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# CROSSFIRE

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### THANKS FOR TANK

A big Thank You to Tank Hoover for his articles in his *Think Tank* section — definitely one of my favorite parts. Tank's latest on the Ruger 7.63x39 motivated me to write and state I am a big fan of this cartridge and rifle. Three years ago, I purchased "my" version of a Scout Rifle. I added a Flash hider to it and topped it with a Vortex Crossfire 1-4x24 scope with an adjustable lighted reticle. I "kitted" it out this way so I would have something to aid me going thru the Wisconsin tree lines that crisscross the farmers' fields here in the southern part of the state. I feed it the Russian FMJ for practice and the Hornady Black SST 123-grain bullets for deer. This year I finally got a chance to put it to use in my brother-in-law's hunting blind. The day after Thanksgiving, a whitetail doe stepped out at 100 yards and was facing away from me partially hidden by a tree. My Ruger can put three of those Hornady in just over an inch every time if I do my job. At the shot, she dropped and my daughter, her husband and two sons will be feasting on venison this winter.

S.W. Broge



### BOLT .45-70

This is in reference to your question in *Crossfire* in the March 2022 issue from Bernard Walker regarding a bolt-action rifle in .45-70 Cal. This is my bolt-action .45-70 rifle. The barrel says Navy Arms Co., Union City, NJ. It's built on a #4 Enfield, I think from Gibbs Rifle Co. Gibbs stopped making them but many have asked them to please restart making them again. The scope is a Bushnell Wide Angle 3x9. I hope this helps you and Mr. Walker.

Paul in Wisconsin

### OUCH

Just read Brent's near death experience with a casing ("Getting Shot," *GUNS Insider*, May 2022). My Dad worked in a hammer forge shop during the '40s making airplane parts. One day a forge flashing separated and hit him in the side, just under a rib. It travelled several inches and lodged under the skin. The company nurse opened him and took out the 1" sliver of steel. As it had been quenched with his blood, he kept it as his war memento. Us kids called it "Dad's shrapnel."

JDD

### OUCH PART 2

"Getting Shot," the full title, a great one. Educational, fun, catchy and "Hey, that could have been me!" Sorta.

As an aside: I think "get/got shot"

continued on page 65

# GUNS

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# COMPROMISE PART 2: CARTRIDGE CONVERSIONS

## THE BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO EPOCHS

John Taffin

Sam Colt was a genius, however, just as those of us who are not, he also had flaws in his character. In 1836 he came up with the first successful repeating firearms producing

the Paterson rifle and revolver form. These five-shot revolvers and shoulder arms were not very powerful but they were a tremendous improvement over the single-shot arms of the day. But something went wrong and Sam Colt went bankrupt.



Both of these Richards-Mason Cartridge Conversions are chambered in .38 Special/.38 Long Colt. However, John has dedicated them to the use of the .38 Long Colt. With the addition of Kirst Konverter cylinders, these Ruger Old Armies (below) become .45 Colt Cartridge Conversions.



Fast forward a decade. Texans especially needed arms against the Mexicans. Two men whose name begins with “W” were about to enter his life and have a tremendous effect on his future. That first man was Col. Sam Walker who went back to the Northeast looking for Sam Colt and arms. Colt had neither arms nor a factory, however, the two Sams put their heads together and designed what was to be known as the 1847 Walker. This huge sixgun weighed right around 4-1/2 lbs. with a 9” barrel; so heavy it wound up being carried in pairs on a pommel holster that fitted over the saddle horn. It used a .44 caliber round ball over a powerful payload consisting of 50–60 grains of black powder. It was as different from the Paterson as a statesman is from a politician.

### GINNING UP GUNS

They had the design but no factory. Enter the second “W” in the person of Eli Whitney Jr. who did have a factory. Colt contracted with Whitney to build the Walkers. Whitney not only built these revolvers, he also introduced interchangeable parts making repair quite easy. Colt soon had his own factory and the Walker was followed by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Model Dragoons, 1851 Navy, 1860 Army and his last full-sized Colt percussion revolver, the 1861 Navy. Meanwhile, something else was going on at Smith & Wesson. In 1857, they brought forth the first successful cartridge-firing revolver that was a seven-shot, tip-up design chambered in what we now know as the .22 Short. Rollin White held the patent for bored-through cylinders and he now worked for Smith & Wesson.

Colt had made a huge mistake! He felt shooters would always prefer to “load their own,” that is, pour powder in the cylinder, seat the ball over the charge and then place a percussion cap over the nipple on the back of the cylinder. This was very short-sighted on his part. He had the first crack at the White Patent and turned it down. The Smith & Wesson, as one might imagine, was vastly underpowered but it was a start. The Civil War interrupted S&W’s plans to bring out a larger version, however,



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another something else was going on at the New Haven Arms Co., which was owned by a shirt maker by the name of Oliver Winchester. His factory foreman came up with the first really successful repeating lever action rifle known as the 1860 Henry, as Winchester was not yet ready to put his name on a firearm.

The 1860 Henry was chambered in a .44 Rimfire cartridge with a case length of about 0.815"; the .44 Special that followed nearly 50 years later had a case length of about 1.200". So, the arrival of this first successful repeating rifle cartridge also set the stage for a big-bore cartridge sixgun. When Smith & Wesson brought out the first successful big-bore cartridge sixgun in late 1869 it was chambered in the .44 S&W American as well as the .44 Henry Rimfire. Since S&W held the patent for bored-through cylinders, Colt was out in the cold. Remington paid Smith & Wesson \$0.25 per revolver to use the White patent to produce cartridge firing revolvers. However, Colt would not do so. They simply waited for the patent to run out.

The question which naturally arises, at least in my mind, is if any local gunsmiths after the arrival of the .44 Rimfire cartridge actually converted percussion revolvers to shoot this new round. To try to get around the patent, Colt came up with the Thuer Conversion using a cartridge which loaded from the front of the cylinder. It was not very popular nor very successful. However, the White patent was about to run out and C.B. Richards of Colt had his own patent issued in 1871. The stage was now set for Colt Cartridge Conversions — cap-and-ball models converted to metallic cartridges.

## CONVERSION

Using the 1860 Army Model as a base gun, Colt began offering Cartridge Conversions with the first Richards Conversion arriving in July 1871 and this first cartridge-firing Colt was soon followed by the Richards-Mason Conversion in

1872. The latter is easy to distinguish from the former as it has a full-length ejector rod housing running all the way back to the front of the cylinder.

What about shorter barrels? The definitive work on Cartridge Conversions is *A Study of Colt Conversions and Other Percussion Revolvers* by R. Bruce McDowell. On page 283 is shown a very rare factory-produced 5-1/2" 1871-72 Open Top Revolver with well-worn ivory stocks. This revolver mentioned by McDowell is also interesting in that it is not cham-

5-1/2" Richards is available in both .38 Special, which also handles .38 Long Colt and a second version that chambers .44 Special, .44 Colt and .44 Russian.

Looking at the specifications of 5-1/2" Richards-Mason replicas, we find the .44 model as well as .38 Special, .45 Colt and .45 Schofield/.45 S&W only. This brings us to the 1871-72 Open-Top which in the 5-1/2" barrel length version can be had in .38 Special, .44 Colt/.44 Russian and .45 Colt. All three versions load through a loading gate on the right side and have an ejector rod for removing spent cases



Here we have all three cartridge-firing Colts based on the 1860 Armory. From the left clockwise, conversions are the Richards-Mason, Richards and 1871-72 Open-Top.

bered in .44 Colt but has been converted to .44-40. Someone was very serious about a Perfect Packin' Pistol!

## TODAY

Original short-barreled Cartridge Conversions may be rare as an honest politician, but now, thanks to Cimarron Firearms, both the Richards and Richards-Mason Conversions are offered in replica form as well as the 1871-72 Open-Top, all with 5-1/2" barrels. Both 1851 and 1860 versions, so named because of their grip frame, are offered. The former has the grip frame identical to the Single Action Army while the latter is the same longer grip as found on the 1860 Army cap-and-ball revolver. A check of their current catalog shows the

and the barrel assembly of the Cartridge Conversions and Open-Top are mated to the frame with a wedge pin just as the 1860 Army percussion pistol.

Cimarron now catalogs a 5-1/2" Remington Cartridge Conversion Model in .45 Colt, 44-40 and .38 Special. Remington percussion pistols can also be easily made into cartridge conversions by simply adding the excellent quality Kirst Konverter Cartridge Conversion Cylinders in both .45 Colt and .45 ACP to the .44 version while with .36, Remington can be converted to .38 Special/.38 Long Colt. I find the Cartridge Conversions to be an extremely interesting part of sixgunning history, although very short-lived, and still quite usable today as Everyday Packin' Pistols. **GUNS**



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# 10MM AUTO: ONE SHOOTER'S PERSPECTIVE

## EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN



Mas' Bren Ten, briefly his duty pistol, is now a safe queen.

**Massad Ayoob**  
**Photos: Gail Pepin**

I was intrigued with the 10mm Auto when it came out in the early mid-'80s and bought one as soon as I saw it at Riley's Gun Shop in Hooksett, NH. It came with a .45 ACP conversion unit and one magazine in each caliber. It turned out the .45 mag worked with 10mm but not vice versa, and the .45 conversion wasn't reliable but the 10mm configuration was. I loaded it with the hot Norma hollow points — Norma was all you could get in the caliber for a while — and carried it on duty. NH Police Standards and Training told

me I was the first cop in the state to qualify with a 10mm.

I carried it on duty, but not for long. The Bren Ten fit well in a Bucheimer-Clark Auto Break front holster and it shot well. I was teaching weapon retention and liked that the Bren came with two proprietary safeties: a cross-bolt in the slide and a CZ75-like thumb lever. I found on the draw I could pop the crossbolt with the median joint of my thumb and then thumb down the other safety by the time the pistol was on target. What made me put it back in the safe was no more magazines were available and there was not yet any street feedback on 10mm performance.

The broad right side of the Bren Ten's CZ-like frame seemed to beg for an inscription. In the canon of Conan the Barbarian, who followed the mythical god Crom, his sword was engraved, "Suffer no guilt he who wields this in the name of Crom." At the time, Jeff Cooper and I were at odds because I was teaching about PTSD in gunfight survivors and Jeff felt no one should feel badly about killing criminals or enemy soldiers. I thought about having my new 10mm engraved, "Feel no guilt, ye who wield this in the name of Jeff," but thankfully thought better of it.

### BEYOND THE BREN

I was teaching with my mentor Ray Chapman at Chapman Academy at the time and tried Ray's new Colt Delta Elite 10mm, built for him by Ed Brown. I liked it enough I ordered a Colt and had Larry Kelly Mag-na-port a 6" Bar-Sto barrel for me, which tamed the muzzle rise with 10mm hot loads. Later, I sent the pistol



1998: Mas, 13-year-old Justine and Mark Morris who made Mas' 10mm. M&J have just won National Champion Parent/Child Team.



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to Mark Morris who created one of my favorite pistols from it, one of his Carry Comps. With full power loads, the comp worked so well it almost seemed like the Colt was recoiling downward.

In June of 1998, I had two memorable moments. I won the Outstanding American Handgunner of the Year award, and at the Second Chance shoot in Michigan where the National Junior Handgun Championships were held, my then-13-year-old daughter Justine and I won National Champion Parent/Child Team in Sub-Junior age class. If I could keep only one of those moments, it would be the one with my kid. I was shooting the 10mm Morris Custom Colt with Black Hills 165-grain JHP at 1,300 feet per second. It's one reason I cherish the pistol.



The 10mm Silvertip did massive damage to a hog it instantly killed. Core remained intact and went deep; fragments radiated outward causing corollary wound track damage.

S&W and the FBI did their damndest to popularize the 10mm. Smith made a standard third generation model, the Model 1006 with a 5" barrel and the shorter M1066 in traditional double action with safety-decock lever. They put a SIG-ish decock-only lever on the 5" M1026 and the gun FBI adopted, the 4.25" M1076. I won a couple of 1026s at Second Chance, giving one to my wife and keeping one. I bought a 1076 as an exemplar gun for a case where I was expert witness for a female FBI agent trainee who had failed to qualify with the malfunctioning 10mm she was issued at the Academy. The exemplar remains in my gun safe. FBI



Author's favorite 10mm: a Mark Morris Carry Comp.

had some trouble with their 1076s, but mine worked fine. My late friend Roger Bloomfield was a helluva shot, having led an A-team in Vietnam, and a total 10mm fan. In his heavy shooting with full loads, he told me 1911 10mms would start peening at 3,000 to 5,000 rounds, but his S&Ws didn't start

showing wear signs 'til around 10,000. His daily carry was a 1006.

Also in my armory are a 10mm GLOCK 20 I won at a GSSF match, and a Springfield Armory XD-M 5.25" with the adjustable sights I learned to appreciate with the Morris Custom, the better to take advantage of the 10mm's

wide range of loads. In talking to many 10mm fans, the polymer pistols such as the G20 stand the gaff of heavy recoil buffeting better than anything else. My Morris Colt has stood up well because the compensator reduces that hammering on the 1911 parts.

## POWER FACTOR

One reason the 10mm didn't take off in police circles is that the early full-power loads were jacketed too tough to expand. I debriefed an armed citizen hero in Washington who dropped a would-be cop-killer with his Colt Delta, saving the life of the officer who was under fire with his own pistol jammed. All three 170-grain JHPs went through and through the bad guy without expanding, felling the perp only because one well-aimed slug cut his spinal cord. By the time the 175-grain Winchester Silvertip was in the field and doing well, the 10mm's death warrant in law enforcement was apparently already signed.

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# TRUCK GUNS

## FIREPOWER FOR LIVING RUGGED

**Dave Anderson**

There doesn't seem to be agreement on what the term "truck gun" means. I guess there can't be a consensus since people live different lifestyles and use trucks for various

purposes from work to recreation to daily driver.

In the farming/ranching world where I live, trucks are ubiquitous. I might see a few SUVs when in town — pop. 100 — for the mail, but seeing an actual car is a rare event. Pickups are

what people drive, the only variation is in size, from mini to one-ton. I can't remember the last time I saw a 2WD pickup around here.

### KITTED OUT

In most of those pickups you would find jumper cables, tow strap, axe and/or chainsaw, bottled water, meat sticks, a bolted-down tool chest in back, rubber boots and some sort of firearm. When I was a kid every farm and ranch had a minimum of three guns, a .22, a shotgun and a deer rifle.

The centerfires came and went as needed, depending on what season was open. The .22 rifle, most likely a Mossberg, Remington, Savage or Winchester, was pretty much always there, unless it was hanging in the barn or standing behind the kitchen door. The purpose of the .22 was to protect the barn, chicken house and garden from predators ranging in size from gophers and rats to fox and coyotes — and to humanely kill steers and hogs to be butchered.

Not many people live on farms or ranches these days but there are still plenty who love doing outdoor stuff — camping, hiking, fishing, exploring. Maybe I'm just an out-of-touch dinosaur but I like having a rifle more or less handy; not necessarily in my hands but no more than a couple of jumps away, whether in camper, tent, boat, canoe, UTV, or truck. The rifles that serve well in the old pickup do pretty well for such purposes.

### CRITERIA

Some of the lessons learned over 60+ years might be of use. For example, I have quite a few rifles using tubular magazines. Much as I appreciate these rifles, and use them regularly, I don't use them as truck guns. Even where it is legal to do so, I dislike a loaded rifle in a vehicle. Loading and unloading a tubular magazine takes time. I prefer a rifle with a detachable magazine for quick loading and unloading, and to



Dave's truck guns include two compact Ruger American rifles. Left is a .22LR, right a Ranch model in 5.56 NATO. Both are light, about a yard long, use detachable magazines and moderately priced.



A semiautomatic such as this Ruger Ranch Rifle is a useful truck gun, reliable and fast for follow-up shots, but Dave does prefer a bolt-action.

When Dave was a kid, every farm had a .22 like this Winchester Model 74 semiauto. Owning more than one was inconceivable, like owning more than one TV!

The truck gun is not necessarily a first choice when setting out to hunt pigs or coyotes, but it is right there if one is spotted during the normal daily routine. This wild fellow ended up as a pit barbecue!

keep the cartridges neatly stored instead of falling on the floor or into a windshield heater vent.

I'm not too keen on semiautomatic rifles as truck guns, though I certainly wouldn't write them off. Loading can be quick enough with a detachable magazine. I have a high regard for the compact Ruger 10/22 and for ARs, especially those with collapsible stocks and shorter barrels. My only objection comes when putting the rifle away after firing a shot or two at wild pigs or barn rats. After removing the magazine the action has to be cycled to clear the chamber, like not sending the ejected round spinning into the weeds. I'll admit this is fairly nitpicky but if you use the rifle three or four times a day it becomes a nuisance.

## HARD KNOCK LIFE

A truck gun can lead a hard life, both from getting dusty and dirty to getting dinged on doorframes. I'm an old school, blued-steel and walnut fan but for hard use, synthetics make a lot of sense. Plus they are often moderately priced and easily replaced. It is hard to get sentimentally attached when one rifle is just like the next.

Finally there is the issue of security. It seems long ago, but I can remember when every pickup had a gun rack across the rear window. The guns were always there and the doors never locked. All that ended when our local law enforcement officer announced in the coffee shop we couldn't summarily hang horse thieves any more. Nowadays I keep the

rifle out of sight, the magazine in one jacket pocket and the bolt in another, and I take the rifle in at night.

As of today my favorite truck rifles are a pair of Ruger Americans, a compact .22 WMRF and a Ranch Rifle in 5.56 NATO. The latter is an early model with the original rotary magazine but I am thinking of trading it for the current model, which comes with an AR-style 10-shot magazine. The .22 WMRF gets more use, especially for eliminating garden pests. I do prefer the center fire when driving back roads, in case of encountering coyotes or wild pigs. I like these compact rifles so much I added a .17HMR, .22LR and a .350 Legend. Maybe I am getting sentimentally attached!

**GUNS**

# BUYING A CLASSIC SHOTGUN

## IT'S MORE ABOUT WHY YOU SHOULD THAN SHOULDN'T

**Tom Keer**

I have a love/hate relationship with gun shops. Whenever I'm driving and see a "GUNS!" sign I jack the brakes and rip into the parking lot. Who knows what dusty little gem might be sitting alone in a rack? It's the same with online listings, but these days I've got to be more careful when scrolling through the thousands ... tens of thousands ... or more listings. A focused search easily can kill a weekend, which leaves no time for dog training or scouting for covers.

### THE HUNT

There's never a question of "if" I can find the American classic of my dreams, but instead if it's the right one for me. The aging of our shotgun community has resulted in many collections coming available. These assortments are the result of a life spent finding, buying and shooting American and Continental classics made from high quality materials, precise machining and outstanding fit and finish. The last thing I need is another duck gun, but it didn't stop me from buying a Parker VH 12 gauge on a #2 frame at a North Carolina gun shop. The 30" barrels choked modified and full were ideal for waterfowl with 2- $\frac{3}{4}$ " shells. The cost? \$500. I'm eyeballing a minty Winchester Model 12 at a gun shop near my home. No one wants to spend \$350 for the 16-gauge, but I will. It's half the cost of a decent lawnmower and a whole lot more fun.

You'll want to check for barrel dents, make sure the barrels haven't been shortened like the late and legendary Frank Woolner did to his Winchester Model 59 when he wanted more responsive handling and a cylinder bore for the grouse/woodcock woods. Loose hinge pins on double guns can be an issue as buggered screws are an indication of repair work done by an amateur. Have barrel thickness measured with a micrometer

to ensure the walls are thick enough, and, while you're at it, check the choke diameters, too. However, there are three main points that consistently pop up in used gun shops, and they're always worthy of consideration.

### FIRST

Get a professional inspection. Find a specialist with intimate knowledge

of the brand and model you're looking to buy. Vermont's Lars Jacob of Lars Jacob Wingshooting is one of them. "Take the Winchester 21, for example," he said. "The shotgun featured two types of bluing, with frames being hot blued while barrels were cold blued. Shooters notice that immediately as a frame with original bluing appears as a shiny blue while barrels have a flat



Lars Jacob measures the drop of a stock at his shop (above), Lars Jacob Wingshooting. Good fit makes the difference between excuses and a full game pouch! A professional inspection of potential purchases (below) — preferably from someone specializing in the type and vintage — is always money well-spent.



hue. If the frame and barrels are of the same hue then you quickly know the shotgun has been refinished. On further inspection, hang the barrels from the barrel lump. You can also hook and hang them on your finger. Tap the barrels with a pen and listen to the sound it makes. If there is a wind-chime ring they were correctly refinished. If there is a thump then they may look good but were improperly restored."

The knowledge coming from a professional gunsmith's inspection is worth every penny. If the gun passes muster then you'll have additional confidence. If it fails you'll avoid a lot of heartburn.

## SECOND

Measure your stock. Used shotguns may be part of a collection where they'll sit on display. But if you're looking for a shooter then pay special attention to stock dimensions. Larry DelGrego of DelGrego and Sons in Ilion, N.Y., are the fourth generation specialists who repair Parker Bros and Remington Model 32 over/under shotguns. While collectors favor original stocks on their gunning irons, shooters routinely do. Older American shotguns typically have too much drop at comb and heel, and their length of pull is much shorter. According to DelGrego, "Up until World

War II, stocks had a lot of drop. American shooters have descended from rifle shooters, and their head position was high. When they returned from the war and returned home to hunt, to shoot skeet or trap, American manufacturers designed stocks around their desire to hold their heads high. As a result, vintage American stock dimensions have far more drop than current models. After World War II, stock dimensions flattened out so they'd better match the dynamic style of shotgun shooting."

Wingshooters need dimensions that produce rock-solid mounts with eyes looking down the rib. Too short of a stock makes shoulders roll too far forward while too much drop and there is a perfect view of the safety. Birds aren't clearly seen in those instances, and it means they're probably missed. Today's off-the-rack shotguns typically measure 14-½" LOP x 1-½" DAC and 2-½" DAH. Always get a professional gun fitting then when you find a candidate in a gun shop, it's easy to pull out a tape measure and know if it's a fit.

## THIRD

Chamber length — In the past century, shotshell advancements have been significant. Yet older classics were designed around lower compression shells of a shorter overall length. Common-to-the-era chamber lengths measured 2-½", 2-⅝", or 2-⅞". If you drop an unfired 2-¾" shell in a 2-½" chamber it's a fit. But here's the problem — modern shells have full crimps which expand to 2-¾" upon discharge. Short chambers won't allow that extra ¼" to unfold and the extra pressure damages forcing cones and hinge pins.

Measure your chambers and if they're too short for the shells you're shooting then get them lengthened. Another work-around is to buy shorter, lower compression shells. Companies like RST Shotshells and Polywad have great assortments.

Shooting a classic shotgun is an experience. Vintage shotguns connect modern gunners to a kinder, more spirited time. We carry their traditions forward, ensuring those wonderful times are kept alive.

**GUNS**



The hunt for a classic American shotgun can be *almost* as fun as finding a great bobwhite thicket (above), but even more rewarding in the long run! Measuring the chamber length in old shotguns is critical (below) as there were many different length of shells in the early 20th century.



# CONNECTING THE (ALLIANT) DOTS

## RED, BLUE, GREEN — PICK YOUR POWDER

**John Taffin**

When I was a very young boy learning my numbers, my grandmother bought me a Connect-The-Dots book. If a straight line was drawn from number to number in the correct order, a picture emerged. It was very helpful for not only learning numbers but also using a pencil correctly.

### TRICOLORS

This was a long, long time ago. However, today I'm still connecting the dots only instead of pencil and paper, I'm

using cans of Alliant Powder. Alliant — formerly Hercules — offers three Dot powders, namely Red Dot, Green Dot and Blue Dot. Just as their names imply each of these Dot powders is color-coded by having the regular powder flakes interspersed with flakes dyed with the correct color. This is one series of powder that is easily identified just by looking at them.

All of these powders are double-based, with a nitroglycerin content of about 20%. Red Dot originally dates back to 1932, Green Dot to 1965 and Blue Dot to 1972. All three of these were originally designated as shotgun powders, however,

they all have excellent applications for handguns, especially sixguns for all three, and semi-automatics for both Red Dot and Green Dot. Over the years, first Hercules and now Alliant both improved these powders and just recently both Red Dot and Green Dot have been changed to be cleaner burning.

On the Propellant Relative Burn Rate Chart in the latest *Speer Handloading Manual* #15, looking at the lineup of Alliant powders Red Dot is faster than Bullseye while Green Dot is slower than Bullseye; Blue Dot is slightly faster than #2400. Hornady's latest Manual #7 lists all manufacturers' powders in numerical order as to burn rate. Bullseye is number two, Red Dot is number 6 and Green Dot is ranked at number 15. Blue Dot is ranked one notch below #2400 at number 49. Burn rates cannot be used to interpolate powders. This tells us Red Dot and Green Dot are for standard or lighter loads while Blue Dot is often used for heavy loads in .44 Special and .44 Magnum sixguns.

### TONE IT DOWN

At this stage of my life, for most of my reloads with big bore, .44 and .45 sixgun cartridges I mostly stay in the same neighborhood as .45 ACP Hardball — a 230-grain bullet at 820 fps. For anything short of big-game hunting these loads will do it all.

For the .44 Special and .44 Magnum loads I have been using a new (to me) bullet, namely the Accurate Molds #43-249. This is truly a wide flat-nosed bullet and at 250 grains, smacks with great authority. In the .44 Special loads with this bullet, 5.0 grains of Red Dot are right at 780 fps; 5.5 grains of Green Dot, right on the .45 ACP button at 820 fps; and 9.0 grains of Blue Dot virtually duplicates the Red Dot load. In all of my loads for the .44 Special, Red Dot proved to be the most accurate while Blue Dot was just slightly shaded by Green Dot.



Above, Alliant Dot powders performed well in the 4" pre-29 and the 4" stainless steel .45 Auto Rim and .45 Colt. Custom stocks are by BluMagnum. Below, both the .44 Special and .44 Magnum loads were assembled with Accurate Molds #43-249 while the .45 Colt uses the Lyman #452424.





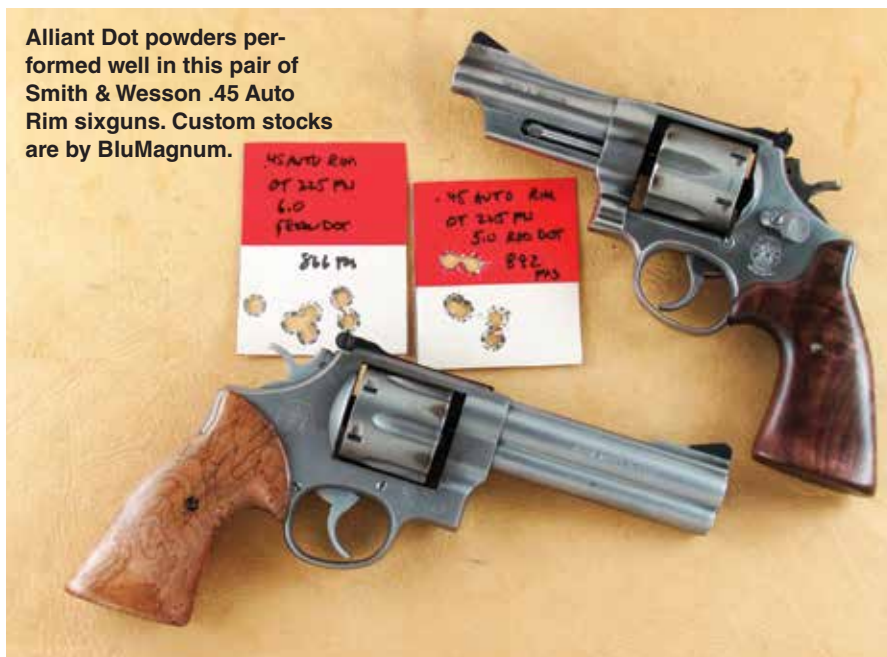
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Alliant Dot powders performed well in this pair of Smith & Wesson .45 Auto Rim sixguns. Custom stocks are by BluMagnum.



Switching to the .44 Magnum and using the same bullet in a 7-1/2" Super Blackhawk, 6.0 grains of Red Dot is at 850 fps; 7.0 Green Dot, 980 fps; and Blue Dot with 11.5 grains is just 20 fps behind the Green Dot. Accuracy-wise, everything was backwards with the Blue Dot loads giving the best groups. I was particularly impressed with the Red Dot and Green Dot loads in a 4" Smith & Wesson Pre-29. Muzzle velocity was 775 and 875 fps respectively with groups right in the 1" neighborhood. Both of these loads make an excellent choice for everyday packin' of this Perfect Packin' Pistol.



John connects the dots with these three Alliant Dot powders for standard loads in .44 Special, .44 Magnum and .45 Colt.

## .45 COLT

For the .45 Colt, I went with Lyman's latest iteration of the Keith bullet, the 250-grain #452424. With this bullet, 6.0 grains of Red Dot are at 850 fps, 7.0 grains of Green Dot give 880 fps, while 11.5 grains of Blue Dot are only 735 fps. The low velocity is overshadowed by its excellent accuracy and easy-shooting qualities. Switching to a 4" S&W M625 with the same loads gave muzzle velocities of just under 800 fps for Red Dot and Green Dot loads making this also an excellent choice for everyday carry.

My final experiments were using Red Dot and Green Dot in .45 Auto Rim sixguns. One of my regular .45 ACP bullets, namely Oregon Trail's 225-grain flat-nose hard cast was loaded over

5.0 grains of Red Dot and 6.0 grains of Green Dot. Results were excellent especially in a 4" S&W stainless steel Springfield Armory Commemorative, which is basically a specially-marked Mountain Gun. These two loads gave very respectable muzzle velocities of 875 fps and 865 fps while shooting exceptionally accurate.

Four-inch double-action sixguns are especially known for their easy carrying qualities and these experiments gave me excellent loads for the 4" .44 Magnum, .45 Colt and .45 Auto Rim Perfect Packin' Pistols. My next experiments will be with .44 Specials in this easy carrying barrel length and I expect the Alliant Dots will connect very well.

**GUNS**

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From 1866 to 1873 the U.S. Army was equipped with one version or another of “trapdoor” Springfields, the Model 1873 carbine (top) and infantry rifle.

## WHICH GUNS ACTUALLY WON THE WEST? HISTORY ISN'T A SLOGAN

**Mike “Duke” Venturino**  
**Photos: Yvonne Venturino**

Fifty years ago, I dared to debate a professor teaching a “History Of The American West” course. He said the invention of Colt revolvers was instrumental in settling the western frontier. In turn, I said, “Revolvers are self-defense items. They are not used to conquer territory.” As many readers might agree, contradicting a professor never ends well for the student.

Here’s another fallacy. Some time along the way an advertising weenie for Winchester came up with the slogan pertaining to their Model 1873. It was

“The Rifle That Won The West.” Actually, the west had to be “won” before settlers could come along and hunt deer with their pistol-cartridge-firing ’73 Winchesters. Also, I believe from a lifetime of reading and research the Indian warriors used ’73s to oppose settlers from winning the west more than American civilians used them to win it.

### THE TRUTH

So what guns were instrumental in making the west safe for settlers? I count two as co-winners of that award with two others as second-placers. For the west to be opened up for farmers

and safe transportation to the west coast, two things had to happen. First the enormous bison herds had to go and second, wild Indians had to be tamed onto reservations. These things had to happen in the order in which I mentioned them.

Anyone who has been around bison (I have) knows no fence available in the late 1800s would hold them out — or in, for that matter. They just walk through most anything that gets in their way, I’ve seen it. Furthermore, the bison herds could be described in modern terms as the wild Indians’ walking grocery store.

When a procedure for making good leather from their hides was perfected circa 1870, the great slaughter began. Hundreds of men saw easy money on the hoof and cashed in by shooting the great beasts. It’s not a pretty idea now, but even in the 1870s many considered the bison’s near extinction as truly sad.

Without doubt, the most-used rifle for killing the huge beasts was the Sharps Model 1874. The name itself is a conundrum because the rifle was put into production in 1871. Most of its .40, .44, .45 and .50 cartridges were adequate for shooting bison, I know from first-hand experience. You may find it interesting to know only about 6,500 Sharps Sporting Rifles were sold before the company folded in 1880.

Runner up to the Sharps was Remington’s #1 rolling block. It was chambered for many of the same rounds as Sharps’ and served many “buff hunters.” However, Remington’s manufacturing was mostly dedicated to making military style #1 rifles for distribution literally around the world.



Duke rates these two big-bore single-shot rifles as winners of the American West — Sharps Model 1874 (top) and Remington No.1 “rolling block.” Both of Duke’s are chambered for .44-77.

## NEXT UP

Once the bison herds were all but exterminated, the next job was for the U.S. Army to convince the nomadic Plains tribes to settle on reservations. This was usually accomplished rather brutally by finding their villages, burning them and often shooting the horse herds. However, to be fair it should be noted just about every time one of those villages was captured, it contained white captives or sometimes just their long blonde hair.

The firearm used in the majority of 1860s/1870s Indian fights was one version or another of "trapdoor" Springfield rifles and/or carbines. From 1866 to 1873 "trapdoors" were .50 Government (.50-70) in Models 1866, 1868 and 1870. They used many parts from left over Civil War muzzle loading muskets. Starting in 1873, "trapdoors" were totally of new manufacture and were chambered for .45 Government (.45-70). Carbines were for cavalry and rifles for infantry.



Fourth place in Duke's list is the Spencer repeater. Post-Civil War, the most popular Spencer cartridge was the .56-50.

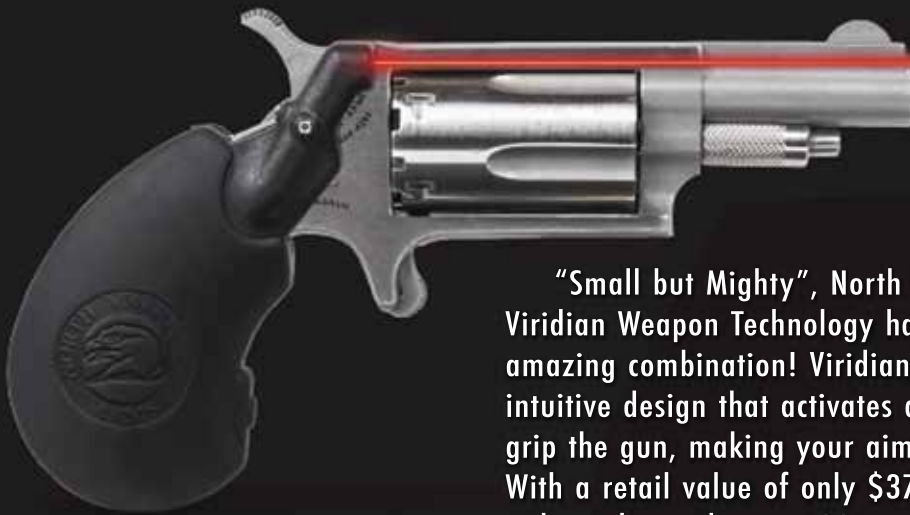
## SECOND PLACE

As a runner up in regards to the U.S. Cavalry fighting plains Indians, I think it must be the Spencer carbine. These were lever-actuated repeaters but instead of the traditional mode of function they loaded through a magazine in the buttstock holding seven rounds. When a fresh cartridge was fed into the carbine's chamber, the hammer had to be cocked manually. Spencer's were made for a variety of odd-sounding cartridges but the one most identified with fighting Plains Indians was the 56-.50. Most cavalry regiments serving west of the Mississippi were armed with Spencer carbines until their new "trapdoor" Model 1873 Springfields arrived in 1874.

So, this is my take on the guns that actually "won" the west — Sharps and Remington big-bore single-shots for clearing out the bison and single-shot "trapdoor" Springfields and repeating Spencer carbines for defeating the Plains Indians. **GUNS**



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# LYMAN SIGHTS

## FROM APPLIANCES TO OPTICS

### Wayne Van Zwoll

One of the oldest firms in the shooting industry, Lyman was founded in 1878. As the story goes, 24-year-old William Lyman was already designing rifle sights and needed a company to manufacture them. William's father, David, had prospered shipping mules, bought in Vermont and New Hampshire, to the West Indies. The rum he got in trade was popular in New England. He'd also partnered with a man who'd invented a clothes wringer and built a factory on the Lyman farm to produce it under the shingle of the Metropolitan Washing Machine Company.

William was apparently more interested in hunting and fishing than in farming or manufacturing. A Winchester 73 in .44-40 served him well, but he decided it would be more effective with better sights. So he designed the Lyman No. 1, with a tang base to put it near the shooter's eye. The No. 1's generous hole yielded a big field of view inside a relatively thin rim that appeared as a mere shadow. Hunters found it a very fast sight and capable of finer accuracy than critics of the open aperture predicted.

### WASHING MACHINES TO RIFLE SIGHTS

From the No. 1's debut in 1879 until William Lyman's death in 1896, he would patent 17 rifle, handgun and shotgun sights. All were "irons." While the first were made in the washing machine facility, demand for Lyman sights soon prompted a move to a larger factory nearby, then additions for still more manufacturing space.

In 1925, Henry and Elihu Lyman, at the company's helm, bought the Ideal Products Reloading Tool line. Soon thereafter, they sensed swelling interest among both competitive shooters and hunters for optical sights. In New Haven, Winchester Repeating Arms was selling its A5, B3 and B4 riflescopes. In Chicopee Falls, Mass., Savage Arms

marketed the Stevens line. But scopes hadn't yet generated widespread demand among big game hunters and optics sales accounted for small slices of the firearms makers' profit pies.

Henry and Elihu bought rights to Winchester's scopes in 1928. By February 1929 — the year they added the Stevens stable — they'd modified the A5 and named it the Lyman 5A. Catalog #17 announced the Winchester and Stevens acquisitions and described the new scope: "We are pleased to be able to offer our new LYMAN 5A TELESCOPIC SIGHT, which is now available

for general distribution ... [It] is the first of a series of telescopic sights which will [appear] from time to time. The workmanship, quality and careful assembling is guaranteed by the organization that has made Lyman Metallic sights for 50 years."

The 5A had target-type mounts. W/E adjustments were in rings which let the scope slide against a spring during recoil. Eye relief was only 1-½" and field of view at 100 yards a narrow 18 feet. The 5A featured achromatic lenses by Bausch & Lomb and came with the customer's choice of five reticles.



The Lyman Targetspot series, first offered in 1934, had external W/E adjustments and a recoil spring.



Lyman fielded its 1" All-American scopes — 2-½x, 3x, 4x, 6x — in '54. Here: a 3x on a Savage 99.

Early in 1930 Lyman announced its 3x 438 scope (described in catalog #25, in 1937, as a 4x). Its mount was initially the same as the 5A's but soon changed. Quarter-minute adjustments arrived in 1933. Lyman's first solid mount came with the 3x Stag scope that year, W/E adjustments still in the mount. The Stag expired in five years. More enduring was the Lyman Targetspot scope introduced in 1934. In 8x and 10x versions, it had an adjustable ocular, a non-rotating objective lens focusing from 50 feet to infinity. In '37 this scope was joined by the 6x and 8x Junior Targetspot and by Lyman's enduring Super Targetspot. Initially in 10x, 12x and 15x, the Super Targetspot appeared later in 20x, 25x even 30x. One of the most popular competition scopes ever, it was discontinued in 1978.

## HUNTING SCOPES WITH A FUTURE

In 1935 and '36, Lyman had added the No. 22 and its successor the 422 Expert scopes for rimfire rifles. But it still had no internally adjustable scope for big game rifles. Lyman engaged Wray Hegeman, a skilled optics designer of German descent, to produce one. In 1937, the year Winchester came out with its Model 70 rifle, Lyman announced its 2-½x Alaskan. It weighed 11 oz. and had a 7/8" steel tube.

Original length was 10-½" and bumped to 11-¼" in the 1950s. A "Fixed

After 1985, Lyman grew as a source of hand-loading and home gunsmithing tools and accessories.



Alaskan" without internal W/E adjustments appeared in '39 but got little traction at market. In 1942 dials on the standard model got caps. Result: the Lyman Alaskan All-Weather. Seven standard reticles were variations and combinations of the post and crosshair. A Lee dot joined that roster in the '50s.

Hunters snapped up the Alaskan. It even made its way into battle in WWII. John George carried his Alaskan-scoped Griffin & Howe Model 70 to Guadalcanal and, with Merrill's Marauders, to Burma. It evidently saw action. By war's end — and in part because optical sights so rewarded snipers — demand for riflescopes surged. Lyman saw a need for a 4x hunting scope but Wray Hegeman decided against a 4x in the Alaskan's tube.

## THE CHALLENGER

Instead, he fashioned a scope with a 33mm front lens and a 26mm tube. Lyman announced it in 1948 as the All-Weather Challenger. Because of its front bell, the Challenger couldn't be mounted with one-piece rings — it required split rings. In 1953 the Challenger got an alloy tube. The same year Hegeman also came up with Lyman's first "varmint" scopes — 6x, 8x and 10x Wolverines, the 10x set for zero parallax at 200 yards. *Field & Stream* shooting editor Warren Page pronounced the 8x the most versatile of this trio. It seemed a perfect match

for rifles in the new and popular .222 Remington.

By 1954 competition was heating up among domestic scope-makers and importers bringing riflescopes from the Far East. Lyman asked Hegeman for a new, affordable series for hunters. He designed the All-American 2-½x, 3x, 4x and 6x scopes. Their 1" steel tubes gave way within two years to alloy. In '57, Lyman added 8x and 10x versions. Demand for constantly centered reticles prompted Perma Center All-Americans, beginning in 1961. While Lyman had considered a variable scope in the 1950s, it waited until 1973 to announce a 3-9x. A 1-¾" 5x and a 2-7x followed. Lyman fielded a Benchrest scope in 1970. The 20x All-American was soon re-labeled "20x Light Weight Bench Rest." This receiver-mounted scope came with ¼- or ⅛-minute W/E dials. A 25x joined it in '76. A 6x with parallax correction (6x-P AA) arrived in 1974, to be replaced in '77 with the Metallic Silhouette "SL" series: 6x, 8x and 10x.

Once, at a long-ago gun show, I demurred when a fellow asked \$35 for a new-in-the-box Lyman Alaskan. In this era of outsize variable scopes heavy enough to drive fence posts, I feel the sting of that decision still. My handful of fixed-power Lyman scopes on rifles isn't going anywhere.

**GUNS**

LymanProducts.com



Lyman's first patented sight was a tang-mounted aperture, with a relatively big hole. Riflemen liked it!



With flak everywhere and fighters tearing through your formation, a B17 cockpit was a really busy place. Mistakes were frequently deadly

## THE OLD PILOT

### SOMETIMES THE BEST STORIES ARE SITTING RIGHT THERE ...

**Will Dabbs, MD**

**H**e sat up front on the left by himself in church every week. His wife was long since gone. He was quiet and old. As is so often the case in a small town like ours, he

was also a patient of mine.

This particular day he saw me for gout. I knew he was a military pilot but nothing more. I casually asked him what he had done during the war.

"B17s," he said with a wistful smile. He loved the plane. He described it as

sturdy. He had flown 25 combat missions over Europe. His eyes twinkled as he spoke.

I explained I had also been a military pilot, though in a totally different machine and during a totally different time. I made some vapid joke about how military aviators got all the girls. He agreed wholeheartedly.

He said he was in the running to snag the prettiest girl in his high school class. It had come down to him and another of his classmates who had also joined the Army Air Corps to fly during the war. He then insouciantly stated, "But he went down in a P38 over the Pacific."

Apparently while my friend was in Europe the girl found somebody else, but it was the casualness of the statement that was so shocking. I graduated from a small high school. Our class was very close. My first classmate to die was in a plane crash while we were in college. This man had known loss on a totally different scale.

Just over 16 million Americans served in uniform during World War II and 407,316 of them died. That's out of a population of 140 million. Everybody knew somebody who had given their life for their country. People like this man knew quite a few.



Two of the B17's 10 crewmen worked up front.

## AN UNEXPECTED TREASURE

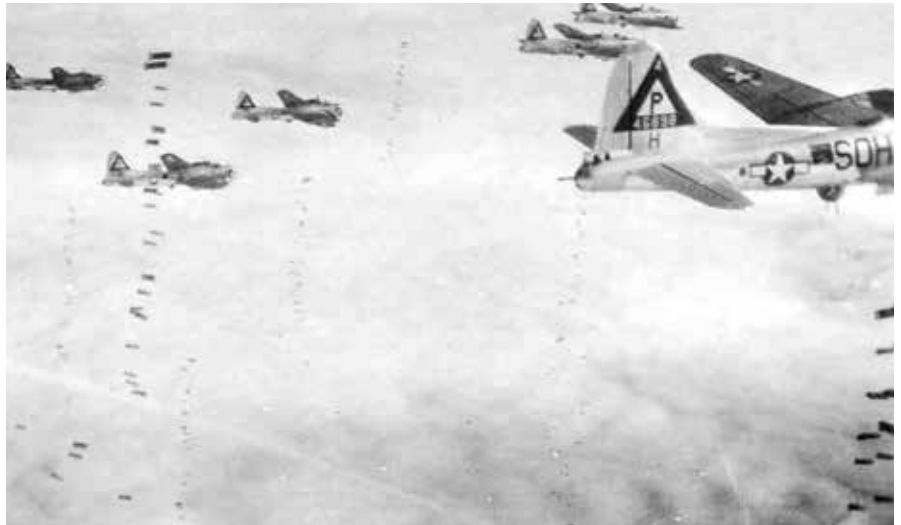
As is my custom I imposed upon the man for a quick war story. Anyone who has ever seen me as a patient now has some insights into why the waits can be so long at times. I innocently asked what his most memorable mission had been. He thought for a moment, his mind clearly rolling back to a different place.

He was on a strategic bombing mission over Italy somewhere. There weren't many fighters this run, but the flak was murderous. As the massive formations of heavy bombers jostled to avoid getting blown to hell by antiaircraft bursts, one of the boxes drifted unduly. This man's formation found itself underneath another just as they released their bombs. An errant 500-pounder caught the nose of his B17 just ahead of the cockpit.

"I suppose we were fortunate the thing didn't detonate," he said flatly. Instead it simply tore the nose off his plane and dropped it some four miles to the distant ground below. Along with it went two of his closest friends. The bombardier and navigator, two men with whom he had lived and flown for months, were simply gone.

He hadn't time to mourn. The B17 was never designed to fly with the nose torn off. He said the wind and the cold were unimaginable. He told me shredded aluminum and disincorporated chunks of airplane shrieked and flopped like a wildly unbalanced washing machine in the slipstream. He said the vibration was indescribable. Trying to keep the eviscerated airplane trimmed up and flying was a piece of pilotage the likes of which I find frankly breathtaking. This old man sitting in my clinic kept that crippled plane flying for another two hours.

He eventually nursed the disabled warplane down at his home field. He explained they considered bailing out, but none of them fancied spending the rest of the war in a prison camp, presuming they even survived the fall. At 22 years old, he was the pilot-in-command. It had been his call. It was a legitimate miracle the big bomber did not disintegrate enroute. Once he landed and got out of the plane, the reality of his loss set in.



Imagine being hit by one of your fellow aircraft 500-lb. bombs (above). Such things happened frequently in close formations and were usually fatal to the receiving plane.



This rugged plane frequently brought its crews home despite some of the most egregious damage.



The B17 Flying Fortress was a pilot's airplane. Tough, forgiving and easy to fly, the Flying Fort saved many an American life in the flak-riddled skies over Europe. The B17 Flying Fortress was unbelievably tough.

## RUMINATIONS

The amazing thing was how little emotion there was in his voice as he related this experience. I lost two friends while I was in uniform, and I still feel a little bit empty inside when I think about them. This man lost two friends three feet in front of his face, and then he still had the presence of

mind to nurse his decapitated airplane two hours back to safety. He described these events as though he were driving to the grocery store.

The man sat up front in church on the left. He typically kept to himself and blended in with the crowd. You'd never have known his was the face of a legitimate American hero. **GUNS**



Training P-64 pistols had obvious red bands painted on the grips and the sighting path on the top of the slide. A closer look reveals an oblong cutaway in the chamber area.

## POLISH P-64 SZKOLNY TRAINING CUTAWAY PISTOL

### A BARGAIN MILITARY SURPLUS TREASURE

**Frank Jardim**

**T**oday, let's consider the Polish P-64 pistol. It was designed in the 1950s and finally adopted in 1965, but such is the nature of government-managed economies in Communist countries.

The P-64 resembles a clunkier, hump-backed, Walther PPK and has similar features — fixed barrel, blow-back action, double-action/single-action trigger, hammer drop safety and an identical field stripping procedure. As much as it resembled the PPK, I've often wondered why the Poles didn't simply copy the PPK. For its few unique mechanical innovations and a somewhat lower production cost, the P-64 really offered no functional advantage over the Walther.

#### A POOR SUBSTITUTE

Chambered in 9mm Makarov, the six-shot P-64 wasn't even the combat pistol its predecessor, the 7.62x25mm Tokarev TT-33 (the Polish Tokarev), was. Factory 11 in Radom, Poland, took up production of the P-64 and it was issued to military, police and security

forces nationwide. Though unspectacular in design and performance, the P-64 was at least home grown rather than a copy of a Soviet weapon.

Before the collapse of the Communist Bloc, American Cold War collectors had very limited access to "enemy" arms, accoutrements and uniforms. I saw a fellow pay over \$200 for an East German army helmet in the late 1980s. It was a good price at the time. If he felt bad when, a few years later, the same helmets were selling at army surplus stores all across the country for less than \$20, I don't think he felt bad very long. How could you when a COMBLOC boom of military surplus was flowing out of the USSR and Eastern Europe at prices that, when adjusted for inflation, were reminiscent of the Golden Age of military arms collecting in the 1950s and 1960s.

The spigot has been essentially closed for a long time now, but we're still enjoying a surplus of Commie surplus in the collector market helping to keep prices down — but mark my word, it won't last.

Warnings of precipitous price rises aside, I'm happy to write a column about

a military surplus gun deal you don't need a time machine to take advantage of. Cold War vintage Polish SZKOLNY cutaway P-64 training pistols are currently available for less than \$100. As variants go, training cutaways are generally extremely rare. At their current pricing, I see them as sleeper collectibles. In fact, I bought three.

These P-64 training cutaways were imported years ago by Century Arms International, along with crates of the standard 9mm Makarov pistols. As imports, they were marked in the usual legally required manner. Century seems to have been experimenting with a dot peen marking machine at the time, as they put their "C.A.I. GEORGIA. VT/ Made in Poland" and the serial number in various locations. Recently, Centerfire Systems bought out all their remaining inventory and started selling the cutaways online. This is where I re-discovered them.

#### NEW ARRIVAL

The condition of the training pistols varies from heavily used to nearly new. Some are the earliest style with round

hammer spurs and some are 1970s versions with the so-called improved, triangular, hammer spur. All of them had the firing pin shortened and have no apparent firing pin hole opening to allow it to hit the cartridge primer if it was full length. The red paint on the grips and the top of the slide and unique marking readily differentiate the cutaway trainers from standard pistols.

On the right side of the slide, SZKOLNY (the Polish word for "school") is deeply engraved. A closer examination through the ejection port reveals a neat, oblong hole, cut through the frame's barrel hoop and the barrel chamber. This viewing port illustrates how the 9x18mm Makarov cartridge chambers and headspaces. I wonder how many accidental discharge injuries and deaths were averted by this simple visual aid demonstrating how an auto-loading pistol can still be loaded and ready to fire *despite* the removal of the magazine!

A look inside the chamber of a P-64 revealed it appears to offer surprisingly little support to the bottom of the 9x18mm cartridge case-head. The bottom rear of the chamber is carved away to extend the feed ramp deeply

up into the chamber to ensure reliable feeding. Apparently it didn't compromise the strength of this all-steel pistol in any significant way. It's a demonstration of how far one can go with leaving a case-head unsupported and how big a role case construction plays in containing the forces of the rapidly expanding powder gases.

## STILL A GUN

Even though these guns cannot fire live ammunition in their present state, they must still be transferred through FFL dealers because they are considered firearms by the ATF. Technically, they could be made to fire even though the strength of the barrel-mounting hoop is seriously compromised by the removal of 90% of it along the ejection port side.

A person could still drive out the barrel retaining pin, replace the barrel, get a new firing pin, re-drill the firing pin hole, and make this a functional pistol ... at least for a shot or two. This makes no sense from an economic or safety standpoint and no sane person would consider it, with the exception of movie prop houses.



This is a standard P-64 of 1970s manufacture (above) showing the improved, triangular shaped hammer. Note the distinctive humped back and the windage adjustable rear sight. The P-64 pistol operates and field strips (below) like a Walther PPK but is different mechanically.



For theatrical use as a semi-auto blank pistol, a simple unlocked, blow-back action like the P-64 is a good starting point and the low cost of the SZKOLNY makes it attractive for conversion to blanks only. A competent welder could repair them to handle blanks safely by welding up the remnant of the frame hoop to a new barrel or patching the old one and cleaning up the chamber. Blanks don't produce nearly as much pressure as live ammunition and generally don't expand to grip the chamber walls anyway, so a perfect chamber-reaming job is rarely needed for reliable extraction.

Overall, the P-64 SZKOLNY pistols are a solid value for a collector, instructor or prop-master. As a collector, I hope the instructors and prop-masters ruin a lot of them so mine will be worth more.

**GUNS**

CenterfireSystems.com



These bargain Cold War P-64 school pistol cutaway rarities were found at CenterfireSystems.com from \$60 to \$100.



# RUGER .416 HAWKEYE AFRICAN

**BIG BANG FOR YOUR BUCK**



Ruger's lightweight Hawkeye African in .416 Ruger packs charge-stopping power into a standard long action package. The scope is Swarovski's superb Z6i with lit reticle.



**Ruger's Hawkeye African in .416**  
Ruger packs classic express features,  
charge-stopping power into a reason-  
ably priced standard long action.

## Jeremy D. Clough

**W**hile we may think of other models first — like their industry standard 10/22, Mark IV rim-fires or the popular Vaquero series — Ruger is no stranger to Africa and African rifles. Founder Bill Ruger took Africa's vaunted Big Five in the late 1950s on safari in Kenya where he met Charles Askins, Jr., and spent time with George Adamson of Born Free fame, from whom he even purchased a few rifles.

### ADVENTURES IN AFRICA

During a Ugandan safari in 1960, he followed the path of W.D.M. "Karamojo" Bell, paid homage to Sir Samuel Baker and visited the Tsavo bridge of *Ghost and the Darkness* fame. Unsurprisingly, it wasn't long until his gun company began producing safari rifles, starting in 1966 with the Number 1 single shot, available in .375 H&H, .404 Jeffrey, .416 Rigby and .458 Winchester Magnum. Ruger's bolt action M77 Magnum, complete with express sights and machined quarter rib, was introduced over 30 years ago in .375 H&H and .416 Rigby, two of the classic safari calibers for repeating rifles.

Those two calibers became the basis of a pair of Ruger rounds intended to duplicate their performance in a smaller package: the .375 and .416 Ruger. By keeping the same Magnum-type case head diameter of the .375 — the first of the belted magnums — but eschewing the belt in place of a wider cartridge case ahead of the rim, the Ruger cartridges



**Jeremy shot factory 400-grain solids from Hornady, 300-grain Barnes TSX hollow points from Double Tap and 400-grain Nosler bullets handloaded over Hodgdon Varget.**

are short enough to be run through a standard long action. The rifles can be lighter and the shorter bolt throw less likely to be short-stroked under stress, something to think about when shooting the fanged. While some loads put the .416 Ruger just a click below the Rigby, no Cape Buffalo shot with it is likely to notice the difference. It still handily breaks the 5,000 foot pounds of energy threshold that elephant hunter John "Pondoro" Taylor considered the standard for seriously dangerous game.

### SPECS

The Hawkeye African shares the same elegant homage to express rifle conventions with a black ebony forend tip, twin stock crossbolts, single-leaf rear express sights matched with a white bead front mounted on a barrel-band style base and a barrel-mounted sling swivel, a not-so-subtle warning this sucker is gonna kick you.

For those who are comfortable with dragging a sling swivel through their left palm, a swivel can be readily added to the supplied hole in the forend. The threaded muzzle is crowned with a radially ported brake. Removable with an AR wrench, it can be replaced with the included solid barrel weight (intended to keep the same point of impact) or thread protector for those who like their shoulders less than I do.



**The Swarovski Z6i 1-6x24L maximizes battery life by turning off if tilted more than 70 degrees off horizontal or 30 degrees vertically. One cap holds a spare CR2032 battery, a nice touch.**



The threaded muzzle is crowned with a radially ported brake. You can replace it with the included solid barrel weight. Don't!



Sights consist of a single-leaf rear express sight matched with a white bead front. The front sight is mounted on a classy barrel-band style base, a distinctly African look.



The barrel-mounted sling swivel is a not-so-subtle warning this sucker is gonna kick you. For those who don't mind digging a sling swivel into their left palm, a swivel can be readily added to the supplied hole in the forend.



The only complaint Jeremy has about the Hawkeye is the safety which can be bumped on accidentally while cycling the bolt, locking the gun down until moved to the "fire" position again.

Magazine capacity is three-plus-one, with the externally activated floorplate release introduced on the M77 Mark II. The prettier early one was easier to accidentally activate, and it's hard to pick up loose cartridges when you're being stomped on.

## PROPER FEEDING

While the Hawkeye is described as a controlled round feed — and the cartridge does appear to snap upwards from the magazine directly under the extractor — the Hawkeye test rifle would readily load a cartridge dropped into the breech, with the full length extractor snapping over the rim as the bolt went home. One of the classic rifle debates is controlled feed, where the cartridge rises from the magazine onto the breech face, captured at all times by the extractor versus push feed, where the cartridge pops up ahead of the extractor which snaps over the rim as the rounds goes forward. While controlled feed is believed to be reliable under more circumstances, push feed can be more readily reloaded because it eliminates the need to snap the round into the magazine before driving the bolt home — the gun can be "road loaded" like a pump shotgun or lever gun. Functionally, the Hawkeye seems to be a bit of a hybrid between the two action styles.

In the course of shooting some 120 or so rounds through the Hawkeye — an eternity of use for most hard-kicking rifles — I had exactly one feed issue when I was rapid-firing it and a round took a couple extra shoves on the bolt handle to go home. Everything else fed flawlessly and the gun developed a distinct smoothness in operation where the bolt seems to go home effortlessly with no sense of change in direction when the handle rotates. The trigger broke crisply at 4 lbs., 2.5 oz. on my Lyman scale with zero discernible creep.

## SAFETY IN MIND

The Winchester-style safety has three positions: "fire," a safe position locking the bolt handle closed and one in between that keeps the gun from firing but allows the bolt to be cycled to load/unload safely. The only complaint



Advertised as a controlled-feed with long Mauser extractor, the Hawkeye would still feed loose rounds dropped into the action, making it a bit of a hybrid.

I have about the Hawkeye is it's possible to accidentally bump the safety lever while opening the bolt so it snaps backward against the bolt between the front of the cocking assembly and the rear of the extractor, tying up the bolt out of battery.

No reasonable amount of force will dislodge it — it must be manually flipped back to “fire” in order to move the bolt. I did this by accident early on with the .416, though in fairness in shooting fast-moving rifle courses at Gunsite with a similarly equipped Ruger rifle, I did not have the same problem. Since this is a rifle for dangerous game, though, you'd be well-advised to train carefully to avoid this problem or have a gunsmith add a bevel to either the safety/cocking assembly/ extractor so the safety will simply pop back out of the way when the bolt is pulled or pushed.

The rifle weighs a svelte 7.8 lbs. and feels slightly barrel heavy. A guide gun version of the Hawkeye has a 20" barrel that's 3" shorter than the African. The lightness is helpful when carrying the gun all day, less pleasant if shooting all day, but that's a fair tradeoff for a hunting gun. The muzzle brake helps — lean into it and press the trigger until the world explodes, followed a split second later by the muzzle blast washing over you. Plugs and muffs are a good idea. Removing the brake, which your intrepid correspondent did so all your questions may be answered, results in a notably more savage punch.

Like all Rugers, the receiver is machined to accept scope rings and comes with 1" rings, which I replaced with 30mm for the Swarovski Z6i 1-6x24L scope. Dwight Van Brunt of Sportman's Legacy, an experienced African hunter, told me this is the best dangerous game scope he'd ever used. Like many of the popular MSR optics, the Z6i combines 1-6x magnification with a brilliant central dot for both distance and the up-close-and-nasty work that's part and parcel of dangerous game work. The dot is powered by a CR2032 battery, with a spare held inside the right side cap and has both night and daytime settings. To maximize battery life, it turns off if the gun is tilted more than 70



In spite of the recoil, Jeremy posted a best group of around 3" at 100 yards with the Swarovski scope and 3.8" with the iron express sights.

degrees off horizontal or rotated more than 30 degrees vertically. The controls are intuitive, the bold reticle quick to acquire and the optics shockingly crisp.

## RANGE TIME

I shot the Hawkeye with factory 400-grain solids from Hornady, 300-grain Barnes TSX hollow points from Double-Tap and handloads assembled with 400-grain Nosler bullets over their recommended charge of Hodgdon Varget. All rounds performed as expected, which means they both hit and kicked.

Recoil is integral with express rifles and has an expected effect on accuracy as the tender flesh behind the trigger has a hard time holding still knowing it's about to get punched. From prone I managed a 3" five-shot group at 100 yards using the scope and about 3.8" using the express sights with three of those going into a sub-1" triangle. Not the fractional-MOA I'd expect from a heavy target rifle, but definitely minute of lion. I also broke some clay pigeons on the 100-yard berm from a standing rest which was spectacular fun.

Not all of us will get to hunt in Africa, or need a buffalo-flattening rifle for hunting here. Those who do, though, including the folks in the Alaska and the parts of the West where the big bears play, need one very badly and the Hawkeye performs exactly as you'd

expect, at a price far below most safari rifles. Just watch that safety.

**GUNS**



African calibers are all about penetration rather than expansion. This 400-grain Nosler solid, next to a .45 ACP, won't expand, but neither will it stop. Ever.

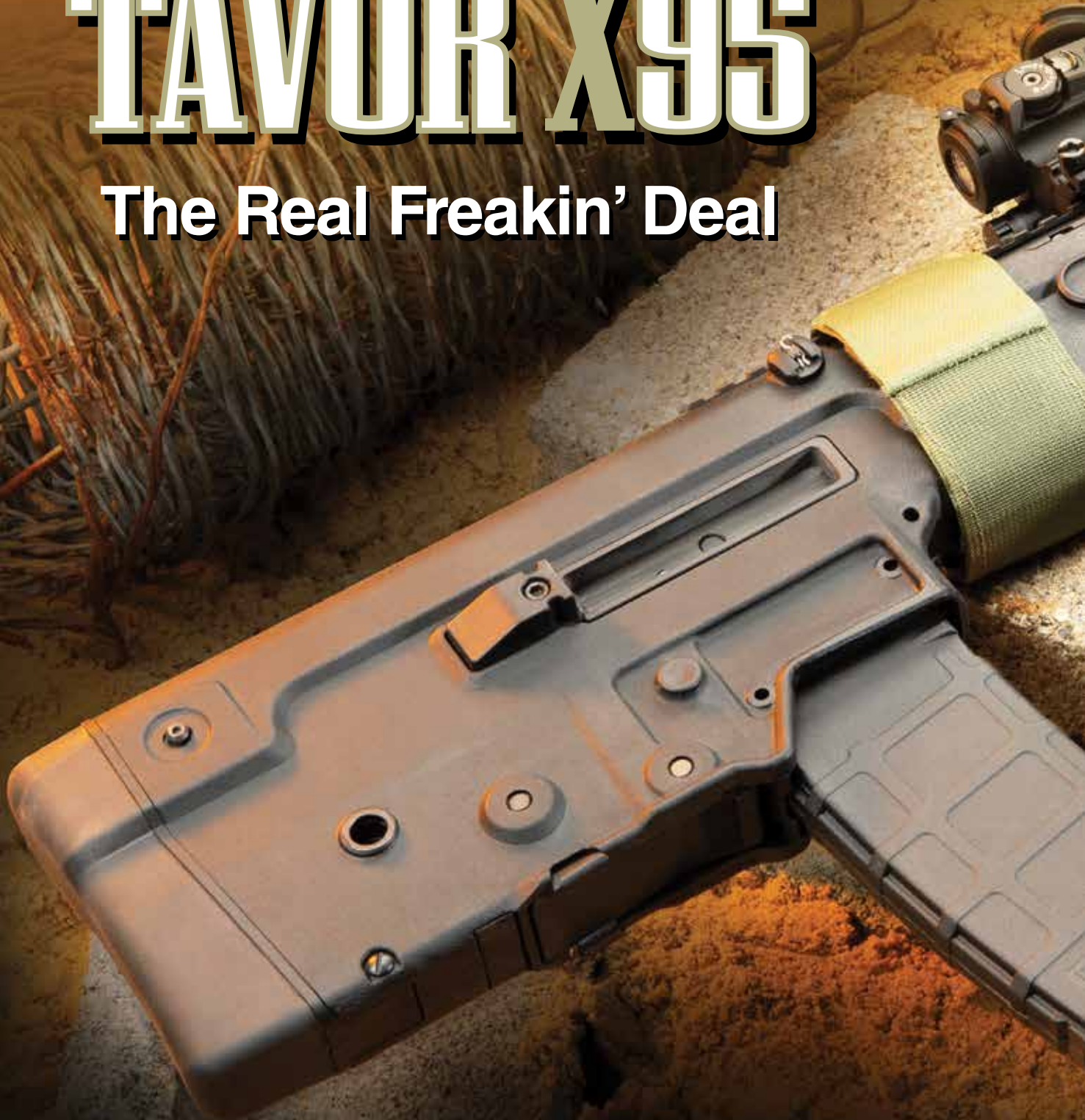
MSRP: \$1,569

Ruger.com



# TAVOR X95

**The Real Freakin' Deal**





**Will Dabbs, MD**

**Photos: Rob Jones/The Imagesmith, LLC**

**A**midst a most remarkable pantheon of advanced modern sporting rifles littering your local firearms emporium, one in particular stands out from all the rest. I would informally estimate 80% are some variation of Gene Stoner's timelessly sleek black rifle. The remaining minority is divided among Kalashnikov, Steyr, FN and the like. I would assert the most advanced of the lot is a remarkable bullpup design hailing from Israel.

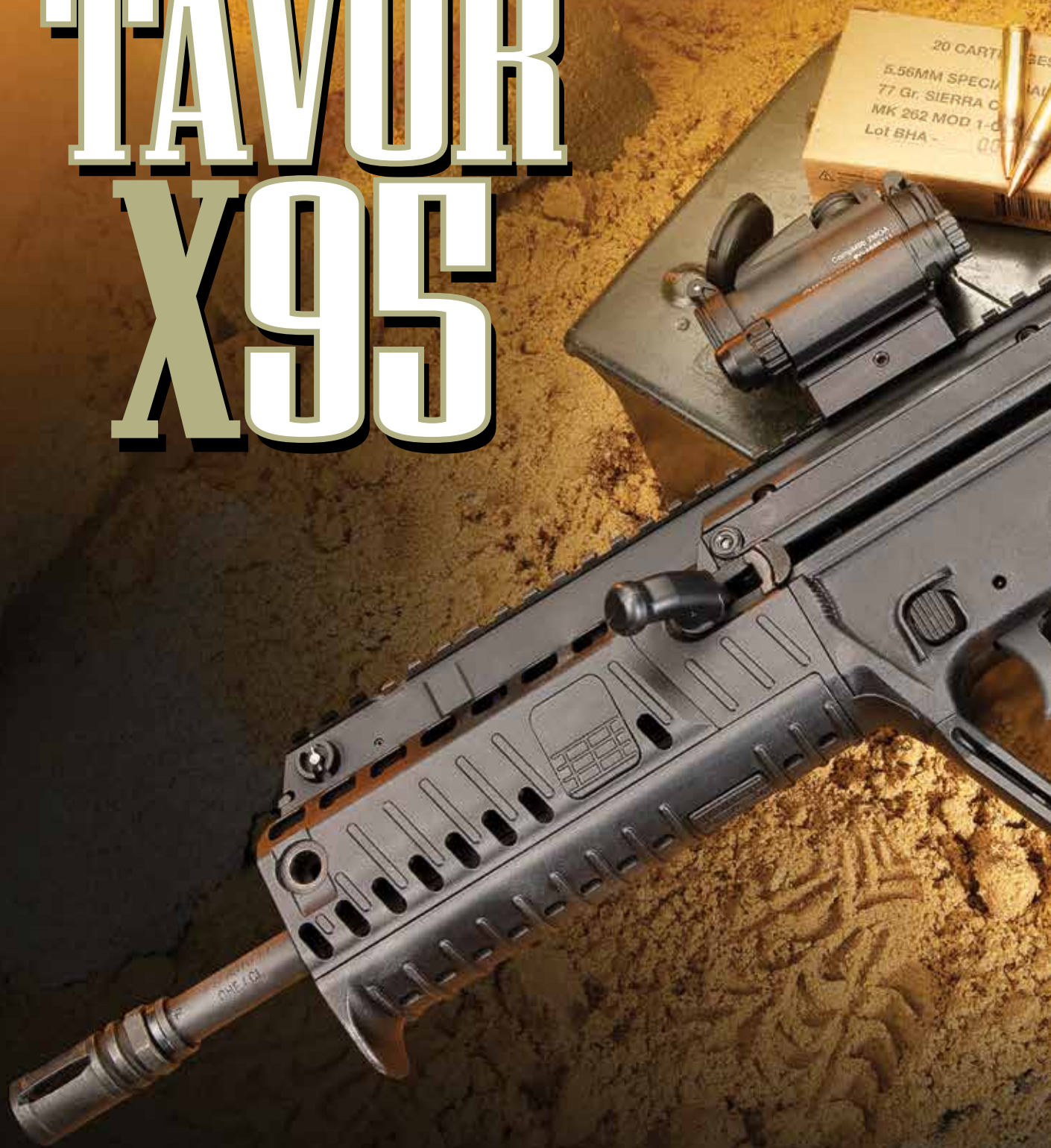
The IWI (Israel Weapon Industries) Tavor X95 represents the current apex in the development of modern infantry rifles. Compact, reliable, versatile and cool, the Tavor X95 is the end result of generations of operational experience. Additionally, unlike many of those guns lining the walls at the shop, the Tavor X95 is also currently in active service in a combat zone as I type these words.

#### **DATE NIGHT**

Abidan Mizrahi was a happy guy. A Corporal in the IDF (Israel Defense Force) assigned to the famed Golani Brigade, Abidan was home on leave after a particularly grueling training cycle. This night on the town with Rivka had been months in the planning.



# TAVOR X95





**IWI TAVOR X95  
GEAR LIST**

**AMMO:**  
Black Hills Mk 262  
77-grain OTM

**OPTIC:**  
Aimpoint M5b

# GUNS<sup>®</sup>

MAGAZINE



The X95 has Pic rails (left) all over the place, ringing the forend and complementing a top full-length optics rail. There are also unique flip-up iron sights — stowed, it would take a hand grenade to destroy them! Here is the flip-up front sight (right) extended for use.



With the front rail cover removed, you can add all sorts of accessories such as this Streamlight TLR-9 weapon light (above). The right side has a safety indicator and the big square bi-lateral magazine release. The Aimpoint Comp M5b (below) fits the rifle perfectly, making for a cutting-edge fighting package.



Abidan and Rivka began dating in high school. When he finally completed his three years of national service he would make her his wife. She was bubbly, playful, smart and gorgeous. She had completed her two years in the IDF three months prior, having served as a firearms instructor. Abidan was looking forward to the day when he could stash his uniform away in a closet as a reservist so they could move on with their lives.

Abidan and Rivka lived on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Today they fancied an evening in the Old City. The market was populated mostly with tourists, but the couple had whiled away many an enchanted evening in years past exploring the cluttered stalls. Tonight they would score some shawarma from a vendor and just wander. He had not seen her in two months.

Abidan ran a comb through his hair one last time and straightened his collar. His little sister rolled her eyes at his aftershave. Abidan gave her a quick hug and snatched up his Tavor X95 rifle before heading out the door.

After two and a half years as a soldier, the weapon has become part of Abidan's life. When he was home on leave he carried the rifle with a loaded magazine and a red plastic chamber flag in place. The little scrap of plastic along with all of the various accessories were secured with short lengths of dummy cord. He had trained to jack the bolt, drop the chamber flag and have the weapon up and ready in an instant.

Rivka was radiant as usual. He had forgotten how good she smelled. After a long hug around the corner from her parents' view, the couple struck out. A short bus ride later and they were strolling arm in arm through the bazaar. Abidan did not know if he had ever been happier.

The screams were faint at first but then grew louder and more penetrating. Orienting to the sound both Abidan and Rivka reflexively struck out at a trot toward the noise. Without conscious thought Abidan had his rifle up, ready and charged as the screams grew ever louder. Now he was at a flat-out run.

The Aimpoint M4S tactical optic on his Tavor was on all the time. As



The buttstock on a bullpup-design conceals the action. The X95 feeds from any standard STANAG M4 magazine.

Abidan rounded the corner into a long corridor between stalls, he saw an elderly woman lying in a pool of blood and several civilians struggling mightily with a young Palestinian man armed with a wicked knife. Abidan shouted for the bystanders to get clear, raised his rifle and shot the terrorist dead with a single round to the chest. Rivka immediately ran past him and began tending to the old woman's wounds. The police arrived in force moments later.

## PHILOSOPHY

Violence is an unfortunate and never-ending reality in the Holy Land. People have been fighting and dying over the revered scrap of dirt since the dawn of man. In one five-month period back in 2016 there were 211 stabbings perpetrated against Israeli civilians. The anger and hatred on both sides

span millennia and perpetuates itself. There are no easy solutions.

As a result, the Israelis are quite well-acquainted with personal defense. Permission from the government is still required to carry a concealed weapon, but those rules were relaxed somewhat within the last couple of years. Many IDF soldiers do indeed bring their weapons home while on leave and carry them in public when out and about. When I was visiting there most every crowd had one or two young studs, many of whom were obviously out on dates, wandering about with an M4 or Tavor slung across their backs. More so than arguably any other people group on the planet, the Israelis know their guns.

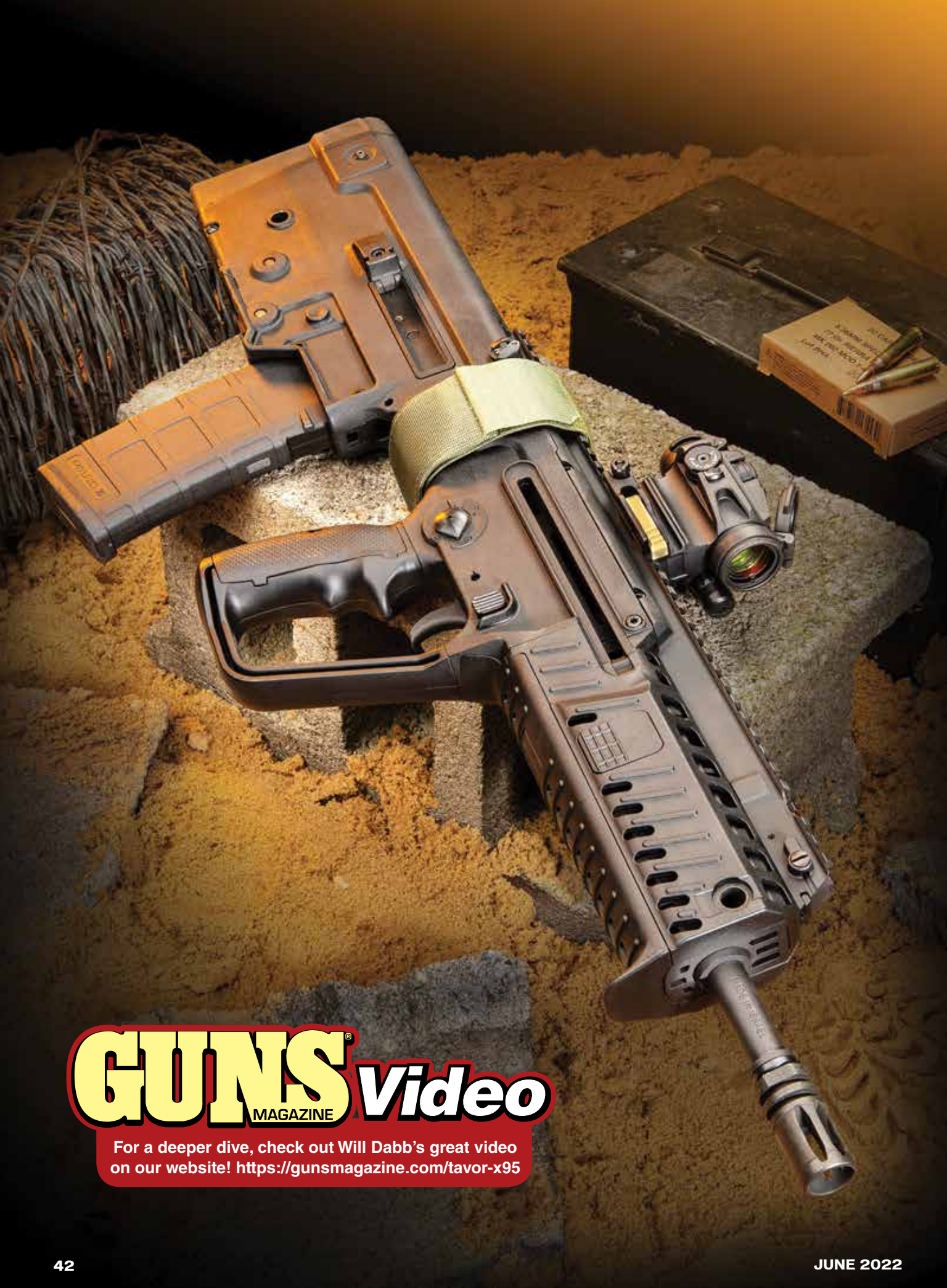
## TECHNICAL DETAILS

The Tavor X95 is the most refined bullpup weapon ever contrived. Bullpup simply means the fire controls

are located behind the action. Other examples include the Steyr AUG, the French FAMAS, the FN F2000 and the British SA80. To the purist every magazine-fed handgun in common use today is actually a bullpup design.

The X95 utilizes a long-stroke gas-piston action conceptually similar to that of an AK47. Optimized in Eugene Stoner's AR180 and now used in such weapons as the HK416, FN SCAR-16 and G36, this design provides ample mechanical energy to ensure consistent operation even under austere conditions. This system represents the most reliable handheld firearm action ever contrived.

The X95 includes a non-reciprocating charging handle readily reversible at the user level without tools. The 16.5" barrel is chrome-lined and cold hammer forged out of CrMoV steel with a 1:7 twist. IDF versions feature a 13" barrel. This configuration is available



# **GUNS** MAGAZINE *Video*

For a deeper dive, check out Will Dabb's great video on our website! <https://gunsmagazine.com/tavor-x95>



The X95 features a unique “cutlass” handguard, though it can be changed to a “standard” guard without the front piece, the way most Israeli guns are configured.

from IWI as a registered SBR (short-barreled rifle).

There is a full-length optics rail up top along with a superb set of built-in iron sights which fold out of the way when not in use. Integral accessory rails come standard in the forearm and are concealed within removable polymer covers. These covers synergistically create a beefy forearm that is easy to grip even when sweaty or rushed.

There are sling sockets everywhere and the pistol grip can be configured as either the standard sort or a cutlass configuration like an AUG. I prefer the cutlass sort myself, but all the X95s I encountered in IDF service in Israel used the conventional design. The X95 feeds from any standard M4 STANAG magazine and features a last-round bolt hold-open device located behind the magazine well. With a little practice the gun runs just about as fast as an M4. As I mentioned, the Israelis have quite a lot of experience building practical combat tools.

Takedown is straightforward and stupid-proof. Running a bullpup weapon with your weak hand is a perennial problem as the gun ejects into your face. A left-hand bolt is

available for the X95 as a factory accessory and is easily exchanged at the user level.

The X95 is relatively portly at around 8 lbs. However, the bullpup design puts the center of gravity over the firing hand, so the gun seems lighter than it is. Once you get comfortable with the weapon, it points naturally and runs like a chipmunk on fire.

### TRIGGER TIME

The trigger on any bullpup weapon has to work a little harder than it does in your favorite AR. However, the 5.5-lb. trigger on the Tavor X95 is simply well designed. The firing experience is refined, comfortable and precise. The bilateral magazine release is located just ahead of the trigger and is easily accessed by the firing finger. Magazines drop away freely. The fire selector is a left-sided switch engaged by the firing thumb.

Once I took its measure, the X95 became one of the smoothest, most intuitive rifles I have ever run. The superb human engineering, ample mass and exceptional action thoroughly negate any recoil considerations so follow-up shots are fast,

straight and painless. Stroke the magazine release and hit the bolt catch with your thumb as you seat a fresh mag and the gun is ready to go.

Accuracy is on par with any advanced modern combat rifle. A Streamlight TLR-9 pumps out 1,000 lumens of brilliant white light and activates using a remote tape switch. The Aimpoint Comp M4S I added is a combat-proven tactical optic with a 2-MOA red dot. The M4S runs for eight years on a single AA battery and is indestructible. The X95 and Magpul P-Mags are a match made in heaven.

### RUMINATIONS

The IWI Tavor X95 is a combat weapon. The rifle has seen service in at least 14 countries and continues to defend Israel today. I have ragged my X95 mercilessly and have yet to clean it. I can't kill it. The Tavor X95 is a war hammer of a weapon from a nation forever at war.

**GUNS**

MSRP: \$1,999 (Model XB16)

IWI.US  
Streamlight.com  
Aimpoint.com

# The Mauser

Best  
Bolt-Action  
Ever?

*Magpie*



Old and lovely: a Holland & Holland .375 (above), on a Magnum Mauser action with a cocking-piece sight. In Namibia, Wayne has often used Jamy Traut's 9.3x62 commercial Mauser (below), always with open sights.



## Wayne Van Zwoll

The Mauser name has graced many rifles and been used to sell others. Oddly enough, the Model of 1898, which brought Peter Paul Mauser acclaim, didn't emerge until he was 60 years old!

### IN THE BEGINNING

Together with his brother Wilhelm in Oberndorf, Germany, Paul's mechanical genius birthed a single-shot rifle firing an 11mm (0.43") black-powder cartridge hurling 385-grain bullets at 1,400 fps. Wilhelm's business acumen brought it to military trials. In 1872 the Mauser Model of 1871 became Prussia's infantry rifle. Alas, the brothers pocketed just 15% of what they'd expected and the new rifles were to be built in government arsenals, not at the Mauser shop. Undaunted, Paul and Wilhelm earned enough making sights to build a factory.

Eventually awarded a contract for 100,000 rifles, they partnered with the Wuerttemberg Vereinsbank of Stuttgart to buy the Wuerttemberg Royal Armory. On February 5, 1874 it became Mauser Bros. & Co. The firm delivered the last Model 1871s ahead of schedule in 1878. After Wilhelm died young in 1882, Paul designed a nine-shot tube magazine for the 1871 rifle. Reliable but crude, the 71/84 soon gave way to better Mausers.

Yes, it was a cold, wet day on the prairie! Wayne's 6.5x55 Swedish Mauser killed the buck at 75 yards.



In 1889 *Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre* (FN) emerged in Liege to build Mauser rifles for the Belgian government. Paul's first successful smokeless arm, the Model of 1889, established him as the Continent's dominant gun designer. The one-piece bolt, bored from the rear, had twin front lugs and the box could be loaded by a stripper clip. Still, the 1889 (and 1890 Turkish and 1891 Argentine Mausers, all bored for the 7.65x53 Mauser) had flaws. The narrow extractor and its small spring could fail. The trigger could be pulled with the bolt out of battery.

## MODEL 1892

The subsequent Model of 1892 had Mauser's long, non-rotating extractor, now hailed as the most reliable claw ever. Collared to the bolt body, it gripped the rising cartridge before it aligned with the bore, and cleared the breech even if shooters short-cycled. Engaging a big chunk of the case rim, it tugged hulls from hot, dirty chambers. The 1892 had a fixed, single-stack magazine which, like the 1889's different box, protruded from the rifle's belly. A sear pin nixed firing until the bolt was locked. A guide rib smoothed

its travel. The rifle chambered the new 7x57 cartridge, a standout among early smokeless, rimless rounds.

Barely a year passed before Paul refined his rifle. The safety became a wing pivoting atop the bolt sleeve. At "right horizontal," it locked bolt and striker. Vertical, it held the cocking piece off the sear but allowed bolt cycling. "Left horizontal" was the fire position. Dual humps on the trigger yielded a two-stage pull. Cartridges fed in a staggered column from a flush box. The resulting 1893 "Spanish Mauser" was an instant hit, snapped up by armed forces worldwide. Its flat-bottomed receiver was machined from a steel forging. An angled cut in the bridge had a camming surface to help with primary extraction. The integral bolt handles on most 1893 (and 1895) Mausers were straight. Carbines had turned-down handles.

In 1894 Sweden ordered 12,185 Mauser carbines, later built in Carl Gustaf's *Stads Gevarsfaktori* government arsenal in Eskiltuna. They chambered the 6.5x55 Swedish round, its head slightly larger than that of the 7x57. The checkered cocking piece enabled a soldier to ease the striker forward without firing. The 1896 Swedish Mauser was similar, but with a straight bolt handle and three gas vents in the bolt.



Lethal with 196-grain softpoints, this nimble commercial Mauser (above) has given Wayne several animals. This 1896 Swedish Mauser (note checkered cocking piece below) has a well-done stock repair, Lyman sight.



## THE ULTIMATE

Mauser actions evolved during the 1890s. The Model of 1898 was adopted by the German Army on April 5 of that year. It cocked on opening. Generous gas ports and a third lug mating with a slot in the bridge were safety measures. Exported to many countries, the '98 was built in many more. France, Great Britain, Russia and the U.S. designed their own battle rifles but none surpassed Mauser's in accuracy or function. The original *Gewehr* 98, a 9-lb. rifle with a 29" barrel and five-shot magazine, first saw action in the Boxer Rebellion in 1898. A short *Karabiner* 98 was built from 1899 to 1908.

Paul Mauser died in May, 1914, just before trench warfare muddied and bloodied his 1898 rifles.

While the 98's most lauded feature



A 9.3x62 softnose from a Mauser doomed this old, heavy-bossed bull. Two quick solids made sure.

is its extractor, the magazine merits equal credit for smooth, fault-free cycling. Each 1898 box was fashioned for a specific cartridge, not to accommodate families of cartridges, as is done today. Besides cartridge length and base width, “Paul Mauser minded the details,” said gun-maker D’Arcy Echols, who has

designed his own rifle action. “Not just box dimensions, but the angle formed by the staggered cartridge bases, taper of the box relative to cartridge shape and shoulder location, the follower’s taper and step height. Even the loose fit of the follower spring to the floorplate is purposeful; that spring must squirm to keep the stack centered as cartridges strip from either side.”

Paul Mauser designed his magazine box as a unit integral with the trigger bow, held to the action by a pair of



**Browning High Power rifles, 1960-74, featured FN Mauser actions. This .458 Lott has been well used!**

machine screws. Depressing a spring-loaded plunger with a pointed bullet let the floorplate slide back and down, for removal.

### SPORTING AFIELD

I’ve used Mausers on animals from deer to elephant, without a feeding failure. Last fall, slipping up on an ancient Cape buffalo, I sent a 286-grain softnose from my open-sighted 9.3x62. The bull roared and spun wildly, no doubt seeking the source of its shattered shoulder.

The Mauser seemed to cycle itself, once, twice, hurling follow-up solids. The beast collapsed not 20 steps from where it had taken the first hit.

Even when second shots aren’t needed, I prefer iron-sighted Mausers in Africa. They’re surely at home in Namibia — once a German colony as Southwest Africa. The 9.3, borrowed from PH

Jamy Traut, has accounted for my best gemsbok and other game. A Mauser in 8x57 has racked up several one-shot kills. A Holland & Holland .375 on a Magnum Mauser action capped a kudu hunt with a fast last-evening shot. While Winchester Model 70s have also brought my safaris to successful ends, the 70 is a latecomer to Africa, introduced nearly 40 years after Boers (farmers) were downing game with Mausers!

On the heels of WWII, the *Mauser Waffenfabrik* (arms factory) was renamed *Werke* (works), and marketing



**Mauser has long supplied Rigby with actions for the English maker’s bolt rifles, here a lovely .416.**

shifted toward sportsmen. U.S. agent A.F. Stoeger, Inc. of New York, which peddled the brand stateside, had earlier assigned numbers to Mauser actions. The line comprised 20 configurations in four lengths: magnum, standard, intermediate, short. The short (*kurz*) receiver had a small ring. It was factory-barreled for the 6.5x50, 8x51 and .250 Savage. Magnum and short actions saw no military service.

After both world wars, surplus German infantry rifles could be had on the cheap. Enthusiasts sifted details to assess various Mausers for costly conversions to sporters. The 1909 Argentine and Czech VZ-24 and 33/40, for example, became ever more costly as supplies dwindled. Beyond design disparities, teasing out differences in vintage, manufacture and scarcity pull you into deep rabbit holes!

### A COSTLY HABIT

Commercial pre-war 98s came dear even when new. In 1939 a Model 70 Winchester cost \$61.25; a 98 Mauser brought \$110 to \$250, square-bridge and left-hand actions adding stiff premiums. Mausers stocked by shops like Griffin & Howe of New York came to define the “classic” sporting rifle stateside. Fitted with Noske and Lyman scopes in G&H double-lever mounts, they seduced discriminating hunters with thick wallets.

In my youth, the Mark X was an affordable entry into the world of Mausers. I had one barreled to the then-new .264 Winchester Magnum. I should have bought a Whitworth big-bore rifle, which also had a Mark X action. Not as beautifully finished as Browning’s High Power rifles built on FN Mauser actions from 1960 to 1974, the Whitworth pointed and shot well.

Another bargain of the day was the Herter’s J9 action, a 98 Mauser with side safety and scope-friendly bolt shank. It listed for as little as \$46.95 the year before I graduated high school. Herter’s peddled J9 rifles for \$79.50! Add \$2.20 for iron sights. Mausers have sold under Zastava, Santa Barbara, Global Trading, Centurion, Mitchell’s, Ackley and other labels.

Several carriage-class shops have since offered Mauser actions and rifles, their prices reflecting the high cost of refining military actions or using commercial



This exceptional Kalahari gemsbok bull fell to a 140-yard shot from an open-sighted Mauser in 9.3x62.

versions like the Brevex, a true Magnum Mauser once imported by Tradewinds. Johannsen Express Rifles are Mausers at heart. Granite Mountain Arms produces beautiful CNC-machined Mauser actions. Mauser has long provided Rigby, of London, with actions for its exquisite rifles. This relationship has endured even the barbs of war!

The proletariat can still find serviceable Mausers — commercial and “sporterized” infantry arms. Once, in a used-gun rack, I spied an 1896

Swedish Mauser fitted with a hunting-style receiver sight. The stock had been nicely refinished, a block inletted where the open sight had been, and I killed a pronghorn with the 6.5x55. A re-barreled 98 in a Winchester 54 stock caught my eye at a gun show and followed me home. It is lightweight, nimble. Uncannily and unfailingly, it centers my eye in the aperture.

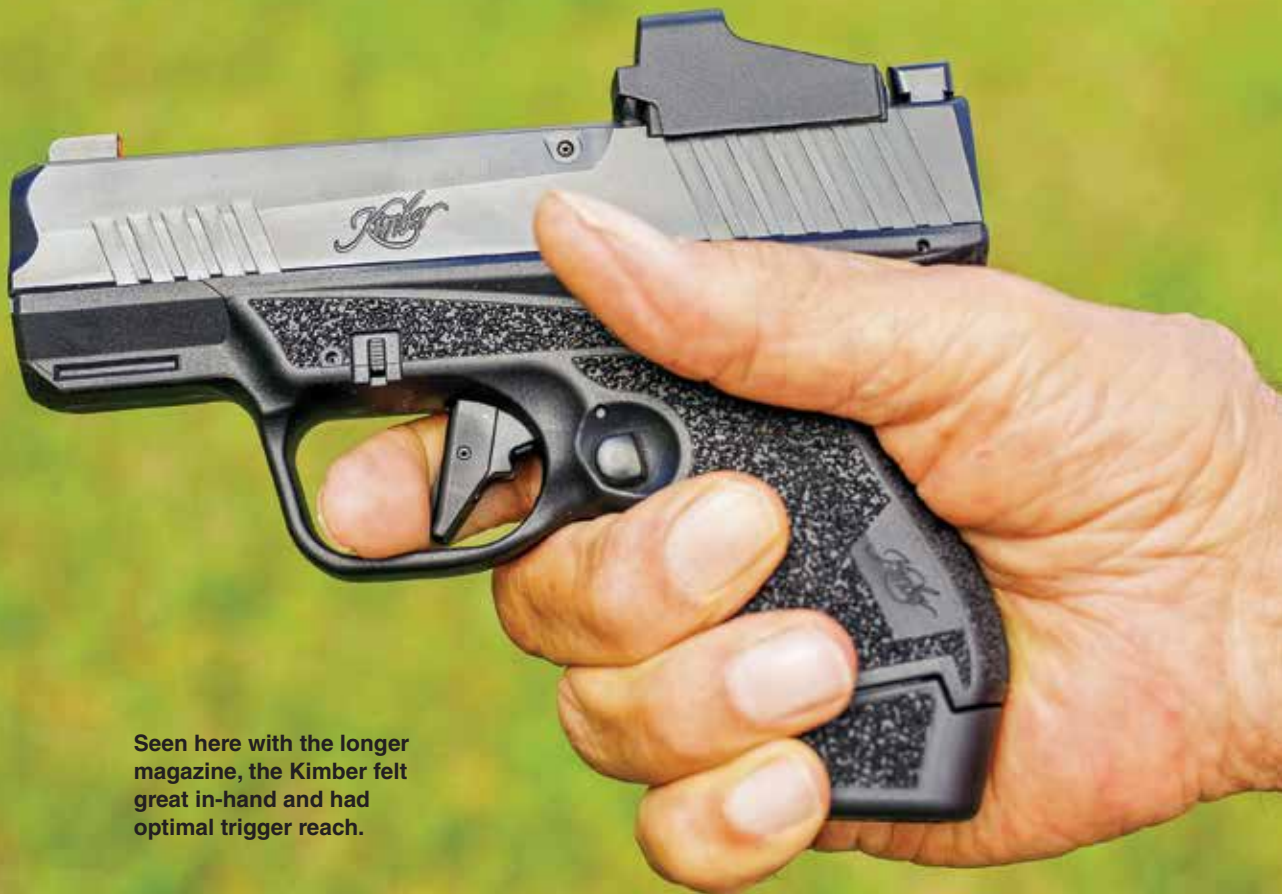
Those aren’t the only Mausers in my rack. Nor are they likely to be the last.

**GUNS**

# THE MAKO Attacks



The Kimber Mako with CT carry optic, out of the box, with both magazines.



Seen here with the longer magazine, the Kimber felt great in-hand and had optimal trigger reach.

# SMALL PISTOL WITH A BIG BITE!

**Massad Ayoob**  
**Photos: Gail Pepin**

**W**ith strong input from pistol champion Phil Strader, the SIG P365 created a new genre of defensive handgun: small and light, polymer frame and striker fired, pocket-sized and holding 11 rounds or more of 9mm ammunition. It was a sea change in concealed carry handgun design and other manufacturers introduced competing models in what looked like a feeding frenzy. The GLOCK slimlines, G48 and G43X. The Springfield Hellcat, which upped the round-count ante. The Smith & Wesson Shield Plus, the Ruger Max-9, the Taurus GX4 and now the Kimber Mako.

## AMIDST THE FEEDING FRENZY

Amidst the feeding frenzy of pistol manufacturers salivating to dominate this market, the Mako cuts the water as any shark would with its dorsal fin being the first signal of its presence. The dorsal fin on our test sample, serial number R00180, is right there on its spine: a Crimson Trace red dot sight. Underlying it are some excellent backup iron sights. The rear has two tritium dots and a front sight needing some explanation. The front is in the form of a Patridge-style post, big enough to see under stress and easy to align with the big U-notch rear. The front sight is fitted with a big old orange dot that catches the eye in daylight or illuminated indoor environments.

And, in the center of the big orange ball is a little green tritium bulb which, in pitch darkness, aligns between the two larger ones on the rear sight.

While I prefer the bigger night sight lamp to be on the front, it's not hard to tell the little one is on the front and the bigger ones are on the back. With the test gun, which had the optional RDS (Red Dot Sight), the three green dots aligned just under the big red one. The point is, if you're "retro" and don't have the optical sight up above, you'll be able to tell the front from the rear and not misalign the three dots and shoot to the side.

Inevitably, someone will say, "If you can't see your sights you can't see to identify your target," to which I will reply, "If there's a humanoid shape in the dark that screams 'I'll kill you, #@\*%!' and you hear a shot and see an orange fireball, your shadowy target *is* identified and it would be awfully nice if you could index your sights upon it."

## IN THE HAND

I was very pleased with the grip treatment. Grip shape has a curve low on the backstrap locking into the hollow of my palm much like the Baby GLOCKS such as the G26, a feature letting people like me shoot them as well as longer barreled guns in the same caliber out to about 25 yards. The stippling seemed "Mamma Bear just right," not chewing up the hand in extended firing but preventing any shift in the gun hand. Not having a holster for it, I didn't give it a



Flying brass, minimum recoil as Mas tests the Mako from 15 yards.



David Rodgers dialed in the carry optic, and test-fires the Mako from 15 yards, all in the A-zone of the IPSC target.



Mako's sweet spot for accuracy at 25 yards: 147-grain subsonic Remington-UMC.

concealed carry test but the stippling seems as if it would only chafe if carried tight against bare skin.

### IN THE FIELD

Because many defensive uses of the handgun involve an attacker right on top of the defender, we have to remember pressing the muzzle of most semi-automatic pistols against the body of the homicidal attacker can push the barrel/slide assembly out of battery and prevent the gun from firing. The Kimber Mako, I'm happy to report, has a recoil spring guide that comes forward far enough to prevent this from happening. I for one think this is a *big* advantage in auto pistol design and am continually confounded why gun manufacturers who have this stand-off feature don't advertise its life-saving potential more than they do.

### ON THE RANGE

The Kimber Mako is truly ambidextrous — dual magazine release buttons and slide lock/slide release levers. This isn't just for our southpaw contingent. Any right-handed shooter might have to fire "weak hand only" in an emergency, and the ambi mag release allows even the "northpaw" to remove the index finger from the trigger during the reload process (a safety bonus point) and probably dump the empty mag faster than shifting the hand to allow the right thumb to do it. If you are wounded and have to do a one-handed reload, ambidextrous slide release levers make this faster. All good in my opinion.

When you take a self-defense gun out of the box, you expect it to shoot to where the sights are aligned. There was good news and bad news here with our test Mako. The iron sights were dead on, but the red dot was nowhere near co-witnessed with the irons. Test team member David Rodgers had to take some time to adjust the dot before it "shot where it looked."

A note to gun manufacturers who sell handguns with red dot sights: Please sight the darn things in before you send them to consumers who buy defense guns for



At 25 yards from the bench, (relatively) low-priced Blazer Brass 115-grain ball kept all five shots “in the black.”



The Mako didn't do its best with normally super-accurate Black Hills 124-grain JHP at 25 yards.

life-threatening emergencies! It is to Kimber's credit they did it with the iron sights; I wish they had done the same with the optic.

Trigger pull? The Lyman digital trigger gauge found the trendy flat-faced trigger to average 5.04 lbs. average from the toe of the trigger, the bottom tip and 5.325 lbs. from the center where most of our trigger fingers will be positioned. This is a bit light in a world where striker-fired pistols are measured by the dominant gun, the GLOCK, whose measurement is a factory-stated 5.5 lbs. on standard self-defense models.

All on the test crew noted “creep” in the take-up of the pull, that is, little catch points that felt like “fits and starts” in slow fire. We also noted a bit of it when the trigger “hit the wall,” that is, reached the point of firm resistance to the trigger finger before the shot discharged. There was also some “backlash,” or rearward movement of the trigger after the striker released and the shot was on its way. This was much less palpable when firing rapidly, however. It did not have much deleterious effect on accuracy, however, as we're about to see.

## ACCURACY

If it doesn't have the optical sight, you can carry your Kimber Mako in a capacious trouser pocket. Some see these guns, viably, as pocket pistols. There is a strange belief in the gun world pocket pistols should only be tested at 7 yards or so. Unfortunately, the pocket pistol will have to do the service pistol's job at 25 yards if this is how things go down, so I still test such guns from that distance. Standard protocol here: Caldwell Matrix Rest on a concrete bench and five-shot groups measured once overall. This shows what the pistol can do under perfect conditions in human hands and again for the best three hits.

We tested with the three most common 9mm Luger bullet weights. Our test Mako turned out to always throw the first shot very high and a little right, due to the fact semiautomatic firearms don't always go into the exact-same “battery” (alignment of firing parts) when

hand-cycled as when automatically-cycled during recoil.

Our 115-grain load was one most widely available in many places during the current “ammo drought,” CCI Blazer Brass full metal jacket. With the first high shot the total group at 25 yards was 4.60", all in the black of a B8 NRA “bullseye” target, but the best three were in 1.60".

Our 124-grain load was Black Hills jacketed hollowpoint, a round so accurate I've seen U.S. military pistol teams issue it to their elite teams for the National Championships at Camp Perry. This little carry Kimber didn't like it as much as the armed services' accurized Berettas, with five shots in 7.30" at 25 yards counting the first high shot, 5.0" for the next four and 2.65" for the best three.

The Kimber Mako hit its sweet spot with 147-grain subsonic 9mm, a load created for sniper-grade accuracy with MP5SF submachineguns of Special Forces back in the 1980s by Winchester, who appropriately named the round “OSM” for Olin Super Match. The Remington-UMC jacketed truncated version we shot put all five shots in 4.95", with the last four in 1.60" and the best three in a most impressive nine-tenths of one inch, dead center in the target.

## IN CONCLUSION

The ability to deliver a press-contact shot is a huge tactical advantage, and the Mako has it. Our test gun went hundreds of rounds in many hands with flawless reliability. We liked that the iron sights came out of the factory spot-on for point of aim/point of impact. We were reminded not all pistol/optical sight packages come out of the box shooting where they looked. Our test crew overall liked it and team member Robby Harris said he'd probably buy one. If you are going to be swimming with the sharks and want a maximum-capacity pocket-size 9mm, the Kimber Mako should be on your sonar screen.

**GUNS**

MSRP: \$799 with optic

KimberAmerica.com

# GUNS AND RELIABILITY

## When Failure is Simply **Not** an Option

**Will Dabbs, MD**  
**Photos: Sarah Dabbs**

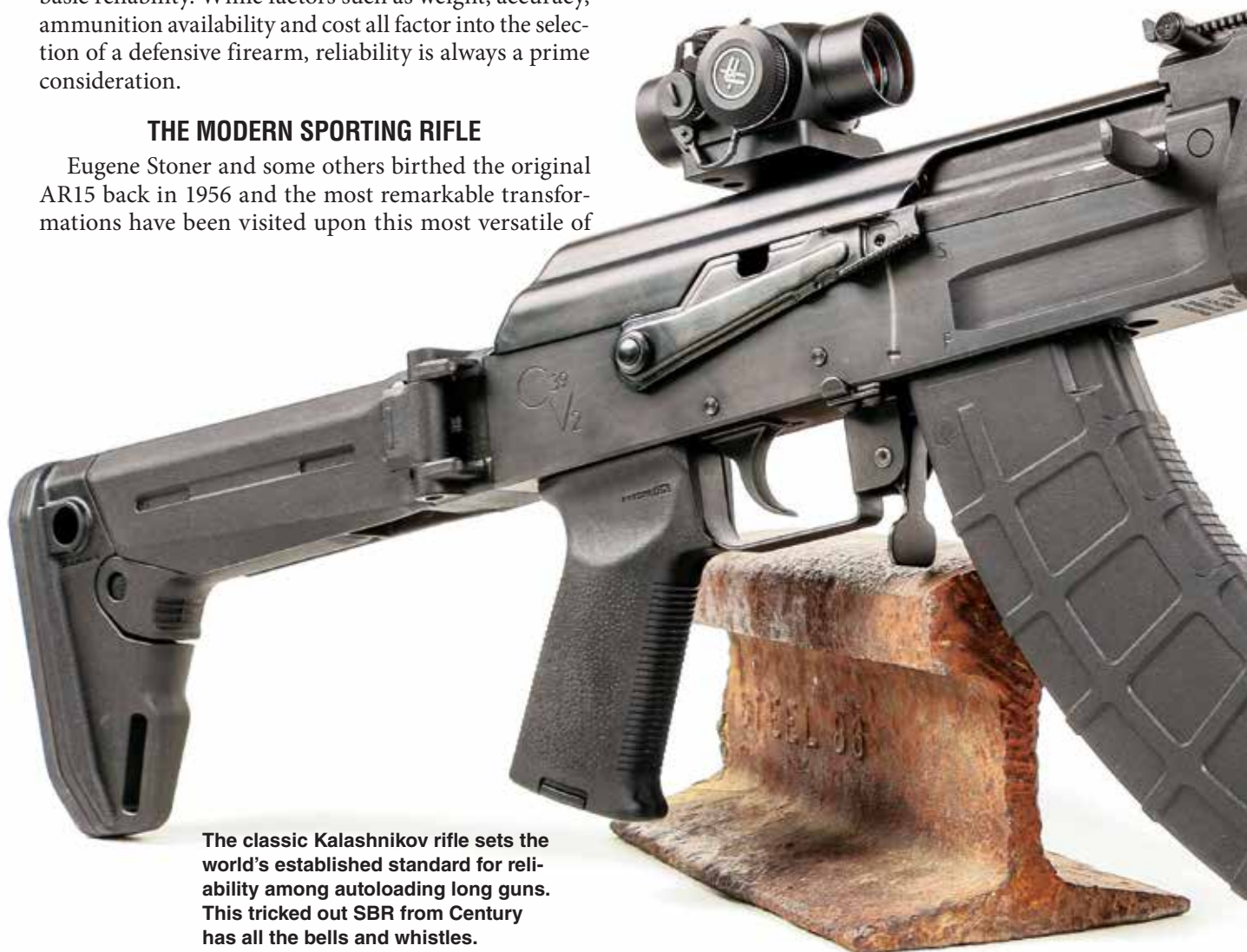
**T**he apex predators in the Alaskan wilds are the size of Volkswagens. Every year a few people run afoul of these massive creatures and inevitably fare poorly as a result. For such times as these when more rides on a gun's dependability than simple convenience, we thought it might be an interesting exercise to ponder various types of firearms from the perspective of basic reliability. While factors such as weight, accuracy, ammunition availability and cost all factor into the selection of a defensive firearm, reliability is always a prime consideration.

### THE MODERN SPORTING RIFLE

Eugene Stoner and some others birthed the original AR15 back in 1956 and the most remarkable transformations have been visited upon this most versatile of

weapons. Caliber options, multitudinous barrel lengths, disparate operating systems and a bewildering number of accessory choices all conspire to make America's Rifle most anything for anybody. However, the common denominator is moving parts aplenty. In these details we find lurking the devil himself.

Information Age surface treatments offer unprecedented lubricity, wear resistance and resilience in the face of corrosion. Little things like O-ring extractor



The classic Kalashnikov rifle sets the world's established standard for reliability among autoloading long guns. This tricked out SBR from Century has all the bells and whistles.



Whether the threat walks on two legs or four, having a reliable defensive firearm equalizes the equation.



boosters are now *de rigueur*.

Paired redundant ejectors can be found as well if you have deep pockets and affection for overkill. The end result is a level of reliability in the platform for which we might only have dreamt back in the day.

The greatest improvement has likely been in the magazines. If I had a dime for every time I have had an AR rifle bolt override the top round in its magazine, I'd have a lot of dimes. Modern no-

tilt followers and meticulous attention to mag body geometry have improved the situation immensely. Tubb Precision 17-7 stainless steel flatwire springs represent the absolute state of the art. However, even well-designed and superbly executed rifles can still fail.

### THE ACCEPTED STANDARD

Mikhail Timofeyevich Kalashnikov was the 17th of 19 children and his eponymous rifle sets the universal standard for



The Chiappa M6 is modeled on the original U.S. military-issue M6 folding survival rifle. It's available in either 12- or 20-gauge versions paired with a .22 LR barrel.

reliability for auto-loading firearms. The AK embodies all it means to be Russian. The Kalashnikov rifle is bulky, awkward and grossly over-engineered. The ergonomics are marginal and the sights are yesterday's news. However, the AK is also the most reliable autoloading gun the planet has ever seen.

The big two-lugged bolt rides in a fairly course cam slot and a massive full-length bolt carrier packs immense momentum once it gets started. Where an AR is all finesse and elegance, the AK is built like a hammer or a tire iron. For all its mechanical attributes, however, the Kalashnikov yet remains a reciprocating machine.





**Alaskan apex predators can be the size of Volkswagens. When the threat is bent on having you for dinner, reliability of your defensive weapons becomes critical.**

I have had several failures in AK rifles over the years. I have seen a few that got sufficiently cruddy through either inattention or sloth to bind up the action. Take the gun through muddy, sandy places long enough and you can pack enough foreign material into the action to gum up the works. More commonly operator error makes it tough to seat the magazine, or getting in a rush causes the shooter to short-cycle the bolt on reloads. These are indeed stupid mistakes when you use the gun for real exogenous circumstances which are,

by definition, distracting. When you are cowering behind an automobile tire in the midst of a real-world lesson on the stark differences between cover and concealment, it can be tough to think clearly.

### MANUAL OPTIONS

Slide-action shotguns and lever-action rifles both had their genesis in the mid- to late 19th century. John Moses Browning originally designed the majority of the free world's firearms and his genius is imprinted upon both of these classic systems.





A little paperwork for BATF combined with a spot of patience and a check for \$200 allows you to legally transform a Russian side-by-side 12-gauge coach gun into something markedly sexier — and deadly on water moccasins!

Each gun derives its power from the operator rather than the cartridge and subsequently becomes somewhat more mechanically reliable as a result. However, the fact human beings are involved means it will never be perfect.

I've seen pump shotguns jam horribly. Eccentricities in ammunition and environmental contaminants can conspire to make a slide-action shotgun positively finicky at times. Additionally, at a certain point in the operating cycle the shell is bouncing about uncontrolled in the nether-space between the tubular magazine and



The classic AR rifle has undergone a great many evolutionary changes since the first copy sprang from the fertile mind of Eugene Stoner back in 1956. Tuned-up Information Age versions are markedly more reliable than the originals.



XCAL chamber inserts from Chiappa convert either 12- or 20-gauge break open shotguns to fire most any commonly available handgun cartridges.

**“DESPITE OUR BRACE OF  
12-BORE SCATTERGUNS STOKED  
WITH THE BEST, MOST POWERFUL  
COUNTER-BEAR AMMO MONEY  
COULD BUY, WE BOTH  
FELT MIGHTILY UNDERGUNNED.”**

the breech. A strategic bump at that critical moment can literally turn the round sideways. Operator experience can minimize the risk but if the threat carries its own gun, it can be tough to attend to details.

I killed my second deer with a lever-action Marlin .35. The classic rifle seemed as reliable as an old friend. However, in the heat of the moment a distracted kid smitten with a terminal case of buck fever can get in such a rush he fails to run the action all the way open. Under such circumstances as these, the hammer will cock and the bolt will close on an empty chamber. The subsequent soft click when the trigger is pulled can be more deafening than even the manliest belted

magnum cartridge. A lever-action is mechanically reliable but sometimes the operator is not.

#### **JUST ABOUT STUPID PROOF**

All this leads us to the most reliable guns around. A proper double-action revolver is just about fail-safe. A simple break-action single- or double-barrel long gun doesn't have much to break either. The trigger/hammer mechanisms could theoretically burp, but they remain fully enclosed within the frame or receiver. So long as the ammunition is up to scratch, there is just very little left to fail. There are options aplenty in these platforms, and pricing spans the spectrum from surprisingly cheap to ludicrous.

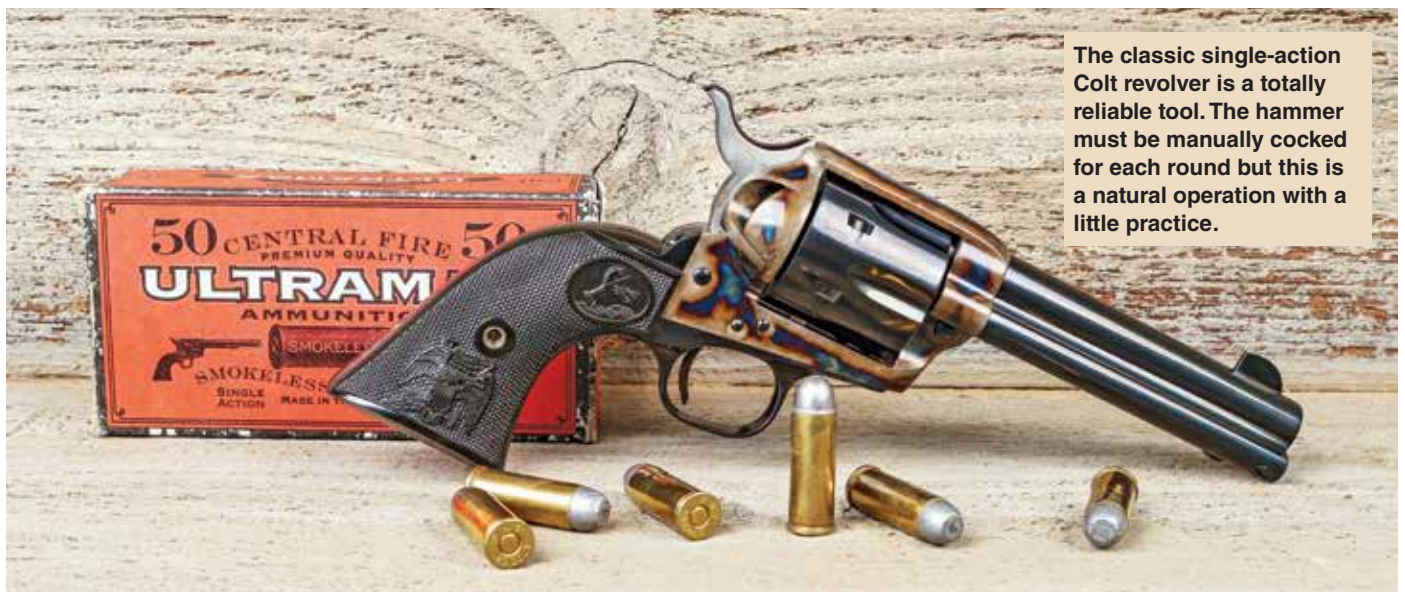


Chiappa offers a nifty set of barrel inserts allowing you to run most any centerfire pistol cartridge through a break-action shotgun. They offer the most remarkable break-open triple

barrel mega-gun as well, though it is a bit portly as a result. Dedicated single barrel weapons from Thompson Center can be had with barrels running literally anything. For the shooter on a budget

who is seeking the ultimate in reliability, however, it is hard to beat Century International Arms.

Century offers basic side-by-side Chinese-made coach guns in .410,



The classic single-action Colt revolver is a totally reliable tool. The hammer must be manually cocked for each round but this is a natural operation with a little practice.



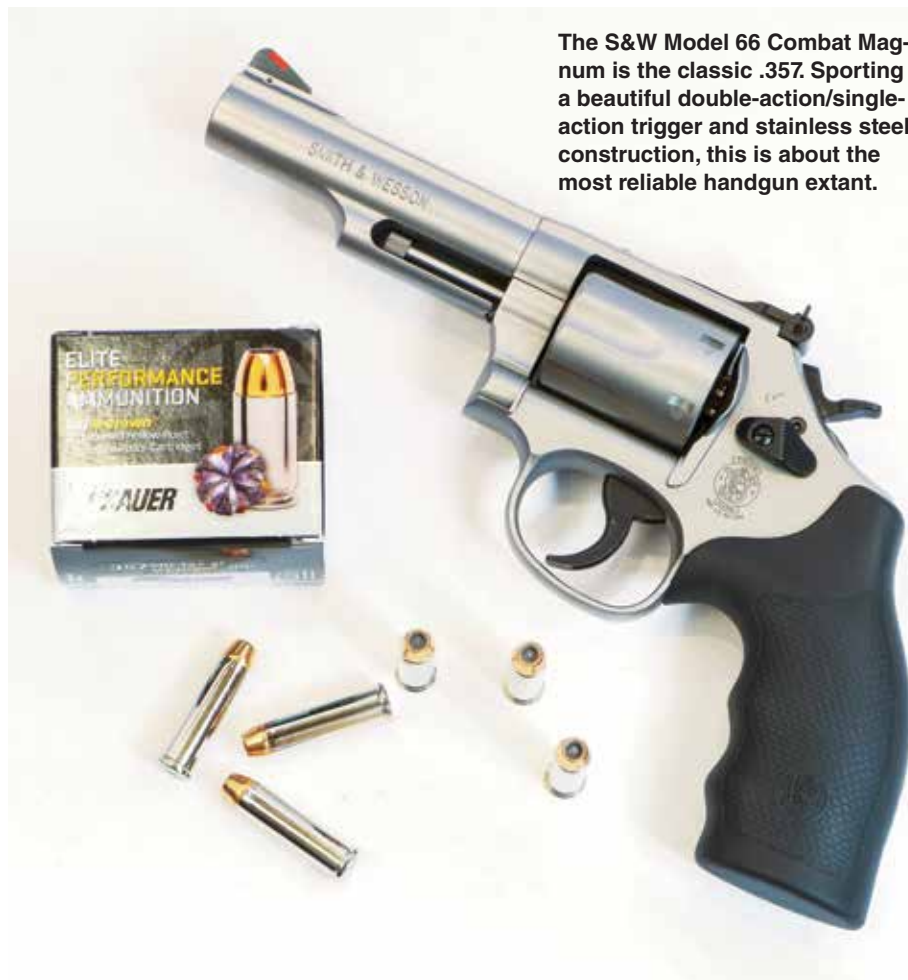
Will used this .35-caliber Marlin lever action to bag his whitetail deer but in the heat of the moment, he short-shucked the action and failed to chamber a follow-on round.



20- and 12-gauge chamberings. Apparently availability is driven by what shows up on the boat so it varies by chambering. The furniture is an odd sort of blonde Chinese hardwood. However, the workmanship is excellent and the fit and finish well beyond adequate. Hammers are exposed and rebounding for added safety, meaning they will not contact the firing pins unless the triggers are pulled. The guns also sport sling swivels, an underappreciated necessity for a utility gun that will actually be used in the field.

Variiegated loads mean exceptional versatility. Cheap birdshot will fill your pot with ptarmigan, plated sabot slugs will bring peace of mind in bear country and buckshot, despite the lexicography of the term, is proper proof against two-legged predators of any stripe. These guns are lightweight and fast handling. With a little practice, the exposed hammer drill is intuitive. I even did a BATF

Century imports Chinese-made side-by-side shotguns in .410, 20-gauge and 12-gauge. Quality is superb and each of these guns includes sling swivels and dual triggers.



The S&W Model 66 Combat Magnum is the classic .357. Sporting a beautiful double-action/single-action trigger and stainless steel construction, this is about the most reliable handgun extant.

Form 1 on one of my side-by-sides and cut it down into a thermonuclear 12-gauge pistol to ride comfortably in a holster. More than two dozen dead water moccasins later, this is my hands-down favorite counter-snake gun.

## MUSINGS

I have entrusted my life to the mechanical reliability of an M16 rifle. I also freely admit confounding a properly executed AK requires the most egregious neglect. This deep into the 21st Century, advances in metallurgy, materials science and basic engineering have conspired to offer the American shooter reciprocating firearms with unprecedented reliability. At risk of being labeled a heretic, even tried and true designs like the venerable M1 Garand pale in reliability alongside state of the art modern offerings.

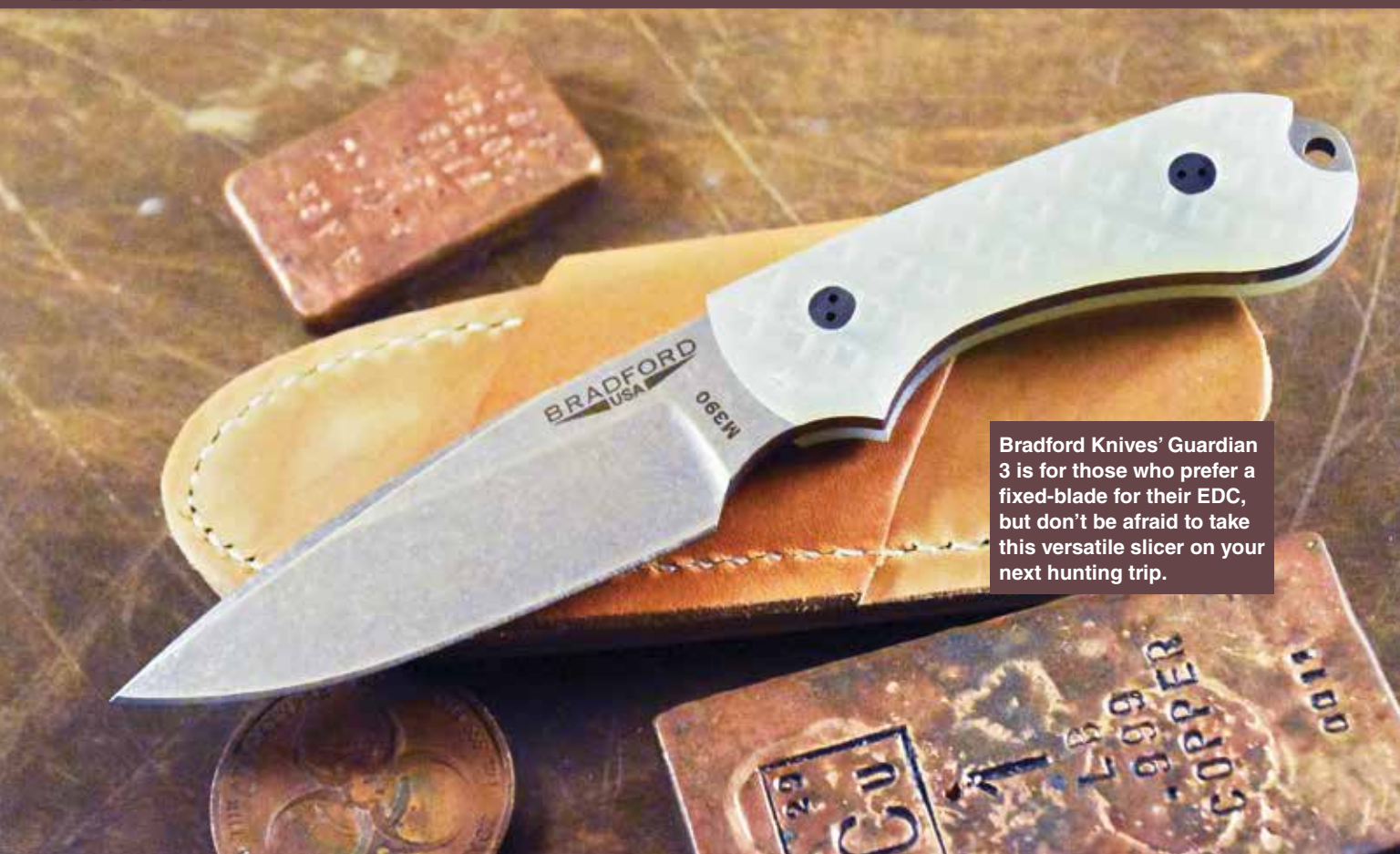
I once sat shivering with a friend at 3 a.m. in the wilds of Alaska clutching my cut-down Remington 870 12-gauge stoked with five Federal sabot slugs. The mama moose and her child who had so violently interrupted our slumber charged out of a nearby slough and past our flimsy tent close enough to shower

it like a deluge. The prospects of facing whatever had been chasing them so enthusiastically ensured we were awake and alert for the rest of the night.

Despite our brace of 12-bore scatterguns stoked with the best, most powerful counter-bear ammo money could buy, we both felt mightily undergunned. The only thing separating us from a hungry half-ton grizzly bear was a paper-thin sheet of green nylon tent material. Fire superiority is always relative.

If the circumstances are such that you just cannot tolerate mechanical failure, an argument can be made older is actually better. A side-by-side 10-gauge helped Doc Holliday put paid to the Clanton miscreants during that fateful 30-second gunfight in October of 1881 at the O.K. Corral. Revolvers from the likes of Colt and Smith & Wesson armed all involved. That same level of supreme reliability can keep you comfortable in dangerous spaces even today. **GUNS**

CenturyArms.com  
Chiappa.com  
DavidTubb.com



Bradford Knives' Guardian 3 is for those who prefer a fixed-blade for their EDC, but don't be afraid to take this versatile slicer on your next hunting trip.

## BRADFORD GUARDIAN 3 AN EDC WEARING MANY HATS

Pat Covert

While the overwhelming number of knife users prefer a folding knife as their everyday carry, a respectable number prefer fixed-blade. There are two main reasons these proponents choose a fixer for an EDC. First off, a fixed-blade can be deployed quicker than a folder, skipping the steps of opening the blade. You just grab and go. Secondly, with a fixer there are no intricate parts to loosen or break during use. The K.I.S.S. principle applies here. Bradford Knives' Guardian 3 is just such a knife.

At 6.75" overall the Guardian 3 is what many consider the "perfect size" for an EDC fixed-blade — not too large, not too small. The Guardian 3's versatile 3.0" Drop Point blade — a common length and style found on many folders — can step up to the plate for both self-defense or utility as needed.

The knife's German-made Bohler M390 stainless steel is top shelf while the handle is a palm-filling bag-style with an index finger choil for added purchase. At 3.42 oz., the Guardian 3 won't drag you down and Bradford provides a welted natural cowhide cross-draw belt sheath for keeping you at the ready.

### WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

If you like options, Bradford Knives will wow you with choices. Blade finishes include Stonewashed (shown here), medium gray Nimbus and Black DLC. Handle options are expansive ranging from various colors of Micarta and G10 (our sample has textured Ghost G10), plus carbon fiber and G-wood. Furthermore, there are steel options as well. Although the Guardian 3 is billed as an EDC, it's at home in the field as well. The Drop Point



The Guardian 3's premium, German-made Bohler M390 steel blade cuts like nobody's business and the Drop Point blade can perform a myriad of functions.

is by far the most popular blade style for processing game and can perform light field chores to boot. Finally, the Guardian 3's leather cross-draw sheath can be had for southpaws and a black Kydex taco sheath is also offered. Prices for this versatile slicer start at \$159, more than reasonable for the quality materials and superb fit 'n finish you get with this versatile EDC. **GUNS**

BradfordKnives.com

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AMERICAN MADE.

[DESANTISHOLSTER.COM](http://DESANTISHOLSTER.COM)

## STREAMLIGHT TLR RM2 LIGHT/LASER

ROY HUNTINGTON

I like things to be rock-solid if I'm relying on them for family protection. Here in the Frontier of Missouri it gets very, *very* dark at night. The long gun I keep handy here on our place is a short-barreled Springfield Armory M1A fitted with a Streamlight 1,000-lumen light/laser combo system because — if you don't already know — when things get scary there's simply no such thing as too much light. Ask me how I know.



The TLR RM2 shown blasts out 1,000 lumens — and a laser if you want — and that's it. Push the go-button and you light up the west pasture or sear the eyes out of some miscreant 20 feet away from you. It also comes with a remote switch and other goodies. It runs on standard CR123 batteries so there's no rechargeable fuss. Think of it like a hammer, only much, much brighter.

**MSRP:** \$250  
Streamlight.com



## C&S HI-POWER AMBI-SAFETY

ROY HUNTINGTON

With the launch recently of a slew of Hi-Power clones from Springfield Armory, FN, EAA and others, there's a renewed focus on after-market parts for the breed. At the top of the list are safeties, either extended left-side or ambi models. I've installed and used Cylinder & Slide parts for 1911s and Hi-Powers for years and thought you'd like to know about their excellent ambi all-steel safety. Made in-house, the safety shows good attention to detail, careful de-burring and is of obvious good quality.

I want to stress here this is not a "drop-in" part though. Over 80-odd years, the Hi-Power has been manufactured by dozens of makers so there are a wide range of fit variables. The C&S safety is made somewhat over-sized in a couple of key areas allowing hand-fitting to your particular pistol. But once installed correctly, it feels great and adds versatility regardless if you're a righty or a lefty.

**MSRP:** \$87.75  
Cylinder-Slide.com

## ETS UNIVERSAL SPEEDLOADER

BRENT T. WHEAT

On a recent video program, I mentioned the ETS Universal Speedloader looks like a birth control device for an elk, because, well, it sorta does. However, while everyone chuckled, I hope they heard my next statement: It's the best speed loader I've tried, hands down.

It operates much like a stripper clip. You load the strip from a box of ammo, shove it into the adapter and push down — Voila! Your magazine is loaded. There are no levers, gear or other such annoyances. It's simple, made in the U.S. and at around \$29,



affordable (there are different models for pistol calibers and rifles). I don't get enthralled with new products too often, but the Universal Speedloader is the proverbial better mousetrap!

**MSRP:** About \$29  
ETSGroup.us

## STREAMLIGHT POCKET MATE USB

BRENT T. WHEAT

One of my preparedness pet peeves is folks who don't carry a flashlight all the time. Despite all my other flaws, I always do, usually a Streamlight Microlight. Now, I've found the proverbial "Two is one, one is none"-backup for my primary light: the Pocket Mate USB.

A tiny bit bigger than the "coin" flashlights I used to keep on my keychain — where they constantly broke — this thing is built like a tank and at 325 lumens, brighter than many pocket flashlights of 10 years ago. With a run time of 30 minutes,



USB rechargeable battery and integral cap clip, this easy-to-carry light is convenient for everyday use and just the thing to keep you out of a real jam whenever the lights go out.

**MSRP:** Under \$20  
Streamlight.com

GUNS

NO. 1

# EXPERIENCE CRAFTSMANSHIP



## OUR STORY

With over a decade of 1911 production, Dan Wesson has perfected the craft. Producing only a few thousand handguns a year, Dan Wesson uses the best components and finishes the industry has to offer. Each part is painstakingly hand-fit and polished creating the best possible production 1911.

[DANWESSONFIREARMS.COM](http://DANWESSONFIREARMS.COM)

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GUN CONTROL

2ND AMENDMENT

# IT'S NOT OVER

## SUPREME COURT RULING THE BEGINNING, NOT THE END

**Dave Workman**

By tradition, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) holds its most controversial rulings until the final days of the session, which wraps up later this month, and *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* will not be the last battle.

Certainly, an affirmative ruling — meaning a decision by the court to nullify the long-standing “good cause” requirement for carry permits in New York State — would be shattering not only for anti-gun-rights Empire State bureaucrats, but for similarly empowered people in states with similar requirements. We’re talking about New Jersey, Maryland, California, Hawaii, Delaware (Joe Biden’s home state), Connecticut and Massachusetts. A favorable outcome would strengthen the Second Amendment, but it won’t be the last word.

If the high court strikes down the New York requirement, as many anticipate at this writing, the other states will have to be dragged kicking and screaming into compliance. Demagoguery dies hard and bureaucrats hate to give up any power they have over the public, especially involving the exercise of the right to bear arms, as well as keep them.

What’s at stake here is not just the rights of people involved in the lawsuit, but the generations of citizens whose rights have been violated by these laws and who never had the chance for relief. Nobody has ever talked about this because it’s an inconvenient truth. If the law is found unconstitutional, it has always been so. We can’t retroactively hold all of those people accountable who

enforced the laws in decades past but we can put candidates and incumbents on the spot to make sure we vote against anybody who thinks the right needs to be restricted.

Experience following the high court ruling against Chicago’s handgun ban in June 2010 suggests New York officials will scramble to figure out just how far they can push the envelope with revised restrictions, and still comply.

An affirmative Second Amendment ruling — if that’s what the court delivers — will come right in the middle of campaign season leading up to the 2022 midterm elections. You’ve got only a few months to mobilize, get behind candidates who will flip power in Congress and in state legislatures around the country. This year provides an opportunity to stage a peaceful revolution by putting anti-gun politicians out of work, allowing pro-rights officials to right the wrongs of the past 18 months and maybe decades in those states with restrictive gun laws.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Let this become your guiding principle: “It’s Not About Guns. It’s About Rights.”

The gun prohibition lobby is good at stirring up trouble by using emotional arguments to demonize guns. Their positions will be justified with such claims as “It’s for the children.” Your response must take the high ground and be logical. Don’t make the discussion about guns but about rights.

Burn this into your gray matter and make it part of your lexicon — according to Wikipedia, “Rights are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; that is, rights are the

fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory.”

Rights are not granted by government, nor are they a creation of the Constitution. The Bill of Rights doesn’t give us anything. It protects the rights with which we are born from government overreach. If you don’t understand that, sign up for a high school civics refresher course.

The next few months will give all of us opportunities to meet with, and question, incumbent politicians and people who seek to replace them. Be willing to engage in debate without losing your cool. It will take more work for some of us, so start practicing self-control right now.

Don’t allow these people to waver. When they’re sworn into office, they take an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, which includes the Second Amendment. Nowhere in that tenet of the Bill of Rights will you find the word “but.”

Don’t allow them to change the subject. Be prepared to say something like, “That’s interesting, Congressman, but you didn’t answer my question.”

Remember these key talking points:

- Rifles of any kind are used in a fraction of all homicides in any given year, according to the annual FBI Uniform Crime Report. (Always refer to the FBI report, because someone may accuse you of making up data but they won’t accuse the FBI of inventing numbers.)

- The Bill of Rights does not place limits on development of new technology. If it did, the First Amendment would not protect radio, television or the Internet.

- The Second Amendment protects a right not only to keep arms, but also to bear them, which translates to outside of one’s home and in public places. This month’s high court ruling should make that clear. A right limited to the

confines of one's home is not a right at all but a government-regulated privilege. This is where you can talk about the NYSRPA ruling, and be completely on topic.

• You're a taxpayer. You outrank any politician in the room, as well as any aide who may try to run interference if the questioning gets too discomfoting.

## AND WATCH OUT

People who support gun control also attend public meetings with incumbents and candidates, and they have as much right to speak and ask questions as you do. You must keep this in perspective. Be respectful of their right to speak by not interrupting or trying to shout them down, and expect the same in return.

I was at a public gathering attended by state lawmakers. One woman demanded to know how much money any of them had accepted from the National Rifle Association. It's a fair question.

Be the person to quickly ask how much money any of them had taken from Michael Bloomberg's Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund, or perhaps some other gun control group. That is also a fair question, deserving of an answer.

You should already know the answer by going online to check with your state's public disclosure commission reports on contributions to a candidate's election fund. For congressional and U.S. Senate candidates, check with the Federal Elections Commission.

Snooping is how I discovered one of my legislators had accepted contributions from a couple of gun control groups. No votes for that guy!

A good ruling by the Supreme Court will be a tool, a litmus test for politicians and a powerful talking point. You will be well within your rights as a voter to ask how a candidate feels about the New York decision.

Listen carefully to the response and vote accordingly. Defending the Second Amendment doesn't end with a court ruling. There are more cases to bring, more battles to fight and more elections on the horizon. Fasten your seat belts.

## CROSSFIRE

*continued from page 8*

events have higher rank on some pyramid than lesser things such as wacked by sharp things (bolo, bayonet) or, now that I think of it, hit by pressurized jets of oily flame. And you are right (I assume you jumped in here), chainsaws are another category.

RH

.....

## KITANICA CORRECTION

I read with interest your item in the "Quartermaster" section of the March 2022 issue of *GUNS Magazine* about the Kitanica Envoy Attaché case. You mentioned their stuff is made in the USA. However, upon visiting their website and looking it up, I see they list that case as being made in Vietnam. Just FYI.

Jeff Pittman

*Okay, shame on me ... I think. Somewhere along the line, I understood it to be U.S.-production but you are correct, the website does clearly show it coming from 'Nam. Did it change between now and then, or did my reading comprehension fail me? Regardless, the buck stops at the editor so the "joke" is on me. Having said that, it's still my favorite small "business" bag and is still here right next to my desk as I'm typing. —BW*

.....



## TOKYO KUDOS

"Bomb Tokyo," (*Shooter's Rx*) by Dr. Dabbs, in the April 2020 issue was very interesting.

*Air Force Magazine* could use Dr. Dabbs as a writer.

From the time Korea was annexed by Japan in 1910, a lot of Koreans lived in Japan. My mother-in-law was such a Korean during WWII. She was in Tokyo

for the firebombing. She related stories of having seen people in water-filled bomb craters, people that had boiled to death during the firestorm.

The M-1 carbine article by Dr. Dabbs was likewise interesting. I grew up in Saginaw and knew lots of guys who had dads working at Steering Gear. Many of them were surely on the carbine assembly lines.

Bill Sims

This is the most interesting article on this topic I have ever read. I would love to know the research credits. Mr. Dabbs has definitely got my interest.

Tom Greenhoe

.....



## NO BARREL, NO PROBLEM

Your story regarding the gun with no barrel ("Who needs a barrel?" March 2022) reminded me of an experiment I did several years ago. A lady neighbor asked me whether 9mm Luger ammo could be fired in a .40 S&W handgun. Obviously the correct answer is NO, but due to the extractor design on most modern auto pistols, the extractor will catch and hold the smaller cartridge against the firing pin blow.

For the experiment, I used Winchester "white box" ammo with a 115-grain RNJ at an advertised velocity of about 1,140 fps in an older model GLOCK 23 with a 4" barrel. I had sights, so I was able to shoot offhand.

At three yards the bullet was point-on and 1" high, and at five yards it was a near perfect key-hole 2" high, and at seven yards, the bullet had turned completely around and went through the target backward making a round hole.

I chronographed the shots but the results are down at my garage about 100

*continued on page 73*



## VIPER S400 ORACLE X

### TENPOINT CROSSBOW TECHNOLOGIES

TenPoint has launched an affordable crossbow with a range-finding scope — the *Viper S400 Oracle X*. The Viper S400 delivers speeds up to 400 feet-per-second and is one of TenPoint's shortest forward draw crossbows at just 32" long. The package includes the ACUslide cocking and de-cocking system, Burris Oracle X Rangefinding Crossbow Scope, 3-pack of EVO-X CenterPunch Carbon Crossbow Arrows, an integrated String Stop System and the 6-arrow Tech Quiver. MSRP: \$2,499.99. For more info: (800) 548-6837, [TenPointCrossbows.com](http://TenPointCrossbows.com)



## CA-COMPLIANT RIFLES ROCK RIVER ARMS

CA-Compliant Rifles of Rock River Arms' popular semi-autos are now available. Dealers can purchase select RRA rifles chambered in 9mm and .308 legally in California. These will include modifications to meet California regulations and will use "fin grips" as part of the compliance. There will also be an upgrade package on the .308 models with a standard grip and adjustable stock. California-compliant RRA 9mm carbine rifles will be offered in competition and other configurations with 16" barrels, RRA 2-stage triggers, A2 buttstocks and more. MSRP: \$1,060–\$1,990 depending on the model. For more info: (866) 980-7625, [RockRiverArms.com](http://RockRiverArms.com)



## DAMASCUS 1911 STANDARD MFG.

The full-size *Damascus 1911* was made with techniques dating back to medieval times. Its frame and slide are hand forged by old-world artisans to make a chain-pattern Damascus. Master gunsmiths at Standard Mfg. then take the Damascus blocks and make each 1911 individually. Features include a 5" stainless steel match-grade barrel with match bushing, lowered and flared ejection port and rear slide serrations, high profile low-mount tactical sights and more. MSRP: \$5,999. For more info: (860) 225-6581, [STDGun.com](http://STDGun.com)



## HERITAGE ROUGH RIDER TC HERITAGE MANUFACTURING, INC.

The *Heritage Rough Rider TC* is a single-action rimfire revolver for plinking and controlling pests and varmints. It's chambered in 22 LR but is also compatible with the 22WMR cylinder so it can use either 22 LR or 22 WMR ammo. Built with numerous grip options, the Heritage Rough Rider Tactical Cowboy has a threaded barrel, an OAL of 11.85" and a 6-round capacity. MSRP: \$249. For more info: (229) 515-8099, [HeritageMfg.com](http://HeritageMfg.com)



## TAURUS G3X TAURUS

The *Taurus G3X* in 9mm has a full frame, an alloy steel slide with a Tenifer Matte Black finish and a polymer grip. With a 15-round capacity, the G3X has a barrel length of 3.2" and an OAL of 6.3". Other features include a drift adjustable rear sight, fixed front sights, loaded chamber indicator, Picatinny rail and trigger safety. The G3X, however, has NO manual safety. MSRP: \$342.98. For more info: (800) 327-3776, [TaurusUSA.com](http://TaurusUSA.com)



## MARLIN 1895 SBL STURM, RUGER & CO.

Ruger President and CEO Chris Kilroy recently announced "Marlin is back." He is referring to the reintroduction of Marlin rifles by Ruger. *Marlin 1895 SBL* rifles have gone through a complete design and production review. The end result is a quality rifle produced using modern manufacturing methods. The Marlin 1895 SBL rifles have an "RM" or Ruger-Made serial number prefix, the Marlin Horse and Rider logo laser engraved on the grip and a red and white "bullseye" on the buttstock. MSRP: \$1,399. For more info: (603) 863-3300, [Ruger.com](http://Ruger.com)



### BEAR EDGE 61123 BEAR EDGE KNIVES

**B**ear Edge Knives' 4¼" modified Warncliffe knife has ball bearing washers for smooth deployment and strong aluminum handles. The *Bear Edge 61123* features a 3" modified Warncliffe

blade made from 440 stainless steel. Built for reliable, on-demand action, this knife's black aluminum handles are comfortable in the hand and designed for hard use. Open length is 7¼"; closed length is 4¼". MSRP: \$65.99. For more info: (256) 435-2227, [BearAndSonCutlery.com](http://BearAndSonCutlery.com)

### WX OZONE WILEY X

**T**he *WX Ozone* is part of Wiley X's Climate Control series. It has Triloid nylon high-wrap frames with shatterproof, Rx-ready Selenite lenses. With ANSI-rated protection and clarity, the lightweight *WX Ozone* has special features to eliminate fogging. Available in four models and comes with a black zippered clamshell case and more. MSRP: From \$120. For more info: (800) 776-7842, [WileyX.com](http://WileyX.com)



### ROGUE HOLSTER SYSTEM CROSSBREED HOLSTERS

**C**rossBreed Holsters' *Rogue Holster System* adds customizing options while providing comfort and improving ergonomics. At the heart of the *Rogue* system is a 2-piece all-Kydex gun pocket. Screw holes and slots allow multiple positioning and retention adjustment. The holster works with both stock and modified handguns with its suppressor-height front sight channel and optic cut for red dot sights. MSRP: \$79.95. For more info: (888) 732-5011, [CrossBreedHolsters.com](http://CrossBreedHolsters.com)



### CODY FIREARMS MUSEUM SERIES ORIGINAL HENRY DAVIDSON'S

**D**avidson's has partnered with Henry Repeating Arms, Baron Engraving and the Cody Firearms Museum to come up with the New Original Henry in 44-40. This Davidson's Exclusive is a third edition *Cody Firearms Series Original Henry*, an example of a highly engraved Henry rifle recreated in the style of 19th Century firearm engraver, Louis Daniel Nimschke. The *Cody Museum Collectors Series* rifle is limited to 300 units and comes with a Certificate of Authenticity. MSRP: \$4,150. For more info: (800) 367-4867, [DavidSonsInc.com](http://DavidSonsInc.com)

### .380/9MM ALTOR PISTOL COMBO ALTOR CORP.

**A**.380/9mm *ALTOR Pistol Combo* is now available. With the combo, you purchase one receiver/handle assembly with two interchangeable barrels — one .380 and a 9mm. This allows you to select the .380 barrel for lower cost, more available ammo with reduced recoil for practice or the 9mm barrel with ball ammo for defense or vermin or snake control with shotshells. Constructed of 100% stainless steel and high-quality polymer, the *ALTOR* pistol is an ideal survival, self-defense or backup gun. MSRP: \$179. For more info: (602) 441-4077, [AltorCorp.com](http://AltorCorp.com)

### TAMARACK FLEECE KITANICA

**T**he *Tamarack Fleece* from Kitanica is a thick and plush jacket you'll never want to take off. It boasts a 300 GSM Polartec ThermalPro fleece fabric for a jacket that's soft, supple and very warm. The adjustable hood is contoured for peripheral visibility and to retain body heat. The gusseted sleeves and relaxed fabric provide mobility. MSRP: \$299. For more info: (415) 305-7663, [Kitanica.com](http://Kitanica.com)



### ERGO AR-15 CLEANING LINK ERGO GRIPS

**T**he *ERGO AR-15 Cleaning Link* (SKU 1015) separates the upper and lower assemblies but holds them securely to allow easy breech access for bore cleaning. Made of Delrin and stainless steel, it is virtually impervious to solvents. The *Cleaning Link* uses the rear locking pin and rear locking pinhole and installs in seconds. MSRP: \$19.99. For more info: (877) 281-3783 ext. 0, [ERGOgrips.net](http://ERGOgrips.net)



### DIVIDED AMMO CRATE MTM CASE-GARD

**T**he *Divided Ammo Crate* (ACDC30) from MTM Case-Gard offers endless storage possibilities. The spacious interior features three removable partitions. The crate has four sections in which to organize gear but partitions can be removed for items up to 17.5" long. Other features include a water-resistant O-Ring seal, heavy-lift handles, strong snap latches and more. Carrying capacity is over 75 lbs. MSRP: \$28. For more info: (937) 890-7461, [MTMcase-gard.com](http://MTMcase-gard.com)



**SUBMIT  
YOUR  
ENTRY  
ONLINE:**

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**If you are unable to  
enter online, mail a  
postcard with your  
name and address  
(no envelopes  
please). Entries  
must be received  
by June 30, 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.

## RUGER **MAX-9** PISTOL PACKAGE

The Ruger MAX-9 can be your next handgun ... if you win this month's giveaway! Whether you're new to firearms ownership, or you've been an enthusiast for years, the versatile MAX-9 is sure to meet your personal protection needs. It's ruggedly constructed with a through-hardened alloy steel slide; one-piece, precision-machined fire control chassis; and high-performance, glass-filled nylon grip frame. Finished in black oxide, the Ruger MAX-9 is striker-fired with a short, smooth trigger pull, clean break and positive reset. Safety features include an integrated trigger safety, manual safety, internal striker blocker and inspection port for visual confirmation of a loaded or empty chamber. Comfortable enough to conceal in an IWB holster or pocket holster, this micro-sized pistol has it all — without compromising on capacity or features. Rugged, reliable, affordable — that's the Ruger MAX-9.

The ProTac-1L-1AA is an everyday carry light. This dual fuel ultra-compact flashlight accepts a single lithium or alkaline battery, providing ultimate flexibility in the field to ensure you have a beam when you need it. It produces 150 lumens of light on "high" with a beam distance of 105 meters. It runs for an hour and 20 minutes with an alkaline battery; 4.25 hours with lithium. The ProTac-1L-1AA comes with two batteries and a nylon holster.

Carry a multitool, flashlight and pen with Versacarry's *Multitool Holster*. Made of vegetable-tanned water buffalo leather and sewn together with industrial-grade nylon thread, this holster can be used with standard 1.5"-wide belts.

A Ruger MAX-9, a ProTac-1L-1AA flashlight from Streamlight and a Versacarry Multitool holster! Enter the giveaway and be the proud owner of this prize package that's both handy and functional! Join now at [GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways](http://GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways) or send a post card! —Jazz Jimenez

**GUNS**



### **MULTITOOL HOLSTER**

**Manufacturer:** Versacarry  
(979) 778-2000  
[Versacarry.com](http://Versacarry.com)  
**Value:** \$44.99





# CKAGE GIVEAWAY

## RUGER MAX-9

Manufacturer: Sturm, Ruger & Co.  
(336) 949-5200, Ruger.com

Caliber: 9mm, Capacity: 10+1 and 12+1

Barrel Length: 3.2", OAL: 6", Weight: 18.4 oz.

Value: \$579

**TOTAL  
VALUE:  
\$668.98**

**ENTER  
TO  
WIN**



## PROTAC-1L-1AA

Manufacturer: Streamlight  
(800) 523-7488  
Streamlight.com  
Value: \$44.99

# THE .357 MAGNUM & ME

## STILL A FAVORITE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

Most people think of sixgunners as being alike as a fresh box of factory cartridges, but let me tell you they’re not. I’ve seen ‘em squabble over adding beans to chili, serving flour instead of corn tortillas or pitting the merits of hollow point slugs against solid cast bullets. However, one thing sixgunners do agree on is the

value of a good .357 Magnum revolver.

The .357 Magnum is the most popular of all the Magnums. Thousands of police officers, troopers and deputies were issued one during the ’70s and ’80s. Every home with guns has one tucked away because the .357 is a known manstopper — and who doesn’t think having a manageable Magnum is cool?

It’s also the most logical step for new shooters, after learning the basics from

a .22 revolver. Loaded with .38 Specials, it’s a natural progression to eventually handling full Magnum loads.

### HISTORY

Elmer Keith planted the seed for the .357 Magnum with hot-loaded .38 Specials. Using heavy charges of Hercules 2400 under his Lyman/Ideal 358429 cast slug, he transformed the meek .38 Special into something entirely different in heavy, N-Frame guns. I’ve shot truckloads of this combination in my magnums, with velocity running around 1,260 FPS, and know the effectiveness of the load. You’d never know you weren’t shooting a magnum.

The .357 Magnum cartridge was designed in 1934 while the first gun was released in 1935. Douglas Wesson and Phil Sharpe are given credit for developing it after experimenting with heavy .38 Special loads in the S&W .38-44 Outdoorsman. Sound familiar?

Winchester used a case approximately 1/10" longer than the .38 Special case, with a bullet weighing 158 grains and having a 0.357" diameter. The longer case prevented the high-pressure cartridge from being loaded in weaker .38 Special guns.

### GUNS

The S&W Magnums were offered in 3.5, 4, 5, 6, 6.5, 7.5 and 8.75" barrels. Having a deluxe high-polish blue finish job, the top strap and barrel



The .357 Magnum has its roots from hot loaded .38 Specials (left). Today, heavier bullets (right) like these weighing 187 grains give the .357 Magnum more punch than ever before. Evolution of the .357 Magnum (below, L to R) — Hot loaded .38 Specials, factory-swaged 158-grain .357 loads, Heavy cast .357 handloads, jacketed .357 factory loads.



ribs were checkered, preventing glare. Adjustable rear sights and various front sights were available, as were special order “humpbacked” hammers for the new Magnum. The Magnums were well received, essentially being custom guns, built one at a time. They were registered by S&W, having a special serial number and certificate made out for the owner.

Colt got into the game with a few SAAs, New Service and Shooting Master double actions. These pre-war Colts are highly prized. The Python came out in 1955.

### TOO MUCH?

The first factory .357 Magnum cartridges used soft, swaged semi-wadcutter bullets that caused terrible leading after shooting a few cylinders. Handloaders remedied this by using hard-cast or gas-checked bullets like those designed by Ray Thompson.

There’s plenty of great sixguns available for the .357 Magnum. Sure, there are bigger, more powerful Magnums but the .357 has just the right amount of power needed to handily get the job done when taking care of man-sized problems. Perhaps this is the reason most people shoot it better than other Magnums?



Tank's issued Ruger Service-Six in .38 Special (top) with his back-up S&W model 66 in .357 Magnum.

I bought my first Magnum in 1988, an S&W model 66, with 3" barrel as a back-up to my issued .38 Special Ruger Service-Six. I may have carried Magnum loads in the 66, but you didn't hear that here. I loved the adjustable sights and shot it very well.

Next came a slew of Rugers, both double- and single-action. The double-actions were all Security Sixes because they had adjustable rear sights. Then came the single actions. First I acquired the New Models, followed by various older 3-screws. Add a Bisley, or two, followed by a Marlin 1894C, and I had the bases covered. When shooting Magnum loads out of the Marlin's 18.5" barrel, it makes the .357 a beast, easily handling deer-sized game.

One of my favorite magnum loads is a cast 187-grain WFNGC bullet over 16.0 grains of H110. It is both deadly and accurate.

### FRIENDLY INDEED

Yup, a good sixgun chambered in the .357 magnum is friendly indeed. Versatile, you can shoot .38 Specials or its intended Magnum loads. The Magnums are proven manstoppers and instill confidence. There's much more to be said about the .357 Magnum as we've barely scratched the surface of its excellence. While the .357 Magnum may not be my favorite cartridge, if forced to pick just one, it would surely deserve a hard look.

**GUNS**



Today we have such .357 Magnums as Ruger's Bisley (top) and GP100 to satisfy our shooting needs.

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salmon sky foreshadowed mind-melting heat later, the kind of day where mad dogs, Englishmen and ground squirrels would rest in the afternoon torpor as cicadas blazed away like a thousand machine guns. Bob knew his moment was now.

Perched in his underwear on the toilet near the open window, the hunter waited. His steely gaze was fixed like a laser on the carrot pile as the child-sized BB gun rested on his lap. He gave the gun the slightest shake to make sure

to us. It's quite uncivilized you know. Shall we flee in terror?

"Indeed. I think absconding is wise and it would serve the brute a lesson. After you, of course.

"No, no, no. After you. I insist ...

"Thank you, but you really should go first."

In the ensuing slow-motion fusillade, the ground squirrels almost made their escape. As they spread-eagled on the ground to avoid incoming fire while they greedily stuffed their cheek pouches full of carrots — the human equivalent would be someone jamming several rolls of carpet tape into their mouth — one

## I'D SAY, OLD CHAP. I DO BELIEVE SOMEONE IS FIRING UPON US.

the steel spheres were flowing freely in the magazine. The gun responded with the satisfying white noise of sleet on a windowpane.

### THE MOMENT

It was only moments later when the two ground squirrels showed themselves. They sauntered up to the pile and stood confused at the mysterious new salad bar which had appeared near their home. Seconds turned to hours. The hunted didn't know death waited only 20 yards away.

Bob tensed, placing the gen-u-wine hardwood stock against his shoulder and took careful aim. He slo-o-wly mashed the spongy rolled-steel trigger and braced himself for the tinny "Pfffft" of the firing rifle. The noise sounded louder than he anticipated in the windless suburban morning as the golden steel projectile left the barrel. The results were instantaneous.

The two ground squirrels stood there, perplexed, undoubtedly chatting like my favorite Looney Tunes characters, Mac and Tosh:

"I'd say, old chap. I do believe someone is firing upon us.

"Why yes. Yes, I'd say you are exceptionally correct in that assumption. Why would someone do such a thing

unfortunate animal did catch a random BB in the head, instantly snuffing out his promising rodent life.

### AFTERMATH

This tiny tragedy apparently served as a warning to the other ground squirrels and none have been seen since. Unfortunately, even a month later when I spoke to him, Bob still seemed conflicted over the incident.

"Look," I told him, "it's simply the way of the natural world. A man has to defend his vines against all aggressors, foreign, domestic — and rodent. You did the right thing." Draining my fifth beer, I continued. "Realize if they had opposable thumbs and firearms, they'd have taken your homestead by force and then the whole neighborhood. In fact, the world might be ruled by ground squirrels right now! We're all still animals you know! Animals! You were justified. Serious. I love you, man ..." Bob walked away at this point, as did several others attending the barbeque.

I hadn't heard from him in a while but surprisingly the story was not quite finished. Yesterday, I got a phone call: "Do you know any taxidermists who work on really small animals?"

Maybe Bob is more of a hunter than I realized.

yards away and it is cold and time for my nap, so to the best of my memory, velocity averaged about 500 fps, certainly potentially lethal.

This is my way of saying thank you for an interesting experiment, but you have my permission to do anything you find useful with the photo and the information, including promptly hitting delete.

Marshall Williams

*Editor's note: Always use the correct, specified ammunition in any firearm. Do not attempt to replicate this experiment, as Marshall already did it, therefore you don't have to! —BW*



### .30 CAL CARBINE THOUGHTS

Your M1 Carbine story in the April 2022 issue ("The Sacred Church of Carbine Collecting," *Surplus & Classics*) reminded me of some things I read about the birth of the M1 carbine — namely that Winchester purchased a design from Ed and John Browning for a magazine-fed carbine in 30 caliber that looks a lot like the M1 carbine. David Williams is given too much credit for "inventing" the Carbine (thanks to a Jimmy Stewart movie) when he basically only shortened the piston on the original Browning design.

Check out this link to some drawings and sketches — <http://www.uscarbinecal30.com/Williams5.html>. Also get the book, *The Guns Of John Moses Browning* by Nathan Gorenstein. On page 192 they explain how they sold the design to Winchester.

If you want to really have some fun with the M1 Carbine, load it with handloads using Lehigh Defense 85-grain Xtreme Cavitator over 12.2 grains of #2400. It turns the 30 carbine into a catalog shredder!

Dave Schmidt  
**GUNS**

# AFTER YOU ... A HUNT IS A HUNT

**Brent T. Wheat**

About two years ago in this corner, I shared my own trials with some rodent yard raiders but recently I've heard another such yarn that puts my own to shame. The following is true, though details have been changed to protect the guilty. While being told this story at a Fourth of July party, the mental picture it inspired nearly drove me to incontinence — though there was also beer involved.

## THE SETTING

Our protagonist, whom we'll call "Bob" (though his real name is Jim), doesn't fit the profile of your typical hunter. He is an urbane man, recently retired from a large corporation where he held an important job. He also holds a doctoral degree from a major university, his obvious intellect is complemented by a genteel manner and calm, thoughtful demeanor. He is the archetype of a kindly gentleman and lives life to the fullest.

However, Bob had a problem. As a recent but still fairly young retiree, he took up gardening as a healthful outdoor pastime. He and his wife have all manner of flowers, shrubs and vegetables around their meticulously-groomed property but above all else, Bob's pride and joy are his grapes.

Bob's grapes are nurtured with utmost dedication. Carefully pruned, lovingly watered, painstakingly fertilized and vigilantly guarded against frost and birds, the grapes have grown well under his caring hand. There are even some who believe Bob sometimes reads Proust and Thoreau aloud to the plants when no one is around.

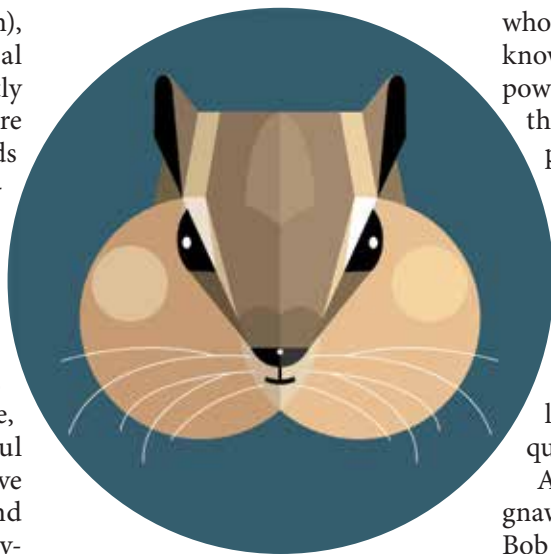
## THE CRIME

Unfortunately, his maturing grape clusters were inexplicably murdered last year in the first blush of youth. One day the fruit was beginning to show promise of ripening and the next, the

vines stood barren. Bob was devastated.

Recently, as Bob sat on the patio softly reading Hemingway's *Big Two-Hearted River* to a scotch pine recovering from spider mites, he happened to look up and see movement around his arbor. After a few seconds of seeing no further commotion, he put down the book and curiously walked over to the grapes.

As he got within a few feet of the nearest vine, Bob was startled to see a common Eastern ground squirrel hurtle from the plant, bouncing like a runaway rubber ball. After the critter



disappeared into a nearby hole, Bob examined his plants and realized the cute rodent had been busily girdling one of his precious vines. Anger flashed across his mind as he remembered the missing grapes from last year.

"This is war," he resolved through gritted teeth. Imagine every Sylvester Stallone movie moment where the hero realizes he has two choices — death or dishonor. Even in Bob's refined manner, he was still an American male and wouldn't accept dishonor.

## THE PROBLEM

Now, Bob doesn't own a gun and never hunted for anything aside from

a specific vintage of Beaujolais. As a further complicating factor, he also lives inside the city limits where shooting is not permissible. However, after pondering the situation, he realized the best way to deal with his problem was with a gun. He reasoned the city fathers would understand a man simply trying to protect his purple jewels.

Bob definitely needed a weapon but didn't want to purchase a firearm because he knew even the .22 rifles of his youth would draw unwanted attention from the local police force. Therefore, enlisting his wife because he was too embarrassed to make the purchase himself, he became the proud owner of a Daisy Red Rider BB gun.

The Red Rider is a legendary American icon and it would be a safe bet the majority of *GUNS* readers have handled one during their youth. Anyone who has gone afield with a Red Rider knows they are tremendously underpowered for hunting anything larger than a churlish centipede but Bob proceeded undaunted with his plan for the "hit."

Now suitably armed, Bob also knew he needed a good hunting blind. After careful consideration of the angles and distance, he chose the master bathroom. There he could sit on the porcelain throne and quietly wait for his quarry through the open window.

As he didn't want the critters to gnaw his precious plants any further, Bob decided a bait pile of fresh baby carrots would prove irresistible to the rodents. This idea was based on the well-known fact ground squirrels and other vermin love produce packaged in cellophane bags.

Showing latent hunting savvy, Bob knew clothing is an important factor to success. After careful consideration, he chose his stained yard-mowing T-shirt and jockey shorts as his hunting togs.

## THE DAY

The morning of the hunt dawned clear and cool. The sun was just peaking over the horizon as a fiery copper disk, casting long shadows across the dew-soaked yard. The red sun and

*continued on page 73*

# FLIP ► THE SWITCH WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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