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THE MA DEUCE

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JULY 2022



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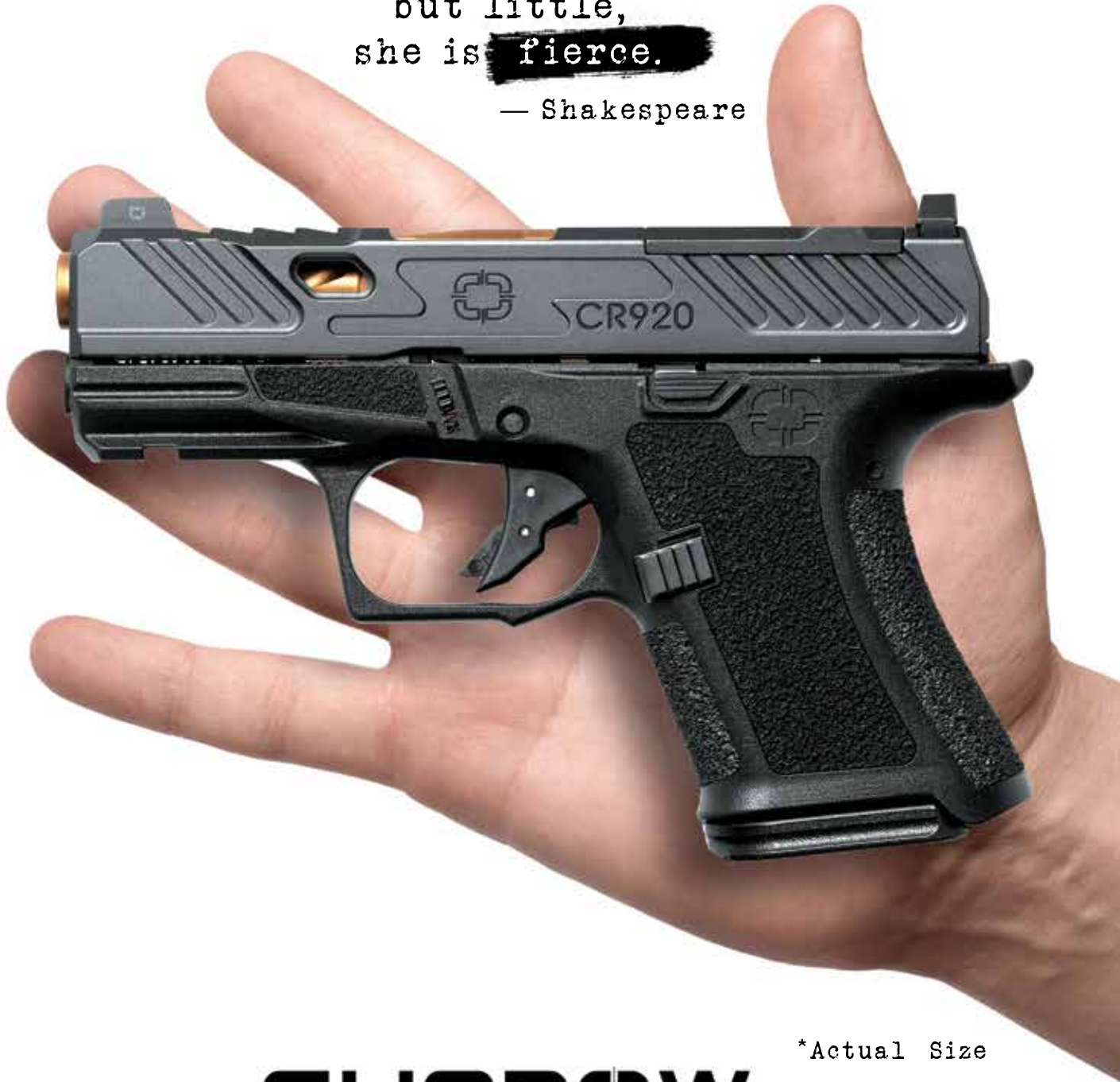
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ON THE COVER:
NIGHTHAWK GRP & 30 SUPER CARRY
 A Dynamic Duo

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FEATURES



COLION NOIR,
Firearms Enthusiast

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CROSSFIRE

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BADGE OF HONOR

I enjoyed Tom McHale's May 2022 cover story on the Ronin EMP. One question: where did the Moore Township police badge come from in the photos?

I was born in Allentown, Pa. in 1965. My parents moved us to Moore Township, Pa. in the summer of 1970. The original address was RD #2 and we also had a 3-party phone line in 1970. My dad passed in 2008, and my mother passed in 2018. I sold the property in 2020 and retired to Alabama. It was just so shocking to see that part of PA law enforcement history.

David Snyder

Photographer Rob Jones says: When I did the photo shoot, I wondered if anyone would notice, because, as you probably know, there are lots of gun folks here. About 15 years ago, my wife and I built a home and photo studio in Moore Twp. Shortly after that, I used the Chief of Police as a model on a gun company's catalog cover. We've been friends ever since. He loaned me the badge for the photos.

It's still a nice place to live. We're on a few acres, surrounded by a few hundred acres of farmland. There really hasn't been any development over the past 15 years.

BROKE DOWN TRAVELING

A friend is always asking me questions about guns, but he asked one recently I have no experience with. He

recently bought a somewhat expensive Browning O/U shotgun for his daughter to use on her high school skeet team. He was asking if I had a long hard case she could borrow when the team travels to a match. I told him I did, but since it was an O/U she could break it down and use a shorter case. He then said the salesman had told him not to transport it broken down, that it might get damaged. Can you tell us why? Surely it is not that fragile, and in a good hard-case it should be protected from damage.

Ron Stinson



Our Video Editor and former international medalist in Skeet Shooting Shari Legate responds: Is it bad to transport an O/U broken down? Of course not! In fact it's the best way to transport it through the mail or on an airplane.

Please make sure it's in a proper case and all parts (barrel & forearm) are properly secured. Of course, if you're just headed to the range, a good quality full-length soft- or hard-case is easier.

GALLAGHER SPECIAL

I just received the May issue — John Taffin's Handloading article with the top picture of John Gallagher .44 Specials got me going. You see, I went to gunsmith school with John Gallagher.

There was always ideas flowing; one day he and I were discussing .44 specials and it was decided to

continued on page 61

GUNS

MAGAZINE

CORPORATE OFFICERS

Randy Moldé

Marjorie Young

Editor: Brent T. Wheat

Associate Editor: Jazz Jimenez

Art Director/Staff Photographer: Joe Novelo

Circulation/Production Director: Heather Arnold

Production Manager: Jennifer Phillips

Digital Content Editor: Ashley McGee

Website Manager: Lorinda Massey

Special Projects Editor: Roy Huntington

Editorial Review: Consol Torres

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

John Taffin, Holt Bodinson, Dave Anderson,

Massad Ayoob, Mike "Duke" Venturino,

Will Dabbs, MD, Shari LeGate,

Dave Workman, Jeff "Tank" Hoover

FIELD EDITORS

Payton Miller, Sam Fadala, Mark Hampton

John Sheehan, Mike Cumpston, Aimee Grant

David Freeman, Dave Douglas, J.B. Wood

FMG PUBLICATIONS

GUNS: gunsmagazine.com

Editor: Brent T. Wheat

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Editor: Tom McHale

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SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

866.820.4045

Express Service: gunsmagazine.com

(click "contact")

Editorial: 760.975.3832

Email: ed@gunsmagazine.com

ADVERTISING

North East: Amy Tanguay, amy.tanguay@fmghq.com

South East: Tom Vorel, tom.vorel@fmghq.com

West: Delano Amaguin, delano.amaguin@fmghq.com

PRODUCTION

760.975.3880

Email: jennifer.phillips@pubdev.com

ONLINE TRAFFIC MANAGER

Lori Robbins • 760.975.3880

Email: lori.robbs@fmghq.com

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COMPROMISE PART III: THE SINGLE ACTION ARMY

THE GUN THAT WON'T DIE!

John Taffin

After previously unsuccessful U.S. Army Trials, Colt was sent back to the drawing board and William Mason came up with what became the Colt Single Action Army in 1872. The new Colt incorporated the solid top strap of the period Remington revolvers, the grip frame Sam Colt had first designed for his 1851 Navy .36 percussion revolver and chambered for the new .45 Colt. This new .45 round used a bullet of 250–255 grains over 40 grains of black powder for a muzzle velocity well over 850 fps.

THE WINNER

The new Colt 1873, officially referred to by the factory as the Model P and unofficially dubbed the “Peacemaker,” was just what the U.S. Army was looking for and their first-order resulted in 8,000 of the 7-1/2" Cavalry Models being purchased in 1874 followed by 6,400 the following year with the last order for 3,000 being in 1891. The total number of Cavalry Model Colts purchased by the United States Government was just over 37,000.

Although the original barrel length was set at 7-1/2" in 1895, 2,000 were returned to Colt for inspection and repair. Approximately 1/4 of these were



This 3rd Generation .32-20 Single Action Army came from the Colt Factory in 2011. Later models are a mixed bag, ranging from “top-rate to those that should have never left the factory!”

condemned and most of the rest had the barrels cut to 5-1/2", which soon became known as the Artillery Model length. In 1901 2,600 5-1/2" Artillery Model revolvers were inspected and repaired by Colt with 550 being shipped to the Philippines immediately. By this time someone had made the foolish decision to mothball the .45 Colt Single Action in favor of the new double-action design of the New

Model Army/Navy in .38 Long Colt. When this cartridge proved entirely inadequate against the Moro tribesmen in the Philippines, the old .45 Colt was taken out of moth balls and shipped to the troops.

From 1873 to the end of production in 1940, there was a grand total of 356,629 Colt Single Actions produced. Their greatest year of production was 1902 with 18,000 units manufactured. However, by 1935 and 1936 only 100 left the factory each year. Shooters were discovering other options such as the .357 Magnum Smith & Wesson and certainly the .45 ACP 1911 Government Model. We were in the midst of a depression, the machinery was wearing out and there would soon be a great demand for wartime production. It was time to end the Colt Single Action.

END TIMES

Col. Charles Askins put it well when he said there was many a damp eye when shooters heard of the end of the



This was Elmer Keith's 5-1/2" Long-Range .44 Special. Notice the folding leaf rear sight and custom hammer.



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Colt Single Action Army. Collectors now refer to the Single Actions made from 1873 to 1940 as 1st Generation sixguns. When the Colt Single Action had been dropped from production in 1940, the official word was it would never come back again. Thank goodness it proved to be untrue and in 1955 Colt began producing the Single Action .45 again, with the first gun leaving the factory in November.

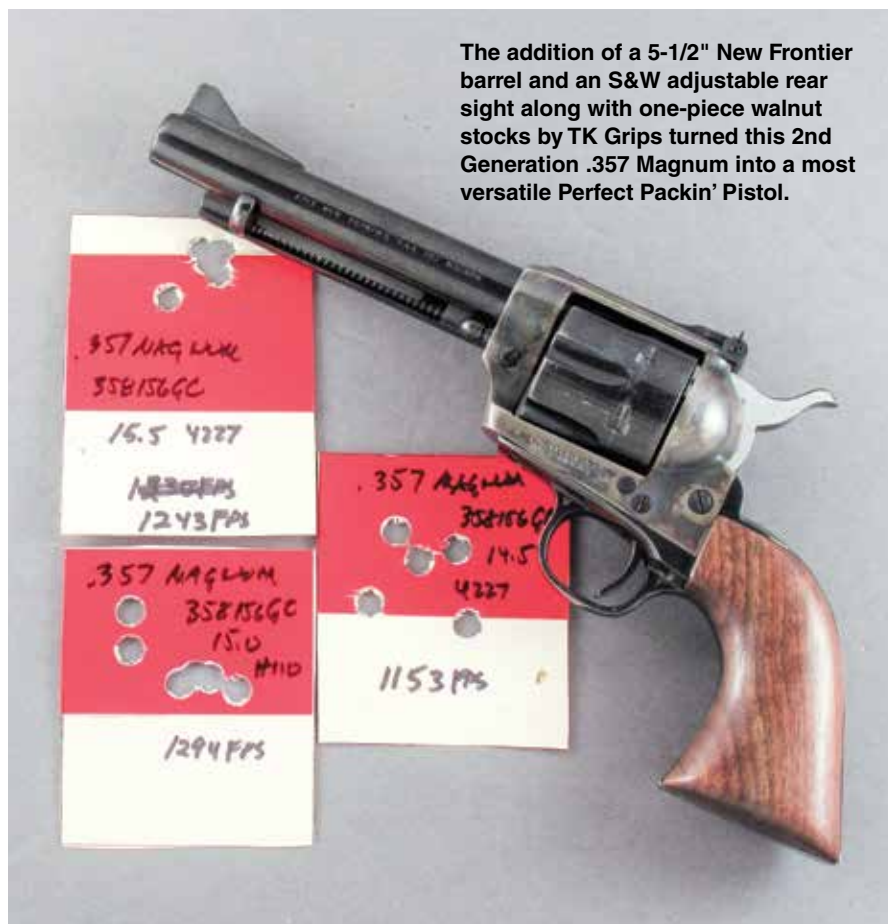
Still the same gun as the 1873 Peacemaker, the “new” Colt was made of stronger steels and as far as quality goes, the 2nd Generation guns — at least at the beginning — were as good as or better than anything from the first run of 1873 to 1940.

By 1975, history began to repeat itself. The 2nd Generation machinery was worn out and the Colt Single Action was removed from production again. This time, however, within a couple of years Colt entered the 3rd Generation of Colt Single Action Army production beginning at serial number 80,000SA. The 3rd Generation Colt Single Action lasted into the late 1980s when the market was flooded with all types of variations as to finish and barrel length and often second-class examples before the production was to cease again for the third time.

RESURRECTION, AGAIN

After being killed off three times, one would think the Colt Single Action would finally be dead and buried. Not so. The Colt Single Action came back! Again! This time it was a Custom Shop option, and then it was a production model, and then it was off, and then it was on, etc., etc., etc. Quality has been everything from top rate to those which should have never left the factory.

It has been 65 years since I purchased my first Colt Single Action. Over those far too quickly passing years, I have managed to add examples from every generation to my working collection and now I have settled on the 5-1/2" barrel length as a very acceptable Compromise. I find I have examples chambered in .45 Colt, .357 Magnum, .44 Special with an auxiliary .44-40 cylinder, .38-40 and .32-20. The latter was produced in 2011 which was



The addition of a 5-1/2" New Frontier barrel and an S&W adjustable rear sight along with one-piece walnut stocks by TK Grips turned this 2nd Generation .357 Magnum into a most versatile Perfect Packin' Pistol.

Colt's 175th Anniversary and is as fine a sixgun as could be desired.

The .44 Special is always very special to me and two of my favorite 5-1/2" Colt Single Actions in this Classic Chambering are my 2nd Generation examples. One has a King hammer and smoothed stag grips while the other is what is often referred to as a “pinto.” That is, it's a nickel-plated .44 with one-piece creamy ivory stocks, however, the cylinder is blue and the barrel is quite interesting as it is not only blue but marked on the side with Bisley Model Frontier Six-Shooter. I've had this one for over 35 years so someone long before me installed the old Bisley barrel on it.

CHOICES

One 2nd Generation .45 is high on my list because it is equipped with stunning one-piece floral leaf carved grips by Kirt Ratejasak and another 2nd Generation, this time in .357 Magnum. I purchased the latter used and found it shot 6" to the left which is too much to adjust by simply twisting the barrel. I happened to have a 5-1/2" 2nd

Generation New Frontier .357 barrel in my parts box and this was installed and mated with a Smith & Wesson fully-adjustable rear sight. I now have a .357 Colt Single Action Army that can be perfectly sighted in with any load I choose from standard .357 Magnum loads to those with 180- to 200-grain bullets, along with standard .38 Special loads as well as Heavy .38/44 loads. Since the last rhinoceros was killed in my area more than 15 years ago, a .357 Magnum/.38 Special will handle the vast majority of my sixgunning needs.

During this century Colt has produced the Single Action Army in .45 Colt, .44-40, .357 Magnum, .44 Special, .38-40 and .32-20. For the past 10 years or so it has been extremely difficult to find a newly produced Single Action Army and currently the only version cataloged is in .45 Colt. Now that Colt has been purchased by CZ-USA, we don't know what the future holds but I would not be surprised if the Single Action Army disappears totally from the production scene. I hope I am wrong!

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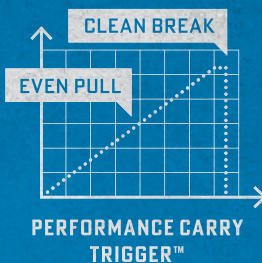
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ABOUT THIS WHOLE DEFENSIVE FIREARMS THING ... YOU NEED TO THINK “REALITY,” NOT “THEORY”

Massad Ayoob

We in the gun fraternity constantly discuss what the best self-defense handguns may be. “Firepower!” “Stopping power!” “Shootability!”

Those are all real factors and real concerns ... but they’re not the only such concerns, nor are they the prevalent concerns within what the Courts and Logic alike call, “The Totality of the Circumstances.”

What’s the best defense gun? The real answer is, “The one you have with you.”

Many years ago, I was at a gun writers’ conference at a host hotel, and a bunch of us were lounging out by the pool. The topic of “the best defensive handgun” came up. “High capacity 9mm,” said one guy. “1911 .45,” said another, confidently. Someone — it might just have been Evan Marshall — was then smart enough to ask, “Well, what are all of you carrying right now?” A sheepish silence descended.

It turned out Detroit street cop Evan Marshall had a Smith & Wesson Bodyguard Airweight .38 Special in a belly band under his swim trunks, the only garment he had on, I had a service pistol inside the waistband of my shorts covered by an open front Columbia-type shirt and everybody else was suitably garbed for poolside with swim trunks and no hardware at all.

Someone benevolently changed the subject before anyone was more embarrassed than they already were.

PERSPECTIVES?

I have been in this business for half a century. I have learned the following.

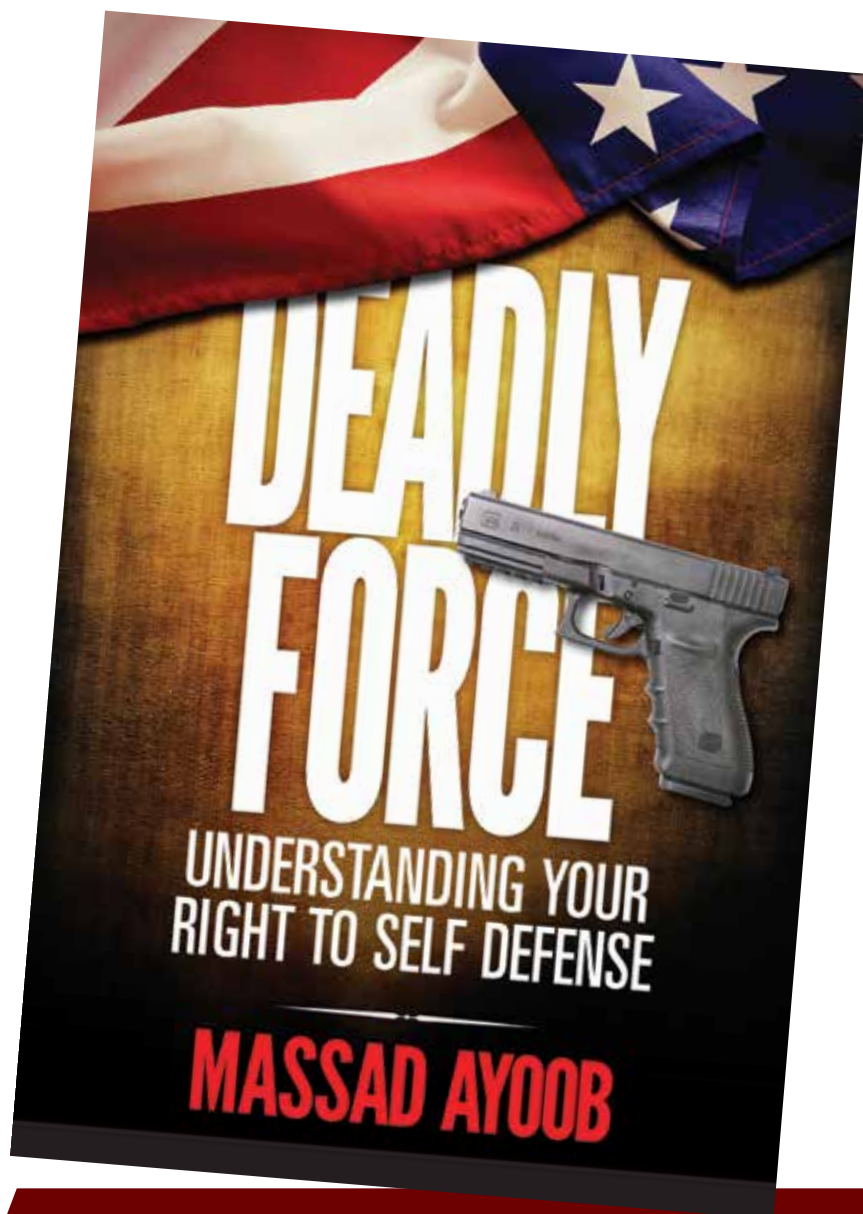
It is not so much about what gun or ammo you had as it’s about, “Did you have a gun when the crap hit the fan?” Do a Google search for the Clutter Family Murders. The farmhouse where the massacre went down had

guns but none of the family members could reach them when the two armed home invaders made entry and the slaughter went down unimpeded.

Did you see the danger coming in time to get your gun out before the assailant could bring his deadly weapon to bear? The history of cops murdered

in the line of duty is largely a history of complacency — cop-killers lull their victims into a sense of “you don’t have to worry about me” and then initiate their murderous action. “Action beats reaction” is a truth of life and human dynamics.

Do you understand what creates



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“deterrence”? For cops and armed citizens alike, most armed encounters end when the VCA (Violent Criminal Actor) realizes he is likely to die if he continues his lawless behavior. The criminals are an armed subculture themselves — they’re not afraid of guns, they’re afraid of people who may shoot them to death. Did your commands and your body language tell them they were about to die from a sudden and acute failure of the victim selection process if they didn’t stop what they were doing?

Can you deliver neutralization? If the VCA continues his behavior threatening innocent human life and limb, can you place shots swiftly and accurately under stress into parts of his body that will render him physically incapable of doing so?

Only after the above criteria have been satisfied is it going to matter a rat’s backside whether your handgun held five rounds or 20, nor what diameter the bullets therein might be nor at what velocity they would strike.

BOTTOM LINE

I’ve held my share of criminal suspects at gunpoint over the years, both as

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**... THAN WHAT
YOU CHOOSE
TO DEFEND
YOURSELF WITH.**

a cop and as an armed citizen. More than once, a little five-shot J-Frame caused awesome surrenders on the other side of the gun. One such suspect bleated like a sheep: "Mneaahh! Mneaahh!" as he raised his hands, because he believed (correctly) I was about to shoot him if he didn't stop what he was doing. Yet one armed robbery suspect seemed about ready to charge into the muzzle of the Ithaca 12-gauge shotgun loaded with Magnum 00 buckshot because he thought until the last moment — which saved his life — I somehow knew he no longer had his gun and therefore couldn't shoot him. What made him surrender was not my command, "Don't touch it!" with my finger taking up the slack on the trigger, so much as my partner jumping back away from him to get out of the way of the buckshot, when the suspect reached for his hip.

The management of lethal threat is a multi-dimensional thing that comprises elements of firearms, tactics, criminal psychology, body language and other factors each of which is a life-study in and of itself. Anyone who invokes the KISS Principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid) needs to be reminded — it ain't Simple, and you ain't Stupid.

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TAKE A GUN OR RENT?

AN IMPORTANT — AND DIFFICULT — CHOICE

Dave Anderson

Maybe our two-year nightmare is drawing to an end. Travel abroad for hunting may once again become routine. We are blessed with wonderful hunting opportunities in North America and one could hunt a lifetime here without running out of options. But travel — new places, new sights, different game species — hold an undeniable allure.

One decision you have to make is whether to bring your own rifle, or to borrow or rent one from the guide/outfitter. I've done both in the past and will likely do both in the future, depending on circumstances.

CHOICES

My preference is to have my own firearms. Part of the enjoyment of a hunt is preparing for it. I like the process of selecting a rifle, scope, cartridge, bullet, assembling and testing loads, tuning for accuracy and reliability, adjusting trigger pull. When the fun is done I have a rifle in which I have complete confidence. The additional cost and paperwork involved in transporting a firearm is a small fraction of the total cost and well worth it.

Bringing your own firearm does



For a red grouse shoot in Scotland, the Laird of the estate very generously allowed Dave to use this 12-gauge Purdey. A new Purdey costs around \$200,000 while this 1900s-era gun is still worth \$40,000 or so.

have costs and risks. It requires paperwork to be completed in advance, in some cases fees to be paid and there can be additional transportation costs. Such steps and costs don't bother me as long as I can clearly understand what I need to do to comply.

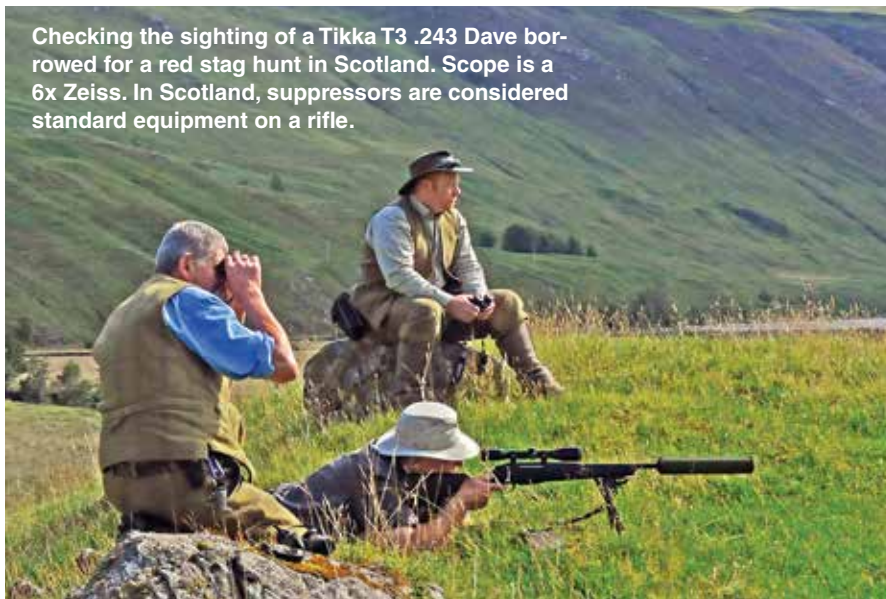
What does worry me is the risk of loss or damage to my property. Long gun cases are distinctive in appearance and are subject to outright theft. They

also seem subject to damage during transport, at least judging by anecdotal stories I see on hunting web sites. It may be the dimensions of long gun cases make them more subject to damage by automated loading equipment or it may be, as some suspect, deliberate damage by people opposed to firearms and/or hunting.

I've been fortunate to never have a firearm lost or damaged in shipping, but did on one occasion have my luggage with the ammunition go missing as did the other hunters with whom I was traveling. Fortunately we all had rifles chambered for common cartridges; as I recall, a .308, .30-'06, .300 Win. Mag., .375 H&H Mag. and a 7x57. The outfitter at the ranch where we were hunting had at least a box or two of ammunition for each rifle.

There was a time when renting firearms meant taking a chance on getting some moldy old military conversion with a cheap scope and 8-lb. trigger. As renting has become more commonplace, the quality of rental firearms has improved. You should check well in advance with the outfitter, of course, but the odds are you'll get a decent rifle

Checking the sighting of a Tikka T3 .243 Dave borrowed for a red stag hunt in Scotland. Scope is a 6x Zeiss. In Scotland, suppressors are considered standard equipment on a rifle.



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and scope. If you're an experienced rifle shooter, the trigger pull will likely be heavier than what you're used to but with a bit of dry fire, an experienced shooter can adapt.

THE MAIN QUESTION

Personally the deciding factor is what kind of trip it is. If it's a pure hunting trip with minimal or no side trips I'll take my own rifle. If it is mainly a vacation with a few days set aside for hunting, I'll borrow or rent the firearms. Remember, you are responsible for the security of your firearms. We like touring the country in a rented vehicle — keeping a rifle in the vehicle and taking it in the hotel every night is a tiresome nuisance. It may be possible to store your firearms with a dealer or your outfitter when not in use, but your travel itinerary may make this impractical.

I've been fortunate in being able to borrow quality firearms from the guide or host. For stag shooting in Scotland, the head gamekeeper let me use his Tikka T3 with 6x Zeiss scope, chambered in .243 Win. and shooting 100-grain Norma bullets. On another

The Remington 700 Dave borrowed in New Zealand (above) had been customized with a match-grade barrel, tuned action and trigger, and a carbon-fiber stock. On two African hunts Dave mostly used his own Ruger 77 Sporter in .300 Win. Mag. with a Zeiss scope (below). He did a lot of pre-hunt fussing — tune the trigger to a crisp 2.5-lb. break, sight precisely at 200 yards and check drop at ranges to 600 yards.



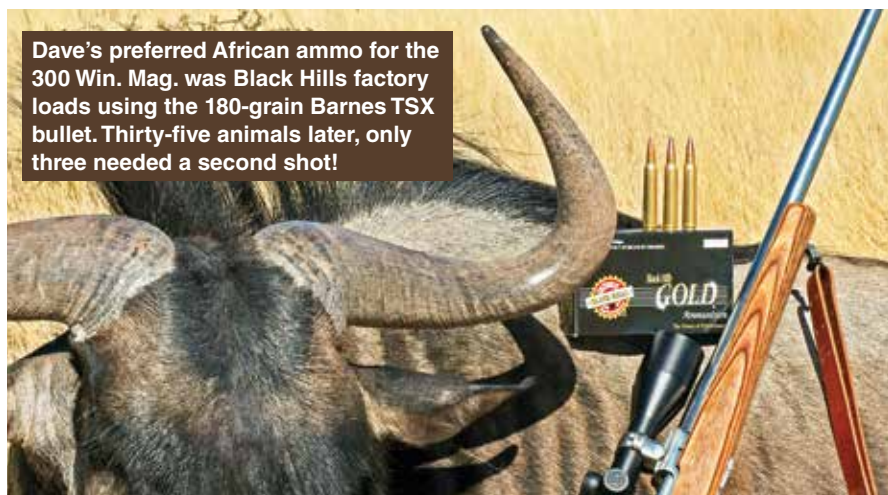
stag hunt in New Zealand, a gun-maker friend of the outfitter loaned me a Remington 700 in .300 WSM with Leupold scope. The cartridges were hand-loaded with 165-grain Barnes TTSX bullets and the trigger tuned to a beautifully crisp 2 lbs.

My best experience was on a Scotland estate hunt for red grouse on the "Glorious 12th" of August. We arrived early, and the "laird" of the estate not only invited us in for coffee, he asked if his estate manager had arranged for a shotgun. Then he said, "Why not take one of mine?" He unlocked his gun vault and asked, "Do you prefer a Purdey or a Holland & Holland?" "Yes." "Here, take the Purdey and I'll find you a belt of shot shells."

Which is how I came to join a group of experienced shooters, walking in an extended line over the Scottish highlands, accompanied by incredible dogs, in pursuit of red grouse while carrying a Purdey shotgun. I'll admit to being one of the world's worst wing shots but with the Purdey, I couldn't seem to miss. I doubt I'll ever shoot a Purdey again, or even hold one, but it remains a cherished memory.

GUNS

Dave's preferred African ammo for the 300 Win. Mag. was Black Hills factory loads using the 180-grain Barnes TSX bullet. Thirty-five animals later, only three needed a second shot!



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MA DEUCE

A CENTURY AND COUNTING

Mike “Duke” Venturino • Photos: Yvonne Venturino

In my entire career I don’t remember writing about a firearm with which I had only a few moments’ experience. But what an experience! The gun was the legendary “Ma Deuce” officially known as the M2 .50 Browning Machine Gun (BMG). Its power, accuracy and muzzle blast were awesome.

BIG BANG

The location of my opportunity was southern Nebraska and I had been invited to join a small group being exposed to a variety of legally owned full-autos. After every invitee had taken a turn with a .303 British BREN Gun, a 7.92mm German *Sturmgewehr*, a 9mm British STEN Mk V and a U.S. .30 Model 1919A4, the day was topped off with everyone getting to shoot the Ma Deuce.

Towards the end of World War I in 1918, the U.S. Ordnance Department

was advised by combat troops in France an especially powerful rifle was being used by the Germans. It was 13mm and could penetrate the Allied tanks’ light armor. Wisely the American ordnance officers felt our army should outdo Germany with an equally powerful *machine gun*.

John M. Browning took on the job but his new .50 caliber was not finished by the end of hostilities. Regardless, it was adopted by the U.S. Army as the Model 1921. It has been written JMB simply scaled up the .30-06 to make a .50 cartridge and Winchester Repeating Arms took over on the ballistic end. Whether true or not, a .50 BMG round is plain HUGE. Case length is 3.91" and bullet diameter is 0.510". The U.S. M2 FMJ round weighs just north of 700 grains at a nominal muzzle velocity of 2,810 fps. Take a minute to think about it — by comparison, a U.S. .30 M2 (.30-06)

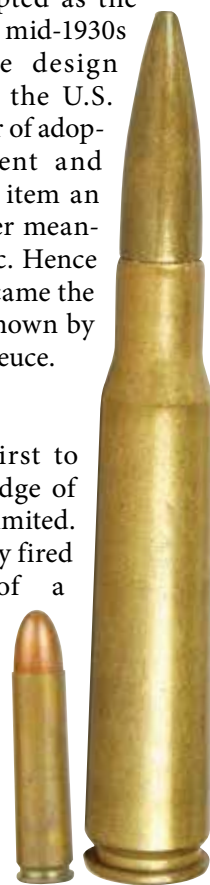
military load fired a 150-grain bullet at 2,740 fps.

Originally adopted as the Model 1921 but by mid-1930s there were some design changes. By then the U.S. Army dropped year of adoption for equipment and gave almost every item an “M” with a number meaning Model One, etc. Hence the Model 1921 became the famous M2 also known by troops as the Ma Deuce.

SPECS

I will be the first to admit my knowledge of Ma Deuce is very limited. Not only have I only fired one to the tune of a few score rounds but that single specimen is the only functional one I’ve seen personally.

A .50 BMG round shown in comparison with a .30 Carbine cartridge.



Duke firing a Ma Deuce .50 BMG.



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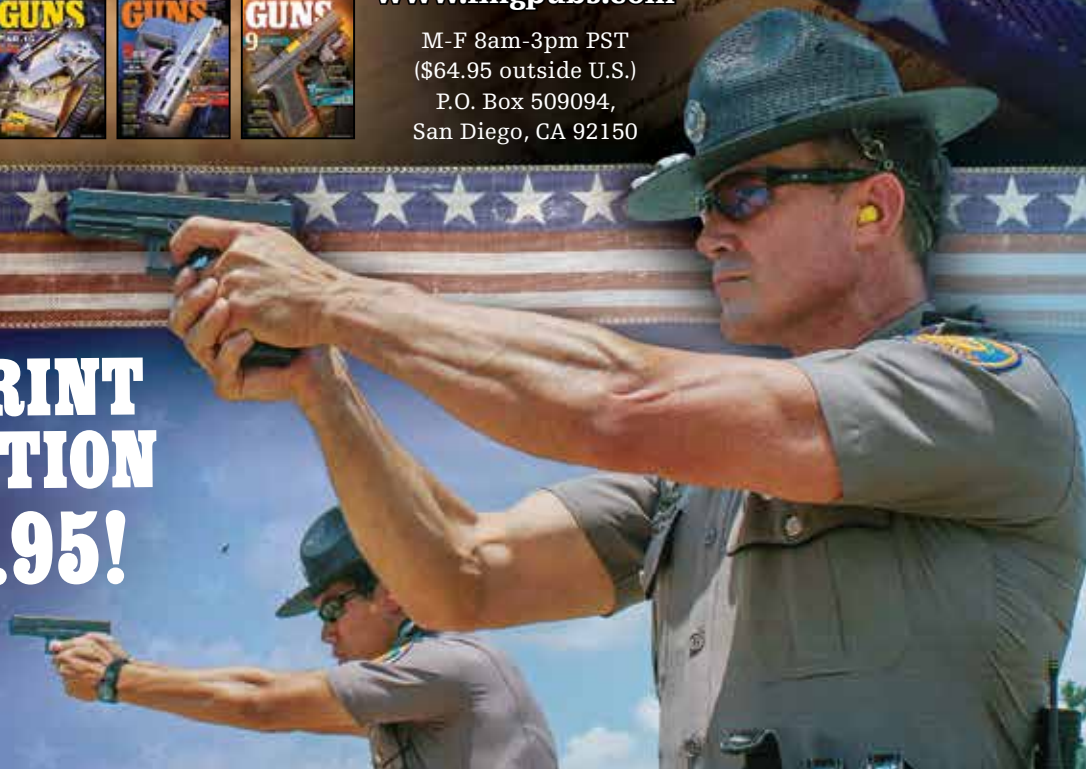


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It was the air-cooled model with a 45" barrel and sitting on a tripod. According to Bruce Canfield's book *U.S. Infantry Weapons of World War II*, an M2 with tripod weighs 125 lbs. There was also a water-cooled version weighing 100 lbs. without mount and its jacket held 10 quarts of water. Cyclic rate of

fire of .50 BMGs not on an aircraft was about 450 to 550 rounds per minute.

Weapon, tripod and ammunition weight limited .50 BMGs' usefulness with infantry. However, with troops riding instead of walking, M2s gained great favor. By the end of World War II, virtually every tank or half-track

carried M2s as well as many trucks and jeeps. There was a special half-track fitted with a rotating cupola holding four Ma Deuces. These were called the "Quad-50" and initially meant as anti-aircraft weapons, they were warmly welcomed by ground troops even through the Vietnam War.



At approximately 500 yards, the Ma Deuce was able to do this sort of damage to an abandoned cistern.

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TEAR DOWN THE WALL

Anyway, back to that very cold day in Nebraska a few years ago. We were shooting the basic tripod mounted Ma Deuce on a rancher's land. At least 500 yards distant was a concrete and brick wall — the remains of a cistern the rancher was in the process of tearing down. It was our target. Once the owner of the BMG got the .50 zeroed for us, we took turns shooting at the wall. Afterwards, I was amazed at the destructive power of 710-grain bullets at 500 yards. In plain terms they just chewed the wall to pieces.



**A MILITARY
WEAPON'S
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FOR THE MA DEUCE,
IT'S AT A FULL
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The big Browning .50s were altered for mounting on airplanes but I have no data as to their rates of fire except that they were faster than infantry versions. Our World War II fighter planes carried two, three or four 50s on each wing. After shooting a .50 BMG I can understand how when an American pilot got an enemy plane in his sights a burst lasting only a couple of seconds often tore it apart. Additionally every B17 bomber carried from 10 to 13 .50 BMGs so it is little wonder many *Luftwaffe* fighter pilots didn't survive a trip flying through their formations.

A military weapon's success can be rated by the length of time it stayed in service. For the Ma Deuce, it's at a full century and still counting.

GUNS

RECALL NOTICE

R7 MAKO HANDGUN FIRING PIN SAFETY BLOCK RECALL

Kimber Mfg. Inc. ("Kimber") has discovered a quality issue involving the firing pin safety block of certain Kimber R7 model handguns shipped from January 10, 2022 through February 14, 2022. Firearms assembled with the subject firing pin safety block may release multiple rounds from a single trigger pull.

This Recall Notice applies only to the Serial Numbers of those products listed in the **List of Serial Numbers of Recalled Products** located at kimberamerica.com/serial-r7-mako. If your handgun is among those in this **List of Serial Numbers of Recalled Products**, please contact us immediately by calling 888-243-4522, and do not load, use, sell, or otherwise make available your handgun, as the condition may lead to serious personal injury or death. Kimber is voluntarily recalling the affected products to help ensure the personal safety of the parties that purchased and/or used them.



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BEWARE THE STING!

John Taffin

Today we have a long, long list of repeating rifles available chambered in cartridges designed for long-range varmints and small game hunting. A century ago this was not the case and the only readily available combination in a repeating rifle was the .25-20 Winchester Centerfire. This cartridge began as a black powder load and was simply the .32-20 Winchester necked down to .25 caliber. However, things were about to change.

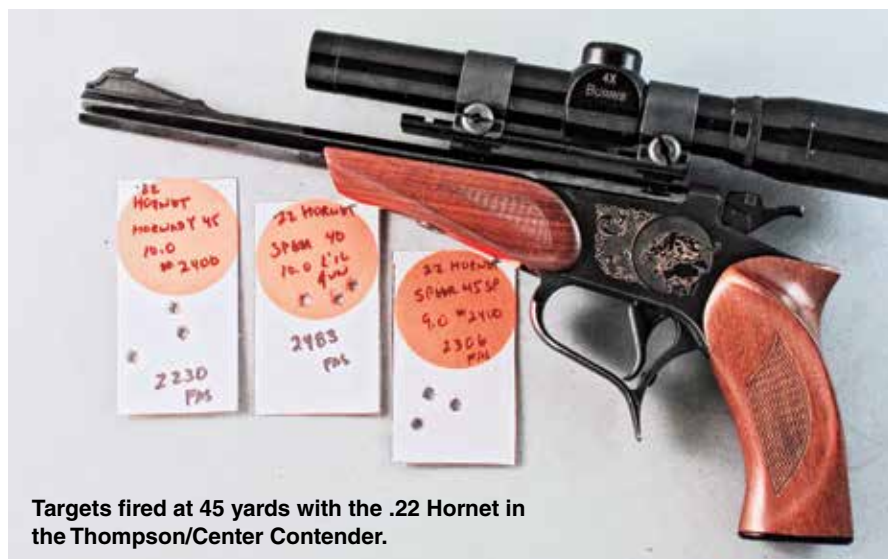
GO FASTER

In the 1920s experimenters began looking to the future with one of the things they desired being a smokeless powder, long-range .22 Centerfire. One of the early seekers was Col. Townsend Whelen — “Only accurate rifles are interesting” — who happened to be assigned to Springfield Armory at the time. Using 1903 Springfield rimfire training rifles from World War I, Whelen had them converted to a new cartridge that became known as the .22 Hornet. By the early 1930s both Savage and Winchester were chambering bolt-action rifles for the Hornet. Both DuPont and Hercules developed new powders for use in the .22 Hornet and when they were able to attain 2,400 fps, the experimental powder from Hercules was given its name, which we all know now as #2400. This was in 1934 and Elmer Keith soon made this powder well-known by using it first in his Heavy .44 Special loads and then on to the .44 Magnum.

In 1940, Lysle Kilbourne, who did much of the technical data for the Lyman Reloading Manuals of the time, improved the tapered .22 Hornet case by blowing it out and giving it a pronounced shoulder. It became the K-Hornet. A third iteration of the Hornet came from Jim Harvey in 1956. Rather than developing a cartridge for a rifle, Harvey wanted a .22 Centerfire



John's K-Hornet of choice is this custom bull-barreled version from SSK Industries.



Targets fired at 45 yards with the .22 Hornet in the Thompson/Center Contender.

for use in a sixgun and his answer was to shorten the K-Hornet to the Harvey Kay-Chuck for use in re-chambered Smith & Wesson K-22s. In the early 1960s Smith & Wesson took that same K-22 revolver Harvey started with and aided by Remington came up with the .22 Jet, which was a milk-bottle-shaped cartridge formed from the .357 Magnum case. Harvey's K-Hornet worked while the .22 Jet did not, at least not in a revolver chamber. Too bad the engineers in the project did not take a closer look at Harvey's .22 centerfire.

Many rifle manufacturers have offered the .22 Hornet in their bolt actions, however, my experiments are mostly with the Hornet in the Thompson/Center Contender using one of the early 10" octagon barrels. Hornady, Sierra and Speer all offer the 40- and 45-grain bullets the Hornet is best suited for, with some even being marked as Hornet bullets. Since this is a rifle cartridge, at least originally, reloading is accomplished with an RCBS two-die set consisting of a full-length resizing die and a seating die.

One problem I run into in loading for the .22 Hornet is the fact those tiny little bullets don't mate well with my fat fingers.

JOHN'S TAKE

All of my loads for the .22 Hornet are assembled using the original Hornet powder #2400, which is now from Alliant instead of Hercules and Hodgdon's Lil' Gun. The final developed original rifle load may have been at 2,400 fps, however, I have no problem achieving this with either powder in a 10" barrel as found on the Contender. Winchester's factory 45-grain JSP clocks out at just a hair under 2,400 fps in the Contender and puts its three shots in 3/4" at 45 yards. I get the same accuracy and a little more velocity using 10.0 grains of Lil' Gun with the Sierra 40-grain JSP and the Hornady 45 "Bee" both with muzzle velocities right at 2,440 fps. The Speer 40-grain Spitzer shoots with the same accuracy over 9.0 grains of #2400 at 2,400 fps and 10.0 grains of Lil' Gun at just under 2,500 fps.

The .22 Hornet barrel is an early octagon barrel while my K-Hornet is a custom 10" Bull Barrel from SSK Industries. I much prefer the looks and balance of the heavier barrel. Forming K-Hornet brass is as simple as it gets — simply fire a Hornet in the K-Hornet chamber. In reloading the K-Hornet I use Hodgdon's Lil' Gun exclusively with 45-grain bullets from both Hornady and Speer. Using 13.0 grains of Lil' Gun, muzzle velocities



The .22 K-Hornet brass (above) is formed by firing the .22 Hornet in the K-Hornet chamber. Powders of choice for loading the Hornet or K-Hornet (below) are #2400 and Lil' Gun.



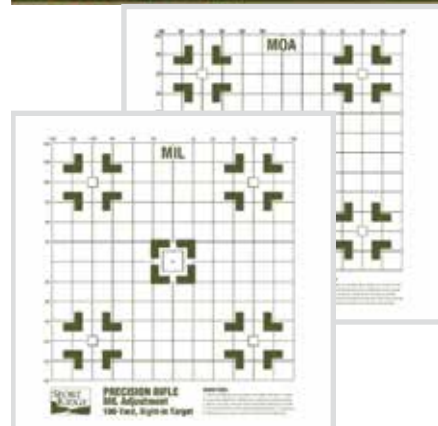
with both bullets are over 2,700 fps with both loads grouping well under 1" for three shots at 45 yards. Along with this excellent accuracy, muzzle velocity is 250–300 fps faster than the original Hornet, stretching the range for cleanly taking varmints and small game a bit further. However, neither one of these are what you would call long-range cartridges and especially when using the Contender, shots at 200 yards or less are preferred.

Both the Hornets have been overshadowed for a long time by such cartridges as the .222 and .223 Remington, the .220 Swift, the .22-250 and many others. However, I find it much more satisfying shooting the Contender than a long-range rifle and in fact, not only are both my Hornets in the Contender, I also use Contenders chambered in .222 and .223. Just seems to me this is the way things should be.

GUNS



Hercules #2400 was originally developed to attain 2,400 feet per second in .22 Hornet rifles.



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DAMASCUS-STEEL BARRELS

ARE THEY EVEN SAFE TO SHOOT?

Tom Keer

Pull out a Damascus-barreled shotgun at a skeet range and a number of folks will run for the hills — they want to be far away when your blunderbuss blows up. Some of their concern is valid, for over the years enough shooters and hunters have had major issues with Damascus-barreled shotguns. Still, a properly inspected gun with twist barrels loaded with low compression shells functions every bit as good as a contemporary model. Owners just need to do their homework, is all.

In simple terms, Damascus is a technique of combining steel and iron for greater strength. It was first used on edged weapons starting around the 3rd century in Damascus, the capitol of Syria. Those knives and swords were produced in such volume the unique pattern became known by the city's name.

PRETTY TOUGH STUFF

Over a millennium later and in the mid-1790s, a Frenchman named Jean-Francois Clouet of Liege, was among the first Western gunmakers to experiment with Damascus barrels. Two Englishmen, William Dupein and J. Jones, expanded on his work several years later with Jones patenting a new process of turning a bevel-edged band of metal into a spiral-twist with interlocking threads. To make these barrels, iron and steel metal was stacked on top of each other, heated and hammered to create one block of mixed metal. The block was then heated and drawn to form a rod. The process was repeated until six such rods were made and then the rods were prepared for heating and twisting. Three of the rods were twisted with a right-facing thread while three of the rods were twisted in the opposite direction with a left-facing thread. A thin-metal sleeve was wrapped around a mandrel over which the barrel ribbons were wound. The threads were connected, heated and hammer-welded, the mandrel was

removed, and a barrel was formed. It normally took seven feet of rod to create one foot of barrel.

Many know the Crolle Damascus pattern-welded barrels, for they are artistic and contain highly-figured patterns based on how the two different-colored metals were “piled” or layered while the rods were twisted. Those patterns form because when twisted, the outer layers move inward. The various degrees of depth coming from the number of threads per inch determines the pattern, with some being simple chevrons or diamonds while others being more complex.

Americans, eager to switch to smokeless powders — slower-burning

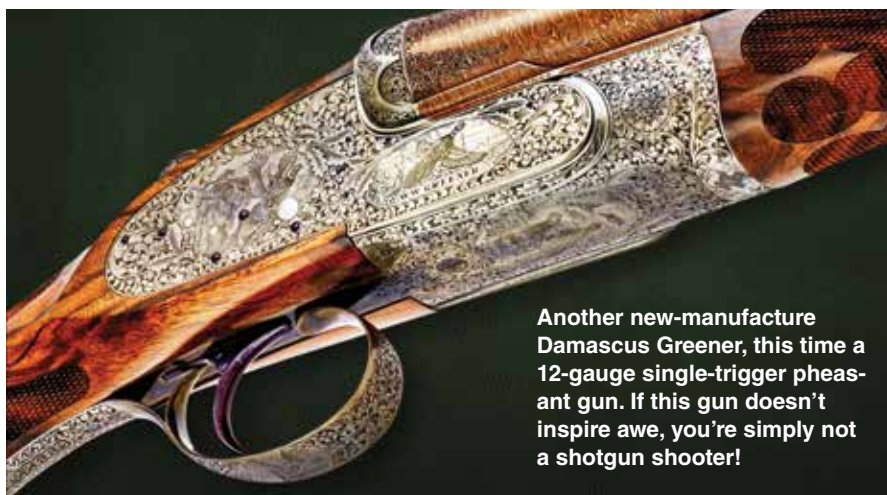
but maintaining high pressures for greater velocities and longer-distance shots — moved into barrels that would accommodate the extra pressure. This change in shotshells caused American gun manufacturers to produce barrels from fluid steel that could accommodate those stouter loads. Americans shied away from Damascus guns starting in the late 1880s though British gun makers continued with Damascus-steel barrels through the early 1930s.

THE PAST IS PAST

Does it make sense to let go of the past? Cell phones have replaced the telegraph as cars replaced stage-coaches. With such a focus on modern



A new-manufacture Damascus “color-hardened 20 bore with four seasons engraving” quail gun from famed English shotgun maker W.W. Greener. Cost? Don’t ask.



Another new-manufacture Damascus Greener, this time a 12-gauge single-trigger pheasant gun. If this gun doesn’t inspire awe, you’re simply not a shotgun shooter!

firearms, sales of Damascus guns have plummeted. What has been created, though, is an opportunity to acquire high-grade, vintage shotguns for more than a reasonable fee. If you're in the market, a close inspection by a reputable gunsmith is necessary.

One proponent of Damascus guns is Vermont's Lars Jacob of Lars Jacob Wingshooting:

"Damascus-barreled shotguns in good repair are highly functional," he said. "Barrel integrity is the most important — and the least understood — element of shooting vintage Damascus-barreled shotguns. Barrels typically fail inspection from one of three distinct issues. The first comes from pitted bores. Pitted bores are often caused by a manufacturer's use of soft iron or poor welding techniques. Pitting also can come from improper storage over time. If the bores have been reamed to remove rust and pits then the wall thickness is altered. When excessive amounts of metal is removed then the barrel integrity is compromised and is therefore weakened. Gunsmiths use micrometers to measure barrel thickness in a variety of places and then compare those measurements with factory specifications.

"The second reason Damascus guns fail inspection is because the barrels have been dented while hunting. It's easy to remove dings from fluid steel barrels but removing a dent from twist barrels creates a soft spot and lessens barrel integrity. And the third issue relates to chokes. Most vintage guns had tighter chokes, with improved cylinder and modified being most common. The second common configuration was modified and full. If your candidate has cylinder and skeet chokes then the odds are high that the chokes have been opened at some point."

In these, shooting low-compression shells is a must, and thanks to companies like RST and Polywad, these traditional shells are commercially available.

AIN'T SKEERED

Shawn Wayment, DVM, is a Colorado bird hunter who isn't afraid to reach into his gun cabinet and extract a Damascus-barreled shotgun. "I've got seven Damascus guns," he said. "Two are



A 1902 Ithaca Grade two side-by-side with Damascus barrels. It's still perfectly serviceable after inspection by a qualified gunsmith and using low-compression shells.



A vintage Henry Clark and Son's Damascus-barreled side-by-side. It still shoots, even though some might run away if it shows up on the firing line!

Parkers, two are Lefevres, and three are Frank Hollenbeck Drillings. Every one of their barrel patterns is unique, and they're all gorgeous. My first Damascus gun was a Parker GH 16 gauge on a 0 frame. Because it's a 16-gauge on a 20-gauge frame, it's light and is considered to be the Holy Grail of grouse guns. I found it at M.W. Reynolds shooting and fly-fishing store in Denver, and when I mounted the gun it fit perfectly. After a thorough inspection I bought it on the spot. I'm a bit more careful when hunting with the Damascus gun, and because I hunt at high elevation in rugged terrain, I'm cautious not to ding the barrels. I shoot RST 2-1/2" low compression shells, and I've killed one heck of a lot of birds. These days I don't care if a shotgun's barrels are fluid steel, Damascus, or twist. If the gun fits I, buy it."

Graham N. Greener, the Director of W.W. Greener Sporting Guns LTD offers new shotguns with Damascus barrels manufactured over a century ago. "Our company was the last English gun-making company to make Damascus barrels and production of these ceased in 1903," he said. "We had a stock of these and decided to make shotguns with these barrels again and some with steel and Damascus interchangeable barrels. These have mostly been side

lock side-by-side sporting shotguns in 12 and 20 bores. All have been made to individual orders including pairs and sets of guns. Many are featured on our website."

Missouri's Steve Culver, a master knifemaker and a master gunsmith, sought to create a firearm that combines his two unique skill sets. "I made Laffite's Revenge as a combination weapon," he said. "I designed the flintlock mechanism to create a .50 caliber flintlock pistol with a spiral-welded Damascus barrel. To that I added a 12" long Damascus blade that features a Woodhead pattern. The spine slopes downward toward the point that keeps the blade from obstructing the shooter's view when aiming. They've been a highlight in my career but the required production time as well as the required materials is too much. Still, I don't know of any modern gunsmith who has made Damascus barrels. Do you?"

I do not, but what remains is while shooting a Damascus-barreled shotgun requires more due diligence from a quality gunsmith and the shooting of low-compression shells, these firearms are safe to shoot. And if properly cared for, I suspect they'll continue to break clays and drop quail many years from now.

GUNS

ASTRA M400 & 600

POTENT BLOWBACK BLASTERS

Payton Miller

Two of the most distinctively retro “hammerless” pistols in the vintage military market you’re likely to find are the Astra Model 400 and 600. They’re darn near impossible to mistake for anything else — being vaguely reminiscent of a spud gun or squirt gun, depending on your childhood frame of reference.

But these two Spanish-made pistols don’t shoot potato plugs or a tepid stream of water. Our two specimens — courtesy shooting buddy, Doug Fee — handle a pair of 9mm cartridges. One is a world-standard while the other is, for all practical purposes, moribund by comparison.

THE GERMAN CONNECTION

The M400 was produced from 1921 to 1950 by *Astra-Unceta y Cia SA* and was chambered in several calibers, most notably the 9x23 Largo (also referred to as the 9mm Bergmann-Bayard). The M600 was a shortened 9x19 Parabellum version made at the behest of the German military, which found itself strapped for sidearms during World War II. As a result, many

M600s (known as the M600/43) ended up tucked away in the flight jackets of *Luftwaffe* air crewmen.

Once the Allies closed off southern France, the M600’s Spanish pipeline dried up and the remainder of the guns ended up in various countries after the war ended, including Chile, Turkey and, yes, West Germany. Many also ended up in the U.S. via Interarms. They are often described as being “intended for a Nazi contract but never delivered.”

A PAIR OF PISTOLAS

Both the M600 and M400 have grip angles — while not exactly like a T-square — are somewhat similar to the Soviet T-33. However, the powerful recoil spring, beefy receiver necessitated by the straight blowback action and low bore axis make them very tractable as we discovered at our initial range session. This isn’t much of an issue with the standard pressure 115-grain FMJs we used in the 9x19 M600, but it was a bit more appreciated in regard to the slightly snappier M400 in 9x23 Largo.

The 9x23 Largo, in service trim, featured a 127-grain bullet at close to 1,200 fps, which is reasonably close to



Modern 9x23 Winchester ammo should definitely not be used in an Astra 400. Best of show: The M600 preferred 124-grain Blazer Brass 9mm Parabellum FMJ at 25 yards.

the original 130-grain .38 Super in terms of performance. It was designed in 1901 by Theodore Bergmann and features a case length of 23.11mm, as opposed to the 19.5mm case of the vastly more successful 9mm Parabellum. The Parabellum, it should be noted, is loaded to higher pressures.

In terms of safety features, both the M400 and M600 feature an embarrassment of riches: a side-mounted external safety, a grip safety and a magazine disconnect. As well, Astras have a hold-open and the slide locks to the rearward position on the last shot, magazine capacity of both models being eight rounds.

However, the trigger pulls were somewhat less than lovable — 8 lbs. for the M600, but a more amenable 5-1/2 lbs. for the M400 in 9mm Largo.

The M600 features a 5.4" barrel, an overall length of 8.1" and a weight of 38-1/2 oz. Magazine capacity is eight rounds. The slightly larger M400 is slightly heavier at 40 oz. thanks to a reinforced slide and 5.9" barrel. Both guns feature fairly rudimentary fixed sights with a V-notch rear.

RANGE RESULTS

Getting hold of 9mm Largo ammo proved a bit of a challenge, however, we did find some early 1950s 127-grain stuff from *Fabrica de Armas de Toledo* and a precious — and pricey! — handful of 124-grain noncorrosive



Astra M400 (top) and M600 (bottom) — A slightly longer barrel and 9x23 Largo chambering differentiated the earlier M400 from the 9mm Parabellum M600.



To many shooters of “a certain age,” Astra autos resembled a ’50s-era “spud gun” (above). Retracting the slide and turning the barrel clockwise (below) allows the barrel/slide assembly to be pulled forward off the frame.



TMJ from CCI Blazer, of which we were able to talk Doug out of.

Naturally, there was no such problem with the 9mm Parabellum stuff. We used some bulk steel-case Winchester 115-grain FMJ along with 124-grain and 147-grain Blazer Brass FMJ. All were standard pressure offerings of course — we saw no earthly reason to subject the elderly M600 to any “two buck a pop” high-zoot Plus-P.

The 9mm Parabellum M600’s best 25-yard group was with a 124-grain Blazer Brass FMJ, which clocked 1,090 fps. It shot “closest to the sights” as well. As for the M400? Well, the Spanish surplus Largo ammo shot a bit low-left and not as tight as Doug’s long-hoarded Blazer stuff. Of the 9mm Largo we were able to scrounge, we only had enough to chrono the Spanish stuff which averaged a respectable 1,180.

VINTAGE COOLNESS

All in all, no one could reasonably complain about the accuracy of either pistol. One of my shooting buddies commented, “If only they had better triggers and bigger sights.” But griping about those factors in regard to a pre-war era service pistol is kind of like complaining it gets cold and windy around January in North Dakota.

Field-stripping consists of turning the serrated nose cap a quarter turn, removing the bushing and spring then retracting the slide and locking it back to expose a series of “grasping notches” on the barrel. Turning the barrel clockwise will free the barrel/slide assembly from the frame.

Both the Astra 600 and 400 are pretty cool items. No, you’re not going to find either for what you would’ve paid back in the Nifty Fifties, but they can still be had for a couple hundred bucks under a grand or so.

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SA-35 *And The*

MOZAMBIQUE DRILL

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

The Springfield Armory SA-35 is an ever-so-slightly modernized iteration of John Moses Browning's classic 9mm combat pistol.



Will Dabbs, MD

The Mozambican War for Independence formally ended with the Lusaka Accord signed in 1974. This pitiless fight technically began back in 1498 when the first Portuguese explorers made landfall on the coastline of what is today Mozambique. Slavery and gold drove the train in the 15th century. By the 20th it was more national pride and geopolitical momentum.

Patriotic hubris can be a powerful engine indeed. Before the guns fell silent the Portuguese were spending 44% of their GDP to cling to the overseas colonies defining their past greatness. Their enemies in Mozambique, a motley band of some 8,000 Marxist irregulars, extracted a ghastly toll in blood and treasure. This fanatical mob was known as the Liberation Front of Mozambique or FRELIMO.



The Springfield Armory SA-35 shoots plenty straight from a simple rest at 12 meters.

Before the war ground to its bloody terminus the Portuguese had enlisted white mercenaries to help keep FRELIMO in check. These experienced African bush fighters were both well-trained and professional. One of these guns for hire was a legendary South African merc named Mike Rousseau.

THE ENGAGEMENT

Amidst the profligate madness of Mozambique, Mike Rousseau found himself alone in the airport in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo). For reasons lost to history, Mike was without his primary weapon and was reduced to clearing his piece of this labyrinthine structure armed with his GP35 Browning Hi-Power 9mm pistol.

Rousseau came around a corner and found himself face to face with a FRELIMO guerilla armed with an AK47 at around 10 paces. The South African mercenary responded instinctively and shot the Marxist soldier twice center-of-mass. He later related both rounds were solid hits, one on either side of the sternum. The FRELIMO guerilla never slowed down.

Rousseau likely stoked his Hi-Power with ball ammo, and 9mm FMJ rounds typically punch 9mm holes. This is more than adequate to kill a man, but sometimes it takes a while. Mike Rousseau didn't have time to wait so he immediately indexed to the man's head.



From left to right is an FN Hi-Power produced in Belgium under Nazi occupation, the Canadian Inglis 9mm Hi-Power and the modern Springfield Armory SA-35. The Hi-Power was the only production gun to see widespread use on both sides during WWII.



In the frenetic pandemonium of the moment, Rousseau pulled his shot slightly. What had been intended to be a round to the base of the nose instead dropped to the suprasternal notch between the collarbones. This bullet severed the terrorist's spinal cord and dropped him like a sack of cement.

Rousseau later related this tale to the legendary Jeff Cooper. Cooper formalized this maneuver — two to the chest and one to the head — as part of his training curriculum at Gunsite Academy and christened it the “Mozambique Drill.” A pair of LAPD SWAT officers who trained under Cooper took the drill back home but renamed it the “Failure



The communist insurrection in Mozambique helped bleed Portugal dry, while giving rise to a classic defensive fire-arm technique still in use today.



to Stop Drill” or simply the “Failure Drill” in an effort to excise any potential racial overtones.

Mike Rousseau eventually returned to Africa where he was killed in action during the Rhodesian Bush War.

THE GUN

The GP-35 Hi-Power was John Moses Browning’s crowning achievement. Completed posthumously some nine years after his death by Dieudonné Saive, the tilting-lock, recoil-operated action of the Hi-Power went on to drive almost every modern combat handgun on the planet. Up until recently, if you wanted a Hi-Power of your own you could either opt for an expensive Belgium-made collectible or a cheap Eastern European surplus knockoff. Now, however, Springfield Armory brings us the real deal made right here at home.

The Springfield Armory SA-35 is a simply beautiful piece of iron. The SA-35 dispenses with the accursed magazine safety of the original. As a result, magazines drop free, and the single-action trigger is to die for. Magazines hold 15 rounds rather than the original 13, and the trim architecture is easy to conceal.

The left-sided thumb safety of the SA-35 is slightly enlarged over the Belgian originals, and the front sight sports a white dot. The rear sight is both serrated to minimize glare and drift adjustable for windage. The stocks are an intoxicating stained walnut and the gun is finished in a rugged dull military blue.

The tactical-rack rear sights allow you to charge the weapon one-handed if your day is extra sucky.

PRACTICAL TACTICAL

The SA-35 is designed to be carried in Condition 1 with a round in the chamber, the hammer back and the safety on. Thusly configured, literally nothing is faster. The gun is substantially thinner and lighter than a 1911 and I am living proof you can comfortably manage this pistol in public underneath shorts and a T-shirt.

The steel architecture and modest 9mm Parabellum chambering conspire to create a divine range experience. Recoil is pleasant and the delightful single-action trigger lets you put your rounds right where you want them. Squeeze this magnificent trigger a few times, and your favorite striker-fired GLOCK will seem positively Neanderthal by comparison.

The slide locks back with authority on the last round fired and magazine changes set the standard for everything else — the Hi-Power is a shooter’s gun. The SA-35 feels great in the hand and does precisely what is asked of it every single time.

RUMINATIONS

Mike Rousseau had to shoot the guy three times in the Lourenço Marques Airport back in the 1970s because sometimes ball ammo just doesn’t work terribly well. Modern expanding 9mm loads through the SA-35 are as precise as a scalpel and as devastating as a hand grenade. As a gun to keep in the car, stow in your nightstand, or drop in your belt underneath an untucked shirt, the SA-35 is where Old School meets Starfleet Academy. The trigger rivals your favorite 1911 without all the large-bore chaos. The SA-35 is the retro pistol you can bet your life on.

GUNS

Springfield-Armory.com

NIGHTHAWK GRP 8

Roy Huntington

Photos: Rob Jones/
The Imagesmith LLC

In this day of injection molded pistols and 3D printed gun parts, many forget there are still rarefied near-magicians here in the states who produce what I like to call “Bespoke” guns. In the spirit of the best British gunmakers and the iconic Rolls Royce automobile — from, say, the 1930s — this cadre of talented people create an exactness in design and engineering hard to find today.

Today’s mindset begs the question: Do you sell 10 “adequate” guns for \$500 each — or one gun for \$5,000? Do you satiate the simple need for a defensive handgun, or fire up dreams, rapid heartbeats and raised eyebrows? A hundred years ago someone had the right idea though.

“Strive for perfection in everything. Take the best that exists and make it better. If it doesn’t exist, create it. Accept nothing nearly right or good enough.”
— Sir Henry Royce

At Nighthawk Custom, the decision on which side of the fence to be on is an easy one. The vote goes toward the thump of hearts brought on by eagerness. When the postcard arrives saying your gun is “almost” ready, the game is suddenly seriously afoot. I appreciate the fact if you’re new to guns, even picking up your “first-ever” gun can be an exciting moment. The hope and eagerness is real and few other items can generate anticipation to the degree some of us feel when it comes to our favorite pastime.

High Performance Match-Making!



But after a while, our tastes may change. We become wiser, more discerning, we raise our expectations and reach a bit beyond just *adequate*. When terms like “billet steel,” “custom” gunsmithing, “hand-fitting” and accuracy measured in sub-1” groups enter into your conversions, it’s time for that next step.

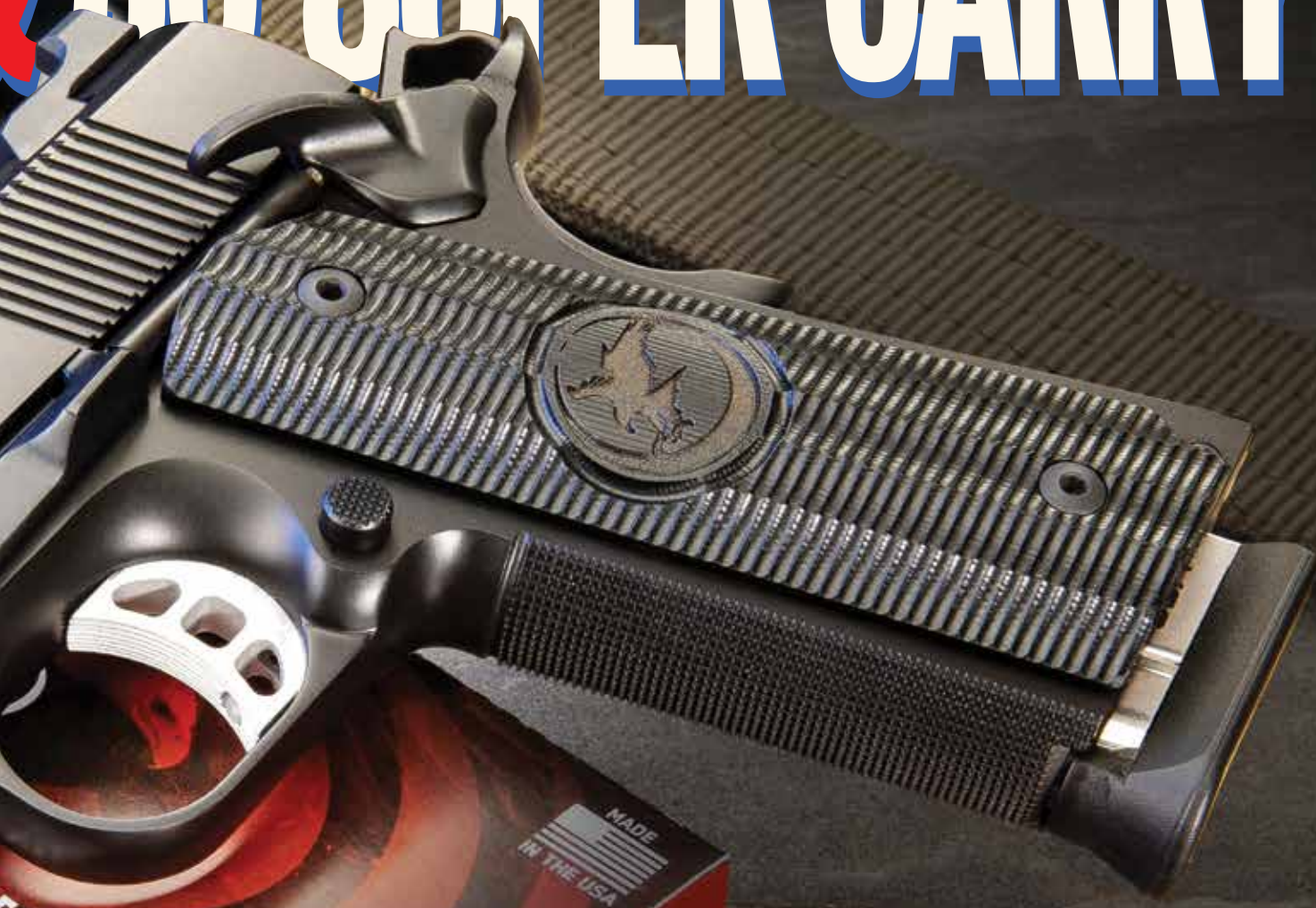
NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM

Formed almost 20 years ago by four people with a passion for quality and distinction, NHC has grown into a cadre of some 80-odd people dedicated to one thing — the creation of a gun as nearly perfect as we mere mortals can manage.

The Japanese have a phrase,

Regardless if you’re carrying the Federal HST defensive rounds or burning up boxes of Federal American Eagle practice ammo, the Nighthawk Custom GRP offers the discerning shooter top-shelf peace of mind.

30 SUPER CARRY



Wabi-Sabi. It's a concept they have where they find beauty in simple, impermanent, imperfect things. A tarnished silver bowl or a cobblestone path exhibits *Wabi-Sabi*. Yet, while there can be beauty in imperfection, there's also beauty and function at the other extreme. At the other extreme — of perfection — is where Nighthawk Custom lives.

NHC touts “One gun, one gunsmith” and it means exactly that. From a “box of unfitted parts” to final test-firing, the end-result emerges from the hands of a single craftsman. His initials will be stamped under a grip panel, to remain there for decades — or centuries? — as testament to his commitment to that particular gun. Perhaps it's your gun?

Six of their gunsmiths have been inducted into the American Pistolsmiths Guild, more than in any other company

in the world. The Guild is a small handful of lifetime dedicated gunsmiths who are the benchmark of the trade. Nighthawk's single-minded quest for consistent quality shows in who they attract to work at their benches.

A 1911 is made up of some 46 or so parts. In NHC's case, the majority of those parts are over-sized, of machined billet steel — and particular combinations of them can come together in a gunsmith's hands to create a singularly remarkable example of their art. Each gun adheres to a set of expectations for the particular model and each one is just as predictably reliable and trustworthy as the men who craft them.

A COLLABORATION

Recently, NHC joined forces with Vista Outdoors to introduce the

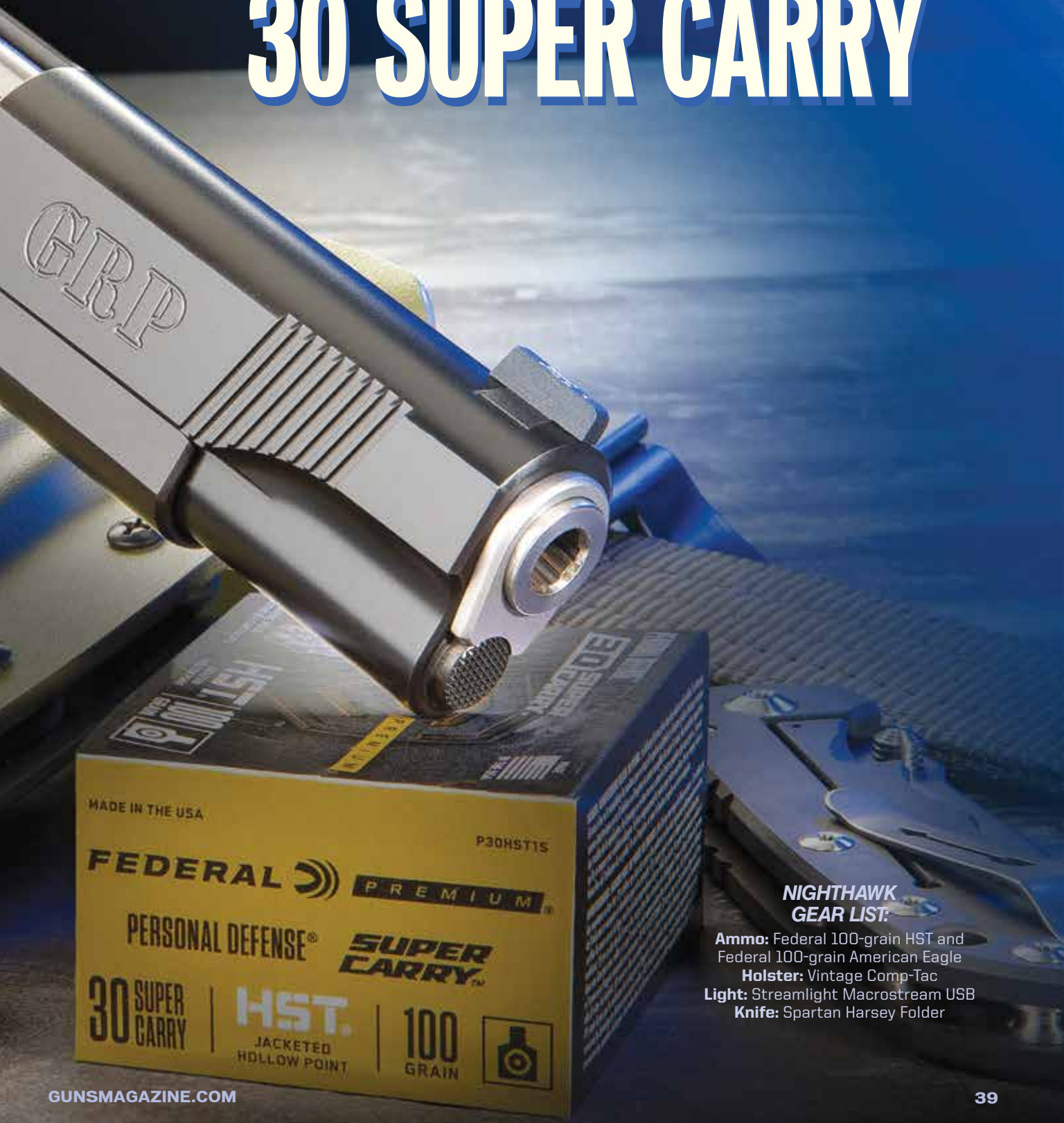
innovative 30 Super Carry cartridge. Vista's concept was a .30 caliber (0.311") 100- to 115-grain bullet traveling between 1,100 and 1,250 fps. The reason is to fill the “void” resting between the pocket .380 and the 9mm. The 30 Super Carry offers essentially .32 H&R Magnum performance in a semi-auto. The compact nature of the case allows 12 rounds in a “9mm” magazine, translating to 13 in a fully-loaded full-sized 1911-style pistol. This is significant, as the 30 Super Carry can outperform even 9mm loads in some cases.

Vista, in the form of Federal, CCI, Speer and Remington ammunition lines, offer FMJ “practice” rounds and onto high performance bullets like the Federal HST and Speer Gold Dot. Testing in gel shows the Gold Dot and HST 30 Super Carry loads perform close



GUNS[®]
MAGAZINE

NIGHTHAWK GRP & 30 SUPER CARRY



NIGHTHAWK GEAR LIST:

Ammo: Federal 100-grain HST and
Federal 100-grain American Eagle

Holster: Vintage Comp-Tac

Light: Streamlight Macrostream USB

Knife: Spartan Harsey Folder

**A****B**

The Nighthawk Custom GRP and the new 30 Super Carry cartridge: a proverbial case of Love at First Sight!

to, or even exceed, comparable 9mm loads. Keep in mind you get the “extra” ammunition capacity in a 9mm “sized” semi-auto pistol when it’s chambered for the 30 Super Carry.

In my testing with the GRP, a full-sized 5” 1911, the 30 Super Carry recoils about like a standard 9mm load. I found the slide runs fast and stays a bit flatter during recoil than a similar “hot” 9mm load. There is a different “feel” and it’s a pleasure to shoot.

And hot the 30 Super Carry is! Most premium defensive 9mm loads run at about 35,000 psi (plus or minus). The 30 Super Carry spikes the pressure needle at 50,000 psi, near the .308 rifle cartridge range, ladies and gentlemen. This combination of contemporary powder technology, high performance bullets and cutting-edge firearm design keeps all this safe and manageable though. Press the trigger, it goes bang and there are no surprises.

THE GRP

While the GRP is considered Nighthawk’s “entry level” pistol, all the rules still apply and each one is built with the same precision as any other gun offered, including their “One gun, one gunsmith” idea. What you end up with is a reliable, beautifully-made Browning design well able to protect your family, be the focal point of a fun day at the range, help you win a weekend match or simply rest on your desk to admire.



A G10 Gator Back grips with the Nighthawk Custom logo set off the black nitride finish and 24 lpi checkering on the front strap and mainspring housing. **B** Mating the GRP with the new 30 Super Carry Cartridge gives a full-size 1911-style pistol with superb controllability but plenty of pep downrange. **C** The Heinie Straight Eight Ledge rear sight rides high above the hammer and ignition components, which are — you guessed it — hand-fitted and polished. **D** The match-grade barrel is hand-fitted to the bushing while at the other end, the hand-polished feed ramp assures positive loading. The slide and frame are likewise. Actually, it'd be quicker to discuss what *isn't* hand-fitted!

If you're familiar with a full-sized all-steel 5" 1911 you've got a good start understanding what the GRP is. NHC had to carefully re-engineer some design elements to properly chamber and run the hot 30 Carry round but the result is a flat-shooting, fast firing, reliable handful sure to please.

The finish on our test gun is a black nitride covering the forged frame and slide. Critical parts are a match-grade barrel, Heinie Ledge Straight Eight Tritium night sights, G10 Gator grips, 25-line-per-inch checkered front strap and mainspring housing, and a lightweight NHC tri-cavity trigger. A checkered recoil spring plug, hi-cut front strap, hand-beveled edges and general de-horning add to the package.

Part of the special treatment each gunsmith commits to embraces things like a tuned and polished extractor, trigger set to 3.5–3.75 lbs., polished ramp, throated barrel, all ignition parts hard polished and fit, hand-fitting frame to slide, hand-fitting the barrel, blending the grip safety and hand-fitting the firing pin stop — a critical

step often missed in many builds.

Keep in mind this is a true custom gun, so there are options like finishes, front strap and mainspring housing treatments, grips, etc. you can elect to change as your mood strikes. If this is the beginning of a dream gun for you, bring your dreams with you and let NHC work with you to make sure your gun is exactly right for you.

SHOOTING

I attended the introduction event at NHC in Berryville, AR where they and Vista showed the new cartridge and NHC guns. I was fortunate to shoot quite a bit there and I saw several thousand rounds put through a few early test guns. The simple straight-walled case design and NHC build quality meant we saw, literally, *zero* malfunctions all day.

Once I got our test gun at home, I tried limp-wristing, shooting upside down, weak-handed — essentially everything I could to get the gun to malfunction. No dice, it ran like gang-busters. Accuracy from a

wrist-rest showed an “average” of 1.3" at 25 yards! The unusual “flat” recoil impulse makes shooting easy and fun, contributing significantly to accurate shooting.

I put almost 400 rounds through this gun in my backyard and made a YouTube video (link below), eventually coming away impressed with gun and ammo. This latest experience with this company's sterling products left me unsurprised. My expectations of a positive shooting experience were paid off handsomely. If you buy a Nighthawk Custom gun you will be guaranteed to be pleased — and that's simply a fact.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

The GRP starts at about \$3,499 but your results may vary based on any additional custom touches you desire. But even the “base” gun — if we dare call it that — will give you lifetimes of service and pleasure.

Another of my favorite quotes from Sir Henry Royce is: “The quality will remain when the price is forgotten.” Write that down. Let it sink in. Then pick up the phone.

GUNS

NighthawkCustom.com
Vista-Outdoors.com

Watch Roy's video on
the FMG YouTube Channel

SAVAGE 1920 RIFLE

Dave Anderson

The Savage model 1920 rifle was introduced over a century ago. Commercially it was not a big success with only about 12,000 made and production ending around 1928. By 1931 it was out of the Savage catalog. Nonetheless it remains a milestone, a rifle far ahead of its time — the first American-made, lightweight bolt-action sporting rifle. Today we are fortunate to have several sub 6-lb. hunting rifles and a few around the 5-lb. range. Mostly the light weight is achieved with synthetic stocks, carbon fiber for the really light models, often with 18" to 20" barrels.

THE ORIGINAL

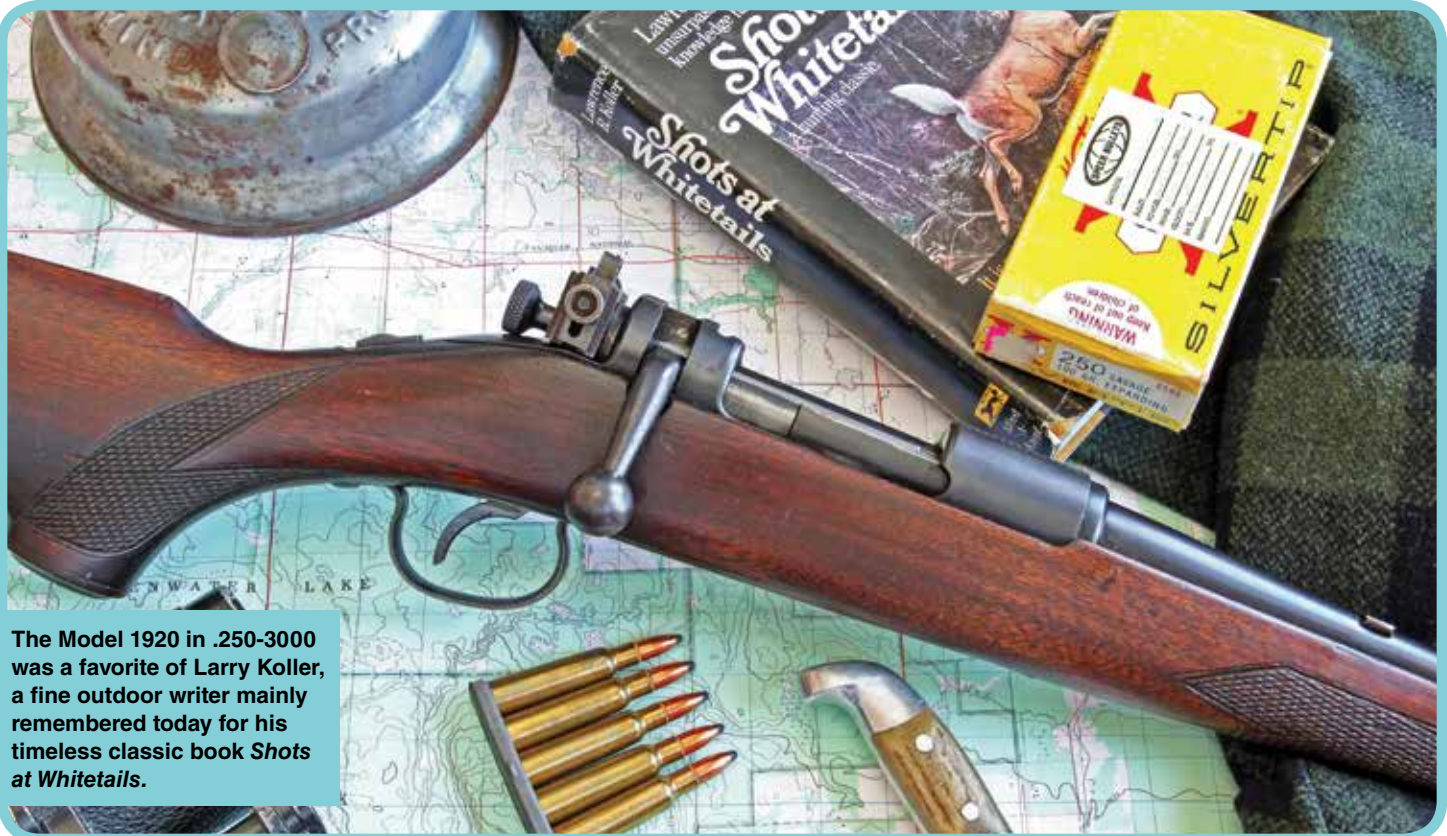
Savage did it in 1920 with a 5-lb., 14-oz. hunting rifle and they did it with a walnut stock, blued steel and 22" barrel in .250-3000. The .300 Savage version had a 24" barrel.

Well into the 20th century, lever-action rifles were the choice of most American hunters. A few rifle enthusiasts wanting something different imported European-made bolt action hunting rifles such as the Mannlicher-Schoenauer and Mauser sporting rifles. Remington also introduced the Remington-Keene and Remington-Lee bolt-action sporters to an indifferent market. Meanwhile Marlin and Winchester lever actions sold briskly, and the Savage 1899 would prove to be a spectacular success.

American hunters may have preferred lever actions, but armies all around the world preferred bolt actions as they were perceived as more reliable and durable for hard military use. The main advantage of the lever action — a faster rate of fire — was considered unimportant if not actually detrimental by the military "old guard." A magazine cut-off was considered a desirable feature so soldiers would use



The Savage 1920 was the first American-made, lightweight bolt-action hunting rifle but it came at a time when American hunters preferred lever actions. Dave's rifle was made in 1920 while the car was made in 1925.



The Model 1920 in .250-3000 was a favorite of Larry Koller, a fine outdoor writer mainly remembered today for his timeless classic book *Shots at Whitetails*.

A RIFLE AHEAD OF ITS TIME

their rifles as single-shots, only utilizing the magazine to repel an assault. As late as WWII, there were still military planners who saw the rifle as primarily a handle for a bayonet.

DEMAND INCREASES

The outbreak of WWI led to a huge demand for military rifles. Although

the U.S. remained neutral until 1917, it was evident if the nation were ever to send an expeditionary force, there would not be nearly enough 1903 Springfield rifles. Circa 1915–16 under the direction of its chief designer Charles Nelson, Savage built several prototypes for military consideration chambered for the .30-’06

service cartridge. The military instead chose the Enfield pattern currently in production for British armed forces, making only the changes necessary to accept the .30-’06 rather than .303 British cartridges.

Savage put the prototypes and blueprints away and spent the war years making Lewis machine guns. As the war ended, Savage began transitioning back to making sporting arms for the civilian market. At the time, conventional wisdom held soldiers who had been trained in the use of bolt-action rifles in the military would want bolt-action sporting rifles but none of the major American gunmakers — Marlin, Remington, Savage, Winchester — offered a bolt hunting rifle. To Savage management it seemed a prudent decision to add one to their line.

It also seemed sensible to chamber the rifle for Savage’s proprietary cartridges, the .250-3000 introduced in 1915 and the still-in-development .300 Savage. Savage designed these cartridges not out of some fixation with

The action of the Savage 1920 was a shortened version of a military prototype. It can even use stripper clips, though no hunter would!



short cartridges but to fit its bread and butter rifle, the great lever-action model 1899.

Savage wanted their new rifle as lightweight as possible. The model 1920 was introduced in the May 1, 1920 issue of *Arms and the Man*, at the time a publication of the NRA.

ARRIVAL

The model 1920 shown here is one I purchased several years ago. It's a .250-3000, made in September 1920 according to Savage historian John Callahan. Savage took its military design of 1915-16 — which they knew could be made without patent infringement, and for which they had blueprints and tooling — and shortened the action by about 1-1/4". All other dimensions remained identical to the original design intended for the .30-'06 cartridge.

The biggest factor in keeping the rifle light was the slim barrel. The .250-3000 version has a 22" barrel with a relatively short chamber area, tapering to a diameter of 0.550" at the muzzle. The bore is rifled with six lands and grooves, right hand twist, with a twist rate of 1:14. Five shot groups at 100 yards run around 2-1/2" to 3", about as good as I can do with iron sights. I'm sure with a scope — or a better iron-sight shooter — the rifle could cut those groups in half.

More weight is saved with the walnut stock, made with a slim pistol grip and slender forearm. Dimensionally it's stocked to suit the iron sights, with a 1-1/2" drop at comb and 2-1/2" drop at heel. Length of pull is 13-1/2".

The front sight boss is integral with the barrel and is slotted for a brass bead held by a cross pin. Sitting high and with no protective wings, the bead looks about as vulnerable as a lollipop at a kid's birthday party. The boss itself is very strong and even if the bead is damaged, it can be replaced. Standard rear sight on the original 1920 was leaf sight mounted in a slot in the barrel. On my rifle, the slot is filled with a Marble's blank and a Lyman 54 sight fitted.

The Lyman 54 sight could be factory-ordered as an option or the sight could be purchased separately and fitted by a gunsmith. The sight is fitted to the bolt sleeve and moves with

the bolt so it's not as consistent as a receiver-mounted sight. For my old eyes it provides satisfactory accuracy, much better than a barrel-mounted sight. It should also provide some protection against escaping gas in the unlikely event of a case head failure.

The original 1920 was ideally suited to the .250-3000 cartridge but in the book *Bolt Action Rifles*, author Frank de Haas suggests it may be a bit too

slim, especially for the more powerful .300 Savage. After 1925, Savage revised the rifle with a fuller stock and heavier barrel, adding about 14 ounces of weight. They also added sling swivel studs, slanted the bolt handle back a bit and made the Lyman 54 sight standard. Collectors sometimes call this the 1920/1926 model. Around 8,500 original 1920s were made, about 3,500 of the revised version.



The bolt handle of the Savage 1920 (above) is shaped to follow the contour of the stock and is flat enough to work quite well in a saddle scabbard. The 1920 (below) has a sliding tang safety easily accessible to both right- and left-hand shooters. Checkered bolt knob is similar to the 1903 Springfield and can be used to manually decock or cock the firing pin.



RECORDS INDICATE THE BIG THREE GUNMAKERS — REMINGTON, SAVAGE, WINCHESTER — MADE ABOUT 53,000 BOLT ACTION CENTERFIRE RIFLES IN THE 1920-1931 ERA.

PROS AND CONS

The 1920 has a lot of features I like. It is a very strong action, originally intended for the .30-'06 cartridge with a large, long receiver ring. I like the sliding tang safety, which locks both sear and bolt. The rifle balances and handles beautifully and the stock dimensions are just right for the iron sights. Quite a few 1920s have been drilled and tapped for scope bases but this one will stay original because if I

want a scope sight, I have other rifles. I like the light weight and trim, slim lines of the rifle, especially the handsome barrel contour. I like the Mauser/Springfield features such as controlled round feeding, large extractor, pivoting ejector, the forged one-piece bolt and forged receiver and the matte finish on top of the receiver.

It also has features I don't like. The trigger is a typical two-stage military style and on my rifle the sear breaks at

6-1/4 lb. The combination of a heavy cocking piece/firing pin assembly and small mainspring leads to a sluggish lock time. The published lock time is 6.7 milliseconds, a bit slower than the '03 Springfield though not as slow as the No. 3 Lee Enfield at 9ms. By comparison, Winchester 70 and Remington 700 short actions have about 2.6ms lock time.

The extractor extends only about half the length of the bolt, presumably to save weight. A full-length extractor would support the bolt at both ends while being cycled. Aesthetically the large receiver ring looks out of proportion on the slim rifle — at 1.425" diameter it is larger than a large-ring Mauser. And, there's no excuse for the ugly steel strap trigger guard/floor-plate assembly.

TOO SOON

Despite talk of returning GIs wanting bolt-action rifles, lever-actions continued to dominate the pre-WWII era. Records indicate the big three gunmakers — Remington, Savage, Winchester — made about 53,000 bolt action centerfire rifles in the 1920-1931 era. During the same time, Savage and Winchester made about 487,000 lever action rifles. If you add Marlin production of its various levers, it would surely bring the total to well over 500,000. In terms of commercial sales, lever-actions outsold bolt guns by a 10:1 margin.

Actually the toughest competition the Savage 1920 faced was Savage's own model 99. In the time it took Savage to produce 12,000 Model 1920s, it made about 126,000 model 99s. It seems hunters and shooters who wanted bolt actions wanted them in .30-'06 (or after 1925, in .270). The light Savage 1920 was a brilliant concept and despite some flaws, a pretty good rifle. It was just too far ahead of its time. **GUNS**



The integral front sight boss of the Savage 1920 (above) is slotted for a brass bead front sight. This sight looks like it could be easily damaged, but it hasn't happened so far. The Lyman 54 sight (below) was a popular option on the 1920 rifle and became standard on the revised version after 1925.



Holt Bodinson

Some rifles are so obscure and so out of reach, they haunt you for a lifetime — the Jacob has haunted me for a lifetime. Lyman's 1958 release of their *Handbook of Cast Bullets* started it all.

There on page 52 was the picture of a short, stocky, rifled, percussion double rifle with a caption reading, "The Jacob's rifle fired a four-ribbed, elongated bullet, either solid or hollow-point with an explosive charge, with astonishing accuracy. This is the type (invented by Brigadier General John Jacob) that Jacob used in blowing-up an ammunition wagon at a range of about 2,000 yards."

Today, I sit with a Jacob's rifle across my knees. It's been a long hunt for a haunting rifle.

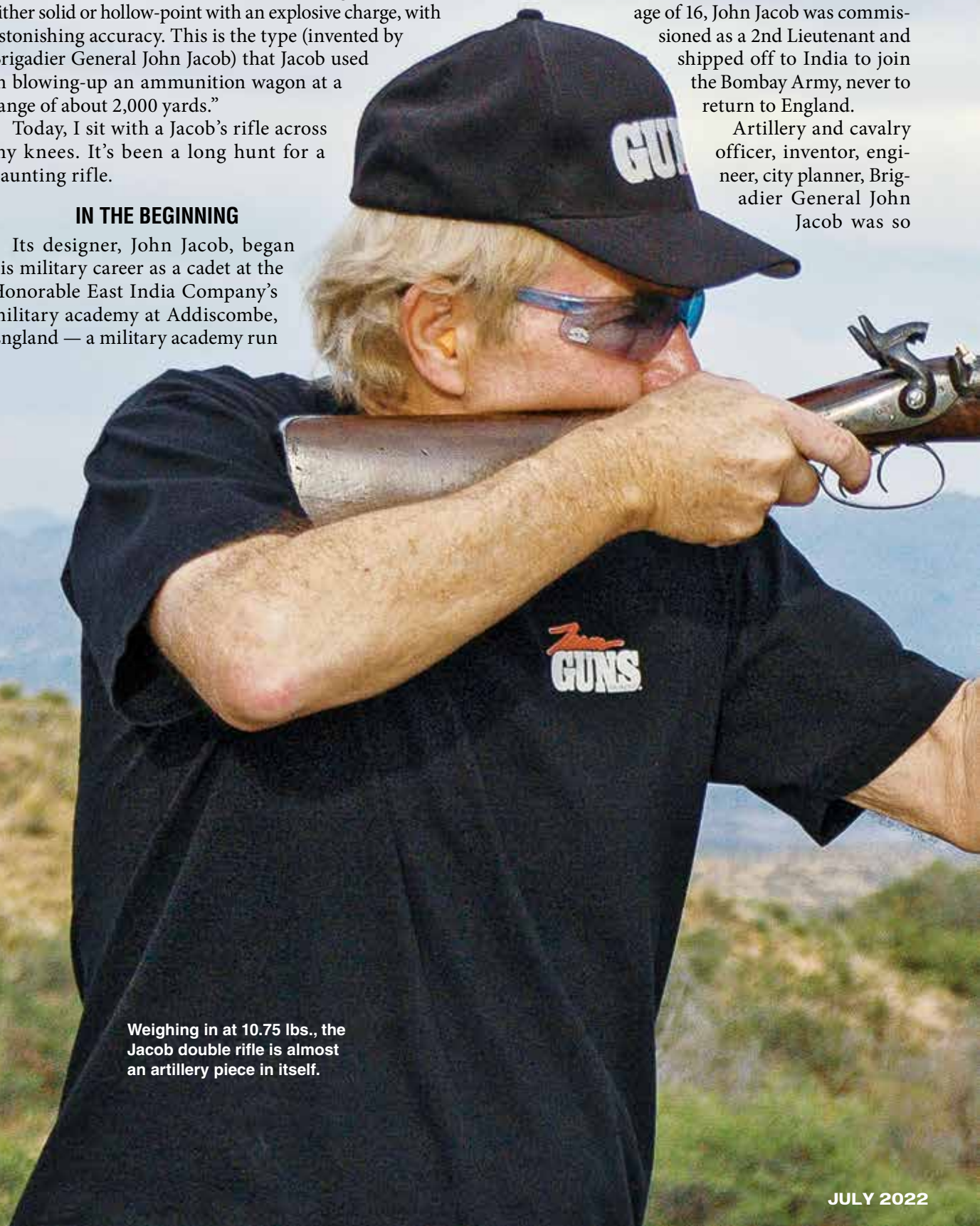
IN THE BEGINNING

Its designer, John Jacob, began his military career as a cadet at the Honorable East India Company's military academy at Addiscombe, England — a military academy run

by the commercial East India Company, you say? Yes, the East India Company was not just a mercantile enterprise, it was also a military extension of the British Empire and maintained three private armies in India — the Bombay, Madras and Bengal Armies composed of Indian units, European units and reinforced with Royal British detachments. By 1844, the combined strength of the three armies was 250,030 personnel. At the

age of 16, John Jacob was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and shipped off to India to join the Bombay Army, never to return to England.

Artillery and cavalry officer, inventor, engineer, city planner, Brigadier General John Jacob was so



Weighing in at 10.75 lbs., the Jacob double rifle is almost an artillery piece in itself.

successful and so well-loved as an administrator of the India's wild Northwest Frontier that the citizens of his administrative seat, the village of Khangarah, renamed their town, "Jacobabad" in his honor. Jacob built irrigation canals to turn their desert into fertile farmland, constructed an extensive road network to encourage commerce and excavated a reservoir to store precious fresh water. Jacobabad still exists, now as a city in northwest Pakistan. Being only a couple of hundred miles from Kandahar, Afghanistan, Jacobabad recently served as an airbase for American bombing and drone missions flown during the Afghan war.

Jacob was both fascinated by and critical of the general-issue British Brunswick rifle. Fascinated by the Brunswick's belted ball which was a mechanical fit in its two-groove, rifled barrel but critical because of its mediocre accuracy. Indeed, by 1852, even the British Select Committee on Small Arms reported, "The Brunswick rifle has shown itself to be much inferior in point of range to every other arm hitherto noticed."

Ever the experimenter, Jacob designed a four-groove barrel taking a ball cast with two cross-belts and offering

improved accuracy. Offering the design to his employer, the East India Company, the design was rejected with a response noting if the Brunswick model was good enough for the Royal Army, it was good enough for the soldiers in India.

BIGGER BANG

Not to be dissuaded, Jacob abandoned the belted ball and began work on an advanced, belted conical bullet design and a new rifle to handle it. As an artillery officer, he was keenly interested in any method to silence the opposing guns short of counterbattery fire. One obvious solution was if one could direct precision small arms fire with an explosive bullet at the enemy's ammunition caissons, thereby blowing them up, the effect would be to kill not only the crews but probably to destroy the guns as well. In modern terms, it would be the equivalent of using an intrepid soldier armed with an RPG/bazooka to take out a tank rather than having to commit and risk a tank or tracked tank killer of your own.

Jacob's experiments that followed are remarkable not only for their scale but for their personal expense.



The Mysterious JACOB RIFLE Blackpowder Big Bang Theory

He established a shooting range at Jacobabad with white-washed, brick walls as targets located at distances from 100 to 2,000 yards. The 2,000-yard wall target was 40 feet high, 50 feet long and 3 feet thick. Testing his rifle and bullet designs from machine rests, it's recorded he consumed tons of lead and powder. He writes, "All manner of rifles were tried, both breech and muzzle loading of every length, weight, etc., of various twists to the grooves and of various calibers from 32-bore to 8-gauge." Just the guns alone he custom-ordered from England must have cost a fortune since he used the best makers like Manton, George H. Daw and Swinburne & Son.

Gradually, he perfected a 4-ribbed, conical projectile. It's 32-bore (or 0.526" caliber) weighing 650 grains and is 1.357" long. The major body diameter is 0.513" while the outside diameter of the ribs is 0.565". Wrapped in a greased cotton patch, the 4-ribs of the bullet form a mechanical fit with the deep, four-grooves of the Jacob's barrel.

DUO DESIGN

Depending upon the mission, the bullet was made in two forms. There was a simple solid point and a hollow-point design accepting a pointed copper tube filled with fulminate of mercury and dipped in melted resin to securely lock it in place. Tests on the range indicated this explosive shell was totally reliable at 1,200 yards. Jacob was ecstatic writing, "Judging from our practice at Jacobabad, it seems certain, that two good riflemen so armed, could in 10 minutes, annihilate the best Field Battery of Artillery now existing."

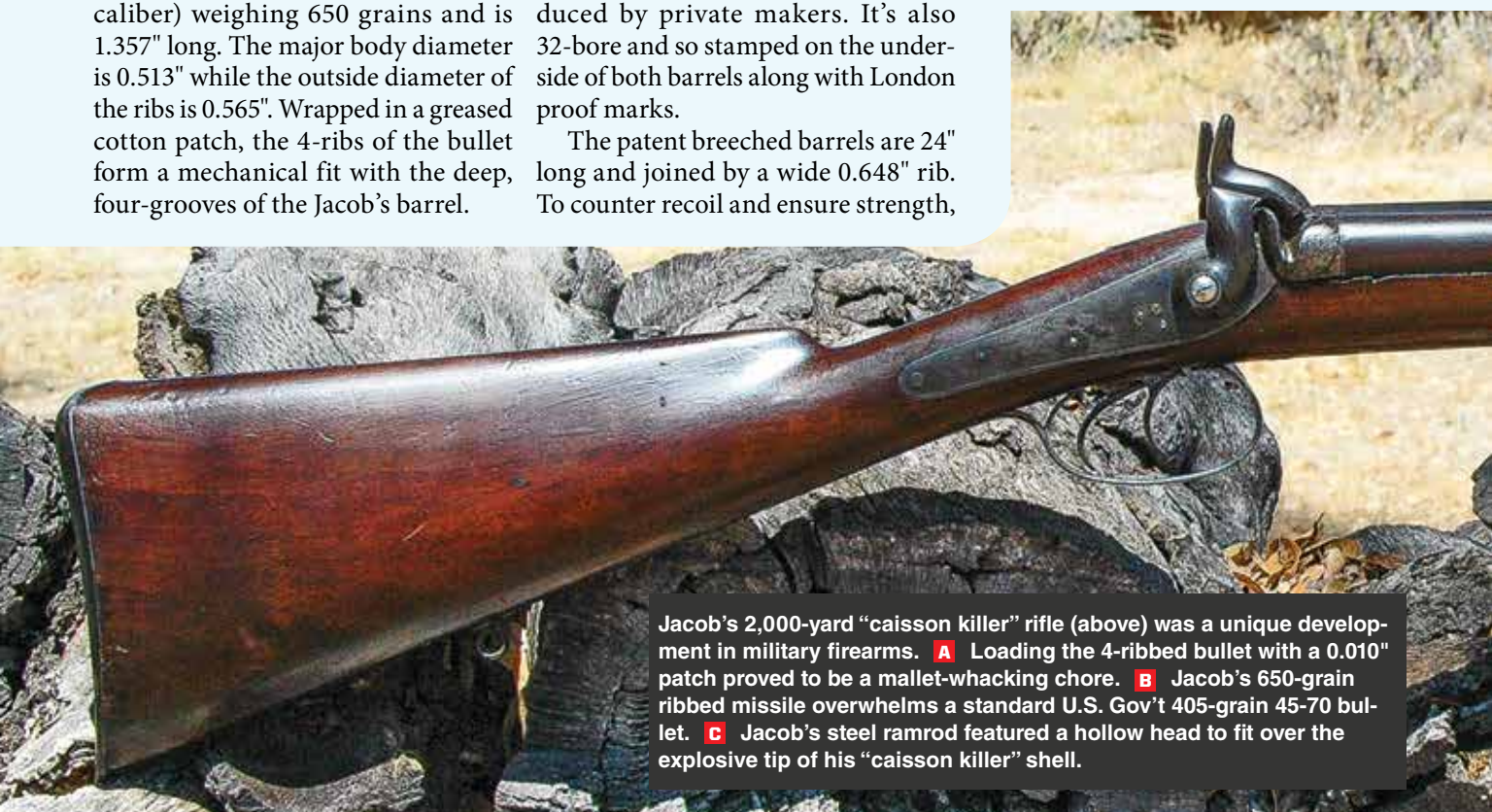
The rifle Jacob perfected to shoot this explosive shell was as unique as the projectile itself.

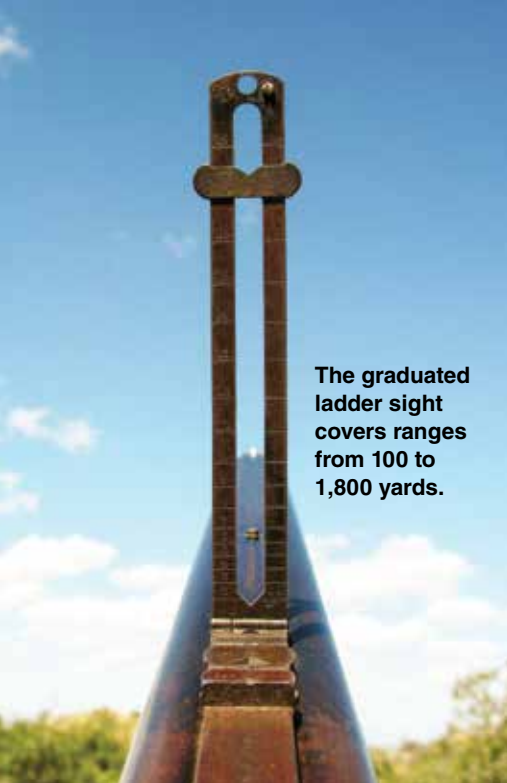
It's a double rifle, although single-barrel sporting rifles were also produced by private makers. It's also 32-bore and so stamped on the underside of both barrels along with London proof marks.

The patent breeched barrels are 24" long and joined by a wide 0.648" rib. To counter recoil and ensure strength,

Jacob insisted the barrels weigh at least 6 lbs. It does, weighing actually 6.75 lbs. and bringing the overall weight of the rifle to 10.75 lbs. The rifle accepts standard Enfield nipples and musket caps. Additionally, it is fitted with sling swivels and an iron ramrod featuring a hollow head to fit over the explosive tip of the bullet and a broad palm piece.

The *piece de resistance* of the design is Jacob's sighting system, consisting of folding leaf sights graduated from 100- to 250-yards in 50-yard increments and a 5" tall ladder sight graduated from 200 to 1,800 yards in 100-yard increments. All this is based, I believe, on a powder charge of 2.5 drams (68-grains) of black powder.





The graduated ladder sight covers ranges from 100 to 1,800 yards.



The Jacob uses a standard Enfield nipple and musket cap.



Was Jacob's rifle ever issued to troops? The evidence is inconclusive but given their survival rate, many were made, but few were used.

ON THE RANGE

Shooting the Jacob is a learning experience. Thanks to a generous friend I was able to acquire a supply of 32-bore bullets poured from an original Jacob mold. Although the exterior of my Jacob is in very good condition, both bores show some corrosion, particularly the right barrel — which typically gets fired first and the most — so I used the left barrel for all of my shooting. The Jacob sights are so fine and faint to my eyes I set the target at 50 yards to establish a reasonable baseline for the gun's potential accuracy.

Given the depth of the grooves, you can actually load a 0.0530–0.535" ball

and a 0.018" patch in the Jacob with great success in spite of the barrel's 1:36 twist. With 45–55 grains of FFg, the Jacob easily kept 3-shot round ball groups within 1.5" at 50-yards. The recovered, fired patches showed no signs of cutting. Frankly, I would be very happy to use the Jacob as a permanent, round ball rifle.

The singular feature of the Jacob design — what makes the Jacob a "Jacob" — is Jacob's streamlined, 4-ribbed bullet. It proved to be a challenge. In none of Jacob's writing does he discuss the thickness or material of the patching he used. On hand, I had 0.0065" thick muslin and tight weave 0.010" cotton stock. A 2" square patch of the latter that fit perfectly around the Jacob bullet and greased with "Pure Mink Oil" from Track of the Wolf, I was in business. Well, not quite.

Loading the Jacob projectile, wrapped with a greased patch down the 24" barrel, over 68 grains of powder

proved to be a chore. The fit was so tight it required the assistance of a rawhide mallet to get the job done. However, accuracy was outstanding, equaling the round ball load and to my surprise, delivered those heavier projectiles to the same point of impact. The recovered patches evidenced just slight cutting lines along the edges of the lands. Switching over to the 0.0065" patch, I could load it without a mallet after using a short starter, but group sizes doubled to 3" and recovered patches evidenced severe cutting. And, oh yes, recoil was stout with the 650-grain bullet!

So, the management of the 4-ribbed missile remains a bit of a mystery to me but does nothing to dampen my enthusiasm for the unique Jacob rifle and the tale of an incredible English officer carrying out ballistic experiments on old India's wild frontier.

GUNS

TWO OF A KIND

Custom Vaqueros To Commemorate A Friendship

Brent T. Wheat

Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp. August McCray and W.F. Call. Frank Hamer and Manny Gault. Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble. Bacon and Eggs. They all have something in common — they're famous duos, a yin and yang of personality and temperament greater in sum than the individual parts. I'll also have the temerity to add my friend Ken alongside Your Faithful Servant to this category, though we tend more toward the Fred and Barney end of the spectrum than Wyatt and Doc.

BACKGROUND

Ken Campbell is the CEO of famed Gunsite Academy in Arizona. Brent T.

Wheat is the threadbare editor of this otherwise-distinguished magazine. However, before either of us achieved a modicum of notoriety in the firearm industry, we were both “baby cops” working side-by-side for decades back in Indiana.

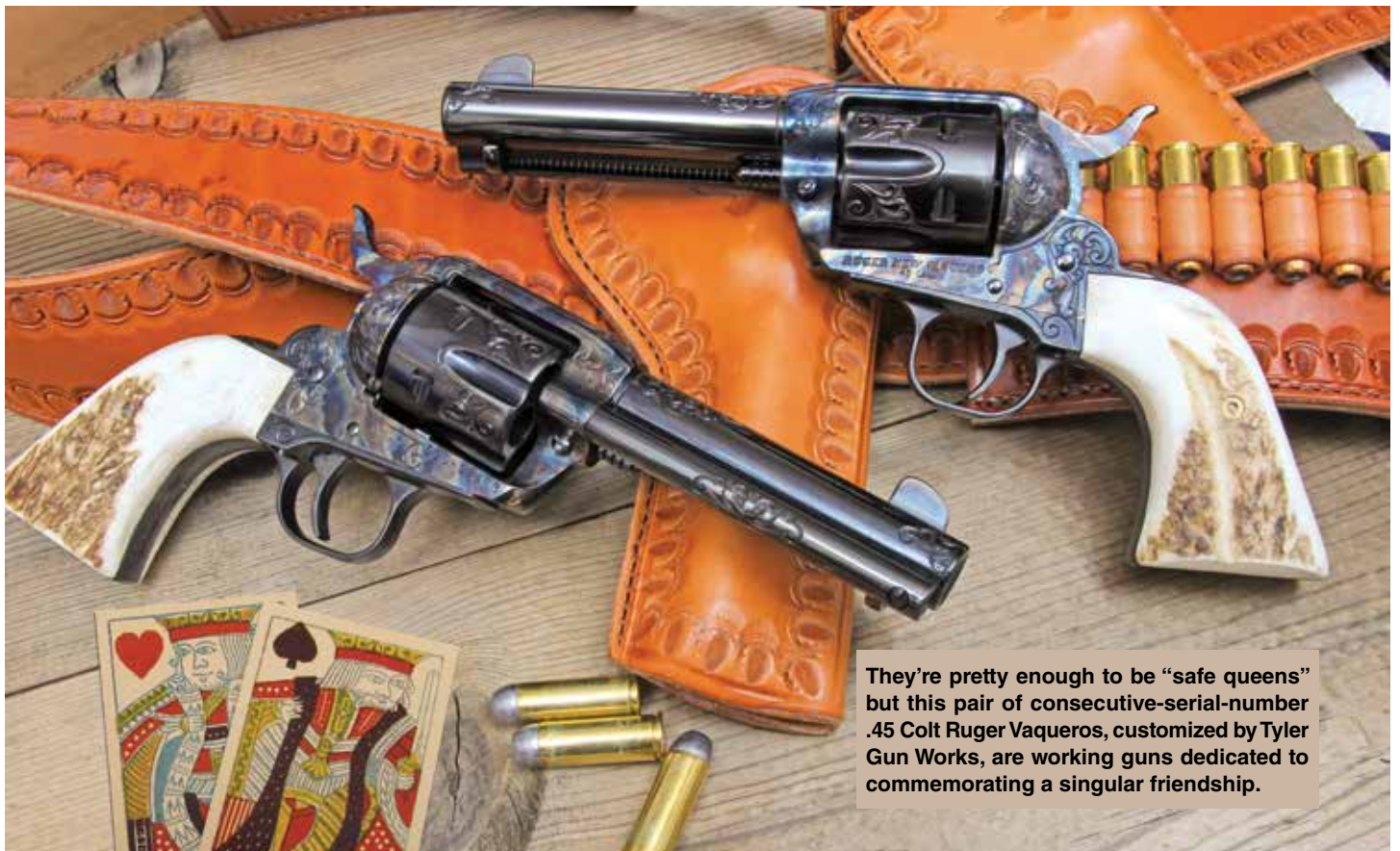
Through those years, we've shared countless eight-hour shifts while he was a sheriff's deputy (later Sheriff) and I a city cop in concurrent jurisdictions. We helped form the SWAT Team, been in innumerable car chases, literally fought side-by-side in bars and on the street, had guns pointed at us and more frequently, pointed guns at other people. I've allegedly given one of his sons life-changing — and very bad — advice, he knows the combination to my gun safe

and together we've killed more bottles of Kentucky Holy Water and maduro cigars than we'd care to admit to our healthcare providers. It's been a good life and a special friendship.

In fact, we consider each other “best friends,” though such labels seem a little trite when you reach a certain age. Regardless, we can generally finish the other's sentences.

IT'S TIME

Thus, two years ago, it seemed past due to commemorate this alliance with something tangible. As we're both “gun guys,” something made of blued steel — perhaps romantically Old West related — seemed the only logical candidate. The answer came



They're pretty enough to be “safe queens” but this pair of consecutive-serial-number .45 Colt Ruger Vaqueros, customized by Tyler Gun Works, are working guns dedicated to commemorating a singular friendship.



A



B



C

one day as I scanned an online gun auction website.

“For sale: two consecutive-serial-numbered .45 Colt Ruger New Vaqueros, never fired, purchased for a Halloween costume,” the listing read. Are you kidding me? Who does such a thing? Regardless, and somewhat skeptical, I made an offer. I won with a low-end bid.

The guns arrived and were exactly as described. I couldn’t believe my luck and felt like it was the proverbial “meant to be.” When I finally showed Ken the pair after our annual Christmas squirrel hunt, he loved them. When I explained one of them actually belonged to him, he was deeply touched — exactly as I expected.

My hope for these guns was they be roughly used so when we were someday sitting on the porch of the old folks’ home, we could make up lies about the time we carried the sixguns to storm the heights of Chapultepec and shot charging lions in the Veldt. It’s unlikely we’ll do either but we will need something to fill our time between rocking and waiting for the 4 p.m. ration of ardent spirits.

THE PLAN

After a few days of cogitation, Ken came up with a great idea: Let’s make the guns even more special with some touches of customization. He even knew who should do the work — Bobby Tyler of Tyler Gun Works in the Texas Panhandle. I immediately concurred.

Bobby, a salt-of-the-earth Texan straight out of central casting, loved the concept and the story. He made several additional suggestions, discussed terms and we were off to the races.

In keeping with the idea of having field guns rather than “safe queens,” Bobby suggested several performance enhancements along with a few exterior embellishments to make the pair unique and special. The wait was intolerable, though only a few months, and the results were even better than we expected.

A Each revolver has the owner’s initials, the year and takes note of the fact they’re a matched set. **B** A meaningful quote from the movie *Tombstone* adorns the backstrap. **C** The Gunsite Academy raven oversees matters on the recoil shield. Special guns deserve special leather and both guns ride in custom Gunsite-theme rigs (below) from Simply Rugged Holsters, just a stone’s throw from the famous shooting school.



FINISHED PRODUCT

Tyler Gun Works is noted for their action jobs and the Vaqueros are a living, shooting example. The revolvers received Tyler’s Revolver Accuracy Package and results were stunning. Twenty-five yard groups smaller than 2” — even in my middling hands — are the order. The trigger feels like 2-1/2 lbs. of quicksilver and the overall mechanical operation is smoother than a vintage Mosler bank vault. I can attest why Bobby and Company’s gunsmithing is rightly famous.

The bluing was removed and Tyler applied his renowned color case hardening treatment to the frames and hammers. The cylinder, barrel and grip were given a deep midnight hot blue and the engraving process started. A pair of real stag grips complemented the work.

A tasteful amount of flourish and scrollwork was engraved, then custom work added. On the recoil shield a raven — the icon of Gunsite — watches over things, then our initials, the year and

“1 of 2” and “2 of 2” added to the backstrap. As males love to pass a broadsword through a buddy’s ribs whenever possible, I take every opportunity to remind Ken my gun is number one.

A final touch on the backstrap are the words “I don’t.” This is Ken’s favorite quote and comes from the movie *Tombstone* in the scene where Doc Holliday and Turkey Creek Jack Johnson are discussing the reasons the men are assisting Wyatt Earp in his vendetta ride. Doc Holliday simply explains, “Because Wyatt is my friend,” to which Johnson replies, “Hell, I’ve got lots of friends.”

Doc definitively concludes the matter by saying, “I don’t.”

Those words are now immortalized in tangible form to commemorate an extraordinary friendship with a singular pair of firearms.

GUNS

TylerGunWorks.com
Ruger.com
SimplyRugged.com

SIG SAUER

MCX



The SIG SAUER MCX Rattler PCB is likely the most compact production AR-based firearm in the world. Available now in .300BLK and 5.56mm, the Rattler PCB packs hard-core firepower into a tidy concealable package. The charging handle (left) is standard M4 sporting bilateral retention latches.



RATTLER PCB

THE POCKET-SIZED .300BLK NUCLEAR REACTOR



Will Dabbs, MD

“**W**hat do you need a new gun for?” Many is the gun nerd who has had his dreams mercilessly torpedoed by those fateful words. In fact, such a statement is unparalleled in the rarefied field of dream-crushing. However, in the case of the revolutionary SIG SAUER MCX Rattler PCB, there are some remarkably practical 21st century real-world applications for this most radical of black guns.

The Rattler PCB is quite literally the ultimate close-quarters defensive firearm. Tuck the Rattler behind the seat of your minivan and have no fear should you find yourself hemmed in by violent protesters bent on mayhem. Secure the gun against little fingers and rest it behind the door to your bedroom closet to be fully prepared for those times you hear breaking glass downstairs at 3 a.m. The SIG MCX Rattler PCB is an unabashedly fun gun with a practical side.

VISCERAL IMPRESSIONS

I have written for the gun press for a quarter century now. Someday, if I keep plugging away at my word processor and going to Sunday School regularly, I hope eventually to join the ranks of such esteemed names as

Huntington, Taffin, Venturino and Ayoob. To earn such rarefied company requires a literal lifetime of study and a reserved, sober view on the industry.

To show undue enthusiasm in the face of some greasy new smoke pole would be both unbecoming of my presumably expert stature and borderline unprofessional. I should indeed temper my zeal with patience and wisdom. A true professional gun writer should therefore approach any new concept gun with a stoic staid skepticism.

In this vein I transcribed my reaction verbatim when first I cracked open the cardboard after the UPS Brown Truck of Happiness delivered this remarkable product of the SIG SAUER Skunk Works — “Holy snot!”

SIG PEGS THE AWESOMETER

The Rattler PCB is likely the smallest production rifle-caliber handgun in the world and chambered in .300BLK or 5.56mm. It is also available as a Short-Barreled Rifle (SBR) with SIG’s standard skeletonized aluminum side-folding stock. In this configuration the gun requires BATF registration and a \$200 tax stamp.

The MCX Rattler PCB sports a two-position adjustable pistol brace, a 5.5" barrel and a custom forearm for accessories. I previously felt the SIG MPX — a pistol-caliber large frame handgun packing enough cool to





This is how the PCB is intended to be fired — keep in mind using the brace as a shoulder stock could be interpreted by law enforcement as a violation of the law.

make Rosie O'Donnell look like Steve McQueen — was the absolute apogee of the gunmaking art. The MCX Rattler PCB raises the bar yet higher.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

The SIG MCX Rattler PCB crams everything righteous and wholesome about the AR15 into a concealable handgun-sized package packing legit .30-caliber firepower. The adjustable piston-driven gas system makes the gun reliable. SIG engineering makes it ergonomic. The gun's chopped tube and abbreviated pistol grip even make it concealable. The synergistic combination makes it awesome.

The magazine release is bilateral, while the bolt catch is oversized and easily accessed. The gun is simply festooned with sling sockets. The Rattler PCB accepts all standard magazines while remaining thin, svelte and lightweight. The scary end comes adorned with an open-ended three-prong flash suppressor.

The pistol grip is a bit smaller than standard and textured for solid purchase. The ambidextrous charging handle is right where Colt put it in the first place, so the gun runs like your favorite AR, only smaller. The monolithic upper is seamless with the forearm while the forged lower includes a machined trigger guard.

CALIBER PARTICULARS

The tested .300BLK version of the SIG Rattler PCB feeds supersonic and subsonic rounds with comparable ease. The gas system adjusts using nothing more cumbersome than the tip of a cartridge or even a fingertip if you're motivated. One setting is for supersonic ammo. The other is for the subsonic sort. We had no stoppages.

With a SIG SRD762 sound suppressor in place, the gun is laughably quiet with subsonic ammo. SIG cans are built like armored fighting vehicles. They craft the things out of Inconel 718, a nickel-alloy stainless steel liberally used on Navy submarines, jet engine thrust reversers and core components in nuclear reactors. The SRD762 is a radical and effective tubeless design that will outlive you.

The .300BLK cartridge has found a solid niche in both civilian and Law Enforcement applications. There are even a few spooky high-end military organizations purportedly with an operational affinity for the round. Jason Imhoff, the guy who thought up the .300BLK in the first place, is SIG's Director of Ammunition Engineering. The true strength of the .300BLK cartridge rests in the fact it will run through standard magazines using standard 5.56mm bolt carrier groups while offering both subsonic and supersonic velocities dependent upon bullet weight.

Supersonic loads are entirely appropriate for hunting whitetail deer down here in the Deep South where I live. Subsonic rounds through a proper sound suppressor are just stupid quiet. With the Rattler PCB and a few cool-guy accessories from SIG, you get to pick your poison.

BEHOLD THE REVOLUTION

The Rattler PCB sports an SB Tactical collapsible Pistol Stabilizing Brace (PSB). In case you've been living underneath a rock someplace, the PSB created an entirely new genre in



The gas piston driven action (left) is readily adjustable for subsonic and supersonic ammo. Designed to accept the tip of a bullet, a standard set of fingers will do in a pinch. The SIG SAUER Romeo3 micro red dot (right) is small enough for a conventional handgun. It adds no appreciable weight and runs like a champ on the Rattler MCX PCB.

defensive guns in America. Originally designed by a Physical Therapist to allow disabled veterans to run a gun one-handed, the PSB straps to the shooter's forearm to provide enhanced safety and stability during one-handed operation. The addition of a PSB has also been found by ATF not to change the host gun's classification from a pistol to a rifle. This means the weapon in question can legally retain its stubby pistol barrel.

The Rattler's PSB has evolved since the gun's initial introduction. The brace on my gun is an earlier version with a pair of steel bars that collapse into the mount in the manner of the M3 Grease Gun stock. The most recent Pivoting Contour Brace is minimalist in nature and folds discreetly to the side. All models include a

rubber forearm pad with a length of Velcro material to secure it in place.

COMBAT GLASS

SIG SAUER makes its own line of tactical optics. Their Romeo3 micro red dot is adequately compact to mount upon a handgun slide. When bolted atop the Rattler PCB, this little rig offers lightning-fast employment with no significant weight penalty.

The sight has a variety of light intensities to accommodate everything from bright daylight to hard dark. The whole mechanism is hardened against rough handling and feeds from standard CR2032 batteries available at any drug store. Waterproof, fogproof and



If you really want to peg the funmeter — and scare “gun safety advocates” — the SIG MCX Rattler PCB will also accept this 50-round skeletonized drum from X-Products.



The SIG MCX Rattler PCB is a pistol in the eyes of the ATF. While the Rattler PCB is slightly larger than most conventional handguns, it is an order of magnitude more accurate, powerful and controllable.

sporting a 3MOA dot, the Romeo3 also comes with a skeletonized riser mount.

RANGE REPORT

So what's it really like to slip a SIG can onto the Rattler PCB's snout and ring some steel? Holy crap. I could shoot this gun until I starved to death. The .300BLK round offers minimal recoil as well as hearing-safe acoustics in its subsonic guise. The Rattler PCB slithers around corners and within an automobile like literally nothing else. The PSB offers a stable firing platform eclipsing any conventional handgun. It also collapses small enough to hide in the center console of your pickup truck.

Even moving with a purpose, I could easily keep my

rounds in the black at modest ranges. In fact, when firing from a rest and taking my time, I could produce single ragged holes all day long at 15 meters. Out to 100 meters and beyond the velocity, discrepancies between supersonic and subsonic rounds become significant. However, the SIG guys printed a 3" group at 300 yards using supersonic ammo. Up close the Rattler PCB hits like a freight train, albeit a remarkably quiet freight train.

With the can in place, the gun is just front-heavy enough to mitigate any recoil or muzzle climb. The suppressor also keeps your fingers healthy, vibrant and attached to your hand. Without the suppressor you do need to mind your digits when moving quickly. This thing is tiny and it would be easy to let one wander.

COGITATIONS

Ours is a weird old world and getting weirder every day. Natural disasters, civil unrest, terrorist activity and good old-fashioned people being stupid inject the responsible armed American into some circumstances our forefathers might never have imagined. In such sordid environs as these, the Rattler PCB makes you the apex predator.

It's hardly cheap, but the SIG Rattler MCX PCB brings rifle-grade accuracy to a pistol-sized platform. The gun is adequately powerful to reliably drop a whitetail but also rides comfortably within a modest knapsack. The Rattler MCX PCB is also just a hoot to shoot. In addition to all the practical stuff, the enjoyment it offers you on a lazy Saturday afternoon at the range is well worth the price of admission.

GUNS



These are typical 15-meter groups fired from a simple rest. At handgun ranges, the SIG MCX Rattler PCB pistol is rifle accurate. The SIG Rattler PCB could do this all day long.

SIGSAUER.com

REDUNDANCY

IT'S NOT FOR DUNCES

Massad Ayoob

Life in general and studies of gunfights in particular have taught me a few things. One is if you need something bad, if it's not on your physical person, you may not be able to get to it in time. Another is the importance of redundancy: As our own Clint Smith put it so eloquently, "Two is one and one is none." So, I carry a lot of stuff.

Wardrobe dictates how much that is. I have to wear a suit in court, and it cuts things down, but on my own time the trousers are almost always 5.11 cargo pants. "Tactical look" doesn't count: Where I live, lots of folks wear them. Think "walking file cabinet."

DRAWERS

Two \$\$\$ repositories: regular wallet left hip pocket — the 5.11s offset

this pocket so you aren't sitting on the damn wallet and throwing your back out of alignment — and a money clip right side front pocket. In the same pocket, the C60 folding knife I designed for Spyderco 20-some years ago and coming back soon in a Sprint Run I'm told. Comb. Pocket change. Right hip pocket: two handkerchiefs — redundancy, remember? Eyedrops and a Bianchi Speed Strip with five 135-grain +P Speer Gold Dot .38 Special rounds in the right side cargo pocket. Left side trouser pocket: J-Frame 2" revolver, most often the S&W M&P 340 with Crimson Trace LaserGrips. Pocket holster is either a Safariland holster. Southpaw cargo pocket: badge wallet with retired officer creds, backup ID to what's in the regular wallet — did I mention redundancy? Cell phone pocket: SureFire LumaMax flashlight. If I have to wear



Mas in typical garb when not dressed for court, wedding or funeral.

a suit, backup will be in an Alessi, DeSantis or Galco ankle holster.

In warm weather, tee or polo under unbuttoned and untucked Columbia-style shirt. On the dress gunbelt, normally a holster at 3:30 for primary handgun. If I'm not testing a gun for an article — regular carry is part of the



Mas carries one spare G17 mag with this double-stack G19, two spare Wilsons with a single-stack like this Springfield Armory Range Officer .45.



When sciatica acts up, Bianchi X-15 is Mas' "orthopedic holster," here with a full-size 1911 .45. Note keys on a triple-purpose D-Jammer.

test for a carry piece, duh — it's most often lately a 16-shot 9mm with either Winchester 127-grain +P+ Ranger-T or 124-grain Speer Gold Dot. I spent a lot of time last year with a Wilson Combat Beretta 92 Compact, loaded with the 15-round Mec-Gar magazine and backed with a 17-round full-size Beretta mag, also Mec-Gar or, as at this writing, a Gen5 GLOCK 19 backed by a spare 17-round G17 mag. In 10-round states, if I'm driving there, often a 1911 .45 or a GLOCK 30 in the same caliber; if I'm flying, one of the above 9mms with "Clinton mags," a 1911 9mm, or S&W's new CSX in the same caliber. The Reason: Commercial airlines limit you to 11 lbs. of ammo in your baggage and since resupply on the ground is tougher than ever these days, I can carry twice as much 115-grain 9mm as 230-grain .45 ACP. With the single-stack guns, I carry two spare mags, with double stack, usually just one.

Holsters? Wardrobe isn't the only factor. In summer 2020, I was diagnosed with a couple of deteriorating discs in the lumbar region from whence the sciatic nerve emanates, and on bad days the sciatica goes right to the hip where I've always carried. My Bianchi X-15 shoulder holster has come out of retirement and been regular wear for months at a time. When the hip tolerates it, IWB or more often now due to the sciatica, OWB by Mitch Rosen, Precision Holster, Aker or Master Holster most often. Leather belt usually by Precision Holster, fabric belt usually by



Backup: S&W 340 M&P, Speed Strip of .38 +P, pocket holster, Spyderco C60 knife.



Redundancy and multi-purpose: (1) D-Jammer keychain clears malfunctions, works great as a Kubotan. (2) ID. (3) Communication. (4) ID and \$\$\$. (5) \$\$. (6) Comm, camera and recorder, light. (7) Light.

the Wilderness Instructor.

For the above reasons I'm trying to keep weight off the hips, so the second flashlight — one or another larger, more powerful SureFire often on a horizontal Kydex carrier near the belt buckle — but not always anymore. There's a light on the iPhone, anyway.

CALLING ALL CARS

Two cell phones — I did mention redundancy, right? — usually in shirt pockets. One can die. I have each on a different system. I've often been to places where my AT&T had bars and my Verizon didn't, or vice-versa.

Keys on the Kubotan-like D-Jammer I designed for Monadnock many years ago, tucked into the front of the waistband. Less likely to be dropped, lost, or mislaid and keeps an intermediate force defensive tool constantly at hand. Plus, I designed it to clear handgun malfunctions, hence its name.

We're supposed to mention timepieces, right? In addition to the phones, a Citizen chronometer from my lovely bride, which means I don't need a stopwatch or electronic timer when running the range.

Redundancy, accessibility, handiness. Works for me.

GUNS



The Benchmade 535BK-4, with its upscale materials and attractive design accents, is an upscale send-up of their popular Bugout EDC.

BENCHMADE BUGOUT ELEGANT ROGUE

Pat Covert

Most successful cutlery manufacturers have models in their stable that catch fire from day one. Knives with this “It factor” have the potential to ensconce themselves in the lineup for years — and even decades — with many iterations of the original varying in changes such as blade styles, steels and handle materials. Benchmade Knives is a master at this strategy and their latest hot dog, the Bugout, is well on its way to being the next mainstay in the company’s corral.

The Bugout 535BK-4 is the most upscale version of this crowd pleaser to date. The attraction of the original Bugout design has been its clean, competent good looks. The 535BK-4 adds spice to the equation beginning with 6061-T6 aluminum frame slabs

sporting a machined sunburst emanating from the blade pivot outward. The blade is a 3.24" Drop Point of stainless Bohler M390 super steel, known for its toughness and superb



The 535BK-4 takes the Benchmade Bugout’s tough, proven AXIS Lock platform and elevates it to a higher level of distinction.

edge retention. The blade has a matte black Cerakote finish with ambidextrous, eye-popping red anodized thumb studs. This appealing use of spot color appears again on the frame spacers. The blade opens and stays rock solid in place by Benchmade’s patented AXIS Lock. On the backside you’ll find a deep carry, stainless steel pocket clip.

WHY YOU’LL LIKE IT

Benchmade fans have come to expect upscale versions of their favorite models and this version of the popular Bugout is sure to delight. The upgrades on the 535BK-4 are tastefully done with just enough pizzazz to wet the whistle without being tacky. Underneath the eye appeal lurks the very sound, extremely tough Bugout design that put this knife on the map for so many Benchmade users. The sizzle on this steak is spot on. MSRP for the Bugout 535BK-4 is \$275.

GUNS

Benchmade.com

CROSSFIRE

continued from page 8

make the smallest .44 Spl. we could. I ordered a Single-Six .32 and put a box of .32 longs through it before it became a donor.

John and I proceeded to make a cylinder, then a second as we got the wall thickness just a wee bit thin on the first. A new barrel of 4-3/4", opened the frame some and refit the hand to work as a 5-shot.

Please tell me about your Gallagher .44 specials, what frames did he use? As far as I know, mine is a one of a kind. A photo is attached.

Life got in the way and I lost contact with John. I was deeply saddened when I heard of his passing.

Will Machauer

Hello, Will! Thanks for writing and giving me the information on my friend John Gallagher. On the Gallagher .44 Special guns in question, Gallagher started with two Rugers, one a Three-Screw Old Model .357 and the other one is either a New Model Flat-Top .357 or .44 Special. I'm inclined to believe the latter. —JT

WATER WILL KILL YOU TOO

I started carrying two guns after reading articles and books by Massad Ayoob and many others. It just made sense to have a gun accessible to each hand. I realize I probably will never need a gun and I hope it stays that way. I refuse to be a victim so, if by chance there is an attempt, I carry two guns 99% of the time. Those writers also taught me to carry extra ammo, knife, flashlight, multi-tool, pepper spray and phone. I've added a few other things but I feel the list is the basics. When I leave the house I am prepared for whatever I may need during the day.

I think the only thing I am not prepared for is swimming. If I fall in the water, chances are I will sink out of sight in seconds!

David Chuppa



Having jumped in a pool in full SWAT kit, including a helmet and body armor, it's eye-opening to see what it takes to not drown. This is why the military makes recruits undergo such training. It's not a bad idea to at least once hit the pool in normal street clothes, shoes and carrying the equivalent extra weight of your equipment to see what happens, though I'd

bet 99.99% of non-military, non-law enforcement people have ever considered it. I'd recommend everyone try it at least once, and maybe consider a yearly refresher exercise if you live in Florida, Minnesota or other water-intensive area. Like any other type of crisis, you'll never know when you might end up accidentally in the drink and it'll certainly kill you as dead as a .50 BMG! —BW

STAY SAFE

I was amused by the May 2022 story, "Moving Day." It brought back memories.

My friend had an incredible collection of 1921 Thompsons in mint condition and worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. He bought a jeweler's safe in Flagstaff, Ariz., to protect his collection. This safe was the real deal. It weighed so much it bent the axle of the trailer used to transport it to Phoenix, about 120 miles away. He invited me over to witness the monster of steel. I told him it was terrific but I had a \$50 key that would open it. He gave me a look of total puzzlement. I insisted, and he grew more bewildered. At that point, I made a "gun" with my hand, pointed it to his head and said, "Used, \$50 Jennings, open it now."

Lessons: Keep safes out of sight. Show your collection only to trusted individuals and tell them never to mention it to anyone. Provide your significant other with the combination unless you want them to die or be beaten because they cannot open the safe. Signs saying "Black Powder Stored

Inside" may deter or make some safe-crackers not use a cutting torch or cut-off grinder. Criminals are not always the brightest people, so it's worth a try.

Richard MacLean

I read your story on gun safes with a smile on my face as I stood in my basement admiring my 3-gun and 1-ammo safe and realized I did not have enough room for the storage of my guns. I believe if I had to find a place for all my "stuff," I would have to build a secure room onto my house.

Ronald Sallow

I feel your pain, as do many of other readers! —BW

WAR PRIZE

I'm a shift lieutenant working night-shift at a small police department. I started listening to podcasts a few months ago because the radio is too repetitive. I was thoroughly pleased when I found your podcasts. I am currently listening to the back editions and enjoying almost every one, especially the Gun Cranks. In episode 110 y'all talked about hand-me-down guns. I only have one and I thought I'd share it.

It belonged to my father. He was also a WWII combat vet who served in Europe and he brought back two pistols he took off German officers. One disappeared over the years but the other one I have. It's a .25 ACP with holster. I have included some pics. I have shot it and it shoots quite well considering the sights are merely a groove along the top of the slide. I hope you might find it a little bit interesting too.

Mark Hillis

NAME GAME

I found the GUNS Magazine Podcast a while ago and have been binge listening, trying to catch up! I just finished episode 110 about Hardware Store Guns. While my question is not

continued on page 65

LOCKSTEP LEXICON

THE MEDIA HAS TAKEN SIDES

Dave Workman

We're in a war and instead of being neutral, impartial observers, the establishment media has definitely taken sides — and just to remove any doubt, you are the enemy.

You see it in the headlines and news columns every day, with terms such as “gun violence,” “gun crime,” “gun reform,” “gun safety groups,” “assault weapons” and the ever-popular “common-sense gun laws.” Each of these terms, and others spawned over the years by the gun control lobby, has been carefully crafted to demonize firearms and the law-abiding citizens who own them.

That's not just me talking. A while back, I was having this conversation with old friend Tom Gresham, founder and host of the widely syndicated and hugely popular *Gun Talk* radio program. “I'm sure they focus group these things,” he observed about terminology that has become so familiar, so institutionalized even FOX News reporters and commentators use the phrases.

“You and I understand what's going on,” Gresham continued. “It is a very calculated conditioning. That's what these terms are all about. You condition people to believe something.”

Soon enough, as we have witnessed as a nation, the vocabulary of gun grabbers is now the accepted norm; the language of the left overwhelms facts and truths.

A BOLD-FACED LIE

Earlier this year, when newly-installed Seattle, Washington Mayor Bruce Harrell held a presser to explain

how he would attack the “gun violence epidemic” in his city, he said this: “We have too many guns pouring into the cities, and into our country. And you will hear, this year, me lead efforts on trying to get relief from the exemption RCW 9.41.290 (Washington state's model preemption law). You'll hear me talking about that. I don't know how many lives have to be lost before we realize we're one of the few states that has that kind of restriction allowing the state to govern the laws we need for our city of Seattle.”

It was simply not true. Washington is not “one of the few states” with

It is part of the calculated lie, which Gresham defined in the simplest terms: “When you can throw out a lie with a 10-second soundbite and it takes us 60 seconds to come back with a response, with data and facts, we lose.”

Perhaps the best example of this was a line from the John Ford-John Wayne-James Stewart classic *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. It was a western about good versus evil, but the real message of the story was about revealing the truth while destroying a myth long perpetuated by — you guessed it — the media.

“When legend becomes fact,” said the local newspaper editor at the end of the film, “print the legend.”

This is why people like Harrell, and even Joe Biden with his oft-repeated canard about how the Second Amendment did not allow everyone to own a gun at the time it was adopted, get away with it. Or at least think they do.

The public is habitually too gullible to question such claims as Harrell's and the press is too lazy and far too aligned with the prevaricators to challenge them.

PAY ATTENTION, STRIKE BACK SWIFTLY

As Wyatt Earp is said to have declared to Ike Clanton at the gunfight in the empty lot near the O.K. Corral, “The fight's commenced. Get to fighting or get away!”

Pay attention to the news, whether televised, in print or online. When you see or hear such prevarications, immediately send an email message

or make a telephone call to the news agency and correct the fib with the facts on your side. Every TV station has a website and somewhere there will be a link to send messages/complaints to the management. Newspapers have “Letters to the Editor” sections and many of them accept Op-Eds from people with opposing views.

And lastly, be willing to confront these prevaricators in public forums. Put them on the spot where there



a firearms preemption law and don't allow anyone to get away with saying something similar about your state. At last count 42 states have adopted such statutes and Washington's was the model used by many of those states to craft their own. Washington adopted preemption to create uniformity in gun laws from border-to-border in 1983 and revised and strengthened the law in 1985, the year the National Rifle Association held its annual convention in Seattle.

may be reporters present. Be mannerly about it, don't call them names, don't make threats and be prepared to respond to any insults with, "I'm sorry, I didn't catch that. What did you just say?" Even if the reply is further insulting, you mustn't react with bel-

READ THE NEWSPAPER

This isn't about knowing what's in the news, but how it is reported. See how many times in crime-related stories you find the terms "gun violence" or "gun safety groups," or something similar to determine just how far into

You're going to be bombarded with news and opinion whether it is agreeable or deplorable from now until November. Grow a thick skin and remember what this column has explained in the past: "Politics is a contact sport."

THIS ISN'T ABOUT KNOWING WHAT'S IN THE NEWS, BUT HOW IT IS REPORTED.

ligerence. Instead, responding with, "Well, I'll take that under advisement." Always be intelligent and diplomatic. Let the other person look the fool.

And always remember the "hot mic" rule, occasionally violated by politicians including the president, as was demonstrated by Biden some months back when he referred to Fox News White House correspondent Peter Doocy as "a stupid son of a ..."

Of course, this requires you to watch the news, instead of 10-year-old sitcom reruns.

the political weeds your local news journal has drifted.

Pay attention to whether a story is balanced — that is, if the gun control crowd is quoted, did the reporter reach out for an opposite viewpoint from a Second Amendment group or individual gun owner(s)?

Learn to tell the difference between what is considered "advocacy journalism" — which is perfectly fine and considered protected speech — and what is supposed to be straight news.

This is, after all, an election year.

And remember something else Gresham noted in our telephone chat. Be careful of your remarks and consciously avoid using the anti-gun vocabulary. It's not "gun safety" or "gun reform," it's "gun control" and say it like you mean it. It's not "gun violence" but "violent crime."

Gresham reminds his listeners: "There is no example, not one, of a gun control law in the United States that has ever reduced crime."

It's your turn to control the narrative. Get with it.

GUNS



CLICK BAIT:

Catch more handguns daily!

New website loaded and made ready for you.

Visit americanhandgunner.com



EMERSON JUNE BUG KNIFE

I don't normally review knives for *GUNS*, but when you see a blade sporting the nickname of one of your granddaughters, it's "Game On."

The Emerson June Bug, like its counterpart namesake, is just plain cute. Sporting a 2.3" Wharncliffe-style blade fashioned from 154CM steel — otherwise known as "crucible stainless" — it is perhaps the smallest knife ever made by Emerson.

It features stout G10 black stocks, a liner lock, an exceptionally hefty belt clip and a largish thumb deployment button on the blade. Despite its minuscule size, the presentation is small but mighty, handy as duct tape and a perfect EDC blade that won't raise eyebrows even in the most genteel situation. Those

of you who have caused awkward looks when presenting a scary-looking tactical folder to open a birthday gift know what I'm talking about!

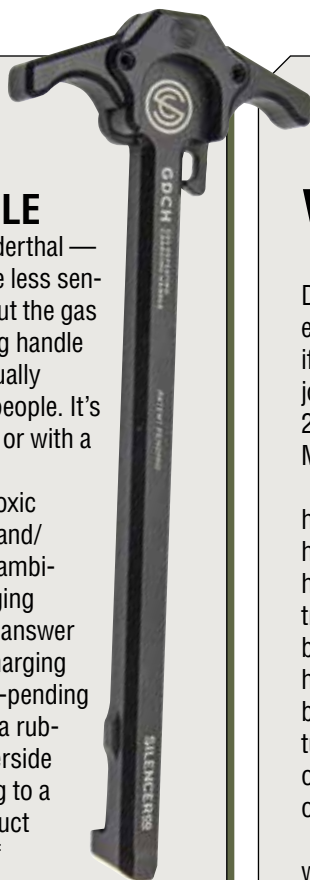
And, as an added special bonus, the Emerson June Bug is almost as cute as a certain three-year-old girl I know!

MSRP: \$219
EmersonKnives.com

SILENCERCO GAS DEFEATING CHARGING HANDLE

I guess I'm either a Neanderthal — likely, in fact — or I have less sensitivity to such things, but the gas blowback from the charging handle on an AR-platform can actually cause problems for some people. It's worse if you shoot indoors or with a suppressed weapon.

If you don't want those toxic burnt gasses up the snout and/or just want a high-quality ambidextrous aftermarket charging handle, SilencerCo has the answer with their Gas Defeating Charging Handle (GDCH). The patent-pending magic is accomplished via a rubber O-ring seal on the underside of the handle and according to a high-speed video, the product really works. Regardless of reason, it immediately replaces the Mil-Spec handle in one of my guns because of its much higher quality.



MSRP: \$114
SilencerCo.com

MISSION FIRST TACTICAL (MFT) TUMBLER

Wanna draw some looks at your next training class or Oh-Dark-Thirty ops briefing? It's easy to be one of the cool kids if you're sipping your morning joe from one of the new Evac 24-oz. insulated bottles from Mission First Tactical.

The bottles are rated to keep hot beverage warm for four hours and cold stuff for nine hours in their double-walled, triple-insulated stainless steel body. They're hella stout and have tight-fitting screw-on lids but the most noteworthy feature is the high-quality graphics on the outside — your choice of a reproduction M18 Smoke Red grenade or the M7 A3 Riot CS agent grenade.

My days of morning briefings are over, but I can't wait to carry my water in the CS grenade lookalike to the gym. I'm guessing it would probably help move along the guy who is always hogging the Smith Press machine.



MSRP: \$34.95
MissionFirstTactical.com

TAC SHIELD GUN BELT

It's always a pain to divest yourself of holsters, mag pouch and the other goodies after a day at the range or in training but I've discovered a better way to sling your gear — the Tac Shield Gun Belt, specifically their 1.5"-wide model.

Built from double-wall 7,000-lb. Mil-Spec webbing with plastic stiffeners, it sports a stout COBRA buckle that is secure as a mother's love but unlocks faster than my liquor cabinet on Friday afternoon. The belt is small enough to fit through regular trouser belt loops if so inclined but where it shines is as an external belt for holding gun and magazines during training. Then, whenever you take a break or have finished for the day, you don't face wrestling a heavy, sweat-soaked and uncooperative rig back off your belt and out of your pants before returning to the classroom, bathroom or traveling.

GUNS

MSRP: \$72
TacShield.com



CROSSFIRE

continued from page 61

about a hardware store gun, I thought of it while listening to Roy talking about finding notes “hidden” in the gun. I have acquired a few guns over the years the original owners scratched their info onto. There is a revolver with a social security number scratched on the bottom of the butt and a Model 12 with the owner's name and SSN scratched on the receiver, again inside the receiver, on the bolt and some other places. Another is a retired Border Patrol pistol with a “#5” scratched into the slide, presumably for arsenal identification. While this is interesting, the previous owners were not family and I don't have a real connection to the guns other than they are now mine to make new memories with. How do I go about removing those markings? Or would I be better off leaving them and making up a wild story to tell the grandchildren one day? Is there any negative aspect of owning a firearm with someone else's name or SSN on it?

Craig Kunz

Every case is different but generally speaking, such markings don't usually affect the value either way and if stolen, makes the gun much easier to identify. The only way I've heard of removing such engravings is by engraving something over the top, kinda like people do with tattoos of their old girlfriend's name. Instead of further altering the gun, go ahead and make a wild story to tell grandkids about Roy Johnson, the last Mountain Man in existence or some other such load of horsefeathers! —BW

.....

T/C INSIDER

I would like to know more about Thompson Center and Smith & Wesson. I know S&W will not be making Thompson Center in the future. Do you think someone will pick up Thompson Center Arms or will we have to go to custom barrel makers to get a new barrel from now on?

Curtis Christenson

At last update, the T/C brand is for sale but hasn't been purchased — yet.



It's purely a guess, but I can't imagine T/C will simply die because there is considerable value in the name and all the great products they built. The current company isn't gone, it has changed focus to industrial metal casting, including for new owner S&W. Since nothing has happened publicly after the sale announcement last year, I'm guessing there is behind-the-scenes negotiation taking place. Then again, in today's world of leveraged buyouts, company-raiding equity firms and anti-gun financial problems, who knows! —BW

GUNS



GUNFIGHTER DEFENDER TAYLOR'S & COMPANY

Taylor's & Company announces the addition of the *Gunfighter Defender* revolver to their Performance Series for 2022. The Gunfighter Defender possesses the original Gunfighter features and the lowered Runnin' Iron hammer. Taylor's installed the 1860 Army grip onto the new model cattleman frame to accommodate the larger handed shooter. This model features a case-hardened forged steel frame, blued steel parts, lowered hammer spur and a checkered Army-Size walnut grip. It is offered in .357 Mag and .45 LC, each with a 4.75" and 5.5" length. MSRP: \$704.46 and \$847.71 for tuned models. For more info: (540) 722-2017, TaylorsFirearms.com



HELLCAT PRO SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

Springfield Armory's *Hellcat Pro* is a 9mm compact pistol in a smaller footprint than any other gun in its class. Optics ready and equipped with an accessory rail and hammer-forged barrel, this everyday carry pistol with an ergonomic, slim profile packs a 15+1 capacity with the flush-fitting magazine. MSRP: \$600 to \$699. For more info: (800) 680-6866, Springfield-Armory.com



SENECA DRAGONFLY MK2 AIR VENTURI

The *Seneca Dragonfly MK2* is equipped with Air Venturi's patented Butterfly High Efficiency Pump System. This versatile, multi-pump pneumatic air rifle makes shooting fun and easy. The improved design allows pumping effort to remain consistent through the entire cycle for up to a 50% reduction in total pumping effort. Ideal for small game hunting or target shooting at the range. MSRP: \$199.99. For more info: (216) 292-2570, AirVenturi.com



FRED EICHLER SERIES LIGHT PREDATOR2L ROCK RIVER ARMS

Rock River Arms' newest predator rifle, the *Fred Eichler Series Light Predator2L* features lightweight, carbon fiber handguards. These reduce overall weight and incorporate the coyote paw prints found on all Fred Eichler Series handguards. The rifle incorporates a .223 Wylde Chamber for both 5.56mm and .223 ammo. Its 16" lightweight fluted stainless-steel barrel with a 1:8 twist offers accuracy at long ranges and is cryogenically treated and bead blasted for a no-glare finish. MSRP: \$1,945 and \$2,010. For more info: (309) 792-5780, RockRiverArms.com



ULTRA CUSTOM LIGHT BEARING HOLSTER 1791 GUNLEATHER

The *Ultra Custom Light Bearing Holster* from 1791 Gunleather eliminates the need for matching your gun and light/laser combo with a specific holster. Featuring 1791 Gunleather's patented Memory-Lok technology, the OWB holster allows for molding and re-molding for endless customization. Ultra-soft cowhide on the front and durable steer hide on the back plus a high sweat guard for added protection. An optic-cut can accommodate most pistol optics. MSRP: \$99.99. For more info: (800) 407-1791, 1791GunLeather.com



ELEVATED II AND SUBALPINE OPTIFADE CAMOUFLAGE ON RIDGELINE AND RANGER 22 CHRISTENSEN ARMS

Christensen Arms has partnered with W.L. Gore to use the *Elevated II* and *Subalpine Optifade Camouflage* on the *Ridgeline* and *Ranger 22*. The 6.3-lb. *Ridgeline* hunting rifle is offered in 20 chamberings and has a sporter carbon fiber composite gun-stock plus a stainless-steel radial muzzle brake. Built for precision, the 5.1-lb. *Ranger 22* features an aluminum receiver with a steel recoil lug insert, Christensen Arms carbon fiber tension barrel and more. MSRP: *Ridgeline* from \$2,399 and \$849.99 for the *Ranger 22*. For more info: (435) 633-4667, ChristenArms.com

KEYMOD COMPATIBLE VERTICAL GRIP TANGODOWN



TangoDown Inc. announces the release of the redesigned *KEYMOD Vertical Grip* (Part Number: BGV-KM2). It offers the same comfortable feel as the original but with a reduced footprint at the top to allow a higher grip closer to the handguard. The BGV-KM2 is compact and tough, with a light-weight injection molded shape. Available in Black and Flat Dark Earth. MSRP: \$35.54. For more info: sales@tangodown.com, TangoDown.com



HEAT-A-SEAT THERMASEAT

The *Heat-A-Seat* from ThermoSeat provides low-maintenance warmth for all your outdoor adventures. For hunting and fishing trips that demand an added layer of protection between your bottom and the ground, stand, or boat, the Heat-A-Seat features premium Insulsoft closed-cell foam that's warm, soft and durable. MSRP: \$10.99. For more info: (603) 784-5671, ThermoSeat.com



SIDEWINDER STALK STREAMLIGHT

Streamlight has launched the *Sidewinder Stalk*, a multi-function military helmet light system featuring multiple color LEDs, an Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) beacon, a strobe feature and a flexible stalk for aiming light where it is needed. The light has several methods for mounting to helmets or MOLLE gear and operates from multiple power sources. It has variable color LEDs — white, IR, red, blue and green — all located in the head mounted on a flexible stalk. MSRP: \$185 to \$215 depending on the model. For more info: (800) 523-7488, Streamlight.com



ARMORERS BLOCK FOR AR PLATFORMS XS SIGHTS

XS Sights introduces its *Armors Block for AR Platforms*. Made from 6061 T6 aluminum, it is designed to allow gunsmiths or DIY enthusiasts to hold an AR-15/M4, AR-10, SR-25 or DPMS GII receiver in a bench-mounted vise to assemble, modify or maintain almost every AR pattern modern sporting rifle available. The XS Armors Block allows the user to work on upper and lower receivers of almost any AR pattern rifle. MSRP: \$83. For more info: (888) 744-4880, XSSights.com



LICOS SMART RED DOT SIGHT HENRICH TECHNOLOGY CO. LTD.

The *LICOS Smart Red Dot Sight* from Henrich Technology is a mini laser rangefinder with an OLED display. The display will show you the ranging distance of your target as well as other important data for your point of aim. With the LICOS Smart Red Dot Sight, your weapon will be easy to operate and your shooting more precise. MSRP: \$599. For more info: sales@henricht.com, Henricht.com



TERRA CELL WIRELESS TRAIL CAMERA

WILDCAM INNOVATIONS

Wildgame Innovations (WGI) expands its wireless camera technology with the *Terra Cell Wireless Trail Camera*. Offered with one of the lowest data plans on the market, it uses AT&T and Verizon network-certified hardware. It boasts 20MP and 16:9 format image capability and has textured polycarbonate housing. MSRP: About \$120. For more info: (877) 269-8490, WildGameInnovations.com



ELITE WILDERNESS PACK SYSTEM ALPS OUTDOORZ

Alps OutdoorZ's modular *Elite Wilderness Pack System* are for hunters who need a lightweight system that can reliably and comfortably haul meat and gear through adverse terrain and weather conditions. It can



accommodate one of two Elite pack bags that use compression straps to secure to the frame over the top of the meat load. MSRP: \$299.99 for the frame; \$149.99 for the pack bags. For more info: (800) 344-2577, AlpsOutdoorZ.com



S6 5-30X56 ED LINE OF PREMIUM RIFLESCOPES SIGHTRON

Sightron launches the *S6 5-30x56 ED Line of Premium Riflescopes* offering a new level of quality and performance with full-featured second focal plane (SFP) and first focal plane (FFP) models. The scopes use premium Japanese glass with Extra-Low Dispersion (ED) elements

to enhance contrast, improve clarity and reduce chromatic aberration. The new optical design has fields-of-view at 100 yards with 74.4 ft. (5x)-12.4 ft. (30x) and a comfortable eye relief of 3.6" to 3.4". MSRP: \$1,999.99. For more info: (919) 562-3000, Sightron.com

SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY ONLINE:

GUNS Magazine
GOM July 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 July 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.

STACCATO XC

Manufacturer: Staccato 2011
(512) 819-0656
Staccato2011.com

Caliber: 9mm, **Capacity:** 17 and 20
Barrel Length: 5", **OAL:** 8.4"

Weight: 37.56 oz.

Value: \$4,299





CKAGE GIVEAWAY



**TOTAL
VALUE:
\$4,299**

STACCATO XC PISTOL PACKAGE

The *Staccato XC* is more than just a gun. “It is a truly unforgettable experience. People describe it as cheating — like having an unfair advantage. Hitting the target — even for novices — is easy to do.” With a 5" integrated compensated barrel and a balanced trigger, the XC gives shooters an edge over their peers. A combination of performance shooting technology and durable build, the XC's design makes it easy to shoot well every time.

Features of the pistol include a frame that's made of billet precision-machined steel with an accessory rail, Diamond-like carbon (DLC)

coating for both frame and slide, a Tac Texture grip plus Dawson Precision Fiber Optic front sight and a rear Tactical Dawson Precision Optic System. The 9mm Staccato XC has an overall length of 8.4" and weighs 37.56 oz. without optic and mag. It comes with two 17-round and one 20-round magazines.

From elite competitors to home defenders, this pistol is at the top of many gun owners' wish lists. And now it can be yours. Owning the Staccato XC is a pleasant possibility when you join this giveaway. Enter now at GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or send a post card! —Jazz Jimenez

GUNS

HEAVYWEIGHT .44 HOLLOW POINT PERFECTION

GAINING WEIGHT IS GOOD

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

We know the 250-grain “Keith” slug traveling at 1,400 FPS is as good as it gets. Or do we? As a bullet caster, it’s easier keeping track of alloy used than actual bullets expended. Since it takes 100 lbs. of alloy to make 2,800 Keith bullets, I’m going to say I’ve easily shot thousands of pounds of Keith bullets over the years. I love the .44 Keith slug for many reasons.

It harkens back to the root of six-gunners venturing out, trying new designs to improve performance. Elmer knew a flat-nose bullet transmitted more shock and created larger wound channels than round-nosed

bullets. If Elmer were still alive, would he be sitting idly by with his design or would he want more performance for the .44 Magnum? I think we know the answer and it’s what I’m going to share with you.

HEAVIN’ HEAVYWEIGHTS

The Force formula is a simple one indeed. $\text{Force} = \text{mass} \times \text{acceleration}$. Acceleration is how fast we can drive a bullet and mass is simply how much our projectile weighs. While we can only go up so much velocity-wise, we can make our projectile heavier to increase force within reason. $\text{Momentum} = \text{mass} \times \text{velocity}$. Again, by increasing bullet weight, we increase momentum. The

more momentum we have, the more it takes to slow down the projectile. This means deeper penetration, and deeper penetration is a good thing in the game fields.

I have a mold from MP Molds dropping what may be the single, most perfect, all-around game bullet ever made for .44 caliber guns. It drops slugs weighing in at 298 grains when using an approximate 70% WW/30% lead mix alloy. It’s of gas check (GC) design and it has three crimping grooves for added versatility. After Powder Coating the bullets, I size them 0.432" and apply the GC with my Lee APP press.

The top crimp groove is for .444 Marlin loads while the middle and bottom grooves are for .44 Magnum, depending on cylinder length. The GC protects the base from those burning hot gases, which adds accuracy and assists in keeping the barrel free of lead.

THE LOAD

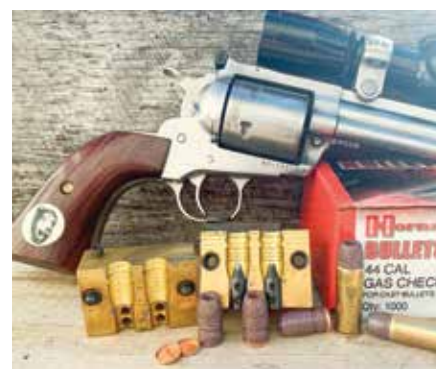
My pet load consists of Starline .44 Magnum brass, filled with 21.5 grains of H110, and sparked with a CCI 350 large pistol Magnum primer. Velocity runs right at 1,300 FPS plus-or-minus out of my Rugers with 7.5" barrels. And



Here's the results of Tank's scoped vs. irons test. At 50 yards, there's not much difference between the two sight systems. Iron sight group is on the left.



Tank's Bisley Hunter is a natural for the 300-grain radiused flat-nose HP design from MP Molds.



let me tell you, when a deer is struck in the vitals with this slug, it poleaxes them. I've yet to recover a bullet as exit wounds are golf ball sized.

From a Marlin 1894 .44 Mag carbine, velocity jumps to 1,650 FPS with this load, which really turns it into a thunderstick.

NO SURPRISE HERE

I have two favorite .44 Magnums consisting of a Ruger Bisley Hunter — naturally — and an older Ruger Blackhawk Hunter. Out of curiosity, I wanted to have a competition of sorts with these shooters. The Bisley is scope free while the Blackhawk Hunter has a Leupold 2x scope mounted with factory rings.

Single-Actions (top, left) are known for their strength, accuracy and reliability, perfect for handgun hunting. The bullet design keeps most of the bullet weight outside of the case (middle), providing more case capacity, while not being too long to bind the cylinder. MP Molds brass molds (top, right) cast beautiful bullets. The Hornady GC's were applied with a Lee APP press after being powder coated.

I've always preferred iron sights for handgun hunting distances as I don't particularly like seeing the crosshairs wobble. Iron sights minimizes this effect, keeping my confidence up. So, when checking my zero for the upcoming firearms season, I set out some targets consisting of 2" orange squares at 50 yards. I was only shooting 3-shot groups since I was just verifying zero.

Shooting was done from the bench, with my forearms resting on a 6"x6" block, simulating hunting conditions. Results were typical. My scoped group

measured just over 2" and the iron sight group went just over 3", with the first two going into 2". I certainly feel confident enough shooting out to 75 yards or so with these two .44 Magnums.

HEAVYWEIGHT HITTER

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to make you look guilty of something heinous. Professional bad guys always clam up and demand their mouthpiece when caught, which is why mimicking their actions is sub-optimal if you didn't do anything wrong.

CHOICES TO MAKE

This is a matter of degrees. I'm not saying you should share everything in your life since fifth grade and throw your Fifth Amendment rights into the sewer, but during initial questioning there are ways to help keep the cops on your side without saying something you'll later regret in court.

Consider doing the same thing many police officers are required to do after a shooting: Make a "public safety statement." This isn't a full-blown walk-through of the event including every thought and action on your part, but a concise synopsis of your general actions. Of course, the detectives and investigators want to hear every tiny detail, including what you had for dinner the previous two nights, but this is where you can reasonably fall back to, "I'm really upset and I don't remember everything clearly. I'd be happy to meet with you a little later and give a full statement, but I need to speak with my attorney. I hope you understand."

They won't, because they want things wrapped up before shift change, but they also know you're being smart. The later statement should have your attorney in attendance to make sure things don't get too far out into left field. Ideally, it should be a day or two later so you have time to collect your wits after an incredibly stressful event.

When talking to investigators the key is to be polite, cooperative and believable, while not over-sharing and hurting your legal cause. Even if you don't feel like being nice to the cops, a cooperative — but internally wary — approach just might get you freed from custody pending a grand jury review rather than semi-permanent jail residence while they decide which category you fall into.

The problem with being cooperative is that, after a major traumatic

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IN FACT, TELLING THE CLIENT TO "SHUT YER YAP!" IS ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS THEY LEARN IN LAWYERING SCHOOL.

event, we tend to spout off at the mouth and babble uncontrollably, often saying things we regret. This is why lawyers tell you to just keep quiet whenever questioned by police. However, if you buy into this idea of victim vs. suspect, I believe offering a bit of generalized insight at the scene about your actions isn't likely to get you into any further hot water and might in fact help your cause.

RESULTS MAY VARY

I acknowledge this strategy won't help in every case but it's a darn sight better than just planning to shout, "Go pound sand! I want my lawyer!" after a shooting. Such an attitude will put your name into the "SUSPECT" block of the report before they even put you into the back of a squad car for further interrogation "downtown."

Of course, cops, investigators and situations run the full gamut so if things appear to be headed in an unpleasant direction for you, *politely* assert your rights, request an attorney and then zip your lips.

While this whole idea of moderate cooperation seems considerably more challenging than remaining silent, the potential benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. Besides, it's often been pointed out carrying a firearm *should* be a thinking-person's occupation. My hope is if you were cool enough to win a gun battle, you are cool enough to answer a few basic questions and keep the justice system firmly on your side.

Besides, everybody else is saying it nowadays, so we might as well join them once in the popular modern refrain — "I'm a victim!"

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ARE YOU SUSPECT OR VICTIM?

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Brent T. Wheat

We're the good guys, right? We work hard, we try to save money and always treat our families, neighbors and assorted acquaintances with kindness and charity. We never intentionally violate the law, we always — mostly, anyway — signal our turns and don't kick puppies or throw slugs into the poor relief box. It should be obvious to anyone we collectively stand for Truth, Justice and the American Way (insert sound of fireworks, apple pie baking and a Chevrolet accelerating).

However, there is one thing most folks haven't considered because it's so obvious to them — after a self-defense shooting, will the police consider you a suspect or a victim? If you think this isn't an important distinction, you are profoundly wrong.

There are lots of what we will politely refer to as Horse Dumplings going around about citizen behavior after a self-defense shooting. Seldom do I hear the people who actually handle these things for a living — police, prosecutors and judges — sharing their views. Sure, defense attorneys will offer their opinions, but they seldom show up at the actual scene of the event. Thus, while they have a great handle on the courtroom criminal and civil proceedings, they're not especially experienced standing around at 3 a.m. over a pile of bloody medical debris or a chalk outline. The scene is where the entire tone of the event is initially set and where you can personally — hopefully — make a difference in the outcome.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let's consider what happens when there is a citizen self-defense shooting in the U.S.

After the gunfire has died down, lots of folks with guns, badges and legal authority are going to arrive in a cloud of dust with sirens blaring. Assuming you don't also get shot by responding police — always a big concern — everyone will be initially handcuffed until things have stabilized.

Then the investigation starts. Those first few minutes of legal probe determine the initial direction of the case and thus can be critical as to how you spend the next several decades of your life.



Here's the basic problem — speaking from 30 years of wearing a badge, cops pretty much put everyone in the world into three general categories: suspects, victims and witnesses.

Witnesses are an extra-large can of worms unto themselves, while victims generally are granted automatic sympathy even if it is sometimes undeserved. Suspects, however, are generally considered lower than pond scum and reality TV stars put together so the investigators operate from this (often unconscious) bias.

This is why you want to be considered a victim if ever involved in a gunfight. Let me say it a second time to highlight the critical importance of this concept — you want to be lumped squarely into the victim category and thereby garner all the appurtenances, benefits and compensations contained therein.

NEVER WHAT IT SEEMS

Consider this from the standpoint of law enforcement: Cops rarely investigate “good” shootings. In the vast majority of cases, troublemakers shoot troublemakers or innocent victims get shot by criminals. This means nearly every time the police deal with gunfire, the person pulling the trigger is a bad guy.

If your marksmanship was good and the red gods smiled in your favor, there might only be one version of events — yours. In this case, the cops would be

naïve to accept things at face value so don't be surprised if they don't initially greet your story as the One and True Gospel.

Even if your shooting was off and the aggressor is alive and talking, cops rarely hear statements like, “Yeah, I was trying to rob that guy at knifepoint and he pulled a gun and shot me twice in the gut. Man, I totally deserved it, too! Go ahead and throw me in prison for 10 years.”

These are some examples of why the authorities are predisposed to consider you a bad guy when you use a firearm. Therefore, your newly assigned job is to act in a way that convinces investigators, and later prosecutors, a judge and jury you are a “legit” citizen who simply exercised his or her God-given right of self-defense in a legal fashion after being threatened with serious bodily harm.

A great way to accomplish this mission is by acting like a victim.

How is this done? For starters, every attorney will give the stock advice of “stay silent.” In fact, telling the client to “Shut yer yap!” is one of the first things they learn in lawyering school.

However, remaining tight-lipped and therefore “uncooperative” when asked simple questions, mumbling only “I want my attorney,” is guaranteed

continued on page 73

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