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Volume 47 • Number 2 • Issue 274

MARCH/APRIL



50



58



36

FEATURES

32 GUNCRANK DIARIES

Light Amidst the Chaos WILL DABBS, MD

36 THE BERETTA 950BS MINX

An Auction Gun with a Love Story WILL DABBS, MD

38 SPRINGFIELD ARMORY'S SA-35

Rebirth of a Legend ROY HUNTINGTON

46 THE GUN YOU CAN'T HAVE

Building a Multi-Caliber, One-of-a-Kind 1911 JEREMY D. CLOUGH

50 KEITH #5 ... WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

What Made this Single-Action So Special? JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

54 TAURUS GX4 T.O.R.O.

A Pocketful of Optics-Ready Power TOM McHALE

58 THE CANIK TP9 FAMILY PORTRAIT

Top Tier Iron for the Working Man WILL DABBS, MD

62 SUPERCHARGED SOG!

Serious Knives for Serious Users PAT COVERT



54



22



26



46

COLUMNS

- 8 SPEAK OUT**
- 14 VANTAGE POINT** TOM McHALE
The Bloodletting
- 28 COP TALK** MASSAD AYOOB
Beyond Dashcam and Bodycam: GUNCAM!
- 71 AYOOB FILES** MASSAD AYOOB
Chesty Puller, .45 In Hand
- 81 GUN RIGHTS** ALAN KORWIN
What Would I do with 126,000 Handguns?
- 82 THE INSIDER** ROY HUNTINGTON
Heavy Duty Revolver Reborn



28



30

RESOURCES

- 64 HANDGUN GIVEAWAY**
- 75 CUSTOM CORNER**
- 78 NEW PRODUCTS** DELANO AMAGUIN
- 80 AD INDEX**

VISIT US AT AMERICANHANDGUNNER.COM FOR MORE CONTENT

DEPARTMENTS

- 16 HANDLOADING**
KaBoom! How Not to Blow Yourself Up LINDSEY BERTOMEN
- 18 PISTOLSMITHING**
Retro is Cool. Very Cool. GREG DERR
- 20 SHOOTING IRON**
The Worst Military Handgun MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
- 22 HANDGUN HUNTING**
What Do You Really Need For Deer and Hogs? MARK HAMPTON
- 24 BETTER SHOOTING**
The Rise and Fall and Rise of the 9mm DAVE ANDERSON
- 26 CARRY OPTIONS**
Carry a Big Gun with LAS Concealment TOM McHALE
- 30 TACTICS & TRAINING**
Lever Actions for Self-Defense TIGER McKEE
- 34 STUDENT HANDGUNNER**
Fine Tune Your Grip with High Tech: Part Deux SERENA JUCHNOWSKI
- 66 THE SIXGUNNER**
Sixgunnin' The 7½" Colt Single Action Army JOHN TAFFIN
- 76 GUNNYSACK**
Alien Gear Driver Defense, Hornady Keypad Safe, Blackhawk Custom Holster Program, Holosun HE407K-GR X2 Green Dot Sight TOM McHALE & SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

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DON'T FIGHT WITH POWER TOOLS!

I'd like to share something that recently happened to me that I think casts a new light on this issue. We often talk about shooting with the other hand in terms of being shot, or injured, or holding a baby, etc. But most of the thoughts we have are in terms of something happening during, or because of, some kind of confrontation.

A couple of weeks ago I had an argument with a bandsaw, and it won. I sliced about halfway through the tendon on my trigger finger. Suddenly I needed to be able to shoot with my "other hand." This is something I practiced for maybe 5% of my trigger time. I wasn't good at it, it wasn't fun (maybe because I wasn't good at it) so I really didn't take it very seriously. I thought, "What are the odds of any confrontation, and then getting shot in my right arm or hand, leaving me unable to shoot?"

They say a wood worker with all his fingers is not working enough. Well, I still have them all but the most important one, my trigger finger so far doesn't work worth a damn. And suddenly shooting with my other hand has become important.

In short, practice with your other hand as much as you do with your main, preferred, strong, etc. hand. You never know when something other than a gunfight will suddenly come along and make being able to shoot with your "other" hand critically important.

Sgt. J. Weiss, Ret.



Sacred Cows

Roy Huntington usually doesn't miss a trick but the 1911 sear spring supposedly has a fifth job. The bent tip on the left tine is the disassembly "tool" for the magazine catch.

At least, that is what I was told many years ago and I have used it for that purpose, on occasion. Normally I would declare this oversight with a slammed fist and a hearty, "By Golly!" but I am still reeling from

a recent discovery that an indisputable fact I had held for over 50 years was not only disputable but was actually false. It seems the notch in the old, military dog tags was actually to index it in the Addressograph Model 70 Medical Imprinter and was not a "tooth notch" for jamming it between the two front teeth of a



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deceased combatant. This misconception was compounded by the fact I had just “educated” my wife when she ran across her father’s old dog tags. Sacred cow tastes very much like crow. So, without access to any of John Browning’s engineering notes to verify this, we will dispense with the tar and feathers and leave it as a possible oversight.

Joe Filice

Well, even in retirement, Roy’s still on top of things. While not part of the article you reference, in the most recent DIY Gunsmithing Special Edition, he wrote an article about how to take down a 1911 with no tools, only using the parts in the pistol to fully field strip it. And, as you’ve likely guessed, part of that involves using the sear spring as a make-do screwdriver to do things like remove the magazine release screw head. Also, for those interested, Joe kindly provided a link for more reading on the dog tag myth. You can learn more at DogTagsRUs.com. —TM

Bombing Hitler

After reading the excellent “Nazi Mouse Guns” article in your November/December 2021 issue, I did some further digging into the briefcase bomb that was used by Count Claus von Stauffenberg.

The detonation was said to have been as powerful as a German artillery shell. It used an explosive charge of Nobel 808 “plastique” explosive, similar to the U.S. Army’s C2 of WWII. The timer/detonator used an acid-filled glass vial that when crushed with a pliers would, over time, release a spring-driven hammer into a percussion cap. It was derived from a British silent time bomb, seized with captured British SOE commandos, (who often provided Nobel 808 to the French resistance) typically used to sabotage railroad bridges and derail trains.

How it made its way from the British POWs to the Operation Valkyrie plotters would be a story in itself. Also, a similar briefcase bomb was put in a plane that Hitler was flying in. Regrettably, it failed to detonate at altitude. Der Fuhrer somehow survived several bomb plots.

Robert Feinstein
96th Infantry Division
Historical Committee
Editor of the *Deadeye Dispatch*

About Those Light Dots ...

What I don’t understand is why no one has ever addressed — at least that I’ve seen or heard — the issue of a laser compared to a red dot optic. It’s always seemed to me that with

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Kevin Michalowski’s 3 Favorite Things
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SPEAK OUT

a (more visible) green laser, you wouldn't have to worry about sights as long as you'd zeroed your laser to your gun. So, you wouldn't have to worry about finding the red dot, what size it was, lighting conditions, MOA or any of that stuff. Am I missing something obvious? I freely admit that's possible!

Don

As for your question on red dot sights and green lasers, here are my thoughts on the topic — your mileage may vary ...

While a green laser is definitely "brighter" than a red one, they're still not bright enough to use as a primary sighting system in daylight conditions. When outside, even at closer ranges, finding the laser dot is not easy — there's just too much light from that big orange ball in the sky to be overcome by a tiny laser powered by a coin-sized battery. So, the net effect is, while you can see it at 5, 10 and even 25 yards in "some" daylight conditions, it's not jumping into your vision like it does in the dark. You'll spend far more time trying to find a laser dot in the daytime than with other sighting systems. In the dark, however, lasers quite literally leap into view. You can't help but see that glowing dot on or near your target. So, it's a question of their intended use. Lasers are great in lower light. Iron sights and/or red dots are great in brighter conditions. Kind of a case of using the right tool for the job. —TM

Team Spirit & The P225

Congratulations and best wishes to Tom McHale upon your assumption of editorship of *AH*. It is good to see Roy H remains aboard. What a team!

I recently caught up with an old university friend who spent 20 years with the RCMP. I knew he would not have been carrying the standard 5", all steel S&W 9mm, which would have shouted "I'm a cop." Here's a short list, with some of my friends comments: .25 acp Beretta — my wallet gun, .38 special S&W J-Frame — with a barrel shroud; one of my family's favorites, 1911s — many over the years — the view criminals had of the muzzle seemed to impress!

This last one may be of special interest to Roy. My friend has medium-sized hands. He could not get comfortable with the SIG SAUER P226. What fit him perfectly was the P225. I remember you writing favorably about your experiences with that model. He had a set of two P225s, one for strong side holster and the other

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for special occasions, such as service of search or arrest warrants, when he would take both.

John Paton

Webley Warnings

I should have written this 20 years ago but at least now I have recently reviewed several writers' articles and videos regarding the Webley Mark 6 before this e-mail. I had not come across the chamber mouth measurement before in their content, nor found it referenced in comments in several online discussions.

While on another gun's improvement project, it occurred to me to check the cylinder dimensions of my 1916 Webley Mark 6, which had been altered for .45 ACP with half-moon clips. The chamber mouths were 0.450". To go with a bore of 0.455"? Well, this makes sense for the earlier loads with a hollow base lead bullet and black powder. But not for the jacketed round used with smokeless powder used in 1916.

And if using the .45 ACP with

its higher pressures, the jacketed round being forced through the 0.450" opening makes the situation even more dangerous.

I was in the process of opening my Ruger Old Model Bisley Vaquero chamber mouths to 0.453" from the factory 0.451" to better go with the barrel bore of 0.4515" and the planned use of LBT or other heavy bullets. It was a good time to also open the altered Webley cylinder's chamber mouths to 0.452".

I do not know about any other Webley Chamber mouths. The 0.450" diameter may be just fine with the lead Fiocchi .455 rounds in an original cylinder.

I use .45 auto-rim cartridges with 0.451" lead round nose bullets. This is the only auto-rim I have and only goes in the Webley. And I do not use the .45 ACP in it. So there is no room for confusion. Thanks. Hope to help someone.

James Glenn

Love Them Holsters

I rarely comment in a magazine column but wanted to take a few minutes and thank you for highlighting Dave Galloway's Ronin Leather Holsters in the Jul/Aug issue of *American*

Handgunner. I echo your comments regarding his first-class work. From the design of the holster to the quality of the stitching, and especially the finish work, my Aegis Calypto model is top notch. Dave took time on the phone to answer my questions and when the holster arrived in my mailbox a couple of weeks later, even my wife took notice and commented she thought it looked great (high praise indeed). In short, its looks are flawless, it fits great and I couldn't be happier. Thank you again for bringing Ronin to my attention. I suspect I will be adding more of them to my holster collection.

Garry Cuff

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THE BLOODLETTING



A libertarian mindset and compassion aren't, at least by definition, mutually exclusive. However, there are occasions in life where one has to plant a stake in the ground and choose one or the other.

Most every range outing, I spot a new(er) shooting cautiously aiming a pistol downrange, arms quivering, anticipation coming off their body in near-visible waves. As I peruse the stance and grip, I see it. The dreaded "thumbs crossed" over the butt end of a semi-auto pistol.

The mini-libertarian elf break dancing on my left shoulder says, "So what? If they choose to come to the range to torch off a lethal weapon without even considering the instruction manual, then they have to live with the consequences. It's not our role in life to save people from themselves."

But there's another gnome on my right shoulder. He's playing Kenny G. remakes on a harp, and his counsel is different. "You have an opportunity to save someone from slicing their thumb clean off and bloodying up the range. Don't you love your fellow humans? What, do you watch reruns of *Halloween XVIII* in your spare time? What's wrong with you? Go help them!"

He's got a point, because empathy comes into play in this particular situation.

I'm not talking about sympathy, where you kinda think you can relate to someone else's situation. I'm talking about real empathy. The kind of empathy Brian Williams and Dan Rather share. You physically feel their pain because you've been there before, made that mistake and suffered through the consequences.

When I see the crossed thumbs, I'm pretty sure I have so much empathy the web of my support hand starts to bleed, and I start looking for a police escort to the nearest CVS Pharmacy. That's because, once upon a time, long, long ago, when I was even more of a dope than I might be now, I just about removed



When you see this at the range, should you intervene? Tom's empathetic side says yes.

a body part as a result of hubris.

My first "real" handgun was a Series 1 Colt Woodsman .22 LR semi-auto pistol. My grandfather bought it back in 1936 and fired maybe 50 rounds through it. While he didn't save the box, he did maintain it meticulously. Apparently, his maintenance regimen included sharpening the slide rails, but we'll come back to that. Anyway, it was (and is — sorry, I'm never parting with it) a gorgeous pistol, and I was anxious to shoot it.

At that point in my life, I'd shot a few BB guns and .22 rifles here and there. If memory serves, I even fired one shot from a .50-caliber flintlock rifle at summer camp, although I now realize the coach charged it with barely enough powder to dribble the lead ball out the fiery end. I had precisely zero experience with handguns.

But no worries, you can tell by looking handguns are easy to operate. Hold the handle thing, yank on the trigger, and it's sure to perforate the target of your choice, right? Why would anyone bother with directions or asking for help? After all, I was a man and born in America. I'm pretty sure the genes for firearm "expert-cy" are passed down in a meandering genetic

path straight from Daniel Boone.

So off to the range I went with a fresh box of .22 ammo. After carefully emptying my newly acquired Wal-Mart shooting bag, opening my fresh bulk pack of ammo, and unwrapping my Woodsman from its well-oiled T-shirt, I was ready to shoot. Admittedly, I was a bit nervous, not having any real idea of what I was doing. It was also my first time in a shooting range, so I didn't know the etiquette.

I loaded the magazine, inserted it into the pistol, aimed, pulled — not pressed — the trigger and ... click. After a hot second or two, I realized there was nothing wrong with the old, but pristine, pistol. In my haste, as you've already guessed, I hadn't racked the slide. Easy fix there. Upon correcting this problem, I proceeded to empty the magazine in short order, putting at least some of the shots on paper somewhere. Success! I figured I was now an experienced, bordering on expert, handgunner! So I removed the empty magazine and reached for the big box of .22 ammo to reload.

It was then I noticed some idiot had bled all over my shooting table, splattering pints of Type O- and various bits of tissue all over my gear. Huh? Where'd that come from? After a

minute or two, I figured out the source of the bloodletting was my left hand, in the web between my thumb and index finger. I was flummoxed. How could that possibly have happened? Ricochet? Did the sketchy looking guy four lanes to the left shoot me? Falling pieces from the Skylab Space Station?

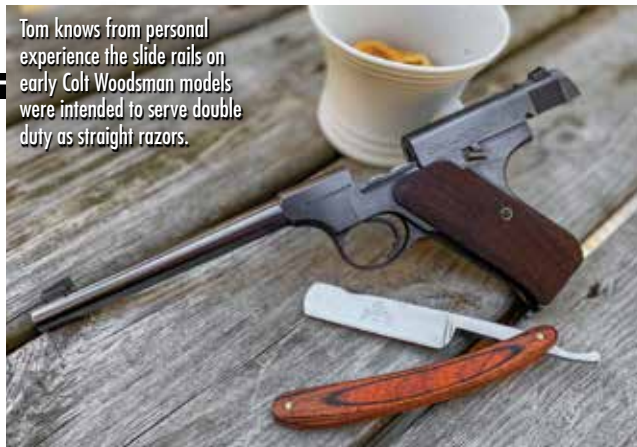
While I was pondering the source of my impending death by exsanguination, I made like the old spaghetti westerns and wrapped up my hand with a dirty rag. The only one I had available was the oily T-shirt shroud serving as the faithful preservation agent for my Colt Woodsman. Oil makes a great antiseptic, right? If it works for Clint Eastwood, it'd certainly work for me.

It took me quite a while to figure out what happened. As all of you likely know by now, a Colt Woodsman slide reciprocates rearward at Warp Factor 7 after each shot. And like an asteroid, it doesn't really care what's in the way, even if it is a frequently used body part. Oh, and I also learned

Colt designed those early Woodsmans with a special bonus feature. The bottom of the slide rail doubles as a great straight razor in a pinch, pre-oiled to go easy on facial skin. I also learned precisely how much blood you can lose and still remain conscious and capable of driving. The range was a bit out in the boonies, and it took me a good 20 minutes to pack up, sneak out the front door, and find a pharmacy well-stocked with bandages and tape. That sucker didn't stop bleeding for a good hour. What? Ask the range for a first aid kit? That's ridiculous because it would have been ... embarrassing.

I learned a valuable lesson about how semi-auto pistols work, and even more about how not to hold them. I might have also learned a thing or two

Tom knows from personal experience the slide rails on early Colt Woodsman models were intended to serve double duty as straight razors.



about the importance of recognizing one's own ignorance and limitations. I guess, in hindsight, it might have been a good idea to make that first range trip with an experienced friend. And, also in hindsight, I'll bet a nickel the proprietor of that indoor range would have been happy to help me out had I swallowed the hairball of pride and asked.

By the way, if anyone needs any tips on how to best leave a shooting range discreetly, while bleeding all over the place, drop me an email. I'm  kind of an expert in that.

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HOW NOT TO BLOW YOURSELF UP

On May 2, 1878, in Minneapolis, the Washburn “A” Flour Mill exploded, killing 14 workers instantly, leveling a mill capable of churning out boxcars of flour every day, and gutting five nearby mills.

The cause of the Washburn “A” tragedy was a mystery at the time.

Milled flour isn’t particularly flammable, so this idea was dismissed initially for other explanations like gaseous decomposition in the nearby Mississippi river. John A. Christian, the mill’s manager, proposed flour dust in the air burned rapidly, once ignited. Christian was right.

The principle that caused the devas-

tation is the same concept that prompts us to warn about leaving lots of space in a case. Light loads in big cases have the potential to kaboom, rather than burn at a predictable rate. There are other ways to cause a cartridge kaboom, and it’s up to you to implement safe inspection and reloading practices.

Care In Reloading

To avoid the dreaded kaboom, be cognizant of any anomaly in the shooting behavior of your gun. Anomalies include: a gun that exhibits no recoil, unusual amounts of smoke or flame, or a change in the operation of the gun. Any time an anomaly occurs, stop and figure out the cause. Of course, start checking for anomalies before shooting by inspecting brass for discoloration, cracks or bulges – even in loaded cartridges.

Out Of Battery Firing

“Out of battery” means the action/chamber of the gun is not completely closed, and the gun managed to fire. Although brass is pretty strong stuff, it is both the brass and the chamber of the gun that contain the pressure of the fired cartridge. The chamber shouldn’t open until the pressure has lowered to safe levels, and a partially opened chamber usually causes brass rupture. Out-of-battery firing is usually a mechanical failure.

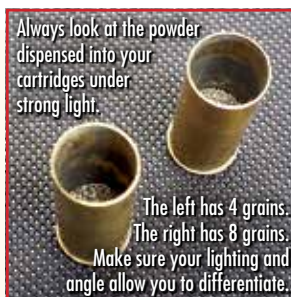
GLOCK Bulge

“GLOCK bulge” is not limited to GLOCKS. It occurs when a high-pressure load is fired in a partially supported chamber – common in earlier GLOCK models. There’s nothing wrong or unsafe about a partially supported chamber. They were designed to feed reliably, and cartridges that meet SAAMI specs will work in them just fine. The problem is the brass expands in this area, which causes a “guppy belly” on the brass. This is especially common in .40 S&W because it is thinner near the case web than a 9mm, and the pressures for these cartridges are comparable.

Initially, I had a real problem with GLOCK Bulge, because I shoot an old GLOCK, plus I pick up range brass. I wisely got Hornady New Dimension Custom Grade dies and run them all the way until the base of the die kisses the shell plate. You can also use a Lee APP Bulge Buster Kit. It pushes the entire brass through a carbide sizing die.



Lindsey runs a Hornady Lock-N-Load Ammo Plant Progressive Press and uses Hornady Custom Grade full-length sizing dies to minimize case bulge issues.

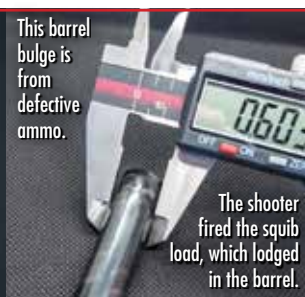


Always look at the powder dispensed into your cartridges under strong light.

The left has 4 grains. The right has 8 grains. Make sure your lighting and angle allow you to differentiate.



This case is bulged near the base from firing in an unsupported chamber and won’t seat fully. Use a Lee Bulge Buster kit to ensure all cases meet spec.



This barrel bulge is from defective ammo.

The shooter fired the squib load, which lodged in the barrel.

Squib Loads

A squib load occurs when there is insufficient powder, or no powder, to propel the bullet all the way out of the barrel. In semi-automatic firearms, a squib load will normally fail to cycle, and the shooter is well aware something is wrong.

One day I was on the range and I was shooting side-by-side with my friend, another firearm instructor. My gun gave a slight pop and reduced recoil. I didn’t think anything of it. I went “Tap, Rack, Target” and my shooting buddy yelled, “STOP!” I was working out of force of habit. Fortunately, part of the habit is to perform immediate action (Tap, Rack, Target), but assess before squeezing the trigger. There was a bullet lodged in my barrel. If I had fired, the result would have been a serious kaboom. Always assess before squeezing the trigger.

Double Charge

A double charge is when more than one measurement of powder is dispensed into a given cartridge. Squib loads and double charges are prevented by using consistent reloading techniques. If you’re using a single stage press, eyeball your cases with powder in them under a strong light. For progressive setups, attach a bright light under the press that allows in-line powder checking, or use a Dillon Powder Check System.

Wrong Cartridge

I have done this, and I admit it. I have loaded a 9mm cartridge into a .40 S&W gun. In my defense, the cartridge had fallen into a box of rounds. Fortunately, nothing came of it. It could be, and has been, disastrous for those who have forced a 10mm into a 40 S&W chamber, or similar.

Most kabooms are preventable. The best prevention is to establish consistent reloading habits and adhere to them.



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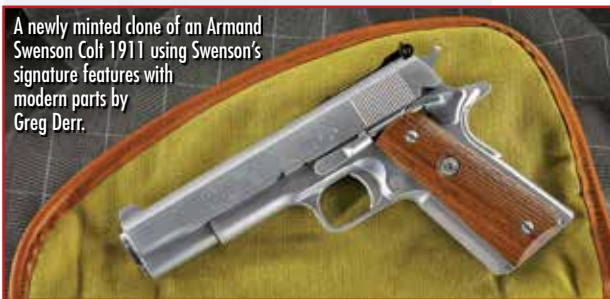


Retro Is Cool. Very Cool.

Custom gunsmiths are working overtime to create cool retro guns. The trend has been going on for a few years. It seems gun owners are looking more to craftsmanship than mass production. With the passing of some of the innovative gunsmiths from the '70s and '80s like Jim Clark, Armand Swenson, Jim Boland and Charley Kelsey, the rush was on to buy a piece of their art. Not unlike original art if one can't get the original, they commission a copy or look for a new gunsmith to create their vision of cool.

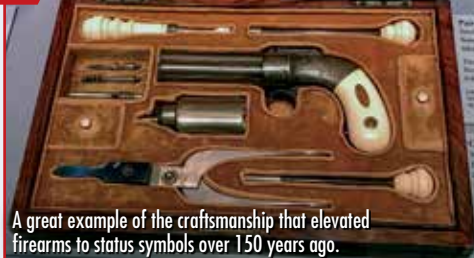
This is driving prices up as well as creating long wait times for custom gunsmiths. The 1911, S&W revolvers, Colt SAA and Browning Hi-Power guns have never been so popular.

A newly minted clone of an Armand Swenson Colt 1911 using Swenson's signature features with modern parts by Greg Derr.

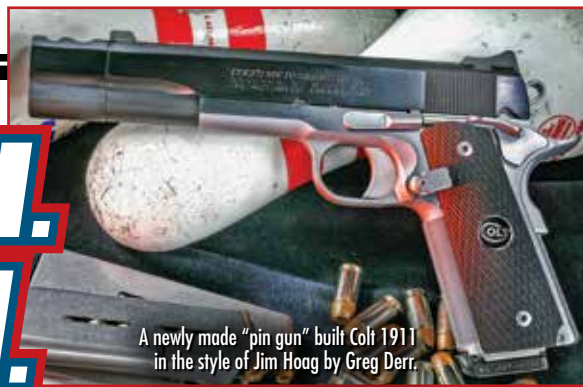


CUSTOM 1911s

I've had many requests to create custom 1911s with features that mimic work from the '60s and '70s like frame stippling, retro rear sights and square trigger guards. Many clients want the old school features but with modern parts and tolerances. For example, a client wanted an '80s vintage "Bowling Pin Gun" like the one he saw on the cover of *American Handgunner* built by Jim Hogue. He could not find a used gun in the condition



A great example of the craftsmanship that elevated firearms to status symbols over 150 years ago.



A newly made "pin gun" built Colt 1911 in the style of Jim Hoag by Greg Derr.



A pair of custom S&W revolvers fitted with faux ivory grips by gunsmith Dave Laubert of Defensive Creations.

COOL FACTOR

Dave Laubert owner of Defensive Creations Gunsmithing put it this way, "I would imagine it all has to do with the demographic of the people behind the resurgence. The firearms industry is a little bored with the proliferation of plastic guns because they have no soul and are just not that interesting. Revolvers, like 1911s, have history and they are sexy because they are usually finely finished steel and exotic woods as the original designers meant them to be. They require skill, craftsmanship and passion to manufacture.

"Now I don't want it to seem I am bashing the plastic guns — I am not. But they are tools just like the 1/2" wrench or 10mm socket in your toolbox. If you lose it or break it, you just go to the store and buy another one.

"Guns made of steel and wood will stand the test of time as they always have! They are the icons just like old muscle cars. Technology may have made things slightly better, but the allure and attractiveness has been lost. A 2021 pickup will haul your ass around just as well, if not better than a 1961 Chevy truck, but the '61 is way cooler!"

Dave makes some of the coolest custom S&W revolvers in the country. He's had a run of great 3" K-Frames converted from 4" models. They are fitted with better sights he custom makes. The bluing and exotic wood grips are elegant — worthy of passing down a generation. You should check out his work.

he wanted. So, he had me make a clone. It featured all the things Hoag would have put into a gun, but maybe a bit better quality selection of parts. Back then it was all Colt or a few Kings or Wilson aftermarket options. Today we have precise EDM and CNC cut treated parts from bar stock steel and barrels oversized in all dimensions.

Gunsmiths like Ted Yost handcraft 1911s fit for royalty with elegant wood grips and custom inlaid walnut boxes fitted for the gun and custom tools. Smiths like Ted are rare. He treats his work like a painter thinking of every brush stroke and its relation to all the other strokes on his canvas. He also knows when enough is enough.

Knowing when to not touch a part or feature is often overlooked by many new smiths who can't grasp the concept of "simple elegance." Sure, there are fully engraved guns that bedazzle — the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is full of them, but we're talking guns to shoot here, not ones to handle with white gloves.

I know there are plenty of uses for new age guns made of space age materials, but most shooters at one time or another want a classic gun. Think of it as having a Sunday best for those special occasions when you need to feel something special in your hands. Like taking a classic car out for a drive, it just feels good, and you get ... 

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THE WORST MILITARY HANDGUN?

Anyone who has studied the history of military handguns must wonder how some ordnance officers formed their concepts of ideal handguns. For instance, consider the Russian Model 1895 Nagant revolver with its odd 7.62mm cartridge wherein the bullet is seated fully inside the cartridge case. That was because when the hammer is cocked, its cylinder is pushed forward over the butt end of its barrel. The idea with such a system is gas cannot leak upon firing. Never mind the gas leakage between barrel/cylinder gap has been of no importance with successful revolver designs for a half century!

American ordnance officers were not exempt from mistakes. In 1892, they chose to drop .45 Colt as the U.S. Army's handgun cartridge in favor of .38 Colt (aka .38 Long Colt). It was a piddling little round pushing a 150-grain bullet at only about 750 fps. Its lack of power resulted in it being replaced by .45s again in only a few years. The abovementioned 7.62mm Nagant used a 108-grain bullet at a mere 900 fps.

The sideplates of Type 26 revolvers are hinged, revealing their innards. Great for cleaning, but perhaps an attraction for tinkers.



Bottom: From left: original Japanese 9mm rimmed cartridge, Duke's handload with Buffalo Arms brass and Oregon Trail 147-grain bullets, U.S. .38 Long Colt military round, and a U.S. .38 Special military round. Note the FMJ bullet.

MODEL #3 INSPIRATION GONE BAD

Type 26s are of top break design, obviously leaning on S&W's Model #3s from the late 1800s. Lifting the barrel hinge allows it to pivot downwards, which then cams its extractor up simultaneously emptying all six chambers. (Japan had purchased thousands of S&W Model #3s for the .44 Russian cartridge. I recently read of a U.S. Marine on Iwo Jima finding six pristine condition S&W .44s in a cave while the battle was still raging.) Type 26s had 4.7" barrels and weighed 2 lbs. Sights were a simple groove in top strap for rear and a half moon front. One good feature is the front sight blade is pinned



to a stud machined integral with the barrel. Therefore, front sight blades can be changed to help zeroing for elevation. Grips are checkered wood, round in shape and obviously meant for smaller hands than my big American mitts.

Pulling down on Type 26 trigger guards frees side plates so they swing away, revealing the revolver's inner workings. That would be great for cleaning, but I'm sure Japanese soldiers were instructed not to mess with their revolvers' innards without supervision. For Americans, with their penchant for figuring out how things work, such instructions would have been considered suggestions or challenges. By



Duke's Japanese Type 26 9mm (rimmed) revolver with its clamshell style holster.

THE WORST EVER?

But personally, I think the biggest joke among military handguns is Japan's 9mm Type 26 revolver introduced in 1893. Don't let the 9mm moniker fool you as it has nothing to do with the famous rimless 9mm Parabellum (9mm Luger) that pushes 115/124-grain bullets in the 1,200/1,300 fps range. Nope. The 9mm Japanese revolver cartridge is rimmed and fired a 149-grain bullet at approximately 750 fps. (Did the Japanese ordnance officers copy American's .38 Long Colt?)

A weak chambering isn't enough to consign a military cartridge into the silly category. After all, three decades later, the Brits thought a 200-grain .38 at 650 fps was sufficient for combat. It's just that the Type 96 incorporated several other poorly thought-out features. One is it fires in double-action mode only (otherwise known as self-cocking). Again, a few decades later, the Brits followed with a variation of their little Enfield Mk. 2 No. 1 .38s. They removed the hammer spur, so only double-action shooting was feasible. Supposedly, this was done for tank crewmen because hammer spurs entangled on things inside a crowded turret.

A worse idea with Japan's Type 26s is that locking bolts only hold chambers aligned with barrels when triggers are pulled. Otherwise, the cylinder is free to rotate. This feature might have back-fired on "Dirty Harry" when he asked, "Did I fire five or six?" With the Type 26, who would bet their life the next round coming up in a free-wheeling cylinder was live? Any sort of strenuous activity might have rotated it.

World War II, Type 26s were obsolete and mostly were issued to NCOs.

My Type 26 showed up at a Montana gun show, complete with its clamshell holster and carrying strap. It has a minor amount of pitting on it indicating it saw service but still its excellent manufacturing quality is evident. It's not a hunk of junk; just poorly thought out. Cases can be made from .38 Specials, but I just bought mine from Buffalo Arms of Idaho. My handloads consist of 2.0 grains of Hodgdon's Titegroup under 147-grain Oregon Trail 0.356" bullets. Assembling the rounds can be done with .38 Super or .38 Long Colt dies. I have shot it enough to know I cannot hit much with it past about 50 feet.

It's my pick for the all-time worst military handgun.



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WHAT DO YOU REALLY NEED FOR DEER AND HOGS?

When surfing various social media sites, it becomes apparent many handgun hunters are pursuing whitetail deer and wild hogs. It certainly makes sense, as whitetail deer represent America's most popular game animal. They inhabit a great deal of the lower 48 and provide ample opportunity for many handgunners hoping to punch their tag and fill a freezer full of tasty venison. The population of wild hogs has proliferated in recent times and now thrives in many states. They too have become popular with handgun hunters. Since these two species of game are widely popular with handgunners, what caliber is really needed for success?

DOSE OF REALITY

Opinions differ broadly and will come in an assortment of answers. Let's look at this from a realistic angle realizing there are many cartridges capable of taking deer and hogs. Remember, polar bear hunting has been ingrained in the indigenous Arctic cultures for decades. Back in the day, many Inuit natives used a harpoon to take large and dangerous white bears. They eventually graduated to .22 LR, .22 Mag. and .223 with a variety of other small calibers to hunt polar bear. The fact the Inuits took many polar bear with a .22 Mag. doesn't convince me this is a suitable choice. Likewise, there has been a trainload of white-

tail deer taken with the .22 LR but this doesn't mean it's an appropriate, ethical, (or legal) cartridge in locales where deer hunting occurs.

So, we can discuss and debate different calibers until the cows come home. Before you start sending your cards, letters, emails and death threats to me for not mentioning your favorite round with which you've killed thousands of deer or hogs, let's first look at what's of paramount importance — the bullet doing all the dirty work.

The bullet, regardless of diameter, weight, or configuration, must create sufficient blood loss, terminate the working order of vital organs, or disrupt and cease function of the central ner-

vous system. There are many calibers and bullets capable of causing blood loss and depriving the brain of enough oxygen to function.

The combination of accuracy, penetration, and ideally, expansion, will result in a clean, quick, humane demise. I mention expansion; remember we're talking about deer and hogs — not rhino and elephant. Placing the bullet in the right place is most definitely the first step. Not doing so will probably lead to a wounded, unrecoverable animal. We can agree or disagree about cartridges and bullets for all eternity, but a well-placed shot will always remain essential.



Wild boar hunting is popular with handgun hunters. Mark took this boar with a Freedom Arms .44 Mag. from 55 yards.



The .308 Winchester remains one of Mark's favorite single-shot pistol rounds. This dandy buck was taken with an MOA Maximum topped with Leupold scope. The MOA features a falling block design and is very accurate.

BULLET REQUIREMENTS

Obviously, the bullet must be capable of penetrating through hide, perhaps rib bones or shoulder blade, and muscle tissue to reach the vitals. Often, I hear those stating two holes are better than one. Well, to some extent — I agree. An entrance and exit hole will in most cases, leave a much better blood trail than entrance only.

But if it were only as simple as two holes are better than one, we'd all be shooting FMJ bullets! While FMJ or solid bullets may be the ticket for rhino and elephant, they are illegal in most states for hunting whitetail deer and grossly unethical. An FMJ or similar bullet will pass cleanly through an animal such as whitetail and hogs, leaving the proverbial "two holes are better than one" without creating a large and destructive wound channel.

Compared to an FMJ or solid, a well-constructed expanding bullet will create much greater tissue damage and ideally, will exit leaving a better probability of visible blood trail. Yes, I like two holes, but I want the bullet to devastate

vital organs before saying goodbye. For hogs and deer, a premium expanding bullet is ideally suited for the task. When you place your shot in the proper location and the bullet transfers sufficient damage to vital organs, you'll be processing meat shortly.

So, what do you really need for whitetail and hogs? Well, we've all got our favorites and thankfully there are lots of possibilities in both revolvers and single-shot handguns. I can't get a good night's sleep with anything less than a .357 Mag. If I had to choose only one revolver cartridge to hunt deer and hogs with for the rest of my life, I would hunt with the .44 Mag. In single-shots, the .308 Winchester would get the nod. Both of these rounds have served me well over the last few decades, successfully taking a ship load of venison and pork. Your mileage may and probably will vary. Thankfully we don't have to choose only one and we're fortunate there are plenty of cartridges capable of delivering the necessary punch.

A well-placed shot with the right bullet will be your friend. Choose wisely and enjoy the experience, and by all means, cherish the opportunity.



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THE RISE AND FALL AND RISE AND FALL AND RISE OF THE 9MM



The FN P-35 was used in considerable numbers by both Axis forces (made in Belgium) and Allied forces (made by Inglis in Canada).



Georg Luger designed this pistol to fire a necked-down cartridge. When the German military wanted a larger bore, Luger expanded it to 9mm.

RISE AND FALL

Although many 9x19 pistols were admired by American handgun enthusiasts for their design features and quality, respect for the cartridge itself remained tepid. Loyalty to the .45 ACP cartridge was one factor. The .45 had served the U.S. military well, in pistols and submachine guns. Among American shooters, the superior power of the manly .45 — the old sledge hammer — over the effete European 9mm was never doubted. Another mark against the 9x19 were moderately powered American loads. Most American manufacturers loaded a 115- to 124-grain jacketed round nose bullet at a nominal 1,120 fps. In much of the rest of the world, the 9x19 was loaded considerably hotter. In the mid-'80s, I chronographed Canadian-made NATO loads with 116-grain bullets at well over 1,300 fps.

In the 1950s, stories about the U.S. military adopting 9x19 pistols natu-

rally caught the interest of Colt and S&W. Colt chambered the alloy-frame Commander in 9mm, while S&W introduced the model 39. Then the military said, "We were just kidding, we'll stay with the .45." Both companies had some success selling the new designs on the civilian market.

The 9x19 began rising in popularity in the late 1960s and into the '70s. Riots and "revolutionary" violence got many a law enforcement officer to rethink handgun features. Illinois State Police adopted the S&W 39 in the late '60s. I recall around 1974 seeing a Salt Lake City officer wearing a model 39.

In the '70s and into the '80s several factors came together. Higher capacity and faster reloading increased

Evolution of 9x19 pistols — Left: Walther designed P-38; Center: S&W model 39 combined the DA lockwork of the P-38 with the Browning-designed tilt-lock system.



Right: S&W 6906, similar in operation to the model 39 but more compact and with a 12-round magazine.

the appeal of semi-auto pistols over revolvers. Handgun ammunition became more effective as companies such as Super Vel and Cor-Bon spurred competition and innovation. High quality handgun designs seemed to be popping up everywhere. The U.S. military again expressed interest in a 9mm service handgun ("We're serious this time!") and in 1985 adopted the M9.

RISE AND FALL. AND RISE.

Everything seemed to be aligning for the 9x19, military acceptance, more police and private citizen interest, improved loads, splendid handguns. Then came April 11, 1986, and the infamous Miami shootout. Two FBI agents were killed and five wounded in what has been called the bloodiest day in FBI history. One of many decisions from analysis of the battle was to develop a more effective handgun cartridge.

I'm exaggerating a bit to call this the "fall" of the 9x19, but it certainly slowed its growth. The FBI tried the 10mm Auto, 10mm "Lite" and eventually the .40 S&W. For a couple of decades, it seemed the .40 S&W would be the predominant self-defense cartridge. Then, as these things are wont to do, the pendulum swung back. Bullet improvement continued with better

balance of expansion and penetration. Accompanied by meticulous testing by FBI ballisticians, the FBI announced adoption of the 9x19 thirty years after the Miami shootout. Hundreds of thousands of police officers and private citizens have found the size and recoil of the 9x19 let them shoot with confidence.

Why is the 9x19 such a good cartridge? Its rimless design stacks and feeds smoothly from single or double-stack magazines. The case is strong, especially the head and rim. Combined with its gently tapered case body, it feeds, extracts and ejects reliably. It is available in dozens of semi-auto pistol designs of the highest quality, and in sizes to fit most any need and any size shooter. It adapts well to high-capacity magazines; with modern loads, it provides effective power along with moderate recoil. Not bad for a 120-year-old cartridge.





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HIDE THE BIG GUNS WITH LAS CONCEALMENT

I like big guns and I cannot lie. I prefer the control, the sight radius, the capacity, the feel in hand — all of it leads to shooting confidence. When weighing carry options, confidence is everything to me. If I can conceal it, I'll gladly suffer the "little bit of extra weight" penalty tacked on to my EDC load with a larger gun.

The myth of "I can't carry a larger gun" is precisely that — a myth. You can, if you want to. I think the more accurate phrasing should be "I'm not willing to carry a larger gun" because with the right gear, and a spoonful of commitment, you most certainly can. I know women who barely top the five-foot mark and tip the scales at just over a hundred who carry full size 1911s, so you can too.

THE RIGHT GEAR

The right equipment goes a long way to making big gun carry a reality. If you're carrying with any type of IWB holster, the length is "free" as the barrel and slide are hidden under clothing, so you're really just worrying about hiding the grip. A holster capable of drawing even a long grip in toward the body will do the job.

Enter LAS Concealment. Designer and Purveyor of a fine line of several IWB (and one OWB) styles, the company offers solutions for all sizes of handguns. I've been testing them with two very large pistols, the Staccato P and C2 models — both double-stack 9mm 2011s. The results? Outstanding. Using two different LAS Concealment holsters, I make even the full-size P model disappear with just a T-shirt.

SHOGUN

The Shogun is advertised as an appendix inside the waistband (AIWB) holster, but I've found it works just peachy as a strong-side hip IWB holster too.

It comes with two belt attachment points on which you can select two types of clip styles for either 1.5" or 1.75" belt widths. The IWB Overhook struts are one-piece injection molded clips with an aggressive hook securing the clip to the bottom edge of your belt. Once mounted, it doesn't come off. You'll see three mounting holes, one of which is horizontal, so you have control over cant angle. The Discreet Carry Concepts Overhook is a metal device — flat for discreet carry. It features vertical oblong mounting holes so you can

adjust ride height. The springy nature of the clip and bottom hook make it a bit tricky to get on the belt, but that's by design. Once in place, it ain't moving.

The holster itself is cut for optic use and features a closed muzzle design for extra comfort, especially when carrying IWB. There are multiple sets of mounting holes so you can tinker with hook placement to fit your desired carry plan.

The Shogun also features a concealment wing. This ledge presses against the inside of the belt and drives the pistol grip back in towards the body, aiding concealment.

I've been using this holster for AIWB carry using an optional teardrop wedge mounted via Velcro on the back of the holster body. It shoves the muzzle out, away from the body, while bringing the grip closer in. For AIWB, it increases comfort at least 673%. When carrying strong side hip, I detach the foam and use just the wing to draw the grip in close. Win, win.

RONIN

The Ronin is a pure appendix design and comes with a magazine carrier. When worn up front, the gun rides to the strong side of center while the spare magazine rides just to the support side of center. The two unique halves of



The LAS Concealment Shogun is designed as an AIWB holster but works equally well as a standard strong-side IWB.



The Ronin 3.0 holster is for appendix carry and features a flexible bungee-attached magazine carrier.



When carrying up front, the foam wedge makes all the difference. Just tear it off for standard IWB carry.

the holster (gun body and magazine pouch) are attached by elastic bungee cord, so each has a range of independent motion. This flexibility makes all the difference for comfort.

I've been using this design to carry both the Staccato P and Staccato C2 model with an extra mag. The results? Miraculous. I can easily conceal the large pistol and even a 20-round spare magazine with nothing more than shorts and a T-shirt. I do use the teardrop foam wedge with this one too and, again, it makes all the difference.

While the Shogun uses a detachable concealment wing, the Ronin uses a molded-in type. It functions identically.

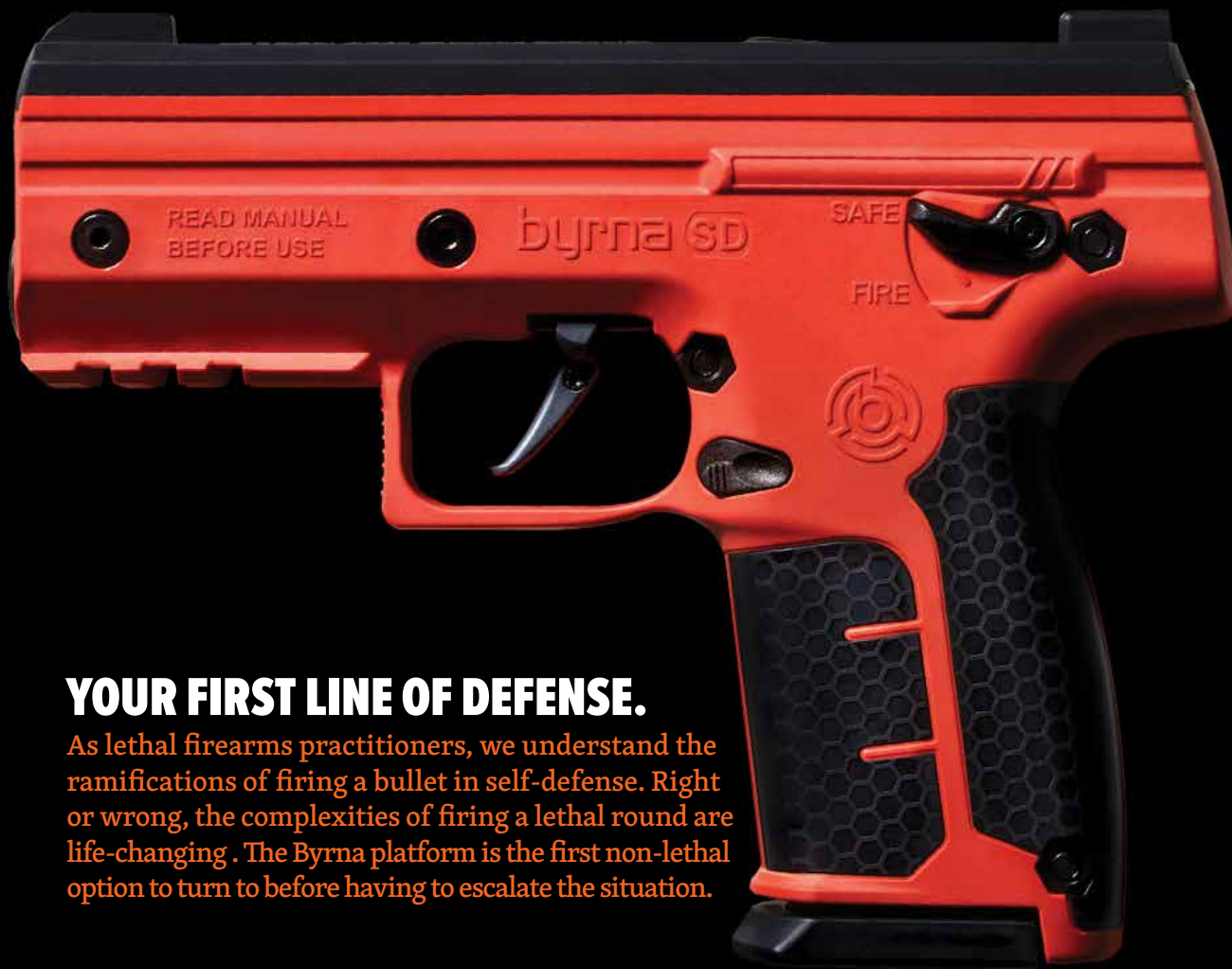
Carrying a large gun with effective concealment is possible with the right gear. If you'd told me months ago I'd be carrying a large 2011 pistol every day in the appendix position, I would have called foul. Yet here I am doing just that.



For more info: LASConcealment.com

THE UN-GUN™

It looks like a gun. It performs like a gun. But it's designed to be NON-LETHAL.



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KNOW YOUR OPTIONS



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GUNCAM!

BEYOND DASHCAM AND BODYCAM

This gun-mounted camera has numerous advantages over bodycam and dashcam in proving what you were facing when you had to fire.

We've had cops wearing bodycams for years and dash-board-mounted cameras in police cars for even more years. They have been critical in providing public transparency, and in exonerating officers from false allegations.

They do, however, have shortcomings. The dashcam stays fixed, pointing in only one direction once the vehicle comes to a halt. Often, all or much of the shooting takes place out of view of the camera.

A problem with the body-worn camera has always been, "Where do you put it?" Worn with headwear like a GoPro, it is uncomfortable for all-day wear, and problematic in other ways: It can easily be knocked off in a struggle, for example. As torsos twist and angles change, a shoulder-mounted camera might lose the needed POV too.

The way it has worked out, the great majority of police bodycams are worn at the center chest or solar plexus area. This is perhaps the least uncomfortable approach and works very well for capturing most action the officer is facing.

Unfortunately, two-handed eye level shooting has been standard in police training for generations. When the gun comes up this way, it blocks the view of the bodycam's lens. The camera records the pistol is firing, but the gun may obscure its view of what the officer, whose eyes are higher, is seeing that causes him or her to shoot in the first place.

Mas and Firearms/Tactics Instructor Daniel Shaw tested the Viridian XTL Gen 3 on this Gen4 G17.

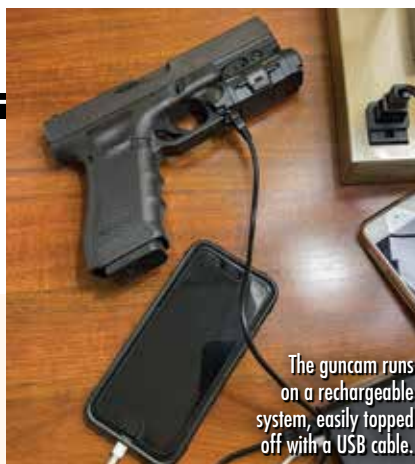


CASE IN POINT

Proof of concept" is found in a 2019 shooting in Vernon, Texas, in which the involved officer was wearing a bodycam at midriff level and had a Viridian guncam on his GLOCK.

into a man who could not be seen on that video to be armed. But the Viridian guncam did see and record the would-be cop-killer's weapon. As a result, Corporal Session was vindicated.

Consider the price of the Viridian X5L Gen 3 with a camera is roughly one hour of a good lawyer's time.



The guncam runs on a rechargeable system, easily topped off with a USB cable.



The guncam's integral white light has ample lumens to help record what's in front of the gun.

DETAILS

Viridian details the features of the multi-purpose attachment as follows: "500 lumen LED light. 5mW green laser sight. Mini USB port and indicator lights for onboard charging and file transfer. IPX7 waterproof rating (exceeds one meter for 30 minutes). Integrated microphone. 1920x1080 HD video INSTANT-ON technology. Fits most holsters designed for the Streamlight TLR-1. Fits most full-sized handguns and rifles." All for \$599.

For some time now, I've been testing a sample of this on a Gen4 GLOCK 17, with a Viridian-provided Safariland security holster. They work fine together. While it could have diagnostic/analytical applications in firearms training, the guncam's greatest advantage is in documenting how a gunfight went down: what the gun — and its shooter — were seeing at the instant the potentially controversial shots in question were fired.

The X5L Gen 3 Viridian on the test G17 brought its front roughly parallel to the gun muzzle. This preserves the too-seldom recognized advantage of a tactical light that protrudes in front of the muzzle, which is creating a stand-off effect if a press contact shot becomes necessary. Pressing the muzzle hard against something will drive most service autos out of battery and prevent them from firing. An attachment such as a weapon-mounted light keeps that from happening and allows the initial and follow-up shots. Our sample worked for straightforward press-contact shots with the guncam on the G17.

Having long since lost count of the OIS trials I've been involved in as an expert witness, those generally run into hundreds of hours of those legal fees. Seen in that light, the Viridian guncam is a stone bargain. I am doing two cases now that would have been a lot easier if the officers had had Viridian gun cameras.

The same could be true for a private citizen who needed to use a firearm in self-defense. Viridian is a pro-2A company and advertises its product as suitable for armed citizens as well as police. With today's concealment holsters, a service-size pistol so equipped can be carried daily and discreetly, even IWB and AIWB.



For more info: ViridianWeaponTech.com



IT'S TRUE. GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES.

If we wanted to show all our new products from the past year, we'd need a lot more room. So here are three – one from each of our brands. For the rest, visit

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nothing else like it.



LEVER ACTIONS FOR SELF- DEFENSE

Choosing a handgun for self-defense is a serious decision. There are different platforms to consider. “Fit” is critical. Is the pistol’s size and manual of arms appropriate and proportional to your hand size and strength? Willingness to train and practice is a factor; some handguns are more complicated than others. Often, it turns out a revolver is the ideal handgun, but that’s only half of the equation. Being fully prepared includes selecting a companion long gun. The more compatible the pistol and carbine/rifle are, the more efficient your response to danger. Turns out, “old” revolvers work well with “old” lever action rifles.

Long Live The Wheelgun!

Revolvers are ideal for self-defense. They come in a variety of sizes, shapes

Revolvers and lever actions still have a lot to offer. Having a pair that fire the same ammunition simplifies and magnifies your response.



and calibers — more today than ever. Several, like the .357 Magnum and the .44s are more effective than the common semi-auto rounds. Revolvers are easy to conceal and carry. Wheel guns don’t require resistance against recoil to function. They can be fired from unusual positions — common in fights. When physical force is applied against the barrel, like against the threat’s ribs, they still work. A well-maintained revolver is more reliable in a fight than a semi-auto. Once the “mystery” of the revolver’s operation is revealed, they’re great, reliable weapons.

Revolver Companions

The “Henry” lever action rifle was produced in 1860. The simple, rugged design hasn’t evolved much since then, but still has plenty to offer today, espe-

cially for self-defense. Lever actions also come in a variety of calibers. “Commonality,” the ability to shoot one caliber with pistol and rifle, was a major attraction when “riding the river” in the Old West.

Sharing this feature is just as desirable today. I normally carry revolvers and the 1895 Marlin .357 Magnum lever action is a perfect companion piece. I chopped down my Marlin’s barrel and stock. It’s only 32" long (4" shorter than an AR carbine) and six lbs. loaded with extra rounds on the stock. They’ll both fire Magnums and .38 S&Ws. The longer barrel of the rifle adds velocity, and the increased sight radius — the distance between front and rear sight — improves accuracy. A variety of companies are producing modern “tactical” lever guns with components like synthetic furniture and M-LOK aluminum handguards.

Optimizing Classic Designs

Both handguns and long guns require the use of modern, “defensive” ammunition. Full metal jacketed “ball” rounds often over-penetrate, failing to produce the desired results. Defensive ammunition is designed to expand and dump all its energy into the body. The ballistic advantages are great — especially considering the advances in design and construction over the past decade.

For both revolver and lever action, fit is important. With revolvers, it’s stocks. For long guns it’s length-of-pull, the distance between butt of the stock and trigger. Sights that work for you, under all lighting conditions, are necessary for pistol and lever action. Even red dots are an option, especially with the rifle.



Fit in both revolver and lever gun is critical. With a revolver, it’s easy to match a set of grips to fit your hands. For rifles, the correct length-of-pull ensures a quick sight picture and proper finger position on the trigger.



There are plenty of books available to study on the operation of revolvers and lever actions. Keep in mind they're a supplement to training under a knowledgeable instructor, not a substitute.

Holsters for the handgun are mandatory. The sling is the rifle's "holster." Adjusted properly, a simple, two-point sling with a quick disconnect does everything needed.

Extras

If forced to fire, you'll probably only expend a few rounds — three or four shots are the numbers seen most often in defensive situations — but be prepared for the "unexpected." Always carry extra ammunition. I like the 3x2 or "pick" pouches. You can load individual rounds as needed with additional rounds on the rifle's stock. Commonality between pistol, rifle and back-up weapon — and don't forget the "snubbie" on your ankle — is a beautiful thing.

Like it or not, "legal" is an aspect to consider. Semi-auto versions of military style weapons and certain semi-auto pistols are illegal in some parts of the U.S. In other places they're legal but not "socially acceptable." "Grandpa's" revolver or lever gun won't attract undue attention, they're "more legal" across the States and, if the threat forces you to fire, the "optics" will be much more acceptable. Yes, it's sad, but today, actions and gear will be examined with extreme prejudice.

Remember, hardware is backed up with training and practice. Revolvers and lever guns are not complicated to operate efficiently, but that doesn't mean it's easy. Training introduces the techniques to safely and efficiently use your firearms, and the tactics of defense. Practice (repetition) is when the real learning occurs. Luckily, dry practice is simple with both DA revolvers and lever guns.

Wheel guns and lever actions aren't for everyone. While they're considered "easy" to use, employing them properly, safely and efficiently against a violent attack requires more dedication than most semi-autos. Regardless of the combination of pistol and long gun you select, strive for compatibility.

Efficiency, which is always effective, is the goal.



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LIGHT AMIDST THE CHAOS

We were deployed to the arctic reaches of Alaska. Winter was the primary training time for the Army in the frozen north, and we were immersed in a full-bore combat exercise. The TOC (Tactical Operations Center) was a bustling hive of frenetic activity. Under such circumstances, the radios are all slaved to speakers. That way, the free flow of information proceeds unimpeded and combat leaders have instant access to the big picture. The scene this day was one of unfettered chaos.

These were the days before cell phones, so being deployed meant being truly cut off from your families. Such isolation was one of the toughest parts of military service for me. However, in the event of a true emergency, there was one way to get a critical message to a soldier operating in the field. If it was truly epically important, a family member could contact the post headquarters and have a landline phone call tapped into the military radio net. I have no idea how they did that. It occurred only very seldomly.

The TOC was crowded with husky armed men, steely eyed killers all. We were neck-deep in war and all had our game faces on. Threat forces were active in our area, and we were running half a dozen different tactical operations simultaneously. Cutting through the chaos, the net control guy came over and said he had an emergency message for my friend Dave from his wife Lisa.

Our collective blood ran cold. A combat unit is a family, and a tight one at that. There is an implicit intimacy that really has no parallel in the civilian

world. When one hurts, we all hurt. If you got a civilian on the tactical net, it invariably meant somebody had died back in the World.

Dave and Lisa were in their mid-30s and had no children. They had recently transferred up from Fort Hood in Texas and grafted onto our merry mob. They were both likable, committed and cool.

The TOC fell silent as the net control guy worked his magic. In a few moments, Lisa's voice came over the net. It was clear she had been crying. Dave addressed his wife in this most regrettably public of circumstances and asked what was the matter. She sobbed in reply, "Dave, we got a baby!"

The Adoption Option

As a physician, I have been privileged to touch any number of profoundly moving adoption stories. Children who are outcast or unwanted are grafted into a home to create a family, arguably the most powerful of God's many extraordinary creations. However, ask anyone who has endured the process; adoption is an intentionally grueling thing. Parenthood is the loftiest of human responsibilities, and the system ensures one does not simply wander into adoption without sober preparation.

In the military, adoption is doubly difficult. When my wife and I hit our 10th anniversary, we were at our 10th address. As adoption is typically managed by the state, it can be extremely difficult for a service family to complete the process successfully before being shipped off some place else. Such a nomadic life is just yet another daunting aspect of the military experience.

In Dave and Lisa's case, they had

initiated the process in Texas only to be transferred to Alaska before it was complete. They had essentially given up, presuming this to be yet another dry hole. Lisa's call from the adoption agency had been wholly unexpected.

Back At The War ...

You could have heard a pin drop. Dave stammered and asked his wife to clarify. She explained she had gotten a call from the agency and they had an infant ready to be picked up back in Texas. She was going to make the arrangements so they could leave as soon as we redeployed back to home station.

The entire TOC erupted in cheers. There was a lot of back slapping and congratulations, enough to smother poor Dave in his lamentably sordid state. There were also not a lot of dry eyes among all those hard-core professional warriors. It was honestly one of the most powerful moments I have ever experienced.

Dave and Lisa went from zero to 60 in an instant. They hadn't planned on becoming parents, so they had literally none of the gear they needed to embark up this most arduous of missions. As soon as we redeployed, Dave jumped on a plane with his wife headed for Texas. Those of us left behind, then made a few phone calls.

When this new family returned, all the car seats, highchairs, changing tables, diaper genies and nitnoid baby crap they needed was waiting for them. A combat unit is a family. We did what families do.



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The MASADA takes user preferences to a new level, with each feature carefully selected based on input from military, law enforcement, and gun enthusiasts alike. The MASADA was engineered to endure all elements while maintaining IWI's legendary attention to detail and reliability.

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FINE TUNE YOUR GRIP WITH HIGH TECH:

PART DEUX

Varying support hand and pinkie pressure made big changes to recoil management.

To see if using the pinkie really did make a difference, Serena tried a few shots varying support hand pressure but without applying any pinkie pressure.

Have you ever thought about the underdog? Everyone roots for them in movies, but when choosing teams, they still aren't the first choice. Concerning pistol grip, I've always paid more attention to the location of my thumbs and palms than anything else. The forefingers wrapped around the front of the grip and landed where they may. My trigger finger received extra attention, of course, but the pinkie was forgotten and ignored.

The Stereotype

Thumbs have wars. Though the pinkie has long been used in adolescent secret-keeping rituals, it's largely considered weaker than the other fingers. In fact, drinking tea, or doing anything else with the pinkie finger extended, is viewed as a sign of royalty, but also of weakness and extreme femininity. You also never hear of anyone squashing a bug with their "mere pinkie."

But the pinkie finger can be used to better manage recoil. Yes, you read that right. The thinnest, weakest finger can make all the difference. Continuing my explorations in grip and recoil management, I set about refining the technique.

One Thing At A Time

Settling into a familiar rhythm and making small changes proved much easier than making drastic grip changes, as I had done previously. One of the greatest lessons that has stuck with me through the years came both from an

English teacher and coach (you know it must be good when it comes from multiple sources). You cannot try to do everything at once, so focus on learning one thing at a time. Try too many things at once and not only will you be overwhelmed, but it will be difficult to ascertain what is actually going right and what is going wrong.

New Game In Town

This time I used a traditional two-handed grip and varied pressure of my support and firing hands, with an emphasis on the pinkie finger. I did make one other major change, transitioning from my Stoeger STR-9 to a 9mm Springfield Armory Loaded Target 1911. The gun was beautiful, easy to hold and heavy. I'm pretty certain it could be used as a weapon in and of itself, should one ever run out of ammo.

I started out dry-firing, getting a feel for the new gun and being mindful of grip pressure. At first, I accidentally applied extra pressure with my firing hand pinkie, but quickly realized I needed that hand relaxed to not put any muscle tension on the trigger finger. Switching to my support hand pinkie, I watched as slight changes in downward pressure moved the muzzle and sights. I was never truly conscious of exactly how much pressure each of my fingers was applying.

Data Can Be Dangerous

Having immediate access to data can be dangerous. When shooting a rifle match on electronic targets, many people throw shots by jumping off the stock to peer at the monitor displaying their shot value. I had to remind myself not to reference the app between shots or try to tailor what I was doing to improve the

results mid-string. Aggregate observations, rather than individual ones, proved much more helpful in painting the larger picture. I specified three different ways of shooting: 1) regular (my traditional two-handed grip without minding pressure), 2) emphasis on support hand — no pinkie, and 3) pinkie support hand (applying consistent downward pressure to the support hand pinkie). The results were astounding. Average recoil angle was greatly improved with emphasis on the lowly pinkie. Average recoil width was sliced in more than half, indicating greater control. Average recoil angle moved from around -9.45° for the first two methods to a positive 2.60°, indicating a change in direction as well. I likely accidentally applied both downward and right pressure on the support hand pinkie to cause this.

Lightbulb

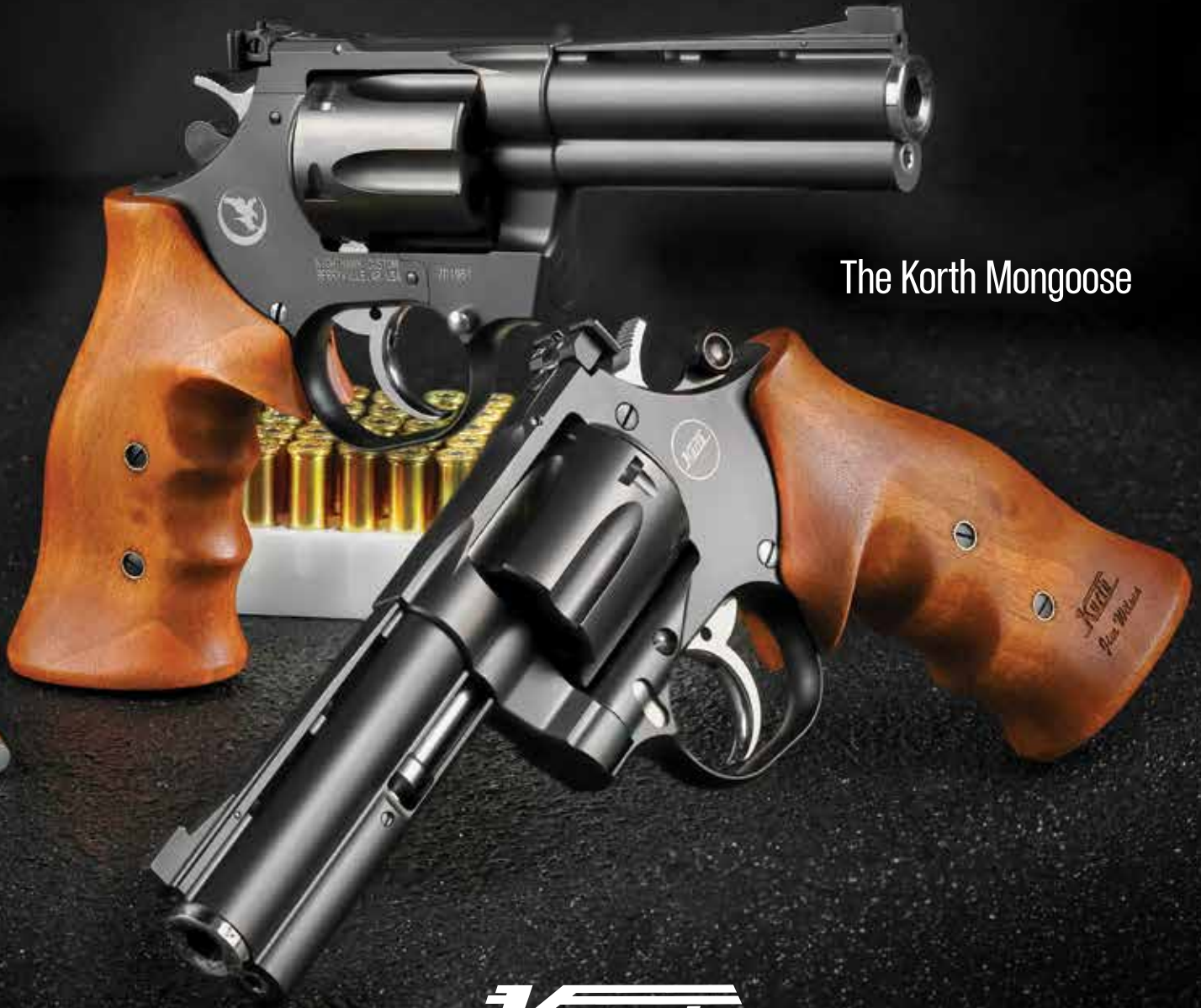
Ignore the data for a second. While it gives quantitative information and proof of concept, the greatest moment for me was encapsulated in a single, great shot. I don't really know where it landed on target — there were too many holes to pick from and my eyes were focused on the front sight — but it did feel great. The pistol barely moved in my hands and its movement was predictable and consistent. I could see the effect of the pinkie pressure in my sights. The trick now is to apply the same consistent pressure every time combined with other basics of marksmanship, letting the pinkie slip back into the recesses of my subconscious.



The Mantis X10 can attach to rails on pistols so equipped or the magazine base using a universal MagRail adapter.



NIGHTHAWK[®] CUSTOM



The Korth Mongoose

Korth

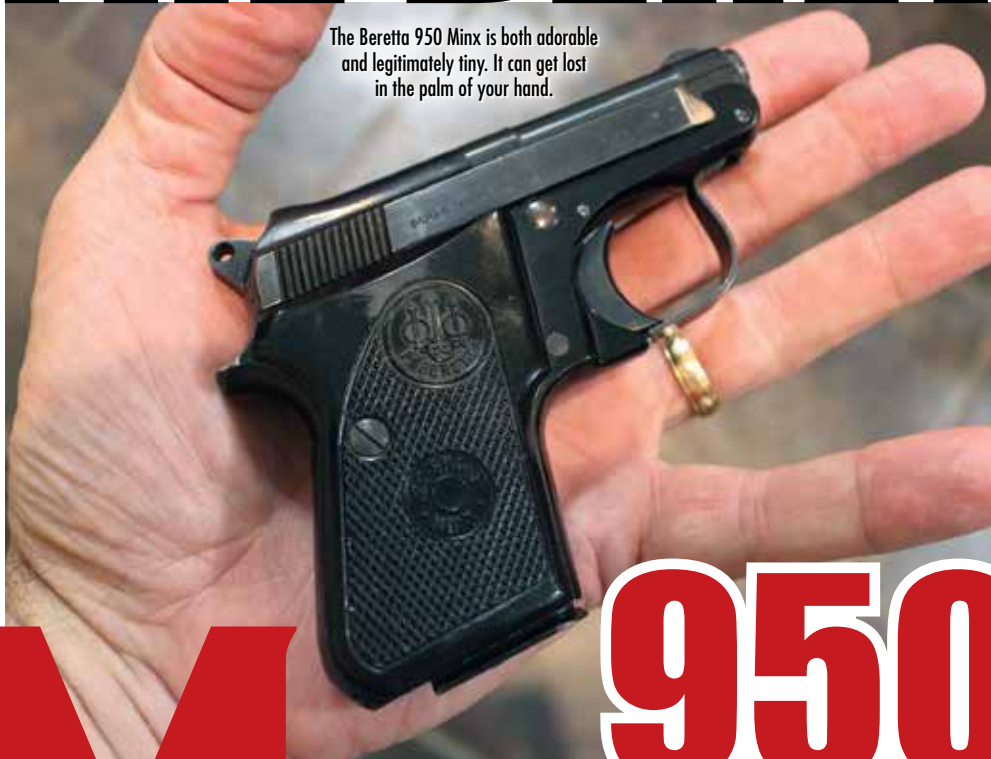
The Korth Mongoose is a revolver offered in 2.75", 3", 4", 5.25" or 6" barrel configurations. Chambered in .357 Magnum/.38 Special, the cylinder holds six rounds of ammunition. It is also available interchangeably cylinder system that allows for .357 Magnum/.38 Special and 9mm to be interchanged in a flash. The Mongoose is built from 100% fully machined parts that have been hand fit by a single gunsmith from start to finish. This revolver also features the world renowned roller trigger system, offering a smooth trigger pull that is second to none.



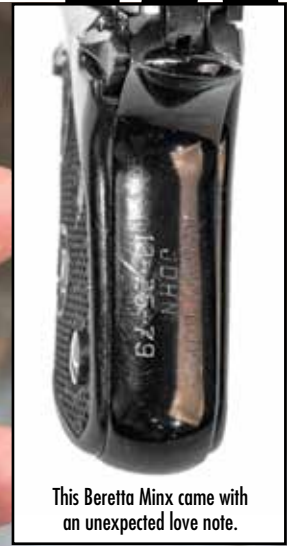
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THE BERETTA



The Beretta 950 Minx is both adorable and legitimately tiny. It can get lost in the palm of your hand.



This Beretta Minx came with an unexpected love note.

MINX 950BS

AN AUCTION GUN WITH A LOVE STORY

WILL DABBS, MD

Fabbrica d'Armi Pietro Beretta is the oldest active manufacturer of firearms on the planet. Beretta weapons have been used in every European war since 1650. Their first official order back in 1526 was for 185 arquebus barrels for the Republic of Venice, for which they were paid 296 ducats. Beretta has arguably more experience producing

military and defensive guns than anyone else on earth. Why then might they have contrived the Beretta 950 Minx?

The first 950 rolled off the lines in 1952. Available in both .25 ACP and .22 Short chamberings, the Model 950 featured an aluminum alloy frame with a carbon steel slide and barrel. A single-action design, those first Model 950s had no manual external safeties. Starting in



The family resemblance between the Beretta 950 Minx and the M9 service pistol is fairly obvious.





The Beretta 950 Minx in .22 Short was actually a pathetic excuse for a handgun. This one, however, indeed embodied something truly powerful.

The tip-up barrel was the gun's most remarkable feature.

1968, the guns were redesignated the 950BS, fitted with a manual left-sided thumb safety, and built in America.

The gun's most distinctive feature was its tip-up barrel system. The spring-loaded barrel could be released by thumbing a lever forward on the left side of the frame. The magazine could, therefore, theoretically be carried loaded with the chamber empty. You then pop the barrel up, drop in a round, and go to town. *No sensible person would ever dare use such a gun for personal defense.*

Seriously?

The Beretta 950 is absolutely Lilliputian. It is lost in a typical adult human hand. It is also fascinating.

There is no extractor. The recoil from the cartridge cycles the slide, and the empty case just bounces off of the left-sided ejector to launch wherever. My gun has been thoroughly reliable, regardless.

The magazine carries six rounds. The magazine release looks like a big, oversized screw on the left aspect of the frame. There is a tiny little peg you can use to help depress the magazine follower and assist in loading chores.

The left-sided thumb safety is easy enough to manipulate. The single action trigger is decent, better than an HK VP70 but worse than a 1911. The little gun enjoys the classic perforated hammer and open slide architecture of most Beretta pistols of its era.

The sights are typical pre-war European pocket pistol chic. I suppose there was some rule some place that guns had to have sights, but they are utterly worthless. The front sight is part of the barrel, while the rear sight is a small groove cut into the back of the slide. My gun shoots about 3" left at seven meters.

Designed in 1857 for the first Smith & Wesson revolver, the .22 Short was America's first mass-produced metallic cartridge. Typical .22 Short rounds push a 29-grain bullet. While the .22 Short was initially developed for self-defense applications, its anemic performance makes it best suited for recreational shooting in gallery rifles and the like.

My Minx produces around 640 feet per second. To put that in perspective, a typical major league fastball crosses the plate at around 147 feet per second. *My Minx indeed tosses bullets faster than you can throw them, but not by any enormous margin.*

Serendipitous Romance

I bought my Minx at a small online gun auction. If you've ever bought a gun that way, there is just so much information you can glean from those tiny pictures. I once purchased a gorgeous Webley Mk VI that arrived irrevocably broken. I have also landed an Enfield No. 4 T sniper rifle that was perfect, matching and unfired. You win a few; you lose a few. My Minx came replete with an unexpected love story.

Engraved along the barrel is the name "Peggy Francine." Lightly cut into the backstrap is "All My Love, John, 12-25-79." Apparently, Santa was good to Peggy Francine that year.

I love stuff like this. John likely bought Peggy Francine this anemic little Minx for "personal protection." Did she even want it? We guys are

Below: At seven meters, Will's little Minx produces softball-sized groups from a simple rest, albeit a bit to the left.

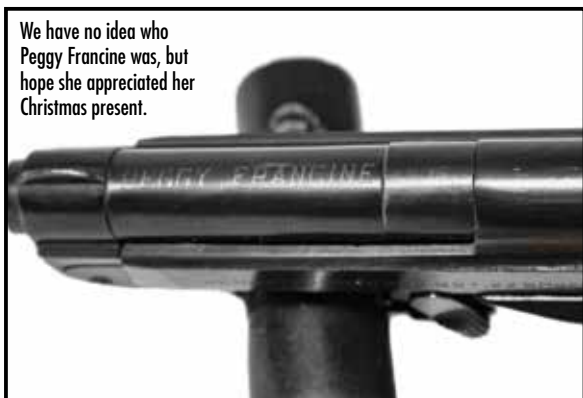


The anemic .22 Short makes even the .25 ACP (middle) seem serious by comparison. The 9mm Parabellum is on the right.

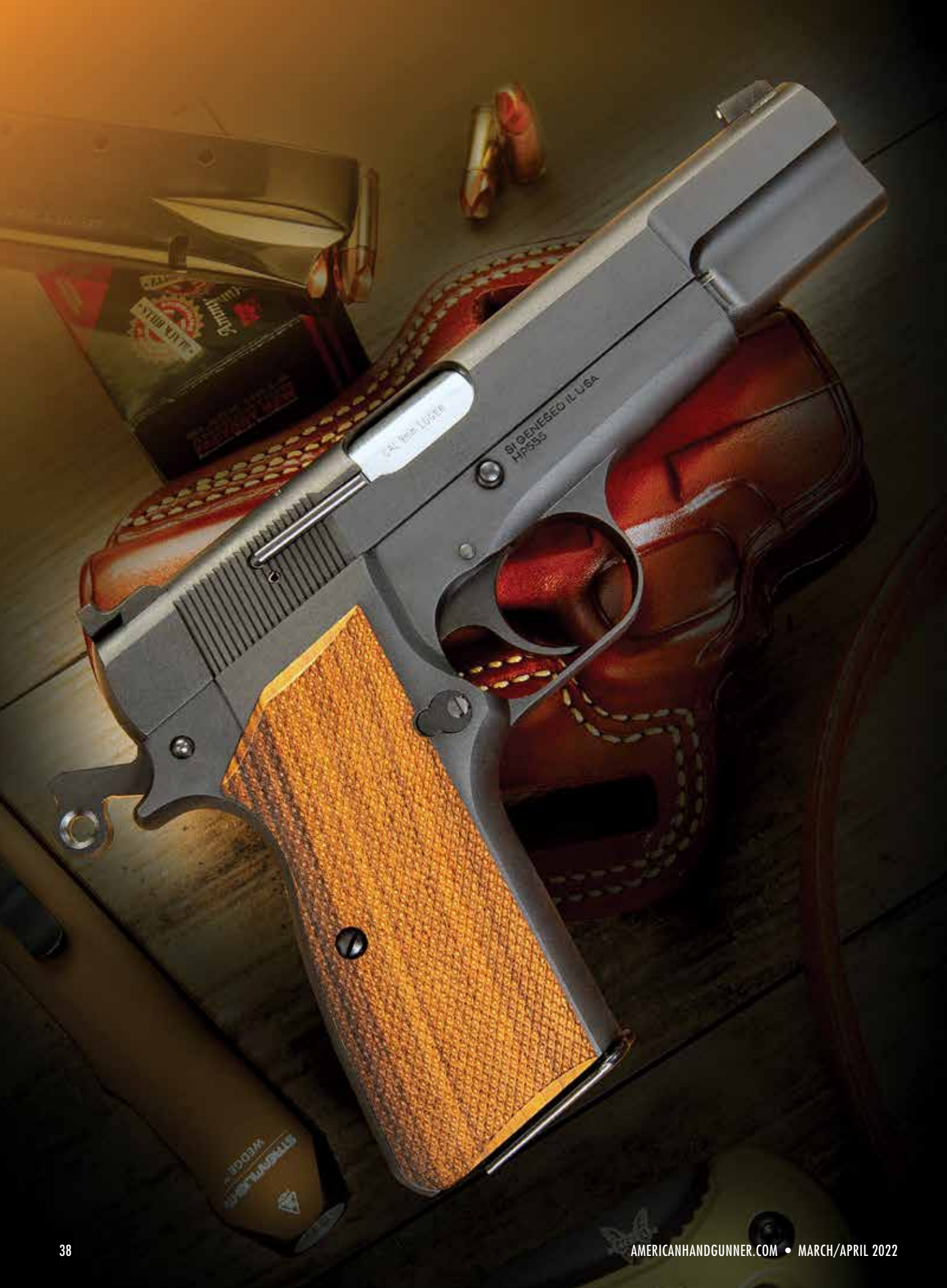


notorious for buying our women stuff like this because we think it's cool. Or perhaps she was genuinely moved by the gift. I hope it was the latter.

Running this recoilless little trinket is indeed great fun, but there is no point to it. There are lots better ways to ventilate repurposed beverage cans on the range, and I honestly might sooner have a proper baseball bat in the close fight. However, for Peggy Francine, it was indeed a tangible reminder John loved her. Poignant, sweet, sincere, and cool, that fact alone gives this worthless little pistol a purpose both deep and powerful.



We have no idea who Peggy Francine was, but hope she appreciated her Christmas present.



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY'S SA-35

MODERNIZING THE MAGNIFICENT HI-POWER

Springfield announced their Hi-Power surprise, the SA-35, on October 25th 2021 — causing the Internet to break. I know, I know ... people say that about cat videos and babies and dogs. But in this case, the net exploded with images, reviews, history, photos, emails, blogs, forum postings and videos. In my 40-odd years in the

industry I honestly don't think I've seen such a fuss. All this for an 88-year-old design that obviously still tugs at heart-strings everywhere.

The best part of all is the fact the SA-35 deserves every moment of attention. It's obvious Springfield took their time on this one and it shows in the attention to fit, detail, quality of construction and frankly, somehow capturing the history and charm of

what the original design has stood for over the decades.

In short, Springfield Armory nailed it.

A Personal Perspective

So why do I care? In 1975 I bought an unfired Hi-Power from a fire fighter for \$175, a huge amount of money for me then. I had a Series 70 Colt 1911, but was instantly struck by the slender seriousness of that shiny, high-polished

ROY HUNTINGTON

PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH LLC





blued Hi-Power. The diminutive sights, impossible to operate external thumb safety and gritty trigger caused me frustration, but I could see in the bones it was a brilliant design. At the time there were no custom parts for the gun so alas, I sold it — to my constant regret over these many years.

By the mid-1980s, I had discovered the MKII Model with ambi-safety, 3-dot sights and a throated barrel. I was on our informal police department action pistol team then (The Border Bandits, courtesy of our policing the San Diego/Mexico border) and together, we pretty much beat everyone, including some wins in the police Olympics. Mostly because, I think, we showed up regularly and didn't know any better other than to try. Guess what rode in my custom holster?

I found the Hi-Power simply fit my hand better, held more ammo and the lower recoil of the 9mm allowed me to shoot fast and accurately. I had learned how to tune the trigger by then, had tossed the magazine disconnect feature away and for about 10 years I lived and breathed Hi-Power. In about 1994 or so, when I was invited for a look at the then-new Thunder Ranch in Texas, that Hi-Power came with me, along with a spare one, which, by the way, I never needed.

Other class members that trip shuffled their feet, averting their gaze. They wouldn't exactly look at my Hi-Power in that bastion of the 1911. But after the first day, they wanted to learn more about just why it seemed to hit so well, never malfunctioned and how I handled it so easily. I showed them, making some converts in the process I think. I've enjoyed the design ever since, have never been without Hi-Powers, and welcomed Springfield's SA-35 with huge grins when I heard it was approaching.

Chronicles

I think it's unfair to talk about the resurrection of a classic design without paying due respect to the history involved. There are, literally, millions of new shooters over the past few years so a peek back is appropriate to help them see how we got here.

Call it 1922 or so and the French called for a new military pistol meeting certain design criteria. Among them were a magazine capacity of at least 10 rounds, a magazine disconnect, external hammer and "positive" safety. It also had to be lethal at 50 meters. FN decided the 9mm was perfect and set John Browning to work on the problem since he was designing for FN. The design was called the *Grand Rendement*



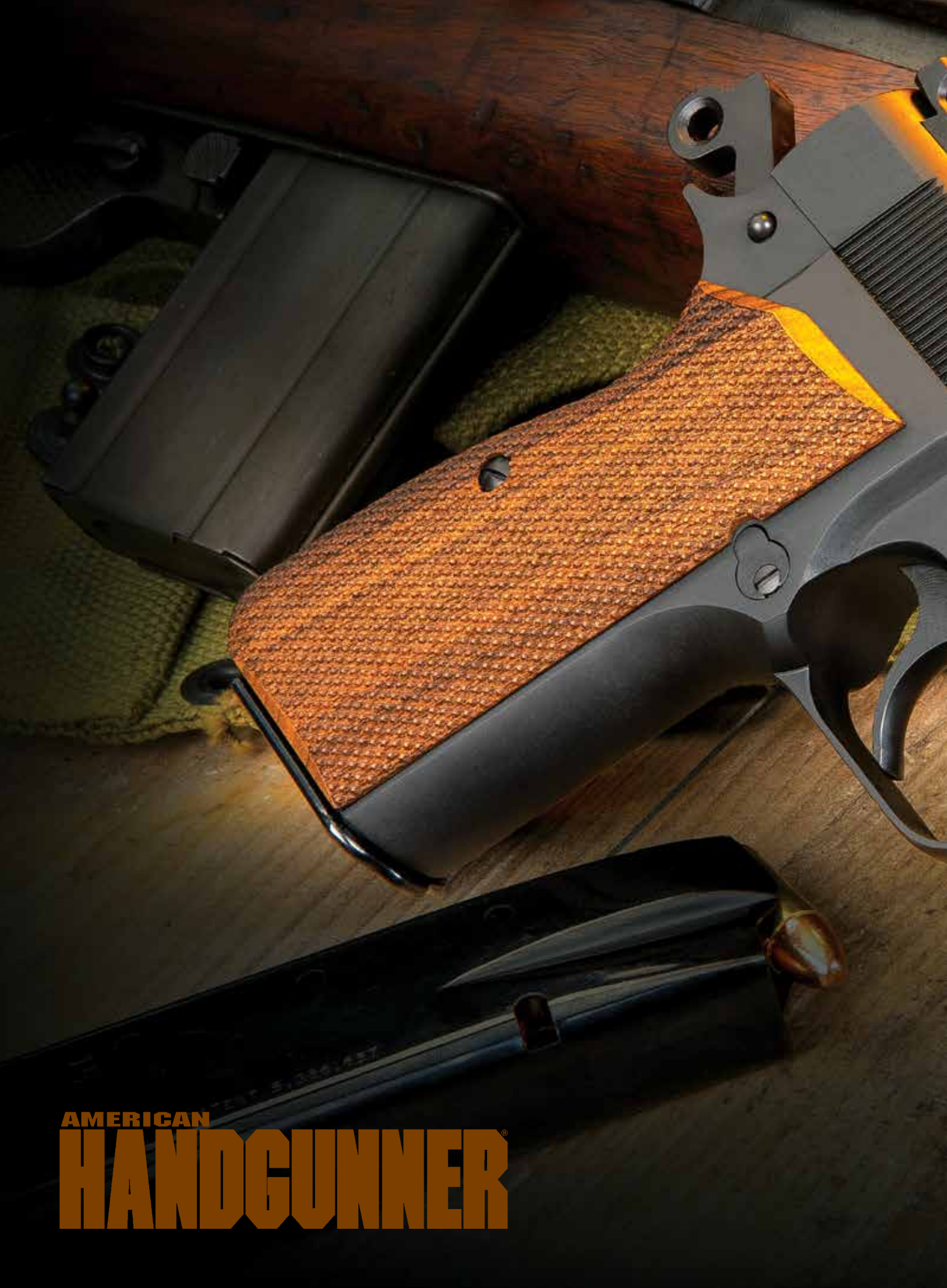
("high yield") or more commonly as the *Grande Puissance* (literally, "high power"). It had to do with capacity, not stopping power.

In June of 1923 Browning filed a patent on his two prototypes in Utah and the patent was granted in February of 1927. The blow-back design didn't work out, and the second, a locked-breech striker-fired model (designed to get around the 1911 patents still in effect), also used the staggered mag design by Dieudonné Saive (who also designed the famous FN FAL rifle, amazingly enough).

Alas, Browning died and Saive continued to refine the design, adding an external hammer while the model continued government testing. By about 1934, the Browning P-35 was done (with a 13-round magazine) but France declined to purchase it. Why are we not surprised? Belgium anteed up to the bar though, adopting the pistol in 1935, soon followed by countries all over the world, mostly thanks to that pesky WWII incident.

Post-war, the design continued to be popular, being improved, changed and refined, eventually adopted by dozens of countries as both military

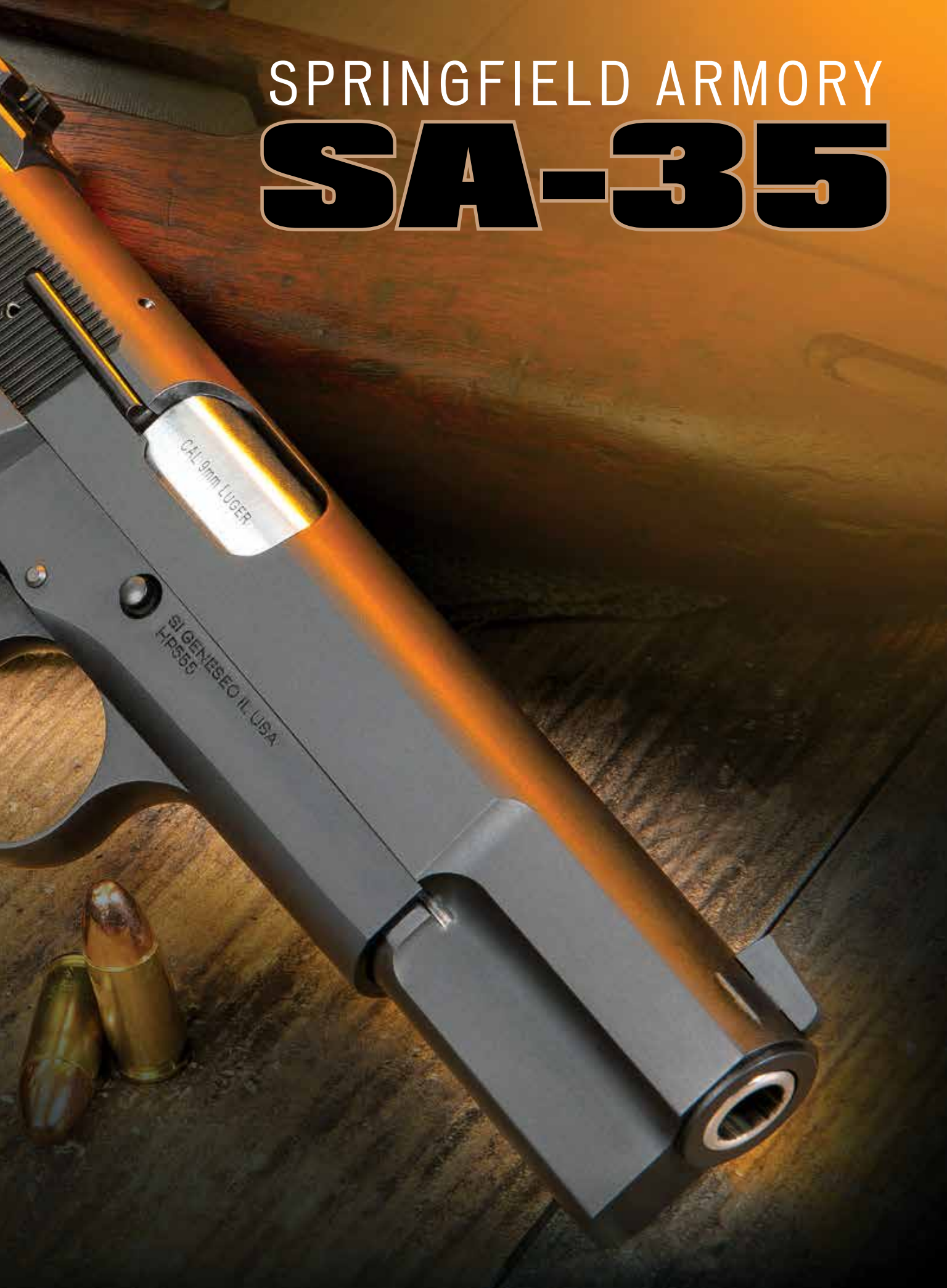




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SA-35





and police guns. In the U.S., thousands were brought back by returning GI's and even today, there are Hi-Powers in military and police holsters around the world.

If it works, don't fix it, eh?

The SA-35

I think since we've placed the design on firm footing now, I'd like to introduce you to Mike Humphries from Springfield Armory. I asked Mike what gives with bringing back this almost 90-year-old design — other than the fact shooters everywhere instantly missed it when Browning shut down production a few years ago.

"Springfield Armory is known for producing high-quality, modern versions of classic firearms, as you know. These combine the charms of the original designs with all the benefits of

modern materials and manufacturing techniques," explained Mike.

"With the SA-35, Springfield continues that tradition, taking another design coming from the mind of firearms engineering genius John Moses Browning, and adapting it to the needs of modern shooters."

And I think that's important to know. Springfield made some small but significant changes to the original design. The rough, gritty trigger common to originals is gone now, thanks to careful engineering and quality control. The silly magazine disconnect is gone as well as the firing pin safety. All contributed to clutter and could interfere with the trigger pull quality.

The sights on the new gun are much better, modern, bold, easy to see and effective. They're also in dovetails making adjustments or changing easy.

The hammer has also been redesigned so now the SA-35 doesn't bite any longer! The extended thumb safety has a flat allowing easy manipulation and a secure feel. The slightly beveled magazine well is "just right" and makes mag insertions go more smoothly. The all-steel slide and frame are both machined from forgings right here in the U.S.A., while the barrel is also hammer forged.

The checkered walnut grips can be replaced with any grip fitting a Hi-Power, and the matte blue finish is business-like and serious. The history is there, and like Springfield's other models, the SA-35 shows careful attention to the bits and pieces going into a design like this. I'd compare this with the best FN made, even in the heyday of the Hi-Power. I've also no doubt more models will be



coming down the line. I think a high-polish blued one with the same features would be a strong contender for a “must have” for many of us.

Design Specifics

Those sights are a white dot front with a serrated rear having a sort of “U-shaped” notch in the blade. The recoil system is classic Hi-Power with a single recoil spring and guide rod and slide release acting on a cam on the barrel’s underside. The barrel and slide recoil together after firing, with the barrel eventually camming down to clear the lugs in the slide. The slide cycles, feeds the next round and it all happens again. That barrel is 4.7” and shows excellent fit and finish with good work around the ramp area.

Height is 4.8”, length 7.8” and weight is right at 31.5 oz. For perspective, most all-steel 5” 1911s weigh in at about 38 oz. or so. The SA-35 feels much lighter than it is, which has always been a bit of Hi-Power magic.

Trigger pull on my test gun hovered around five lbs. and was, frankly, as good as on some of my custom Hi-Powers. It had just a bit of creep at first, but smoothed out after shooting. At this point, I have a bit over 500 rounds of assorted 9mm through it with no issues whatsoever. I did give it a good clean and lube prior to shooting

and broke it down after a few hundred rounds to take a peek and put a bit of lube on things again. Why abuse your equipment? The slide runs smoothly and indeed, the entire gun feel more like a custom Hi-Power than a stock, factory base model gun.

Out of curiosity I slipped a stock Hi-Power slide assembly on the SA-35 frame and it went right on. Barrels seemed to fit fine, and some grip swapping revealed other grip fits for Hi-Powers fit perfectly. I’m thinking aftermarket custom parts like those from the Cylinder & Slide Shop (ambi-safety, etc.) would work fine. I checked with Bill Laughridge there and he’s going to get an SA-35 to make sure.

A Bit Of Shooting

I made two “First Look” videos with the SA-35. A quick look on the day of release, then an extended one, shooting it fast and close, then for accuracy and at 70 yards. Along with other bench testing I did, the test gun seemed to deliver very reliable 1.25” to 1.5” groups at 20 yards. It seemed to like heavier ammo too, with the 147-grain sub-sonic HP loads chasing 1”. I was able to easily keep shots on my torso gong out to 80 yards and even hit the 100-yard 14” square plate regular enough to be great fun. This gun is a shooter.

The trigger has a distinct re-set, and

when I put a set of slim grips on the SA-35, I found fast, accurate shooting at torso targets out to 10 or even 15 yards was easy. A falling plate rack I have was just plain fun to shoot. I had forgotten how much it was to shoot this sort of “living history” — and digging out my old holsters and putting them back to work was great fun!

A Final Thought Or Two

When I first saw the new gun in Springfield’s confidential press info, I expected it to be in the \$1,000 to \$1,200 range. When I saw the MSRP of \$699 I thought it was a typo and called Mike Humphries to make sure.

“Yep,” he said. “That’s right, you’re not seeing things!”

That’s a basketful of features and value for the money, for sure.

I asked Mike why he thinks the SA-35 strikes such a chord with so many shooters.

“Roy, the pistol features subtle, yet significant enhancements, making the SA-35 a modern, capable defensive pistol — as well as one appealing to those who revere the history of the design.”

Well, there you go. I couldn’t have said it better, Mike. 

For more info: Springfield-Armory.com, CS@Springfield-Armory.com, (800) 680-6866

JEREMY D. CLOUGH

Designed without regard to what was available or how long it would take, the Lazy 8 was Jeremy's mid-'20s idea of the ultimate carry 1911.



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The .45 ACP and .38 Super are common calibers for the 1911, as is the .22 LR, but the bottleneck .41 Avenger is a J.D. Jones wildcat based on a .45 ACP necked to fire a .41 revolver bullet. It can push a 210-grain bullet in the 900–1,000 fps range with greater sectional density than a .45. Each barrel was hand fit to its own bushing.



Law school does strange things to people. One of my classmates took up drumming as a hobby; another caromed around the country in his Cessna on the weekends. Hamilton Bowen found himself day-dreaming about English double rifles, and I did the same, only mine were of 1911s. I had a permit, and my carry gun (off campus, of course) was a blue Officer's Model .45. Short, stubby and menacing, even the ebony grips were flat black. It was pure business but lacked a



Left: Centerfire slide from SVI/Infinity (right) shown with the matching one Jeremy converted to a .22 (left). Notice the longer breechface and the lightening cuts near the disconnect. It's some of his first machine work and not pretty, but it functions.

certain ... *je ne sais quoi*. Then, in the earliest stages of my gunwriting career and starting to see things I'd never seen before, my reveries spread farther from what I had built, to what I could build, to what I couldn't but wanted to. And that's where the Lazy 8 started.

There was no question about the starting point; my ultimate 1911 would be a compact, with a short Officer's-size frame and a Commander-length slide. Partially inspired by some of the cool multi-caliber Randall LeMay compact 1911s, of course my pistol would have to shoot more than one caliber. Better yet, it should shoot .22 as well. All from one slide. Or at least two looking identical.

Hot Swapping

Enter SVI/Infinity, who had just released their brilliant interchangeable breechface slide. Using a breechface cleverly locked into place by a screw inside the firing pin channel, swapping calibers was as easy as switching the breechface, extractor and ejector, and swapping barrels and mags. *All of a sudden, you could shoot anything off one slide — well, almost.* I ordered one, then, after realizing the modifications required to make it shoot .22 were likely not compatible with centerfire

chamberings, I ordered a second slide, near identical to the first.

Groovy, Man

Clearly, something this exotic needed an equally interesting receiver, and nothing breaks the cookie cutter like having a finger groove on your front strap. I also thought it would spare me the perpetual "Is that a Kimber?" query uttered in those days by anyone seeing a custom 1911 of any stripe. I turned out to be wrong about that, but it still feels good in the hand.

Finger-groove receivers were then cataloged by Caspian, who had to shorten one to create an Officer's size gun. Enthusiastically embracing the infinite possibilities offered by the SVI/Infinity slides, I requested the serial number LAZY 8, the name of the infinity symbol. *A short-lived mishearing when I ordered the frame almost led to my FFL opening up a package to find a 1911 frame engraved LADY 8*, which would have been as perplexing to me as it doubtless was

Both slides were welded up and remachined for Novak front sights with gold beads, the original old school night sight. And since they're, you know, real gold, the beads never tarnish.



Special guns deserve special leather. Galco's exotic Concealable holster, gunbelt and mag pouch, all in black Stingray.



Jeremy wanted the gun to be right in all the details. Pete Single welded up the beveled corner at the bottom of the frame so it would meet the S&A mag funnel without an unsightly notch.

to the folks at Caspian, but we got that sorted out. Finger-groove frames typically came with two grooves: one each on the front strap and the triggerguard, since it was close to the time that finger-forward shooting was still a thing. Only wanting one, I ground the triggerguard smooth and shaped the front strap to fit my hand, then sent the receiver to master metalsmith Pete Single for some touchup welding.

Making A Multi-Caliber

By this time I had settled on calibers: In addition to a .22 conversion — which, let me hasten to point out, SVI did not make — the gun should shoot .38 Super, .45 ACP, and .41 Avenger, and the J.D. Jones wildcat that necked down a .45 ACP casing to fire a .41 revolver bullet. Bar-Sto made the barrels, even going so far as to correctly mark that one with ".41 AVG" and J.D. Jones himself was



The Lazy 8 early on in its career. A clean-sheet of paper approach to a custom concealment pistol, it shoots .45, .41, .38 and .22. You can't build another one today.

kind enough to chamber it for me. Since there's a big difference between 0.354", 0.410" and 0.451", the barrels are all ramped so each caliber rides on its own sized feed ramp instead of trying to modify a single frame ramp to work for all of them.

Needless to say, this took time: six months, a year at a hit for some parts, most of which I had in hand by the time I graduated law school and headed up to Novak's .45 Shop for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to spend some weeks in the shop under Wayne's tutelage. He demonstrated how to fit the centerfire barrels, and I stumbled my way through the slide/frame fits and trigger job, which was assembled with a Videki trigger and that rarest of all original Swenson ambi safeties, one that's internally marked (they're usually stamped on the

outside in one of three different varieties of stampings). For the hammer, I selected a particularly aggressive-looking STI hybrid of a rowel and spur, which the trigger drops crisply at an average of 4 lbs., 2 oz. on my Lyman trigger scale.

I had bought Bo-Mar adjustable rear sights since the gun would shoot multiple calibers but did not like the front dovetails the slides came with, so off they went to Pete Single to be welded up and recut for Novak front dovetails, which I filled with gold bead front sights on both slides. On one of the gun's trips to Single, I had him replace the material at the bottom rear corner of the receiver, which is usually beveled, so the line of the frame would



SVI's brilliant interchangeable breechface is the key to shooting all centerfire rounds from a single slide.

flow smoothly into the S&A magwell, without an unsightly notch.

Rimfire Considerations

In between all of this, though, one of the slides had to become a .22. With a borrowed Colt .22 conversion in hand, I miked and measured and milled until I narrowed and lightened one of the two centerfire slides (originally a .38 Super) enough that it could feed from a .22 magazine. I machined a filler for the breechface, silver brazed it in place, machined it again, and now had a removable .22 breechface, complete with rimfire firing pin, which I turned down from another .22 conversion pin and forged into a dogleg to get the correct offset. Somewhere in there I acquired a prototype .22 barrel from the Colt model shop I promptly — sacrilegiously to some — cut to Commander



Adaptability was at the core of the Lazy 8 concept. Bar-Sto created the ramped centerfire barrels in .45 ACP, .41 Avenger and .38 Super, while the .22 rimfire barrel is a prototype Colt floating chamber, one modified to work in an SVI slide.

The ambi safety is an original Swenson, one of a precious few marked internally with the patent information but not stamped on the outside.



length for my gun. Shockingly, it worked. All of it. So much so I can't remember the .22 ever failing to feed.

Beastly Bullseyes

How accurate is this beast? I don't know; I've never had it in the Ransom Rest, but I did put three rounds in 3" at 50 yards with it, handheld. While I usually prefer 230-grain bullets in .45 ACP, Hornady's 200-grain +P XTP was so accurate at 25 yards that if you drew a line where the top of the front sight was, the bullet would split it. I'll give up 30 grains for that kind of pin-point accuracy.

Ruminations

I had originally planned to hard chrome the gun and have my coat of arms engraved in the smooth panel just forward of the cocking serrations, but life has a way of getting away from you. Once the gun was functional, I shot the Q course, and it became my carry gun with little further ceremony. The carbon steel slides wound up blued and unadorned, and the receiver stayed stainless, with a pair of unremarkable wood grips. After several years those were replaced with ivory, back when ivory grips were only a matter of writing a check.

Between the gun being built and earning its ivory, I shot it frequently,

carried it incessantly, and competed with it in the local pistol matches. While I usually carried it in a Galco Fletch on a Ken Null gunbelt, around the time I upgraded the grips it found a new leather home, also from Galco, in the form of a gorgeous Stingray gunbelt, with which it pairs in striking fashion.

The Lazy 8 saw me through my early days as a prosecuting attorney, which, in retrospect, was probably among the most dangerous periods of my life. Its aggressive appearance was duly noted — such as the day a gun-savvy attorney wandered into the room where I was working, and, seeing it, stopped in his tracks and exclaimed "Dear God, what a heater!"

He has since gone on to meet his Maker, and now knows exactly whether or not He felt that was an appropriate use of His name. But to your point, Jim, yes, it's quite a pistol.

It was ambitious when conceived, but now, some 20 years later, the Lazy 8 is literally the gun you can't have; the major components are unavailable and many of the men that made them are dead. Videki, Bo-Mar, Swenson — none remain on the market. Even the receiver is unavailable: The tooling to create the finger groove ones was altered beyond use. Of course, I got one of the last ones made, a government-sized frame. Wonder what I should do with that one? 

For more info: CaspianArms.com, Barsto.com, GalcoGunLeather.com, SVIGuns.com

Jeremy removed the .38 Super breechface from one of the matching SVI slides, machined an insert and silver brazed it in place, then machined it again to create the .22 breechface.



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THE KEITH #5...

"The Last Word" in sixguns just got the conversation started. Here's Elmer's #5 and Lawrence carved/laced 120 holster.

JEFF "TANK" HOOVER
PHOTOS: MATTHEW PEAKE



AND WHAT MADE IT SO SPECIAL

The Top Strap is engraved with a Masonic symbol.



Factory roll-marked caliber
.44 Russian and S&W Special.



I well remember my first visit to Idaho. Mom died a few months earlier after a courageous cancer battle. Filled with "life's too short" sentiments, I accept an offer for an elk hunt from a man I met on the internet, Dick Thompson. I made my first handgun kill using my hand-load, consisting of the Lyman .45 Keith bullet on a cow elk, while making life-

long friends. I also saw the Elmer Keith Museum when it was housed in the Boise, Idaho Cabela's.

Here, seeing Elmer's trophies, rifles and sixguns puts everything in perspective. He is, indeed, the real deal — The Grand Old Man. The crown jewel of the display is, of course, the famous #5. With nose and hands pressed flat against the glass, like a hungry kid staring in a

Notice the dovetailed hammer brazed together from a Bisley top and SAA. Also, the dovetailed rear sight, base pin latch and head are clearly visible, exhibiting magnificent skill work, not to mention the welding creating the Flat Top.



Here's a close-up of the engraving of the #5. Note the checkered hammer.

bakery window, I think, "Boy, if I could just hold that gun!"

I imagine wrapping my fingers around the ivory stocks, the Mexican Eagle forming a natural palm-swell. I fantasize about cocking the hammer, feeling and hearing each of four distinct clicks, as Elmer did, thousands of times. Holding the very gun Elmer carried and shot for 30 years would indeed have been special — if only possible. Little do I know, 12 years later, I'd get the opportunity ...

An Invite

Imagine my surprise when I'm invited to Brownells to get a chance to see and hold the iconic piece. Yes, iconic is overused, but proper, when one mentions the #5. Brownells photographer/videographer Matthew Peake invited friends Bobby Tyler, Doc Baranti and me for the occasion. The #5 was being auctioned off again by Rock Island Auction Co. and Matthew was going to be filming a few videos about the gun to stir up interest.

The #5

Imitation is surely the highest form of flattery. I'd venture to say the #5 is the most copied, imitated, sought after, and the basis for custom single-action sixguns. Just as it's popular to say "Keith" bullet, referring to a semi-wadcutter slug with equal-sized driving bands and square grease-groove, a #5

sixgun has its own traits. The sexy grip-frame is the most obvious, being like no other. How the #5 came about is a wonderful story worth repeating, especially for those who've never heard it.

The Beginning

Back in 1927, Elmer Keith was writing for *American Rifleman*. He talked of long-range sixgun shooting at distances many thought preposterous. Harold Croft, a fellow sixgun enthusiast from Philadelphia, Pa. was intrigued by Elmer's claims. They communicated via mail, with Elmer inviting Croft to his Durkee, Ore. ranch for a month.

Croft accepted, bringing a "suitcase full of guns" as Elmer described it. Upon arrival, Elmer nailed some boards together, making a 4'x4' target and sets it a measured 700 yards away. Using his sitting "Keith" position, hands locked between his knees, head resting on his saddle, Elmer started shooting, hitting the target with every gun Croft brought. Keith even hit the board with a 2" slip-gun. Croft became a true believer.

Croft spent much time and money improving standard Colt SAAs, looking to develop lightweight weapons for self-defense. He designed four different featherweight models from SA Army and Bisley Colts, calling them #1 through #4. Elmer regarded Croft's #3 grip as perfect, considering it "the finest ever put on a sixgun." Consisting of a

Bisley backstrap mated with an SAA guard and front strap, the Bisley back strap was bent to the same angle as the SAA front strap and guard.

Excited, Elmer sent a Colt back with Croft, "to be worked over" explaining what traits he wanted from Croft's guns, along with a few of his own ideas. Elmer said he wants the #3 grip-frame, along with target front and rear sights. He wanted the gun to be left full weight, not reduced, for better balance.

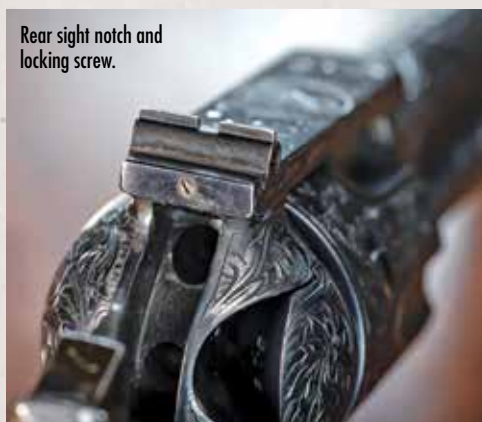
Besides the grip from Croft's #3 gun, the Base Pin Locking Latch is the second most recognized custom feature on the #5. R.F. Sedgley designed the mechanism, which positively locks the base pin in place, making it impossible to "jump" from recoil. A swinging latch mounted on the frame fit into a square groove of the base pin. Elmer also wanted an oversized base pin head for easy removal in the field.

Building The #5

Croft has Sedgley, a master gunsmith from Philadelphia, weld-up the frame into a flat top, extending it over the hammer top, maximizing sight radius. Sedgley welded the #3 grip for Elmer's gun and made and fit a new "V" main-spring designed by him and Croft. This new spring was less prone to breakage, while being more sensitive and quicker than standard SAA flat springs.

Elmer stated, "the gun cocks as easily

Rear sight notch and locking screw.



Here's the "V" spring Croft and Sedgley designed.



Here's a close-up of the pinned/sleeved front sight. It's reversed, to increase sight radius, from Target Colt's.

The backstrap has Elmer's name engraved on it.



The base pin latch and head in locked position.



as when a Newman's 'far country' spring is used. The Croft-Sedgley spring is without a doubt the fastest in action of any SAA spring and should improve the SA greatly for target shooting."

The hammer was previously made by J.D. O'Meara, by fitting a Bisley hammer top/spur to the lower of an SAA hammer, then dovetailing and brazing them together.

Sights

Elmer wanted adjustable, rugged sights on his gun. The front sight consists of cutting the last inch off a Colt Target Model barrel and reaming the cut portion, so it fits on the turned-down end of the #5 barrel, like a sleeve. The sleeve is sweated and pinned, like an S&W barrel, for added security. It's also reversed from the Target Model, maximizing sight radius.

Elmer also wanted the rear sight

dovetailed, making it windage adjustable. He requested a screw be added to the rear of the flat top frame to lock the sight in place. Elmer obviously wanted a gun capable of withstanding rugged conditions while hunting, ranching and traveling, without worrying about his sights being knocked off zero.

Croft procured Sedgley to make a wider trigger to Elmer's specifications, instead of the typical narrow triggers placed on the left side of the guard of SAAs. Elmer said, "the trigger follows the contours of his finger and is set back, close to the guard, allowing one to properly squeeze the trigger." Trigger pull is set at 3.5 lbs. Elmer stated, "for general excellence of grip, balance, sights, trigger and hammer, I do not think this gun can be improved upon."

Personally Handling #5

When picking up Elmer's #5, the first thing noticed is the deceptive lightness of the gun. You'd think it would be heavier. This is due in part to the balance of the gun and shape of the grip-frame. It is a natural pointer, with sight alignment being instantaneous. The square notched rear sight is just large enough to fill the patridge style, adjustable front sight. It is genius in design, for if daylight is seen on either side, you know sight alignment is off.

The barrel and recoil shield on this gun are immaculate. Rifling is sharp with no throat erosion. We know the gun has been re-blued at least three times from Elmer's writings. It was not engraved

until later. Doc O'Meara originally made Walrus ivory stocks for it, but they were replaced when they shrunk.

Elmer had his gun engraved not to be fancy, but rather, to cover up, or conceal, the numerous scuffs and scraps it would endure from daily use. Elmer stated, "I killed 59 magpies, around two dozen crows and hawks, six horned owls, and a bobcat, to say nothing of over a hundred blacktail jack rabbits and a few woodchucks. It does excellent work at long range."

Speaking of accuracy, Elmer said, "using a charge of five grains of Bullseye and 250-grain cast bullet, sized to 0.431", I put five shots under a silver dollar at 15 yards. Such accuracy is good for me and will get meat when I need it."

Closer Examination

It should be noted cylinder throats measured 0.432" with pin gauges and gun weight is 2.55 lbs. Barrel/cylinder gap is very tight, with barely any light able to peek through. Gunsmith Bobby Tyler removed the grips, revealing the mainspring. It appears brand-new, without any hint of rust. Tyler was impressed with the complexity of the design and fitting of the spring. Barrel length was measured at 5.51".

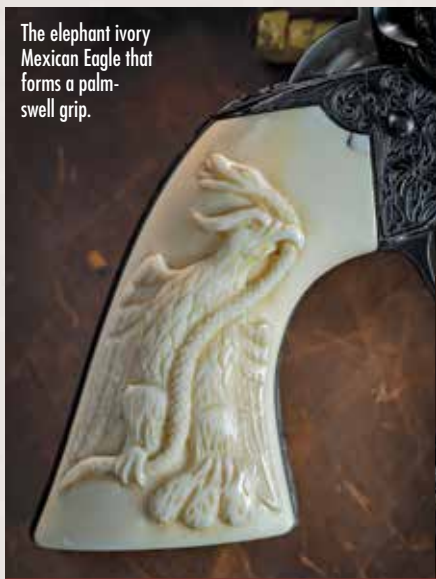
In Summation

The modifications requested by Elmer on the #5 display his striving to improve what was available at the time. This is evident of not only sixguns, but his cast bullet designs, handloads, or other modifications to equipment of his time. When reminiscing about Elmer, it's something I always think about, the need to improve. Never be satisfied with what's available. There's always room for improvement. If not, such guns as the #5, and the many custom guns that followed it, would never have been built.

Elmer exclaimed the virtues of the #5 in an article he titled, "The Last Word" in *American Rifleman*. Little did he know he was just getting the conversation started on custom sixguns.



The elephant ivory Mexican Eagle that forms a palm-swell grip.



Elmer's home at the time, Durkee, Ore., is engraved at the bottom of the gripframe.



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TAURUS

Note the wide trigger face, wide safety leaf and vertical serrations on the safety.



GX4 T.O.R.O.

A POCKETFUL OF OPTICS-READY POWER

TOM MCHALE



The GX4 T.O.R.O. is cut for an optic and includes a cover plate if you don't use one. Tom tested this pistol with a Holosun HE407K-GR X2 6 MOA green dot sight.

It's time. Like scopes on rifles, optics on pistols are here to stay. It was only a matter of time, technology and durability improvements before red dot sights on even compact carry guns became mainstream.

The Taurus GX4 T.O.R.O. takes the double-stack GX4 platform a step forward by making it optics ready out of the box.

Optics Ready

There's a guy I know who may or may not be the not-very-retired Special Projects Editor around here, who jokingly refers to pistols equipped with red dot sights as "having TVs on top." He'll be happy to know he can watch all his favorite programs on the GX4 T.O.R.O. also. I can't definitively say whether this one tunes in to *HeeHaw* and *Green Acres*, but I'll certainly find



With the 13-round magazine installed, Tom could easily fit all fingers on the grip for improved control.

out and let him know.

The GX4 T.O.R.O. (that's Taurus Optic Ready Option) features a pre-cut slide sized for the new crop of micro red dots. These smaller footprint models, compatible with the GX4, include the Shield RMSc, Holosun HS507K and HS407K, Sightmark Mini Shot A-Spec M3, Hex Wasp GE5077-MIC-RET, SIG RomeoZero, Riton 3 Tactix MPRD2 and Trijicon RMRcc Red Dot. Mounting a Trijicon RMRcc does require an optional adapter. If you choose to use this GX4 without an optic, just install the included flush-mount cover plate on the slide and the pistol looks and acts like the standard GX4 model.

Just The Facts

The GX4 T.O.R.O. is a subcompact, double-stack 9mm pistol, ideal for

carry. It ships with two magazines, an 11-rounder and an extended 13-rounder, so depending on which you install, you'll get 12 or 14 rounds of 9mm ready to go in a package about the same size as the classic snubbie revolver. Amazing. That's almost three New York reloads of snubbies in one package of just 6.05x4.4x1.08" wide. Unloaded weight comes in at 18.5 oz.

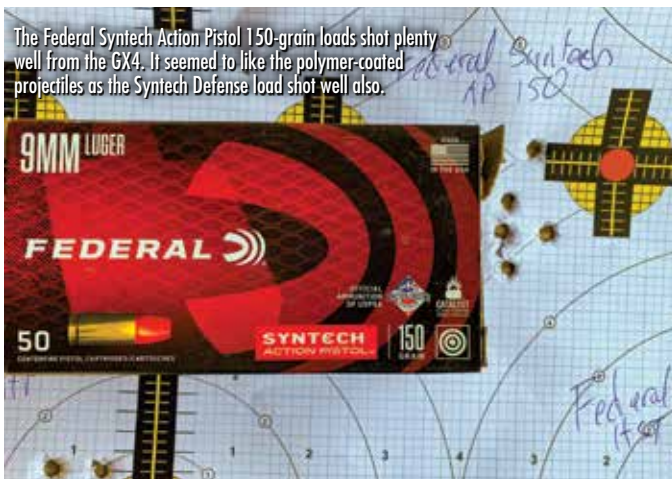
The magazines are steel-bodied and use bright yellow followers. The two are identical except for the extended base on the 13-round version. There are witness holes for rounds four through 11. There is a cutout area at the base of the grip allowing you to rip out a stuck mag if needed, but mine have so far dropped freely on hitting the magazine release button. Oh, one more thing. The company does offer

10-round configurations for those of you who live under the iron-fisted rule of Republiks.

The grip texture is like a moderate stippling pattern all around the grip itself — somewhat like a kinder, gentler skateboard tape. You'll also notice two small textured areas above the trigger guard area. They make great reminders of where to rest your trigger finger when not shooting.

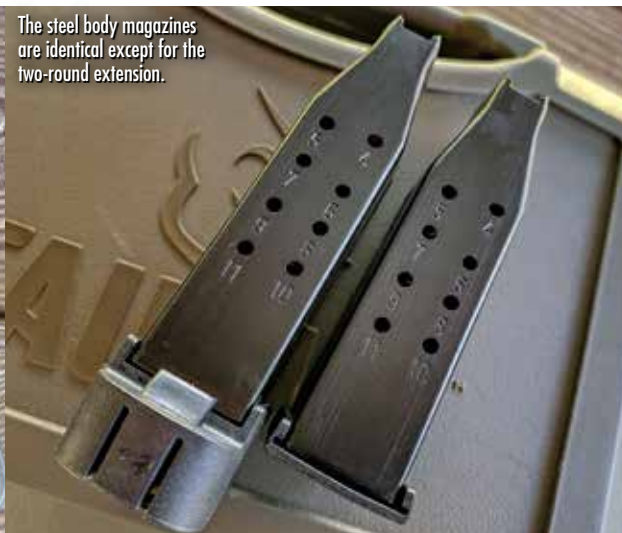
Trigger

This striker-fired pistol has a defensive/carry trigger. I measure it consistently at 6¼ lbs. You'll get 1/8" of light, low-grit take-up followed by another 1/8" of constant pressure before it breaks. I couldn't detect any stacking at all, nor could I feel any significant over-travel. While a tad heavier than I would



With the flush-base 11-round magazine installed, Tom could fit half a pinkie on the grip.

The steel body magazines are identical except for the two-round extension.



prefer, it's just fine out of the box for its intended purpose.

The reset is obvious — you'll feel and hear it after about 1/8" of forward travel.

I'll also note the trigger itself is wide across its face, as is the interior trigger leaf serving as an extra layer of safety. Unless you depress the leaf, the trigger won't move. The leaf has a vertical serration texture, presumably to reduce slipping. I liked the feel of the trigger overall and the extra face width helps manage the slightly higher pull weight.

Let There Be Sights

The sights on the GX4 T.O.R.O. are solid out of the box. The front is a white dot while the rear is all black with serration to cut glare. Here's even better news. If you're picky about specific sights, you'll be happy to hear the mounting system for front and rear are "industry standard." That's code for ... the same mounting system as used by a big gun company rhyming with "block."

This is a big deal, and I heartily thank Taurus for using this system, because lots of aftermarket sight companies make all sorts of outstanding sight upgrades that will fit this pistol.

There's nothing proprietary about sight cuts, or at least there shouldn't be, so I think it's great news companies are starting to standardize.

Care And Feeding

There's a nifty feature for take-down and field stripping. Rather than clutter up the already compact surface of the gun with more controls, you'll notice an inset flathead "screw" on the right side of the frame, just forward of the trigger. That's the takedown "lever." Using a flathead screwdriver or some other handy object like a dime, turn the bar almost 180° counterclockwise. This releases the slide from the frame. You will need to press the trigger during the process, so exercise all normal caution. As field stripping is an administrative function, I am fine with this tradeoff and appreciate the lack of extra gear on the frame. So, unlike most semi-autos, the GX4 T.O.R.O. has only two movable controls on its frame, not counting the trigger — the magazine release button and the slide lock.

Once you remove the slide, things will look familiar. The recoil spring is a dual captive design, so no flying parts to worry about. You'll also notice the

interior steel "infrastructure" or chassis is longer than you might expect. This is another deliberate feature intended to add strength to the polymer frame and control flex during firing.

Shooting And Handling

The 13-round magazine — really the 11-rounder with a two-round extension — comfortably fits my size large hands. I can easily get all firing and support hand fingers on the front-strap of the pistol without any undue crowding. When I install the more compact flush-base 11-round magazine, I get a two and a half finger grip. Half of my pinkie is on the front strap and the lower half hangs in space. I did find I preferred shooting with the half pinkie on the front. When I curled it under, I didn't have as much control and the whole grip was less natural and less comfortable.

Accuracy

I tested this GX4 with five-shot groups from 15 yards using a Ransom Multi-Caliber rest using five different types of ammo.

Federal's Syntech 150-grain action pistol won the day with a grouping of 1.57". The Syntech Defense 138-grain load was next up with 1.62". I guess this pistol likes the polymer bullet jackets. Other loads tested included Federal HST 124-grain (2.08"), Norma MHP 108-grain (2.75") and Black Hills HoneyBadger 100-grain (3.2").

Closing Arguments

Over the past few years, Taurus has re-focused their efforts on producing solid guns at attractive price points. This one certainly fits that bill too. It ran like a champ, digesting whatever ammo I ran through it. If you need a pocketful of power, give it a look.



For more info: TaurusUSA.com, FederalPremium.com, Black-Hills.com, Norma-Ammunition.com

The texture is like a moderate skateboard tape. Aggressive enough for a solid grip, but it won't tear up the body or holster during daily carry.



Right: The Holosun fit directly in the milled-out notch, so the standard included sights co-witnessed through the bottom of the optic window just fine.



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THE CANIK TP9

The Canik TP9 is actually an extensive family of handguns ranging from subcompact concealed carry heaters all the way up to long-slide, tricked-out race guns with everything in between. Quality is superlative throughout.



FAMILY PORTRAIT



Left: The first Canik TP9 was a proper approximation of the Walther P99.



The Canik TP9SA is a thoroughly modern SA/DA combat pistol available in either black or FDE.

Century Arms is the gun company for the *Common Man*. I've honestly lost count of the number of cool black Century guns I have bought over the years. Their weapons are rugged, dependable and reasonably priced. Century's superb Canik TP9 handguns represent the hands-down best value in the gun world today.

The Real World

Travis Beckett and his wife Jenny were struggling. Their first child Ashley

was a preemie. They had intended to put Ashley in day care so Jenny could go back to work. However, as Travis had learned in his previous life as an Army Ranger, the plan never survives first contact with the enemy. Ashley needed attention only a mom could provide.

Travis therefore worked two jobs. One offered health insurance. The second let them eat. Jenny kept a meticulous house, but the ratty apartment was all they could afford. The young couple kept to themselves, but one

fateful night, life intervened.

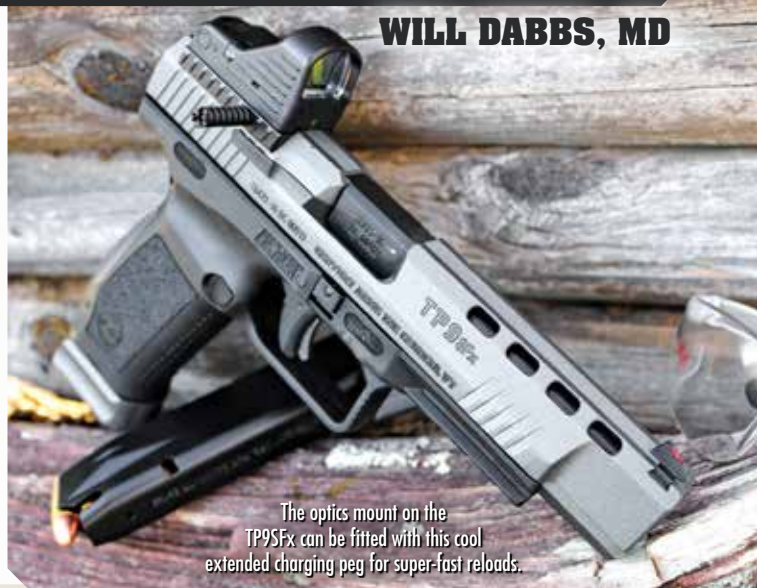
It began with yet another police-involved shooting. The riot grew like some kind of metastasizing cancer until nearby businesses were in flames. Jenny held Ashley close as the fires flickered across the front windows. Travis put his girls in the tub and retrieved his TP9, tucking the spare

TOP TIER IRON FOR THE WORKING MAN

The Canik TP9SF Elite-S is the mid-sized concealed carry version of the TP9.



WILL DABBS, MD



The optics mount on the TP9SFx can be fitted with this cool extended charging peg for super-fast reloads.

magazine into his back pocket. Pulling up a chair behind his front door, he sat quietly in the darkness. The riot would likely spend itself by morning. However, if trouble came knocking, Travis would blow it straight to hell.

Ballistic Philosophy

Ours is a weird old world that gets weirder daily. In the face of such rampant manifest chaos, it's not just the well-to-do who need self-protection. Quite the contrary, it is typically those of modest means who know the most genuine peril. Not just everybody can afford a \$600 defensive handgun. The Canik TP9 is the answer.

The first Canik TP9 pistol was introduced in 2012 and was a near clone of the Walther P99. The action was a striker-fired SA/DA with a pushbutton decocker atop the slide. Those first Canik sported, I'm not making this up, *a cavorting dolphin on the grip*. Cold hammer-forged barrels were formed from 32CrMoV12-10 steel and there were interchangeable backstraps. They were every bit the equals of the P99 they aped at a literal fraction of the price.

I picked up one of those very first copies. I've never had a stoppage and



The red tab is the blade safety built into the trigger. The bilateral lever underneath is a nifty separate manual safety system not found on the larger TP9 guns.

the pistol shoots nice and straight. I cannot find fault with it.

Each standard gun comes with two 18-round magazines, a nice polymer holster with both a belt slide and pancake mount, and cleaning gear. Stuff that would cost you extra elsewhere comes standard with the TP9. And yet it still sells for a c-note or two less than its name-brand competition.

Family Portrait

Today's TP9DA offers that original DA/SA trigger along with the slide-mounted decocker. The initial long trigger pull brings added safety, while the subsequent crisper sort provides better precision. The Browning-inspired recoil-operated action is common throughout.

The TP9DA is indeed a great combat handgun at a great price. However, the American shooting public has developed an undeniable enthu-



Canik TP9 guns come standard with a top-quality polymer retention holster.

siasm for the GLOCK-style striker-fired trigger. The TP9SA scratches that itch.

The TP9SA features a slightly longer frame and slide along with a blade safety in the trigger face. Finishes can be either black or FDE. The manual decocker remains perched atop the slide, but it is now used to lower the striker safely for disassembly.

The TP9SF retains the elongated slide and barrel of the SA but includes an improved single-action trigger with nickel-coated component parts. In this configuration, the mechanism went full-GLOCK. Keep your finger off the trigger, and the gun is on safe. Put your finger inside the trigger guard, and the gun goes hot. The dirty little secret is that between the Canik and the GLOCK, the TP9SF has the nicer trigger.

Next Level

The slide and barrel of the TP9SFx race gun are stretched out a bit. There are lightening cuts for lighter weight, faster lockup and just plain cool points.



The Canik TP9 Elite Combat Executive has literally all the bells and whistles. It is snazzy-looking to boot.



TAYLOR FREELANCE

MAKING A GREAT GUN EVEN GREATER

It was inevitable the Canik TP9 would eventually catch the eye of those firearms artisans who craft aftermarket mechanical enhancements. Taylor Freelance is the DaVinci of gun accessories. Their media are aluminum, steel and brass. Their product is ballistic art.

Polymer-framed pistols are designed to be lightweight. For a carry gun, that's the point. However, mass times velocity in one direction will always equal mass times velocity in the other direction. That's not just a good idea. That's the law. Taylor Freelance produces applique accessories that add some proper mass to your competition Canik and look awesome doing it.

Their snap-on extended magazine bases offer a prodigious four extra rounds. It is easy to load to a full 22-round capacity without a loader. The brass checkered backstrap and flared magwell add an aggregate 6 oz. to the weapon. No kidding, the end result feels like you're running the gun off a tripod.

Thusly configured the extra weight gobbles up recoil and provides the perfect interface between weapon and flesh. It will absolutely ruin you to your flimsy lightweight pistols. For competition and home defense, Taylor Freelance rules.

Taylor Freelance lets you thoroughly pimp out your TP9 and simultaneously transform it into a teddy bear on the range. The added mass all but negates perceived recoil.

The Canik TP9SFx is the race gun. The extended slide and barrel tame recoil, while the ample 20-round box magazine will have you shooting about forever between reloads.

Steel Warren combat sights are the sorts you'd be expected to pay extra for on lesser guns.



The TP9SFx front sight includes a fiber optic insert and the rear of the slide is cut to accept a micro red dot. TP9SFx magazines pack a whopping 20 rounds onboard. The TP9SFx can be had from the factory with a Vortex Viper red dot.

The TP9SF Elite is the mid-sized gun akin to the GLOCK 19. The TP9SF Elite has all the same awesome stuff as the rest of the TP9 line along with a 15-round magazine. The TP9SF Elite-S also sports a cool manual safety easily manipulated with the trigger finger.

The TP9 Elite Combat Executive is the same gun thoroughly customized. That means fiber optic sights, a fluted gold PVD-coated match-grade threaded barrel and an aluminum speed funnel magwell. The flat-faced trigger sports a precise 4.8-lb. pull weight. Magazines are the standard 15-round sort with extended baseplates for a total capacity of 18.

The TP9SC is the subcompact deep carry version with one stubby 12-round magazine as well as one longer 15-round sort. This allows the operator to configure the gun for the circumstances and the mission. The TP9SC still has all the bells and whistles but rides comfortably underneath a pair of shorts and a T-shirt.

If you can't find the gun you need in the TP9 family, you are just too picky.

With an MSRP as low as \$359, the TP9 is the military-grade combat pistol that is within financial reach of normal folk. You can spend way more on a combat handgun, but you could also just put your money in a tidy pile and set fire to it. The TP9 is epic iron at any price.

For more info: CenturyArms.com



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Pentagon XR
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SERIOUS KNIVES FOR SERIOUS USERS

When founder and long-time owner Spencer Frazer of SOG Specialty Knives, commonly known simply as SOG, retired in 2020, there were a lot of questions about the future of the innovative and successful cutlery manufacturer. After 45 years of business, who would take the helm of the company? Known for making excellent knives, both fixed-blade and folder — not to mention an extremely popular line of multi-tools — what changes would new leadership bring to SOG? Now, with time to let the dust settle, we felt it was time for an update, and we bring it to you here.

With fresh blood comes change, and so it has with SOG. After Frazer's retirement, the responsibilities for the manufacturer's direction were handed over to Beren McKay to oversee Innovation and Product Development, Jonathan Wegner to lead Industrial Design and Strategy, and Chris Cashbaugh, to direct Product Strategy. "In the last decade there was a focus on appealing to the mass consumer which, we feel, caused SOG to lose focus," Jonathan Wegner tells *Handgunner*. "We acknowledged this to be a misalignment with where we wanted to

go so last year the company launched a complete brand refresh, starting with a total revamp of the product line-up. The new products and direction are what has put SOG on a different course and has been received very well by traditional and new fans of the brand alike."

The new management team did some serious head cracking and developed a bold new direction for SOG focused on new divisions — essentially recreating the SOG brand. In a nutshell, they took the carburetor out and added a supercharger. "Our new product lines are developed specifically with one of three key focuses in mind: professional and defensive use, outdoor (including hunting and camping), and general-purpose daily carry," Jonathan explains. "At the beginning of the development of each product we first identify what problem we're trying to solve, who the user is, and what the typical use scenarios look like to give us clear parameters of what we're trying to make and the goals we're aiming for. This follows our 'study, observe, understand, apply, repeat' product development mantra to ensure we're creating tools that are developed to be deliberately intentional, rather than just a pretty looking hype tool."

Innovation Is Key

Innovation has always been high on SOG's priorities, whether it be incorporating new features into their knives or

Terminus XR Black

Kiku XR LTE
Blaze Orange

improving their earlier ones — they've never sat on their laurels. "In terms of special features, we have quite a few to talk about as almost every single release has patented or patent pending technologies we've developed to achieve a specific solution or feature," notes Wegner. "One of our most popular recent innovations has been the latest evolution of our Arc Lock, which we have named the XR Lock. Key benefits of our patent pending design is smoothness and reliability of open and close, ability to work with a kick, and its sheer strength. We have tested this lock system in our SEAL XR knife to an excess of 2,500 lbs. of force without a failure of the lock mechanism. Our XR Lock can be found in most of our recent folders across all three of our user categories — Terminus XR, Kiku XR, Vision XR, Pentagon XR, Ultra XR, SOG-TAC XR — and will be utilized in many upcoming future releases."

Multi-tools continue to be a hallmark in the SOG stable. "Our signature Compound Leverage feature is well known in our multi-tools. It allows for one-handed open operation as well as enhanced gripping and cutting strength. We've applied this technology not only to our well-known multi-tools such as PowerAccess and PowerLock but also to our folding ParaShears, providing the user with greater cutting force," Jonathan informs us. In addition, SOG still continues to build innovation into their fixed-blade line as well. "We are just starting to release the Universal Mounting System (UMS) on our fixed blades, which we've developed to be an interchangeable and customizable sheath and carry group of accessories that can be adjusted and scaled to meet individual applications. This system includes tool-free tensioners on the sheaths, which allow for adjustment of the draw strength. Our UMS Clip features a very flat, strong steel MOLLE or belt mounting solution as well as a variety of other attachment methods and accessories."

Piping Hot SOG

We asked Jonathan to give us the inside scoop on SOG's best sellers. "In the last year, our best sellers have included our recently released Terminus XR and the associated variants we have in G10 and Light Edition form. The Terminus XR is a compact everyday

Pentagon FX Covert Blackout



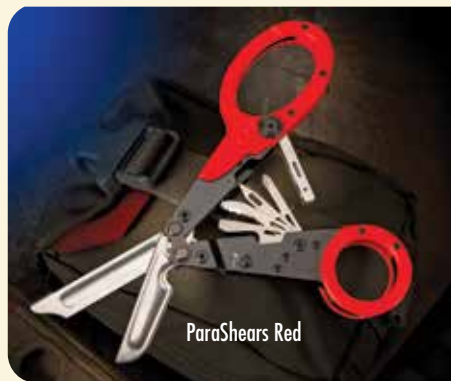
carry that has a perfect blade shape and size for most common daily tasks.

"Our Kiku line of products, designed by noted custom knife-maker Kiku Matsuda from Japan, has a lot of fans. They have a unique design style which started as a single collaboration and have now gained momentum in many variants. The latest version is the Light Edition Kiku XR LTE — a large format outdoor folder that is incredibly lightweight thanks to the use of carbon fiber as a structural component.

"In our professional line-up of knives," Wegner continues, "the Pentagon XR and Vision XR are very popular with both uniformed professionals as well as those who carry for self-defense. The assisted-opening technology Trident AT gets a lot of love from first responders. Our HQ store has frequent visits from local first responders who swear by Trident — especially the latest version."

As for the highway ahead, new designs are just around the corner. "Future plans are to dive deeper into what we've done in the last year, which is doubling down on innovative features and materials and continuing to work with end-users to understand their needs — more of that. We have one of our largest collections coming out in Spring 2022 with a good number of items specifically designed for each of our main customer groups." We're looking forward to seeing where this new, supercharged version of SOG goes!

For more info: SOGKnives.com and @SOGknives on all major social media networks



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SCAN TO ENTER



ALIEN KNIVES BLACK MIDI DX2



PLUS



**SILENT DRY
INVISIBLE DEHUMIDIFIER**

For this issue of *American Handgunner*, our giveaway gun is Mossberg's MC2sc. The micro-compact 9mm offers increased capacity but is comfortably sized for concealed carry. With an OAL of 6.25", a height of 4.30" and slim 1.10" width, the MC2sc also features an optics-ready slide for ease of mounting micro red-dot sights. Available in two frame variants (standard and cross-bolt safety) and with optional TRUGLO Tritium Pro Night sights, each MC2sc comes equipped with both an 11-round flush and 14-round extended magazines.

The *MIDI DX2* from Alien Knives is a simple yet appealing knife. With an OAL of 7.125", its 2.76" blade is made of Sandvik 14C28N stainless steel. The handles are G10. Its liner lock can be opened and closed with one hand without repositioning the knife.

The *Invisible Dehumidifier* from Silent Dry prevents rust buildup on your gun. Put it inside your gun case to control the humidity level. One block is sufficient for 5 liters of storage space. It's reusable too. Just heat it up in a microwave.

Mossberg's MC2sc, Alien Knives' MIDI DX2 and Silent Dry's Invisible Dehumidifier can be yours, if you win the giveaway! You just have to enter! Go to AmericanHandgunner.com/ giveaways or mail a post card! —Jazz Jimenez

MC2SC PISTOL

MANUFACTURER: MOSSBERG
(800) 363-3555, MOSSBERG.COM
CALIBER: 9MM, CAPACITY: 11+1 OR 14+1, OAL: 6.25"
BARREL LENGTH: 3.4", WEIGHT: 19.5 OZ.
VALUE: \$556

BLACK MIDI DX2

MANUFACTURER: ALIEN KNIVES
(619) 240-0079, ALIENGAGE.COM
VALUE: \$99

SILENT DRY INVISIBLE DEHUMIDIFIER

MANUFACTURER: SILENT DRY, SILENT-DRY.COM
VALUE: \$30

TOTAL VALUE: \$685

Bisley Model and Single Action Army 7½" .44 Specials compared.



SIXGUNNIN' THE 7½" COLT SINGLE ACTION ARMY

Call it fate, destiny or it just had to be. Whatever your choice, it was meant to happen. My favorite sixgun all these many decades has been a 7½" Single Action beginning with the legendary Colt Model P. I'm sure I was greatly influenced by the arrival of *Gunsmoke* while I was still in high school — Matt Dillon used a 7½" Colt. This certainly had something to do with my brand-new 7½" Colt Single Action .45 being the first to arrive in my area in late 1956. I used mine in Fast Draw with an Arvo Ojala Hollywood holster.

Over all these years, the Colt Single Action Army has been produced in what is now known as 1st, 2nd and 3rd Generations, so let's take a look at how all that came to be. After the Civil War, Colt began converting their 1860 Army revolvers to cartridge firing by replacing the cylinders using both the Richards and Richards-Mason configuration. The military was about to call for testing to adopt a new revolver and to this end Colt produced their first big bore cartridge firing sixgun.



Three Generations of the 7½" .44 WCF Colt Frontier Sixshooter.

The 1871-72 Open-Top

This new Colt looked much like an 1860 Army with the same open-top frame construction, however, it had a cartridge cylinder, a loading gate, and an ejector rod. It also had the same grip frame as the 1860 Army. The

chambering was .44 Colt using a bullet of approximately 210 grains at approximately 750 fps. However, the military board was not impressed. They did not like the open top frame and instead wanted a "top strap" design like that found on the Remington percussion revolvers of the period. They felt this would offer a significant increase in strength not only to make the sixgun more rugged but also to hold the cartridge they felt was necessary for future use by the military. They wanted a .45.

'72 Open-Top. The chambering was changed, the mainframe was changed, and the grip frame was changed. The new Colt incorporated the solid top strap of the Remington, the grip frame Sam Colt had first designed for his 1851 Navy .36 percussion revolver, and it chambered the new .45 Colt. This new .45 used a bullet of 250-255 grains for a muzzle velocity well over 850 fps. The barrel length of the 1860 Army had been 8". The new Colt .45 had for me what is a perfectly balanced 7½" barrel.

From 1873 until 1940, the Colt Single Action Army was produced in over 30 chamberings with approximately half of the 357,000+ sixguns produced being .45 Colts and about half of the remaining were in .44 WCF and then followed the .38 WCF and .32 WCF. During the 20th century, Colt added the .44 Special and .357 Magnum. My experience with



These 3rd Generation examples shoot just fine too.

Drawing Board

Colt was sent back to the drawing board and William Mason redesigned the '71-

the 7½" 1st Generation Colt Single Action is confined to .45 Colt, .44-40 and .44 Special.

A Fortunate Find

About 20 years ago, I stumbled onto an old beater 7½" .45 Colt for the sum of \$300. Upon careful inspection, as I turned it over in my hands and caught the light, I saw something on the frame. What caught my eye was "U.S."; even though it was not in very good shape, it appeared I had an original Cavalry Model Colt made in 1881. There was no caliber marking on the barrel and it appeared to have a re-blue of sorts mixed in with a little bit of rust. It seemed to function okay, at least much better than it looked. The mainframe number itself was quite interesting as it was a "One of One Thousand" as the last three digits of the serial number were all zeros.

Larry Larsen, who specialized in restoring old Colts, was given the challenge of restoring this old Colt. The entire sixgun, except for the mainframe and hammer, which were re-case hardened, was properly and period-correctly re-blued and the necessary re-stamping



was performed. When we were all finished, I had a U.S. Cavalry Colt as beautiful as it was the day in 1881 when it left the Hartford factory.

Bisley

A variation on the Colt Single Action Army is the Bisley Model. Over 8,000 Bisley Models were produced with just under 100 of them configured with target sights. The standard SAA grip frame was designed to roll in the hand, however, the Bisley Model was

made more vertical to the bore axis and designed to ride up higher along the back strap. The front strap came up higher behind the triggerguard to allow the grip frame to really nestle into the shooting hand. The Bisley was also given what is now normally referred to as a target hammer for easier cocking and the trigger was made wider and also curved to fit the finger. My 7½" Bisley Model began life as a basically shot out .44 WCF with no finish left and extremely oversize cylinder mouths. It



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is now a 7½" .44 Special with a new barrel and cylinder and re-finished by Hamilton Bowen.

2nd Generation

In 1955, the 2nd Generation of Colt Single Actions began with the first chambering being .45 Colt followed by .38 Special, .357 Magnum and .44 Special. These ran from 1955 to 1975 with 2nd Generation serial numbers ending in "SA" to differentiate them from 1st Generation Single Actions. The 2nd Generation .45 Colt Single Action was virtually identical to the original guns except for some very minor changes

such as serial numbers, barrel markings, and lack of inspector marks. Instead of carrying on the same serial number range that ended in 1940, Colt chose to use an "SA" suffix on the new guns and begin the serial numbers with 1002SA; they would go to just over 73000SA when production ended in 1975.

Still the same gun as the 1873 Peacemaker, the "new" Colt was made of stronger steels, and as far as quality the 2nd Generation guns, at least at the beginning, were as good, or better than anything from the 1st Generation production. My experience with 7½" 2nd Generation Colt Single Actions is con-

fined to .45 Colt and .44 Special plus the only example produced in .44-40 was from the Peacemaker Centennial Commemorative set.

3rd Generation

By 1975, history began to repeat itself and the 2nd Generation machinery was worn out. The Colt Single Action was removed from production again. This time, however, it would not take 15 years to come back. Within a couple of years, Colt entered the 3rd Generation of Colt Single Action Army production, beginning at serial number 80000SA. The 3rd Generation Colt Single Action lasted

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into the late 1980s when the market was flooded with all types of variations as to finish and barrel length and often second-class examples before the production was to cease again — for the third time. But it was destined to return!

With the third resurrection, the Colt Single Action Army has followed a somewhat strange path being sometimes offered as a production gun and other times as a custom shop offering. The bad news is quality has been spotty. The great good news is my most current Colt Single Action Army, a 7½" .45 Colt from 2011, the 175th Anniversary of Colt, is of excellent quality with close attention paid to fit and finish with a deep blue on everything but the mainframe that has the breathtaking case-hardened colors Colt has long been known for.

My 7½" Colt Single Actions from the 3rd Generation run not only includes .45 Colt and .44 Special but also .44 WCF and .38 WCF, which are now known mostly as .44-40 and .38-40. Colt may have had some trouble with specifications in the early 3rd Generation sixguns, however, all of my later ones have uniform cylinders cut to the proper dimensions in .44 Special, .44-40 and .38-40.

The 2nd and 3rd Generation 7½" .45 Colt Single Action sixguns.



With the .45 Colt versions cylinders cut at 0.454", they shoot well with either 0.452" or 0.454" cast bullets.

At one time, in addition to all those I have mentioned, they also offered the .32 WCF, or .32-20. I did manage to get one of these in a 5½" barrel length.

It is an excellent shooter and I wish I had picked up a 7½" version while they were available.

Who knows what the future holds for the Colt Single Action Army? We do know history has proven it to be a survivor.



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CHESTY PULLER, .45 IN HAND

SITUATION: Famous as a leader in combat, Chesty Puller was a skillful pistol fighter as well.

LESSON: Training, skill and the best equipment are enormously helpful. Perhaps most important, though, is the fighting spirit that made General Puller a legend. And ... a pre-war start in guns and hunting can shape a more survivable combatant.

Lewis “Chesty” Puller. In his time, his name was a household word, and if asked “Who was the most famous U.S. Marine?” — many people today would answer, “Chesty Puller.” He first made his mark in “police actions” in places like Haiti, rose to fame in the South Pacific campaign during World War II, and became solidified in legend by leading *the Breakout* in the Korean conflict.

There are many books about Puller. Most focus on his leadership and courage. One book is even devoted to his famous quotes. But most give short shrift to the general’s formidable pistol fighting skills.

Burke Davis (1913-2006) was the author of many historical non-fiction books, specializing in war and warriors. One of his trademarks was a personal touch, with deep insights into the heroes about whom he wrote. One of Davis’ classics is *Marine! The Life of Chesty Puller*, subtitled *The Only Marine in History to Win Five Navy Crosses*.

It is to Burke Davis we are primarily indebted for the following accounts of General Puller’s pistol fights, his training and background with guns and his general attitude toward related matters.

Puller In Combat

Puller’s first deployments were in Haiti and Nicaragua, supporting friendly governments who were fighting anti-American insurgents. In the latter country in 1929, he found himself traveling with a Thompson submachine gun, cased with ample spare ammunition.

Two years later, he found himself fighting for his life with his .45 pistol in Nicaragua. Davis tells us, “They were more than a hundred miles from Jinotega, Company M marching over open country on high ground beside the swift Cua River. Puller and (Col. William) Lee were not far apart when they saw, almost at the same instant, a native dugout canoe speed around a bend to their rear, bearing two men. One of these men fired, wildly. There was also a burst of rifle fire from across the river — another attempt at ambush.

“Puller reacted as usual. He ran at top speed toward the riverbank, straight for the canoe, pulling his pistol as he went. He fired in motion, and one of the canoeists fell across the gunwale. The patrol killed the other Indian, and when men splashed across the river, they found the band had fled.

“Lee thought Puller’s action a climax of the fighting in Nicaragua: ‘It was the greatest field shot I ever saw. He shot that bird from 15 to 25 yards away from that canoe, going at full speed, and the canoe moving, too. He drilled him right in the ear, so perfectly that we looked over the body for several minutes before finding the wound. He had shot him precisely in the opening of the ear. I don’t think such shooting was accidental.’” (1)

Some of the accounts of Puller’s personal engagement in combat are sketchy and short on details. Here is one, from when he was a Colonel on Guadalcanal: “A grenade fell near the Old Man — no more than eight yards away, Captain Zach Cox estimated, but Puller turned when he saw A Company scatter and yelled: ‘Oh, that damned thing ain’t going off.’ It helped steady the men. The grenade was a dud. Cockrell’s B Company was being cut up in the woods by snipers in trees with light machine guns, and fire from Puller’s front became spotty. The fight was now at close quarters: The Colonel had killed three men with his .45 — one of them a Japanese major.” (2)

There were many men in combat along with Puller who were glad they, too, were carrying pistols. One was Captain Regan Fuller, who spoke of an experience he had on Guadalcanal. “It was rough country, up and down everywhere, with plenty of cover. I sent one of my boys, Corporal

Continued on next page

AYOOB FILES

Turner, up a grassy hill to our right, where we were trying to persuade the Old Man to stop for the night. I walked behind Turner — and we almost stepped on two Japs who were eating rice by a hidden fire at the base of a big tree. They were as astonished as we were, and we all scrambled. I fired three clips from my .45 and killed one of them, but the other ran down the trail toward our main body. Turner's squad had deployed into line behind us. There was a little shooting, and then quiet ..." (3)

The Guns Of Chesty Puller

Most of the time when an enemy was killed by Puller's own hand, it appears to have been with his service pistol.

While there exists a photo of Puller shooting offhand with a very long barreled, non-issue DA revolver, virtually all the photos of him in the South Pacific and Korea depict him wearing a standard .45 auto. Burke Davis' anecdotes all refer to him using a .45. I've been unable to find if or where Puller's sidearm still exists today. Most photos of him wearing it are taken from the front, so we can't see whether it wore a flat (1911) or arched (1911A1) mainspring housing.

There actually exists a chest holster

named the Chesty Puller, but it appears to be a modern play on the great Marine's nickname. In every photo I've seen of him in combat theaters, his .45 is in a standard issue flap holster on his right hip, backed up with a web double magazine pouch at the left front of his web belt. *While many military officers did carry their .45s in the tanker-style chest holster during WWII, I've seen no indication Puller was one of them.* He became a Marine early enough he was presumably issued a 1911, since the A1 dates to relatively late in the 1920s. Of course, if he preferred the 1911A1's features (slightly better sights, longer grip tang to minimize hand bite, shorter trigger, arched housing), he had the "pull" to requisition one once they became available.

In any case, whenever Puller personally fought with a pistol in hand, it was the government-issue pistol known colloquially in his time as simply "the .45 automatic."

Puller had specific opinions on other small arms. Pictures of him in the field almost invariably show him wearing a pistol and two spare magazines, and he expected fighting men to be constantly armed when in danger zones. Davis writes of one day when Col. Puller was selecting staff members: "When he was choosing his intelligence officers, his exec pointed out a major sent in for the purpose by head-

quarters. Puller scoffed loudly, 'Hell, that man hasn't even got on a weapon. Find me another one.'" (4)

Only The Best For His Men

He also worked hard to make sure his troops had ample ammunition. Again, from Burke Davis: "As the time for a new campaign drew near, Puller drove his staff to complete the last detail in preparation. He warned the regimental supply officer, an Army Quartermaster general, was to check their requisitions. 'Notify me at once when he arrives,' Puller said. 'I want to explain things in person.'

"The Army general arrived when Puller was out, and the lieutenant took the inspector to the supply dump. Puller found them there and overheard their conversation:

"'Lieutenant, your requisitions are excessive.'

"'I'm sure Colonel Puller would never have signed for more than we need, sir.'

"'But he's asked for 10,000 brass buckshot shells. What the devil does he want with those?'

"'To kill Japs with, sir.'

"'Doesn't Colonel Puller know buckshot is prohibited by the Geneva Convention?'

"'Sir, Colonel Puller doesn't give a damn about the Geneva Convention — any more than the Japs did at Pearl Harbor.'" (5)

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It should be noted short barrel pump shotguns were indeed used in the Pacific Theater. My late mentor, Bill Jordan, a veteran of that campaign, told me he used a Winchester slide-action trench gun and an S&W 1917 .45 revolver when clearing enemy pillboxes in the island campaign. *The brass buckshot shells had been requisitioned because paper shells swelled up in the heat and humidity there, getting stuck in the magazines and chambers.*

Puller's demands for the best equipment for his Marines weren't limited to guns and ammo. Wrote Davis, "(Puller) spoke to War Production Board officials in Washington: 'I want to ask you why American troops shouldn't have the world's best fighting equipment. On Guadalcanal we saw our trenching shovels break at the first use. All of our men now have Jap shovels because they're better and more dependable. Jap field glasses are better, too. I have good ones myself, German glasses I've carried for 20 years. Why should American glasses be so poor? Not worth a damn in the tropics. They fog up because they are improperly sealed, and once they get damp, they're done for. I've seen hundreds of pairs tossed away in the jungle or the sea, because men know they can see as well with the naked eye. What kind of American ingenuity — or patriotism — produced those?'"

Yet, curiously, Puller wasn't a fan of the M-1 Garand that George S. Patton had called "the best battle implement ever devised." Davis reports the following:

"There was a squabble between A Company and some of the 164th Army men, for Regan Fuller's men had bartered for, or stolen, some new M-1 rifles during the big night's fighting, and Army officers wanted them returned. The Colonel was amused by the affair. For himself, he favored the old rifle they brought to Guadalcanal: 'For sheer accuracy, if you want to kill men in battle, there has never been a rifle to equal the Springfield 1903. Others may give us more firepower, but in ability to hit a target, nothing touches the old '03. In my opinion, nothing ever will. A perfect weapon, if ever there was one.'" (6)

The following seems contradictory to the above, but Davis noted, "... Puller was asked by Marine Corps Headquarters for a full report on his experiences with the Thompson submachine gun under field conditions and sent in an enthusiastic report on the weapon's value on patrol." (7)

Puller's Training & Quals

While based in Hawaii, having shot Expert Rifleman five years running, Puller was affronted when a grizzled sergeant offered to teach him to shoot. When the sarge promised to bring his



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rifle score up 20 points in two weeks, Puller accepted the challenge. Davis reported, "Puller became the sergeant's pupil, shooting when targets became vacant during the training, and shot an average of two bandoleers daily. He improved rapidly, and brought his record score from 306 to 326, of a possible 350. During all these years he qualified as expert with both rifle and pistol, and when a rifle team was sent from Pearl Harbor to a competition in San Diego in 1928, Puller was a member." (8)

Davis adds, "... in the first report period, Puller posted an average score in bayonet drill; a fellow Marine, Lieutenant Gerald Thomas, finished 10 places ahead of him. But in marksmanship, with the automatic pistol, he ranked as expert, with a score of 91.13 out of 100 points. As a rifleman, he fired 335 of a possible 350, and stood 16th in the class of officers. He also ranked as expert with the machine gun, in which he stood high in the top third of the class, with a score of 340." (9)

The quality of marksmanship training in the United States Marine Corps is, of course, legendary. That said, Puller famously credited his survival and many of his accomplishments in battle to having been a young armed citizen before he enlisted in the Marine Corps.

Born in Virginia, he learned guns and hunting early. He was about 10 years old when cancer took his father, and he supplemented the larder by shooting small game and wild turkeys. He became a trapper, selling muskrat pelts to pay for his ammunition. "Lewis learned both accuracy and frugality, for he bought his own ammunition," biographer Davis wrote. (10)

Another writer, Michael Martin, wrote, "After his military fighting career was over many years later, Chesty noted he learned more about the art of war by hunting and trapping than he learned from any school. *He insisted the skills he learned as a kid, living off the land, saved his life many times in combat.*" (11)

Lessons

The constant presence of his sidearm saved Chesty Puller's life more than once. It is no surprise you see his holstered .45 in almost every photograph taken of him in a combat environment, from his early days in the banana republics to the Pacific Theater to Korea. Note he insisted all his men be within reach of their guns in combat environments, at all times. It saved his life multiple times over ... and, doubtless, the lives of many of his troops, including Captain Regan Fuller, as noted above.

Puller was a contemporary and friend of Herman Hanneken in his early combat

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days. Hanneken was the man who had killed the revolutionary leader Charlemagne Peralte in Haiti in 1919, with a single .45 slug to the heart from Hanneken's USMC-issue Colt 1911. Puller had doubtless incorporated this knowledge into his trust in the same weapon, which he learned to keep constantly close.

His critics felt too many USMC casualties had accrued from Puller's aggressive tactics, while his defenders argued those aggressive tactics were what won his major victories. Both sides need to remember Puller was a casualty himself, blown up on Guadalcanal with shrapnel savaging his legs, yet he returned to lead from the front sooner than his doctors wanted. *Many who served under him were heard to say they'd follow him into Hell ... and that he actually led them there and did his damndest to get them back out after they'd won.*

It is vital to remember this legendary Marine gave credit to his survival and victories to the hunting and shooting skills he learned in boyhood and adolescence. This sort of "pre-service preparation" has served American fighting men since the beginning of our nation. Woods-wise citizen soldiers with their own rifles and muskets won the Revolutionary War. The National Rifle Association was founded in 1871 by Yankee officers who had noted the superior fighting ability of individual Confederate soldiers who had grown up hunting and shooting. Sergeant Alvin York in WWI, WWII's most decorated soldier Audie Murphy, Carlos Hathcock in Vietnam and Chris Kyle in the most recent conflict all fit the same mold: super-soldiers whose skill at arms had been developed before they joined up. This heritage is one reason why we at the Second Amendment Foundation where I currently serve as interim president have brought lawsuits to allow young Americans ages 18 to 20 to buy their own AR15s and prepare for a career defending their nation with firearms similar to the faster-shooting true assault rifles they'll be issued when asked to die for their country.

There is much, much more to the history and legacy of Lewis "Chesty" Puller than can be presented in this short space. We conclude with thanks to the late biographer Burke Davis, who gave us so many valuable details from this particular side of the Puller legend. He is the one to thank for what you've just read; hell, I merely "wrote the book report."

For more info: SAF.org. References: 1) Davis, Burke, Marine! The Life of Chesty Puller, P. 56. 2) Ibid., P. 118. 3) Ibid., P. 118. 4) Ibid., P. 181. 5) Ibid., Pp. 169-170. 6) Ibid., P. 148. 7) Ibid., P. 61. 8) Ibid., P. 46. 9) Ibid., P. 61. 10) Ibid., P. 9. 11) Martin, Michael. "Chesty" Puller and the Southern Military Tradition, Abbeville Institute Press, 2018.

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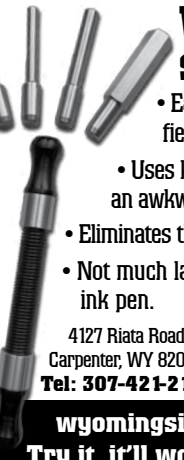
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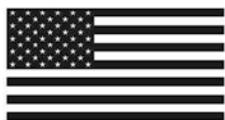
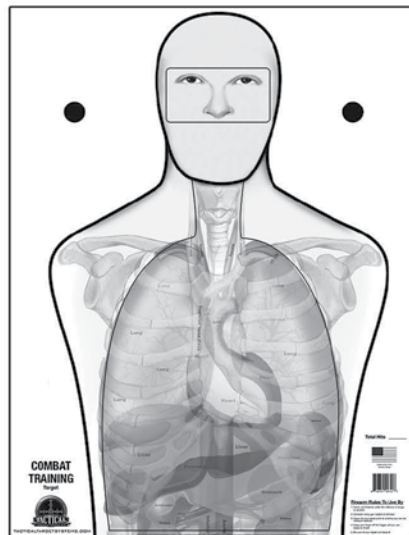
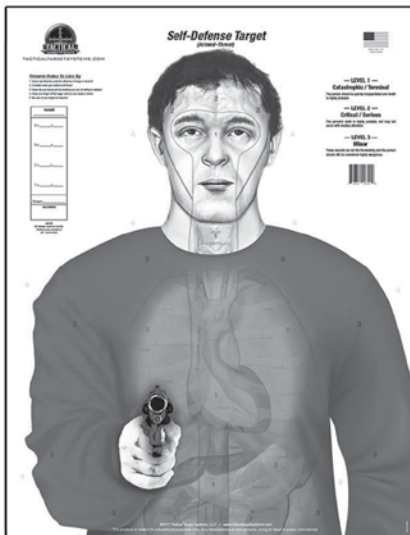
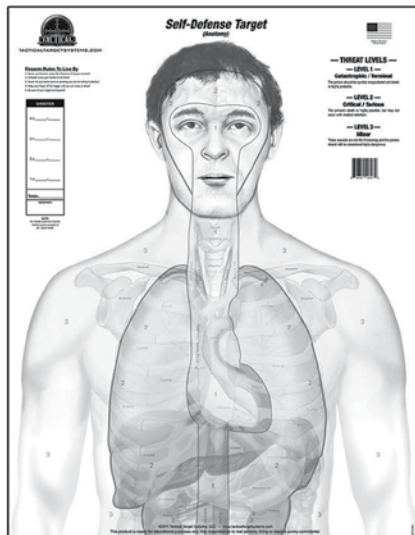
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I never really knew where to stow my firearm while carrying concealed inside a vehicle. The Alien Gear Driver Defense holster amends this issue by positioning your handgun between your legs under the steering wheel. Two straps buckle through and around the seat while the modular shapeshift holster keeps the pistol secure. This system leaves no marks on the vehicle — ideal for retaining resale value. Ultimately, this has

become my preferred method of carry in a vehicle for long car trips. If you have a front-seat passenger who is not authorized to carry, it also keeps it out of their reach. My favorite part is the thumb release. Grabbing the pistol with my right hand, my thumb falls naturally over the release, making the draw smooth, fast and easy. MSRP: \$59.88. For more info: AlienGearHolsters.com



MEET THE FAMILY

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NEWPRODUCTS



GIRSAN MC1911 SC ULTIMATE

EAA Corp.

The *Girsan MC1911 SC Ultimate* is the ideal concealed carry pistol. Available in .45 ACP and 9mm, this concealable 1911 has a no-snap design. Features include G10 grips, a fully melded frame/slide in Blue/Black or Dark Earth, a visual capacity window and custom texturing. With a capacity of 6+1, the Girsan MC1911 SC Ultimate has an OAL of 7" and weighs 1.6 lbs. MSRP: \$710. For more info: (321) 639-4842, EAACorp.com

IMPERIAL LOAD-OUT DUFFEL BAG V2

Maxpedition

The *Imperial Load-Out Duffel Bag V2* from Maxpedition is a heavy duty 78L duffel bag for travel, camping, moving and more.

It carries a lot of stuff yet it's comfortable to carry with the integral 2" wide shoulder strap. This updated edition has seat-belt webbing throughout, a larger loop field for morale patches and slack webbing organization on compression straps. Comes in Wolf Gray and Black. MSRP: \$129.99. For more info: (310) 768-0098, Maxpedition.com



MINI LEATHERNECK

Cold Steel

Cold Steel's *Mini Leatherneck* is a series of fixed blades offered as a Tanto model, Double Edge Spear Point and a Clip Point delivering "big knife" performance in a compact package. The Mini Leatherneck has a 3.5" blade and 3.25" handle for an OAL of 6.75". The 8Cr13MoV steel blade is easy to sharpen and holds an edge well. A quillon and pommel provide a positive grip and hand protection. The Mini Leatherneck fits in a rugged Secure-Ex sheath for use with a bead lanyard or a Cold Steel C-clip. MSRP: \$25.99-\$29.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, ColdSteel.com



LEVAR RATCHETING CHARGING HANDLE

Springfield Armory

The patented *Levar Ratcheting Charging Handle* gives users a 3:1 mechanical advantage over traditional charging handles and clears stuck cartridges with ease while keeping your muzzle pointed safely downrange. No need to slam the butt of the gun against the ground to free stuck casings. Simply deploy the ratcheting arm and pull back to eject the casing. The LevAR installs in seconds and is compatible with any standard AR-15 upper receiver. Dimensions are 7.25"x2.25"x0.5"; weight is 2.9 oz. MSRP: \$99. For more info: (800) 680-6866, store.Springfield-Armory.com



PISTOL STORAGE BAG

Arms Preservation Inc.

The *Pistol Storage Bag* from Arms Preservation Inc. is designed to protect subcompact to full-size handguns from rust and contamination during storage. They use a combination of Vapor Corrosion Inhibitor (VCI) chemistry and barrier packaging materials to prevent corrosion in firearms, spare parts and ammunition for five years or more. A.P.I. bags are available for long guns as well. MSRP: \$11.99 for pistol bags; \$19.99 and \$24.99 for shotgun and rifle bags respectively. For more info: (585) 455-0681, APIGunBag.com

WARCAT IWB HOLSTER

Warcat Tactical

The *Warcat IWB Holster* has a slim, minimalist design. It's smooth and shaped for comfort and comes with the Warcat Claw & Wedge Kit. The kit reduces printing by adjusting the holster tighter to your body horizontally and vertically. The claw keeps the grip turned toward you while the wedge adjusts the frame inward. Warcat holsters are made from a molded polymer that's 20% lighter, 40% tougher and 80% more heat resistant than other molded holsters. MSRP: \$17.76. For more info: (208) 618-8618, Warcat.com



MC2sc Mossberg

Mossberg has expanded its popular MC2 lineup with a micro-compact 9mm: the *MC2sc*. With its double-stack magazines, the optics-ready MC2sc offers increased capacity but is comfortably sized for concealed carry. Constructed of glass-reinforced polymer, the MC2sc has an OAL of 6.25" and features a 3.4" stainless steel barrel and an optics-ready slide for micro red-dot sights. For more info: (800) 363-3555, Mossberg.com



PROVOKE CRKT

The *Provoke* draws on an ancient *karambit* design but it's also futuristic. It is the first knife to feature Kinematic technology. How does Kinematic work, you ask? Nudge the upper crossbar with your thumb — while the rest of your fingers firmly grasp the handle — and the blade lunges and locks into place. Shift the lever at the base of the finger loop and the blade retreats into its closed position. The *Provoke* has an open length of 7.25" and weighs 6.1 oz. Its 2.41" hawkbill-style blade is premium D2 steel with a black titanium nitride finish. The handle is 6061 T6 aluminum. MSRP: \$199.99. For more info: (800) 891-3100, CRKT.com



SINGLE GUN CASE 36" Birchwood Casey

The *Single Gun Case 36"* from Birchwood Casey is ideal for AR-15 and AKM-pattern rifles. Designed to accommodate rifles up to 36" in length, the case is lighter and easier to transport than conventional hard cases. Made of rugged 600D polyester, the *Single Gun Case 36"* has a dual-zippered main compartment for securely stowing a carbine. Padded side panels give optimum protection in transit. MSRP: \$69.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, BirchwoodCasey.com



carbine. Padded side panels give optimum protection in transit. MSRP: \$69.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, BirchwoodCasey.com



REBEL HOLSTER FOR THE TAURUS GX4 Versacarry

Versacarry's *Rebel Holster for the Taurus GX4* is now available. It is an optics-compatible holster for OWB and IWB carry. The *Rebel* has a raised protective backing with closed-cell padding to give users added comfort. To securely hold the firearm in place, the *Rebel* has a custom-molded polymer front as well as a durable, high-quality leather backing for stability. MSRP: \$59.99 for OWB; \$69.99 for IWB. For more info: (979) 778-2000, Versacarry.com

FIREARMS GUIDE 12TH EDITION Firearms Guide

Published since 2009, the *Firearms Guide 12th Edition* is for industry professionals and enthusiasts. It has the most extensive firearms, ammo and air guns reference guide, gun values guide and gun schematics, blueprints, antique gun catalogs and gun manuals published online. Available online with activation cards and as an online+flash drive combo. In photo, the *Firearms Guide Flash Drive Edition*. MSRP: \$99.99 for the combo; \$29.95 for the activation card. For more info: FirearmsGuide.com



DXT2 BIG DOT TRITIUM NIGHT SIGHTS XS Sights

The *DXT2 Big Dot Tritium Night Sight* from XS Sights offer front sight visibility in all lighting conditions. They are available for the Taurus GX4 micro-compact 9mm pistol as well as for the Taurus G3c. The sights drive focus to the front sight using a high-contrast front and a V-notch rear for an unobstructed view of the front sight. The *DXT2* uses a patent pending glow dot that absorbs light and glows in low-light levels before it is dark enough to see the tritium. Other sights offered for the Taurus GX4 are the R3D, Minimalist and DXW2. MSRP: From \$111. For more info: (888) 744-4880, XSSights.com



MASTER GRADE HOODIE Real Avid



Real Avid announces the debut of an apparel line that has something for everyone. The line includes the *Master Grade Hoodie* as well as five T-shirts and a long-sleeved shirt. The hoodie is made of pre-shrunk 80% cotton, 20% polyester blend ideal for cool weather. The T-shirts are made of 60% cotton, 40% polyester mix great for everyday wear. Two new women's shirts of cotton/polyester/rayon are also available. MSRP: \$59.99 for the hoodie; \$19.99 for the shirts. For more info: (800) 286-0567, RealAvid.com

ENVOY ATTACHÉ KITANICA Bag Lab

The *Envoy Attaché* from KITANICA Bag Lab is functional, utilitarian and durable. It has four



carrying options: 1) over the shoulder; 2) stowable backpack straps with sheathed attachment points; 3) single strap sling; and 4) top and side triple layer webbing handles. The interior of the *Envoy* is a lighter gray color for internal visibility. It has three compartments for storing a laptop, tablet and more. MSRP: \$139. For more info: (415) 305-7663, Kitanica.com

his credit, the shop of revolver sage Hamilton Bowen turned the heavy barrels down and orchestrated other magical machinations turning even the challenging 58 into a semblance of loveliness. But to me, it was still an *almost* proposition.

Then I found an aging, beater of a .38/44 Heavy Duty with a 4" barrel calling to me softly from a display case. Perhaps sensing someone was close by who would understand and rescue it, it whispered "Take me ... take me ...!"

So I did.

As I looked at it under the harsh fluorescent lights of the gun shop I saw past

the nicks, scratches, worn blue and flat-tened checkering of the original small S&W "Service" stocks. This hardy gal had likely taken good care of a beat cop, then languished in a bedside drawer for how many years protecting a family? What I saw there in my mind's eye on that olive-colored felt pad was the ghostly image of a richly blued, ivory-gripped, elegant lady with no small amount of experience in life.

I also saw her in .45 Colt.

Bowen Understanding

Hamilton is a teacher, author, accomplished pundit, genial soul, old friend — and the best revolver pistolsmith in the world. I told him what I had and asked if a .45 Colt would be possible. Hamilton said it'd be a tragedy to install a heavier barrel on the svelte gun so I grinned and said, "Heck, let's rebore and re-rifle the existing barrel, take off the caliber stamp and turn it into a .45 Colt barrel." When your skills can keep up with your imagination, saying such things earmark what follows as something to often wonder at.

Time passes, slowly I might add. Eventually, after administrations at Hamilton's shop, a trip to Roy Fishpaw for ivory grips — the junction of metal and ivory isn't discernible by touch — the old girl came home.

Hamilton and his gremlins turned the beater into a beauty, magically erasing those hard-living decades. The custom pinned front sight, 600-grit hand polish, case-coloring on the hammer and trigger and sublime yet meaningful blue conspire together, creating something triggering most who see it in the flesh to simply sigh, look at me, back at the gun, at me again, then sigh again.

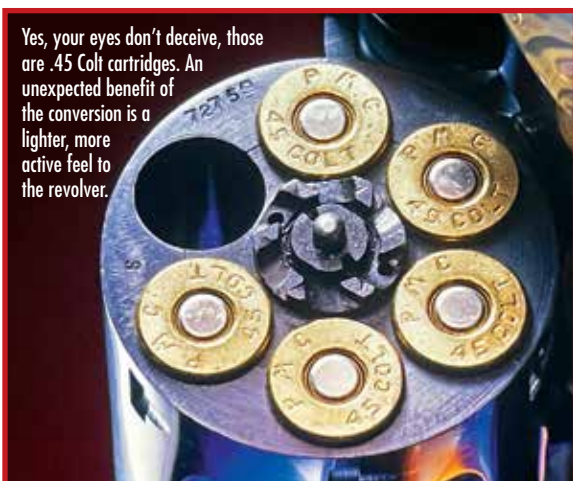
I understand completely.

I do shoot it, have been known to carry it now and again thanks to Thad Rybka and the Milt Sparks shop, and it often spends weeks on my desk simply being there to enjoy. If you don't own such a thing, do not pass go and do not collect \$200, but sell some safe queens and put the money to use while you still have time to enjoy it all. Trust me on that.

Is this the best revolver ever? Some might argue the point with me, but I confess to smiling often knowing at least this one — is mine.



For more info: BowenClassicArms.com, MiltSparks.com



AMERICAN HANDGUNNER INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Alien Gear Holsters	3	IronMind Enterprises Inc.	63	Spartan Blades USA	31
Ammo Inc.	8	IWI US	33	Sport Ridge	49
Armscor/Rock Island Armory	29	Jennings Machine and Tool	75	Springfield Armory	84
Beltman Inc.	63	Les Baer Custom	23	Standard Manufacturing Co. LLC	2
Black Hills Ammunition	68	Levergun Leather Works	74	Starline Brass Inc.	6
Burger Knives	73	Mag-na-port	74	Streamlight	15
Byrna Technologies Inc.	27	MTM Case-Gard	73	Taurus International Mfg. Inc.	21
Cammer Technologies	10	Nighthawk Custom	35	Tactical Target Systems LLC	76
Competition Electronics Inc.	77	NovX	17	Ten-Ring Precision	75
Cylinder & Slide	10	O.F. Mossberg & Sons	19	Throom Targets	9
DeSantis Gunhide	25	Powder River Precision Inc.	75	TOPS KNIVES	70
Diamond D Custom Leather	67	Real Avid	53	Tussey Custom	75
Dillon Precision Products	12	Ronin Leather Holsters LLC	9	Versacarry	61
European American Armory Corp.	11	Ruger	83	W.C. Wolff Company	74
Heckler & Koch	7	SAR USA	72	Wilson Combat	69
Hits Arms	13	SCCY Industries LLC	57	Wyoming Sight Drifter LLC	75
HSS Corp.	75	Simply Rugged Holsters	31	XS Sights	31

GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



WHAT I WOULD DO WITH 126,000 HANGUNS? THOSE TALIBAN SIDEARMS ARE ... OURS!

You've heard this before, it's age-old wisdom ... "If you know how many guns you have you don't have enough." Similar wisdom applies to ammunition — "How much ammo does a person need?" And of course, the snide answers include, "More than you have; you never have enough; the last thing you want in a firefight is to run out of ammo." Despite what the current administration says about, "No one needs a hundred bullets," our leader doesn't know jack about guns, ammo or their use. This is the guy who suggested firing two shotgun blasts through a closed door to frighten felons. If it wasn't for the media covering for the guy, he never could have gotten into office.

My friend Tim Weaver, a gentleman who ran for mayor of a modest-sized city here in Arizona, had an answer that rocked me back on my heels: "Well, first you need 5,000 rounds for each of your neighbors." And as a tangent, when you have at least one box of ammo in a caliber you never use, you need another gun. Tim didn't get into office, a crying shame. He had his head screwed on straight.

Though these answers are clever, and I like them a lot, I'm also put off by them. Attorney Jeff Snyder, who wrote the brilliant book *Nation of Cowards*, once told me while we relish these sorts of jokes, the "other side" are horrified by these swaggering (and when you get down to it) silly answers. After all, you can only shoot one gun at a time with any decent accuracy, two at most with a drop-off in target acquisition, and extra guns don't make you a better shot. That comes from a little thing called practice. Try shooting with

your weak hand next time you're at a range. It's tough.

Spares For You And Me

Now for sure, having extra firearms is a good thing. Keep some stashed in key places, use different guns for different applications like hunting, target practice, carry, home defense — you know the drill. Guns can fail, and at the worst possible time, so a backup (or 10) is a good idea. When friends stop by, it's always nice to be able to show off some iron and take a spread out to the range. Or loan one to a friend in need.

"Our leader doesn't know jack about guns, ammo or their use. This is the guy who suggested firing two shotgun blasts through a closed door to frighten felons. If it wasn't for the media covering for the guy, he never could have gotten into office."

What's the best gun? "The one you have." I can't count all the people I've interviewed who survived a deadly encounter and didn't have the gun with them they would have preferred.

Next time you see a gun you just gotta have, I say, go ahead, indulge yourself. What's money for, anyway? There is little quite as exhilarating as bringing home a nice new piece, or a fine used one, and plopping down in your favorite chair to ruminate. Add it to your

inventory list right away, or you'll forget and make the opening joke too real. Responsible gun owners know exactly how many firearms they have, the numbers, locations, and all the relevant juicy details.

For ... The Taliban?

By now you've seen the frightening — or mouth-wateringly tempting — lists of ordnance Mr. Biden left for our insurgent enemies in Afghanistan. The Pentagon has refused to give us accurate accounts. They say they haven't got any. That alone should have you screaming for a changing of the guard. What does that say for the degree of truth we have gotten from them for the past 20 years? But between Reuters, *The Times of London*, firsthand reports and photos, we know for sure it's a shootload.

What I'm interested in is the 126,000 handguns showing up on these lists. That appears to be twice the size of the entire insurgent army. Some of those guys — The Taliban — prefer belt-fed long guns and goodies like that. We left them plenty of that type of ordnance as well. If you look closely at the images emerging from the debacle, you can tell they don't know the first thing about the guns they acquired.

To be honest, I have no idea what I would do with 126,000 sidearms. If you have a clever thought, let our editor know.

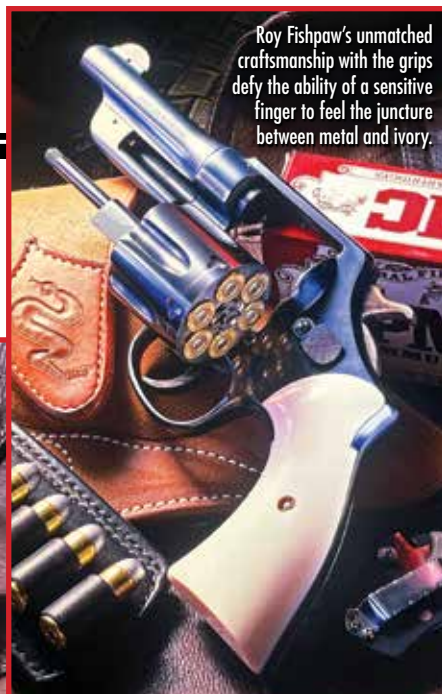
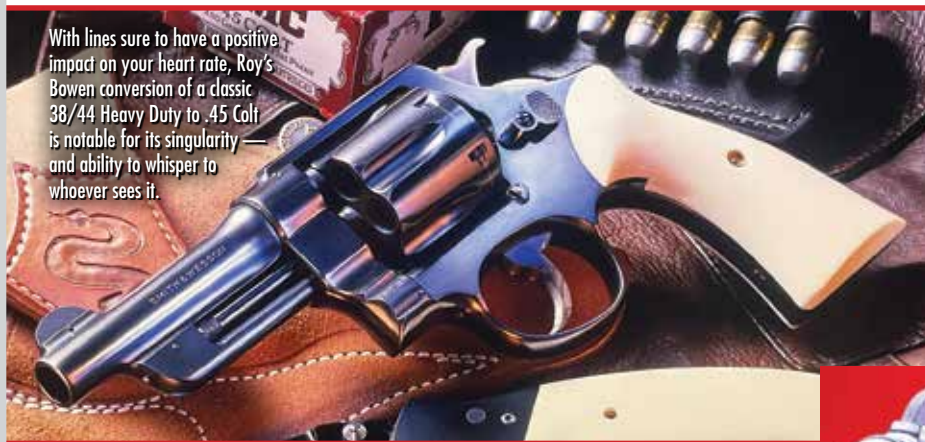


Award-winning author Alan Korwin has written 14 books, 10 of them on gun law, and has advocated for gun rights for nearly three decades. See his work or reach him at GunLaws.com.



REVISITING A

With lines sure to have a positive impact on your heart rate, Roy's Bowen conversion of a classic 38/44 Heavy Duty to .45 Colt is notable for its singularity — and ability to whisper to whoever sees it.



Roy Fishpaw's unmatched craftsmanship with the grips defy the ability of a sensitive finger to feel the juncture between metal and ivory.

The Smith & Wesson name is restored as it should be. Note the thin barrel walls and serious .45 caliber bore looking back at you. An undeniably eye-catching combination, indeed.

REBORE

IS THIS *THE* PERFECT REVOLVER?

Behold — the revolver. It appears I have peers among you who also suffer — perhaps not quite the right word, there — from an affliction I affectionately call “Um, uh ... I really like revolvers, do you?” Leading me directly to the part where I have to laugh when I hear people say, “Wow, there is sure a lot of interest in revolvers these days, isn’t there?”

These days? I think for a certain segment of we die-hard “gunists” (may I call you fellow Guncranks?), the revolver renaissance supposedly occurring today isn’t newly

minted. It’s been going on in my own life for, well ... 60 years or more. I’ll also wager a significant bet on the fact it’s been going on for some time prior to then too. I think what we have here are people who are suddenly discovering these marvelous contraptions in which cylinders go round and round. “Wow, these are great, aren’t they?” they exclaim in wonder!

Cue we ‘Cranks smiling in unison as we nod our collective heads.

If you still have your Nov/Dec 2000 issue of *American Handgunner*, go dig it out. I’ll wait. To kill time though, I’ll enlighten those who weren’t savvy enough to subscribe back then. You see, even then in the “very dark ages, a long, long time ago” there were revolvers of all sorts, and yes, some were even marvelous. The one in question here is, I feel, more “marvelouser” than most. Just maybe, dare I say it — “The Most Excellently Marvelous of All?”

Okay, if you’re back with your magazine, you’ll see a feature I wrote called “The

Ultimate Outdoorsman,” which is, I might add, an incorrect title. It should have read, “The Ultimate Heavy Duty” but for some reason the then-editor called it by the wrong name. Oopsie. I wasn’t the editor at the time, but confess when I saw it I thought, Oopsie, that’s not right. It’s neither here nor there now, but I know what it is, and it isn’t an Outdoorsman. Now you know.

The Back Story

I always thought S&W fixed sighted 4" N-Frames to be purveyors of all things good about fighting revolvers. Just enough heft, just enough authority in look and feel and even enough power to solve problems handily. At the top of the pyramid would have been a .44 Special and, more rare than common sense in Congress today, one chambered in .45 Colt — be still my racing heart.

As time passed, S&W brought out the Model 58 in .41 Magnum but alas, to me it was a swing and a miss. The heavy barrel, longer cylinder and more “clunky” feel wasn’t quite the right number of notes, if you will. Yet some did convert them to .45 Colt, and to

Continued on page 80



Using the original barrel and rebarreling it allowed the original contours to remain unmolested.

Bowen's attention to detail shows in the .45 Colt marking and new, pinned front sight.



**9MM
LUGER**

Caliber

**10+1
12+1**

Capacity

3.20"

Barrel Length

**18.4
OZ.**

Weight

COLION NOIR,
Firearms Enthusiast

The acquisition, ownership and use of firearms is heavily regulated.
Some models may not be legally available in your state or locale. Know the law and shoot safely.

RUGER[®] MAX-9[™]

The MAX-9[™] is Your Next Handgun[™].

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Comfortable enough to conceal in an inside the waistband holster or pocket holster, this micro-sized pistol has it all - without compromising on capacity or features. Rugged, reliable, affordable - the Ruger[®] MAX-9[™].

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RUGER.COM/MAX-9

Emissary 1911



All New EMISSARY

The all new Emissary 1911 from Springfield Armory® blends form and function seamlessly in a firearm built for defense and loaded with custom-grade features. The Emissary's forged slide and frame is outfitted with a tritium luminescent front sight and an accessory rail for adaptability. A Tri-Top cut to the slide with 40 LPI serrations diffuses glare and a heavy-profile bull barrel ensures the Emissary stands ready to deliver.



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