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Roy Huntington

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MAUSER MISTAKE

I always enjoy articles about classic rifles of the past, bolt-action Mausers being a favorite of mine. In the June 2022 issue story "Mauser Magic," the photo of Wayne Van Zwooll's antelope rifle correctly shows a Model 1894 carbine, not a model 1896. The giveaway is the curved bolt handle and also the sling buckle hole in the buttstock. Both of these features are not found in the 1896 or intermediate length M1938 rifles.



The glory days of affordable Mausers is not yet over. There is a certain gun emporium in Galesburg, Ill. with numerous Husqvarna hunting rifles for sale at reasonable prices and very well described as to condition. I even purchased a 9.3X57 Husqvarna on a '98 Mauser action and lengthened the chamber to 9.3X62. It goes along well with my Husqvarna 30-06 on the

later HVA action, which is still just an upgraded 98 action with a side safety and alloy bottom metal.

Richard Peterson

Aargghh! And I proofed that article until my eyes blurred! Maybe that was the problem. You're correct, Richard. Many straight bolts were later bent, but this one's original, so too the stock. A pox on armories that tweak details to confound the scribes who follow, and on readers with sharper eyes! — Wayne Van Zwooll

ANACONDA ADVICE

I finally managed to buy a new Colt Anaconda and was disappointed when the guy at the gun store told me, "it's a Colt so be careful because it won't handle the handloads a Redhawk will!"



I reread John Taffin's article on the Anaconda from October 2021 and the loads he mentioned are about as hot as it gets. I never go over 22 grains of 2400 in my Blackhawk or Redhawk, so I'm pretty sure the gun store guy doesn't know what he's talking about, and will take John's advice instead. So — how strong is the Anaconda?

John Stevenson

continued on page 61

GUNS

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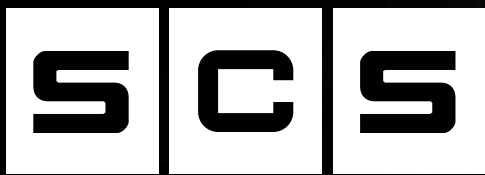
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COMPROMISE PART IV — THE NEW FRONTIER SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST?

John Taffin

In late 1961, Colt introduced its New Frontier model in honor of President John F. Kennedy's ringing declaration, "We stand at the edge of a New Frontier" To further honor the new young president, Colt went to work on a special engraved presentation model New Frontier to present to JFK. However, the dark days of November 1963 occurred before the Colt was finished and it was never presented.

IN THE BEGINNING

The original Colt Single Action Army was produced from 1873 to 1940 with the traditional hog-wallow fixed rear sight matched with a blade front sight. In the 1890s, a very few Target Models, both in the Single Action and Bisley Model configurations, were offered with a flat-topped frame and crudely adjustable sights.

To come up with the New Frontier, Colt basically took their standard Single Action Army — now in its 2nd Generation phase as production had resumed in 1955 — generously flat-topped the frame as Ruger had just accomplished with their brand-new .357 Blackhawk, fitted it with a fully adjustable rear sight matched with a ramp style front sight and the New Frontier was born. Finish on these Colts, which I consider the most beautiful single actions ever factory-produced, consisted of a case-hardened frame as only Colt could do with the balance of the sixgun being Colt's Royal Blue as found on .357 Magnum Pythons of the same era.

The Colt Single Action Army may be the choice of traditionalists, however, the New Frontier maintains the beautiful looks, feel and balance of the Colt Single Action Army with the added advantage

of adjustable sights. It is a rare fix-sighted sixgun that shoots perfectly to point of aim, and even if it does so, it may be with only one particular load.

MAKING IT WORK

If such a sixgun shoots low, it is an easy fix, namely simply filing down the front sight. However, if it shoots high, that means the front sight has to be made taller, which is not such an easy fix. If the windage is off, the barrel must be turned using a special vise. The adjustable-sighted Colt New Frontier requires nothing more than a proper

fitting screwdriver to change point of impact. The addition of adjustable sights also turns a Colt Single Action into a viable hunting handgun.

The first run of the Colt New Frontier, known as 2nd Generation sixguns, began at serial number 3000NF and finished in 1974 at serial number 72XX. Four chamberings were offered in this first run of magnificent "modern" Colt Flat-Top Target sixguns — .45 Colt, .44 Special, .357 Magnum, and very rarely, .38 Special. Standard barrel lengths of 4-3/4", 5-1/2" and 7-1/2" were cataloged but not in every caliber. Serial numbers for the New Frontier run from 3000NF to 73XXNF.

In 1978, the New Frontier went back into production, joining the 3rd Generation run of the Single Action Army. Just as with the Single Actions, the ratchet on the back of the cylinder and the hand were changed, the full-length cylinder pin bushing was

The versatility of the 5-1/2" .44 Special New Frontier — the original cylinder not only handles .44 Specials but .44 Colts and .44 Russians while the auxiliary cylinder is for .44-40s.



A pair of New Frontiers for Everyday Packin' as well as hunting are chambered in .45 Colt and .44 Special.

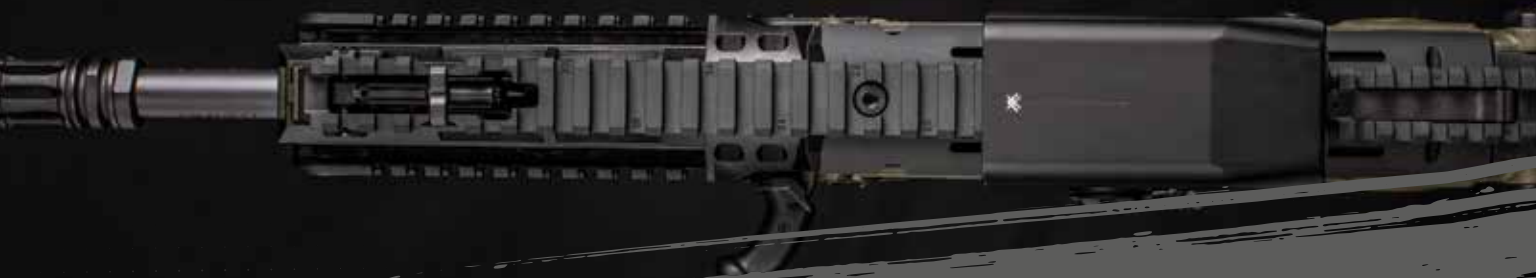




THE TAVOR X95



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dropped in favor of a collar in the front of the cylinder only, and for some very strange reason, the threads were changed on the 3rd Generation barrels. From 1873 until 1975, the barrel threads of Colt Single Actions had been 20 tpi; however, all 3rd Generation Colts were 24 tpi. The upside to this is 24 tpi happens to be what Ruger frames and barrels are, so I bought all of the New Frontier barrels a local gun shop had when they went out of business and have used these to build several custom sixguns on Three-Screw Ruger Single Actions.

The most bothersome change to me was the profile of the 3rd Generation hammers, both on the Single Action and the New Frontier. The early hammers appeared to have a ground-off spur with a very un-eye-appealing flattened off profile. Thankfully this was eventually changed and all hammers were properly contoured. Serial numbers began at 01001NF, using five digits instead of four. Chamberings were .45 Colt, .357 Magnum, .44 Special and .44-40. Production ended in 1982, however, a few were assembled from parts for the next two years.

The New Frontier had been gone for 30 years and I assumed we would never see it again. That was very unfortunate for sixgunners, so I looked for an alternative, which we will talk about in the next installment on Ruger Blackhawks

— namely, having 3rd Generation Colt New Frontier barrels fitted to re-chambered Flat-Top, Old Model Three Screw and 50th Anniversary .357 Magnum Blackhawks.

DIAMOND JUBILEE

The year 2011 marked the 175th Anniversary of the Colt Single Action going all the way back to the first one, the percussion Paterson of 1836. It was fitting for Colt to resurrect the New Frontier to help celebrate this anniversary and all New Frontiers produced this year have a special Anniversary Marking on the barrel consisting of “1836 — 175th Anniversary — 2011” and serial numbers began at 20000NF. Colt at least announced all three standard barrel lengths, 4-3/4", 5-1/2" and 7-1/2" were to be produced in three chamberings of .357 Magnum, .44 Special and .45 Colt.

The first two production runs consisted of the .45 Colt with a 7-1/2" barrel and the 5-1/2" .44 Special, both of which I received as test guns. Shortly thereafter I was informed I would soon have a 4-3/4" version, however, this proved to be long on promise and short on actuality.

This new production 5-1/2" is without a doubt one of the most beautifully finished Colt Single Action revolvers I have ever experienced. Not only is the finish, consisting of a case-hardened



This excellent shooting .45 New Frontier was stocked with ebony by the late Charles Able.

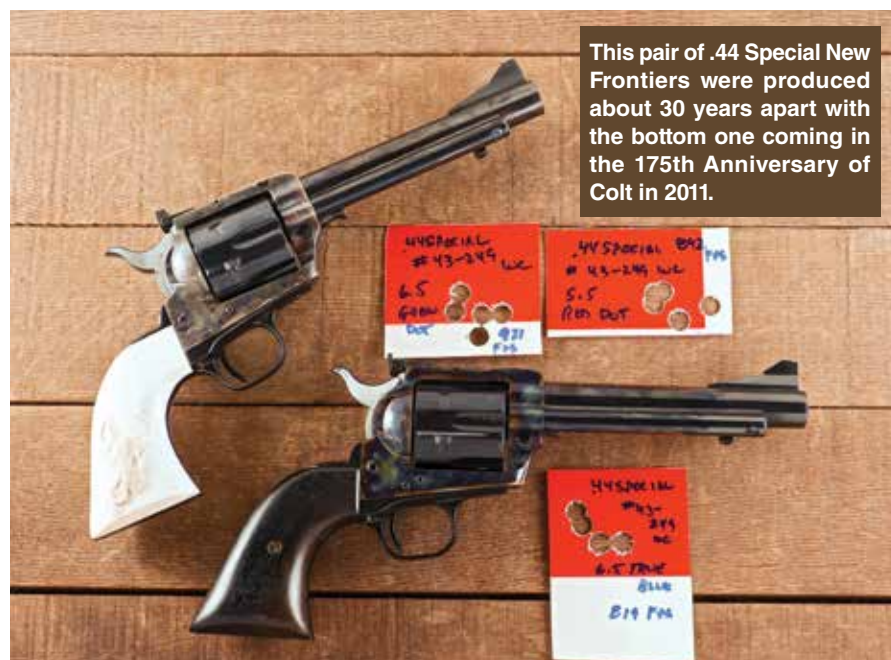
frame and the balance a blue you can see your ancestors in, absolutely stunning, both of these sixguns are also exceptionally well-fitted with no sharp edges.

The grip-frame-to-mainframe fit is as it should be and running a finger over the seams shows a nice smooth transition. Lockup is tight and trigger pulls, while not perfect, are certainly more than adequate. Grip panels are nicely fitted to the grip frame, and although a very plain wood, are shaped to fit my hand perfectly. I'll take proper fitting and shape over fanciness anytime. Well, up to a point! It now wears beautifully shaped and figured walrus tusk grips by TK Grips.

My 5-1/2" Compromise Colt New Frontiers consists of the above-mentioned .44 Special example from 2011 as well as two others. Both of these happen to be 3rd Generation sixguns. One is an ivory-stocked .44 Special, which also accepts .44 Russian and .44 Colt loads, and is made even versatile with the addition of a .44-40 auxiliary cylinder. The other is in .45 Colt with custom ebony stocks by the late Charles Able. Any of these three sixguns properly loaded are certainly capable of handling anything in the lower 48. Perfect Packin' Pistols personified!

It has been several years since Colt cataloged the New Frontier and I doubt we will ever see it again.

GUNS



This pair of .44 Special New Frontiers were produced about 30 years apart with the bottom one coming in the 175th Anniversary of Colt in 2011.

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WHAT WERE WE THINKING?

TODAY'S CUSTOM PROJECT BECOMES TOMORROW'S RUINED COLLECTIBLE



Bobbed hammer and non-original grips lower this Baby Chief's collectibility value considerably.

Massad Ayooob

It was one of those benevolent reprieve moments. I had been scheduled for two trials that week — a murder case in the heartland and an attempted murder case in the Southeast — and poised for an intense five days of cross-examinations and an insane timeline involving red-eye flights. The prosecution in the first case offered a sweetheart plea bargain with no time served for a homicide, which the defendant couldn't refuse, and a postponement of the second by the prosecution. I had some rare trigger time on my hands.

While safe-diving, I came across two handguns. Each had an emotional connection — and each had been significantly modified — and which, I

knew now, both would have a helluva lot more cash value today had they been left alone.

A BABY CHIEF

One of those guns is what S&W collectors call a "Baby Chief" — the first production run of the Chief Special. This first .38 Special J-Frame had the round front sight, small trigger guard and the rectangular flat cylinder latch of the time. I had traded it from my friend and brother instructor John Farnam and for the life of me couldn't remember what I'd swapped from my side. I wrote and asked him. John replied, "I have a really rusty memory of that transaction! It took place sometime in the 1980s at your house in NH, and I ended up with an S&W, J-Frame, M38 Bodyguard, Blue

steel, gloss, 12773 A20, 1J22621 (two separate serial numbers). It's currently in the possession of my youngest son, Rick, who is a physician in El Paso, TX." John's "rusty memory" is supplemented with good records, a lesson for us all!

When I got the .38 from John, it had already had its hammer bobbed and someone had done a very nice action job. Its factory stocks, which would go for three figures by themselves to a collector today, were long gone, replaced by someone's copy of Craig Spiegel's iconic Boot Grips. The revolver itself remains in nice condition.

In original condition, this early Baby Chief would be worth beaucoup bucks. In current condition, less so. Back when it was modified, the bobbed hammer made it faster to draw and the grips

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made it easier to shoot fast and straight, so the “mods” were justified. Serial number 3754 indicates it left the factory in 1950 or ’51.

MY FIRST COLT 1911

My 1911 .45 auto Serial #194246 appears to have left the Colt factory in the year 1918. I suspect it too could tell many stories. Its story picks up with me in the year 1960, when I had been reading Jeff Cooper’s work in the gun magazines and told my dad I wanted nothing for my 12th Christmas but a Colt .45 automatic. Dad was skeptical but we went to Stan Sprague’s gun shop in Hooksett, NH. Stan took this Mil-Surp 1911 out of stock, we went out behind the shop, I fired my first shot from it one handed and said, “I like it, Dad!” It wound up under the Christmas tree, still my most memorable such holiday.

The price was \$37.50. In my time with it, there were more stories. One of the most memorable was when I was a young cop. The truck driver I had pulled over was jerking a Savage Model 340 .30-30 rifle

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These guns still work, as they were modified to do: Mas with his Colt .45 on its centennial, 2018.

out from behind his seat, I outdrew him and made him drop it. I shot a match or two with it and carried it in my dad's jewelry store going back to age 12.

In those days, we followed Jeff Cooper's advice. I replaced the tiny sights with Colt Government Model sights, enameled bright yellow — better than the original 1911's, to be sure, but even then not optimum. I put on a regular Colt Government thumb safety instead of the harder-to-reach flat original. I had the pistol reblued. The original barrel had been shot out with early GI corrosive ammo and it wound up with a Colt Mark IV barrel and bushing. Nolan Santy hogged out the butt for me to speed up reloads and gave it a good trigger job, new hammer, etc. The worn-flat original diamond grips were replaced multiple times, ending up with Colt Cold Cup stock panels. The frame was crudely checkered for better grasp.

There was a seemingly endless supply of GI .45s then and we modified them to shoot better, never thinking about future rarity or resale value. I look at what WWI-era 1911s sell for today and cringe at the memory of what I had done, but ...

... The stories those modified guns could tell if they could talk are more important to us who lived those stories than the price of an unmodified old gun today.

And for that reason, I am unrepentant!

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HOWA 1500 MINI EXCL LITE

QUALITY AT A NICE PRICE

Dave Anderson

We have quite a choice of bolt-action rifles with detachable magazines holding 10 or so cartridges. Some examples: CZ 600 Trail in .223 or 7.62x39; Howa 1500 Mini and Mini EXCL Lite; Mossberg MVP series; Ruger Scout rifle; Ruger American Ranch rifle in 5.56; Savage 110 Scout and Carbon Tactical; Steyr Scout with optional 10-shot magazine; Tikka CTR, UPR; and Tac-A1.

STEPPING UP

Living on a farm, I like to have a rifle handy for vermin control, most often

a .22 LR or .22 Magnum. Recently my truck rifle has become a .223 rather than a rimfire. The rifle shown here is my latest, a Howa 1500 Mini EXCL Lite in .223. Built on the Howa mini action, it's housed in a polymer chassis stock. The buttstock is adjustable for length of pull and can be folded for storage.

The Howa Mini action is a little gem, 12% shorter than the Howa short action. The receiver is machined with a flat bottom for easy bedding and with a large integral recoil lug. The bolt is forged in one piece, with a recessed bolt face and M16 style extractor and ejector. It feeds from a proprietary detachable magazine holding 10 rounds in

.223. Barrel is medium profile, 20" long with a 1:8 twist. The 1:8 twist will stabilize many of the ballistically efficient bullets such as the various 70–75 grain match and hunting bullets. I like high B.C. bullets mainly because they are superior in resisting wind drift. I'd be exaggerating to say it's windy every day on the plains. No, it's only windy on the days I want to shoot something.

Overall length varies from 41" to 44" depending on where you have the LOP set. The unloaded rifle weighs 6 lbs., 12 oz. on my certified scale while the factory web site says 7-1/2 lbs. As shown with Zeiss 3-9 x 40 scope in steel Warne rings/bases, weight when empty is 7 lbs., 13 oz. It's not what I would call "lite" by today's standards, but the weight is due in part to the medium profile barrel. I can tolerate a bit of weight in return for the steady hold provided by the muzzle-forward balance.

The two-stage trigger is very good with a smooth first stage of about a pound, then a crisp 3-1/4 lb. break for the second stage. The manual provided doesn't mention pull weight, much less advise how to adjust it, but there are videos online for assistance should you require a lighter pull. For a rifle that may be used in cold weather, I don't mind the factory pull, especially considering the rifle is not super light.

The fast 1:8 twist stabilizes heavier bullets and the barrel is throated to accept bullets seated out. Most bullets in the 55-grain range in factory loads will jump about 0.20" to the rifling depending on bullet profile. Longer



With the push of a button, the Mini EXCL Lite stock (above) can be folded to allow convenient storage of the rifle in a UTV, boat, or light aircraft. In open position, it locks rigidly in place. The Howa Mini EXCL Lite (below) is based on the Howa mini action housed in a polymer chassis stock. This rifle is a .223. It is also available in 6mm ARC, 6.5 Grendel and more.





The 75-grain Hornady ELD Match bullet seated to a cartridge overall length of 2.390" is slightly too long for the Mini EXCL magazine box. The 75-grain BTHP is not quite as ballistically efficient but will fit the magazine box.

bullets seated out can be single-loaded. Magazine length is 2.33", which limits bullet choice a bit. I like the Hornady 75-grain ELD Match bullet but seated to cartridge overall length of 2.390" as recommended by Hornady results in cartridges just a bit too long. When this happens, my reliable standby is the 75-grain Hornady BTHP.

FEW CHOICES

These days, one takes bullets where you can find them. Most 0.224" bullets can be loaded to fit the Howa magazine provided the bullet length is an inch or not much more. According to the online JBM bullet length list, the ELD-M bullet measures 1.121". The Hornady 75-grain HPBT length is 0.981". Others to consider are the Berger 73-grain Match BT (0.970"), Hornady 73-grain ELD (1.046"), Lapua 77-grain Scenar (1.043"), Nosler Custom Competition 77-grain HPBT (0.980") and the Sierra 77-grain HPBT Match King (0.994").

Howa barrels are cold-hammer-forged. A great deal of care is exercised in maintaining barrel quality with chambers carefully cut and headspace set properly. I've shot around 15–20 Howa barrels, mainly on Vanguard rifles, which Howa produces for Weatherby, and have never gotten a bad one. It was no surprise when the Howa consistently shot under one MOA five-shot groups with a variety of factory and hand-loaded cartridges. I'd have been astonished if it hadn't. I'm going to bench it again when warm weather makes trigger control easier, with a higher-powered scope, and see if it will give consistent groups under 1/2 MOA. Function was always smooth and reliable.



The LUTH butt stock allows adjustment for length of pull from 12" to 15". Adjustable LOP is a useful feature for a rifle used in varying conditions with the shooter dressed for the weather.

Small point of interest — the Weatherby people who have had a strong working relationship with Howa for decades, pronounce the name "Hoe-ah" rather than "How-ah." However you say it, Howa rifles, like the Vanguards I admire so much, provide the best value for your money. **GUNS**

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GRASS-GROOMING GOVERNANCE

A SIMPLE TEST FOR POLITICIANS

Will Dabbs, MD

I just came in from cutting the grass. Some guys look forward to this modern urban chore. I despise it myself.

Out where we live, grass is more for erosion control than appearances. The grass is simply what separates us from the surrounding jungle. I cut it maybe four or five times per annum.

The entire undertaking requires just south of two hours. Most of this time is spent behind an old push mower covering terrain that is uneven, rock-strewn or steep. By the time I finally wrap up, I'm tired and ready for a cold glass of ice water. However, such mind-numbing tedium does offer ample time to think — today, I redesigned the entire system of American governance.

POLITICAL PREREQUISITES

When do you figure was the last time our major governmental leaders mowed their own grass? Some folks like Joe Biden and Donald Trump likely never have, but they're rich. If I were rich, I would hire somebody to cut my grass as well. However, I personally think not cutting your own grass should disqualify you from telling people who do cut their own grass what to do.

And there's the problem. Joe Biden wouldn't know a banana clip from a banana. (Don't freak out. I know banana clips aren't real.) Whoever crafts laws really should understand the details. There's a great deal riding on it.

Somebody has to enforce all those shiny new laws. With 445 million firearms already in circulation, it can be really, really dangerous. Things can get tragic quickly. A U.S. Marshal, along with Randy Weaver's teenaged son and unarmed wife, died over the length of a shotgun barrel.



These guys don't cut their own grass.



If you lived in "Willworld," you'd have to show proficiency with one of these before you could start telling normal people what to do.

AGRARIAN PHILOSOPHY

In the last 24 hours I have killed two water moccasins in the lake serving as my backyard. This makes an even 60 since we built the house. Don't feel sorry for them. We built the lake ourselves. They wouldn't be here at all were it not for us.

The monsters breed like rats. Poisonous snakes kill between 50,000 and 100,000 people around the globe each year. The world has no shortage of venomous reptiles.

Today's first snake I killed at a slant range of maybe 15 meters with a suppressed TacSol .22 pistol. I nailed him on my second shot. I then expended another six just for insurance.

The other snake was as long as my arm and had been lurking near my back patio. By the time I got out with my rifle, another superb integrally suppressed TacSol product, he was maybe 50 meters away and moving erratically. I connected with him after about 10 rounds and then peppered him until he sank just to be sure. In total I spent 22 rounds making sure the toothy menace was no more. As a rural American I choose not to carry three 10-round magazines for my .22 rifle. I prefer the single big one. How can I convey this fact to Joe Biden and his pals?

PRACTICAL TACTICAL

I have needed a gun a couple of times for real in my 55 years on this planet. In one instance my assailants were a criminal youth gang numbering about a dozen. Under those circumstances, having ample rounds on tap in my Springfield Armory Hellcat or SIG P365 is mighty reassuring. It's honestly none of Joe Biden's business how I skin the cat. I don't go around telling him what to do. Most folks like me just want to be left alone.

I'm not the first guy to think our laws should originate closer to home.



Running a chainsaw for an afternoon is a workout of the highest order. Will believes our candidates for public office should be able to do stuff like this before they could run. Photo: Rvannatta

blades imbedded in wood, and ballistic knives,” which they do, then more power to them. Just don’t try to foist such rank stupidity on me.

Per New Jersey statute, possession of a slingshot without good reason is 18 months in the Big House. I was tearing around the neighborhood with a slingshot while I was still in diapers. Do folks living in such places even begin to appreciate what idiots we think they are?

DENOUEMENT

Joe Biden calls himself a public servant. Pat Tillman was a public servant. Joe Biden is something else entirely. The term *servant* implies sacrifice. I’ve seen a few up close and in action. Modern politicians seldom sacrifice.

So if you want to tell me what to do, at least cut your own grass. I’d really prefer it if you could prove you know how to run a chainsaw as well. However, I’d be satisfied for now with just the lawn mower.

GUNS

The Founding Fathers really left most of the governance up to the individual states. If New Jersey wants to outlaw “gravity knives, switchblade knives,

daggers, dirks, stilettos, billies, black-jacks, metal knuckles, sandclubs, sling-shots, cestus or similar leather bands studded with metal filings or razor



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RANSOM PISTOL MACHINE REST

A DARN SIGHT BETTER THAN TIRED HANDS!

Mike “Duke” Venturino • Photos: Yvonne Venturino

New visitors to my Shooting Shack often point at a permanent fixture and ask, “What’s that for?” It’s my Ransom Pistol Machine Rest and I explain to them it’s for testing handgun and/or ammunition precision by eliminating or at least minimizing human error.

WHY NOT?

Mostly the questioners are shooters themselves who then inquire, “Why not just shoot off sandbags or V-fork barrel rests?” Here’s the deal — I’m not all that great of a sandbag-rest shot in the first place. Certainly, I can make decent groups for a short while but then eye,

noise and recoil fatigue come into play. I guarantee despite the intrinsic precision of the handgun and ammunition being tested, my sandbag rest groups will grow the more I shoot.

With the Ransom Rest, many groups can be fired in a long afternoon. In this manner, not only is mechanical accuracy tested but also how handloads are affected by varying combinations of bullet, powders, primers, lubes or whatever.

For instance, in 2021 I tested a pair of Colt Frontier Six Shooter .44-40 revolvers. Four bullets were combined with five propellants so each .44 was fired in 20 groups of five shots each. In this manner, each bullet was used in 10 groups, five

through each revolver. When averaged, RCBS mold #44-200CAS gave tightest average at 1.65" at 25 yards. Each powder was fired eight groups, four from each revolver. It was my very first outing with Vihtavouri Tin Star powder and it gave a best average of 1.68". Shooting was at 25 yards and done in one afternoon. Firing 40 groups in one afternoon was only possible because a young friend in good shape literally ran out to staple up new targets.

SET UP

Getting the handgun clamped in the Ransom Rest takes more time than one might expect. Grips must be removed from the firearm and then synthetic grip adaptors are fitted around the grip frame. There are three bolts to slide the grip adaptors over, then an aluminum alloy plate goes next and the whole she-bang is tightened by three wingnuts. However, resting does not start yet!

My procedure is to fire 10 to 15 rounds to settle the revolver grip frame in the grip holders and I use the most powerful load available for that purpose. For instance, if testing will be of a .38 Special revolver, I use +P or equivalent for settling in. After each full cylinder, I hand-tighten the wingnuts again. It’s surprising how many more turns can be made before they are finally impossible to tighten further.

Also, while this preliminary shooting is being done, the revolver’s shots will continue to climb on the target paper. With some handguns I’ve watched bullet holes string 24" before matters are settled. When bullets cluster instead of climbing, testing starts.

The Ransom Rest handles recoil by a coil-spring arrangement. At firing, handgun muzzle start upward until recoil has been totally absorbed by the machine rest. There is no strain on hands but the rests must be securely bolted to a non-moveable object. My



Duke shown test-firing an S&W Model 24 .44 Special mounted on a Ransom Pistol Machine Rest. This close-up shows the mounting arrangement of Duke’s Ransom Rest in his shooting house and particulars of the rest itself.



Ransom Rest mount was built as part of the structure.

Triggering the handgun is done with a dogleg-shaped lever adjusted into the trigger guard as the gun is mounted. I've learned to use steady pressure instead of jerking the lever. As said above, machine rests can minimize human error but not always eliminate it completely. After the shot, the operator resets the handgun for the next shot by pushing down on a flange, *not* by pushing on the carefully settled-in handgun. The more powerful the load, the higher the handgun's muzzle rises. Target loads sometimes only raise muzzles an inch or two while some magnum loads will bring it to 45 degrees. I learned early on not to stand next to the rest when using loads with heavy muzzle blast — for those, I sit behind to escape blasts as much as possible.

Back in the days of plentiful ammunition and handloading components, I often test-fired 10 shot groups for semi-auto pistols and 12 shot groups



Duke machine rest-tested these two engraved .44-40s. His is at left. Yvonne's is at right. She gloated hers shot the smaller 12-shot group.

for sixguns. Not so anymore! Five shot groups and enough of them for averaging are what I'll use until component availability return to normal — if ever.

Do I think every avid handgun shooter needs a machine rest? Certainly

not! They are a great aid for custom ammunition loading businesses, perhaps even some handgun manufacturers and folks like me who are forever curious about the workings of handguns and their ammunition.

GUNS

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FIVE COMMON ZEROING MISTAKES

A SIMPLE TASK OFTEN DONE WRONG

Wayne Van Zwoell

MISTAKE #1: ZEROING WHEN THE RIFLE ISN'T READY

Before you can zero a scope, you'll have attached it — another topic. Bore-sighting comes next. A collimator slipped into the muzzle puts a screen in your sight line. Adjust the reticle to its center. A must for closed-breech lever, pump and autoloading rifles, it works for any. Bore-sighting saves ammo by putting first shots "on paper."



Before zeroing or checking zero, snug screws. Any change in tension could well affect point of impact.

Now grab some ammo No! Wait! Did you check the screws? Whoa. You're already ahead of yourself. Scope base screws may be inaccessible; not so with ring screws and the rifle's guard screws. Instead of "feeling" them tight, get a torque wrench from Brownells to ensure correct, even tension.

Cinching the base to the rifle, I bring 6-48 screws to 25 inch/pounds. Leupold advises 8-40s be snugged to 28 in/lbs, about 20% tighter. Weaver specifies 30 in/lbs for the crossbolt on 1" Tip-Off rings, a tad more for 30mm rings. Talley suggests 30 in/lbs for the base screw of its vertically split rings, 20 for the top screw. For 10-32 screws in its QD mounts, the numbers are 35 for the bottom, 20 on top.

I snug the rifle's front guard screw to 45 in/lbs, the rear screw to 30. You can cinch both to 60 in/lbs if the action is glass- or pillar-bedded, or has an alloy spine. Center guard

screws are best coddled. I hold torque to 15 in/lbs. Muscling a center screw can bind a bolt, even spring an action.

Now check the bore-sighting again, thankful you didn't waste ammo by firing with loose screws.

MISTAKE #2: USING SMALL BACKERS AND SMALL TARGETS

Bullets that don't make readable holes are useless. At the range, use big target paper or cardboard to catch all shots. On such backers I tape quarter-sheets of typing paper, setting one backer at 35 steps, the other at 100. The first bullet at 35 should hit near center. I adjust with W&E dials to put the next spot-on, then fire at 100 and adjust to hit 2-1/2" high. After a reasonable three-shot group, I move the 35-yard backer to 200 and adjust for a center hit.

Why a generous target? You can use a scope of modest magnification, as you will afield, but tiny targets make you crank up scope power. While point-of-impact change between settings has



A torque wrench from Brownells helps you cinch scope and action screws evenly and to proper tension.

largely been eliminated with rear-plane reticles, and isn't an issue with front plane, using high-power glass at the range denies you a look at targets and other distant objects as they'll appear on a hunt. One reason many hunters over-estimate distance to game is they're accustomed to peering through scopes near the top of their power range. Lower settings make animals look small! At least finish zeroing with the dial at 4x!

Objections to big targets are based on the belief you must have a point at which to aim. Not so! In iron-sight rifle competition, shooters can't see the X-ring. They trust their eye to center the much bigger "black." For scoped hunting rifles, a saucer-size target works fine to 200 yards. The reticle won't hide it; your eye is quite capable of finding its center. With 4x scopes I've shot half-minute knots on such targets.

MISTAKE #3: ASSUMING WHAT YOU READ IS TRUE

Not everyone lives where they can fire at 400-yard targets. So they consult ballistics charts to find proper hold-over beyond 200. A logical option. But if general news reporting hasn't yet dis-



Don't believe all you read. With or without a chronograph, let live fire at various ranges tell the story!

abused you of pie-eyed trust, the charts should. For as long as mice have had tails, factory-loaded 180-grain bullets have exited .30-06 rifles at 2,700 fps. My Oehler, though, has clocked them from just under 2,600 to 2,835 fps (standard, not super-duper loads, 22" barrels). Difference in

400-yard drop is nearly 5", given the same bullet shape. If the faster load sends a sleeker bullet, the disparity can be much greater. A round-nose bullet at 2,600 fps plummets 38"; a boat-tail spitzer at 2,800 falls 23".

Another variable, increasingly common, is the height of your sight above line of bore. Back when 2-1/2x Lyman Alaskans sat so low in Tilden mounts they almost kissed the receiver, sight-line stayed close to the bullet's course until gravity dissolved the union. Now, soup-can objective bells and Picatinny rails put sight-lines higher, increasing its angle to bore-line. For any given

first crossing, zero range then moves farther out.

To confirm a zero, you must shoot groups on paper at the named distance with the load you'll use on the hunt. Ditto to see where the bullet lands beyond zero range.

MISTAKE #4: ZEROING AT TOO GREAT A DISTANCE

The most effective zero range depends on your load and how much mid-range gap you'll accept. "Mid-range," by the way, is not your huckleberry. Sight-line dives farthest below the parabolic arc just beyond midway. For squirrel hunts long ago, we lads zeroed .22s at 75 yards with high-speed LR ammo. Given iron sights or a low-mounted scope, bullets hitting point of aim at 25 yards would strike about an inch high at 50 and 3-1/2" low at 100. My range limit was roughly the zero distance — not because I didn't know the arc farther out, but because my wobblers couldn't keep the sight on chestnut-size rodent skulls.

Eventually a lucky poke with iron sights took a crow off a limb at 140 steps. I can't recall where that bead was. If you spend enough time on the trigger, you get a feel for trajectory, like an archer shooting instinctively.

With modern centerfire hunting rounds, a 200-yard zero will keep bullets within three vertical inches of sight-line to 250 yards or so — farther with frothy magnums. Call this the maximum practical point-blank range. Zero farther out, and you make the mid-range gap too wide. With a 300-yard zero, your 180-grain .30-06 spitzer lands nearly 6" high at 200. A 400-yard zero puts it over a foot high at 200; 10" high at 300! A client after a big deer told me his .257 Weatherby shot flat enough for a 400-yard zero, so no, he wouldn't change it. He crippled a fine buck at 150 yards. Only community effort brought it to bag.

Most game is shot closer than 250 yards. An honest 300 steps is far, 400 very far. Better to zero at 200. No thinking required for urgent shots out to 250 yards. Shade a hand's-width high at 300.



A competitive prone shooter, Wayne favors — and zeros with — this field position with a Latigo Sling.



This hunter is proofing his zero afield, from hunting positions, in hunting weather. Note the big target.

MISTAKE #5: FIRING FROM THE BENCH ONLY

You probably won't shoot game off sandbags or a mechanical rest. When permitted time to belly down, rifle on bipod or backpack or a jacket on a rock, you get the benefit of a rest. But it doesn't mean the bullet will fly to the same place as from the bench. Even with floated barrels, forend pressure, or the lack thereof, affects rifle behavior as the bullet leaves. I recall a hunter whose heavy rifle drilled itty bitty knots with its bipod legs in a collapsed but upright position. On a rocky slope, when a big elk came by, he had no platform for that 'pod. An awkward shot paunched the bull at 175 yards. A long follow-up ensued.

If you expect to fire from a bipod, check your bench zero with shots from prone, pressing the rifle forward so the bipod legs dig in. You'll steady the rifle with pressure you can duplicate most places in the field. I check bench zeroes from prone with a taut sling, my preferred shooting position on a hunt. Oddly enough, looking for places to flop down has made prone shots possible on game commonly taken offhand or from a support — whitetails to Cape buffalo. Quite commonly I find a tight sling tugs point of impact to 7 o'clock, compared to shots over bags. A .300 in my rack sent bullets 8" lower at 200 yards from a sling! Re-bedding trimmed the disparity. I took the rifle hunting with the taut-sling prone zero.

GUNS

STAGGERED SHELLS

THE 'CHANGEUP' ISN'T JUST FOR BASEBALL

Tom Keer

I sort of miss the old Poly-Chokes E.F. White developed in Hartford, Conn. in the 1920s. Poly-Chokes were a practical, dial-and-go way for shotgunners to change bore constriction. All it took was one turn of the dial and we could go from cylinder bore when hunting grouse and woodcock to a full choke for pass shooting geese.

No tools were necessary, but there was a catch — the beauty was certainly in the eye of the beholder. While the bulb on the muzzle was machined and functional, it surely wasn't sleek. It seemed like folks either loved the practicality and dealt with the look, or they hated 'em and stayed far away. It turned out to be a passing trend for in the late 1950s, Winchester's screw-in chokes were a follow-up design. Ever since, screw-in chokes have been an important way to hit more and miss less.

THE CATCH

There are far more upsides to changing bore constriction with either a Poly-Choke or a screw-in choke, but there is a downside. Shotgunners have to stop shooting and change their choke diameters. If you're in the middle of a hunt and a flock of mallards are dumping into your spread or a covey of quail are



erupting at your feet, you don't have time to change chokes. There is a way to handle the situation — staggering your shells.

Although the flock of mallards and the covey of quail are different gamebirds, they do share one similarity. First shots on mallards are taken when their wings are cupped and the birds are dropping into the dekes. This first shot is close. After discharge, spooked birds beat feet to get away and the second shot is farther away. If you're shooting a pump or a semi-automatic, the third shot is at an even greater distance. The same holds true for quail just as it does for a nye of pheasant. Changing chokes to

accommodate those different distances would work but there is no time to do so. It makes as much sense as socks on a rooster.

You can solve the problem by staggering your shells. The concept is to shoot lighter loads offering better pattern spread at closer distances. A second shot is a moderate load designed for peak performance at a mid-range while the third shot should be of a heavy load.

Here's one load-out example:

- A light 20-gauge load holds 3/4 oz. of shot.
- A standard 20-gauge load holds 7/8 oz. of shot.
- A heavy 20-gauge shell holds 1 oz. of shot.

If you're shooting a double, simply load your 3/4-oz. shell in either the right (SxS) barrel or in your bottom (O/U) barrel. The first shot is taken when the birds are close then load the 7/8-oz. shell in either the left (SxS) or the top (O/U) barrel; the second shot is taken when the birds are farther away.

This concept carries over to pump and semi-automatic irons, too:

- Light loads go first in the chamber.
- The heavy load is the first shell put in the magazine.
- The moderate load is added last.



This loading pattern gives a firing sequence with the pump or semi-automatic of the requisite light-moderate-heavy shells. The beauty of staggering shells is you can also change shot size to increase lethality. Smaller shot in close, larger shot at mid-range and the largest shot for the farthest distance. Use a patterning board to experiment with different brands and loads and you'll find a winning combination.

PELLET PERFORMANCE

Upland game birds and waterfowl aren't grizzly bear tough. A few pellets are all it takes to knock down a quail or grouse and several more for ducks and geese. Pattern spread is key to placing enough pellets for a lethal shot and staggering loads helps to achieve that goal.

But wait, there's more — double-gun shooters have an additional advantage as they can shoot staggered shells in two different choke constrictions. If your first shot is on a mallard at 25 yards, you'll get better



While it's common to fill chambers with the same load, a staggered approach offers better spread and more lethal shots.

pattern spread with a cylinder choke so use your right or bottom barrel. When the ducks are flying away, use

the modified choke in your left or top barrel. Then, you'll have chokes and loads giving the best possible spread at your distance.

CHOKE	Optimal pattern spread
CYLINDER	A 40" spread at about 25 yards
IMPROVED CYLINDER	A 40" spread at about 30 yards
MODIFIED	A 40" spread at about 35 yards
FULL	A 40" spread at about 40 yards

The late outdoor writer Frank Woolner used a different technique to get a better pattern spread, but I wouldn't recommend it — Woolner took a hacksaw to his Winchester Model 59 and knocked off about a foot of steel. I'd prefer a Poly-Choke, but more likely I'd spend a few off-season days simply staggering my shells. **GUNS**



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John uses Red Dot for comfortable-shooting loads in .44 Russian, .44 Colt, .44 Special, .44-40 and .44 Magnum.



John uses reloading dies from Lyman, Redding and RCBS for loading these five .44 cartridges — .44 Russian, .44 Colt, .44 Special, .44-40 and .44 Magnum.

ALLIANT'S RED DOT AND .44 SIXGUNS DIAL IT DOWN FOR FUN

John Taffin

Everything about sixgun power changed when the .44 Magnum arrived in late 1955. After graduating from high school in 1956 I started my journey down the path marked "Serious Sixgunnin'." My first never-to-be-forgotten encounter with the Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum occurred later that summer. The recoil, to those of us used to nothing heavier than .45 Colt, .45 ACP and .357 Magnum sixguns was indescribable. After firing the first round I would have quit if I was by myself. However, I could not do that in front of my friends so I fired the rest of them and was very glad it was only a six-shooter and I only had five more rounds to fire.

That first encounter with the Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum was shooting a 4" sixgun rented out by the local gun shop. The brief time had such an effect on me I waited six years before I purchased my first Smith .44. That was my first Smith & Wesson .44

Magnum. However, three years later after graduating from college and getting ready to head to Idaho, I purchased a 4" S&W .44 Magnum. Over the past 50+ years several more, both blue and nickel-plated, as well as the later-arriving stainless steel versions and in barrel lengths of 4", 5", 6-1/2", 7-1/2" and 8-3/8" have been added to my accumulation of sixguns.

IN THE BEGINNING

For many years, actually decades, my loads were full-house .44 Magnum loads mostly such as Keith's choice of his 250-grain hard-cast bullet over 22.0 grains of #2400. About 10 years ago, I was faced with coming up with loads that would allow me to shoot 250 to 300 rounds in a session without my hands paying for it several days thereafter and my loads were dropped down to a muzzle velocity of around 1,100 fps.

Now I find myself at another threshold, a much lower threshold if I am going to be able to continue to



Milder Red Dot Loads work well in .44 Russian and .44 Colt in the Cimarron Cartridge Conversion.

shoot big-bore sixguns. Everything changes as we grow older and my hands and wrists will no longer take the full-house loads, or even the drop-down load, on a regular basis.

I have used several powders, however, for this installment we look at Alliant Red Dot for use in .44 sixguns. This includes chamberings of not only .44 Magnum, but .44 Special, .44 Colt, .44 Russian and .44-40. For most of my loadings I use Oregon Trail's 240-, 225- or 200-grain RNFP (Round Nosed Flat Point) cast bullets.

In the .44 Magnum, I go with 5.0 grains of Red Dot and the 240-grain bullet. This load in a Ruger Super Blackhawk cut back to 4-3/4" clocks out at 785 fps and puts five shots in well under 1" at 20 yards. Switching to the .44 Special with the 225-grain bullet, I drop down to 4.5 grains of Red Dot. In a 7-1/2" Texas Longhorn Arms West Texas Flat-Top Target model, this is an 800 fps load and groups in 1". The same load under a 200-grain bullet results in 770 fps and the same accuracy. Both are very pleasant shooting. Going up to 5.0 grains with this bullet in the .44 Special gives me 870 fps in a 5-1/2" Colt New Frontier with the same accuracy.

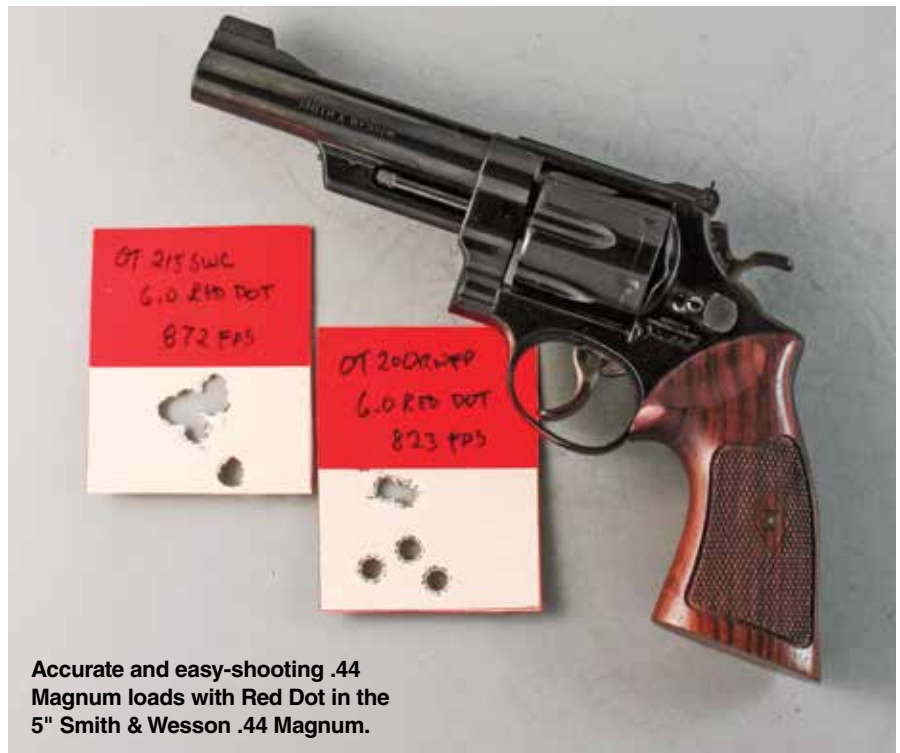
THE FAMILY TREE

The .44 Colt actually predates the .45 Colt by a couple of years and was first chambered in Colt Cartridge Conversions and the 1871-72 Open-Top, all of which are now available from Cimarron in replica form. Starline offers brand-new brass, which is basically a shortened .44 Special case with a smaller diameter rim. Since this is a shorter .44 Special, I drop my powder charge down to 4.0 grains of Red Dot under the 200-grain Oregon Trail bullet. In a 7-1/2" Colt New Service Target Model, the results are groups just over 1" with a very pleasant shooting load at 680 fps. Going up to the 225-grain bullet over 4.5 grains of Red Dot raises the muzzle velocity by 100 fps with the same excellent accuracy.

The .44 Russian arrived around 1870 in the Smith & Wesson Model #3



Red Dot .44 Magnum loads in Ruger Bisley and Super Blackhawk.



Accurate and easy-shooting .44 Magnum loads with Red Dot in the 5" Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum.

single action sixgun. It quickly gained a reputation for accuracy and then in 1907, was lengthened to become the .44 Special. My most-used load for this cartridge is 3.5 grains of Red Dot under either a 200- or 225-grain Oregon Trail Bullet. In the previously mentioned TLA West Texas Target, both of these loads clock out just over 700 fps with groups well under 1".

This leaves the .44-40 Winchester with the same two Oregon Trail

Bullets and a charge of 5.5 grains Red Dot muzzle. Velocities are in the 750-790 fps range with groups just over 1" in the Texas Longhorn Arms sixgun. I use this particular sixgun for much testing since it has four cylinders chambered in .44 Magnum, .44 Special, .44 Russian and .44-40.

Here in my twilight years I expect to last a lot longer shooting .44 loads at these levels using Red Dot. The sixguns will also last a lot longer.

GUNS

WINCHESTER'S MODEL 75

WALNUT AND BLUED-STEEL

HOLDOVER FROM THE GOLDEN AGE

Payton Miller

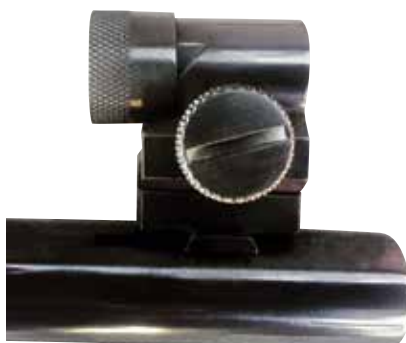
Few vintage .22s have the legendary reputation for tack-driving accuracy as Winchester's Model 52. It was discontinued in 1979, but whether in Sporter or Target trim, it's still a byword among connoisseurs of bolt-action rimfires. The only drawback, of course, has been its premium price.

The original 1919 sticker for the M52 Sporter was \$88.50. That sounds like a whopping good deal until you stop to consider what it translates to in today's dollars. (Hint: it's a couple hundred bucks north of a grand).

A BETTER MOUSETRAP

What was needed, according to the Winchester brain trust, was a relatively low-cost alternative to the storied M52, one that was lighter, yet accurate enough to allow for competition. So they developed the Model 75, which enjoyed a 20-year production span from 1938 to 1958.

To be sure, Winchester also had another "price" alternative to the Model 52 — the Model 69/69A (1935–1963). The M75's action was similar, yet the bolt was designed with tighter



Vintage Redfield aperture sights — front and rear — establish the Model 75's paper-punching credibility.



tolerances and the stock was configured for prone shooting. But these were most certainly not the only bolt-action offerings Winchester rolled out over the years preceding World War II. It isn't surprising when you consider how popular competitive

smallbore rifle shooting was "back in the day."

R.L. Wilson, in his *Winchester, An American Legend*, put it this way:

"A flurry of activity in the bolt-action .22 market saw a number of new models brought out by Winchester in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Models 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 60A, 67, 68, 69, 677, 72 and 75 all preceded World War II ... these rifles intended to claim their fair share of the increasingly competitive .22 bolt-action rimfire market."

I'm old enough to remember when serious target ".22-ing" was every bit as popular as Cowboy Action or Metallic Silhouette in their respective heydays.

In those pre-Ruger 10/22 days — or make that Remington Nylon 66 days if you're really old — I can recall shooting 50-foot smallbore targets from prone on a padded mat with some fairly hefty bolt actions when I was a kid. So I immediately had a twinge of nostalgia when hefting the 8.5-lb. Model 75 Target.

This particular specimen is owned by a shooting buddy, John Wightman. It features marvelous quarter-minute click-adjustable Redfield sights — specifically a Model 75 Micrometer



rear and a M63 Globe front. These, I was to discover, required a bit of re-familiarization.

The Model 75 Target sports a 28" barrel and an OAL of close to 45". It was also offered at one time with the Lyman 77 front sight and 58E rear. Like its pricier stablemate, the Model 52, the Model 75 could also be had in a lighter, shorter barreled (24") Sporter configuration.

John, like any sensible collector of vintage .22s, had scoured the market for spare magazines and had both the flush-fitting 5-shot and extended 10-shot models. These are expensive items, running around \$70 per copy or more — although this isn't out of line if you're hunting spare magazines for classic Winchester rimfires.

And speaking of price, expect starting auction bids for replacement Lyman or Redfield vintage target sights be semi-stratospheric.

RANGE TIME

We tried to mix up our test ammo menu between bulk pack bargain stuff, high-velocity 36-grain HPs, and standard velocity 40-grain match brands. The list included Aguila Rifle Match Competition and Super Extra HP, Lapua Dominator, Winchester Super-X Power Point, Sellier and Bellot Club and CCI Mini Mag HP.

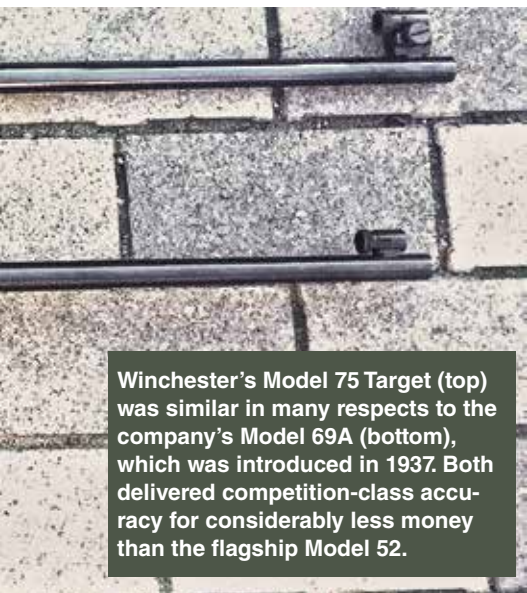
At 25 yards virtually everything stayed under an inch for 5 shots, with the Lapua Dominator consistently clustering under a half-inch. We then



The Model 75 — long, hefty and “man-sized” — balances well for offhand shooting.



Lapua's Dominator ammo (right) delivered the tightest groups at both 25 and 50 yards.



Winchester's Model 75 Target (top) was similar in many respects to the company's Model 69A (bottom), which was introduced in 1937. Both delivered competition-class accuracy for considerably less money than the flagship Model 52.

subjected our aging eyes to the aperture sights at an optimistic (for us) full 50 yards with the Lapua and still beat the 1" mark.

One thing should be mentioned in passing — the trigger was a fabulously crisp 2 lbs. It's adjustable, but what we were working with was far removed from what were later referred to as “lawyer triggers.”

We were pretty satisfied with the results, seeing as how we've been spoiled with scope reticles for most of our adult lives. And those of us who've stuck with iron have generally used ghost-ring setups with far more generous apertures than the pinprick-sized hole on a serious target .22.

There's a definite learning curve to shooting well by centering a 3" bullseye

in a circular aperture (front and rear) and “keeping the edges even” while breaking the shot.

One trick we did learn in coping with the micrometer sights: If your eyes are “well-aged,” a magnifying glass is a godsend in making adjustments and keeping track of those hashmarks. Once you're locked down, those old sights are pretty much bombproof.

One other caveat — during extended shooting sessions, the occasional scrub with a brush is sometimes needed to prevent sticky chambering from waxy bullet lube buildup.

Winchester's Model 75 is a wonderfully crafted walnut and blued-steel artifact from what could be described as an era of “full-size, target grade, receiver-sighted bolt-action .22s.”

GUNS

The Revived *Remington*

Mark Hampton

Most of the shooting world knows by now the Remington Arms Company we all were familiar with in the past is no longer with us today. During recent times, Remington Arms experienced somewhat of a tumultuous path, which finally came to an abrupt halt. For a variety of reasons, including bankruptcies and court settlements, the Mothership was broken up and divided among seven different buyers.

Vista Outdoors purchased Remington's ammunition and accessories division and related intellectual property for \$81.4 million. This acquisition included Remington's

Lonoke, Ark. manufacturing facility along with the Remington brand and trademarks. The acquisition was approved by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Alabama. Remington ammunition now joins other brands under the Vista Outdoors umbrella including CCI, Redfield, Speer, Weaver, Federal, RCBS, Bushnell, among others.

ANALYSIS

So what does this mean to the shooting and hunting industry? Personally I feel brighter days are ahead with Vista Outdoors behind the wheel. Chris Metz, Chief Executive Officer made this comment, "The migration

Jon Langerfeld took this dandy mule deer with his custom .270 Win. rifle using Remington 130-grain Core-Lokt Tipped ammo.

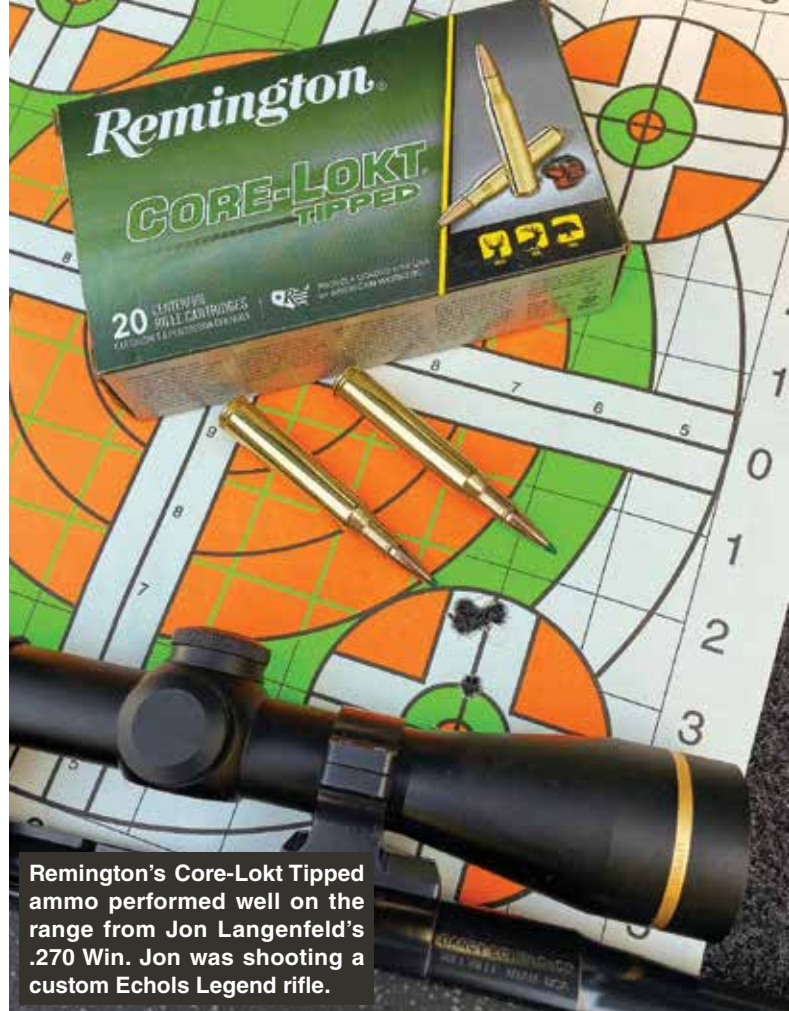


Big Green is Back!

back to nature and into the outdoors is the future. The combination of beloved ammunition brands created by this transaction will benefit shooting sports enthusiasts, outdoor recreation retailers and Vista Outdoors for many years to come. We look forward to welcoming the people of Remington and leveraging our collective passion, scale, manufacturing infrastructure, distribution channels and Centers of Excellence to bring Remington products to more consumers.”

The contemporary Remington has already introduced new products for 2022, many of which will appeal to recreational shooters, CCW holders as well as hunters. Some of the new ammunition slated includes three new loads for .224 Valkyrie, Golden Saber Defense, Peters Paper — a competition load for 12 gauge with a paper hull — Premier Mag Turkey High Velocity 20 gauge, Premier Match ammo in 6mm, 6.5 PRC, 6.5

Recovered 130-grain Core-Lokt Tipped bullet (right) from Jon's Mule Deer. Trap, skeet and sporting clays enthusiasts again have the option of paper shotshells (below) from Peters — just like the old days.



Remington's Core-Lokt Tipped ammo performed well on the range from Jon Langenfeld's .270 Win. Jon was shooting a custom Echols Legend rifle.

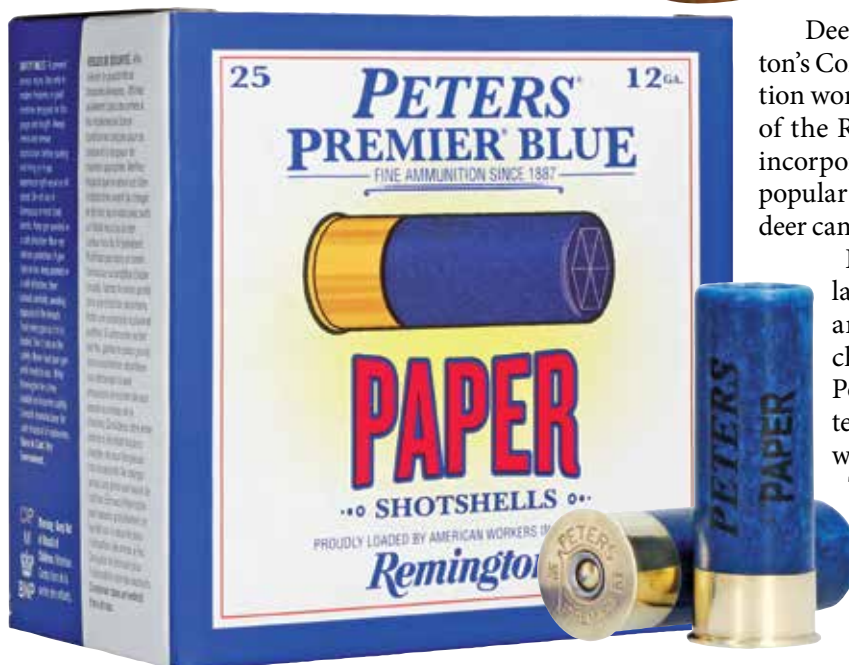
Creedmoor and 260 Remington. In the company's Core-Lokt line-up, the addition of 350 Legend with a 180-grain Core-Lokt SP and 450 Bushmaster launching a 300-grain Core-Lokt PSP will be available. These are just a few of the new offerings.

HUNTERS

Deer hunters have long known about Remington's Core-Lokt ammo — a staple in the ammunition world from Big Green. This was the flagship of the Remington lineup for whitetail hunters incorporating a controlled-expansion bullet. The popular ammunition line could be found in many deer camps all over whitetail hunting destinations.

Remington has just improved the bullet, launching a new line of Core-Lokt Tipped ammo consisting of 13 loads from nine chamberings in .243 to .300 Win. Mag. Polymer-tipped bullets are not earth-shattering news by any means and are common with Nosler and other bullet manufacturers.

The first new product launched by the revived Remington will enhance the former Core-Lokt bullet with a green poly tip to provide higher ballistic coefficients and improved accuracy along





Mark took this desert mule deer with a .308 handgun using Remington's newly launched Core-Lokt Tipped ammo. The shot from 251 yards dropped the mulie in his tracks.

with initiating rapid expansion.

With my interest in hunting ammo, I recently had the opportunity to hunt desert mule deer in west Texas using the new 165-grain Core-Lokt Tipped bullet in .308 Win. I was hunting with an H-S Precision handgun topped with a Burris scope. Curiosity was full-tilt as I was anxious to see how this new poly-tipped bullet would perform on a big-bodied mule deer.

Early the first morning, we spotted a dandy buck. He was following a doe from about 250 yards but the doe kept moving away from us, luring the buck out of range before we could set up for a proper shot. Eventually the pair disappeared in the gauntlet of west Texas brush so we decided to take a break for lunch and look for them later in the afternoon.

AFTERNOON DELIGHT

After a short break, we begin glassing a lot of open country, hoping to find

our quarry again — or one bigger. A front was moving in and the temperature dropped drastically with the wind gusting over 20 mph. It was downright cold! Right before dark we finally located our buck, working his way over a ridge top.

He was all alone at this time.

By the time we made it over to the brink of the ridge, he was all the way down in the bottom of a canyon. My eyes were watering so bad I could hardly see. When the buck stopped momentarily, I rested the handgun and tried to steady the crosshairs. The gusty winds made holding the crosshairs steady a real challenge. The buck was broadside from 251 yards when I managed to wipe the tears from my watering eyes and squeeze off a shot. The deer dropped immediately! When we made our way to the buck, we found a part of his main beam had been broken and we suspect this occurred when he dropped suddenly. Unfortunately we could not find the broken piece but I was still pleased with this big mature mule deer. The first new product launched by the revived Remington ammo company, Core-Lokt Tipped, performed as expected.



Remington introduces new Match ammo in 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC, 6.5 Grendel and 260 Remington.

During the following days, I had the pleasure of spending time with Jon Langenfeld, product engineering manager of Remington. Jon had been an engineer for many years with the company and was quite knowledgeable regarding terminal ballistics and bullet performance. He was shooting an Echols Legend rifle chambered in .270 Winchester with 130-grain Core-Lokt Tipped. Later in the hunt, Jon scored on a nice buck taken from 85 yards. The bullet did a massive amount of internal damage and we were fortunate to find the bullet. It had passed through the shoulder and mushroomed while maintaining 50% of its original weight.

Two other hunters scored on nice mulies during the west Texas hunt. One was using a .308 Winchester with the 165-grain Core-Lokt Tipped, the same bullet as I had shot. The other chap was shooting a 6.5 Creedmoor with a 129-grain Core-Lokt Tipped. I experienced the longest shot during the hunt at 251 yards. The other three big-bodied bucks all fell under 150 yards.

THE FUTURE

I asked Jon for his honest assessment of what realistically could be expected from Remington in the days ahead. He said, "Remington is heavily focused on innovation and there will be many new ammunition items coming in the next few years." I for one will be anxiously waiting to see what materializes. As whitetail deer season approaches, I'll be shooting a Nosler handgun in 6.5 Creedmoor with the new 129-grain Core-Lokt Tipped. When I asked Jon what Remington was doing at the moment to get caught up with ammo demand, he said, "We are running wide open with machines running 24/7." That's good to know because many of us are hoping to see shelves filled with ammo again.

With the current demand for ammunition, it's refreshing to see a rejuvenated company back in full swing. Big Green is definitely back and brighter days are forthcoming. I'd be willing to bet a dozen Krispy Kreme donuts good things are on the horizon for shooters and hunters alike. **GUNS**

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HELLION

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY'S BULLPUP HAS BITE!

The question seems to come to mind naturally, at least to me — “But why?”

With the classic AR-style and design seeming to be the benchmark of a defensive rifle today, why try to gain market share with a design apparently at odds with what's popular with shooters? I've spent about 45 years shooting AR-style rifles so my muscle memory is deeply rooted. I also have just a modest amount of experience shooting bullpup style rifles, so I think I might be just the right guy to review this new one from Springfield.

I didn't start out as a fan-boy for the design and honestly had to overcome some initial doubts about the concept. I'll just say it out loud — the Hellion looked strange to my eye and my muscles and fingers fought back when I

handled it at first. But once the dust settled and I learned about the mechanics of the design, the engineering features — and learned to manipulate the rifle — it began to feel comfortable, even normal to me. I was surprised and interested and felt I had opened some entirely new doors when it came to defensive rifle ideas.

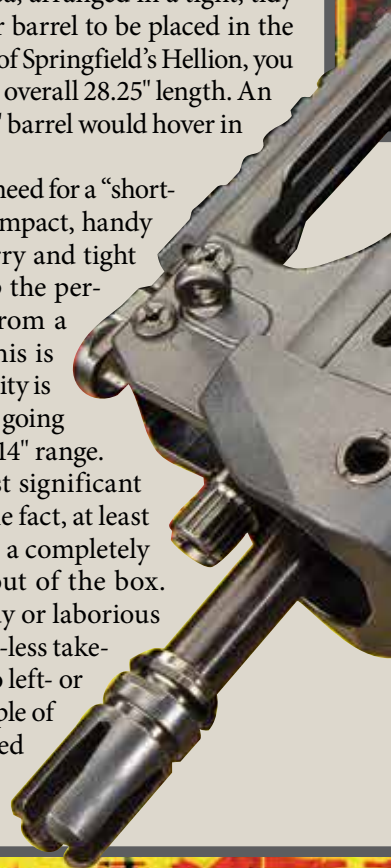
So will you.

BULLPUP VS. AR

If we distill it right down, the bullpup concept makes perfect sense. In a “regular” rifle, all the good bits are forward of the trigger, “out there” in front of you. The entire stock area is essentially unused except to rest against your shoulder. Why not put it to work? In bullpup rifles the “good bits” like the action, magazine, recoil system and such are behind the trigger and grip area, arranged in a tight, tidy assembly, which allow a longer barrel to be placed in the same overall length. In the case of Springfield's Hellion, you get a full-length 16" barrel in an overall 28.25" length. An AR-style rifle with a similar 16" barrel would hover in the 32" to 33" length, at least.

With the Hellion, there's no need for a “short-barreled rifle” label to get a compact, handy package perfect for vehicle carry and tight quarters. You also get to keep the performance you can only get from a full-length 16" rifle barrel. This is significant since .223/5.56 velocity is usually seriously affected when going to shorter barrels in the 10" to 14" range.

But I think one of the most significant advantages of the bullpup is the fact, at least in the Hellion's case, you have a completely ambidextrous design right out of the box. There's no kits you need to buy or laborious change-over mechanics. A tool-less take-down allows you to swap out to left- or right-side ejection in just a couple of minutes. And the unique angled ejection port design helps keep empties away from your face





even if you're forced to fire from the off-side in a pinch. It's a bit of elegantly simple engineering and significant for those lefties out there. Someone listened, it seems.

HISTORY AND FEATURES

Another meaningful point is the fact the Hellion is essentially the justly famous VHS-2 bullpup service rifle designed in Croatia and used by their armed forces. Proven in battle, this platform has been modified slightly in a few key areas to make it appropriate for the U.S. market. The key parts of the Hellion are manufactured at HS Produkt, Karlovac, Croatia (that has also made the XD series for Springfield over the years). The rifles are then imported to the U.S. where Springfield does final assembly with the American-made parts added.

The Hellion is, of course, semi-auto while the VHS-2 is full auto. The Hellion feeds from AR-pattern magazines

as opposed to the proprietary mag for the VHS-2. The Hellion also uses replaceable AR-style pistol grips, has M-Lok slots and six QD mounting points for slings — all features Americans generally look for.

There are some other qualities adding to the user-friendliness of this design, which might not be obvious at first glance. The Picatinny rail on the top is about 13" long — longer than I've ever seen on a rifle like this. It allows a red dot, an optic, night vision/IR, laser, light, etc., especially if you use an off-set mount or two. The rail also has built-in flip-up sights of excellent design, with aperture choices allowing for almost instant ranging options from 100 to 500 meters. There are scads of possibilities there.

ROY HUNTINGTON
PHOTOS: ROB JONES
THE IMAGESMITH LLC



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY HELLION GEAR LIST

AMMO: Federal M855 "Green Tip" 62 grains, MAGAZINES: 30-round
Magpul PMag Gen 3, RIFLE CASE: SKB Mil Std., KNIFE: Spartan Damysus

GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE



THE HELLION

.223/5.56

A 5-position adjustable buttstock manipulates easily and surely. The carrying handle is handy — once you learn to make use of it. Hey, it's there, use it! The ability to customize the grip and use one of your favorite shooting styles fitting the AR can help make the rifle even more comfortable. It comes stock with the BCM Gunfighter Mod 3 grip but swapping it out is easy.

The action itself is surprisingly conventional in design. Think classic rotating multi-lug bolt run by a short-stroke gas piston. Reliable and robust, it's also easy to keep clean. The Hellion also has an adjustable gas block for normal or suppressor use. No tools are needed for adjusting the gas block and that's handy.

Speaking of no tools, you honestly can take this rifle completely apart without any tool other than a cartridge tip to depress a few plungers or pins. Most are fingertip friendly and take-down is about one minute or so. The action comes out the back, very simply, including the trigger group. The forend slips right off as well as the gas assembly. Access for cleaning is among the best I've ever seen on any sort of semi-auto rifle of any kind.

LEFTY/RIGHTY

While you have the Hellion apart, it's easy to rotate the bolt 120 degrees and re-install it to swap to left-handed use. You can also pin the dust cover closed on the opposite side just as easily.

Being fully ambidextrous, the charging handle is centered under the carrying handle and can be pivoted to either side. You can also use the charging handle to act as a "forward assist" if needed by pushing it down to lock it to the bolt carrier. You'll get it once you try it.



In a nod to the U.S. market, the Hellion uses an AR-style grip. Roy found the trigger pull long but rolled into a crisp break, negating one of the common complaints of bullpup designs.



The 5-position adjustable buttstock makes LOP no problem. It also features QD points on each side, making a truly ambi rifle out of the box!

The safety is already ambi and comes to your thumb perfectly. It's sure and easy to manipulate too. The magazine release is nift, and even though there's only one (behind the mag), it's easy to manipulate with either hand. A quick "press" by a thumb and the mag comes out. The mag needs to be pulled out and won't fall free on its own accord. Frankly, I like that as I want to keep my mags out of the dirt if possible and not lose them in brush or weeds.

The bolt locks back on an empty mag and can be returned by either operating the charging handle or by "pinching" the release button just behind the mag release. If you need to lock the bolt back without a magazine, you can easily reach into the mag well with your finger and push the bolt lock up. Again, these are all simple jobs to do with either hand.

SHOOTING

I did some initial test-firing shooting casually off-hand just to become familiar with the rifle's operation. I began to get comfortable with the unique feel very fast, to the point that when I shouldered an AR to compare, I felt as if it was too far "out there" in front of me. A strange feeling to describe but you'll soon understand once you try both rifles.

The trigger is a sort of typical military style feel with a good deal of travel before you begin to feel things tighten up. Then it's a sort of roll-off rather than a crisp break like a target trigger. My rifle showed an average of about 6.5 lbs. but in all honesty, I shot it just fine. It wasn't gritty in the least, but very smooth, with an even flow to final break. You can take up the travel fast, then slow for your final pull very predictably and easily.

I've found in the past with most rifles, and with bullpup designs in particular, pressure on the forend

can often affect groups and the Hellion seemed to be the same. It's very slight and you'd only notice it if going for extreme accuracy at longer ranges, though.

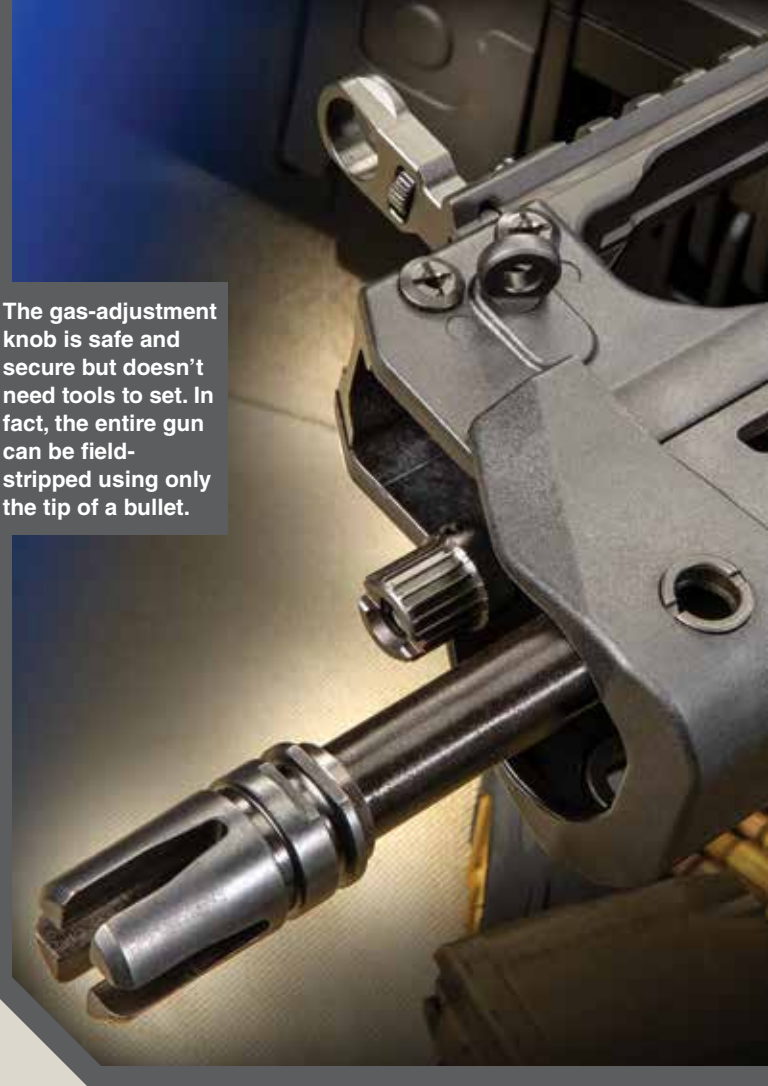
I mounted a Meopta Meopro Optika5 2-10x42 scope on the rail and it seems "about right" for the rifle for precision work. A red dot would also be just about perfect if you were setting your rifle up for defense. The hammer-forged 4150 steel barrel has a 1:7 twist and seemed to shoot just about everything fine. Black Hills .223 55-grain, FMJ ball ammo delivered very reliable 1.5" or just a tad better groups at 100 yards. I was, frankly, surprised by this. I had no idea this rifle could do this and would have been happy with — and expected — 2" to 3" groups.

I settled down and got a 1.15" group using Federal Gold Medal Match King, a 77-grain boat-tail HP bullet also in .223. Such accuracy from a "battle" rifle is surprising and I think this has to do with the excellent barrel, full 16" length and outstanding overall build quality of the rifle. It's not a "cheap" rifle and it shows in real world performance.

I also ran a gamut of junk ammo I had through the Hellion, a mixed bag of 5.56 military ball of suspicious origin, partial boxes of commercial ammo, etc. and had no issues whatsoever. The rifle ran like a military rifle should, the trigger was predictable, and the accuracy was simply icing on the cake. You could in all honesty take this rifle to a busy prairie dog town and do excellent work with it while your buddies tried to keep up with you using target bolt guns. Amazing.

FINAL THOUGHTS?

I spent most of a day bouncing around in my E-Z-Go ranch vehicle dragging the Hellion along with me without the scope mounted. I wanted to see what it would be like to live with. Whenever I got out to do a chore or check



The gas-adjustment knob is safe and secure but doesn't need tools to set. In fact, the entire gun can be field-stripped using only the tip of a bullet.

something out, I took the rifle with me and let it hang using a two-point sling. I did a bit of shovel work, fed the fish in the pond, moved a tractor to another spot, towed a utility trailer to a burn pile to off-load some brush and generally "lived with the rifle" for a day.

What I found was it didn't poke me or catch on things as much as an AR seems to, at least for me. The short overall length was exceptionally handy and made stowing it easy. It also carried without fuss and when slung on my back, the muzzle was well below my shoulders and the butt at about back pocket level.

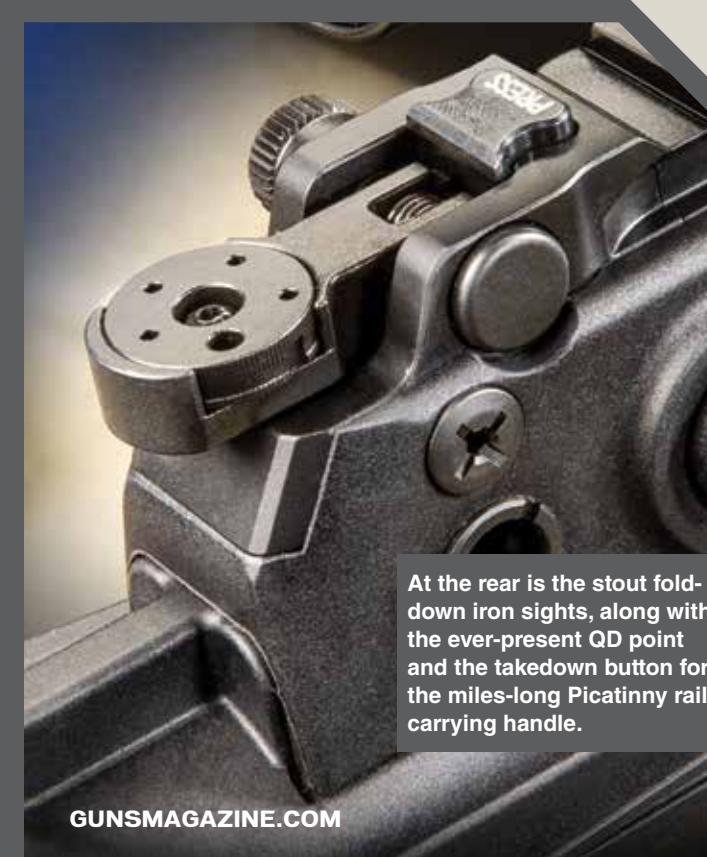
I think the only challenge would be the transition training needed to learn this manual of arms after handling an AR-style rifle for so long. Like any defensive gun, sticking to one platform for carry makes good sense and training with it is critical. Swapping from an AR to the Hellion might confuse muscle memory so keep that in mind.

But darn if I'm not sold on this whole idea. I suspect you might be too if you gave it an honest try. The Hellion is about the price of a high quality AR — and worth the investment if you ask me.

GUNS

MSRP: \$1,999

Springfield-Armory.com



At the rear is the stout fold-down iron sights, along with the ever-present QD point and the takedown button for the miles-long Picatinny rail/carrying handle.

PERCUSSION POCKET PISTOLS OF THE 1850s

John Taffin

“B” Western movies always show everyone being openly armed. This is fantasy and rarely happened, especially in towns. Carrying of weapons was forbidden by many municipalities but this did not prevent carry, it just changed it from openly carrying a large revolver to a hidden pocket pistol.

Samuel Colt began things by offering the first successful revolver, the Paterson in 1836. It was a great step forward from single-shot pistols and well accepted. However, Sam wound up bankrupt. The next step occurred when Sam Walker and Sam Colt got together to come up with something much better for combat than the fragile, folding-trigger Paterson. The result was the Walker of 1847, and then the Walker Whitneyville Dragoon, a transitional model which led to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Model Dragoons.

BIG IRON

The Paterson was produced in .28, .31, .34 and .40, all of which Sam Walker felt were underpowered. The Dragoons were definitely *not* and all of these were large, heavy, six-shot .44 percussion pistols weighing 4 lbs. or more and not easily carried. Colt's first Belt Pistol, so-called as it was easily carried in a holster such as the “Slim Jim” on the belt, was the .36 caliber 1851 Navy followed by the



Remington percussion pistols compared — .31 Spur Trigger and New Model Army .44.

Sometimes four aces
are not enough.



BEFORE THE J-FRAMES

.44 1860 Army and .36 1861 Navy. All three of these were extremely popular and easily and comfortably carried.

For a look at the history of the Colt Pocket Pistols I use as my resource, *A History Of The Colt Revolver From 1836 To 1940* by Charles Haven and Frank Belden, 1940. This book is remarkable in its coverage of so many aspects of the history of Colt and personally remarkable as I purchased it in the Kent State University bookstore in 1963. What are the chances of finding any such book in a university bookstore today?

The following is from the Haven & Belden book: "The first pocket model put out by Colt in his new establishment on Pearl Street was a .31 caliber five-shot revolving pistol with a standard barrel length of 4". The notches for the engagement of the cylinder-locking bolt were round or elliptical, the back of the trigger guard was square, there was no roller on the hammer at its bearing point on

the mainspring and the arm had no ramrod. The barrel was octagonal and similar in shape to those of the small Paterson models, but the frame was square at the back like the '48 Dragoon and all following models."

The authors go on to refer to this as the Old Model Pocket Pistol that was later followed by the Old Model Police Pistol. Also according to the authors, the former is sometimes called the Baby Dragoon while the latter is identified as the Wells Fargo Colt.

There is considerable confusion and disagreement on the calling of this later model the Wells Fargo Colt. The authors say this: "As the Wells Fargo Express Company was not organized until 1851, and did not send its first representative to the West until 1852, three years after the improvements were applied to the Model of 1848 revolvers, one of two things must have been the case if the Model of 1848 with the arm supplied to them. Either

Colt had on hand the stock of left-over arms of the earlier model, an unlikely occurrence when his factory could not keep up with his regular orders, or else a lot of old-type arms were specially made up for some reason that seemed good at the time. Either of these eventualities is, of course, possible but we consider them unlikely.”

Whatever the real situation, it is now lost to history but both models are available in replica form as the Model 1848 Baby Dragoon and the Model 1849 Wells Fargo. Both are of .31 caliber, five-shot and do not have loading levers/rammers. The cylinders must be loaded off the gun.

With all of these designs being offered, none of them, at least according to civilian sales, were the most popular. This distinction goes to the 1849 Pocket Pistol. This was a five-shot, .31 caliber single-action percussion pistol design for easy concealed carry. The fact it was the most popular of all percussion revolvers offered by Colt once again attests to the fact most sixguns of the time period were not carried openly but rather in a pocket.

POCKET ROCKET

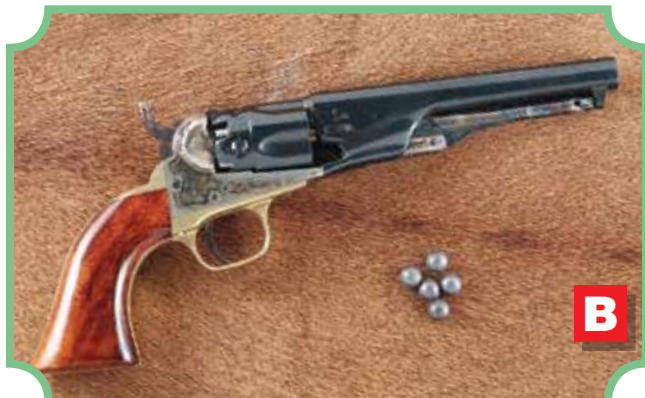
Belden & Haven say this about the most popular pistol: “The Improved Pocket Pistol was brought out by Colt in 1849. This arm differed from the model of 1848 in the following respects. In the regular issue, the trigger guard was rounded at the back, a loading lever, similar to the loading lever of the Dragoon and Navy Models, was attached, pins were placed between the nipples, and the hammer was slotted to rest on these pins as a safety stop while the arm was being carried, a wheel was put on the base of the hammer to ease the bearing of the mainspring, and the cylinder notches were changed to a rectangular shape with an inclined plane leading into them to guide the cylinder bolt, in case, owing to wear on the hand or ratchet, the cylinder did not index properly. The hammer and barrel-lug were also of slightly different shape.... Hundreds of thousands of these pistols were made between 1849 and 1872, and they were by far the most popular pocket revolvers in the world from the time they were first manufactured to the general adoption of cartridge revolvers in the early 1870s.”

It is easy to see from the authors’ description this Pocket Pistol Model 1849 had every possible upgrade to make it state-of-the-art at the time. It is still available to shooters in replica form and use thereof will soon show why it was such a popular offering in its time.

After the development of the 1849 Pocket Model, Colt switched back to producing Belt Pistols with the 1851 Navy .36 and the 1860 Army .44, the latter being the main side-arm of the Union forces in the Civil War. Sam then combined the .36 caliber chambering of the 1851 Navy with



A



B



C



D

(A) Before the J-Frame, before the Colt Detective Special, there was the Colt 1849 Pocket Pistol. (B) The Colt 1862 Police .36 offered more power than the .31 Pocket Pistols. (C) Although printed in 1940, the Haven & Belden book on Colt Firearms is still a valuable resource. (D) Both of these Colts are .36 caliber, however, the five-shot 1862 is much smaller than the six-shot Model 1851.



(A) 1849 Pocket Pistol .31 and 1862 Police Model .36 compared to the full-sized 1861 Navy .36. (B) Colt Pocket Pistols of the 1850s — Baby Dragoon, Wells Fargo and 1849 Pocket Model. (C) The Remington .31 Spur Trigger is quite a bit smaller than the Colt 1849 Pocket Model and Baby Dragoon. (D) A hundred years separate these Colt Percussion Pocket Models from the S&W J-Frames.



the streamlined look of the 1860 Army and the result was the 1861 Navy Model. Sam Colt must have seen the need for a more powerful pocket pistol as his last design was the 1862 Police Pistol, which was a scaled-down .36 Navy with a smaller grip, frame and a smaller five-shot cylinder. As the name implies, these were popular for police carry (again Belden & Haven): "The New Model Pocket Pistol of Navy Caliber was made on the same frame and grips as the Model of 1849 Pocket Pistol, but the forward part of the frame was cut away to make room for a round, rebated cylinder that was 1/32 of an inch larger in diameter at the front, and the tapering part of the barrel forward of the cylinder was cut back to allow for the length of the cylinder, which was 3/8 of an inch greater than in the Model of 1849. This cylinder contains five chambers of .36 caliber, taking the heavy conical bullet of the Navy Pistol, but with a slightly reduced powder charge. The barrel was identical in outside dimensions with the Model of 1849, and made in the usual octagonal form.... This model was made in barrel lengths of 4-1/2", 5-1/2" and 6-1/2"."



MODERN UPDATES

The Model 1862 is available today in replica form in all three barrel lengths mentioned. Realistically speaking, the .31 Pocket Pistol Models basically offer .22 Long Rifle power so it is easy to see why Colt decided to come out with a .36 Pocket Pistol, about equal to the power offered by a .38 Long Colt. To make my 1862 .36 Pocket Model even easier to carry, I had the standard barrel cut back to 2-1/2" and fitted with an 1858 Remington front sight in a dovetail. This allowed me to easily adjust for windage and elevation. Both parts are available from VTI Gun Parts as are virtually all other parts for Italian-made replica revolvers.

All of my pocket pistols, as with all other cap and ball revolvers, have also been upgraded and made more reliable by the addition of SliXshot stainless steel nipples from SliXsprings. These nipples are properly shaped to accept Remington #10 and CCI #11 caps and also vented to help prevent cap jams. Cap jams seem even more prevalent on the pocket pistols than on the belt pistols so these aftermarket nipples are a much-needed addition.

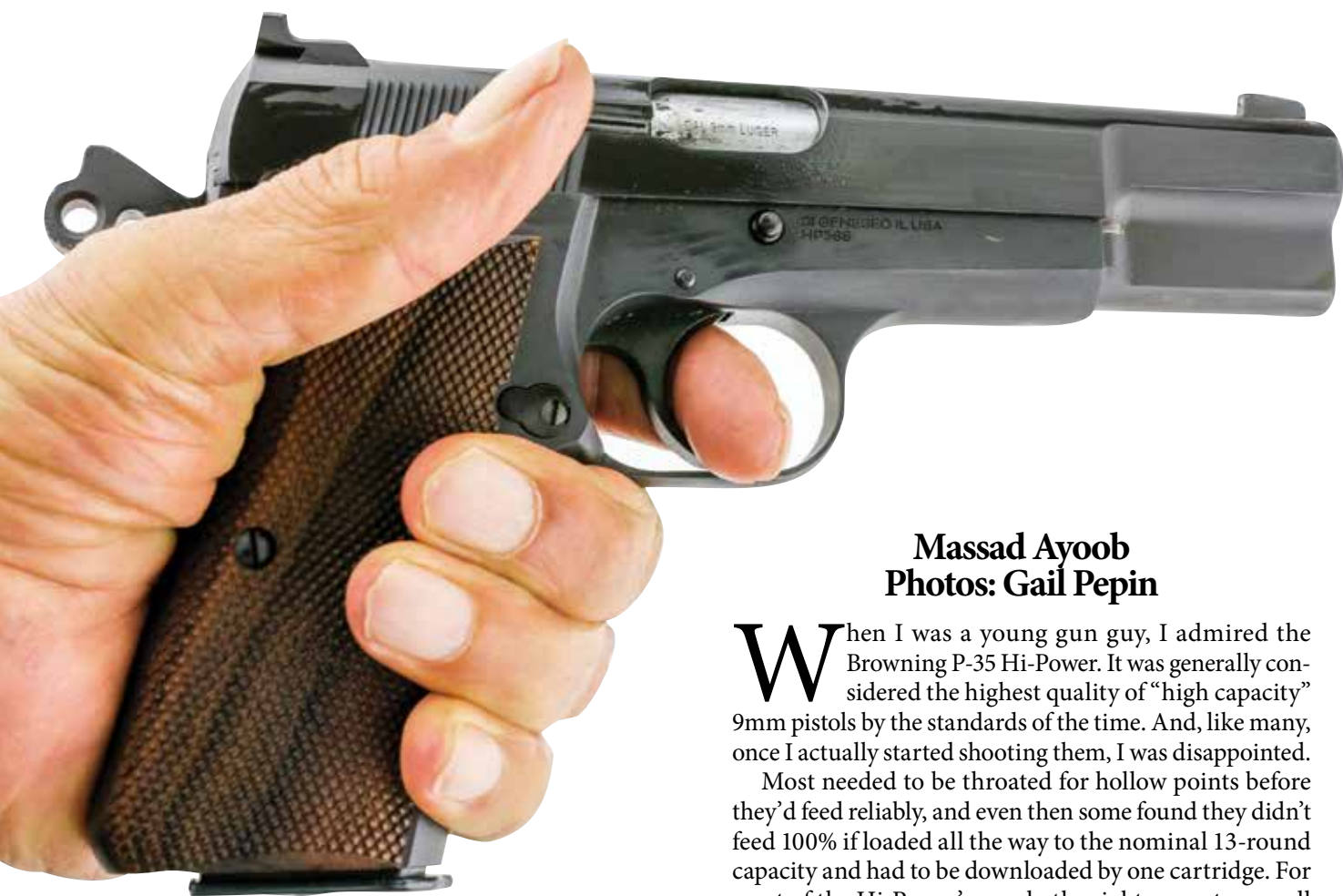
Remington also offered an extensive lineup of pocket pistols including double-action versions, however, thus far the only one offered in replica form is a five-shot, spur-trigger .31. Offered in both steel frame and brass frame versions, it is even smaller than the Colt Pocket Pistols and very easy to carry concealed. Perhaps someday other Remington Pocket Models will be offered. Perhaps. **GUNS**



VTIGunParts.com
SliXSprings.com

THE SPRINGFIELD

Old School Cool, Improved And Updated



Great “feel” and optimum trigger reach of a classic P-35 remain in this SA-35.

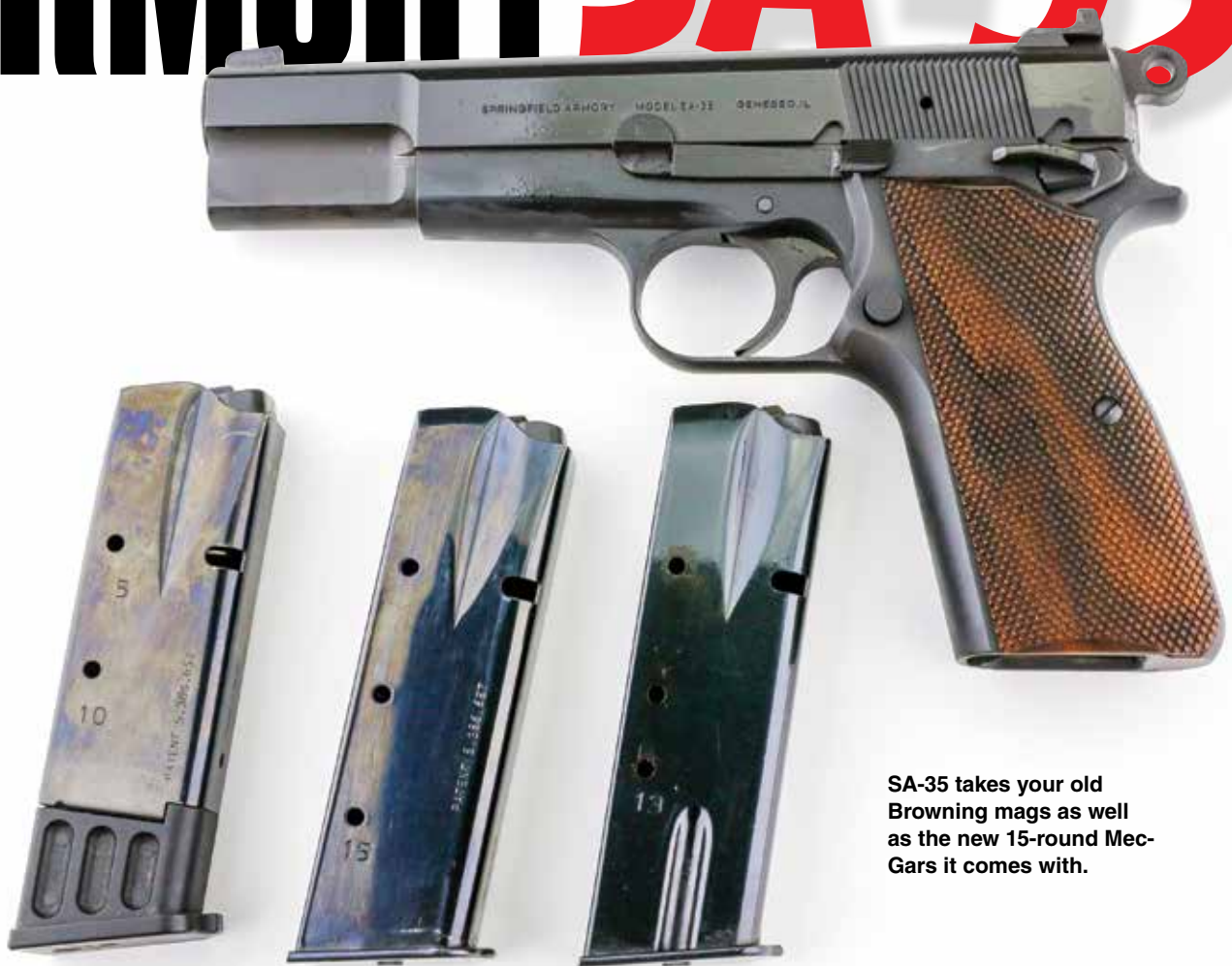
Massad Ayoob
Photos: Gail Pepin

When I was a young gun guy, I admired the Browning P-35 Hi-Power. It was generally considered the highest quality of “high capacity” 9mm pistols by the standards of the time. And, like many, once I actually started shooting them, I was disappointed.

Most needed to be throated for hollow points before they’d feed reliably, and even then some found they didn’t feed 100% if loaded all the way to the nominal 13-round capacity and had to be downloaded by one cartridge. For most of the Hi-Power’s epoch, the sights were too small and the manual safety, too small and too mushy.

We learned not to load them heavy: My travels from England (Radway Green Arsenal ZZ ammo) to Venezuela (the CAVIM arsenal’s NATO loading) revealed baskets filled with broken P35 frames. This problem persisted until the guns were “ruggedized” for the introduction of the .40 S&W version. Moreover, they weren’t drop-safe with a round in the chamber until the Mark III was introduced with an internal firing-pin-safety circa 1988.

ARMORY SA-35



SA-35 takes your old Browning mags as well as the new 15-round Mec-Gars it comes with.

MORE PROBLEMS

To keep the pistol slim, a feature endearing it to generations of concealed carriers, the trigger linkage was complex with lots of friction points, made worse by the design of the magazine disconnect safety. This feature had been mandated in the original French military specification, which gave birth to the design and stayed with it thereafter, even though the French never did

adopt it. This feature also retarded magazine drop, preventing the mag from ejecting completely. This feature actually made sense in a battlefield weapon: The 9mm ammo for submachine guns would usually be readily available, but spare pistol magazines not so much. The pistol retaining the magazine forced the soldier to take it in hand, making it more likely he'd pocket it for refill later. However, fast-shooting modern Yanks absolutely hated this element of the P-35.

Thus arose the trend to send one's Browning to Bill Laughridge at Cylinder & Slide or to Wayne Novak who did the FBI HRT's Brownings, or Jim Garthwaite or any of several other master pistolsmiths. It would come back with good sights, much better triggers, throated chambers, feed ramps for improved reliability and sans the detested mag disconnecter.

Deactivating a safety device on a gun, of course, was a red flag for lawyers. Laughridge would have you

Classic burr hammer, large and positive thumb safety and rear sight serving as a cocking shelf are all present on the SA-35.



send your magazines, polish all the interfaces and return a Browning with a sweet trigger and quick-dropping magazines with the disconnecter still in place.

Low worldwide demand in the time of striker-fired polymer pistols, coupled with worn-out machinery, caused FN to discontinue the Hi-Power a few years ago. Prices of available specimens immediately shot upward. Enter the SA-35 from Springfield Armory.

FIRST GLANCE

About the time of the discontinuance, the 2018 *Gun Digest* listed the basic 9mm Hi-Power at a \$1,110 starting price. In late 2021, Springfield Armory introduced the SA-35 at an amazing \$699 MSRP. Yes, you read the price tag right and it is the SA-35's first "attention-getter."

The big eye-opener is Springfield Armory assembles them with virtually all the old "custom only" features already in place. The ammo ante is upped with a pair of 15-round Mec-Gar magazines, which work perfectly, and are easy to fill, empty and snap into place when full. The sights are big and easy to see: a humongous U-notch rear reminiscent of the Wilson Combat BattleSight and a good square front post with a white dot and no glare. The rear sight is "shelfed" to allow working the slide off the edge of the belt in a one-hand-only wounded defender situation.



The SA-35 gave Mas this 60-shot qual target in a demo run for students in Delaware.



With new Mec-Gar mags, the SA-35 is a 15+1 9mm.



The right-hand-only thumb safety is the right size and very positive on and off. The feed ramp and chamber are ramped and polished for hollow points.

This pistol's checkered walnut grips are reminiscent of custom Browning stocks by Craig Spiegel and felt wonderful to every single person, male and female, on our test crew. Much better than the flat walnut of early Brownings and the plastic ones of the late breed.

The hated magazine disconnect safety is not present. This allows clean mag drops and, probably more important, improves trigger pull. All of us on the test team found this gun to have a better trigger pull out of the box than any non-customized Browning we had ever shot — short take-up to clean break, with a long but palpable and very controllable reset. Alan Davis, manager of the Pro-Arms Gun Shop, weighed the trigger of SA-35

serial number HP566 and found it to be 5 lbs. even.

The fragility issue seems off the table: With modern metallurgy, Springfield rates the SA-35 as approved for +P. Until the Mark III version of 1988, the Browning was not drop-safe with a round in the chamber; Springfield Armory assures me the SA-35 is drop-safe. It seems “all the improvement boxes have been checked” on this classy interpretation of a classic design.

“SHARPS”

From 1935 on, shooters found the Browning Hi-Power tended to bite the hand that fed and fired it, the burr hammer often striking the web of the hand. Browning reshaped the hammer to remedy this in the late 20th Century but some purists felt “losing the burr” ruined the iconic shape of the pistol. Springfield came

up with a burr hammer “true to the classic look” but didn’t bite the hands of any of our testers, who ranged in size from petite female to Mongo male. Only one other gun reviewer — Justin Dyal, writing for *American Rifleman* magazine — found after a couple of hundred rounds it had drawn blood from his extra-large hand. A couple of our testers thought the rear edges of the grip tang might be sharp enough to cause discomfort and discovered that for them, they weren’t.

Personally, the only uncomfortable edge I found on this gun was the front part of the long slide-stop lever, which caused discomfort to the support hand thumb when firing right-handed in a two-hand/straight-thumbs grasp. Firing with thumbs lower instantly cured the problem.

ACCURACY

From 25 yards on a Matrix bench, this SA-35 was tested with exemplars of the 9mm’s three most popular bullet weights. Each group was measured overall to get an idea how it would perform from experienced hands under ideal conditions and again for the best three hits, which experience has shown me is an excellent predictor of what the same gun and round is likely to do with

all five from a machine rest. Measurements were center to center of the farthest-flung holes being measured, to the nearest 0.05”.

The 115-grain SIG SAUER V-Crown JHP grouped a little left, 4.30” for all five with four of those in 2.85”, and the tightest trio in 2.05”. It was a good example of how the “best three” measurement factors out unnoticed human error.

American Eagle 124-grain FMJ shot a little more left, but drilled the tightest overall group, all fire in 2.30” and the best three in 1.30”. Finally, subsonic 147-grain Speer Gold Dot bonded jacketed hollow point, a popular police load, delivered all five into 4.80”. All but one of those were in 2.10” and the best three, in 1.85”. This told me the test pistol is about a 2” gun at 25 yards in terms of inherent mechanical accuracy.

SA-35 X 3

We normally only get one gun to test; for this article, I was able to run three SA-35s. First was the one tested above. The second was in Delaware while I was teaching a MAG-40 (MassadAyoobGroup.com) class at the Bridgeville Rifle and Pistol Club. Hosting us



Brass flies as Mas enjoys the controllability of the SA-35 in rapid fire.



American Eagle
124-grain, 25 yards.



was “Justin Opinion” whose YouTube videos under this name are excellent. I borrowed his sample, with a trigger weighing just a little over 5 lbs., as a teaching and demo gun. When shooting the pace-setter for their 15-yard final qualification, Justin’s SA-35 delivered for me dominant-hand-only, non-dominant-hand-only and two-handed in every position, yielding a 300 out of 300-point score and about a 4-1/2" group for the 60 shots. I can’t ask for more.

The third SA-35 was the one I tested for another outfit. Accuracy parallel to the sample tested above, 5.485-lb. trigger ... the quality of all three was both excellent and consistent.

Bottom line? This improved Old School pistol is a classy classic, more functional than ever in its 86-year battle-proven history. I frankly think it’s the best new firearm buy of the year at the \$699 MSRP. This is why I’m sending a check to Springfield Armory to keep the test sample.

GUNS

MSRP: \$699

Springfield-Armory.com



The New Original

HENRY

**America's First
Successful
Lever Gun Renewed**

Jeff "Tank" Hoover

Nothing's more American than lever-action rifles. The pride and romance associated with them is legendary. Even to this day, they're revered for their reliability, fast follow-up shots, power and just plain fun. Riflemen cannot contain their smiles when seeing one, let alone control their impulse of picking it up and working the lever. Transported, while magically levering a round in the chamber, brings back a flood of great memories both lived and dreamed.

BENJAMIN TYLER HENRY

Lever gun enthusiasts can thank Benjamin Tyler Henry for these wonderful repeaters. It was Mr. Henry who conceived the first successful lever-action repeating rifle. He patented it in 1860 and the New Haven Arms Company produced it. The repeater changed the way wars were fought by providing one man, armed with a Henry rifle, the firepower of a small platoon. Henry rifles first saw battle in the Civil War in mid-1862 with Union troops.

Confederate Colonel John Mosby is credited with the infamous saying of the Henry's firepower — "that damned Yankee rifle that can be loaded on Sunday and fired all week." The Henry rifle continued as a dominating force



Henry's beautiful 1860 is made using the same patents and patterns as the original. It is beautifully polished and blued and uses top grade walnut for the stock. Above is Tank's Cimmaron 1875.

for settlers heading west during the frontier days of America.

HENRY TODAY

About 15 years ago, I was finishing up lunch while watching the Outdoor channel. As I was putting my boots on, an info commercial started playing. The voice was full of passion and sincerity, with a Brooklyn accent. Captivated, I continued listening.

Mesmerized, I wanted to buy every rifle being talked about having walnut from Missouri, castings from Ohio and built in America, emphasizing, "made in America or not made at all!" Who is this guy? I was really excited. Of course, the voice belonged to none other than Anthony Imperato, president of Henry Rifles.

Henry Repeating Arms took its name from Benjamin Henry when

Louis Imperato and his son Anthony opened shop in Brooklyn, NY in 1996. The first product shipped in March of 1997 was the Henry classic .22 (H001). There is no other affiliation or lineage to Benjamin Tyler Henry.

RATON, NM TERRITORY

You never know who you'll bump into at the NRA's Whittington Center. First, I spot Andy Larsson, head honcho of Skinner Sights. Wherever Andy travels, you can be sure he leaves a wake of lever guns nearby sporting his exceptional sights. Next to Andy was Tom Kotz, product manager of Henry. Talk about being in lever gun Looney Land! Tom brought plenty of samples, complete with ammo. The first rifle I tried was one of Henry's new side-loading levers, this one in .38-55. I have a thing for cartridges with dashes in their name.



A simple steel bolt cocks the hammer, just like any other lever gun while cycling it. The 1860 action is smooth.

After hitting steel at 400 yards, I was ready to try something else and I knew exactly what it was. You see, Henry resurrected the original Henry rifle of 1860 fame in April of 2014. However, these guns are chambered in .44-40 and .45 Colt as the original chambering. The .44 Rimfire is long discontinued.

Tom showed me how to load the 1860 and it was back to the steel silhouettes. Accuracy was impressive and I was duly impressed with the quality of the "Original Henry," the gun that started it all for lever gun lovers. Tom and I conspired as I ordered one to test and evaluate shortly after getting home.

UNBOXING

When unboxing the Henry 1860, you'll be bedazzled by the highly polished brass frame and impeccably deep-blued, one-piece barrel and magazine. I was! That's right — the barrel and magazine are machined from one piece of steel. It's screwed



Accuracy was all you could ask for with either factory ammo or handloads.

onto the hardened brass receiver, which has the same tensile strength as steel.

The 1860 is fitted with fancy-grade American Walnut stocks. As you can see, my test gun has exceptional figure. The classic folding-ladder rear sight and brass blade front provide a wonderful sight picture. Using the ladder sight is fun and an accurate way of shooting long distances.

Best of all, the 1860 uses a traditional half-cock safety hammer notch. There are no modernized manual safeties, just like the good ol' days when people were responsible and held accountable for their actions. Both calibers have a 24.5" barrel with a 13-round capacity. Weight is 9 lbs., overall length 43" and LOP 14". The brass buttstock has a traditional trapdoor for cleaning rod storage.

LOAD & SHOOT

Loading the 1860 is pretty cool, since there's no side-loading gate. The magazine has a brass follower tab, which rests against the frame of the gun when empty. To load, you need to push the follower tab all the way to the top of the magazine, until the follower clears the pivot point of the barrel/magazine. When it does, twist the top 5" clockwise. This exposes the magazine tube for loading.

With muzzle pointed up around 40 degrees, start loading cartridges. The shallow angle keeps cartridges from slamming into one another. When loaded, twist the top 5" of the barrel back and slowly let the follower down. Your magazine is now loaded. Sure, it's not nearly as fast as a side loading gate, but it is still fun to load the original lever gun like our forefathers did!

AMMO

Luckily, I had some Black Hills .44-40 ammo left over from a previous review. Consisting of a 200-grain cast lead slug of radius flat-nose design, loaded in Starline brass, it's packaged in an authentic looking, period-correct box. Still suffering from the great ammo drought of 2020-21, my only other course of action was to use handloads.

Using a Lee six-cavity 200-grain radius flat-nose mold, I size them 0.430". It's been my experience cast bullets sized



With ladder sight up, long-range shooting is a snap.



Loading is easy. Simply push the magazine follower to the top and twist the top 5" of the barrel/magazine clockwise. Then drop your cartridges into the magazine. Below is a cartridge on the elevator, ready to be chambered. Cycling is as smooth as could be.



0.430" shoot best in modern .44-40 guns. I load them over 8 grains of Unique in Starline brass with CCI 300 large pistol primers for ignition.

SHOOTIN'

Shooting was done at 50 yards. I used U-line 2" fluorescent orange squares as targets. Using a 6"x6" carpeted block of wood, with a sandbag on top, I was sitting pretty, stability-wise. The 1860 provides plenty of sight radius with its 24.5" barrel, making accuracy a breeze. The Black Hills ammo consistently grouped into 2", or as well as I could hold at the distance.

My handloads were a tad tighter and I give credit to the 0.430" powder-coated and sized slugs. Function was smooth and flawless if you just remember the follower tab moving toward you after cycling the lever. I caught myself a few times dry-stroking the lever when the follower was blocked by the sandbag.

This can be both a good and bad trait. Bad in that you need to move your support hand while firing numerous rounds, good in that you have a reminder of approximately how many rounds you have left when the tab hits your hand. The open magazine seam allows you to visually check round count, but also allows dust/dirt to enter the magazine. Trigger pull was smooth, breaking just over 4 lbs.

SUMMATION

It was a natural for Henry to resurrect the Original Henry Rifle, the lever that started it all. Like all Henry rifles, it's made entirely on U.S. soil, just as B.T. Henry did. The Henry Original duplicates the 1860 pattern and patents and is virtually identical, besides being chambered for the .44-40 and .45 Colt.

Considering Civil War-era Henry rifles sell for up to \$250,000 at auction, Henry provides you an affordable means to own, shoot and display the "original" lever gun. This rifle started it all for us lever gun lovers and is one of the most important rifles ever made in my opinion.

GUNS

MSRP: \$2,720

HenryUSA.com



GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE

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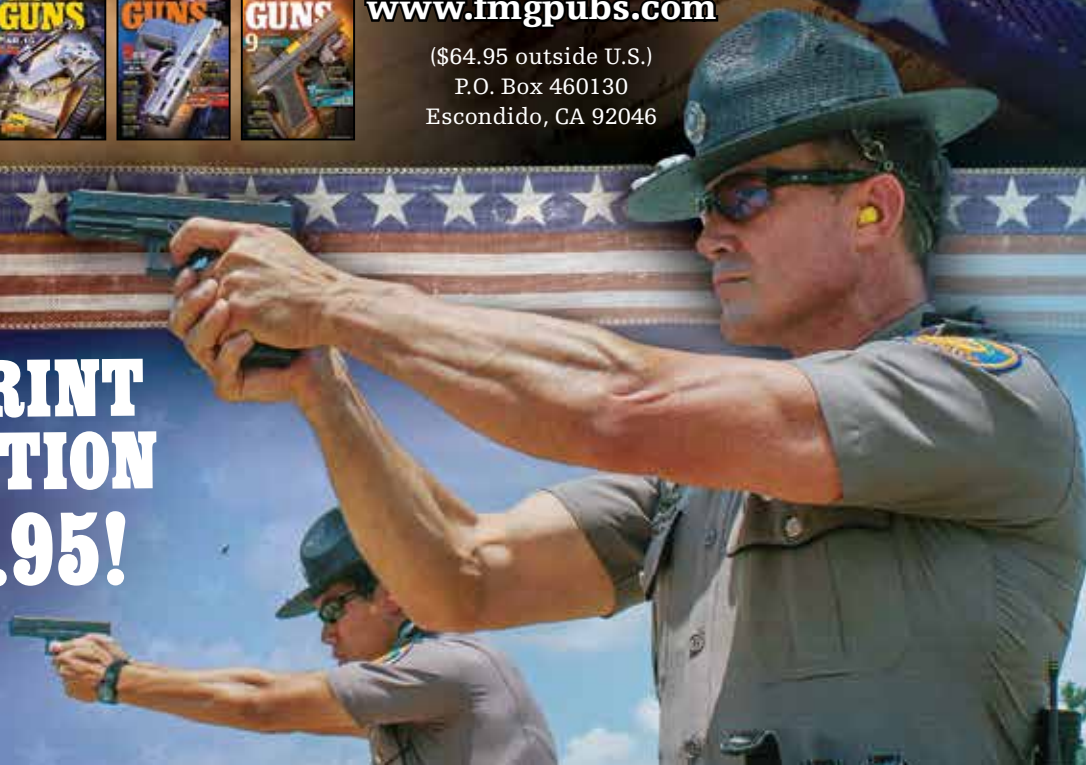
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CRY HAVOC TACTICAL AND LUTH-AR

**THE *CONCEALABLE*
PRECISION COMBAT RIFLE**



The holy melding of the Cry Havoc Tactical QRB kit and a top-flight AR15 build kit from Luth-AR makes for a reliable and accurate takedown sporting rifle par excellence.

Will Dabbs, MD

Cry Havoc Tactical has built their business around designing the perfect takedown gear to transform your favorite black rifle into something half as long and twice as easy to tote. Their Cry Havoc QRB (Quick Release Barrel) Takedown Kit consists of a pair of interlocking collars allowing you to separate the front and rear halves of most any AR-style weapon with nothing more than a standard set of human fingers. Their rig is actually so cool it is currently riding in the ejection seat survival kits of every tactical aircraft in the USAF inventory. It turns out the Cry Havoc QRB Takedown Kit has applications even if your other car isn't an F22 Raptor 5th generation stealth fighter plane.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Mindy Parker was a 107-lb. perambulating nuclear reactor. At five foot two she kept trim via Pilates and chasing her two twin sons. She was raised on a rural farm and had been the captain of her cheer squad in high school. Thursday was Mother's Morning Out at her local church so she had a rare few hours to herself. On the recommendation of a friend, she thought she'd drive into the city to

help out at a homeless shelter. That's the way she rolled.

Mindy typically cared little for the city. She did not feel comfortable in crowds and her husband usually did the driving when they were together. SIRC found the shelter easily enough, but securing a place to park was the bigger challenge. Before she knew it she had accidentally pulled her minivan into a blind alley. As she put the vehicle in reverse a pair of muscular young men appeared from nowhere and blocked her path. Two more now approached from the front of the vehicle. One carried a baseball bat and the other a tire iron. The final two had their hands menacingly in their pockets. Mindy felt her heart rate double in an instant. The sketchy guy nearest her side of the van broke

into a wide grin when he saw who was driving.

The grinning man swung his bat and shattered the driver's side headlight just to show he was serious. Without saying a word he motioned for Mindy to get out of the van. With a skill borne of multiple iterations, Mindy reached behind her seat and retrieved her gym bag. Twenty seconds later she opened her door.

The compact little takedown AR had been a birthday present from her husband, himself a former Navy SEAL. The grinning man's eyes were suddenly roughly the same diameter as the blast can on the front of the gun. Mindy had the four young men on the ground and controlled in less than half a minute. As they waited for the cops, she had the opportunity to explain the seminal aspects of predator/prey relationships in nature to the four misguided young miscreants. By



The Cry Havoc Tactical QRB kit produces a takedown rifle that breaks down and assembles in seconds yet reliably retains its zero.



the time Law Enforcement arrived, two of the four had committed themselves to full-time Christian ministry while the other two promised they would get real jobs and be more respectful to their grandmothers.

BALLISTIC PHILOSOPHY

A gun is a tool, but it is a very special tool. Most folks of reasonable dexterity can run a crescent wrench, but a crescent wrench doesn't readily change the calculus of interpersonal conflicts. A firearm deftly wielded, by contrast, will transform the most petite soccer mom into the tactical equal of a 220-lb. gladiator. Nothing else in the world does that.

I honestly don't know of any other human pursuit offering more unfiltered options than the modern world of defensive firearms. The spectrum of

caliber, format, features, ergonomics and accessories is adequate to support the superlative periodical you currently seem to be clutching. I've made a decent career out of just talking about it all. So with all those rifles, pistols, shotguns, whatever out there, why would you ever need or want a takedown black rifle that will stash in a gym bag? Don't know, don't care. It's not my place to impose my views on others. This is one of several aspects of modern life upon which Chuck Schumer and I most fundamentally disagree.

DETAILS

The Cry Havoc Tactical QRB Takedown Kit takes about 20 minutes to install and about 30 seconds to use. The latest version is available for AR10, AR15 and pistol-caliber blowback

AR-style weapons. The AR15 version demands a barrel with a maximum external diameter of 0.985" and free-float handguards with a maximum width of 2". With those parameters as a foundation, the QRB kit does some epically amazing things.

The beating heart of the QRB kit is a pair of patented mating collars. One threads onto the front of the upper receiver, while the other accepts the barrel and handguard. The latest version interfaces via a pair of steel pins keeping everything nicely aligned. Once these two collars are mounted, you simply slide the barrel extension in place and secure everything with a pair of throw levers. Mounting and dismounting is easy-peasy.

SERIOUS COMBAT CRED

After a competitive trial involving most of the AR takedown systems on the market, Cry Havoc's QRB Kit won the day. USAF armorers mounted these kits up on existing M4 chassis using a 12.5" and folding pistol grip from FAB Defense. The resulting collapsible weapon was christened the GAU-5A.

The disassembled GAU-5A fits into a standard ACES II ejection seat along with four 30-round magazines. This rig gives the downed aviator escaping and evading through hostile territory a significant advantage over the traditional 9mm handgun. With the formal adoption of the GAU-5A, Cry Havoc Tactical joined the ranks of serious defense contractors. The Wing Nuts bought 2,700 copies of the weapon for a cool \$2.7 million.

THE BUILD

I already had a little micro-AR I had built up on a registered SBR lower using an early version of the Cry Havoc QRB kit. This thing is cooler than Steve McQueen in *The Great Escape*. However, the new version is even easier and smoother to use.

For this build I used a set of parts from Luth-AR. Randy Luth is really the father of the American Modern Sporting Rifle. He was the guy who first bolted a length of Picatinny rail onto an AR receiver and subsequently changed the world as we know it. He



The Cry Havoc system allows the rifle to be stored in a backpack (above) yet retains zero when reassembled. The GAU-5A (below) is a selective-fire takedown survival arm carried in all USAF combat aircraft in the ejection seat survival kit. It uses the Cry Havoc QRB kit. Photo: USAF



Assembly and disassembly had no noteworthy effect on zero.



is also personally responsible for the modern phenomenon of hunting with black rifles. We all owe Randy a great debt of thanks. His is indeed a fascinating story.

Luth-AR parts are still the top of the line. Randy really does have more experience producing custom AR components than anybody else on the planet. For this build I opted for a Luth-AR MBA (Modular Buttstock Assembly), Chubby Grip, Palm Handguard and Lower ENHANC-AR kit. The barrel is

a 16" fluted tube with a heavy profile.

TRIGGER TIME

The obvious question is whether or not such a takedown rig will hold its zero. To test this facet of the design I shot three different strings using the same ammo and the same parameters. Between each string of fire I fully disassembled the weapon and put it back together again at the shooting bench. This operation requires no tools. As you can see in the photo, group size and point of impact

were essentially unaffected.

The finished rifle runs just like any other AR, only better, thanks to Randy's top-flight build components. Once the rifle is assembled you really don't know the QRB Kit is part of the equation. Whether your application is a tiny packable AR pistol or a long-barreled hunting rifle that needs to be kept compact for easy portage, the QRB Kit from Cry Havoc Tactical effectively cuts your favorite black gun in half.

Even if your day job doesn't involve flying a \$165 million fighter plane, there yet remains a potential place in your gun safe for a Cry Havoc Tactical QRB Kit. The build is within the capabilities of anybody even remotely handy with tools and the final product is good enough for Uncle Sam to take to war. The QRB Kit makes your good gun even better. Building up such a rig at home is also a simply superlative way to kill a lazy Sunday afternoon.

GUNS

MSRP: \$400

CryHavocTac.com
Luth-AR.com



The beating heart of the Cry Havoc Tactical QRB kit is this patented collar system mating the barrel assembly with the upper receiver.



The SOG Flash MT is a compact multi-tool with full-size pliers and a nice assortment of tools to get you through the day.

SOG FLASH MT MULTI-TOOL

MID-SIZED MULTI!

Pat Covert

SOG Knives carved out a nice slice of the multi-tool market when they focused on equipping our military personnel back during the conflicts in the Middle East. The troops liked their serious approach and the civilian market followed. Often multis are overburdened with tools, and hence

The Flash MT's handle closely resembles SOG's Flash AT knife and there's a pocket clip for easy carry. A liner-lock mechanism keeps the blade secured when in use.

weight, for the average user and SOG's new mid-sized Flash MT addresses all these. In fact, the Flash MT can be used as an EDC by folks who need more tool than blade.

The heart of a multi-tool is its pliers and SOG didn't scrimp here. The Flash MT has a full-sized pair of pliers with their compound leverage action. Then, they added a set of tools most used, including a wire cutter and stripper, a 2.4" assisted opening Cryo D2 Clip Point blade (with a liner-lock), a large flat head screwdriver/bottle opener combo and small double-ended Phillips/flat head screwdrivers with a bit drive at the base.

The Flash MT is designed with an asymmetrical handle — one half of

the butterfly grip is slim with only the small bits in a foldout holder while the other grip is loaded with the other tools. Uniquely cool is the Flash MT frame becomes a very comfortable handle when the main blade is folded out. Ingenious! Furthermore, there's a pocket clip for carrying the Flash MT just as you would an EDC.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

The Flash MT is a companion piece to SOG's popular Flash AT folder, which is available with a cyan handle to match the synthetic components on the MT pictured here. Better yet, the Flash MT won't drag you down — the multi-tool folds down to a compact 3.75" closed and its weight is a very manageable 4.7 oz. At a suggested retail of \$77.95, the price won't drag you down either. There's a lot to like about the Flash MT, especially if all you want is the basic assortment of tools you'd typically use most frequently.

GUNS



SOGKnives.com

Unfortunately there are many gun store employees, as well as YouTubers, who really don't know what they are talking about when it comes to firearms and their use. The Keith load you mentioned will do fine in the Anaconda.
—John Taffin

LIGHT 'EM UP!

I was enjoying your February magazine when I turned to page 46 and saw the article by Alan Garbers about the Colt 1877. I immediately got mine out of the gun safe and sure enough, they're almost identical. My wife's grandfather handed this gun down to her father who later gave it to me.



As you can see, the finish is gone, but the gun itself is in great condition. The double action still functions flawlessly and the original hard rubber grips are still intact. The serial numbers all match and it doesn't appear any screws have been turned. It was given to me in a holster with "U.S." stamped on it. There are some numbers stamped at the bottom of the flap that appear to have been added post manufacture.

My father-in-law (in his 90s) doesn't get excited very much but his eyes lit up when he heard this piece might have some history. Keep up the great work.

Jerry Jones

Jerry, It's definitely a Colt Model 1877 "Lightning" Double-Action revolver in .38 Long Colt; Alan Garbers also agrees. The holster is definitely military issue but probably not with the gun. The 1877 was a favorite of John Wesley Hardin among others. You can get Alan's story on the Model 1877



BETTER THAN THE 37

I read the *Surplus & Classic* article on the Winchester Model 37 by Payton Miller in the May 2022 issue. Stone-simple, single-shot .410 perfection! Good article but you definitely missed the best .410 single barrel shot gun ever made! The Winchester model 20 is the best single-shot .410 shotgun ever made! Hands down!

They were made between 1919 to 1924, producing about 24,000 of them. I'm a gunsmith and have taken apart and repaired a lot of guns and the Model 37 Winchester has never impressed me much. They made so many slight variations and never liked the looks of the 37. Never liked the weird hammer either. The Iver Johnson single-shot is a lot better made and it's better looking too. I grew up

with an Iver Johnson 16-gauge — great shotgun! But the model 20 is a work of art! It has a cool design that allows you to remove the trigger assembly out in one piece and makes it very easy to work on or clean. The Schnabel forend is a great look! I have two of these model 20s and they are quality! Very hard to find and are priced high but worth it! In my opinion the model 20 is truly perfection! Go check one of these classics out! Keep up the great articles!

Glen Kyser

I've also got an Iver Johnson and a Stevens single-shot .410. Both of them are lighter in weight than the Winchester M37, but as you can probably tell, I'm a sucker for .410 single shots, so I will definitely keep my eyes peeled for a Winchester Model 20! —Payton Miller

in the February 2022 issue of GUNS or online at GUNSMagazine.com. —BW

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MOLD MAKING METHOD

How about an article on how companies, such as Lyman, make cast bullet molds? Just a thought.

Bill

Interesting idea. I have no direct knowledge of the process but assume it involves a CNC machine. An article about how it's actually done seems like a good idea. Keep reading GUNS for a future story! —BW

.....

THE VOTES ARE IN!

I have enjoyed listening to every episode of the GUNS Magazine podcast. During the Safe Queen podcast (#126) you sounded very hesitant to use your custom Ruger. Every firearm has a story to tell, let your Ruger's story be magnificent! Keep up the great work!

Dan Hogan

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WELCOME BACK!

Wow! What an issue to restart my subscription! A few comments on articles in the June issue.

Letters to the editor regarding the bolt-action .45-70 — A few years before the #4 Enfield .45-70s, Navy Arms marketed a Siamese Mauser .45-70 bolt action.

Truck guns — Having lived or had friends in rural areas all my life, a gun rack with rifle or shotgun in the rear window of a pickup is standard equipment, just like tires and wheels. My all-time favorite is absolutely, no argument, no discussion: the SKS!

"Which guns won the West?" Years ago I read an article that made a compelling case for the shotgun. The Sharps, Rolling Block and Winchesters cleared the Great Plains of Indians and buffalo to make it safe to be on the plains, but the shotgun, by providing jackrabbits and prairie chickens for food, made the plains survivable.

Mauser Magic — I agree completely

continued on page 63

JUDGMENT DAY

KNOWING YOUR JUDGES IS CRITICAL

Dave Workman

When Nov. 8 rolls around, you will be voting for a lot of people running for office at all levels and among the races are positions as judges — a more important elected office than one might imagine.

There are many ways to protect your Second Amendment rights. Participating in judicial elections is one of the most overlooked.

It is imperative to check the backgrounds of people who wish to sit in judgment of all because the courtroom can be a Pandora's Box of legal activism. Are they supported by activist organizations? Are they rated "qualified," and who does the rating?

As this month's column was being prepared, we did a little research due to some startling — nay, shocking — information that surfaced in relation to a couple of police officers murdered in Washington State. Two lawmen, one a sheriff's deputy and the other a municipal police officer, were murdered and the suspects in both slayings were convicted felons who had firearms.

One of the suspects was killed in the same gun battle in which he fatally wounded the deputy. The other suspect was taken into custody after allegedly shooting the uniformed city officer and then driving over his body before fleeing a few blocks to where he was involved in a horrendous traffic accident and subsequently taken into custody.

Suspect No. 2, as it turned out, had a long criminal history dating back nearly four decades. His troubles included multiple felonies and at the time of the shooting, he was wanted on two misdemeanor warrants.

How do people with multiple felonies manage to be loose in public?

Often, it's because of lenient judges. Ergo, it is incumbent upon voters wishing to keep their neighborhoods and communities safe to pay attention to judges and how they sentence people convicted in their courtrooms.

THE HIDDEN KEY

In recent months, frustrated citizens, curious journalists and conservative talk show hosts in various metropolitan regions have been paying more attention to how judges treat certain cases. Down in Atlanta, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* earlier this year reported how local officials started a program in which authorities tracked cases involving 1,000 people who were apparently responsible for a stunning 40% of crimes committed in Atlanta.

deputy who has related stories about suspects who are released almost immediately, only to re-offend within days, if not hours? I've written about such people. They just cannot stay out of trouble.

Q. Who knows someone victimized by such a miscreant? Have you ever been victimized by a repeat offender?

Q. Have you studied your local state representative/assemblyman and state senator to learn their voting record? Lax judges are only one part of the equation. Lawmakers who push legislation that penalizes law-abiding citizens are another part of this problem.

According to Ballotpedia, 21 states elect judges in nonpartisan elections. Seven states do not have popular elections for judgeships. Several states

hold what are called "retention elections," defined by Ballotpedia as "yes-no elections without opposition to determine whether or not the judge remains on the court." Still other states hold partisan

elections for judges, and a couple of states have two or three of these types of elections, depending upon the type of court.

CITIZEN INITIATIVE

Three decades ago, activists in Washington State did something remarkable, and they did it twice.

Remember "Three Strikes and You're Out" and "Hard Time for Armed Crime?" Both measures were the brainchildren of gun-rights advocates, and they caught on fast despite opposition from — you guessed it — many liberals. The laws focused on inconveniencing criminals, not honest gun owners. Maybe the Atlanta program is a modern-day variation, and if it shows promise, gun-rights activists might lobby their local city or county governments to try something similar.



This popular bumper sticker is available from the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms.

How does that happen? These recidivist criminals have evidently learned to game the system. Law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders and judges know them. Since only the judges hold elective offices, this is where to start. If judges squawk about being held responsible for the crimes of repeat offenders, remind them this is how gun owners feel whenever legislatures start debating new gun control laws.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Q. How many times have you heard or read about criminal suspects who were either out on low bail or no bail (personal recognizance), awaiting trial for some other charge?

Q. Who knows a beat cop or a local

It would be too late this year to put citizen initiatives on the November ballot — not all states have the initiative or referendum process — but think about doing it next year if you live in a state allowing such measures. Off-year elections can accomplish things when left-leaning voters might be less likely to fill out a ballot.

Meanwhile, it is less than three months before the November elections. There is plenty of time to study the records of judges running for re-election and find out about candidates who may be running against them. Of course, judicial elections have all the excitement of watching paint dry but their impact on the community can be overwhelming.



THIS FALL COULD SEE A CONSERVATIVE WAVE AT THE POLLS, BUT ONLY IF EACH OF YOU IS INVOLVED.

This column has routinely encouraged people to make sure they are registered to vote at their current address. There is no excuse for not getting this done. Voting is a right as important as your right to keep and bear arms, and when you don't vote, trust me on this, someone else is making a decision on how you will live.

The past couple of years have seen something of a migration of conservatives and gun owners to places such as Texas, Idaho and Montana. You cannot keep running away from an inevitable fight. Draw the line where you live.

This fall could see a conservative wave at the polls, but only if each of you is involved. Want to change things in your region? Find out who is running for office, including judgeships, and cast your vote.

CROSSFIRE

Welcome Back!
continued from page 61

with Van Zwoll's assessment of Mauser rifles. I have sporterized dozens of Mausers in the last 60 years and all made excellent deer, antelope and prairie dog rifles. My favorite Mauser actions are the 1908 Brazilian actions made by DWM in both Oberndorf and Berlin. They are the smoothest of the smooth!

Don Wittenberg

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GOING HEELED

Regarding the podcast episode "Safe Queens" (GUNS Magazine Podcast Episode #126), it seems we both ended up in the same situation. Only I've moved on faster, lol!

I also have a Ruger Vaquero 3-3/4" custom run in .357 Magnum. She spent many days in my safe just being pretty. Until, I thought "huh, this would be a great CCW for me." So now she's out a lot more and rides in leather the way she was made to do. I love this gun even more now. When my close friends see what I'm carrying, they say "Huh, single-action, and beautiful!" There's a thought turning into reality for them as well, I think. So get her out and carry that smoke wagon!

Gene Yohannan

You're so old-school, I love it! I'd never wish anyone to get into a life-threatening confrontation but the thought of you, "Skinning yer smoke-wagon" makes for the stuff of legends! —BW

.....

HEROES IN THE MIDST

At the risk of offending him, Dr. Will Dabbs in his article "The Old Pilot" (Shooter's Rx June 2022) is coming dangerously close to committing literature.

Our shooting club is fortunate to have our own hero in our midst — a

95-year-old veteran of Okinawa named Jim White who has spent a lifetime passing on his love of rifle marksmanship to generations in our state and community. As an 18-year-old, he fought for 74 days on Okinawa before finally being wounded. His company, part of the Marine 6th Division, suffered 50% casualties. When asked, he will tell you his war stories. He tells them in a matter-of-fact style and is surprised at how interested we are in listening. I'm amazed at what his generation achieved.

Post-war, he became a Distinguished Rifleman and earned the President's 100 tab. And perhaps just as importantly, he became a coach and mentor to numerous shooters, young and old, distinguished and ordinary. In that sense, he still serves.

Heroes are where you find them.

Howdy Stout

I think that honestly might be the nicest thing anyone

has ever said of my writing efforts. Made my day. —Will Dabbs

.....

INVITE

Recently, I read Wayne Van Zwoll's article "The Winchester Enigma" in the May issue of GUNS Magazine and I hope to interest him in a shoot at the Whittington Center in Raton, NM in July 2022, titled the "Western National Lever Gun Championships." Three lever rifles are needed with iron sights: a 22 LR, a pistol cartridge and a rifle cartridge. All rifles must be a regular production model.

Black silhouette animal targets are set in banks of five. The 22 LR and pistol cartridge targets are set at 40, 50, 75 and 100 meters. The rifle cartridge targets are set at 50, 100, 150 and 200 meters. The firing position is standing only. Target setters are used to speed up the process.

J. Eric Sundstrom



GUNS



DIAMOND D DENALI CHEST HOLSTER

ROY HUNTINGTON

If you ride an ATV, drive a tractor, spend time in your truck, hunt with a handgun, hike, trap or do anything where keeping a pistol handy makes sense — you've found your ideal holster. Wild pigs are close by us here these days, the odd feral, nasty dog strolls through and of course there's always the possibility of some miscreant up to no good finding us here. So having a big bore revolver or — my favorite — a lightweight 5" 1911 close by keeps things in perspective.

Hip carry is fine for many but I find my lower back injuries over the years have made that mode too painful. Chest carry solves the problem and the Denali rig from Diamond D is my go-to daily rig. It's lightweight, adjustable, of 1050 nylon available for a wide range of gun fits and cut for red dots sights to boot. At less than \$100, it's also a solid deal. Tell 'em we sent you.

MSRP: About \$99.99
DiamondDOutdoors.com

LevAR FROM SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

ROY HUNTINGTON

Ever had a case stuck in an AR chamber? The common method to get it out is to rap the butt of the rifle sharply on the ground, trusting the bolt momentum to jerk the case out. I confess it makes me squeamish to do it or see it done. Something about muzzles bouncing around in front of your face or the guy next to you in class is just unsettling. Call me old fashioned if you will.

Springfield's LevAR replaces the stock charging handle and is a drop-in fit. It has a lever system allowing you to keep the muzzle

downrange while you use the power of the lever to pull the case out of the chamber. The 3:1 mechanical advantage this design offers works almost magically and pretty much effortlessly. Besides, do you really want to stand up and bang your rifle on the ground in a gun fight? Just sayin'.

MSRP: About \$99
Springfield-Armory.com



SIERRA RELOADING MANUAL VOL. 6

BRENT T. WHEAT

If you have a sudden need to bludgeon an elk to death with a book, the 6th Edition of the *Sierra Rifle and Handgun Reloading Manual* might be a good choice. I won't dig out the bathroom scale to weigh the thing but I'm sure it's on par with a case of 6.5 Creedmoor! That's an awful lot of data at your fingertips!

With 1,368 pages of reloading charts and information, cartridge information, history and equipment recommendations, the three-ring-binder format is fantastic for keeping the pages open when you're trying to write down the pertinent data. I also enjoyed the Q&A section covering some of the interesting questions Sierra technical services folks have fielded over the years.

MSRP: \$39.99
SierraBullets.com



CYCLOPS eFLEX 400 HEADLAMP

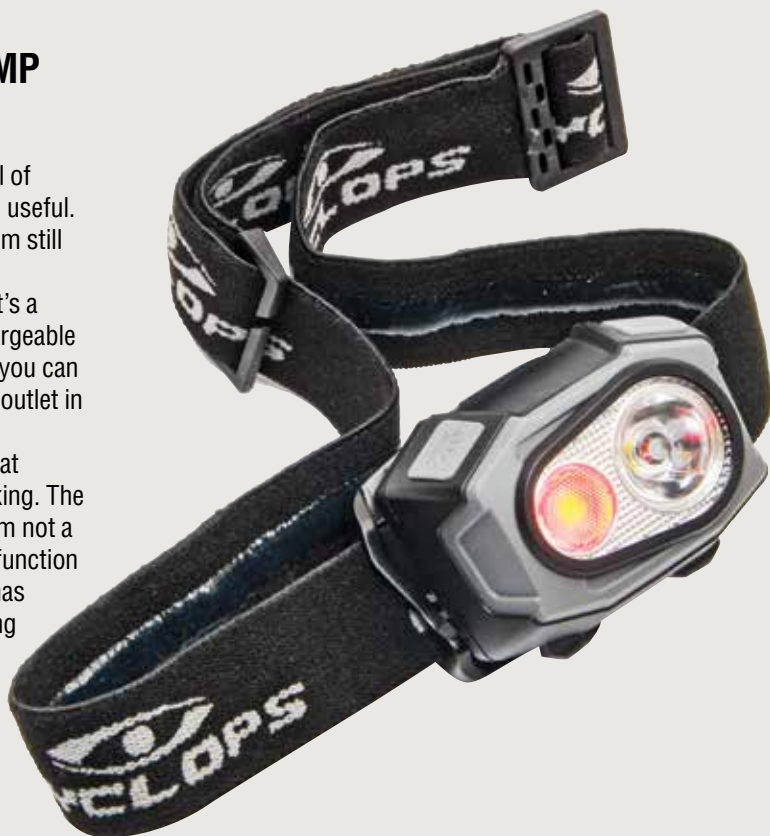
BRENT T. WHEAT

Being an outdoors-oriented guy, I've got a box full of headlamps in the closet because they're so darn useful. Unfortunately, none reach 100% perfection so I'm still looking for the mythical best-of-all!

My current test platform is the Cyclops eFlex 400. It's a dual-LED model with a unique feature — a USB-rechargeable battery pack. This makes it handy for heavy use, plus you can also fuel it with AAA batteries if you don't have a USB outlet in the woods.

It features two Cree LEDs, one white and another that changes between white, green, blue, red and red-blinking. The white LED has High/Med/Low and an SOS function. I'm not a huge fan of the color-changing disco LED or the SOS function but some might be. Overall and so far, the headlamp has been versatile, user-friendly and robust. I'm still looking for my fabled perfect headlamp but this one is in the running!

GUNS



MSRP: \$32.99

CyclopsSolutions.com

WANT MORE?

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gunsmagazine.com

RUGER 10/22 CUSTOM COMPETITION

GUNS

THE ESSENTIAL OPTIC

IL BOSSIN' TAY

TAURUS .357 MAGNUM RAGING HUNTER



BA712

ADCO ARMS CO. INC.

ADC Arms is now producing Best Arms' BA712 and the Bullpup BA912 in an American Flag coated format. The durable coating surpasses normal anodized

finishes for long-lasting performance. The 12-ga. BA712 AR-style shotgun with a 5-round capacity has a 21" barrel. Best Arms' manufacturing standards allow the use of only drill bored (not pipe) barrels in their products to ensure they are durable and of the highest quality. MSRP: About \$439.99. For more info: (800) 775-3687, ADCOSales.com



LUPO COLORED BE.S.T. MODELS

BENELLI USA

Benelli USA's Lupo Bolt-Action Rifle Series is being expanded with six *Lupo Colored BE.S.T. Models*. The new rifles have been treated with BE.S.T. — Benelli Surface Treatment — a coating that

provides corrosion and abrasion resistance as well as contemporary styling. The Lupo Colored BE.S.T. rifles are offered in 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win and .300 Win-Mag. They also come in two new camo patterns: GORE OPTIFADE Open Country and GORE OPTIFADE Elevated II. MSRP: \$1,899. For more info: (800) 264-4962, BenelliUSA.com



RIDGELINE FFT

CHRISTENSEN ARMS

Christensen Arms unveils Flash Forged Technology, which represents the latest in carbon fiber structural manufacturing. Available on select Christensen Arms firearms like the *Ridgeline FFT*, Mesa FFT,

Mesa FFT Titanium and more, the technology employs an engineering approach to achieve the lightest possible structure while exceeding crucial strength and safety margins. MSRP: From \$2,399 for the Ridgeline FFT. For more info: (435) 633-4667, ChristensenArms.com



HELLION

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

The *Hellion* from Springfield Armory represents a unique and innovative approach to firearms design, helping to redefine perceptions of semi-automatic 5.56mm performance. Featuring a

"bullpup" configuration where the action is located behind the trigger, the 8-lb. Hellion has an OAL of just 28.25" but with a 16" barrel. Its ambidextrous controls work with a reversible case ejection system resulting in a 5.56 that combines portability with performance. MSRP: \$1,999. For more info: (800) 680-6866, Springfield-Armory.com



TX22 COMPETITION SCR

TAURUS

The *TX22 Competition SCR* builds on Ruger's original TX22 Competition model with its precision-engineered, high-grade aluminum slide and 5.25" match-grade bull barrel. With an OAL of 9.37" and weighing 25.84 oz., the TX22 Competition SCR is offered in .22 LR with a 10- or 16-round capacity. It has a full-size frame, fixed white dot front sights, fully adjustable white dot rear sight, a polymer grip, manual safety, trigger safety and more. MSRP: \$589.32. For more info: (309) 944-5341, TaurusUSA.com

COP 3 SLOT HOLSTER

GALCO HOLSTERS

Galco's *Cop 3 Slot* holster is precision-molded and allows comfortable carry in the strong-side and cross-draw positions. The low-cut front allows for easier, faster clearance of the firearm while also accommodating most red dot sights. MSRP: \$102. For more info: (800) 874-2526, GalcoGunLeather.com



S6 1-6X24 ED LINE OF RIFLESCOPES

SIGHTRON

SIGHTRON launches the *S6 1-6x24 ED Line of Riflescopes* for hunters, 3-gun competitors and modern sporting rifle shooters. The 6x24 uses premium Japanese glass, new optical designs and MC-777 multi-coating technology to ensure clarity, light transmission, color accuracy and sharpness. MSRP: TBD. For more info: (919) 562-3000, Sightron.com

AMBI BEAST WMD GUNS

WMD's *Ambi Beast* has ambidextrous controls and a hammer-forged, match-grade barrel. It comes with two 30-round magazines and is ready for any environment. It is also available in an AR pistol profile in various calibers. Features include an Ergo Grip and a six-position adjustable

stock. The handguard, bolt carrier group, aluminum receiver and two-stage fire control group are protected with NiB-X, a nickel boron coating process. MSRP: \$1,350. For more info: (772) 324-9915, WMDGuns.com



D&L CUSTOM SIXGUN D&L SPORTS INC.

D&L Sports now offers the *D&L Custom Sixgun*. Customized Single Action Rugers like the one in the picture are available in .357, 44 Spl., 44 Mag and .45. There is a D&L line of sights not just for Ruger but also for S&W and Colt. MSRP: Custom Revolver Work from \$1,000 to \$5,000 depending on detail work; Sights are \$95 each. For more info: (928) 636-1726, DLSports.com



GHOST 20 ALPS OUTDOORZ

ALPS OutdoorZ's *Ghost 20* is a hybrid pack that can be used as a backpack, briefcase or messenger bag. While built to carry essentials of everyday work life, the Ghost 20 features a back panel pocket to secure a handgun for EDC/CCW practitioners. The Ghost 20 is constructed of 500D nylon Cordura and has PU coating, making it water-resistant. MSRP: \$179.99. For more info: (800) 344-2577, ALPSOutdoorZ.com



STACCATO 2011 HOLSTERS CROSSBREED

CrossBreed is producing several of its most popular holster systems for Staccato's 9mm C2 and P handguns. The *Staccato 2011 Holsters* include IWB, OWB and modular models like the SuperTuck, SnapSlide, SuperSlide, Pac Mat and more. The MaxOhai Modular Holster is also offered for the Staccato P. MSRP: From \$39.95 depending on model. For more info: (888) 732-5011, CrossBreedHolsters.com

SILENT SERIES NOSE JAMMER

Nose Jammer announces its latest innovation—the *Silent Series*. For hunters who need completely sound-free stealth in the field, the Silent Series pack provides Nose Jammer technology in a dead-quiet package. All products in the Nose Jammer Silent Series deploy silently and help the hunter catch his prey with long-lasting, smell-blocking technology. MSRP: \$28.29 for the combo kit. For more info: (507) 452-9202, NoseJammer.com



AIR HUNTER PCP SLUGS NORTHERN PRECISION

The *Air Hunter PCP Slugs* in .300 diameter for 25 and 50 caliber are made using Corbin equipment and handmade one at a time. Northern Precision takes pride in making jacketed bullets. MSRP: \$10 for a sample pack of 10 pellets; \$20 for 50 of the .300 diameter dish base hollow points. For more info: (315) 955-8679, NPCustomBullets.com



CALIBER EARBUDS ISOTUNES SPORT

ISOTunes Sport introduces the *CALIBER Earbuds* for hunters and shooters who want hearing protection without sacrificing situational awareness. The earbuds have Tactical Sound Control technology that allows listening to ambient sounds such as game movement or range commands while ears remain protected from gunshot noise. MSRP: \$199.99. For more info: (317) 740-0419, ISOTunesSport.com



SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY ONLINE:

GUNS Magazine
GOM August 2022
P.O. Box 502795
San Diego, CA
92150-2795

If you are unable to enter online, mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please). Entries must be received by August 31, 2022. Limit one entry per household.

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



P322

Manufacturer: SIG SAUER
(603) 610-3000
SIGSAUER.com

Caliber: 22LR, **Capacity:** 20, **Barrel Length:** 4", **OAL:** 7", **Weight:** 17.1 oz.
Value: as low as \$399.99

PIONEER DEHUMIDIFIER

Manufacturer: SilentDry
sales@drybox.com.tw
Silent-Dry.com
Value: \$30





CKAGE GIVEAWAY



TLR-1 HL

Manufacturer: Streamlight
(800) 523-7488
Streamlight.com
Value: \$179.99



**TOTAL
VALUE:
\$654.97**

SIG SAUER P322 PISTOL PACKAGE

The P322 is loaded with premium features! For one, it's optic-ready with a removable rear sight plate so a ROMEOZero red dot optic can be easily added even without adapter plates. It is also suppressor-ready with its threaded barrel adapter. Ambidextrous controls with a reversible magazine catch, interchangeable flat and curved triggers, and fiber optic front and rear sights make the pistol the highest capacity, most advanced 22 pistol in its class. The P322 has a 4" carbon steel barrel, stainless steel/polymer frame, hard-coat anodized alloy slide and compact polymer grip. It comes with a magazine loader and two 20-round magazines. You can own this amazing gun, if you win this month's giveaway.

Streamlight's TLR-1 HL is a super bright, 1,000-lumen LED Tactical Weapon Light emitting wide beam patterns over large areas. It is ideal for clearing a room or searching an alley. Powered by two CR123A lithium batteries, the TLR-1 HL has a rail grip clamp system that securely attaches and detaches quickly and safely with no tools and without putting your hands in front of the muzzle. If you win this giveaway, you can mount the light on your SIG P322, all the better to see your target!

The Kith from CRKT has an OAL of 3.78" and weighs 2.30 oz. This folding knife with a front lock is strong and lightweight. It has a 2.95" 8Cr13MoV stainless steel blade with a satin finish and the handle is glass-reinforced nylon.

Place the Pioneer Dehumidifier from Silent Dry inside your gun case. It will control the humidity level to protect your gun from corrosion. You can use the Pioneer Dehumidifier over and over because it's reusable. Just heat it up in a microwave oven.

You should definitely join the GUNS August 2022 giveaway! The SIG SAUER P322, Streamlight tactical light, CRKT knife and Silent Dry dehumidifier are all fascinating prizes you'd want to own. Enter now! Go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or mail a post card. —Jazz Jimenez

GUNS

KITH BLACK

Manufacturer: CRKT
(800) 891-3100
CRKT.com
Value: \$44.99



ARE YOU WORTHY OF A CUSTOM GUN?

THE ANSWER IS 'YES'

Jeff "Tank" Hoover

The biggest factor to overcome when going the custom gun route is asking yourself, "Am I worthy of owning one?" At least it was my way of thinking not so long ago. Going hand in hand with this "worthiness" is being able to afford a custom gun. Cost is the limiting factor, and I'm not telling you it's okay to empty your

children's college fund, but there are ways of getting a custom gun without a lot of cash.

DIY ROUTE

While being a cop my adult life allowed me to pay the bills, there wasn't a lot of extra cash left over. But it didn't stop me from having customized guns. I simply did as much as I could to the guns I already had. I spent my waking

hours looking for "bargains" in all the usual places. My long-term plan was to eventually spruce these guns up with DIY stocks, action jobs, aftermarket sights and other minor gunsmithing, making the guns look and shoot better.

Anyone can buy a Belt Mountain base pin for your single-action shooter. The oversized pin will tighten your cylinder while adding a classic look to your gun with custom offerings like their #5 base pin. Next, I'd look at sixgun stocks. Nothing changes the appearance more than a nice set of stocks. You can do them yourself, with minimal skill. Just take your time and you'll have the added self-satisfaction of doing them yourself.

I've also polished out undersized cylinder throats with basic tools and it did wonders for accuracy. Doing it yourself is economical and fulfilling. As time goes on, you'll get better or you may seek a professional's services. I've got guns I've stocked myself, and while not perfect, they carry a special charm I appreciate.

THE INTRODUCTION

About six years ago, I met Bobby Tyler of Tyler Gun Works. I think most of you have heard of him. He had a plan to make nice, ornamental custom guns affordable to the average working man. A hard worker himself, he knows the value of the dollar. By using young, or newer people in the industry, Bobby provided custom work giving people the chance to hone their skills in the craft they practice. It was a win-win-win situation for everyone involved. I managed to buy an engraved gun through Bobby and it seems his plan is working, judging by how busy he is.

Over time, your kids graduate college, move out and there's more money available for your interests. Now, instead of working over one of your guns, you can afford a full-blown custom job.

FUNCTION OR FANCY?

Custom guns don't need to be prissy. I have several guns worked



A couple of Mag-na-port customs by Ken Kelly.



Laser engraving/plating by Precision Custom Guns with mastodon ivory stocks by SK Stocks can really spruce up anyone's shooter.



The top gun was the first Tank worked over by honing cylinder throats, replacing a base-pin and trigger job. Middle gun is a simply perfect John Linebaugh custom; bottom, a Ken Kelly of Mag-na-port custom.



Alan Harton converted Tank's .357 3-screw (above) to .44 Special, ala' Skeeter Skelton-style. A pair of Tyler Gun Works full-blown customs (below).



over purely for performance. They had trigger and action jobs, along with accuracy packages where cylinder throats were honed, barrel crowned and timing executed for upmost accuracy. A John Linebaugh custom is plain as day, until you examine it closely, recognizing the precision involved in making it.

The same goes for factory guns from their respective custom shops. The Magnum Research BFR comes to mind here. Also, Freedom Arms, maybe the most precisely built single action ever made. Their accuracy, durability and tolerances are legendary.

REFURBISHED

Getting a dog of a gun and giving it a second chance is also a fun, worthwhile project. Guys like Ken Kelly of Mag-na-port come to mind here. Known for their Detroit Muscle Car look, Kelly can buff, hone, polish, jewel and blue with the best of them, and his action work on vintage S&W revolvers is legendary. I'd put his action work against anyone's.

Guys like Doug Turnbull and Hamilton Bowen can perform magic to any tired gun you may have. The only limiting factor is how much you want to spend, or more importantly, how much you can afford to spend. Remember, slow and steady wins the race. Don't dig yourself in a hole doing it. Start slow, maybe doing some of the things yourself. Heck, I have some friends who are totally satisfied doing just that.

Buy some easy replacement parts to upgrade your shooter. Stocks, base pins, ejector rods and housings, and of course sights. Check out Fermin Garza's smorgasbord of front sights available to jazz up and improve accuracy of your shooter.

YES ... YOU ARE!

To answer the question titled in this article, yes, you are worthy of a custom gun — or at least a customized gun. There are several different paths for you to take. Remember, it's not a race, or contest. Take it slow and enjoy the journey to customized sixgunnery.

GUNS

The companies listed have featured advertisements in this issue.
Look to them first when you are ready to make a purchase.

ADVERTISER	PAGE	ADVERTISER	PAGE
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— and you're having a bad hair day. Are you now willing to bet your life the nifty new "dealie" will actually work under these conditions?

The other big issue is carry and usage. I've seen civilian weapons so fore-end heavy with gadgets there was no way to cover a door or window for an extended period of time unless you had the upper body strength of Arnold Schwarzenegger in his prime. The extra weight, coupled with a couple of dozen additional protrusions to catch passing obstructions, make some of these guns only suitable for benchrest competitions.

I blame the Picatinny rail craze. Starting in 1995, shooters suddenly found a way to hang every possible gizmo off their M4 carbines and eventually every other "tactical" firearm. Tactical rails on .22LR rifles are common and I've even seen such a rail on a Single-Action .45 Colt. Seriously.

Now, armed with only a stout credit card, you can hang a scope or heads-up sighting device, white light, backup white light, IR laser aiming module, vertical grip, extra magazine, fore-end grip, breaching device, backup iron sights and bipod to your rifle. You could probably even find a STANAG-compatible coyote-brown tactical partridge-in-a-pear-tree if you check the farthest corners of the Interwebs.

Okay, so the fancy-pants Editor has made fun of all the stuff hanging off rifles. What does he think should actually be there?

MY RECIPE

Sights are obviously first and foremost, and there isn't much debate on the idea you should be using a red dot sight on your "social" gun. If you think your particular unpleasantness might take place at 100+ yards, a glass optic might be a better choice — though I hasten to add it's mighty difficult to prove to a civilian court you were in grave personal danger when you zapped somebody out at 400 yards or more.

What about backup sights? I'm torn. For most non-military users, I see little

use for backup iron sights. Hear me out while you sharpen your poison pencil.

If you are in true combat and your sighting system could break without the possibility of replacement for days or weeks, you need a backup. Fortunately, very few people in the United States will be in such a dire situation. Maybe it's just overabundant clumsiness but for my money, the fewer things to snag on door frames, clothing and passing branches, the better.

In a cost-benefit analysis, the likelihood of the backup sights snagging on something greatly outweighs the possibility of your sighting system "taking a download" at a most inopportune moment. Furthermore, in a close-up domestic defensive situation, you could still likely put rounds on target semi-effectively even if the primary sight is down.

Having said all this — I carry backup iron sights on my rifle. Your mileage may vary.

A weapon light is certainly important. A backup light is certainly not important because you should already have a general-purpose spare on your person. You do still train to use a non-attached flashlight if necessary, right?

I used to say lasers were completely pointless unless you are operating in a military environment or regularly use night vision devices. I'm grudgingly changing my viewpoint regarding pistols, so maybe rifles are next.

Other "fun" stuff, such as a bayonet or target designator might make sense if you plan on charging up San Juan hill with your military unit but for the guy or gal trying to protect their home or the cop standing on the perimeter, such things are not only pointless but potentially dangerous to your health.

Just like everything else in the tactical world, it's a matter of trade-off. Added gee-whiz functionality also increases the chance something will break, catch a passing handrail or make the gun so unwieldy you aren't pointing at a danger door the moment a miscreant decides to go out in a blaze of glory.

It's your call. Though I'll never be accused of being "high-speed, low-drag," I do try to make sure at least my weapons fit into said category.

GUNS

The complete series of excuses, alibis, pithy observations and general ephus now in a new book.

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search for Guncrank Diaries

INCLUDING THE KITCHEN SINK ... STOP ATTACHING SO MUCH STUFF!

Brent T. Wheat

Our sermon of the month is simple: Know when to stop hanging crap off your gun!

I'm speaking primarily to those who own uber-cool black tactical rifles, typically of the AR-15 variety, though the disease can be seen in manifestations ranging from pistols through shotguns to sniper rifles and even on slingshots. I'm not kidding on the last point — a few years ago I reviewed a "tactical" slingshot with a laser and pic rail. It was as good as you could imagine ...

market, especially if you are perusing the website named after a major South American river, most of those things sink to the bottom of the sales pool rather quickly. What I should have said is, "Today we have a world of firearms accessories to serve every possible purpose, need or want, built with care by the most brilliant minds from the finest materials and impeccably serving the intended purpose."

Unfortunately, too often the intended purpose for the end user frequently seems to be based on appearance rather than function.

Another major part of the equation is the fact over the last two decades, a large chunk of a generation went afiel with an AR-15 to go terrorist hunting in various mountains and sandboxes. Our bearded operators, oiling their tricked-out rifles with vials of pure testosterone, made us all want to have a gun decked out in the latest go-faster widget.

This is the reason we see so many guns in the field looking like the results of a high-speed impact between a piece of mil-spec billet aluminum and the Large Hadron Collider.

However, the more experience you have at the point of your particular type of spear, the more you realize less is truly more.

WHY?

There are two significant points about having too much junk on your gun: dependability and usability. First and foremost is the reliability factor.

The more complex you make any system, the more possible points of failure, especially if you are adding things that change the mechanical function from the original design criteria. Bigger brains than yours or mine developed those guns and each part was engineered to specific tolerances, energy levels and velocity. If you add stuff to change the complex engineering equations, the likely outcome is failure, usually at the worst possible moment.

Keep in mind even reputable accessories are designed with the "optimum" weapon in mind. A factory-new Masterthump 5000 rifle — clean, properly lubricated at standard temperature, humidity and air pressure — will *probably* work with your new gimcrack operating handle or magazine spring. However, when Mr. Murphy comes calling, you'll realize too late there's a speck of sand in your gun from the last range session, or it's freezing, or it's over 100 degrees

continued on page 73



It's all well and good we are in the midst of a technological boom fueled by advances in optics, lighting and computer-controlled machining. Those factors, forged in the fires of a couple of shooting wars mean we now have every possible type of gimmick, gimcrack and tactical doo-hickey imaginable to modify your weapon. To prevent sounding too holier-than-thou, I'll note we've reviewed many of them here.

Granted, I'm being too harsh when I say "gimmick." While there is always some level of junk on the

'MERICA

With wads of disposable income, a plethora of choices and only a few more-or-less legitimate needs, it's easy to "want." And, since a large part of the ownership pool of tactical rifles is male, our natural desire to own hopelessly complicated machinery — search online for "Space Shuttle" as one prime example — must be appeased. It's a wholly normal impulse, just like the documented urge of women to festoon every sleeping contrivance with 144 decorative pillows, even if it's just the dog bed.

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