) *they are not mounted to the rifle's bolt and getting slammed back-and-forth at whatever X-hundred feet per second it is moving.* I'm not throwing shade on the Crimson Trace optic on the Mako: It performed flawlessly, but we need to acknowledge the nature of the physics an optic has to overcome, and this includes having a backup plan if it fails. Wisely, Kimber included high-profile

tritium sights from TRUGLO that co-witness through the optic and use the same rear dovetail as GLOCK sights, which lets the Mako access its large aftermarket selection of sights.

The sighting channel in the base of the optic is a little narrower than the U-shaped notch and is visible in the bottom of the sight picture, something I noticed while handling the gun but not while shooting it. The front sight has a tritium dot surrounded by an orange-ish ring intended to make it higher visibility, while the rear has two dots. Having twice the tritium on the rear sight draws your eye to it, and not to the front sight, which is a universal problem for all three-dot night sights. While some makers address this by using a larger (and therefore brighter) dot up front, the Mako's front dot is somewhat smaller and dimmer than those on the rear, particularly when viewed through the optic. I understand they are a backup system, but if you need them, you will need them fast and a brighter front relative to the rear is quicker to acquire.

Tilting Barrel Tweaks

A subdued mounting rail is molded into the frame dustcover and Kimber is currently working with industry partners to develop accessories that will mount to it. Intriguing from a mechanical viewpoint is the Mako's breech-face is pinned into the slide rather than machined as an integral part. It's been done before, but not often, and on the Mako it may be done to accommodate the rear locking lug on the barrel.

The vast majority of centerfire semi-auto pistols use the Browning-style tilting barrel arrangement where the barrel is locked to the slide at the time of firing, and then pivots downwards at

the rear, unlocking as the slide moves backwards. This adds weight to the slide to keep the breech closed at the moment of firing, then frees the slide to move by itself during the feeding cycle after chamber pressure has dropped to a safe level. John Browning originally used concentric rings located on the barrel forward of the chamber to mate with similar rings inside the slide to lock the two together, as is found on the M1911 and Browning Hi-Power. Most later designs use the chamber area of the barrel as the locking lug, with the front face of the chamber mating with the ejection port. By moving the locking lug to the rear of the chamber instead of the front, Kimber has reduced the angle at which the barrel unlocks in an attempt to reduce felt recoil. Clever and simple, as most good designs are.

It's also worth noticing the steel chassis of the gun — frame rails, etc. — also appears to be pinned into place in the polymer grip frame. While there was no definitive answer from Kimber, it makes me wonder if we'll see other interchangeable grip frame modules, a la SIG's 320. At this point, it's pure speculation on my part, but we'll see.

Trigger

The flat face of the trigger, *de rigueur* these days, made it virtually impossible to get consistent readings from my Lyman trigger gauge, as the movement of the gauge's roller changed the amount of pressure required to break the trigger. I managed to get an average of just over 5 lbs. with one set of readings, but in practice, it feels significantly lighter, which is one of the marks of a good trigger. As with most pivoting triggers, whether you feel any creep depends largely on where you place your finger,



but there is very little and I rarely noticed it while shooting — again, likely a function of finger placement. The minor roughness I felt at first quickly smoothed itself out while shooting, leaving the pull feeling smooth and light. Reset, while less pronounced than my GLOCK 19, is still distinct, with a crisper click than my M&P. If you want a Kimber trigger with zero creep at all, you should look at their 1911s. But for a striker-fired trigger, the Mako's is excellent. My only criticism is it sometimes pinches my finger between the trigger and its slot in the frame, which would benefit from a slight bevel.

Shooting Impressions

The Mako consumed 560 rounds of 9mm defensive loads from Black Hills, including their HoneyBadger in 100- and 125-grain weights, as well as both standard and +P 115-grain jacketed hollowpoints. Reliability was very good, with a single failure to feed (round #52, a +P JHP), and one failure to lock the slide back at round #130. As is my custom when testing, I neither cleaned nor oiled the pistol at any time.

Like any short dual column mag, the stubby little magazines could be challenging to angle correctly during speed reloads. On several occasions, the slide dropped when I slammed the new mag

home, but that may be a function of how firmly I seat magazines. On every occasion, though, it properly loaded the top round as it fell.

Hidden Handling Benefits

This brings us to one of the other great revelations about red dots, — their location on the slide makes traditional slide manipulations difficult. Shortly prior to receiving the Mako, I received some instruction on red dots from Gunsite instructors Lew Gosnell and Aimee Grant and learned the correct way to drop the slide after a reload.

We all know the debate about using the slidestop during a reload or grasping the slide with your support hand to pull it back and drop it. From a combatives perspective, I prefer the gross motor skill of grasping the slide, which is less affected by stress than the fine motor skill of trying to find the slidestop with the tip of your thumb.

Using the optic takes it one step further: Just bring your palm back towards your chest like you were fanning a single action revolver and whack the optic with the heel of your hand. When you hit it, the slide falls. It is lightning fast, and if it's possible to leave enough of a handprint on the optic to blur the sight picture, I didn't manage to.

I've shot various optic-equipped

handguns off-and-on for over 20 years now, but I was agnostic about their use on carry guns. The difference the Crimson Trace makes for the Mako, however, is convincing. The auto-brightness-adjusting 3 MOA dot worked whether it was bright or rainy, and in my limited time I never approached the expected 5,000+ hour battery life.

I'd say the gun was stupid accurate, but there's nothing stupid about hitting your target, so it needs another superlative. Either "superb" or "shocking" would do. Handheld, I put five rounds into less than 3" at 25 yards from an unsupported standing position. This was typical performance for the Mako — it also performed acceptably at 100 yards — but far better than I expect from a compact pistol. The combination of good ergonomics and trigger with excellent mechanical accuracy makes it easy to shoot well, and the red dots' simplification of the sighting process removes the traditional drawback of having a barrel that's a mere 3"-and-change long. The combination makes a formidable package for concealed carry where accuracy, speed and dead reliability are critical.

No wonder they named it



after a shark.
For more info: KimberAmerica.com, BlackHills.com, CrimsonTrace.com

The MC2sc is a nice-looking pistol to boot. The grip texture is effective. Note the magazine ledge — you can rip a mag out if necessary.



MOSSBERG MC2SC



Tom shot the heck out of this little pistol with a variety of ammo, including Hornady Critical Duty not shown here. The Federal HST won the accuracy games.

Even the ultra-concealable flat base magazine yields total capacity of 12. The extended gives you 15.



TOM MCHALE

COMPACT CARRY CAPABILITY

I'm not sure causation is at play here, but one good thing at least coincident with the COVID pandemic is the plethora of tiny pistols with punch. Companies have innovated with small 9mm pistols managing to pack double digits of rounds into pocket-sized packages and consumers are buying them in droves.

The latest introduction is the Mossberg MC2sc. Shipping with two magazines, a flat base ultra-compact configuration yielding 11+1 total capacity and an extended version with 14+1, there's no longer a reason not to carry a 9mm with plenty of capacity. This one even offers a rail cut for a miniature red dot like the Crimson Trace model shown here. If you like, you can stick something up front too as the MC2sc features an accessory rail.

Sights

The MC2sc is ready to go for red dot sight use. And it plays well with the included traditional iron sights.

The pistol makes use of traditional dovetail cuts for both front and rear sights, and in them you'll find standard three (white) dot sights. The rear sight features a "U" notch cut. This is a style really growing on me. I find it significantly faster to acquire a good sight picture compared to traditional square notches. The approach doesn't

The MC2sc is rounded and smoothly contoured in all the right places for a deep concealment pistol.



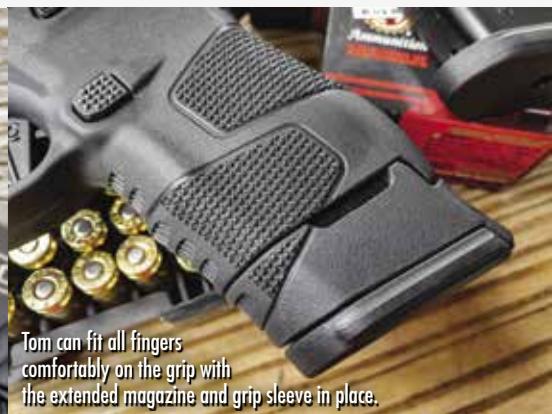
lend itself to 50-yard bullseye shooting, but then again, defensive pistols like this one are designed to prioritize fast hits on target. Don't get me wrong — it's not like "U" notches aren't precise. Their precision possibilities are far above and beyond what most of us mere mortals can shoot.

The optics cutout is forward of the

rear sight dovetail cut, so you can mix and match red dot and iron sight configurations. The MC2sc doesn't use one of those combination rear sight/optics mounts. You'll also notice the heights of the rear sight and optic are carefully coordinated. You can clearly see the iron sights through the bottom of the optic pre-installed on this pistol.



Note the flat-faced trigger and resting pad for your trigger finger "safe area" rest.



Tom can fit all fingers comfortably on the grip with the extended magazine and grip sleeve in place.

The field stripping process is brilliant. Without a trigger press, you remove the entire striker assembly, sans tools, so the gun cannot fire during proper maintenance.



It's visible in the bottom 15% or so of the sight window, so the irons don't obstruct your view of the red dot.

You can order the MC2sc with standard 3-dot white sights or with tritium night sights.

Takedown

Field stripping the Mossberg MC2sc is a nifty process requiring no press of a trigger. In a nutshell, the procedure removes the striker assembly completely, allowing easy cleaning of an area prone to collecting excess oil and goo. That's a good thing, as generally the striker and spring channel should be fairly dry. If exposing all that is part of the regular slide and barrel removal process, you'll have a nice and clean striker by default.

To disassemble the MC2sc, drop the magazine, ensure the chamber is clear, and lock the slide open. Now press directly inward on the slide cover plate while pulling down at the same time. It's a tight fit, but when successful, the plate will slide right out, exposing the striker assembly channel. Now just depress the slide lock lever and allow the slide to ease forward. The striker assembly will come right out the back, channel liner, spring and striker together. The pistol is not in an impossible-to-fire condition, as there is no firing pin present after field stripping. At this point, the slide will come right off the front of the frame and you can pop out the recoil spring and barrel for cleaning.

It's a clever design and what's not to

like about being able to completely avoid a trigger press to field strip the pistol?

How Does It Shoot?

I shot the heck out of the MC2sc out at Gunsite in the heat of summer. Hot? Yep. Let's sum it up like this. All present agreed the thermometer topping out at 108 was a cool day — on the hot ones I could stick a raw egg in my pocket in the morning and have a hard-boiled egg for lunch.

One of the benefits of experiencing a new gun out at the Gunsite Academy is you really get to run it through its paces. We did plenty of holster work, standard range plinking and slow fire, speed drills, and lots of shooting and moving. The two magazines got a veritable workout and spent much quality time tumbling in the dry desert sand. I didn't have any mechanical trouble with the pistol or the steel magazines, even dirty. I did learn something new about polymer. It will get a bit sticky in ultra-low humidity conditions, so now and then I'd have to help a mag out the bottom — apparently the inside of the magazine well got a bit hot and dry. To be clear, this was a (lack of) humidity issue. When I got the same pistol and same magazines back home here on the east coast, everything worked normally. Just something to be aware of should you find yourself in exceptionally arid conditions.

With all that shooting, I had the opportunity to properly evaluate the carry convenience vs. shooting performance tradeoff between using the 11- and 14-round magazines. The larger one features a grip extension sleeve, effectively lengthening the grip.

My hands are size large, probably average-ish for a man. Using the more compact flush magazine, I get a solid two fingers (middle and ring) on the grip while my pinky remains mostly below the grip base. Using the larger magazine and sleeve, I get a very comfortable "all fingers" grip on this pistol. I noticed a big difference in the joy of shooting using the larger magazine, so for me, that'll be my practice and plinking configuration, while the flat base will be

peachy for ultra-concealment. Don't get me wrong, I had no trouble controlling the MC2sc with the smaller mag installed, it's just more fun to shoot with a bit more grip surface area.

The trigger is flat with a little nub at the base of the shoe to help prevent finger slippage to the guard area. I measured pull weight a hair over 6 lbs. It's a perfectly serviceable polymer, striker-fired trigger. I did find my large trigger finger developed a bit of a hot spot after a couple hundred rounds, but admittedly, this isn't going to be a high-round count per outing pistol under normal usage.

Ammo And Accuracy

With all the shooting in different conditions, I never had a failure of any kind for ejection or firing. During the Gunsite shoot-a-thon, I fired hundreds of rounds of Hornady Critical Duty 135-grain ammo. When back at home, I added four other brands to the mix: Federal Syntech Action Pistol 150-grain, Norma MHP 108-grain, Black Hills HoneyBadger 100-grain and Federal HST 124-grain.

Given the compact, pocket nature of this pistol, I did some accuracy testing using a Ransom Multi-Caliber Rest from 15 yards. Shooting five-shot

The optics cut sits low and may not require a mounting plate as with this Crimson Trace. This means the existing sights co-witness perfectly at the bottom of the glass.



groups, I measured 2.2" for the Federal Action pistol, 2.48" for the Norma MHP, 1.82" for Black Hills HoneyBadger and 1.33" for the Federal HST.

The MC2sc is a pocket pistol with punch. Comfortably at home in a cargo or coat pocket, it's small enough to fit in many standard pants pockets with a proper pocket holster. Or carry it IWB and take advantage of its 14+1 capacity

using the extended magazine and grip sleeve. MSRP for the standard white-dot sight model is \$555 and \$653 for a tritium night sights version. At this time, Mossberg doesn't offer a red-dot included packaging, so you're free to select the miniature red dot of your choice.



For more info: Mossberg.com



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SHADOW SYSTEMS

POLYMER PERFECTION

WILL DABBS, MD



Lightening windows in the slide and gripping grooves all around define the Elite model.

Shadow Systems is a different sort of handgun manufacturer. Their superlative line of defensive pistols comes standard with all the bells and whistles you'd pay extra for elsewhere. Shadow Systems handguns are the tools for the gun nerd of distinction. However, given their exceptionally rarefied feature set they're not ludicrously expensive.

Shadow Systems pistols are available with either compact or full-sized frames along with standard or longslide uppers. Additionally, each gun can be had in either the Combat or Elite con-

The MR920 is their mid-sized concealed carry piece; it rides comfortably in GLOCK 19 holsters.



figuration. Think of the Combat model as extraordinary and the Elite version all the more so.

Selecting a primary defensive handgun is a really big deal. Lives could turn on the reliability and effectiveness of this curious little machine. It therefore behooves us to approach such stuff soberly.

Enter The Shadow

Is it just me or has the entire freaking planet lost its collective mind? [Editor: *It's not just you, doc ...*] Politicians and the media tell us cops are unnecessary. They also claim Old Glory, the internationally recognized symbol of freedom that liberated the world during World War II, is now actually emblematic of oppression and hate. Mix in Antifa and



The Shadow Systems line of combat handguns is for the gun nerd of distinction. These pistols just ooze quality without breaking the bank.

a global pandemic and you have the chemical formula for chaos. This chaos pushes the American firearms industry to some unprecedented places.

There are around 442 million guns in America. Let's put this number in perspective. If those 442 million guns were all M1911 pistols stacked muzzle to butt, they would circle the earth twice and still have another 9,462 miles' worth of guns left over.

We corn-fed Americans are indeed exceptionally well-armed.

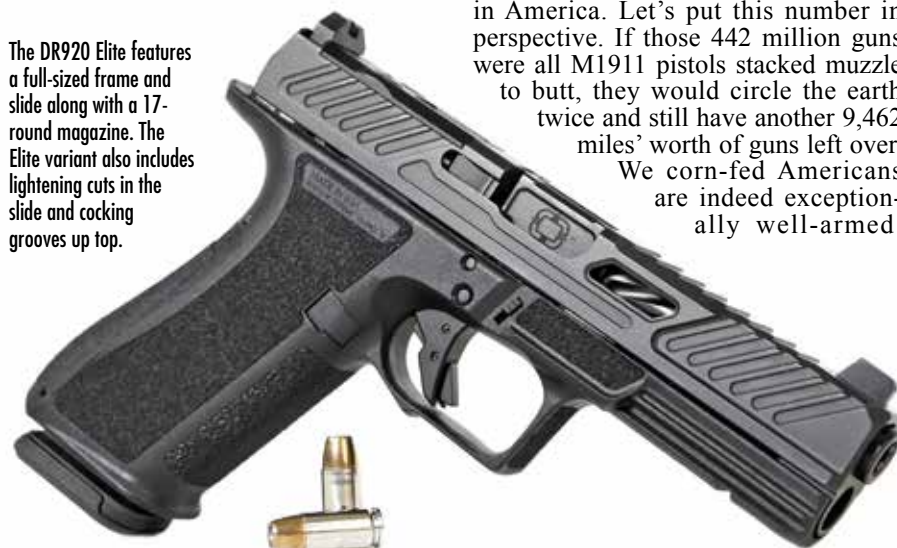
When it comes to selecting a defensive pistol, we have ample options.

With that many options on the table, the particulars of your ideal defensive handgun can seem overwhelming. The sacred tome you seem currently to be clutching stands in evidence to the many-splendored details shaping the selection of a proper defensive pistol.

Defensive handguns stratify into several layers. I own a Hi-Point 9mm pistol. That thing is about as graceful as a pubescent rhinoceros and comparably bulky. However, it shoots quite straight, has a surprisingly nice trigger, and, so long as it is not abused, remains as reliable as the tides. For the young man with two jobs struggling to cover rent, baby formula and diapers, the Hi-Point is a thoroughly serviceable heater. However, many of us covet something more.

A Hi-Point can be had for a c-note or so used from a pawn shop. The SCCY DVG-1 or Canik TP-9 are simply magnificent guns for the money. They will

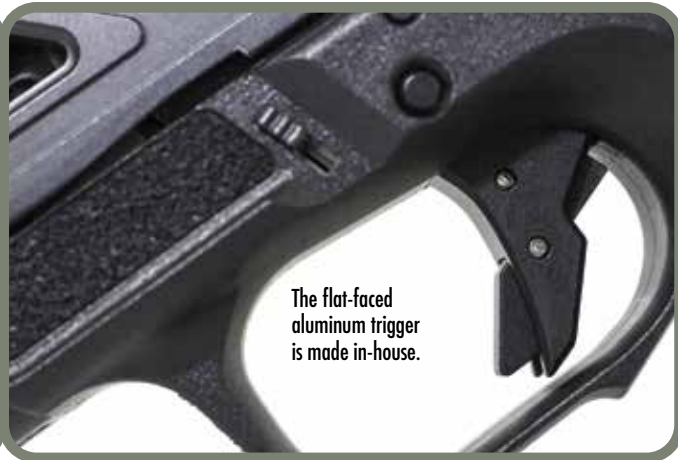
The DR920 Elite features a full-sized frame and slide along with a 17-round magazine. The Elite variant also includes lightening cuts in the slide and cocking grooves up top.



A modest curtain underneath the slide stop helps prevent inadvertent activation.



The flat-faced aluminum trigger is made in-house.

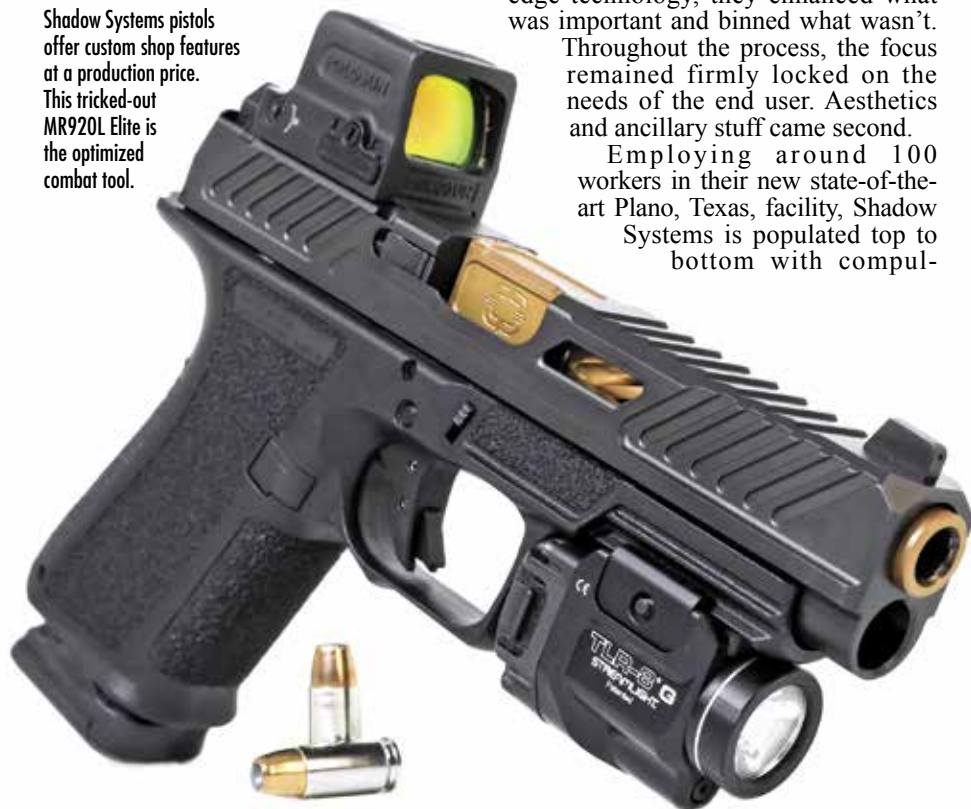


set you back maybe \$300 to \$400 retail.

A proper name-brand plastic pistol from Springfield Armory, GLOCK, SIG, or Smith and Wesson will typically run \$550 to \$600 retail. These are fantastic, proven designs with ample combat cred. However, they are mashed out cookie cutter fashion on assembly lines some place. At the top end, a custom tuned 1911 pistol can cost four grand or more.

Shadow Systems pistols found a sweet spot. Custom features come standard along with literally unrivalled design and build quality. MSRP is between \$799 and \$999. Everything about these guns is perfect, from the top-tier materials science to the peerless ergonomics and capacity for customization. Additionally, while the purchase price is hardly front pocket

Shadow Systems pistols offer custom shop features at a production price. This tricked-out MR920L Elite is the optimized combat tool.



change, it is within reach of the typical American shooter with a decent job.

Origin Story

The chief bottle washer at Shadow Systems is a gentleman named Trevor Roe. At age 15 Trevor was the youngest Master Class shooter in the USPSA. He has trained extensively with Taran Butler (the guy who transformed Keanu Reeves into John Wick), attended West Point, and knocked out two combat tours downrange as an Infantry officer. For more than four years, he has helmed Shadow Systems.

Shadow Systems reimaged what it meant to build a handgun. They design and produce their firearms using tools and manufacturing philosophy spawned from the Information Age. Applying best practices and cutting-edge technology, they enhanced what was important and binned what wasn't.

Throughout the process, the focus remained firmly locked on the needs of the end user. Aesthetics and ancillary stuff came second.

Employing around 100 workers in their new state-of-the-art Plano, Texas, facility, Shadow Systems is populated top to bottom with compul-

sive shooters. From the designers to the folks who stuff guns into boxes, these are former cops, combat veterans and competitive trigger pullers. The attention to detail is obvious the moment you heft one of their extraordinary heaters.

Details

It is the grip that drives concealability of a concealed carry handgun, not the slide. As such, both mid-size and full-size guns are available with extended slides and barrels. The Combat versions feature serrations on the side of the slide both front and rear. The Elite sort adds serrations up top as well as lightening cuts for faster lock times.

All Shadow Systems pistols feature their unique patent-pending optics cut on the slide. Unlike most optics-ready pistols that require you to purchase a separate expensive adaptor plate to mount up a micro red dot sight, the Shadow Systems guys created what amounts to a universal mount built into the slide. This system includes a variety of threaded screw holes to accommodate a variety of sight geometries along with the niftiest polymer spacers that keep everything snug. They designed the entrails of the firing pin system such that *the optic mounting screws can extend the entire depth of the slide* for maximum strength. The Shadow Systems optics mount is both easy-to-use and effective.

The frames should hang in the Louvre. Beautifully stippled with the perfect beavertail, these guns include splendid little parking pads for your trigger finger as well as a raised curtain underneath the slide release. This generous bilateral parking spot lets you really lock the support thumb in place to mitigate muzzle flip and recoil as well. There's also a removable magwell funnel.

Their interchangeable backstraps actually change the geometry between flesh and gun. These backstraps are easily exchanged and come in high, neutral, and low versions. *By swapping out these grip adaptors, you can push*

the muzzle up or down based upon your unique anatomy. Cool-guy stuff like an aluminum flat-faced trigger with a 4- to 4.5-lb. break comes standard.

The front sight sports a tritium insert. The rear is serrated black steel. In Trevor's words, "You just push the green light to the bad thing and squeeze."

Multi-Role pistols occupy the GLOCK 19 footprint and sport 15-round magazines. Duty-Role guns carry 17+1 and mimic the GLOCK 17 geometry. Edges are chamfered for easy holstering and the guns use standard GLOCK holsters and magazines.

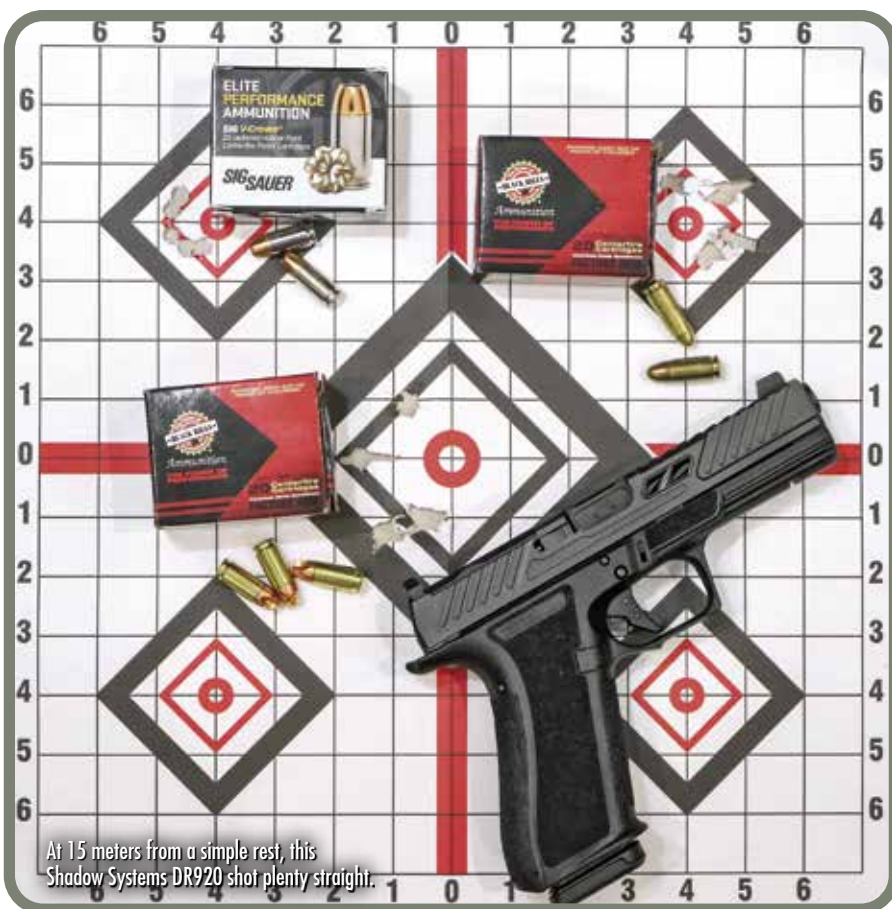
Denouement

Shadow Systems offers custom guns at production prices. They feast on feedback and will stop the world day or night to fix something that's wrong. It is simply that not much goes wrong with these spectacular weapons.

Shadow Systems iron is for the sorts of folks who want a custom tricked-out combat tool but don't want to get just stupid about it. These guys build guns like your life depends upon them. In fact, it really just might.



For more info: ShadowSystemsCorp.com



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A HANDHELD CLAYMORE?

WILL DABBS, MD



VINTAGE ORDNANCE FP-45 LIBERATOR

The FP-45 Liberator was an inspired, unconventional idea. However, theater commanders weren't keen on having hundreds of thousands of uncontrollable little guns wandering around their post-war zones of occupation. Relatively few were issued.



The FP-45 Liberator was a curious little spy pistol mass-produced during WWII for use by partisan forces. The gun cost \$2.10 back in 1942. That's about \$35 today.

Right: Partisans operating in occupied areas caused no end of heartache for oppressive Axis forces during WWII. The FP-45 Liberator pistol was designed to give these unconventional warriors the tools they needed to take the fight to the enemy.



Datu Del Rosario nursed his cigarette and burned with hate. The accused Japanese occupation forces had seized Manila in April 1942. Now, nearly two years later, Del Rosario and his people chafed underneath the Japanese boot.

The man had ample motivation. His sister had been dragged off to join the comfort women, attractive girls press-ganged into sex slavery for the



The FP-45 is actually surprisingly large. Here it is shown alongside a vintage Colt M1911A1.

occupying Japanese troops. Datu had resigned himself never to see her again. Tonight, however, she would be avenged.

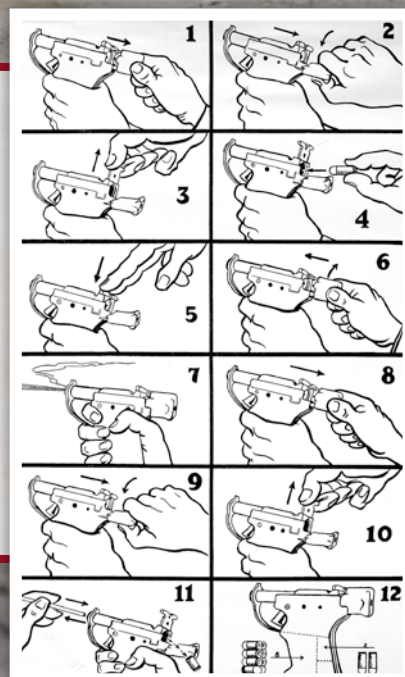
The Japanese officer kept a girlfriend in this building. His regular dalliances had become predictable. For that, and a great many other things, this evening he would die.

As the Japanese Captain exited the structure, Datu snubbed out his cigarette. The Japanese officer wore a meticulously pressed khaki uniform and tall brown leather riding boots polished to a high sheen. He carried his holstered pistol on the right and his regulation sword on the left. His haughty air telegraphed to all

comers he feared nothing. The Filipinos were little more than cattle to him.

The officer stepped into the alleyway across the street and turned to the wall. Without looking over his shoulder, the man fumbled with his fly and began urinating on the side of the building. His heart in his throat, Datu knew it was time.

Del Rosario retrieved the blocky handgun from his pocket as he staggered into the street. With one practiced motion, he made as though he stumbled and retracted the striker with his left hand. He then pressed the primed gun behind his leg and wobbled toward the alleyway.



Loading the little gun is straightforward enough.

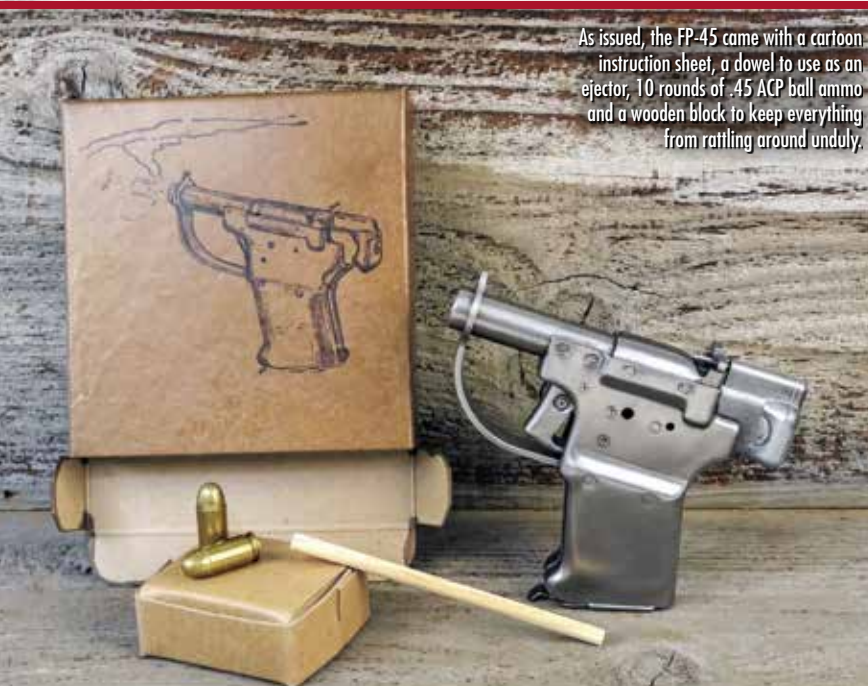


Right: The cartoon instruction sheet explains in simplistic terms how to use and maintain the FP-45.



The striker must be manually retracted for each shot. There is no real mechanical safety and the action is fairly stupid-proof.

As issued, the FP-45 came with a cartoon instruction sheet, a dowel to use as an ejector, 10 rounds of .45 ACP ball ammo and a wooden block to keep everything from rattling around unduly.



This is a typical 4-meter group. Recoil is attention-getting.



The cartoon sheet that came with the weapon had showed him how to use it. Though he'd never fired the weapon before, he had practiced with it back in the privacy of his home for hours. The resistance fighter who had given it to him was nameless. At this time, in this place, names and relationships were nothing but a liability.

As he approached the alleyway, the Japanese officer was straightening himself up. He looked over his shoulder and sneered at the apparently drunken Filipino. The look in his eyes was carefully crafted to control other human beings. Datu duly lowered his gaze and mumbled an apology. As the soldier returned his attention to his fly, Datu pressed the stubby little gun between the man's shoulder blades and squeezed the trigger.

The thunderous report was muffled by the man's flesh, but it still split the evening air. The recoil was brutal, but Datu was so intoxicated on adrenaline he hadn't noticed. The muzzle blast left the back of the man's uniform smoldering vigorously. The front was torn open to expose a hemorrhaging wound the size of a walnut.

The heavy 230-grain ball bullet cut a half-inch hole through the Japanese officer's right ventricle. His blood pressure dropped to zero, and the man died where he fell. There was a look of utter shock on his face. Datu quickly retrieved the dead man's Nambu pistol and spare magazine before stealing a furtive glance around. Half a dozen surprised Filipino faces looked back from various points in the neighborhood. To an individual they

nodded grimly and returned to their business. The reprisals would be inhuman, but this was a small victory.

Datu abandoned the sword and ran down the road, disappearing into the darkness. The long blade would be impossible to hide. Now that he had a proper weapon, he would give the stubby little single-shot pistol to somebody else; there were still three big fat .45ACP rounds remaining. That could be three more dead Japanese.

The Gun

The FP-45 Liberator was one of the more bizarre weapons to come out of World War II. Intended to be air dropped to resistance forces behind Axis lines in both theaters of war, the FP-45 was mass-produced by the Guide Lamp division of General Motors, the same company that produced M3 sub-machine guns. Each FP-45 cost the government \$2.10.

Three hundred Americans worked during a single 11-week period in the summer of 1942 to produce around one million of these little guns. Alas, theater commanders weren't convinced, so only a few thousand actually saw service. The rest were destroyed.

Each weapon came in a cardboard box with a cartoon instruction sheet, a dowel to use as a manual ejector, and 10 rounds of .45 ACP ball ammo. Five of those rounds could be stored in the butt of the gun. The FP-45 sported a 4" smoothbore barrel.

There was a great deal of secrecy surrounding the production of this weird little weapon. The FP-45 designation was short for "Flare Projector," an intentionally spurious nomenclature. Similarly, the barrel was called the "tube," while the trigger was the

Five rounds of .45 ACP ammo rode in the grip.



“yoke.” The firing pin was the “control rod,” and the pressed steel trigger guard was the “spanner.” The gun had only 23 parts, most all of which were cheaply pressed or cast for ease of manufacture.

How Does She Run?

Holy crap. Imagine touching off a Claymore mine in the palm of your hand. *The FP-45 isn't a weapon. It is the tool you use to obtain a weapon.* Nothing about the gun is comfortable.

The FP-45 is surprisingly large, and it weighs about a pound. To load it, you retract the cocking tab and turn it sideways. Slide the breech cover up and insert a round before sliding the breech cover back down. Rotate the charging tab back in line with the barrel, point the gun at something you dislike, and squeeze. There are technically sights, but I cannot fathom why. A smoothbore .45ACP palm pistol is not going to be accurate beyond 10 meters or so.

Recoil is ghastly. I shot 10 rounds, and I was done. I'm sorry, but I don't love you guys enough for any more than that. However, at four meters, the FP-45 would still easily kill you.

Where Do I Get One?

A perusal of the online sites shows original FP-45 pistols selling for between \$1,000 and \$6,000 depending upon condition and the support gear. My gun is a newly made reproduction from Vintage Ordnance. Vintage Ordnance is run by *Handgunner's* own Frank Jardim. I didn't know that before I rang up VOCO to buy one of their pistols.

Frank's FP-45 sports a rifled barrel, very discreetly engraved identifying information and a serial number. It is otherwise a part-for-part perfect reproduction of the originals. The gun is completely safe to fire. However, trust me, you won't want to do a whole lot of that. The basic pistol sells for \$515.

Frank tells me he originally set out to build semiauto Grease Guns. Obama's gun control initiatives chilled that project. He therefore made a limited run of 1,000 FP-45s and *sells them as demand arises and his hands can tolerate the test firing.*

VOCO's FP-45 Liberator is a perfect rendition of the quirky WWII-era OSS spy pistol. You won't be whiling away a pleasant afternoon at the range with this thing, but it does add some serious cool to even the most seasoned gun collection. The VOCO FP-45 is the WWII spy gun  for the common man.

For more info: VintageOrdnance.com

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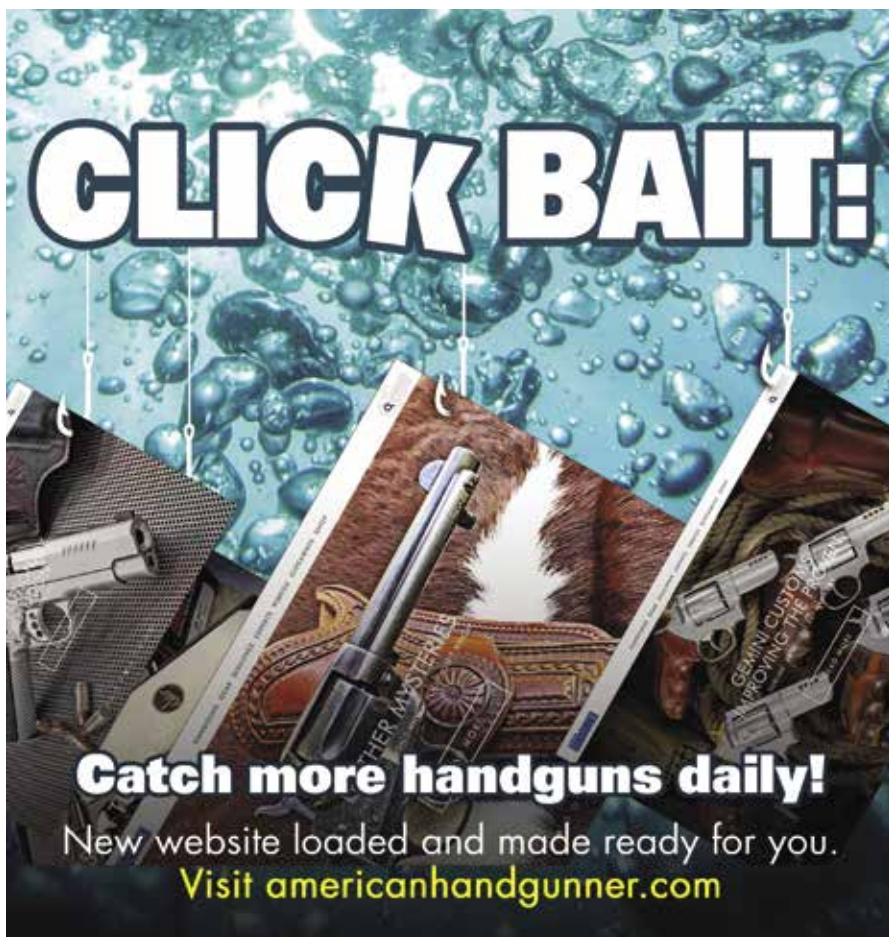
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SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

What's not to love about the flat shooting joy of plinking with a nice rimfire pistol?

Below: The SR22 is a hammer-fired, double-action/single-action pistol and features a magazine disconnect safety.

RUGER'S VERSATILE

SR22

Comfy. Not quite the word I ever expected to use to describe a pistol, but it's true. One might argue for comfortable, and I'd likely concede, but I appreciate the former's connotation. The bottom line? Comfy was my first impression of the Ruger SR22. Holding it in one hand felt right. It felt easy.

The ergonomic black polymer grip didn't leave my hands marked with indentations and the black anodized aluminum slide was just heavy enough for gravity to pull the muzzle towards the ground. Though it arrived with interchangeable rubberized grips for varied palm swell options, I never felt a need to change it. To quote Goldilocks, it felt "just right."

A three-dot sight system with a fixed front sight and windage-and-elevation adjustable rear allows for similar customization. *The rear blade itself is reversible — allowing shooters to choose*

between two white dots and solid black.

Safety First ...

After verifying the gun was unloaded, I dared myself to try the trigger. Though there are various schools of thought on it, I've always tried to avoid dry-firing rimfires. With barely any force at all, the trigger shoe smoothly glided to the rear of the trigger guard. Surprised and concerned, I kept trying. I soon realized I had left the gun on safe. Oops. I moved the ambidextrous safety with my thumb and attempted to try again. This time the trigger was "stuck," the shoe seemingly locked back to the rear of the trigger guard. I almost panicked. My first thought was I never should have dry-fired the gun, I had broken it without even having shot it. In reality, I discovered the magazine safety.

While some may argue magazine

safeties are good, allowing someone to render a firearm unusable or keep a handgun stored with one in the chamber and no chance of it going off without a magazine inserted, I tend to disagree. But that's just my preference. If you're in the "love magazine safeties" camp, then you'll be happy to learn the SR22 has one.

Trial By Competition

I used the Ruger SR22 at my very first IDPA match. Due to ammunition shortages, the course was somewhat modified. Participants could shoot .22LR in lieu of centerfire. Since I was new, I started from low-ready rather



The sights are standard 3-dot, but if you prefer blacked out rear sights, the blade is reversible.

than drawing from cover from a holster. The match consisted of several stages, each with a self-defense themed scenario and instructions on how many rounds to fire and at what targets. Speed and accuracy both play roles in IDPA shooting.

Trial by fire IDPA with a .22 was incredibly difficult. I couldn't see holes in the cardboard targets like I could with centerfire rounds. Some stages required a certain number of hits per target — I had to guess, and trust, where my hits were. Although I have to admit, the ease of control and lack of recoil was a nice benefit ...

Handling

This wasn't the first time I fired the pistol, shooting it first in my backyard and at an indoor range. It was still easy to hold, nothing changed that, but the trigger tripped me up a bit. The single-action trigger pull is predictable and relatively smooth and crisp. As a hammer-fired pistol, the first shot on the SR22 double action with a longer and heavier pull — by design — unless you manually cock the hammer. I freely admit I'm spoiled rotten by my regular diet of match rifle triggers so I'm still getting accustomed to double-action pistol triggers. I found myself applying mere fractions of the pressure I needed. To make it through, I began pulling through the trigger and jumping it — both negative habits I didn't wish to foster. Gotta work on that!

The rounded external hammer is small and low-profile, it stays out of the way, unlikely to snag on clothing and other objects though not large and easy to reach by feel.

Rimfire Ammo

Though not my first choice for self-defense, the release of viable .22LR self-defense ammunition like Federal's Punch makes it an option. These new rounds ran flawlessly in the gun — no jams or misfires. The nice thing about Punch ammo for those who choose a .22 for defensive use is it's designed to penetrate reliably. No fancy hollow-point features designed for thin-skinned, small varmints.

Federal wasn't the only ammunition I fired through the gun. I was very happy with SK's Pistol Match rimfire ammunition too as it offered flawless function and predictable accuracy.

The Ruger SR22 has many uses. Holster manufacturers make dozens of options for it. It serves as a great trainer gun for larger centerfires, .22 LR self-defense option, or low-recoil plinking gun. An underside Picatinny rail has multiple cross slots for accessory mounting. MantisX, a company focused on improving shooter abilities, even offers a special magazine adapter



Note the ambidextrous safety and magazine release. The SR22 also offers adjustable grip inserts.



Serena checking out the SR22 at an indoor IDPA match. Seeing those 0.22" hits on target was a bit tough, but the lack of recoil made up for it.



The Ruger SR22 is a nice-looking pistol, isn't it? It feels equally good in the hand.

for this arm. Grip and sight options allow shooters to make the gun their own and for it to fit more than one person. Easy and fun to shoot, this is an item I'd take out to the range for some light plinking and keep by my bedside as a backup firearm.

The MSRP is \$529, and the package includes two 10-round magazines, two finger grip extension floorplates, and the palmswell grip panels if you want to customize the hand fit.

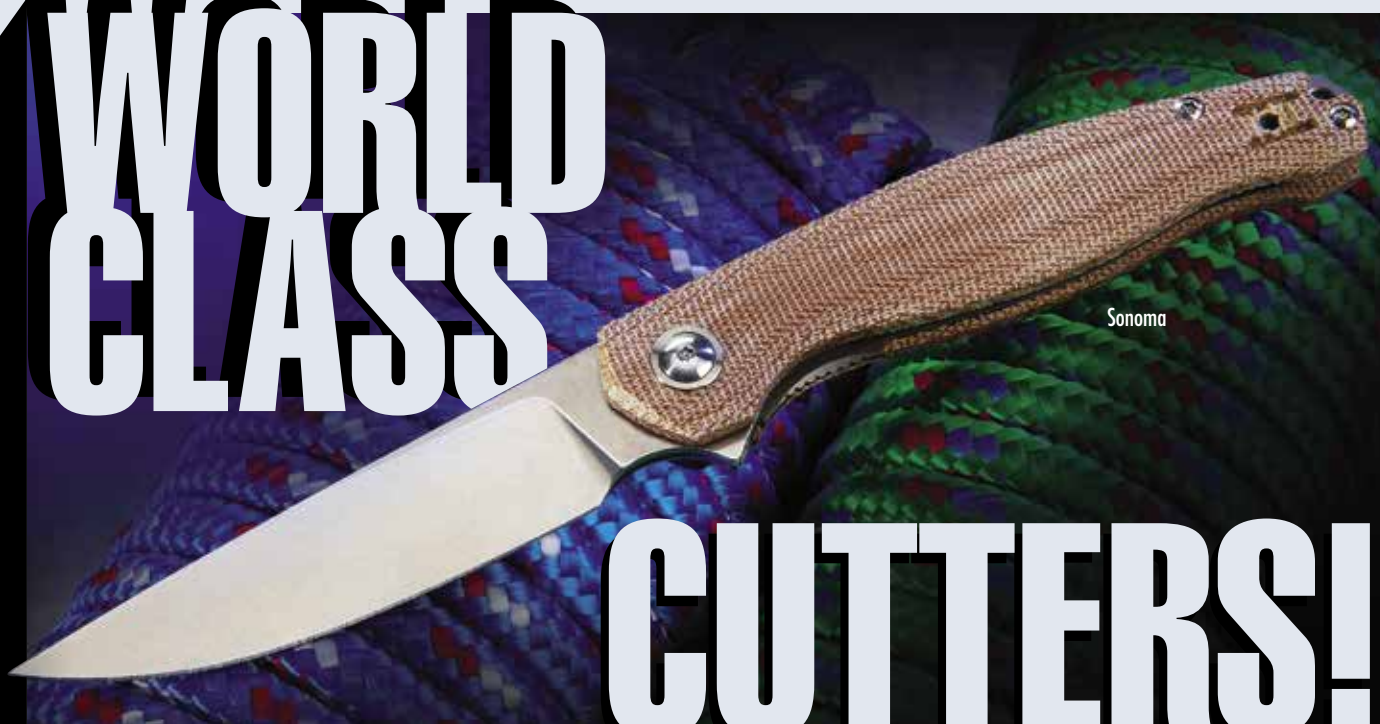


For more info: Ruger.com

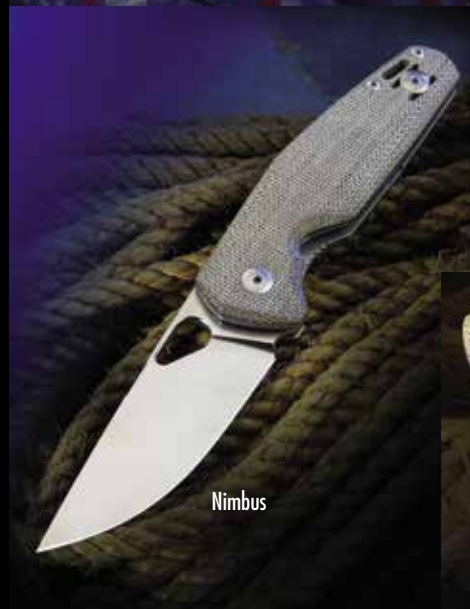
WORLD CLASS

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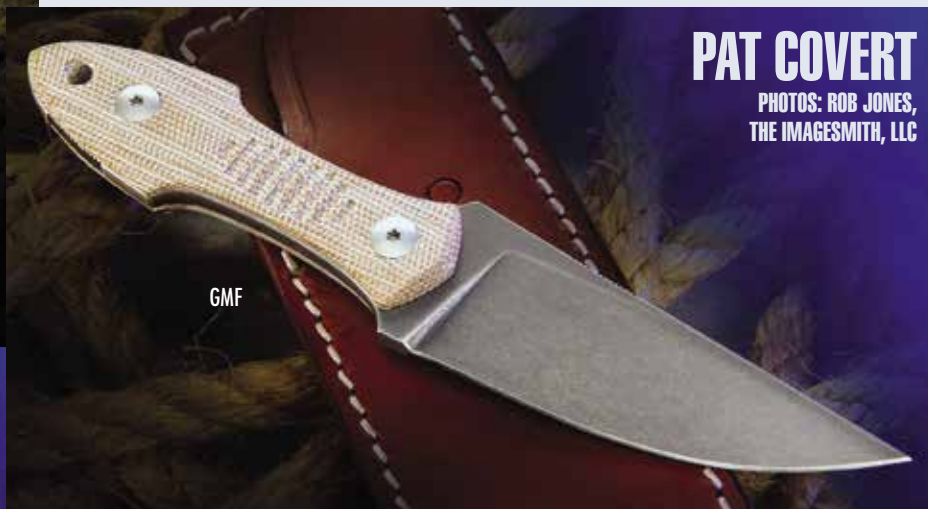
GIANTMOUSE KNIVES DARES TO BE DIFFERENT



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PAT COVERT

PHOTOS: ROB JONES,
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC



Grand

So many success stories have started over dinner and drinks it's almost become ubiquitous, but we've got a good one. This is the story of the mouse that roared. "The inspiration for starting GiantMouse came over dinner and drinks one night when we started discussing the knife industry, and how knife designers license their designs to the large knife brands," the company's CEO Jim Wirth tells *Handgunner*. This was a big deal because his two soon-to-be partners in GiantMouse were two of Europe's hottest

knifemakers and designers. Danish artisans Jens Anso and Jesper Voxnaes had already taken the U.S. cutlery world by storm by way of a rabid social media presence and a multitude of collaborations with noted knife manufacturers Böker, Kershaw and Columbia River Knife & Tool (CRKT).

"Jens and Jesper had talked about starting a business together several times over the years prior to our deciding to create GiantMouse," Wirth notes. "They always came to the conclusion they were both too busy with their own design work and custom

knife making to run a new company. When they explained this to me, I said I had time on my hands and experience starting and running a business, having retired early in 2006 after a successful exit from a company I co-founded in 1995. So, it just all fell into place I'd launch and run the business in the U.S.A. with all of our designs coming from the two of them in Denmark. Hence our slogan, "Danish Design, American Spirit!"

"GiantMouse was a name Jens and Jesper had tossed around themselves during their prior discussions about launching a company," Jim adds. "Their reasoning for the name was, besides being catchy and fun, Denmark is a tiny country but is a giant in the world for their legendary Scandinavian and Danish design. We all agreed the name also played well for our new company in the knife industry, as we would be a small boutique brand in a giant industry. We agreed we could start a brand that turns the standard model on its head and provides high-quality innovative designs at fair prices as a boutique knife brand while having fun working together as friends and partners."

Unique Business Model

To compete in a packed cutlery market laden with heavy hitters, the GiantMouse guys knew they had to stand out in the crowd — so they chose a unique business plan. "We have two lines of knives, our GM line and our ACE line," Wirth states. "The GM line consists of limited-edition models in small batches which are discontinued once sold out. We have introduced seven of these unique models in the GM line over the past five years. Each model in the GM line has two versions. The GMx version is produced as 300 numbered units in a particular finish, and the GMPx version is produced as 100 numbered units in a special finish stamped with our 'pirate mouse' logo. The ACE line includes our unlimited models, which are continually restocked once sold out. Each model in the ACE line may appear in several versions with different handle materials, colors and blade finishes." Covering both the high-end and affordable markets gave GiantMouse a broader base than had they chosen to pursue only one group of knife users.

Eye-Popping Lineup

The GiantMouse line is loaded with the same worldly, eye-pleasing "Euro" design characteristics Jens and Jesper have delighted their followers in the past. "It seems as though all the models we have produced have been extremely popular with our customers and we have a hard time keeping knives in

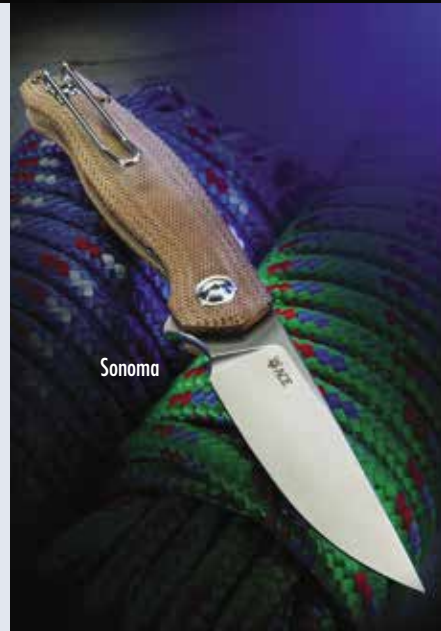


stock," Jim opines. "The ACE Biblio has been available since 2018 and is still in demand, selling out regularly. The ACE Grand and ACE Clyde have both been praised by customers and regularly appear in photos across social media. Customers love the designs of our knives — the lines, the ergonomics and the fact they are designed in collaboration between two world renowned knife makers/designers. Customers also love the quality of our knives — which we work diligently with our manufacturers to achieve. We insist on exceptional fit and finish on our knives and work closely with our manufacturers to ensure the knives we sell are knives we are proud of and want to carry ourselves."

All the company's offerings, even the lower priced ACE models, have quality materials built in. "We mostly use high-end steels such as M390 and Elmax in the production of our knives. We have also used N690 in some of our fixed blade knives and some of our lower-priced folders," Wirth points out. "For handle materials, we are partial to Canvas Micarta, Titanium, Brass and Bronze. In some cases, we mix materials such as in the Biblio with bronze scales having natural canvas Micarta inlaid into the presentation side scale."

Future Mice

All it takes is a quick gawk at our ace photographer Rob Jones' photos here of Anso's and Voxnaes' diverse GiantMouse designs to get an idea of just how talented this team is. From a neo-historical fixed blade, to a sleek tactical fighter, or a handsome EDC runt, the gang's all here. The hard part about



buying a GiantMouse knife is choosing which one.

We asked CEO Wirth what the future holds for the mouse that roared. "We have just hit the 5-year anniversary of selling our first knife. Our plans are to continue to grow the brand, by releasing new and innovative designs by our dynamic duo Jens and Jesper. One of those will be our first slipjoint, which we're particularly excited about." Prices average around \$185 for the company's ACE models to several hundred for their upscale GM fare, which, due to their limited numbers, sell out quickly. We are looking forward to giant things in the days and years ahead!

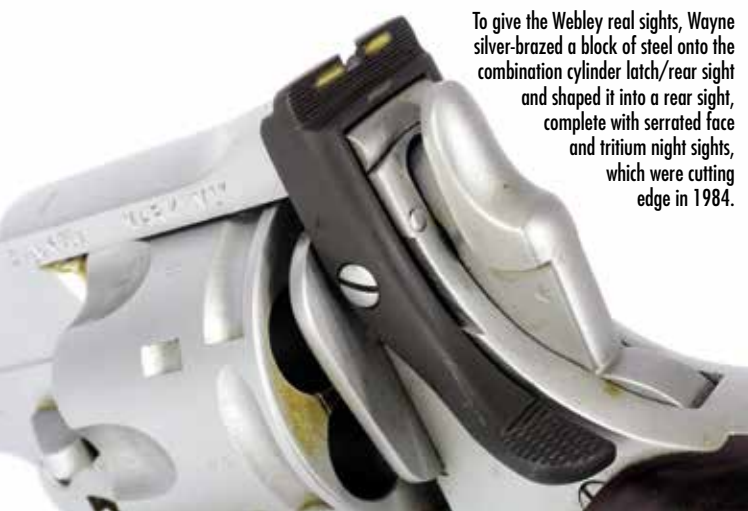
For more info: GiantMouse.com

YOU'VE NEVER SEEN THIS...

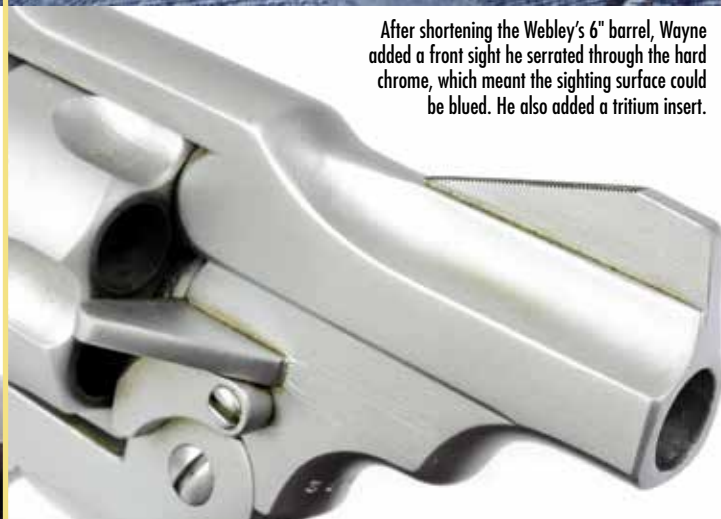
An early Novak gun, this Mk VI Webley is a Fitz-Special style conversion designed for concealed carry. Chopped, bobbed and night sighted, it was ahead of its time, even in the 1980s.

NOVAK FITZ SPECIAL

WEBLEY .455 CONVERSION



To give the Webley real sights, Wayne silver-brazed a block of steel onto the combination cylinder latch/rear sight and shaped it into a rear sight, complete with serrated face and tritium night sights, which were cutting edge in 1984.



After shortening the Webley's 6" barrel, Wayne added a front sight he serrated through the hard chrome, which meant the sighting surface could be blued. He also added a tritium insert.

Most established pistol-smiths have a particular gun or style for which they are known, but this doesn't necessarily mean it's all they do — especially early on in their career, before the style has become solidified. While Wayne Novak is known for M1911s, Hi-Powers and his groundbreaking sight system, which has become so much a part of modern

pistol design it's taken for granted, it's certainly not all he's ever done.

In 1984, not long after moving to Parkersburg, W. Va., after two years working with Armand Swenson, one of Novak's repeat customers asked him to convert a revolver to a Fitz Special. John Fitzgerald, who worked for Colt and is at times credited as the father of the Detective Special and other snub-nosed revolvers, created

the Fitz Special by taking a .45 caliber revolver, lopping off the barrel to 2" or so, bobbing the hammer to make it snag-free, rounding the butt and completely removing the front of the trigger guard to make it faster to shoot. A truly fearsome looking thing, and for those who've never handled one, it makes for a real chunk of a gun. Apparently pleased with the cut-down Colt Wayne had made for him,

the customer returned with a Mark VI Webley revolver and asked for the same package.

"Nice" Personality?

The Mk VI chambered in either .455 Webley, or 45 ACP, was the last of the big Webleys used by the British military everywhere from Ireland's 1916 Easter Rising to both World Wars, the Boer War, Vietnam and anywhere else upon which the English colonial sun did not set. Webleys have never been accused of being particularly good-looking guns, but they have their merits, which include a fast top-break mechanism that ejects all the empties simultaneously.

Unfortunately, the cylinder latch and rear sight — which was somewhat vestigial anyway — are a single unit, which means adding useful rear sights is a challenge. As an aside, if you're wondering why this gun has been hard-chromed except for the cylinder latch, now you know: It was the best way to keep the sighting surfaces black instead of a glare-inducing silver. To give the Webley a real sight picture, Wayne made a shelf on the top of the latch and silver-brazed on a block of steel that he then shaped into a rear sight, complete with serrated face, and had tritium vials installed by Self Powered Lighting to create night sights.

Similarly, after shortening the 6" factory barrel, he added a front sight with a long ramp he hand-serrated through the hard chrome after the gun was finished, which meant the sighting surfaces could be blued. A single tritium vial was also added lengthwise. In those early days of self-luminous sights, when guns didn't just come standard with them, this was very high tech.

Across The Pond Fitz

The rest of the gun got the classic Fitz treatment; an artfully trimmed hammer, excised triggerguard, and custom checkered wood grips from Hogue, in which the owner's gold hieroglyph cartouche was inset.

The cutaway triggerguard is a trademark of Fitz-style guns.

Below: The big Webley got the classic Fitz treatment; an artfully trimmed hammer, excised triggerguard, and custom checkered wood grips from Hogue, in which the owner's gold hieroglyph cartouche was inset.



little large, if you've spent much time shooting little revolvers, you'll appreciate them, as well as the matting on the exposed backstrap.

I'm not going to say just anyone can build a Fitz Special, because they can't. But Novak's application of the Fitz principles to the far-different Webley platform required a bit more

work and imagination, and resulted in a well-thought out, formidable package that's concealable and has truly useful sights. Fitting, since well-thought-out defensive pistols are the hallmark of Novak, who has become one of the most influential pistolsmiths (and the most influential sight designer) of our generation. 

The exposed backstrap was matted, a hand-applied texturing process that Wayne learned during his time at Swenson's.

Bobbing the hammer is smart on any defensive revolver. Not only does it reduce the risk of snags, it makes it less likely you'll cock the hammer, which increases the risk of accidental discharge and possibly short-stroking the trigger for the second shot.



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SCAN TO ENTER

We've been told it's difficult to find postcards nowadays so here's a tip: You can use index cards, back of greeting cards and even cereal boxes. A reader also said you can buy postcards from your local post office.



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STREAMLIGHT PROTAC 2L-X USP



The sky's the limit for SCCY Firearms. The company recently introduced their new DVG-1 and DVG-1 RD pistols. The DVG Series of pistols are striker fired and chambered in 9mm Luger, featuring the Roebuck Quadlock Barrel System and a 10+1 capacity all in a sub-compact footprint made for everyday carry. For this first issue of 2022, *American Handgunner's* giveaway prize is the *DVG-1 RD*. It comes with a Riton Optics MPRD V2 red dot sight that has a 3-MOA dot for precise and rapid target acquisition. Additional features of the DVG-1RD (and the DVG-1) include forward slide serrations for ease of manipulation, a flat 5.5 lb. trigger and a new enhanced grip texture. By the way, DVG stands for David vs. Goliath.

Sharpen your aim with the *THROOM 6" KNOCKDOWN Plate Rack Kit*. It includes six 6" targets, six base mounts and one set of Alpha Stand Brackets, all requiring little assembly. Just add standard 2x4s to build a lightweight plate rack for the indoor range or outside in any weather.

SOG Knives' *Pentagon FX Covert* in Flat Dark Earth is ideal for discreet carry. It has a 3.41" full-tang double-edged CYRO S35VN steel blade, removable G10 handles and a minimalist GRN sheath. With an OAL of 7.52", this fixed-blade is modest in size, but big in capability.

You're sure to find your way with Streamlight's *ProTac 2L-X USP*. It produces 500 lumens of light and uses multi-fuel — a Streamlight SL-B26 Li-Ion USB rechargeable battery pack or two CR123A lithium batteries. It's 5.14" in length and weighs 3.90 oz.

This is *American Handgunner's* first issue for 2022 and we have amazing prizes to give away — the DVG 1-RD from SCCY, the plate rack kit from THROOM Targets, the Pentagon FX Covert from SOG Knives and the PROTAC 2L-X USP from Streamlight. Don't wait. Enter now at AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways or send a postcard! —Jazz Jimenez

DVG-1 RD

MANUFACTURER: SCCY, (386) 322-6336, SCCY.COM
CALIBER: 9MM, CAPACITY: 10+1, BARREL LENGTH: 3", OAL: 6.01"
WEIGHT: 15.5 OZ., VALUE: \$399.99

6" ROUND KNOCKDOWN PLATE RACK KIT

MANUFACTURER: THROOM TARGETS, INFO@THROOMTARGETS.COM, THROOMTARGETS.COM
VALUE: \$254.99

PENTAGON FX COVERT

MANUFACTURER: SOG KNIVES, (425) 771-6230, SOGKNIVES.COM, VALUE: \$166.95

PROTAC 2L-X USP

MANUFACTURER: STREAMLIGHT, (800) 523-7488, STREAMLIGHT.COM, VALUE: \$58

TOTAL VALUE: \$876.92

PLAYIN' FAVORITES:



Ruger's first big bore DA was the .44 Magnum Redhawk, top, however it was soon followed by the .45 Colt version.

.45 COLT DOUBLE ACTION SIXGUNS

I am going to take advantage of my advancing years looking at my favorite sixguns; this will definitely not be objective but rather entirely subjective. Choosing favorites is not always easy. Sometimes I can pick one favorite; other times it will be several. With this in mind, we herein look at Taffin's Top .45 Colt DA sixguns.



The Dan Wesson .45 Colt was built on a much larger frame than their .357 Magnum.

Colt's First

Colt not only offered the first .45 Colt sixgun with the Single Action Army in 1873, but they also followed five years later with the .45 Colt Model 1878 Double Action. The latter is basically an SAA fitted with a DA mechanism and a different grip. The Model 1878 loads and unloads the same way as the SAA, that is, with a loading gate and an ejector rod, however, the grip frame was designed along the lines of the Lightning .38 and Thunderer .41 to keep it from rolling in the hand as the SA grip was designed to do.

For fast work with a DA, one needs a grip that will stay in the same hand position from shot to shot. Shooters who felt they needed to shoot faster



S&W recently revived the Classic .45 Colt; leather is by Al Goerg.

without having to cock the hammer bypassed the SA for the Model 1878. They were used by the military, especially by officers in the Philippines and Alaska, and they were often fitted with a larger than normal trigger guard to allow use with a gloved hand.

Approximately 20 years after the introduction of the Model 1878, Colt brought forth their first swing-out cylindered DA .45 Colt with the New Service. This was a large-framed sixgun with the grip frame made for those with large hands. For many years, the .45 Colt New Service was a standard sidearm of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and some U.S. government agencies. In 1940, the New Service suffered the same fate as the SAA when it was dropped from production. Unlike the SAA, it has never returned — a tremendous loss for sixgunners.

Fitz Not to Be

Several years ago, I picked up a late-model .45 Colt New Service with the standard 5½" barrel. It has some real pitting on one side of the frame and cylinder, so I was able to acquire it for a good price. My thought at the time

was to use it to make a Fitz Special. Fitz used all sizes of Colt DAs for his modifications; however, he preferred the .45 Colt New Service. When I visited Col. Rex Applegate in his home/museum, he had a very special .45 Fitz Special New Service engraved "To Rex From Fitz." I wanted one just like it.

To make his Special, Fitz shortened the barrel, dehorned the hammer, made the grip frame smaller, and cut out the front of the trigger guard. Before sending off the .45 Colt New Service to Andy Horvath to be made into a Fitz Special, I made the mistake of shooting it. It shot so well I decided to look for another candidate which turned out to be a .44 Special, so I still don't have a .45 Colt Fitz.

Anaconda

Colt never did return the New Service to production, however, when the decision was finally made in the early 1990s to build a .44 Magnum, they also chambered the same sixgun in .45 Colt. The Anaconda is the largest, and probably the best, .45

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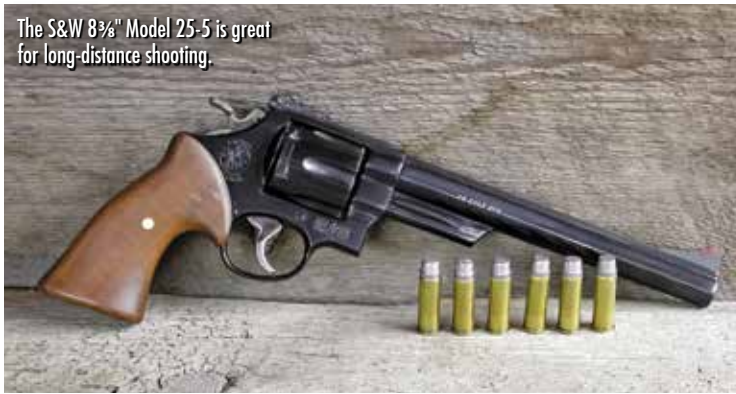
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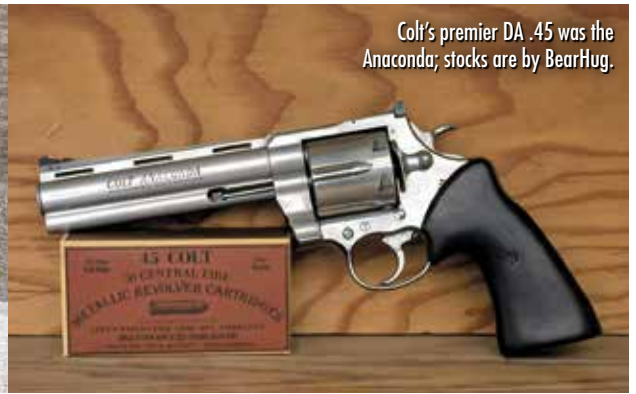


Two favored .45 S&Ws carry in classic Berns-Martin holsters; stainless steel Mountain Gun and Model 25-5. Grips are by BluMagnum.

The S&W 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " Model 25-5 is great for long-distance shooting.



Colt's premier DA .45 was the Anaconda; stocks are by BearHug.



Colt DA ever produced by Colt. It is all stainless-steel construction. Mine has a 6" barrel, and some were also made with 4 and 8" barrels, however, they are very rare.

The Anaconda easily handles standard .45 Colt loads as well as my Heavy Duty .45 Colt loads consisting of a 300-grain bullet at 1,200 fps.

Smith Swings Out

When S&W introduced their first large-framed, swing-out cylindered sixgun in late 1907, it was chambered in the new .44 Special. During the eight years this First Model Hand Ejector, or Triple-Lock was manufactured, very few were chambered in .45 Colt and are quite valuable collectors' items today. The same can be said of the Second Model Hand Ejector, which lasted from 1915 to 1941. I don't believe the Third Model, or 1926 Model, was ever offered in .45 Colt.

In 1950, S&W introduced the 1950 Target in both .44 Special and .45 ACP, with again a very small number being made in .45 Colt. In 1955, S&W upgraded their .45 ACP Target Model by adding a heavy ball barrel, target hammer and trigger, and target stocks. This became the Model 25 in 1957 and then in 1978 was offered as the Model

25-5 chambered in .45 Colt and three standard barrel lengths of 4, 6 and 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". I could get along quite well with the 4" Model 25-5 as a self-defense sixgun, and I thoroughly enjoy shooting long-range with the 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " .45 Colt. S&W was not always careful with the chamber throats on their .45 Colt, and they can be found as large as 0.455–0.456" in diameter.

Over the years S&W has offered several heavy underlugged barreled .45 Colts and their stainless-steel Model 625 5" is as fine a shooting DA .45 Colt as can be found. However, for self-defense use it is somewhat heavy and bulky. S&W addressed this by coming up with the 4" .45 Colt Mountain Gun with a tapered barrel. This makes it much lighter than the original 4" Model 25-5. It would be my first choice as a self-defense .45 Colt DA sixgun. Colt has also resurrected the 1950 Target as the Classic .45 Colt, and it is an excellent shooting sixgun. Even before the Classic, S&W made a series of Heritage Revolvers, and one of these was in .45 Colt with a tapered barrel, enclosed ejector rod, and gold bead front sight. It may not be called the Classic, but it is sure a classic-looking revolver.

Dan Wesson

Once Dan Wesson brought their .44

Magnum to market, they soon began to offer it in other chamberings. The frame and cylinder were stretched to house the .357, .375, .414 and .445 SuperMags, however, they also used it in the standard version for the .41 Magnum, and thankfully, the .45 Colt.

Dan Wesson sixguns were known for two things, beautiful, high polished bright blue finishes and superb accuracy. The .45 Colt 8" Heavy Barrel Dan Wesson is definitely a superbly accurate sixgun and weighing in right at 4 lbs. handles 300-grain bullets at 1,200 fps with no punishing felt recoil to the shooter. I purchased mine more than 20 years ago when I was deeply involved in long-range silhouetting. It has now been fitted with custom stocks by Rod Herrett and is simply a pure joy to shoot.

Ruger

With the coming of the .44 Magnum Ruger Redhawk in the 1980s, it was only natural it would soon be offered in .45 Colt. The Redhawk is probably a stronger DA .45 Colt than the Dan Wesson, however, being lighter and harder to stock with a good comfortable grip for my hands, it does not handle felt recoil as well as the Dan Wesson. Ruger just recently brought out a 4" stainless steel Redhawk in .45 Colt which is fitted with pebble-grained, finger-grooved, recoil-reducing grips which make shooting any heavy .45 Colt load quite tolerable. With a cylinder longer than the Ruger .45 Colt Blackhawk, it will handle heavier and longer bullets.

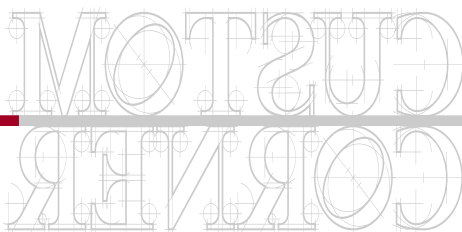
When it comes to DA .45 Colt sixguns, I am mostly partial to 4" sixguns. For everyday packing and self-defense use my hands-down favorite is the S&W stainless steel Mountain Gun; however, if I'm going to do a lot of shooting or use heavier than standard loads, I would go with the 4" S&W Model 25-5. If I ever found myself, which at my age isn't very likely, being outside in all kinds of weather and rough terrain, again, the choice would be easy. I would reach for the 4" Ruger Redhawk.



S&W's Heritage Model .45 Colt compared to the Classic Model .45 Colt.



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GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



GUNLESS PEOPLE ARE DANGEROUS

Fear and hatred of guns have unintended consequences; political fallout and dangers which are largely missed in the running monologues that pass for “news” in America today.

Age-old wisdom suggesting knowledge of guns leading to harm is incorrect, according to leading experts on both sides of the aisle. People who avoid guns, and refuse to discuss the subject, exhibit fear bordering on paranoia, leading to accidents, defenselessness, and potentially dire consequences. Criminals now running rampant on a small number of American streets have virtually no training, and certainly don’t represent the values of marksmanship and firearms education, which generally leads to self-control and responsibility.

“A person who knows nothing about guns, and preserves that ignorance with great vigor, which many anti-gun people do, harms society’s fabric by promoting counter-productive law, hampering police efforts and putting children at risk,” I noted in a recent public speech. Starbucks, as a case in point, had ignorantly refused to serve armed police officers, people tasked with protecting society. How did that help anyone? It simply showed their disdain for something good.

Projection?

“Many people who fear guns secretly harbor internal rage, just waiting to break into violence upon some slight provocation. They project this instability onto others, falsely assuming anyone with a firearm will eventually erupt into violence and injure others — as they believe they might do, according to Gary Marbut, president of the Montana Shooting Sports Association. “They cannot imagine most people are not also plagued by the demons under which they suffer. So, they fear guns and believe everyone should be disarmed, just as they

don’t trust themselves from erupting into violence,” he said. Mr. Marbut is a firearms instructor accepted as an expert witness in state and federal courts concerning self-defense, use of force and firearms safety. His cogent testimony has helped defendants wrongly charged by misguided anti-gun prosecutors.

Heavily credentialed firearms training expert and author Stephen P. Wenger notes that gun-fearing folks have what’s called “poor impulse control” and project that onto others. The lack of understanding gunless people exhibit leads to laws that affect the innocent and ignore the criminal element, which I have personally witnessed repeatedly in legislatures nationwide. People with terror in their eyes and myths on their lips over imagined dangers band together, hire lobbyists, and rally for laws to disarm people who haven’t done anything.

Real Responsibility

The gun-fearful flatly ignore actual perpetrators entirely. Frequently, the criminal perps are people of color or other “disadvantaged” types (ethnic, immigrant, poor, released prisoners, gang members) who they are afraid to single out or implicate out of fear of being called names like “racist.”

Red-flag laws are an example. Notice these laws let police confiscate your property on hearsay and without a trial, merely on suspicion of you being a potential mass murderer. Afterwards, they just set you loose back on the streets. How much more dangerous could a plan be? “You haven’t done anything, so we’re letting you out. Go buy a chainsaw, matches and some gasoline. You’re not angry at the person who had you detained, are you?” Red-flag laws were drafted by the gun-control lobby, without evidence that they work, based on their desire “to make guns go away.” Authorities might take “your gun” for a while, but that doesn’t put you in the database preventing you from buying another gun, because you lack

guilt or a conviction necessary to be included. And they may not check to see if you already have several guns. It’s an irrational response to psychotic mass murderers and sociopathic children seeking to slaughter their classmates.

Also at issue are prosecutors — or perhaps lack of prosecutors — willing to prosecute, using laws we have to incarcerate truly dangerous people using guns for illegal purposes. That’s how we get felons on our streets with mile-long rap sheets, committing one serious crime after another. In an insidious way, this serves a valuable purpose. It keeps gunless people terrified, clamoring for more so-called “gun control,” which increases government power. Just take the guns away and we’ll all be safe while leaving officials armed to the teeth. Right. The fact it hasn’t worked for decades doesn’t seem to enter the equation, and efforts continue to hamper the innocent.

There is no known way to reliably make or staff a “pre-crime” bureau, according to forensic experts, and catch psychopaths before they act out. That’s a fanciful feature of sci-fi films, with no place in the real world. “It’s hoplophobic,” said Dr. Bruce Eimer, Ph.D., a police forensic psychologist, “just a manifestation of irrational fears. Those people promoting such things need help, but typically refuse any.” Red-flag laws are delusions, typically promoted by gunless people, to quell their fears, without any hope of success.

Take a gunless person to a shooting range, an often-reliable cure for their phobia, and help improve the safety of the nation, Dr. Eimer would advise.



Award-winning author Alan Korwin has written 14 books, 10 of them on gun law, and has advocated for gun rights for nearly three decades. See his work or reach him at GunLaws.com.

TOM McHALE

1791 TACTICAL IWB HOLSTER

Tired of following passed-along hearsay, I've been trying appendix carry myself to learn the real pros and cons. The folks at 1791 have a nifty Tactical model ideal for front of body use.



The Kydex IWB holster features a wide belt clip that's adjustable for both ride height (critical for comfortable appendix carry) and cant angle in case you want to experiment with different positions. A molded-in wing under the pistol grip jams against the backside of your belt, drawing the grip in closer to the body for better concealment. Retention is excellent, and adjustable, and the cut allows room for a red dot sight. I've been using a model for the SA XDs Mod. 2 with great success. 1791Gunleather.com

WILLIAM STARNES

INLINE FABRICATION ULTRAMOUNT



I finally jumped on the bandwagon and purchased Inline Fabrication's multi-mount system for my reloading presses. I've tried other swappable mounting systems, but this is the only one I would recommend to a friend. The system consists of a steel mounting plate for your workbench and any number of interlocking steel plates for presses, vices, or just about anything you want to mount. All parts are 3/16 thick steel, laser cut, CNC Formed and powder coated. I can now switch from my single stage press to my progressive in less than a minute, and each one is rock-solid once attached. They offer plates for all popular presses and will even custom make one if they don't have it in stock. When not in use, everything fits neatly onto a wall-mounted bracket. Also, if you're OCD like me, they have a slew of press accessories to keep your equipment organized. InlineFabrication.com

SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

INFANTE S6 ULTRASONIC GUN CLEANER

And so the search began. Like kids in search of Easter eggs, my dad and I scoured the house looking for anything we could throw into the Infante Ultrasonic cleaner. The unit impressed with its quick work of carbon on an AR bolt carrier group and in revitalizing my gummed up .22 pistol. The process was easy and quick. I field stripped the Ruger SR22, dropped it in the cleaning solution and let the waves go to work. A rinse with water, hit with compressed air, and bath in the lubrication solution followed. The parts emerged as if brand new. This unit, designed for handguns, firearm parts and silencers, takes the chore out of cleaning and makes it fun. InfanteUltrasonics.com



WILLIAM STARNES

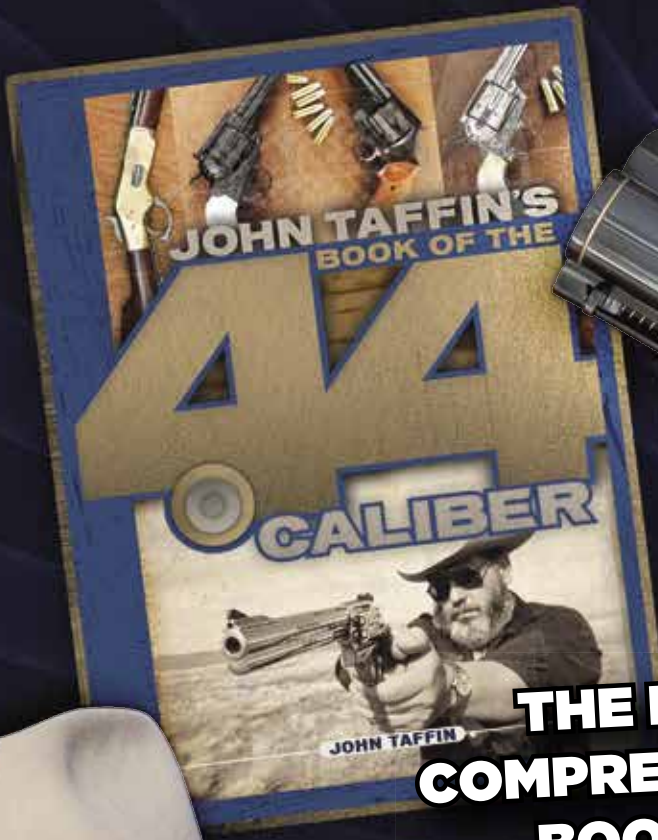
HATPOINT TARGET STANDS



Shooting at an outdoor range often means you have to supply your own target stand. Fear not, for I have finally found an excellent option for you. I recently evaluated a HatPoint target stand and couldn't be more impressed. These stands are a lot lighter and easier to carry than my old steel ones, plus I don't have to take a can of WD-40 to free rusty screws. After the short assembly, you just simply add standard 1"x2" firing strips and staple a target. The slots for the boards are taller than my old target stands, and they have tension tabs to hold the boards firmly in place. Some might worry about them breaking by a wayward bullet. Don't! The polymer material is capable of surviving multiple hits and remaining serviceable. Lastly, they have a variety of slots allowing targets from 6" to 24" wide. HatPointTarget.com



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LESSONS FROM A PISTOL-PACKING PRESIDENT

SITUATION: One American President wielded deadly force as a judge, a combat general, and a head of state ... and as an armed individual.

LESSON: What was legal then can be illegal now. Some principles are ephemeral, but some are eternal.

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) served two terms, from 1828 through 1837, as the seventh President of the United States. Controversial in his own time and perhaps more so today than ever, he was a complicated person — a classic example of the fact great men tend to have great strengths, but also great weaknesses. Few would dispute he was the architect of the great victory in the Battle of New Orleans, allowing the U.S. to win the War of 1812. He figured prominently in the long chain of conflicts known as the Indian Wars, accepting the surrender of the Creeks, and engineering the defeat of the Seminoles in Florida, including his time as Commander-in-Chief during the Second Seminole War. There were documented atrocities by both sides in the course of those Indian Wars.

Today, his statues are removed, and he is seen as a racist, yet he adopted an orphan Indian boy and raised him as his own. At the time, American settlers saw themselves as the visiting team in battle against the home team, the Native Americans, and celebrated Jackson's victories. Historians James Cusick and Sherry Johnson would later claim, "... it is possible to conclude that while New Orleans made Andrew Jackson a hero, it was Florida that put him in the White House." (1)

He saw himself first and foremost as a fighting man. At his instruction, his tomb bears no mention of having held his country's highest office, nor that he was recognized as the first "common man" to serve there. Instead, the inscription simply reads "General Andrew Jackson."

It was something he didn't limit to times when he wore a uniform. Andrew Jackson fought other men physically, up to and including death, as a private individual. Those are the instances in his life we'll examine here.

First Encounter

An orphan boy of 14, Andrew Jackson took part in the War of Independence as a scout and was captured by the redcoats. When an imperious British officer contemptuously ordered young Jackson to polish his boots, the lad replied with dignity, "I am a prisoner of war, and claim to be treated as such." The Englishman didn't appreciate that and took a sword to the unarmed teen. Young Jackson came away from that with scars on his hand and arm, a crease in his skull from the blade, and an absolute abiding hatred of the British.

The Sevier Shootout ...

Jackson married his wife Rachel, the love of his life, in the mistaken belief her first husband had divorced her. In fact, the divorce had not yet been granted, making the couple technically bigamists. Throughout the rest of his life, political opponents would harp on this. In Knoxville, Tenn. in 1803, Jackson found himself face-to-face with Tennessee Governor John Sevier, debating which of them should be named to lead the state militia. Jackson said he felt his own services to the unit qualified him. Sevier sniffed, "I know of no great service you have rendered the country except taking a trip to Natchez with another man's wife."

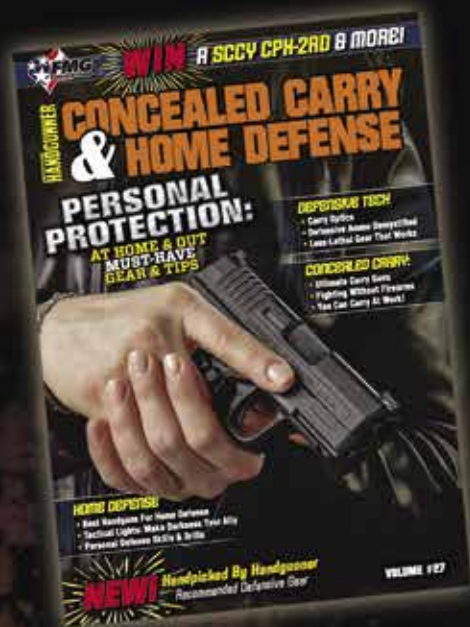
"Great God!" Jackson exploded. "Do you mention her sacred name?" Historian Jon Meacham picks it up from there: "Then, according to a contemporary's recollection, 'several shots were fired in a crowded street. One man was grazed by a bullet; many were scared; but luckily, no one was hurt.'" (2) Neither of the principals had fired a shot: Judge Jackson was armed only with a cane during the brawl, and Governor Sevier, with a cutlass.

... and the Sevier Face-off

Feeling his wife's honor had not been sufficiently upheld in the encounter recited above, in the custom of the time, Jackson challenged Sevier to a duel. Older, arguably wiser, and aware the state

Continued on next page

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he governed had banned dueling the year before, Sevier also apparently felt a need to save face and tried to stall the deadly appointment Jackson sought. They agreed to meet at a point just over the border of Virginia. Sevier didn't show.

Riding back to Knoxville, with his friend and "second," an Army surgeon's assistant named Thomas Van Dyke, Jackson met Governor Sevier and his son James riding in the other direction. They stopped their horses and Jackson, now on foot with a pistol in each hand, advanced toward Sevier, who armed himself likewise. Van Dyke successfully made a temporary peace, convincing each man to holster his guns and get back on his horse. They complied, but cursed each other out as they did so. Finally, Jackson seemed to snap. He dismounted again and, now with a drawn gun in one hand and a sword cane in the other, advanced on Sevier. Sevier got off his horse with a drawn sword; the saber frightened his mount, which ran off with his guns apparently still holstered on the saddle.

At this point the Governor's son drew down on Jackson with his own pistol, to protect his father. Van Dyke, in turn, pulled his pistol and leveled it at the younger Sevier to protect his friend Jackson. Finally, people seemed to come to their senses. With the trash talk still spewing, but no guns blazing and no blood flowing, both sides mounted up one last time and went their separate ways.

First Duel

In 1788 Jackson, then a young attorney, fought what appears to have been his first duel, evolving from his challenge to a prosecutor named Waightstill Avery who was called by one historian "the dean of the North Carolina bar." Avery had apparently bested him to an embarrassing degree in the trial of a civil lawsuit.

History tells us duels, being grandiosely called "affairs of honor," were highly formulated and were often shams. If the duel was not called off entirely with a handshake, the participants might deliberately "waste their shot," intentionally aiming away from their opponent. Face was saved on both sides by this ritual, and bloodshed avoided.

So it was on the day of the Jackson/Avery duel. History professor H.W. Brands writes, "By now Jackson's anger had cooled, and he apparently acceded to the advice of the seconds that honor would be assuaged even if no blood flowed. At any rate, after Jackson and Avery stepped off the agreed-upon distance, they fired, and both deliberately

missed. 'General Jackson acknowledged himself satisfied,' Avery's son concluded. 'They shook hands and were friendly ever after.'" (3)

Gunpoint Arrest

Jackson was apparently a quick study. He began studying law in his mid-teens, apprenticed to an attorney at 17, and was licensed to practice law at age 20. He soon earned a position as circuit judge. Circa 1800, he ordered the arrest of a man named Russell Bean. Bean was a local badass with many claims to fame. He was said to be the first white child born in what became Tennessee; he was the biggest, strongest man in the area; and he was absolutely the local bully. His mean streak reached the height of its cruelty when he found out his wife's new baby was not his.

He cut the infant's ears off, sneering that now he could tell this one from his own.

A warrant was issued for his arrest.

Sevier got off his horse with a drawn sword; the saber frightened his mount, which ran off with his guns apparently still holstered on the saddle.

Bean, who habitually wore two pistols and a Bowie knife, told the sheriff he wouldn't submit to arrest. When the sheriff came back with a posse, Bean cowed them too. The frustrated sheriff came to court to announce to Judge Jackson what had happened. Jackson told him to deputize every man in the courthouse for a posse, and perhaps to save face, the sheriff responded he would start the posse by enlisting Jackson himself. Stung, the judge did indeed lead the posse to Bean's residence, where he found the wanted man wearing his knife and guns.

But Andrew Jackson had also armed himself — by one account, with a pistol in each hand. He drew down on Bean and advanced on him shouting, "Now, surrender, you infernal villain, this very instant or I'll blow you through!"

Bean meekly surrendered, muttering a face-saving "I will surrender to you, sir, but no one else." When asked later why he submitted only to Jackson, he said it was because he was certain that the judge, unlike the others who had come for him, actually would kill him if he didn't give up. "I looked in his eyes and saw 'shoot,'" Bean was quoted as saying. (4)

Blows Instead Of Bullets

It seemed to some observers of the day Jackson would duel at the slightest provocation. In 1805, Jackson, nearing age 40, traded insults with a young provocateur named Thomas Swann from

Nashville. Historians seem to agree Swann was a showoff trying to make a name for himself when he challenged Jackson over what may have been an imagined slight to one of his friends; Jackson simply blew it off. But when Swann challenged him again, it apparently became too irritating. Historian Brands explains, "Jackson paid no more attention to this than to Swann's earlier challenge. He declined to recognize Swann as a gentleman and threatened to thrash him rather than trade pistol fire. Swann confronted Jackson at a Nashville tavern, where Jackson began beating him with a cane. Onlookers broke up the fight, and Jackson strode off." (5)

Deadly Duel

Legend has Andrew Jackson being a prolific duelist of his day, but I can only find two Jackson duels where shots were fired, and only one that was fatal. In 1806, after an argument over a horse race bet some six months earlier, one

Charles Dickinson publicly called him "a worthless coward, a paltroon (sic) and a coward," and by some accounts disparaged Rachel Jackson. That was a mortal offense to Jackson, who challenged him to a duel. It took place in late May in Kentucky, where dueling was still essentially ignored by the law.

Brands relates the rules: "It is agreed that the distance shall be 24 feet, the parties to stand facing each other with their pistols down perpendicularly. When they are ready, the single word 'fire' to be given, at which they are to fire as soon as they please. Should either fire before the word given, we (the duelists' "seconds") pledge ourselves to shoot him down instantly."

Jackson challenging Dickinson would be like one of us today challenging Tiger Woods to a golf match, placing our lives as the bet. Dickinson was famous for his marksmanship skill and his coolness with gun in hand, and it was claimed he had killed 26 men in duels: one for each year of his life.

On the "fire" command, Dickinson fired first. Jackson stood erect, his free hand rising to his chest. Shocked his opponent was still on his feet, Dickinson blurted, "God, have I missed him?" The implacable Jackson merely aimed at him, carefully pressing his trigger.

Click.

Nonchalantly, Andrew Jackson cocked the weapon, then extended it again at the end of his right arm. He took his time with an achingly long trigger



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squeeze. This time, the pistol discharged, and Charles Dickinson collapsed.

The bullet had struck Dickinson center mass in the upper abdomen. The seconds quickly learned why Jackson had brought his left hand to his breast: Dickinson's bullet had smashed through rib and lung deep into his chest, stopping an inch from the heart. Blood was pouring down Jackson's body so profusely it filled one of his boots.

Dickinson died hours later. Jackson lived with a long but incomplete convalescence that left him in constant chest pain and coughing up blood until the end of his days.

Gunfight In Nashville

Jackson's long-time frenemy Thomas Hart Benton has bad-mouthed him, and Jackson has sworn to horsewhip Benton the next time he sees him. That encounter takes place outside the City Hotel in Nashville in 1813. Jackson is accompanied by his friend John Coffee, and Benton by his brother Jesse. All are armed with concealed pistols, and

Legend has Andrew Jackson being a prolific duelist of his day, but I can only find two Jackson duels where shots were fired, and only one that was fatal.

Jackson also has an edged weapon and, in hand, the promised riding whip.

The two principals go for their guns.

Jackson's is out first. Moment by moment accounts differ. In their book on the Indian Wars in which Jackson figured so prominently, Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard maintain Jackson got his gun out first, pressed the muzzle against Thomas Benton's chest, and drove him backward inside the hotel. (6)

What all accounts of the incident seem to agree on is Jesse Benton fires first, his bullet shattering Jackson's left shoulder and cutting an artery. As the gunfire erupts between the various opponents, Jackson's left arm takes another lead ball. He falls, and as he is going down, he fires his own pistol. The bullet strikes no one, but some believe the muzzle blast scorches Thomas Hart Benton, causing him to stagger back; in any case, Benton falls down a flight of stairs as he backs away from the gunfire, and is out of the fight. Thomas Coffee's gunfire joins the cacophony.

Brand, the history professor, writes: "Then the daggers came out. Stockley

Hays, a nephew of Rachel Jackson, was passing by and heard the shooting. Seeing his uncle in danger, he dove upon Jesse and slashed him several times. Jesse pressed a pistol against Hays' heart and pulled the trigger, but the gun misfired." (7).

Their single-shot pistols having run dry, the men were separated by hotel staff and shocked bystanders, ending the fight. Lapsing in and out of consciousness, and told by doctors they had to amputate to save his life, Andrew Jackson replied coldly, "I'll keep my arm."

He did, but the effects of the wound would haunt him for the rest of his life. He had unarguably lost the fight: Thomas Hart Benton retrieved Jackson's sword from the fight scene and triumphantly broke it over his knee in a public square. (8)

Assassin!

In January 1835, Andrew Jackson had the dubious distinction of being the first American President to undergo an assassination attempt. Long before Secret Service, he was walking out of the Capitol building when a British lunatic named Richard Lawrence — who believed himself to be Richard the Third, the rightful king of England — lunged at him and from eight to 10 feet away, leveled a pistol at Jackson's center chest and pulled the trigger.

Click. The pistol misfired. Before Jackson could react, Lawrence brought up a second pistol. Click!

Now, if there was any man in America who knew how deadly a pistol could be, even after it had misfired, it was Andrew Jackson. In an instant, he was on Lawrence, ferociously clubbing him to the ground with his cane. Onlookers rushed Lawrence, swarming him, and probably saving his life by getting between him and the President's cane. When the would-be assassin's pistols were tested later by authorities, they both fired on the first try.

Lessons

Death battles seem glamorous until the shooting starts. Andrew Jackson's three gunshot wounds were permanent injuries, which made his life miserable to the end of his 80 years. Pride is a two-edged sword, and many of the experiences detailed above remind us why pride is so often called a deadly sin.

Mutual combat isn't lawful self-defense. In the last days of dueling, note how hard it was for Jackson to find a place to do it legally. No such place exists today. In consensual mutual combat, the rule is the loser leaves in the meat wagon and the winner in the paddy wagon. The killing of Dickinson — shot dead while helplessly holding an empty pistol, by a man who admitted later he intended to slay him — would be seen today as clear-cut premeditated murder ... and was even

seen as such by Jackson's enemies then.

Be certain you can pull the trigger if you must. The arrest of Bean teaches a lesson about gunpoint that remains valid. Bean was a quintessential predator. One definition of "predator" could be "expert in prey selection." By Bean's own admission, when he realized — from Jackson's stance, face and speech — the judge was fully prepared to end him, he surrendered without bloodshed on either side.

Fights that last seconds leave much longer aftermaths. Historians and even observers present at the time seem uncertain whether in the Dickinson duel, Jackson's pistol initially was only half-cocked, or the hammer fell and caught on the half-cock notch, a mechanical malfunction. The rules of the day said a misfire constituted a shot, and to this day there are those who claim Jackson cheated when he re-cocked the gun and fired the fatal round. It is worth noting both Dickinson himself, on his deathbed, and his second announced the fight to have been fair. (9) One would think that would have settled the matter, but the "cheating killer" cloud still hangs over Andrew Jackson's memory more than two centuries later.

If you're hit, keep fighting, and expect your opponent to do the same. When asked later how he could stay on his feet and slay the man who'd shot him in the chest, Jackson famously replied even if he had been shot in the brain, he still would have killed Dickinson.

Speed is fine, but accuracy is final. Before Wyatt Earp, Texas Ranger John Hughes, and the legendary Bill Jordan gave that advice, Jackson came to the same conclusion. Circa 1817, when asked for advice about dueling, Jackson replied in part, "... charge your friend to preserve his fire until he shoots his antagonist through the brain for if he fires and does not kill his antagonist, he leaves himself fully in his power." (10) Jackson was speaking, clearly,  as a voice of experience.

Footnotes: (1) Cusick, James G and Johnson, Sherry, Andrew Jackson in Florida, Florida Historical Society Press, 2016, P. 312. (2) Meacham, John, American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House, Random House, 2008, P. 25. (3) Brands, H.W., Andrew Jackson: His Life and Times, Doubleday, 2005, P. 54. (4) <https://www.vice.com/en/article/8qkq5a/these-wild-obscure-foes-of-past-presidents-are-stuffed-full-of-american-badassery> (5) Brands, op. cit., P. 133. (6) O'Reilly, Bill and Dugard, Martin, Killing Crazy Horse: the Merciless Indian Wars in America, Henry Holt & Co., 2020, Pp. 26-27. (7) Brands, op. cit., P. 190. (8) American Heritage Magazine, "Now Defend Yourself, You Damned Rascal," by Elbert Smith, February 1958 issue. (9) Brands, op. cit., Pp. 140-141. (10) Brands, ibid., P. 350.

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me lay the first Victory model I had ever seen. I recall the glow of the old incandescent light on the brushed blue finish and the tarnish on the old brass cartridges he took out of the cylinder. He smiled, let me handle it, then loaded it and returned it to its safe place.

Later, my dad told me the man had fought in the Pacific in WWII and had used the gun in earnest. I felt changed having handled it. I got a bit older that night.

As time passed, I've always been attracted to Victory models and I can't hold one without trying to listen to its story. They all talk, some more quietly than others, but they all have stories. It may just be about walking the perimeter of an aircraft factory — or time in a P-51 as the pilot tried to outsmart a Focke Wulf 190 in the skies over Germany. But they talk.

Two Now

I have a pair of Victory models right now. Both have good stories. I bought them from the men who carried them — one in WWII and one in Vietnam. They sold them to me because they knew I cared, and still do. The Victory was long-lived in our armed forces and uses were found for them for decades after WWII. I predict some are still hiding in lockers or duffels around the world.

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You might not have ever seen Gwen's name on the masthead of our magazines, but for years now, she's turned her sharp eye toward finding any pesky mistakes in our pages before going to press. Gwen's title was "Grammar Guru" and she was all that — and more. I first met Gwen when she was production director of our police association newspaper, *The Informant*, almost 40 years ago. I soon became the editor there during my police career, and for 15 or so years, Gwen and I were part of a team running that award-winning newspaper. When I heard Gwen had retired I snapped her up to handle proofing for us and she proved her mettle time after time, instantly becoming part of our FMG team and well-liked by all.

Alas, Gwen, and her kind-hearted husband Joe, passed unexpectedly in August from COVID, within one week of one another. We all miss Gwen's ready-willingness to lend a hand, her amazingly sharp eye when it came to proofing and her unfailingly positive outlook. She and Joe were two of the nicest, kindest and sheer decent people I've ever known. Darn it all anyway.

My blued one helped protect a PT boat crewman in the South Pacific in WWII. The Parkerized one — showing some honest wear — rode in a Jeep quite a bit in Vietnam and, according to the soldier, "Made me feel a lot safer at times."

I shoot them now and again and enjoy it every time I do. The small grips and sharp edges of the top-strap bite some, and after a couple of cylinders I

stop. But that old S&W long action is smooth, predictable and familiar and I always smile. After 80-odd years, they still work, are still accurate and could be relied upon to protect a lonely guard, a 19-year-old tank commander or a G.I. in a foxhole on Iwo Jima.

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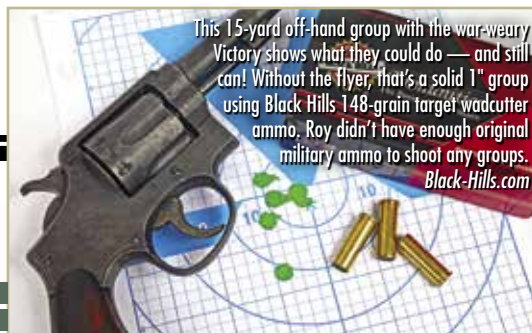
Then I remember Gun Cranks.

Want to know about the latest foibles over at the NRA? And what we ought to do about it? Check out Gun Cranks. How about sniping chickens? While the strategy may sound harsh, Roy has a terrible problem with ill-tempered roosters with shockingly poor dating manners sneaking into his hen house. I'll leave the rest up to your imagination.

You can catch Gun Cranks at YouTube.com/GunCranks — a new show goes live every other Thursday.

The tech tyrants of social media love to show you only a tiny fraction of what we publish on social media, so if you want to keep up to date on Gun Cranks and everything else going on around here, subscribe to one or more of our weekly emails. You can choose from *American Handgunner* Insider, Carry Options, Personal Defense, First Look: Guns & Gear, Guncrank Chronicles, *GUNS Magazine* Insider, *GUNS Magazine* Podcast, or Wheelgun Wednesday. Better yet, choose them all! You can subscribe at AmericanHandgunner.com/Newsletters.

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VICTORY'S VIRTUES



The original military loading of a 158-grain FMJ showed 760 fps over Roy's chronograph but was advertised at 850 fps. Note brushed blue finish on left, parkerized on right.

It's the beginning of WWII, we've had our face slapped at Pearl, and virtually the entire world will soon be engulfed in a struggle to fight the warmongers and get some sanity — and freedom — back. While politicians yammered, pounded chests and pointed fingers, there were those who realized this was turning into a toe-to-toe fight where bayonets and pistols would be bloodied.

And we weren't ready for it. Not even close.

Things changed fast as time seemed to rocket by. As suddenly as Nazi tanks stormed through

S&W's "Victory" model ruled the revolver roost during WWII and beyond.

Europe, Banzai charges trampled Asia and bombers struck Honolulu, the U.S. and its allies were faced with sending millions of troops worldwide to face-off the threats. Industry ramped up — fast — and it was soon realized there weren't enough 1911s to go around. The old 1917 revolvers were dusted off yet the numbers were still far short. Smith & Wesson responded with a "Hand Ejector" .38 S&W

Special revolver to fill the holsters of soldiers, sailors, airmen, guards, allies, insurgents — and even some spies.

Available at first in 4", 5" and 6" barreled versions, the gun proved light, handy, effective and universally popular. Almost

850,000 were made, including hundreds of thousands in .38 S&W for the allies. The finishes went from "commercial" blue to a sand-blast blue to Parkerized — with the "Wartime Finish" noted by the maker lest anyone think they'd slumped to a new low in quality. This revolver fought back in the hands of pilots, factory security, in the jungles, forests, deserts and in the back-pockets of spy-catchers in a 2" version.

It was called the "Victory" model for good reason, and the bold "V" before the serial number let anyone seeing it know what it was for. This game was final, total Victory — or no win at all.

Historical Legacies

My dad was a Navy man, joining in 1952. I recall men I used to meet on his ships, at duty stations or who visited us. Men who had all fought in WWII. To my 10-year-old eyes, they were almost mythical. They'd "been there" and "seen that" many times. Things I'd only seen in old war movies — *but they'd lived it*. I remember my dad was often very respectful of certain gentlemen, and he'd later carefully explain who they were and what they had done "in the war."

A life-long memory for me arrived the day one of them showed me his "old S&W" as he called it. We were at his home and he knew I was a gun-crazy kid but understood about the war, and how to be safe around guns. He brought it out, unwrapped the oiled rag, and before



The Victory (center) was lighter and handier than the 1917 S&W (top) and soon found favor with anyone needing a handy side arm.

The 1940-era Enfield in .38 S&W (lower) was Britain's way of answering the need for a mass-produced revolver but Roy feels the S&W Victory is easier to operate and more accurate.

Continued on page 80



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