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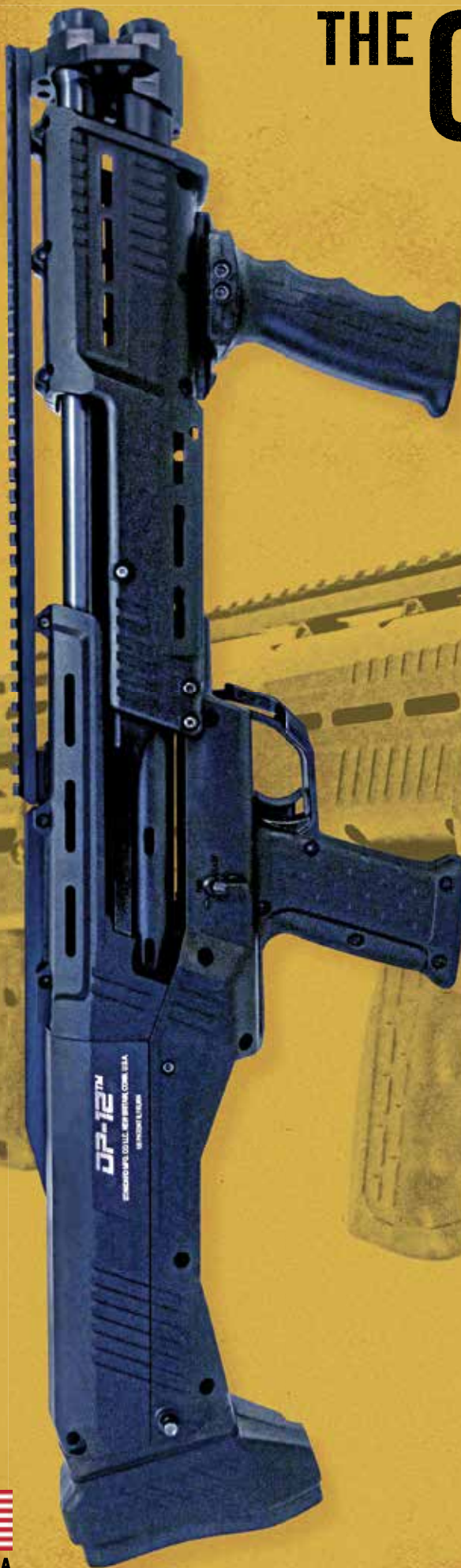
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### WHY NOT?

Why doesn't someone make a .45-70 in bolt action? The cartridge is very versatile, easy to reload, readily available and can be uploaded to take true big-game animals. A bolt action can be easily modified to use all of the anti-recoil devices available from Brownells and that would help my poor Medicaid-eligible shoulder. Many older shooters would no doubt agree. The .45-70 is about one third of the cost of such long rounds like the .505 and .300 Weatherby Magnum.

Would anyone else care to share his opinion?

Bernard Walker

This is an interesting question. On the face of it, a .45-70 makes sense in a bolt gun. There have been small runs over the years of modified bolt guns built on such things as Mauser and Mosin Nagant conversions. From an

engineering standpoint, using the cartridge in a bolt gun is feasible despite a few challenges using a rimmed cartridge.

However, it's more likely a marketing problem. From the 1930s to '70s, the .45-70 was nearly a forgotten cartridge, with no commercially produced firearms. People are now "rediscovering" the advantages of the cartridge but in today's market, would a gun manufacturer be willing to invest big design and marketing money in an antique cartridge that doesn't have a high BC, tends to punish the shooter and doesn't include "Magnum" or "Super" in the name? In my opinion, it'll likely remain primarily a levergun round for people working around or pursuing large clawed mammals. —BW

.....

### BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Regarding "A Bump in the Night," January 2022 — best article ever on the realities of home defense, an issue that is in the forefront of the minds of students in my basic firearms classes! Your level-headed approach and descriptions of "Things That Aren't What They Seem" run parallel to my presentation of the topic in my classes. Thank you again for such a level-headed treatment of a topic so important to and in the forefront of the minds of both new and experienced firearms owners.

Gary L. Miller

.....

### DAD WAS RIGHT

Tonight I'm relaxing in a Scottsboro, Al. motel with a big .45 Colt in the drawer

continued on page 61

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

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# BIG BORE BELLY GUNS PART II

## THE FITZ SPECIAL

John Taffin

**A** Big Bore Belly Gun I yearned after for a long time was a Fitz Special. The last time I saw the late Col. Rex Applegate, I was accorded the rare privilege of a personally guided tour through his private museum. I had presented him with the coveted bronze as Outstanding American Handgunner in 1996 and knew his private museum held sixguns that had formerly belonged to special friends such as Col. Doug Wesson, Col. Charles Askins, Elmer Keith and Bill Jordan.

There, in front of me, were the first two Smith & Wesson .357 Magnums, one a 6-1/2" and the other an 8-3/4", which had been used by Col. Wesson to promote the first Magnum as a hunting handgun; Keith's custom heavy-barreled 4" .44 Magnum; two of Askins' target pistols and the three 8-3/8" Smith & Wesson Magnums that had been especially engraved to commemorate Bill Jordan's varied career.

All of these handguns were special and a treat to see and hold, however, the Colonel's favorite possession as far as firearms go was found immediately inside the door of the museum, the first item viewed. Actually it was one of two first items as this sixgun was resting upon the base of the Outstanding American Handgunner Awards Foundation bronze. The highly modified revolver may have started life as a standard Colt New Service .45 Colt but considering Col. Applegate's many contacts, and his friendship with Colt's John Henry FitzGerald, this revolver was probably one of the very few specially manufactured as it now appeared. On the side plate were the words "To Rex From Fitz."

Col. Rex Applegate was one of the original members of the O.S.S. during World War II. After I got to know him, he sent me taped copies of the original footage of the training the men went through, the same training advocating a style of self-defense shooting known as point shooting. Until the day he died, he stayed with his original theory of point shooting that was definitely not hip shooting but rather employed with the handgun brought up, arm straight and the handgun "pointed" at the target.

Applegate was an expert on riot control and a colonel in the United States Army, however, he also held the rank of general in the Mexican Army after spending much of his time south of the border. It was during one of these excursions after World War II when his old .38 S&W "Lemon Squeezer," always carried in a shoulder holster, nearly failed him by requiring all five shots to stop his attacker. After this experience, Applegate was highly responsible for the advent of five-shot Smith &

Wessons chambered in .38 Special, especially the hammerless versions.

John Henry FitzGerald was "Mr. Colt" between the two World Wars, traveling to all the large pistol matches, shooting and fixing Colts and being a genuinely good ambassador for The Horse. Fitz was considered an expert, and spent much time lecturing and instructing both target and defensive shooting. Before Clint Smith, before Mas Ayoob, before Jeff Cooper, even before Col. Applegate, there was FitzGerald teaching principles and practices of quick shooting with a revolver. Not only was he a top shooter, he also designed the Fitz Special.

I first encountered the Fitz Special as a teenager in Col. Askins' 1939 book. Askins said, "*The grandest defense gun I have ever had was a Colt New Service with the barrel cut down to two inches.... The hammer had been dehorned ... the trigger guard was cut entirely away in the front ...*"



**John's Fitz Special .44 Special (top) was custom-built by Andy Horvath. Charter Arms .44 belly gun (bottom).**

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*the grip was shortened ... it was a whiz for the purpose intended."*

Actually the Fitz Special started nearly 40 years earlier as Fitz started experimenting with the then-new Colt New Service. It was common knowledge among his contemporaries Fitz always carried a pair of .45 Colt Fitz Specials in his two front pockets. He definitely knew how to use them.

I've wanted to have a Fitz Special ever since I was the kid learning to shoot the big-bore sixguns of the 1950s. There was little hope of ever having an original, which would be a very rare and very expensive collectors' item.

I was happy simply to have a top gunsmith build one for me on a Colt New Service. I earlier found what I thought would be the perfect candidate, a 5-1/2" late model New Service in .45 Colt. Although having considerable pitting on the right side of the barrel and part of the cylinder, it was mechanically perfect and the interiors of both barrel and cylinder were like new. There was one major problem — it shot much too well to touch. A .45 Colt placing five shots, fired double-action standing at 50 feet, in less than 1-1/2" is not to be messed with! I am a firm believer in "Don't fix what ain't broke."

When a second late model New Service chambered in .44 Special surfaced, I had learned my lesson very well. Instead of shooting it, I sent the New Service off to one of the premier gunsmiths in the country, Andy Horvath. Horvath has built more than a half-dozen single-action sixguns for me. He turned the New Service .44 into a Fitz Special, which is why my Fitz Special is a .44 instead of a .45 as Col. Applegate's — and the most-used chambering by John Henry himself.

FitzGerald had several factory-produced Fitz Specials for individuals, with more surfacing all the time. Charles Lindbergh had a Fitz and *Hopalong Cassidy* author Clarence Mulford also had a Fitz Special. His was not a .45 but started life as a .38-40 and was later changed to .44 Special.

In the early 1970s it was virtually impossible to find a factory .44 Special so Charter Arms came to the rescue by increasing the size of their Undercover .38, resulting in a new five-shot Bulldog .44 Special. The result was one of the best BBBGs ever offered and the new .44 was an immediate success because it was not only chambered in .44 Special but also for the first time in many years, shooters had a big bore pocket revolver. It probably got its name from the old English 19th-century pocket pistols that are also known as Bulldogs.

When our kids were growing up we had very little expendable money so we did things that cost very little such as camping and fishing. A second Bulldog, this time in stainless steel, was added to our family. The Bulldogs have logged many miles, seen many camping trips, been carried in boot tops, pockets and fanny packs and are still serving our family. They have even gone swimming when my wife fell in not once, but several times, while fly-fishing. That's why I bought the stainless steel version.



**Charter Arms .44 Bulldogs included the Pug (top) and the original that was soon offered in the stainless steel version.**

They never complained. Three times in my life I needed a gun for protection — two of those times the family was along and in both of those situations the Bulldog .44 was there when needed.

The kids are grown up with families of their own so we don't do camping and fishing trips anymore, but the .44 Bulldogs are still on duty. My original blued 3" Bulldog now rests in my desk drawer. This little gun carries what is probably the best designed wooden wrap-around grips to ever come forth from a factory for a small defensive revolver. Its stainless-steel brother, equipped with compact Pachmayr grips, is in the drawer of the bathroom cabinet off my gun room. The latest Bulldog .44 Special is the Bulldog Pug, stainless steel with a 2-1/2" barrel. It's in the medicine cabinet in the main bathroom. Why are these two stainless .44 BBBGs on duty in our bathrooms? The reason for the stainless steel should be obvious. (*To be continued.*)

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## ONCE SHUNNED, NOW A FAVORITE

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

**A**long about 1950, Colt debuted the first American-made pistol in 9mm Luger. The U.S. military was thinking about retiring the venerable .45 of 1911 in favor of a 9mm for compatibility with their Allies in case of another land war in Europe. Colt figured the 1911 could be so chambered and lightened to boot. The result was the Commander, with a 4.25" instead of a 5" barrel, and another first: a lightweight aluminum frame.

When the military decided to stay with the .45 for the nonce, Colt went commercial with the Commander. It was offered in 9mm, but also in .38 Super and of course, .45 ACP. Revolver expert Bob Nichols declared it to be the one autoloader that had captured his heart, and nascent gun writer Jeff Cooper would include it in his battery as a convenient pistol for wear under a suit, and to be "carried much and shot little."

Cooper, the high priest of the .45 ACP, naturally chose that caliber — and so did most of the handgun buying public. A few, mostly in the Southwest, chose .38 Super and almost no one at all bought into what was then "the enemy's cartridge," the 9mm Parabellum. The time came when the 9mm and eventually even the .38 Super Commander were dropped from the catalog, with only .45 ACP remaining. That was then. This is now.

### TIMES HAVE CHANGED

The 9mm was on the hind teat of 1911 popularity for a very long time, for then-good reasons. For most of that time, the .45's reputation as a fight-stopper far exceeded the 9mm. People who bought 9mms wanted either double-action or double-stack capacity, neither of which the 1911 provided.

The 9mm Springfield Armory 1911s come in large, medium and small.



And then there was the reliability factor. John Moses Browning designed the 1911 around the .45 ACP cartridge. The .38 Super, introduced in 1929, was designed for the 1911 pistol. Both worked well. The 9mm/1911 combination was a mid-20th Century concept built in hopes of a military contract and the distinctly shorter overall length of the 9mm Luger created cycling and feeding problems.

As time went on, the 9mm grew in popularity. The ammo was cheap and the recoil was mild — two huge selling points. Ammunition advances made the .45 better and the 9mm a whole lot better, closing the gap from the "stopping power" side. Shooters discovered the heavy Government Model made the 9mm's kick ridiculously soft. In fact, it was so soft savvy instructors like the late Tim Noe and the thankfully still with us Bonnie Young chose Colt Commander 9mms to both carry and teach with. It was discovered the recoil was awfully light in the 9mm versions of those guns, too, and many found this shorter gun better balanced.

Perhaps most important, gunsmiths learned to tune the 1911 to run reliably with the short 9mm cartridge. Around the turn of the 21st Century, I made Master in IDPA Enhanced Service Pistol with a 9mm Colt Government Model tuned by Al Greco. In 2005, the Dave Williams-designed Springfield Armory EMP hit the market — this Enhanced Micro Pistol was a 1911 scaled down expressly for the 9mm Luger and fed it wonderfully. It wasn't long before Nighthawk Custom was producing 9mm 1911s that worked, thanks to the combined input of Shawn Armstrong and Bob Marvel. Most recently, Bill Wilson designed the EDC

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(A) Yeah, it works — Mas with 300/300 demo qual target, Sacramento 2021, shot with a Springfield Ronin 9mm. (B) Light 4.25" Springfield Ronin 9mm is eminently controllable: Mas' is still on target with the last three spent casings (circled) still in the air. (C) Mas wins an IDPA match with a Springfield EMP 9mm, circa 2006. (D) Fillet O' Snake anyone? Mas terminates a rattlesnake in Arizona "with extreme prejudice" using a Springfield EMP and 9mm Winchester 127 grains +P+, 2009.



9 series, Wilson Combat's updated take on the 1911 concept, which combined 9mm Commander-ish size with superb workmanship and higher capacity.

By 2019, premier 1911 manufacturer Bill Wilson told me he was producing more 9mm 1911s than .45s. The sound you hear may be Jeff Cooper rolling in his mausoleum, but such are the tastes of modern buyers.

Oh, and the Commander angle? Some 1911 aficionados are convinced

the 4.25" Commander format runs the 9mm 1911 the most reliably, because the 3/4" shorter overall length makes the slide lighter and easier for the weaker recoil impulse of the 9mm to run. The original Colt Commander, remember, was an aluminum frame pistol and in this format is lighter to carry.

## PERSONAL COMMENTARY

I had always sort of thought I'd end up with a lightweight Colt Commander .45 as a carry gun when I retired. I'm not there yet, but am leaning a bit toward the 9mm version. Old age and arthritis will do that. Such .45 men of the past as Pat Rogers and Walt Rauch had switched to 9mm before they left us, Pat with the S&W M&P and Walt with the 1911, for those reasons. Experts still here who shot their way to fame with .45 1911s have admittedly switched to the 1911 versions, Ken Hackathorn for practice and Bill Wilson all the way.

On my side, I confess to carrying 9mms more than .45s these days. I have full-size all-steel 1911s in the Parabellum chambering for competition, a Nighthawk Falcon with fiber optic sights for IDPA ESP and a match-grade Springfield Armory with adjustable sights for centerfire bull's-eye and PPC. When I carry a 9mm for personal protection and teaching, it's "short and light." The Springfield EMP 9mm I bought when it came out 16 years ago still has a place in my gun safe and my heart. A Ruger Lightweight Commander 9mm I won in a match in 2017 has been with me when I'm out and about, and when in "10-round limit" states you might find me teaching with my 4.25" aluminum-frame Springfield Armory Ronin 9mm. Their thin profile, sweet trigger, good pointability — and more than 60 years of "1911 habituation" — combine nicely.

In 1950, the 9mm Commander was an anomaly that made shooters ask, "Why?" It took a long time, but today we know why.

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# HISTORY OF THE BOLT-ACTION

## IT'S ACTUALLY A JOHNNY-COME-LATELY IN AMERICA!

**Dave Anderson**

**T**he bolt-action is by far the most popular action type for most sporting purposes. For younger shooters, I suppose this is considered the natural order of things yet it wasn't always so. During the late 19th century

and well into the 20th century, bolt-action rifles were primarily military arms as bolt-action sporting rifles didn't really become dominant until after WWII.

In the first few decades of the 20th century, the lever-action was the choice of most American hunters. Marlin and

Remington pump-action rifles were quite popular, as were semiautomatic Remington and Winchester rifles. One famous example was baseball legend Babe Ruth who loved hunting and fishing. In 1938 *Outdoor Life* had a story about the Babe hunting deer and moose in Nova Scotia using a .401 Winchester model 1910.

### TIME FOR A CHANGE

I've often read the switch to bolt-actions took place in the 1920s. Thousands of soldiers had trained in the use of bolt-action rifles during their military service, and now back in civilian life, wanted similar actions for hunting rifles. There's some truth to it but the change was more glacial than a tidal wave. During the 1920s American commercial production of bolt-action sporting rifles by American makers Remington, Savage, Winchester and Buffalo Newton totaled about 53,700 bolt-action rifles.

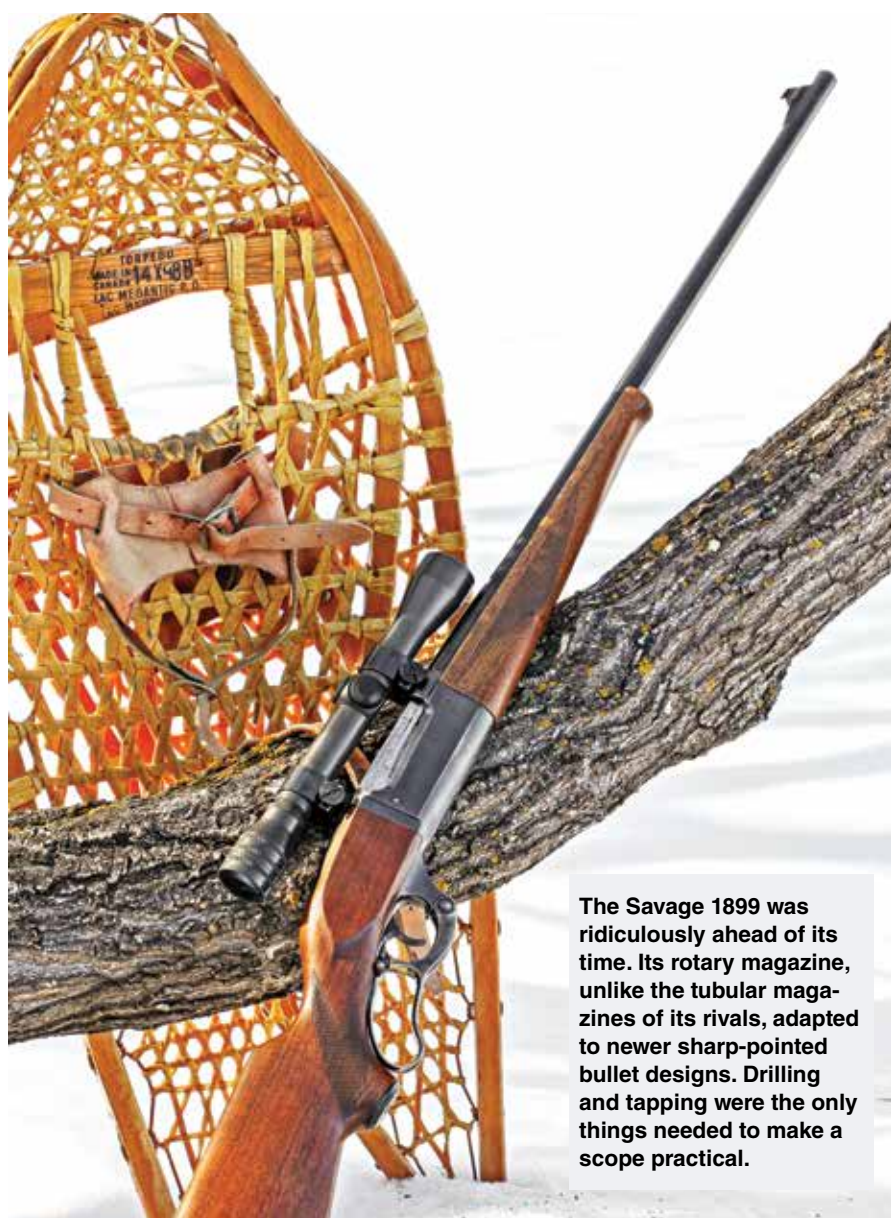
In the same time, frame production of lever-action rifles was more than 10 times as much. Savage with the Model 99, Winchester with the models 92, 94, 95, 53 and 55 made about 51,100 rifles in the '20s. I can't find Marlin production records for the 1920s but I wouldn't be surprised if adding Marlin production brought the total to over 600,000 lever actions.

The 1920s also saw production of about 36,000 Remington pump actions, 20,000 Remington 8 semi autos and about 8,000 Winchester 1907 and 1910 semi autos. Among sporting rifles made in the 1920s by major American manufacturers, bolt-actions made up only about 7.5%.

Nonetheless the bolt-action, like the proverbial camel, had its nose inside the tent. In far-off Africa, bolt-actions were catching on for several reasons — availability, moderate price, magazine capacity, access to military ammunition and the ability to use long, powerful cartridges.

### BRING THE POWER

This last, I believe, is the #1 reason for the ascendancy of the bolt-action: the ability to use longer, more powerful cartridges. The 1920s was a relatively



The Savage 1899 was ridiculously ahead of its time. Its rotary magazine, unlike the tubular magazines of its rivals, adapted to newer sharp-pointed bullet designs. Drilling and tapping were the only things needed to make a scope practical.

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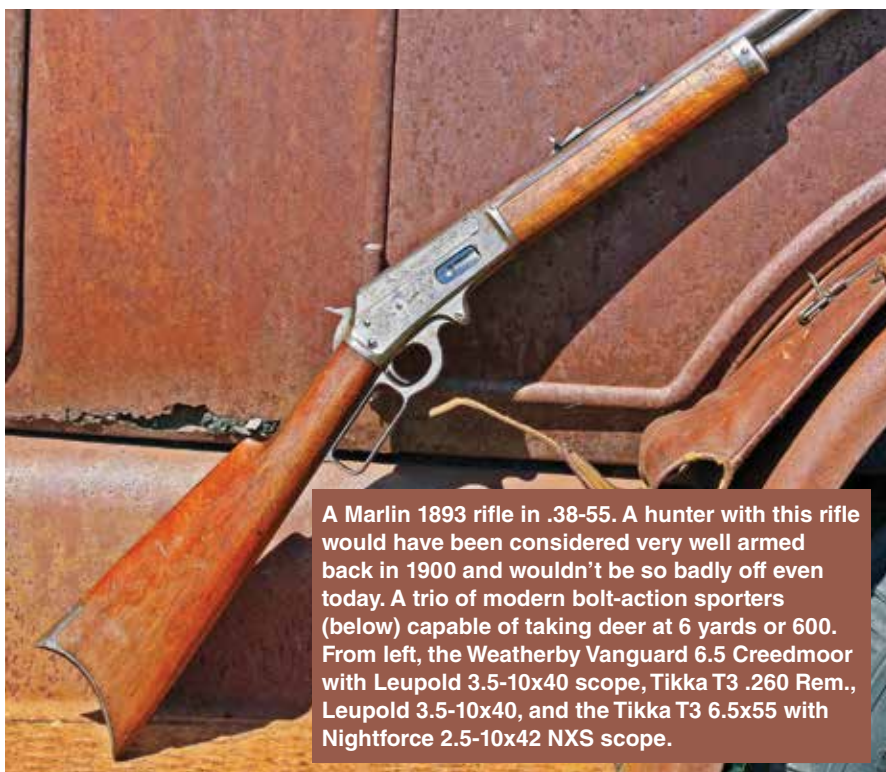
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 **TAURUS**



A Marlin 1893 rifle in .38-55. A hunter with this rifle would have been considered very well armed back in 1900 and wouldn't be so badly off even today. A trio of modern bolt-action sporters (below) capable of taking deer at 6 yards or 600. From left, the Weatherby Vanguard 6.5 Creedmoor with Leupold 3.5-10x40 scope, Tikka T3 .260 Rem., Leupold 3.5-10x40, and the Tikka T3 6.5x55 with Nightforce 2.5-10x42 NXS scope.



Remington followed up their models 14 and 141 pump action rifles with the postwar 760 series, all of which were popular. This example is chambered in .257 Roberts with a Weaver K3 scope.

prosperous era. Hunters who had only pursued whitetail deer began to hunt elk, moose, mule deer, sheep, goats and even grizzlies. The old .25-35 and .30 Rem. started to look a little marginal. Cartridges such as the .30-'06, .270 and the wildcat .35 Whelen appealed to American hunters just as the .318 and 9.3x62 appealed to African hunters.

Demand for new firearms in the U.S. dropped sharply in the 1930s due to the depression but even so, the swing towards bolt-actions was evident. From 1930 to Pearl Harbor, lever-action production by Savage and Winchester fell by more than half, from 511,000 in the '20s to about 250,000. Meanwhile, production of bolt-action rifles from Remington, Savage and Winchester nearly tripled to about 150,000 rifles.

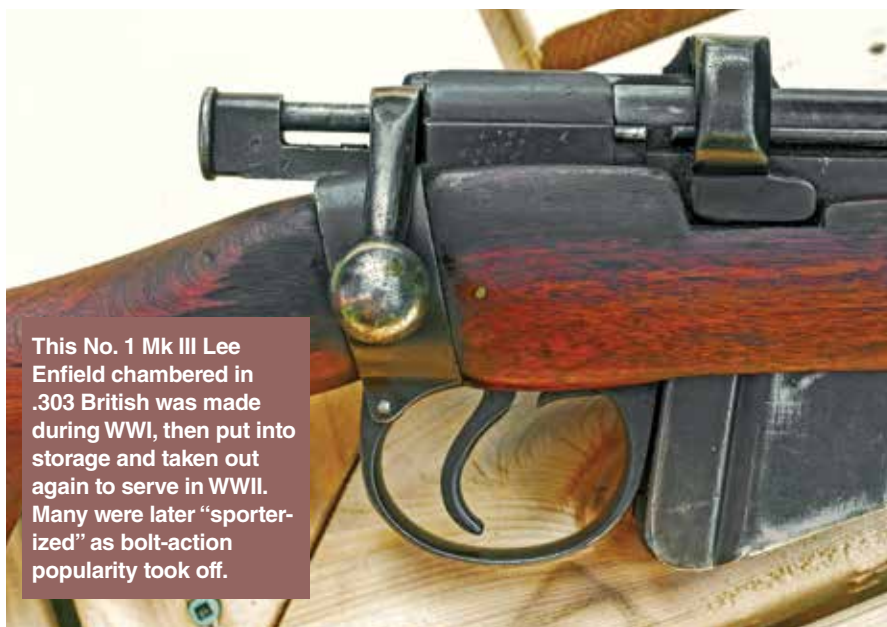
Winchester shook up the rifle world by offering the .300 and .375 H&H cartridges in the model 70 at the same price as standard cartridges. The long, tapered .300 H&H with its gentle shoulder angle just begged for "improving." Wildcatters fell on it like hungry wolves, blowing it out, sharpening the shoulder, shortening the case neck. In terms of performance, all were much the same but it was Roy Weatherby who achieved the greatest success. It's often said Roy had a genius for publicity. I think his genius was a willingness to

work all the hours of the day. As an old saying goes, genius is “1% inspiration and 99% perspiration.”

### CHANGE STARTS SLOW

In the postwar boom into the 1950s, demand for consumer goods was so strong manufacturers had little incentive to innovate — *just make 'em and sell 'em*. When demand began slowing down, the magnum boom intensified as old line makers like Remington and Winchester came out with magnum cartridges. As with the .30-'06 and its offspring, magnum cartridges were most often associated with bolt-actions.

There were other factors. Scope sights were becoming almost the universal choice and current bolt-action rifles came drilled and tapped for easy scope mounting. Some lever actions such as the Marlin 336, Savage 99 and the new Winchester 88 could be readily adapted to scope use but older top-ejecting designs were not so scope-friendly. Handloading was becoming



This No. 1 Mk III Lee Enfield chambered in .303 British was made during WWI, then put into storage and taken out again to serve in WWII. Many were later “sporterized” as bolt-action popularity took off.

wildly popular and was well suited to the strong, rigid bolt-action design.

Accuracy enthusiasts found bolt-actions provided consistent accuracy. As armies around the world transitioned to semi- and full-automatic rifles, hundreds of thousands of quality

surplus bolt-actions flooded the market. The bolt-action sporting rifle was becoming identified with knowledgeable, skilled riflemen. We all want to be thought of as knowledgeable and skilled, especially when all it takes is buying something.

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If you didn't know it, would you spot the piece of wood between barrel band and bayonet lug as a grafted in repair?

## PAWN SHOP SNIPER RIFLE DON'T GIVE UP ON BASKET CASES

Mike "Duke" Venturino  
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

### KISMET

**L**uck? I couldn't win a lottery if only two of us entered. Back in the 1970s, I once indulged in playing Blackjack at a Montana casino. After a while of steadily losing, the lovely gal dealing whispered to me, "Mister, you shouldn't gamble." More or less in my life I have lived her advice. When ignoring it I've paid the price!

That said: I have had some excellent luck in finding good guns and good gun deals. One of my best finds came out of a Montana pawn shop. But get this: I almost never go in pawn shops! Why? Because most firearms in them are run of the mill and fantastically overpriced.

One day Yvonne was having a minor medical procedure in Bozeman, Mont. Her doctor told me to come back in two hours and she would be ready to go home. Yvonne wanted me to pick up a few sacks of horse feed, which I did and was heading back to the hospital early. Passing a pawn shop on a rare whim I quickly turned into its parking lot.

As expected, their rifle racks and handgun counter had nothing of interest but I happened to glance behind the counter. There sat what was obviously a tampered-with military Mauser rifle. When asked what it was the counter fellow said, "It's what's left of a German

sniper rifle." Naturally I wanted to examine it and with a quick glance asked about its cost. The counter guy's price was a giveaway so I nabbed it.

Brothers did I luck out! Examining it in my car, I quickly determined it was more than just a good buy. It was a K98k with the factory code of bcd4. (The German Wehrmacht put codes on almost all military equipment instead of manufacturers' names.) The code meant my new rifle had been made at the Gustloff-Werke facility located in the city of Weimar. The "4" stood for the manufacturing date of 1944 and was likely the only time a German code used a single numeral for a year.

Most noteworthy is K98k Mausers coded bcd4 were intended from the very start of manufacture to become sniper rifles. Not all did but they were meant to be. The giveaway is the receiver's left

**Duke's luck brought him the better part of this German bcd4 sniper rifle from a rare visit to a pawn shop. The extra-wide left receiver rail (inset) told Duke this was one of the K98ks built from the ground up to become a sniper rifle.**



side rail is approximately 1/8" thicker than other K98ks. The reason was so the side rail could then be planed flat on its exterior surface. Thusly the scope mount was affixed to a flat surface making it sturdy in combat conditions. Collectors have come to call this mount the long side rail. A short side rail version preceded it. Having the mounts' flat surface attached to a rounded action rail resulted in easily loosened scope mounts from rough handling. My collection contains one of those also.

There was another feature particular to bcd4 Mausers I was not aware of at time of purchase — a checkered steel buttplate instead of smooth steel ones other K98ks wore. Mine has the proper buttplate.

### GUN BUTCHER

Now you're wondering why the counter guy said, "What's left of a German sniper rifle." It's because some yahoo cut the stock off from rear barrel band forward, which also meant its forend cap with bayonet lug was

missing. Duke does not fear trivia! Proper-era steel replacements were quickly found on the Internet. Also obtained was a broken K98k stock with its wood from barrel band forward intact. All that was needed was a good gunsmith and locally that was Rocky's Gun Works of Logan, Mont.

What about mounts and a scope?

**“ I ALMOST NEVER  
GO IN PAWN SHOPS!  
WHY? BECAUSE  
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I had on hand a German commercial Hensoldt 4x scope which could be war-time or post-war vintage. As the United States did with Weaver 2.5x scopes for their Model 1903A4 sniper rifles, early in the war German ordnance people gathered up scopes from the civilian market. For mounts I turned to a company called Accumounts that supplies replicas of most World War II sniper rifle mounts and even reproductions of some scopes. I've used their products for many years with satisfaction.

Within a reasonable time, Rocky called one day and said my rifle was ready. I hotfooted to his shop. He did an amazing job. If an observer didn't know the wood from the barrel band forward was grafted onto the original stock, it wouldn't be noticed. With a minor outlay of money, some questing for vintage parts and the efforts of a talented gunsmith, I became the owner of a fine shooting, mostly-original German K98k long-siderail sniper rifle.

And let's not forget a healthy dose of luck!

**GUNS**

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## SHOOTING THE SHORTIES IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK

**Denny Hansen**

Several years back BATF approved the use of 14" barrel shotguns equipped with the Raptor-head grip as a "firearm" per the Gun Control Act (GCA), but not a Class 3/NFA firearm. A 14" barrel shotgun using the standard pistol grip is still a Class 3 firearm falling under the National Firearms Act.

Unlike with other shotguns, a buyer must be 21 years of age to purchase a "pistol grip" firearm.

Mossberg came out first with their Model 590 Shockwave in 2017 and currently has over a dozen variations with 12-gauge, 20-gauge and even .410 models available.

Remington followed shortly afterward with the Model 870 Tac-14, 12-gauge.

### COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Although these short shotguns have been around for several years, there

remains a lot of misconceptions about them. The first is it's meant to be fired from the hip and this is what I have observed most often.

Can you hit when hip-shooting a shorty? Absolutely, but it takes a lot of practice and when fired in this manner the normal tendency is to shoot high. I was once told by someone who considers himself an expert on-all-things-tactical, "You can just 'walk' the rounds onto target like you would if shooting cans with a .22."

Two problems with this. First, cans don't shoot back and at the ranges the shorty will be fired at. The time spent missing may be a matter of life or death — yours.

Legally, morally and ethically you are responsible for every projectile fired. Say it takes you three rounds to "walk" the rounds to the target hitting with the fourth. When firing 00 buckshot this can be between 27 and 36 pellets that missed the target and

have the potential of hitting an innocent person.

If the Raptor grip is held against the front of the hip instead of slightly to the side, the sling stud and grip will recoil (sometimes painfully) into the shooter. After the first time this is usually a self-correcting problem.

### THE RIGHT APPROACH

The correct technique is to bring the gun up to eye level and use it just like a standard shotgun except it isn't shouldered. When I say "eye level," I do not mean to hold it close to your face, as it will recoil into your noggin. Again, a self-correcting problem.

When so employed, the Shockwave is capable of surprising accuracy. The bead front sight is more than capable at the close ranges it is intended for. The Raptor grip soaks up recoil much better than a standard pistol grip such as found on the Mossberg Cruiser shotguns.



Correct shorty technique is to bring the gun to eye level and use it just like a standard shotgun, sans stock.



Remington Model 870 Tac-14

Remington's Tac-14 may or may not have a strap on the forend, but the strap on the Shockwave is not there for looks. It's important to use as it keeps your hand from wandering in front of the short barrel. It is also an aid to recoil management, especially with heavy loads such as buckshot or slugs.

Recoil can be further mitigated using isometric tension by pushing forward on the forend and pulling the Raptor grip rearward. The pump-action can be easily manipulated while at full extension.

### FEEDING A SHORTY

The capacity of the Remington Tac-14 is four plus one in the chamber.

Capacity of the Shockwave is five plus one. If shooting the new Mossberg 590S Shockwave with 1-3/4" shell, capacity is eight-plus-one (see *GUNS* cover, January 2022).

Accepted loading technique with a standard stocked shotgun is to hold it with the primary hand and maintain a firing grip. The stock is held between the chest and arm. Keep the muzzle pointed downrange toward the target and feed fresh shells with the support hand.

Due to the short Raptor-head grip, this method does not work with the shorties and it's nearly impossible to maintain a firing grip.

I've found the easiest way to load is to hold the shorty in the support

hand with loading port facing up and then load.

### WHAT'S IT GOOD FOR ANYWAY?

With different techniques and some perceived drawbacks, some may ask what these short shotguns are good for.

The variants of the shorties really come into their own where space is at a premium. A few of these would include an RV, camping trailer, an aircraft or a boat.

If kept in cruiser ready (full magazine and hammer down, ready to cycle), it could also be a handy anti-carjacking device in the front of a passenger vehicle — quick to come into action and easy to manipulate in close confines. **GUNS**



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## LOADING THE 9MM THE WORLD — NOW AMERICA'S — FAVORITE

**John Taffin**

Even though a dozen or so 9mm cartridges arrived in the 20th century, today when we say “9mm” virtually everyone knows exactly which 9mm we are talking about. Introduced in 1902 in the Luger semi-automatic pistol, it is the 9mm Luger or 9mm Parabellum or 9x19. It was adopted by the German Navy in 1904 then the German Army in 1908 assuring it would become very popular in Europe.

There would not be an American-made 9mm until the 1950s when Colt brought out the Lightweight Commander in the 9mm in 1951. Then, in 1954 Smith & Wesson's Model 39 arrived in 9mm and was adopted by at least one State Highway Patrol. Until this time 9mms were rarely ever seen in the United States, and when they were, it would be a P 38 Walther or a Browning High-Power.

### A CHANGE COMES

The revolver was King in this country and then things started to happen in the early 1980s. First, GLOCK introduced their then revolutionary polymer pistol and in 1985 the military dropped the .45 ACP Model 1911 in favor of the Beretta 9mm. These were followed by more and more improved ammunition and today the 9mm is the most popular semi-automatic pistol not just here but around the world. Virtually every manufacturer offers a 9mm semi-automatic pistol with

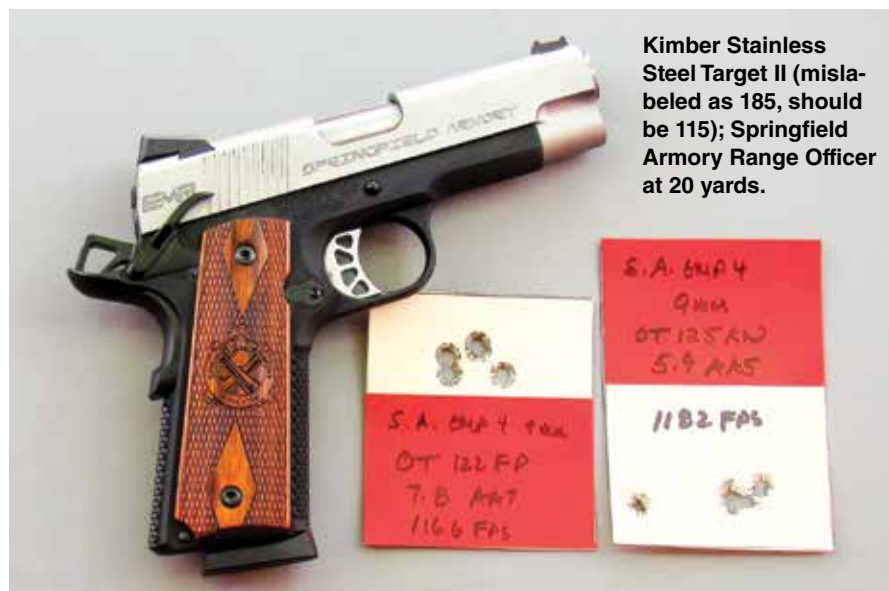
many of them offering almost endless versions of polymer pistols, as well as 9mm on the 1911 platform. Two things have made the 9mm very popular — the widespread proliferation of very reasonably priced ammunition and the easy-to-handle felt recoil.

Before the “shortage” of 9mm ammunition, it was not unusual to find a box of 50 rounds selling for \$10 or less, making it the only ammunition that was cheaper to buy than to reload. Over the years I simply tossed all my empty brass into 5-gallon buckets and whenever I found myself in a situation where virtually no ammunition could be found, I went back to reloading 9mms.

First it was necessary to sort all the

brass by head stamps. Well, maybe it isn't necessary, however, I feel better when I do it and spent two days sorting brass, finding 14 different head stamps and about 7,000+ empties.

Normally, I use the RCBS Pro-2000 Progressive Press to re-size, de-prime, re-prime and expand the case mouth. This gives me a large supply of brass to load in the amounts preferred on the RCBS RockChucker Single Stage Press. The re-sizing effort is greatly reduced by using the Lee Tungsten Carbide Sizing Die along with spraying the brass first with Hornady One-Shot Spray Lube. This waxed-based lube does not contaminate primers or powder and I have also found it handy for lubricating the



**Kimber Stainless Steel Target II** (mis-labeled as 185, should be 115); Springfield Armory Range Officer at 20 yards.



priming punch. I do not expand the case mouth but rather just kiss the mouth with the Lee Universal Expanding Die to allow the bullet to enter the case. This helps provide a tight bullet-to-brass fit. Once the cases have been given the proper charge of powder, bullets are seated but not crimped. Revolver reloads receive a heavy roll crimp as the bullet is seated, however, this does not work with semi-automatic pistol rounds as they headspace on the case mouth. This requires a special taper crimp which is accomplished in a separate step by using the Lee Factory Crimp Die. Although it means an extra step in reloading, I have found it well worth the effort. Combined with the tight bullet-to-brass fit, there is no problem with bullets being shoved into the case during the path from magazine to chamber.

## ON THE BENCH

When loading large batches of bulk 9mm, I use the RCBS Pro-2000 for all steps except the last one (crimping with the Lee Factory Crimp Die). Every 200 or so rounds that have completed their cycle on the Pro-2000 are then moved over to the RockChucker for applying the final step, the crimp.

All 9mm brass is not equal. Some of it has heavier walls that may become a problem when loading heavier bullets. Each bullet manufacturer gives the desired overall cartridge length which is measured using a mechanical or digital caliper. The former I use is a Lyman while the latter is Frankford Arsenal's. By having both I can check on myself to make sure I am reading everything right. However, length measurement does not

**A** John uses a variety of jacketed and cast bullets in loading the 9mm. He also finds the Lyman Case Gauge and Lyman Calipers useful for checking loaded cartridges, and the Lee Factory Crimp Die for accomplishing the final loading step. **B** One of John's most used powders for loading the 9mm is Hodgdon's Universal; pistol is an early Colt Lightweight Commander. **C** Lyman's Turbo 600 with added Lyman brass polish results in very clean and shiny brass, all 7,000+ cases! **D** Powders used in loading the 9mm include Hodgdon's Longshot, CFE Pistol and HP-38.

stop here. If it has been done correctly and the proper taper crimp is applied, the cartridges "should" work just fine. I use a Lyman Cartridge Gauge to check them but there are two other checks.

I start with several dummy cases properly set to the suggested/required overall cartridge length and then run two other checks. The dummy rounds are placed in the magazine to make sure they will fit and work smoothly. If too long, the bullet will butt up against the front edge of the magazine and jam things up. The second check is to make sure they will feed from the magazine smoothly and into the chamber. *Use dummy rounds only* for these checks. If everything is done correctly, we have cartridges as perfect as we can make them.

## POWDER IT UP

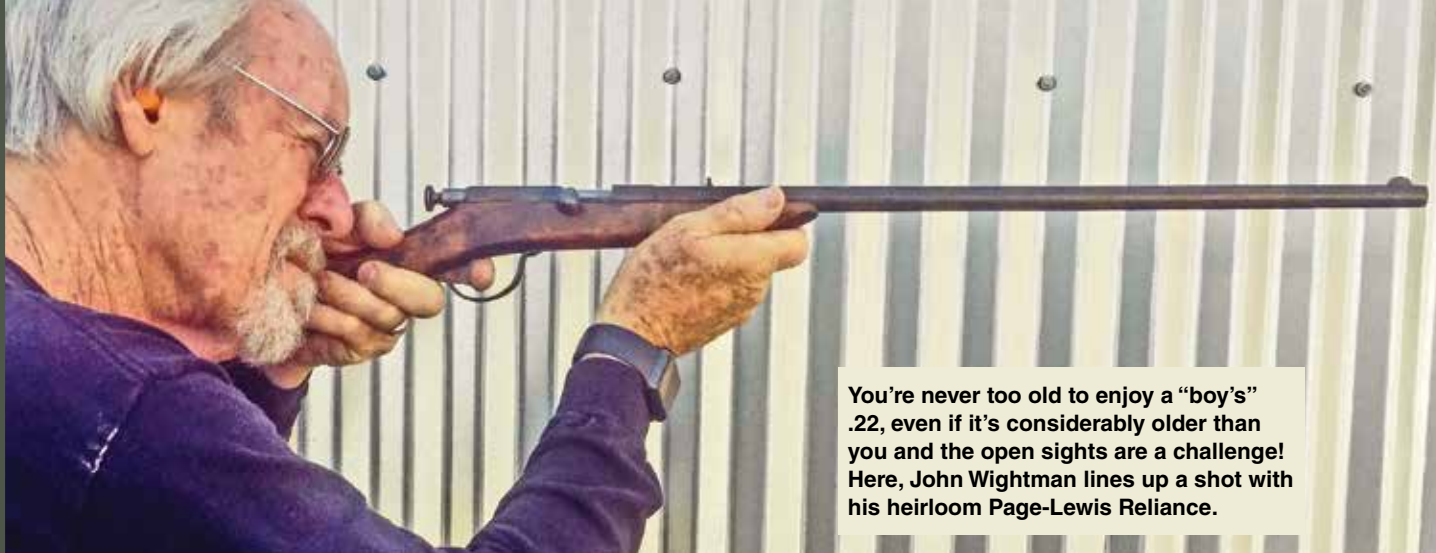
There is a long list of applicable powders for use in loading the 9mm. Over the years my most-used powders have been Hodgdon's CFE Pistol, Alliant's Unique and Accurate #7. I am also now using Hodgdon's Universal, Longshot and HP 38. When it comes to bullets, my mainstays have been the Hornady 115 XTP-JHP, Rainier 124 HP and Oregon Trail's hard cast 122 FN, 125 RN and 147 FN bullets. As this is written, it is almost impossible to find 9mm jacketed bullets. However, I did

locate 2,000 of Sierra's excellent 115 JHPs and these are now being loaded with various powders preparing for shooting next spring.

I earlier mentioned normally sorting all brass by head stamps while raising the question of whether or not it really accomplishes anything. Using mixed brass, I have received excellent results to the point of making me really wonder as to why I should bother separating. However, old habits are hard to break!

Using mixed brass and the Rainier 124 hollowpoint over 5.0 grains of Unique is right at 1,200 fps while putting five shots at 20 yards in a 1-1/4" group when shot in the Kimber Stainless Steel Target II or Citadel Cerakote 1911. The same bullet used with 5.3 grains of CFE Pistol shoots inside 1" in this Citadel and also in the Browning High-Power. My most-used practice/ everyday-shooting loads are assembled with the Oregon Trail Bullets. The 147 FP over 6.7 grains of Accurate #7 clocks out right at about 1,075 fps and I load the 122 FP Hard Cast bullet over 7.2 grains of Accurate #7. When the Ruger P85 arrived way back 30+ years ago, there were complaints of the inaccuracy. I have never found this to be true and this practice load clocking out at 1,170 fps places five shots in 1" at 20 yards. It does the same thing with the Rock Island Armory 1911.

**GUNS**



You're never too old to enjoy a "boy's" .22, even if it's considerably older than you and the open sights are a challenge! Here, John Wightman lines up a shot with his heirloom Page-Lewis Reliance.

## PAGE-LEWIS MODEL D THE ESSENCE OF A SINGLE-SHOT "BOY'S .22"

**Payton Miller**

Throughout the first half of the 20th Century, it seems virtually every American gunmaker offered at least one "boy's rifle." This was generally a no-frills, single-shot .22 with an extremely modest price tag and scaled-down dimensions.

Remington, Winchester, Mossberg, Marlin, Savage and Stevens had them, and in some cases still do. Later, a few companies actually specialized in such rifles — Chipmunk, Henry and Keystone are currently filling this niche admirably.

But sadly, a lot of "boy's rifle" companies dropped by the wayside well before the Second World War. Gunmaking concerns such as

Quackenbush, Hamilton and Page-Lewis are now known by a relatively small number of collector/obsessives.

### PASSION SATISFIED

Thanks to our shooting buddy John Wightman's unquenchable fetish for vintage .22s, a Page-Lewis Model D Reliance is what we lucked into. In James J. Grant's *Boy's Single Shot Rifles* (William Morrow & Co., 1967), the author lauds the little bolt gun's bona fides as a beginner's tool and describes a fairly unconventional action:

*"This little bolt action was a very safe and practical arm for a boy. When a cartridge was inserted into the chamber and the bolt was closed, the bolt went into a half-cock or safe position so the firing*

*pin was not in contact with the cartridge head. Then, to fire the piece, the knurled bolt head was drawn to the rear to cock it ... However, the bolt of this Page-Lewis mechanism behaves in an unorthodox manner. When the usual knurled knob is drawn to the rear to cock it, about two thirds of the bolt body follows along and when the trigger is pulled, falls. The flat firing pin is of course attached to the long rear of the bolt body and slides in a groove milled along the outside surface of the front one third of the bolt body."*

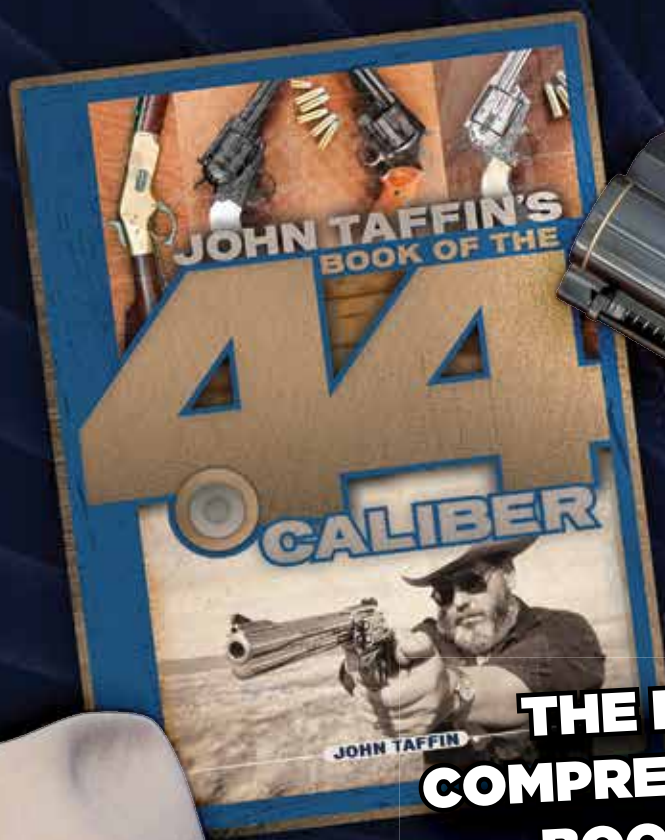
To make a long story short, both Mr. Page and Mr. Lewis were originally employed by Stevens in Chicopee Falls, Mass. and eventually sold their business to Savage — which had also acquired Stevens. Prior to that,



Kid's stuff! Winchester's 18" barreled M58 (top) had a production run of 1928–1931 and an original MSRP of \$5.50. The Page-Lewis 20" barreled Model D Reliance (bottom) was produced from 1923 to 1928 and sold for \$5.87.



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Page-Lewis guns had been sold by Stevens under the company's Springfield line (not to be confused with Springfield Armory).

Originally, Page-Lewis had produced simple rolling block designs before they moved to bolt actions. The Model D Reliance was designed as an entry level item and was produced from 1923 to 1928. The initial list price was \$5.87, but the model was eventually replaced with the more refined Stevens M52.

Before anyone gets excited enough over the prospect of a \$5.87 sticker price and starts looking for a time machine, it's worth keeping in mind

that in terms of actual buying power, the price translates today to \$92.57.

The actual year of manufacture for John's specimen, incidentally, is a bit hazy as the Model D — like many firearms of its era — was not serial-numbered.

## PLAIN AND SIMPLE

The rifle itself is about as straightforward an item as you might expect. It has a 20" barrel, fixed sights and a hardwood stock which we've been unable to positively identify in terms of wood type — our best guesses revolve around birch or gumwood.



At 25 yards, Federal Premium Gold Medal Match shot well but was shaded somewhat by Winchester "Bulk Pack" 36-grain HPs (inset). You never know what's going to group best in a particular .22 until you shoot it.



Our range notes indicate although the fixed sights can be challenging even at 25 yards, the fixed rear sight of the Page-Lewis is a relatively large square notch. When paired with the commensurately

tall front blade, the resulting arrangement is superior to the microscopic fixed sights often seen on .22s of its time period.

The sights, plus the excellent trigger

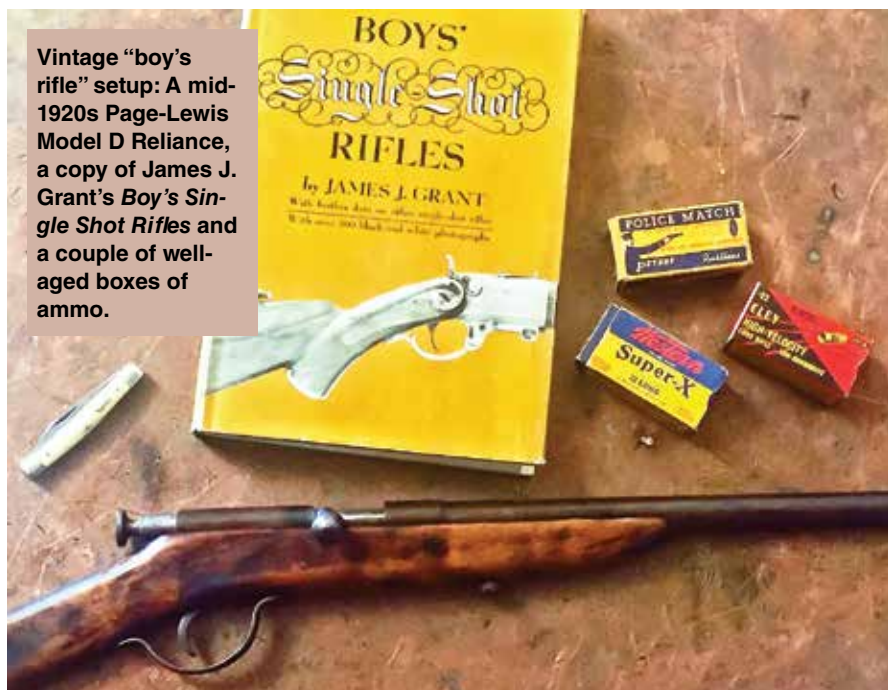
pull — a darn-near nonexistent 2 lbs. — permitted some fairly tight groups with Federal 40-grain Gold Medal Match and less pricey “bulk pack” Winchester 36-grain HPs. In fact, the Winchester stuff outshot the premium Federals, which just goes to show you there is no substitute for the time-consuming grunt work of shooting as many brands and weights of rimfire ammo as possible in a new gun before settling on one.

Naturally, this goes double when you’re shooting a fixed-sight oldie and are obliged to find a workable compromise between tight groups and a reasonably agreeable Point of Aim/Point of Impact relationship.

There’s a lot to be said for a single-shot .22. Sheer simplicity is always a virtue, and if it’s a vintage model, you’ll never have to worry about finding a replacement box magazine. And in this time of ammo uncertainty, it’s nice to know you and yours are unlikely to burn through a 50-round box of Long Rifles before the next ceasefire!

**GUNS**

**Vintage “boy’s rifle” setup:** A mid-1920s Page-Lewis Model D Reliance, a copy of James J. Grant’s *Boy’s Single Shot Rifles* and a couple of well-aged boxes of ammo.



## THE MOST VERSATILE UPLAND VEST EVER BUILT.



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In most revolvers, the bullets are not far from the end of the cylinder. In this model 10, bullets had to travel less than an inch to fly free on its own.



# WHO NEEDS A BARREL?

**Brad Miller**

**F**irearms are tools — we use them for hunting, recreation, competition and defense. They are machines. Ammunition is based on science. A propellant is used to accelerate the projectile(s) down the bore.

The gun and the ammunition must work in concert to get the projectile(s) on target, though the shooter has to do his part, too. Many features of the gun contribute to how the ammunition performs. The barrel, obviously, has a huge part in this. Ballistic performance depends on barrel length. Longer barrels produce more velocity, all else being equal.

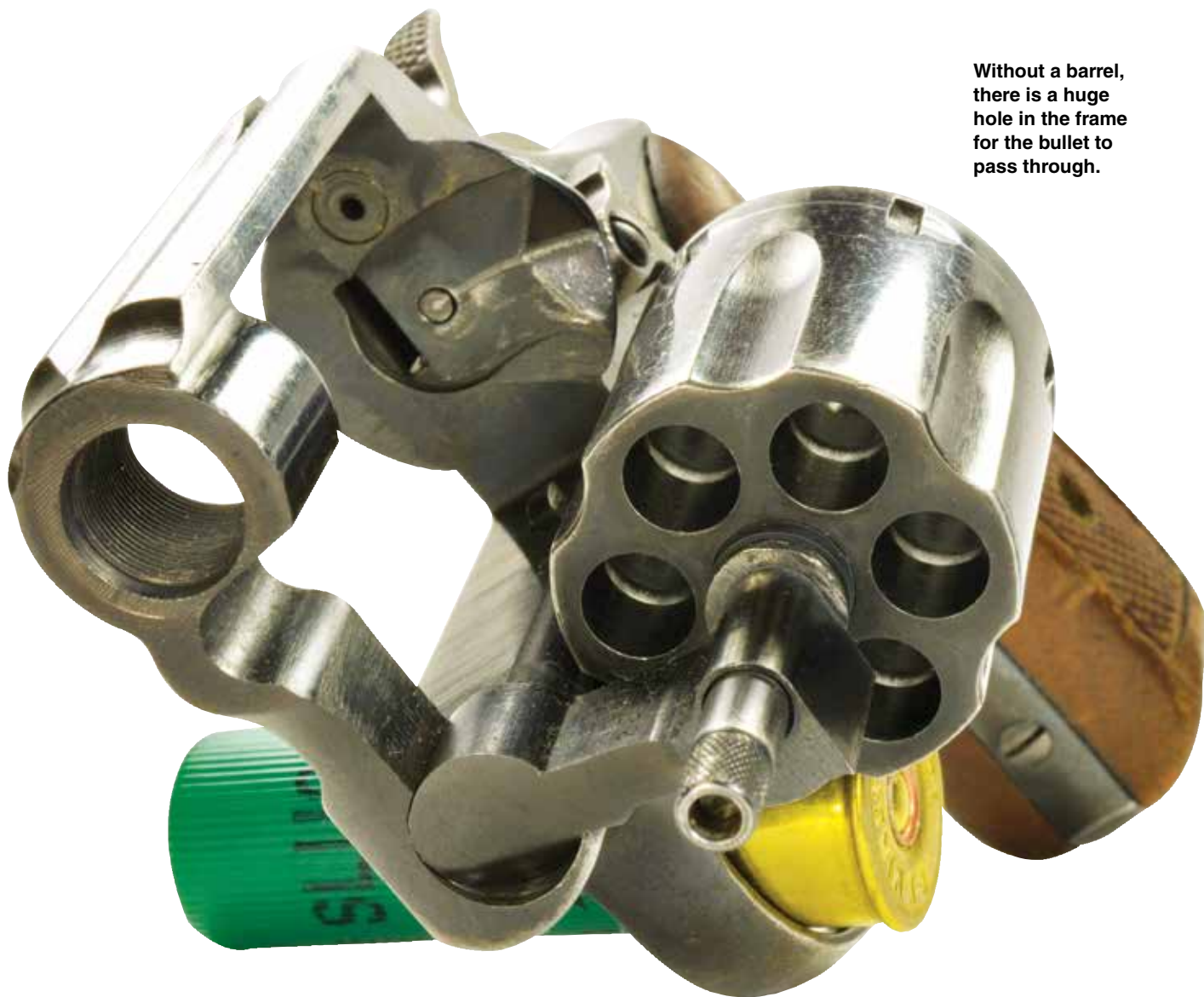
The chamber holding the cartridge is part of the barrel for rifles, shotguns and handguns aside from revolvers. Revolvers separate the chamber and the barrel. Thus, a revolver can fire even with no barrel. What

## Thoughts from the test bench

happens when you do this, and what can you learn from it? What kind of velocity would you get? How about accuracy? I looked into it.

### TEST PLATFORM

J&G Sales had an S&W Model 10 .38 Special revolver with no barrel. These are sold as “gunsmith specials” that usually lack all the parts of a working gun. The guns are



Without a barrel, there is a huge hole in the frame for the bullet to pass through.

used, with various amounts of wear. The Model 10s had everything except the barrel. I ordered one.

I received a model 10-7 with a three-letter serial number prefix, placing it as being made around 1987 to 1988. It had an import stamp, indicating it was sent out of the country at some point in its life then reimported.

What velocity can you get when firing from just the cylinder? Two things affect this. One is the rapid rise of gas pressure as the powder burns. The other is the design of a revolver's chamber. Revolver chambers have two parts — the chamber where the cartridge fits and a throat feeding the bullet into the barrel.

The throat acts a little like a mini-barrel as the bullet passes through because it seals most of the gas pressure as the bullet is pushed out of the cylinder. Chamber throats on this gun are about 0.480" long. Throats are (generally) slightly larger than the bullet diameter, but usually only a thousandths of an inch or two.

On this gun, the chamber throats were a little tight. They would allow a 0.357" jacketed bullet to be pushed through, though most required a little effort. There was no way I could push a 0.358" jacketed bullet through them unless I wanted to use a hammer. I didn't. My gun's

throats were tight, but even if the throat is 0.001" to 0.002" larger than the bullet, it's a really small space for gas to go through and there is very little time for this to happen.

When a round is fired, chamber pressure rises very quickly and peaks soon after the bullet starts to move. How soon does this happen? I used handloads so I could plug my load data into Quickload ballistic software to help explain what happens during the firing process. One load was a 158-grain Nosler JHP bullet and 4.8 grains of Unique gunpowder loaded to 1.440" overall length.

Quickload ballistic software estimates this load will reach peak chamber pressure after the bullet has moved about 0.36". In this gun, the bullet's nose is just 0.18" from the end of the cylinder. Traveling 0.36" means the bullet would be mostly still in the cylinder throat, with only 0.18" of the nose past the end of the cylinder. The Nosler bullet, which is 0.680" long, has to travel 0.860" to exit the cylinder so the pressure has peaked and started to drop before the bullet has exited.

The point is the bullet is getting a high-pressure push from the start. This article demonstrates what kind of velocity it can achieve from just the cylinder.

Two loads were fired in the barrel-less Model 10,



Everybody worries about barrel length (above) for maximum performance, but what about *no* barrel? Brad thought he'd find out.



The gun in the Ransom Rest. The target behind it was shot at 15 feet and has elongated tears from bullets hitting sideways and two cookie-cutter holes from bullets that have tumbled 180°.



At 10 feet, the ragged oblong holes are from tumbling bullets while the clean "cookie cutter" hole in the upper portion is from a bullet that has tumbled 180° and hit base first. The hole in the upper right black box shows a normal hit from a 4" barrel gun.

and for comparison, an S&W Model 360 .357 Magnum revolver with a 1.875" barrel. One load was described above. The other load was a 125-grain Remington SJHP loaded with 6.5 grains of Power Pistol to 1.420" overall length. These are both full power .38 Special loads.

### THE RESULTS ARE IN

Average speed of the 125-grain bullet was 661 fps with no barrel. In the 1.875" barrel it averaged 883 fps. The 158-grain bullet averaged 524 fps with no barrel and 665 fps from the 1.875" barrel.

I found these numbers very impressive. The 125-grain load fired from just the cylinder reached 75% of the speed it would with a 1.875" barrel. The 158-grain load reached 79% of the speed it would with a 1.875" barrel — the very fast rise in peak chamber pressure gets the bullet moving fast!

No-barrel ballistics with the 125-grain bullets are around what I get with .38 Short Colt ammunition. For example, Remington .38 Short Colt with a 125-grain lead bullet clocks at 612 fps from a 1.875" S&W 340PD and at 699 fps from a S&W Model 67 with a 4" barrel. My 661 fps with no barrel is in the middle of this range. That's decent ballistics for a barrel-less gun.

What about accuracy? Normally, bullets are spin stabilized as they go through the barrel by the twist of the rifling and without this stability, bullets can tumble. Naturally, I was curious about what the bullets would do with no barrel.

I initially fired the gun by hand at 10 feet, but without a front sight I was guessing if I was pointing it at the same spot for every shot. I decided to do the accuracy test the "right way" and put it in a Ransom Rest. This device points the gun at the exact same spot for every shot.

Accuracy was better than I expected and the bullets were surprisingly not widely dispersed. I fired six shots of the 125-grain load at three different distances. When

fired at 10 feet, six shots had a spread of 2.09". At 15 feet they were spread to 2.61" and at 21 feet they spread to 4.44". Heck, these groups are better than some people can shoot. I might or might not be in this category. I'm pleading the fifth.

Even though the groups were surprisingly good, the bullets were tumbling. At 10 feet, all the bullets tumbled. Five bullets hit the target sideways. One bullet had tumbled 180° and hit squarely with the base, "cookie cutting" a perfectly round hole like a wadcutter bullet would do. When these semi-jacketed hollow point bullets hit paper normally, the hole is circular and has a grease mark around the entire edge. I confirmed this by shooting them through another revolver with a 4" barrel. The only way to make a cookie cutter hole is for the bullet to flip 180° and hit base-first.

Fifteen- and 21-foot targets had the same appearance of virtually every bullet tumbling, with at least one being a cookie-cutter hole. This should be no surprise since they are being fired from a "freebore" with no rifling to stabilize them.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

This was an interesting little adventure. It showed how quickly a bullet could achieve high speed in a very short distance. The fast rise in chamber pressure produced surprisingly fast bullets when fired from just the cylinder. This is aided by the chamber throat that prevents most gas pressure from escaping so it can push the bullet to high speed in a short distance. Accuracy was surprisingly good. The bullets have a similar flight path as a result of passing through the narrow chamber throat but they freely tumble because they are not spin stabilized by rifling.

What's next? This gun has an ejector rod for a 2" barrel, so I bought one. It will be sweet to have a Model 10 belly gun — with a barrel!

**GUNS**

*Disclaimer: The author does not recommend readers try this. Neither the author nor the publisher is responsible for any mishaps that might occur if readers ignore this advice.*



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# TAURUS TX 22 RD



# IMPETITION

## ACTION + INACTION = TACK DRIVER

Tom McHale

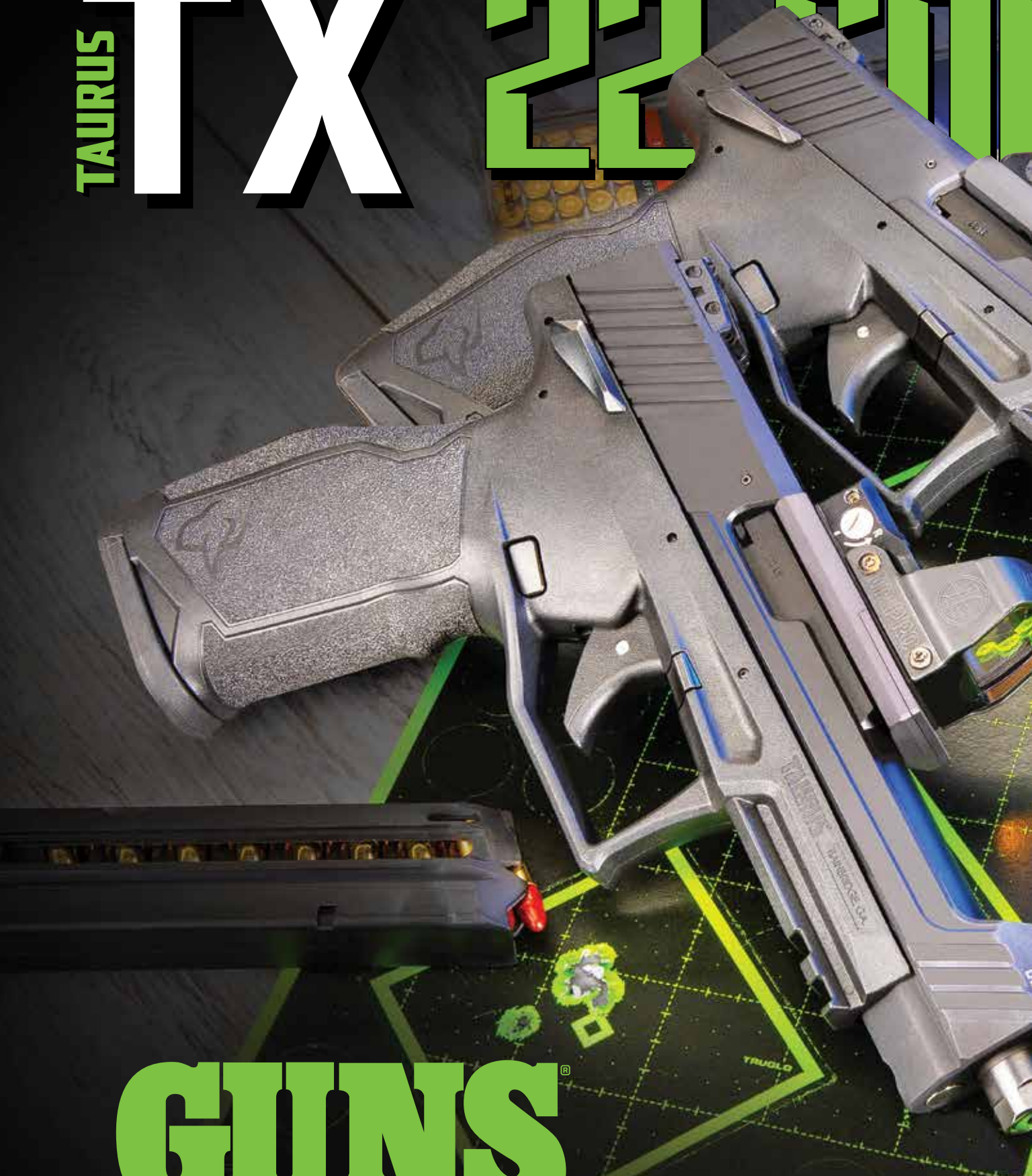
**A**t risk of offending the kind folks from Taurus, I don't see the TaurusTX 22 as a competition-specific pistol at all.

Sure, it's a souped-up version of the popular TX 22 rimfire pistol with more bells, whistles and a red dot sighting platform. So, it does in fact, make for a stellar pistol to use for handgun action-shooting sports like Steel Challenge or whatever *mano-a-mano* test of skills floats your boat.

What I quickly found with this nifty pistol is its suitability for just about anything. With its red dot sighting platform, it's a truly exceptional plinker. Even in these arduous times, .22 LR is a heck of a lot cheaper than centerfire ammo. The threaded barrel slides this handgun into a category approaching more fun than should be legal. Its size and profile make it an excellent service pistol trainer, so don't hesitate to bone up on your defensive shooting skills without all the flash, recoil and general conflagration. Oh, and if you're a new-shooter ambassador like me, the TX 22 comes with an absolute guarantee



# TAURUS TX 22



# GUNS<sup>®</sup>

MAGAZINE

# COMPETITION



your pupils will grin ear-to-ear when putting it to work.

To top things off, this is one of the rare pistols that surprised, no, shocked me, with its downrange performance. Hold that thought.

### JUST THE FACTS

The TX 22 sports a polymer frame mated with an aluminum slide made possible by the pistol's rimfire chambering. Three 16-round magazines are included with the standard TX 22 Competition model. Taurus does offer a version equipped with 10-round magazines for you poor souls living under the iron-fisted rule of a *Republik*. The magazines are made of polymer, but they still drop freely with a press of the left-side release button. I anticipated a

bit of stickiness, but it wasn't to be. Those magazines do have recessed loading-assist buttons on both sides so you can lower the follower with your support hand to more easily drop tiny rimfire cartridges into place.

The magazine release button comes on the left side of the frame but is easily reversible. You'll also note safety levers on each side of the frame — a necessity, since the TX 22 Competition is a single-action pistol.

The safety lever doesn't block administrative actions so you can operate the slide to load, unload, or show clear. It does positively block the trigger to prevent firing. The only other visible controls are a slide lock lever on the left side and a recessed takedown release. This mechanism is flush with the frame just above where you'll place your

The TaurusTX 22 Competition — all the bells, whistles and pure fun you can tack onto an optic-equipped, striker-fired .22 pistol at a nice price.



trigger finger. Rounding out frame features, you'll get a two-slot Picatinny rail up front for lights, lasers or — if you're feeling really spunky — a pistol bayonet.

The sights are the three-dot variety with a twist. While the front is fixed through the slide *a la* GLOCK, the rear is adjustable for both windage and elevation. Inside the rear sight outer body is a floating section housing the actual rear notch. Two independent screws on the right side allow separate adjustment of windage and elevation so you can match point of impact to point of aim for your



**A suppressor on a .22 pistol is one of life's little — okay, major — joys and the TX 22 is ready out of the box for your favorite snuffer.**



**The unique design of the TX 22 places the optic base directly above — and physically part of — the chamber. If the mount is tight, the optic will stay accurate, no doubt.**



**The included rear sight uses a 3-dot configuration and is adjustable for windage and elevation if you don't want an optic — though we're not sure why you wouldn't.**

chosen load. This is particularly handy for .22 LR pistols, given the variety of bullet weights, jacket material and velocities. Find the ammo your TaurusTX 22 likes and then adjust as needed.

## **BLOWBACK IS YOUR FRIEND**

"I never worry about action, but only about inaction."

The undisputed master of the pithy comment came up with that one. Yes, Winston Churchill, although I doubt he was referring to the TaurusTX 22 rimfire pistol when he said it.

As are most rimfire pistols, the TaurusTX 22 operates via simple blowback. The pressure from each shot knocks back the slide to allow the empty cartridge case to shove its own self out the back door. The returning slide, powered by the recoil spring, picks up a fresh cartridge and locks everything up neat and tidy. While that may sound like any other pistol, the nifty benefit to a blowback design is the barrel doesn't move. It's stuck to the frame like crazy-glued fingers. With a low-energy and low-recoil round like the .22 LR, there's no need to implement a fancy locking system for the barrel.

This combination of action and inaction is, in my opinion, what makes the TaurusTX 22 perform. As the barrel is fixed in space, it's possible to mount the red-dot sighting platform right on it, and this is precisely what the Taurus does. The benefit is easy to picture. From shot to shot, the barrel and sights remain in exactly the same orientation. There's no need to hope and pray the slide, where sights are normally attached, comes back into perfect re-alignment with the bore.

## **RED DOT MADNESS**

You can't miss the unusual dot platform placement on the TX 22. It's right smack in the middle of the barrel. It took me a minute to get over the weirdness, but then I remembered there's no government mandate saying the red dot has to be piled on top of the rear iron sight. One of the benefits of a red dot is its lack of eye relief restrictions. Heck, we stick red dots right on the middle of Modern Sporting Rifles, so why not pistols? Thanks to the fixed-barrel blowback design, this one allows it. On the models shown here, the Leupold and Holosun sight bodies are mounted just about smack in the middle of the pistols' 8"+ overall length, approaching 5" forward of the rear sight.

The slide is an open-top design, reminiscent of the Taurus PT92 series. While the design keeps the weight down, it's actually an operational necessity. As the optics plate is mounted over the breech area, the open top slide allows full travel rearward during recoil — around the optics mount.

There's the aforementioned generous mounting platform with a small, recessed cutout on the front end. This is where one of two included mounting plates drops into place to provide the mounting interface for optics.

Those adapter plates are cleverly designed to be reversible. So, by flipping each upside down, you'll get a total of four unique optic compatible platforms. Out of the box

you can mount the following: Trijicon RMR, C-More STS, Vortex Venom, Noblex-Docter, Burris FastFire, Sightmark Mini, Holosun HS507C and Leupold DeltaPoint Pro. Of course, you can also use any other make which shares a mounting footprint with any of the above.

The pair of sample pistols I've been working with came equipped and range ready with a Holosun HS507C and Leupold DeltaPoint Pro.

### TRIGGER

The trigger blade on the TaurusTX 22 is broad and flat across the front, but with contoured edges on either side. With no safety leaf in the middle, it's a comfortable fit. I'd describe the sensation as a "roll" trigger style with

about 7/8" of take-up with some resistance, followed by a break at just about 1/2" of overall travel. You can easily stage it by feel, knowing exactly when to let up prior to the shot or you can press right through during more rapid-fire strings. There's no detectable over-travel and the reset is positive after about 1/8" of forward travel. I have two samples here equipped with different optics, and the press weight measured the same, right at 4.5 lbs.

### SUPPRESSOR READY

If your life is full of sadness and anguish, get a .22 pistol with a suppressor. Then collect all the tin cans, golf balls and dollar store cans of shaving cream you can find and head to a range. Seriously, is there anything more fun



The 16-round magazine features side-loading assist buttons but is much easier to load than most centerfire pistols, making it great for training those hand-strength issues. There is also 10-rounders available for more "progressive" gulags, er, states.

than a .22 suppressed handgun? If you're not taking the hint, the correct answer is — no.

The TX 22 comes complete with a 1/2x24 threaded barrel. Just unscrew the thread protector with exposed flats and pop on your favorite silencer. I used a SilencerCo Sparrow for this review and it worked like a champ.

Paired up with most any .22 LR ammo, you'll get subsonic velocities out of the 5.25" barrel, so you'll hear no supersonic crack of the projectile, just a gentle "pffffh-hhht" sound. It might make you just a bit giddy.

To verify my velocity assumptions, I fired five types of ammo through the TX 22 and used a Competition Electronics Pro Chrono DLX placed about 10 feet down-range. I observed the following with the SilencerCo

# “ YOU MUST LOOK AT FACTS, BECAUSE THEY LOOK AT YOU.”

Sparrow suppressor attached: CCI Mini Mag HV .22 LR 40-grain (1,026.3 fps), Winchester Super Suppressed .22 LR 45-grain (946.3), Norma Match-22 .22 LR 40-grain (823.7), SK Pistol Match .22 LR 40-grain (817.7) and Lapua Pistol King .22 LR 40-grain (869.7). Around these parts, the speed of sound is about 1,133 fps, so everything I shot resided in the ultra-quiet zone.

## SURPRISING ACCURACY

To put the action/inaction theory to the test, I headed out for a range day of accuracy testing. Right. It was all work!

I set up at 25 yards using the Ransom Multi-Caliber rest, my new favorite handgun testing accessory. It provides a rock-solid handgun platform and is easily portable in a .50-caliber ammo can.

I chose the sample TX 22 outfitted with the Holosun HS507C red dot optic. This model features a circle with an interior red dot reticle and I just love the sight picture. It's fast and easy to acquire, thanks to the large outer circle and the small interior dot provides all the precision you need.

The five-shot group results were stunning. The Winchester Super Suppressed .22 LR 45-grain load won the day with an average group size of just 0.90". Honorable mentions went to the rest as follows: CCI Mini Mag HV .22 LR 40-grain (1.17"), Norma Match-22 .22 LR 40-grain (1.29"), SK Pistol Match .22 LR 40-grain (1.40") and Lapua Pistol King .22 LR 40-grain (0.97").

Yes, this little competition, plinking, service trainer pistol will shoot.

## CLOSING ARGUMENTS

Consider me pleasantly surprised. The pistols ran like a champ and accuracy results speak for themselves. A lot of polymer guns come through here, but it's a rare specimen capable of shooting 1" groups from 25 yards with regularity. MSRP is listed at \$533.33.

As Winston once said, "You must look at facts, because they look at you." When 1" groups look at you, it's time to face the facts — this one is a keeper.

**GUNS**

TaurusUSA.com



# ***HENRY BIG BOY STEEL*** ***.357 MAGNUM*** **A MUST-HAVE LEVER FOR YOUR STABLE**

**John Taffin**

**W**e are blessed with a large proliferation of sixguns, semi-automatic pistols and leverguns to choose from. However, especially when it comes to leverguns, there are absolute essentials. I will not argue the first choice is a .22. and I simply cannot imagine life without a quality .22 levergun. After a .22 has been selected, the next step is a .357 Magnum levergun.

The .357 Magnum arrived in 1935 and it took a while for the levergun manufacturers to catch up so shooters looked to the Winchester Model 1892 in .32-20 to be converted to the .357 Magnum cartridge. The first factory-produced Magnum-chambered levergun was not the .357, but rather the .44 Magnum which arrived in 1964, and I added one in 1966. The .357 Magnum levergun did not arrive until 1979 and I soon purchased one to find out what an absolutely grand rifle it is to have.

## **NEW-OLD NAME**

Henry Repeating Arms goes back to the mid-1990s with their first rifle, the Model H001 Classic .22. They soon became known as one of the slickest operating rimfire rifles available and popular enough to already have reached 1 million sales. I presented one of these to my grandson

who used it to keep the ground squirrel population down in their place in Montana. Today Henry Repeating Arms is the most prolific rifle manufacturer in the United States with not only leverguns in .22, .327 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .41 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .44-40 and .45 Colt, but also "Long Ranger" versions in traditional rifle chamberings. My first Henry was a .22 and this was soon followed by a .44 Magnum, and now my trio consists of these two as well as a recently added .357 Magnum.

The Henry Big Boy .357 Magnum is not a copy of the original Henry of 1860 and it is also quite unlike any other leverguns out there. Two things about the Henry make it much easier to handle if one is going to shoot a long string of cartridges. First, is the weight. Normally we look for a levergun chambered in a sixgun cartridge to be light and easy to handle. However, if one is going to shoot hundreds of rounds at a time, the extra weight is valuable. The Henry .357 Magnum Carbine weighs nearly 7 lbs., even more with the addition of a scope. Add the generous recoil pad provided and this is definitely a centerfire rifle I can shoot all day long. Okay, a half a day, as the body does tire easily.

## **NO SORE FINGERS**

One of the things I really appreciate about the Henry, especially when I'm

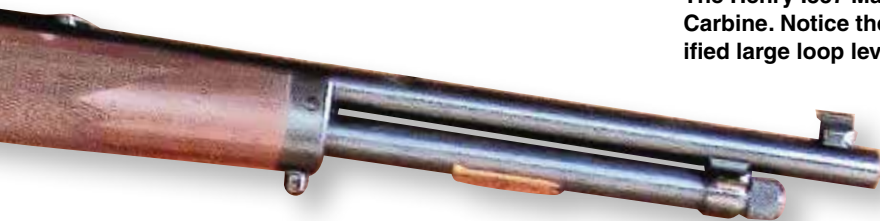
going to be doing a lot of shooting, is how it is loaded. When shooting a sixgun-cartridge-chambered levergun, I often employ a wooden dowel to help push the cartridge past the loading gate without acquiring sore fingers. The original 1860 Henry loaded through a tube from the front (just as with many .22 rifles today). The 1866 Winchester provided a loading gate on the side of the frame just as all centerfire Winchester and Marlin leverguns from that time forward. Henry Repeating Arms has taken a giant backward step by reverting to the old original method. The Henry Big Boy does not have a loading gate but rather loads just like the conventional .22 levergun through a slot under the barrel. To load the knurled head of the inner magazine tube, the barrel is turned until it releases, then pulled forward to expose the cartridge-shaped slot. Cartridges are loaded base down, the inner tube is then pushed back in place in the magazine tube and locked. After a day's shooting, my fingers feel just as fine as they did to start with.

*(Editor's note: Henry has recently added a side-gate to this model, giving two loading options.)*

## **CHOICES**

Henry Repeating Arms offers many different models. Mine is the carbine length with a 17-1/2" barrel and a modified large loop lever. I do not care for

The Henry .357 Magnum Carbine. Notice the modified large loop lever.



the "John Wayne/Rifleman" large loop levers, however, the Henry version is somewhere midway between this and the standard lever and I find it very comfortable and easy to operate. It would certainly be appreciated in cold weather when wearing gloves.

This Henry .357 Magnum is blued steel with an American walnut stock fitted with a black solid rubber recoil pad. The stock is also fitted with sling swivel studs. Sights are semi-Buckhorn style, however, since the top of the receiver is drilled and tapped for a scope base, I went directly to this option of mounting a scope.

My first .357 Magnum, as mentioned

earlier, goes back almost 40 years. However, as the grandkids have arrived, now 14 in number, I have been in the process of adding one for each of them to have eventually. In a one-month period, I purchased three .357 Magnum leverguns. The Henry was the only one that needed nothing to be done to it except shooting. The other two came with 7 to 8 lbs. trigger pulls that I had taken down below 4 lbs. for easier shooting. Each of them also had a hitch in the loading area that often caused inserted cartridges to catch on something. With its "new-old style" method of loading, the Henry bypassed any of these problems and also came with a usable trigger pull.



Loads with the Lyman #358156 Thompson Gas Check Bullet. John tested the .357 Magnum Henry with Black Hills 158 JHPs, 158- and 200-grain cast gas check bullets and jacketed bullets (below) from Hornady, Speer and Sierra.



## RANGE TESTS

The Henry .357 Magnum was test-fired with factory loads from Black Hills as well as handloads with cast bullets and jacketed bullets. Test-firing was accomplished at 45 yards using three shots. It performed exceptionally well. My long-time favorite .357 Magnum bullet for sixguns has been the Ray Thompson-designed Lyman Gas Check Bullet #358156 GC and it also works very well in the Henry. Loaded over 15.5 grains of H4227, muzzle velocity is 1,635 fps with three shots in just 1/2". The same bullet over 14.0 grains of H4227 does 3/4" at 1,450 fps while 12.5 grains of #2400 is just under 1,600 fps with a 7/8" group. It also does just fine with heavy cast bullets. My most-used heavy .357 Magnum bullet is the NEI #200.358GC which, as the number indicates, is a 200-grain bullet. With 11.2 grains of #2400 or 13.0 grains of H110, it is right at 1,400 fps and 1" groups. This would be my choice for hunting of feral hogs.

Switching to Black Hills 158-JHP .357 Magnum load, I had both an original jacketed hollowpoint and their newer version on hand. They shot right at 1,575 fps and grouped at 1/2" and 7/8" respectively. The Hornady 180 Silhouette bullet, which is excellent for penetration, also grouped in 1/2" and just under 1,600 fps with 12.5 grains of #2400. Some of the best loads for the .357 Magnum are assembled with a powder that is unfortunately no longer available. I am speaking of the H108. With the Speer 140 Jacketed Point or the Sierra Jacketed Hollow Cavity over 15.5 grains of H108 muzzle velocities are 1,685 fps and 1,730 fps, respectively, with groups of 5/8" and 3/4", also respectively. This same powder also works very well in the .30 Carbine and I cherish the little bit I have left.

The only problem I encountered with the Henry .357 Magnum Carbine was self-induced when I tried to work it too gently and jammed it. As long as I worked the lever like I was in charge, there were no problems whatsoever. I can't find anything negative about the Henry .357 Magnum Carbine and give it the highest rating possible. MSRP: \$969

**GUNS**

HenryUSA.com

# The Dreaded CAMP RIFLE

SOMETIMES FEAST, SOMETIMES FAMINE, ALWAYS INTERESTING

**Mark Hampton**

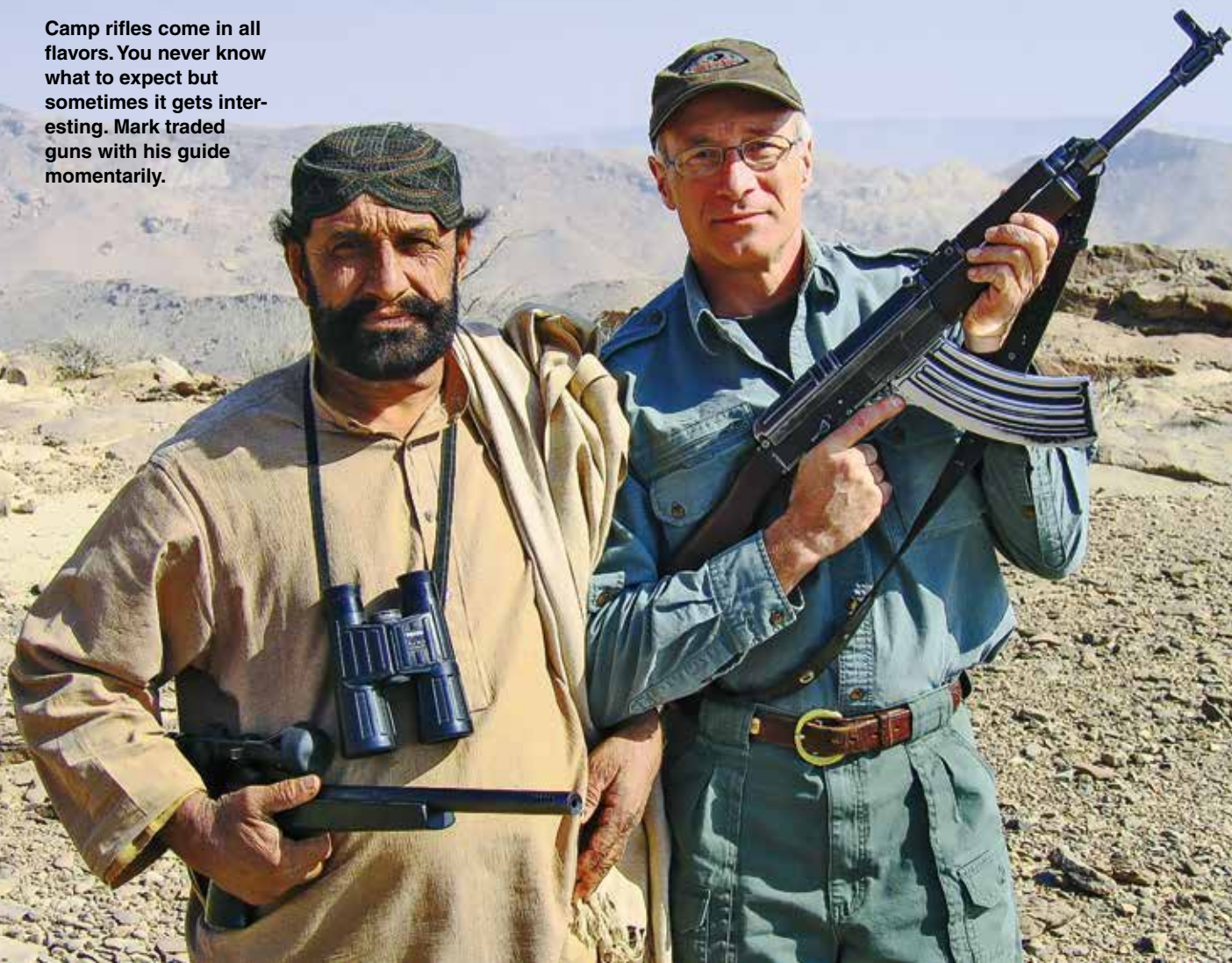
If you travel much, it's no big secret flying with guns and ammo is no longer fun. With almost 40 years of traveling internationally with firearms, I can testify under oath — flying abroad with guns and ammunition can be downright frustrating.

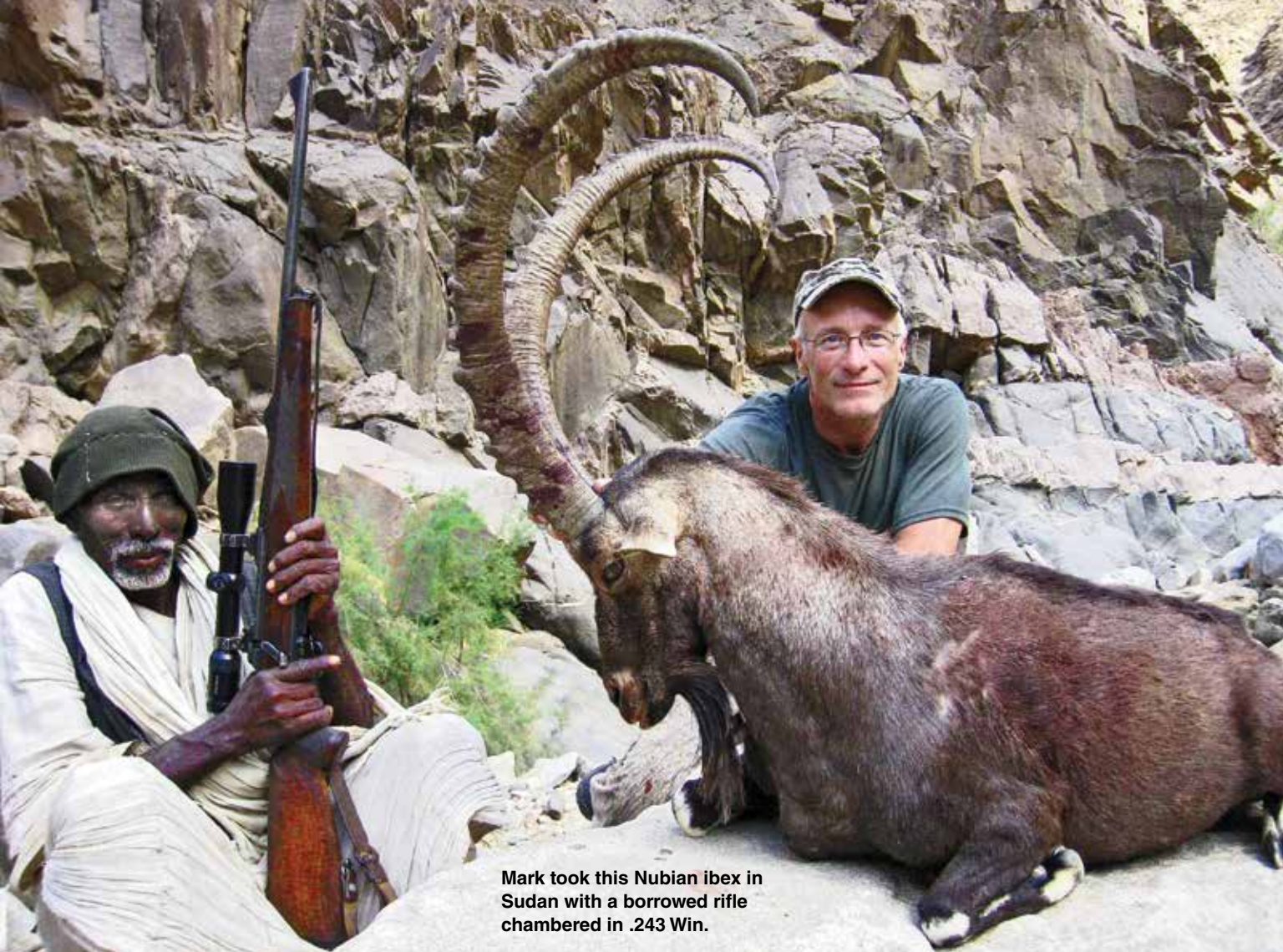
Perhaps I am just an unlucky slug. I've had four occasions where my guns were never recovered. There have been several instances where my gun arrived but no luggage containing ammo. Then, I have experienced luggage with the ammo come sliding out the carousel but the firearm

didn't make the trip! And of course I have arrived at the hunting destination with no luggage, no ammunition and no sign of a firearm. As a dyed-in-the-wool handgun hunter, it is of paramount importance to hunt with my handgun. I detest having to use any gun other than my own. To say I get upset when all of my luggage and handguns don't show up would be an understatement. I'm not a conspiracy theorist but I sometimes wonder what goes on behind the scenes!

Once in a great while I hunt in a country prohibiting the use of handguns so I have no other choice but use a rifle. In some circumstances where I can't hunt with my handgun, it takes the hassle out of traveling with the firearm and ammo

Camp rifles come in all flavors. You never know what to expect but sometimes it gets interesting. Mark traded guns with his guide momentarily.





**Mark took this Nubian ibex in Sudan with a borrowed rifle chambered in .243 Win.**

to just borrow a rifle from the outfitter. After hunting on six continents, 33 countries and six Canadian provinces, I've had more than my share of heartburn regarding lost luggage and camp rifles.

## **SUDAN**

Several years ago I hunted in Sudan for Nubian ibex. Sudan does not allow handguns so to avoid the headache of traveling with a firearm, I used the outfitters' camp rifle. It was a "working" gun in the form of a Sauer Model 202 chambered in .243 Winchester. This particular rifle shot pretty darn good but the problem came with ammunition — there wasn't much! A few rounds of 80-grain bullets mixed with a little 100-grain ammo was it. I took a couple of shots from 100 yards and was pleased with the results. I wanted to shoot a couple more rounds from 200 and 300 yards but the outfitter declined. Apparently he wanted to preserve his short stash.

I missed two different Eritrean gazelles at long range, which caused concern. Now I was fighting a confidence battle in my mind. What if I had a crack at ibex from long range? Well, on the 11th and final day of a 10-day hunt, I was lucky to connect on a nice billy from 150 yards and the borrowed gun actually performed well. I was most fortunate to get within this range.

## **TO RUSSIA WITHOUT LOVE**

You never know when your luck will go south. I had just finished a hunt in Spain with my favorite Encore handgun in .308 Winchester then headed to Russia for mid-Caucasian tur. The gun didn't show up and I haven't seen it since! The outfitter told me I could rent a rifle — a Mossberg in 30-06. I asked how much? He replied, "Not very much, don't worry." Well, that didn't seem too terrible under the circumstance. Unfortunately it was topped with a worthless scope and the elevation turret was broken! They gave me 10 rounds of ammo — no three rounds were the same; different manufacturer, different bullet weights! To make matters worse, the Caucas Mountains encompass steep, precipitous terrain where shots at tur are often long-range affairs. The gun shot two-feet high at 100 yards. I didn't have enough ammo to shoot much more. Where would I hold for a 300-yard shot?

If I didn't have enough to worry about, the antagonizing raw spot on my heel took my mind off the gun situation. The Russian guide didn't speak any English and my Russian was non-existent. Somehow we managed to sneak up on a herd of tur on day six despite the excruciating pain inflicted by the raw spot on my heel aggravating every step I took. Climbing over a sea of huge boulders, I found myself within

While hunting urial sheep in Pakistan, Mark had no choice but to use the outfitter's Blaser rifle. The .300 Win Mag worked like a charm.



100 yards of several mature males. Placing the crosshairs where I thought was the correct hold; I said a prayer and squeezed one off. It was probably just a stroke of luck but the bullet landed perfectly and I was most thankful this hunt was over!

**This Russian guide is holding the Mossberg rifle Mark had to rent when his own gun went missing. The mid-Caucasian tur lives in some of the most difficult mountainous terrain and is often taken from long range. Fortunately Mark managed to get within 150 yards with the broken scope — for a mere \$800 in rent!**



When I returned the rifle I asked how much I owe. When I heard \$800, I immediately went into coronary arrest!

## PAKISTAN

My luck in Pakistan hasn't been any better. When my beloved handgun — after it took several weeks to obtain a permit — didn't show up, again I was facing the reality of borrowing a rifle. Not only the gun didn't show up but all luggage with special clothing and boots designed to withstand the elements of freezing weather in the Himalayan Mountains got lost in transit. Himalayan ibex was on the menu and they also reside in mountainous terrain in higher elevations. Shots often occur from long range so I was a bit concerned about borrowing a gun. I didn't know what to expect when the outfitter brought out a black case. Honestly, I was anticipating an AK-47 when much to my surprise a bolt-action in .300 Win Mag popped out. It was a difficult hunt in freezing temperatures but on the fifth day we sealed the deal thanks to a decent rifle. Ironically, when I went back to the airport to return home, my gun and luggage were there waiting for me!

## CAMEROON

With great anticipation, my wife and I headed to Cameroon for a 10-day hunt in the Savannah Region. There were several unique species of game residing in this remote part of wild Africa and I couldn't wait to hunt with an Encore handgun in .338 Federal. I sighed with relief when I saw the handgun case appear on the luggage carousel. Unfortunately, the bag with my clothes and ammo were absent! Have you ever tried to find .338 Federal ammunition in Cameroon? It wasn't to be found. This left two choices



## “ WHEN I RETURNED THE RIFLE I ASKED HOW MUCH I OWE. WHEN I HEARD \$800, I IMMEDIATELY WENT INTO CORONARY ARREST!”

— turn around and go home, or use a borrowed rifle.

When I arrived in camp I told the eccentric French PH my sad story. He went back to his bungalow and brought out a working-type Blaser in .375 H&H. The rifle looked as if it had been dragged behind a truck. The wood stock appeared to have the same elegance as a boat paddle. But the gun shot great and I'm sure if it could talk, it would shock you to find out what game it had taken on previous hunts.

The hunt progressed like clockwork and every species desired was in the salt. The Blaser performed flawlessly as I'm sure it had in the past. My only regret — I didn't have my handgun along for the ride.

### MOZAMBIQUE

My wife too has endured trepidation with camp rifles. A few years ago she was hunting cape buffalo in Mozambique and Karen had to use a camp rifle in .375 H&H, a Sako, if memory serves correct. It was a difficult hunt. Many stalks went south — the wind would change direction and anything else that could go wrong did. Often our days would entail tracking a herd for several hours to no avail.

On the fifth day we followed a lone track for about an hour. When we spotted the big bull, our PH got Karen on

the shooting sticks. She was a little uneasy with the borrowed rifle even though she had shot it well previously in camp. At 45 yards she placed the 270-grain slug directly where it belonged and the bull was down. She was ecstatic and I couldn't have been more proud for her. The bull was a dandy sporting 45" horns, bigger than anything I've shot.

On a last-minute opportunity to hunt Punjab urial in Pakistan, I found myself once again using the proverbial camp rifle. I had braced myself and was expecting anything but what I found in camp — a Blaser Professional in 300 Win Mag fitted with a Swarovski scope. This made life easy and I proceeded to take gazelle and sheep without issue. I lucked out.

So, you never know what to expect when you are forced to borrow a gun. Savvy outfitters today are procuring good rifles for camp, a smart move as there are many hunters who want to avoid the pitfalls and worry of traveling with firearms. Since I'm emotionally attached to my handguns, I'll continue fighting the battles with the complexity, frustration and unnecessary nonsense of traveling with a firearm. However, I never leave home without insurance covering the replacement cost of the guns. With my luck, it's just a matter of time! **GUNS**



PTR's green-stocked GIR .308 rifle is a dead ringer for the Bundeswehr-era G3, with the addition of a Picatinny 1913 rail. Add low-cost practice options and you're off to the races!

# Feed Your G3 FOR PENNIES ON THE DOLLAR

## MAKE PRACTICE EASY ON THE SHOULDER AND WALLET!

**Jeremy D. Clough**

**T**he ammo shortage is no longer news and has sharply limited most of our ability to practice. Fortunately, this scarcity is not new to the military which has used things like subcaliber conversions for nearly a century. A .22 conversion was one of the first accessories developed for the M1911 and the U.S. military even adopted a floating-chamber .22 conversion for their belt-fed .30 machine guns — both, interestingly, designed

by Dave “Carbine” Williams of M1 carbine fame. With its 0.223" bore, the M16/AR15 was and remains particularly easy to convert. Alas, it's harder for us who love the .308 as \$0.50 a shot was a good price in normal times. But there is hope.

Millions of HK roller-locked G3 .308s (and its predecessor the CETME) were issued across the world and semiauto versions are common in the U.S., largely thanks to South Carolina's PTR which purchased Portugal's HK-licensed G3 tooling. They lead the U.S. industry


**A**

**B**

**C**

**D**

**E**

**A** Not a toy, the 9.9-grain plastic bullets still penetrated the plywood target backer at 100 yards. **B** Training adaptors for the G3 family make it possible to keep shooting even in the midst of an ammo drought. **C** Don't let the cheerful color fool you — the plastic "bullet" does better than 4,000 fps! **D** Cooler but more finicky, the .22 conversion kit includes a rifle barrel insert, the conversion and a couple of the super-rare magazines. **E** Blue plastic ammo and the matching training bolt can be purchased as a package. Jeremy paid under \$300 for the bolt and a thousand rounds and it's been available ever since the pandemic started.

in semiautomatic versions of the iconic .308, including producing receivers on an OEM basis for other makers.

Along with the very affordable Century Arms C308, PTR guns cost far less than original HK rifles such as the HK91, which goes for more than some cars I've owned. As many countries have moved to newer rifle designs, spare G3/CETME parts of all kinds have flooded the market, including two of particular interest to us — a rollerless bolt for plastic training ammo and a .22 rim-fire unit.

## PLASTIC FANTASTIC

Reportedly available in multiple colors for different applications, I've only ever seen the plastic ammo in blue. Basically a one-piece plastic case with a metal casehead, upon firing the powder charge separates the casehead and the bullet, sending the little plastic pill downrange at a blistering 4,000+ fps. Word to the wise: While not appropriate for hunting or self-defense, this is still a bullet and is fully capable of taking a life. Treat it like the lethal projectile it is. While no longer readily available, plastic training ammo was also made in 9mm, for which HK

made a dedicated MP5. Sounds like fun, but I'm sure it costs more than my house.

As a safety feature, both the casehead and training bolt face for plastic ammo are slightly smaller in diameter than the usual .308 to keep the unlocked bolt from being able to fire full power ammunition. I fired several hundred rounds of the blue ammo using the training bolt or cycling them by hand in an unmodified C308 and a Ruger Scout rifle. In spite of the smaller casehead, there were no extraction issues.

Basic physics tells us a 9.9-grain bullet has little momentum and will slow quickly, so long-range accuracy with plastic bullets is not a thing. And while the limited recoil is a welcome reprieve, the cartridge's low power cannot cycle the stock action. The simple solution is to manually cycle the bolt, which gets really old, or purchase the rollerless training bolt/carrier assembly.

## .22 ADAPTER

Unlike the blue ammo training bolt which removes the locking element of the design, the .22 conversion has a smaller, lighter breechblock mounted in the carrier and



The .22 conversion uses a smaller, separately sprung bolt contained within a full-sized carrier which is used to cock the rifle — and, if you're not careful, to overcock it.

powered by its own recoil spring. While the carrier is still used to manually load or unload, it does not reciprocate with recoil, which leads to one of the conversion's quirks. While it only needs a short length of travel to cycle with .22 ammo, the carrier can still be drawn back the full length required for .308 rounds. When you do this, the carrier modifications required to make the smaller .22 round feed will cause it to get stuck behind the hammer where it will stay until you field strip the gun and fix it.

The wise .22 shooter will get a length of vacuum hose at the local car parts store, slit it and slide 2" of it on the recoil spring guide rod to act as a stop to keep the carrier from coming back too far. Magazines are likewise a bit of a sore spot. The grey-bodied conversion mags have a separate .22 magazine bolted into place in a positioning block riveted into a steel .308 magazine. The internal .22 mag holds 20 rounds just like the big boy version and is surrounded by a standard .308 magazine spring, a bit of superfluity only serving to retain the magazine baseplate.

Two mags usually come with the conversion, but they are unobtainium if purchased separately and run around \$200. Black Dog Machine, however, sells a magwell insert that will take their Uzi magazines: the insert and one mag are \$25, while the insert alone goes for \$10.

While mine feeds well, the standard or even high velocity .22 LR will not push the bolt back far enough to eject. This likely means hyper velocity ammo will be required, further reducing cost savings.

## INSTALLATION

For those unfamiliar with the roller lock, both conversions are installed in the same way. After clearing the rifle, push out the two push pins holding the stock in place and slide the stock backwards off the receiver. Since, unlike the AR, the pins are not captive, feel free to stow them in the two holes in the stock provided for this purpose. Pivot the trigger housing downwards at the rear until it can be pulled off of its forward mounting point at the rear of the magazine well. Use the cocking handle to unlock the bolt carrier and remove the carrier from the rear. If

installing the .22 conversion, insert the barrel liner into the bore prior to reassembly, which is in reverse order.

## TESTING

For semi-auto fire, I used the training bolt in a pair of PTR rifles, one a modified 16" collapsible stock gun and the other a green-stocked GIR, a dead ringer for the *Bundeswehr* G3. In order to get the best out of the gun, I paired the GIR with Leupold's VX Freedom AR scope. I mounted it in a pair of 30mm rings sourced from Brownells, mounted to an AR-style riser to get the scope up above the rear sight.

Assuming good magazines are used, the plastic training ammo ran flawlessly although malfunctions basically break the cartridge in half. The light recoil made it a joy to shoot. While there is some change in point of impact, my Scout Rifle with a 200-yard zero put them at point of aim at 100 yards. At this distance, groups tended to open up and when the bullets struck in the plywood target backer, most penetrated. Like I said, not a toy.

Blue ammo has gone in and out of stock through the years but as this is written, it's still available online — as it has been throughout the pandemic — for under \$200 per thousand.

The .22 conversion is somewhat less of a money saver. Running between \$500–\$600, the G3 .22 conversion comes in a wooden case with dividers to hold two magazines, the bolt, a barrel liner, a manual in German and the ubiquitous plastic cleaning kit.

For the coolness factor, it's hard to beat the .22 unit. But you'll pay for it and its ammo needs mean you won't get the same savings as most rimfire conversions. The same money buys a training bolt and 2,500 rounds of blue ammo. Much as I'm a sucker for a rimfire, if you can only get one, it's an easy choice.

**GUNS**

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# GUNS

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You will likely never be called upon to HALO into the Hindu Kush to rescue a bunch of swimsuit models from the Taliban. However, if ever you are, the Red Arrow Weapons RAW 300 will reliably do the deed.



Nicely accessorized, the Red Arrow Weapons RAW 300 is the ideal general purpose home defense and light utility hunting arm.



# THE RED ARROW WEAPONS RAW 300

## RAREFIED YET RUGGED

**Will Dabbs, MD**

**T**he Red Arrow Weapons RAW 300 is what happens when seriously gun-savvy guys set out to build the optimized 300 BLK AR pistol. The fit, finish and component quality are not just good, they're perfect. Most everything that could be upgraded, polished and refined has been upgraded, polished and refined. The end result is a versatile and effective defensive tool that will hold its own in the field on the hunt.

Red Arrow Weapons is actually professional hunter, shooter and outdoorsman Kip Campbell. Kip is the chief bottle washer at Shotfish Productions and host of the Red Arrow television show on the Outdoor Channel. He crafts his rifles and pistols to deliver superlative accuracy and outstanding reliability. Whether chasing game, shooting recreationally or defending the homestead, Red Arrow Weapons are guns you can count on.

### PRIORITIES

I have a long and illustrious history of driving really crummy vehicles. My awesome Dad gave me two of them. The first was a basic no-frills Toyota pickup truck. It had manual windows, no air conditioner and an attractive plastic cover in lieu of a radio. At some point it had been driven behind a gravel truck, leaving it covered in little chipped paint spots. Dad rectified this by dabbing it with some enamel paint from Walmart, which didn't quite match. The little truck looked like it had the pox.

The second was a Jeep Cherokee, also driven to the near-end of its service life before coming into my possession. The interior looked like a homeless person lived there. I once tried to toss an apple core out of the passenger side window and missed, splashing the upholstery with pulverized apple detritus. I intended to clean that up for years right up until I gave the vehicle away to yet another deserving soul.

Like me to a degree, in both cases these two trucks were so ghastly they were almost cool. I kept the mechanical bits nicely maintained, but the esoterica, not so much. For something that just took me to work and back, I expended what was necessary for maintenance but little else.

The worse thing that could happen if one of those old trucks failed between home and work was that I'd have to call my wife



Right out of the box, the Red Arrow Weapons RAW 300 is ripe for customization. At minimum, you'll need a sighting system for the flattop.

to come pick me up. However, what if I had to drive through Afghanistan's Helmand Province or some of the seedier parts of Chicago? Were this the case I'd spend whatever it took to obtain the most rugged and dependable vehicle I could afford. If my life — or the life of my family members — rode on the dependability of some machine, I'd do that up right. So it is with the Red Arrow Weapons RAW 300.

### WHY 300 BLK?

Just in case you've been living under a rock someplace, the 300 BLK is what happens when you stuff a .30-caliber bullet into a 5.56mm case. The technical appellation is 7.62x35mm. Interestingly, the 300 BLK is strikingly similar to the 7.92x33mm Kurz round driving the original WWII-era German StG44 assault rifle. The 300 BLK offers a trivial recoil impulse and unprecedented versatility.

The 300 BLK originally spawned from a request by certain rarefied American special operations units. These

guys needed a hard-hitting .30-caliber round fired from an M4-style rifle that retained proper downrange thump in a suppressed system. The 300 BLK was the answer.

Bullets in the neighborhood of 125 grains will typically produce around 2,200 fps and flirts with .30-30 Winchester ballistics. By contrast, the heftier 220-grain sort will drop the velocity to a bit less than half. As the speed of sound in dry air is around 1,125 fps, this means subsonic 300 BLK rounds do not produce an annoying sonic crack when fired through a sound suppressor. This makes all the difference in the world when it comes to perceived sound.

### DETAILS

The Red Arrow Weapons RAW 300 is indeed one sweet gun. The BATF considers the RAW 300 with its 10" barrel to be a handgun. The weapon is built around



The Tailhook MOD 2 from Gear Head Works is the most effective Pistol Stabilizing Brace Will has yet encountered.



The 300 Blackout chambering provides .30-30 ballistics in a .233-profile weapon. It's also a great choice for using with a snuffer for pigs — or larger trouble ...



a premium Diamondback receiver set finished in a cool midnight bronze Cerakote finish.

The bolt carrier group is shot-peened, magnetic particle inspected and Melonite-coated. The pistol grip and magazine are from Magpul, while the handguard sports more M-LOK space than you could reasonably use. The upper and lower receivers are forged from 7075 aluminum.

The Pistol Stabilizing Brace is a Tailhook MOD 2 from Gear Head Works. The Tailhook slides in and out on its buffer tube to accommodate any human arm. The hook portion pivots out with the push of a button and legitimately works to stabilize the weapon when firing one-handed. As I type these words President Biden's BATF is contemplating the fate of these magnificent devices. Time will tell if the government chooses to infringe yet further upon what they were explicitly directed not to infringe.

The trigger is a drop-in assembly from CMC and it is a thing of beauty. The flat-faced trigger itself is consistent and comfortable. The mechanism breaks like a supercooled icicle at 3.5 lbs. I've squeezed my share of AR triggers and this is as good as it gets. The trigger module is held in place via threaded captive pins.

## ACCESSORIZING

A gun this awesome rates some proper cool-guy stuff. The Swamp Fox Trihawk optic offers 3x magnification and a delightfully wide field of view — edge to edge is 52 feet at 100 yards. The illuminated reticle features Shake 'N Wake technology that activates automatically when you move it. The reticle is fast in action and can even serve



**At 25 meters from a simple rest, the RAW 300 prints single jagged holes. The pistol preferred the closed-tip architecture of the SIG loads.**

as a both-eyes-open close quarters solution in a pinch.

The Magpul Angled Foregrip gives you something solid upon which to grip, while the Streamlight TLR-9 shreds the darkness with 1,000 lumens of brilliant white light. I also carefully removed the flash suppressor after my first outing at the range and perched a SIG SAUER SRD762 direct thread suppressor up front. This indestructible sound suppressor is made from Inconel, weighs a modest 15.5 oz. and is preternaturally effective.

## SYNERGY

You'll not find a better tool for home defense or bugout applications. The RAW 300 is the perfect truck gun. It would be a rare anarchist mob to press home an attack in the face of such a prickly beast. Be discriminating with your ammo selection and the weapon also offers so much more.

Wolf imports cheap steel-cased blasting bullets for practice. Service loads from SIG, Federal, Winchester, or AAC offer proper downrange performance. You really could effectively hunt whitetail deer with this thing. The RAW 300 is easy to tote and dead nuts accurate out farther than I would be comfortable engaging.

The nicely accessorized RAW 300 moves like a mon-goose in enclosed spaces, shoots as straight as Mr. Rogers teaching sex-ed and hits harder than taxes to an emancipated millennial. You'll also find no better tool to help you while away a lazy Saturday afternoon at the range. The Red Arrow Weapons RAW 300 is the kind of real-world insurance you really can count on.

**GUNS**



**The CMC precision trigger is a thing of beauty, while the Magpul handle and magazine offer reliability and comfort.**

RedArrowWeapons.com  
SwampFoxOptics.com



Tank keeps his “PBJ” emergency kits in his pack, range bag and vehicles. The jars are tough enough to survive most abuse or neglect while keeping the contents safe. Just a sampling (below) of what can go inside your “PBJ Survival Kit.”



Here's Tank's daily pocket dump (above). These items are carried by Tank every day!

## POCKET DUMP AND PEANUT BUTTER PREPAREDNESS

### HAVING THE STUFF ON HAND TO SOLVE BIG — AND LITTLE — PROBLEMS

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

Proper preparation prevents piss poor performance — also known as “The 6Ps” — is a motto I’ve always tried to live by. But life being life, the unexpected always seems to have a way of worming itself into our lives. For these occurrences having the basic necessities, along with a Mac-Gyver-like imagination and skill set, we can get through just about anything.

#### POCKET DUMP

Every morning, there are certain items I know will religiously go into my pockets. It’s why I keep them on my dresser. First is my Ruger LCP, stuffed in its Barranti Leather pocket holster. Loaded with 60-grain Black Hills HoneyBadger cartridges, I’m confident it’s the most devastating ammo made for the .380 ACP. It goes in my right front, strong-side pocket, along with a large folding clip knife.

The accompanying magazine goes in my left pocket, along with my Leatherman macro mini tool and a mini flashlight. The reason for mini tools is obvious. Their unnoticeable size means I’ll carry them. Sure, there’s bigger/better equipment but it does no good unless it’s on you.

As to the Ruger LCP, I consider it more a back-up piece than a primary weapon, but I’m always armed. Whenever leaving the house, I strap on a .45 ACP S&W Shield or comparable gun.

#### JAR DUMP

Peanut butter is a staple in my house. My wife says it’s for her dogs, meaning I eat it too. As a result, we have plenty of plastic jars to recycle but not in the way you think. While making great cast bullet containers, they’re the basis for my “survival kit” of sorts, which I carry in our vehicles, or field pack. Survival may be too strong a word. Perhaps

“convenience kit” or “handy kit” would be more accurate? All I know is they’ve bailed me out a bunch of times.

Before we even open the jar, you’ll notice the duct tape wrapped around the body of the jar. Duct tape is the temporary fixer of all things loose and broken. Its strength is commendable. Torn into thinner strips, it’s perfect for smaller items. Full size, it’s patched more than one radiator hose leak, hanging vehicle quarter panel or ripped tarp.

Inside the jar is a metal mint tin first aid kit. It’s complete with band-aids, bacterial ointment, needles for splinters, aspirin, throat lozenges and Benadryl. While not set up for a major trauma, it handles most common maladies. Next is a Leatherman tool kit. These tools are very handy indeed and well worth their weight for convenience. One only need be stuck somewhere, wishing they had one, to



Tank always has a case of water (above), bow saw and heavy duty shop towels in his vehicles. The large plastic bin holds just more essentials.

Metal tin boxes (right) are great for compartmentalizing kits. Here's Tank's mini First-Aid kit.



Leatherman tools and Swiss Army knives (left) are compact but convenient and versatile. Perfect size for a peanut butter jar, they won't change a transmission but will often get you out of a jam!

know how vital they are.

Next, we have a disposable lighter and matches. You never know when you may break down out in the boonies and need to start a fire for warmth while help is on the way. I always throw in about 30 feet of 550 paracord, the kind made with seven smaller strands of nylon string. This makes it more versatile for smaller fix-it needs when the 550-lb. tensile strength isn't needed. Also handy are the plastic wire ties of various sizes. Next to duct tape, these handy connectors are indeed versatile for temporary quick-fixes.

Eye-glass repair kits are small, but handy to have for obvious reasons. Even if you don't wear prescription glasses, sunglasses are just as prone to pop a lens or have a hinge screw break or work itself out. Packets of moist towelettes are also always handy and a welcome addition.

## EMERGENCY FUNDS

Lastly, we have emergency funds. Keeping a \$50 bill is insurance when food, gas or any other necessity is needed when the country store doesn't take credit cards. I know we're all used to living off plastic, myself included, and I hate carrying cash for obvious reasons. Therefore, it makes sense

having the emergency fund in your jar for those "just in case" moments.

## SITUATIONAL MODIFICATIONS

With the above basics, modifying your kit for different scenarios is a snap. When I go hunting for instance, I add a few packs of instant coffee, tea, or beef bouillon cubes should I have to spend the night in the woods due to injury, storm or temporarily losing my bearings. Hey, it could happen. Think of the comfort a hot cup of coffee, tea or bouillon would be in those instances. Also, a small gun-cleaning kit, with pull-thru cable easily fits in your jar.

Fishing trips might include the addition of a small tool kit for reel-sized issues, lube, spare rod guides, etc. Range bags PB jars have smaller pill bottles containing small Allen wrenches/screw drivers for sight in, etc.

## VEHICLE STUFF

I always keep a case of water in the back of my vehicles. Again, you never know when you might be stranded and we all need water. It can be used for flushing eyes, wounds or even putting out an engine fire. Also, a large roll of heavy-duty shop towels, the blue kind, have a million and one uses. Combined

with your duct tape, they can stave bleeding from deep wounds, be used for any clean-ups or any emergencies of the intestinal kind. We did say any emergency!

## TIMBER?

I also carry a 20" bow saw, with spare blades in my vehicle. For those living in the country, or who frequent it, blow-downs across the road are a real occurrence. When there's only one road in or out, sometimes you need to free yourself. You'll be glad to have it if you're ever stuck.

## SPREAD IT ON THICK

Like the tools in your daily pocket dump, if you never need them, so much the better. But if you do, you'll be glad you have them. As to the peanut butter kits, these are personal. Everyone has different needs. Supply your kit as you deem necessary. Certain medications such as bee sting kits or nitro for your ticker may be options for some. Having a spare just might save your life. Another axiom I believe is it's better to have and not need, than need and not have!

And if you never need it, you're a follower of the 6Ps of life. Good on ya!

**GUNS**



The DPx Gear DEMO Billy Waugh Special Edition is a Megalodon decked out in Titanium and M30 stainless steel artistry. The DEMO's combination awl/spike (below) is tucked into the lower portion of the front Titanium handle slab, ready to strike.

## FULL BEAST MODE: DPX GEAR DEMO SLICK STEELASUR!

**Pat Covert**

DPx Gear never has done dainty and never will as long as Robert Young Pelton has a say in it. Noted author Pelton founded DPx Gear by putting forth innovative designs, and the company's newest is their most badass to date. Pelton designed his latest *tour de force* — the DPx DEMO — in collaboration with custom knife designer Bill Harsey as a special tribute to World War II hero Billy Waugh. You can read about Waugh's heroic exploits in Robert's book *Licensed to Kill: Hired Guns in The War on Terror*. Harsey is known for making hard-nosed, hell-bent knives and the new DEMO tactical folder explodes all the boxes.

The DEMO model we're reviewing is the Billy Waugh Special Edition but it

can be had in a slightly plainer version without the signatures on the blade. This knife is a Megalodon, stretching out to 9.13" fully open and tipping the scales at 6.80 oz. The DEMO's 3.78" blade of top shelf M390 stainless steel rolls out on a smooth IKBS ball-bearing system via a slick triangulate combination cut-out/thumb nick and locks up with a sturdy frame-lock mechanism on the back. The ample handle frame is 3-D machined Titanium in a diamond checked pattern. A Titanium pocket clip completes the package.

### WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

But there's more! Look closely and you'll see another small frame-lock on the spine of the front frame slab. This ingenious design mechanism houses a heavy duty awl/spike that rolls out



on bronze washers and locks up tight as a drum. Manufactured for DPx Gear by Italy's most revered upscale knife manufacturer, the DEMO has superb fit and finish with the look and feel of a custom. Price for the signed DEMO Billy Waugh Special Edition is \$495. The standard version, if you could demean it as such, is \$468. DPx Gear's special releases like this one often appear later in more affordable releases so check their website regularly for updates.

**GUNS**

[DPxgear.com](http://DPxgear.com)

beside me. I've got all the confidence in the world in this gun, in my choice of ammo and in my ability to use it effectively. So why do I have this nagging feeling I brought the wrong gun? Let me explain. It all started in August at a favorite gun store haunt of mine. An old S&W Model 10 snub caught my eye. The gun wouldn't let go of me. Eventually I went back and bought it. Not because I planned to carry it, but because it's such a classy old revolver. My daddy tried to tell me how it would be a great carry gun for me. He had always been a sixgun man as a security guard and working at the local jail. Come to find out, the little revolver is a dream to shoot. Crazy accurate and so comfortable to carry.

In September my daddy tested positive for COVID. During the days that followed the Model 10 was a constant and faithful companion. All the long days and late nights it was right there. On the morning of September 21 when I got the news that Daddy was gone, it rode with me. It was with me at the funeral and at the graveyard. See, the best I can figure, Daddy's advice about the S&W was the last gun advice he ever gave me. More and more I see the wisdom he had gained through the years.

I'm a hardcore wheelgunner — wood and steel is my idea of beauty. But I didn't get this way on my own. It was my daddy and his old Combat Magnum that got me started. He's the reason I wish that Model 10 was here right now. I'm not sure why I'm writing this to you tonight. Maybe just to send a message to all my favorite gun writers: ya'll keep



## EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

the wheelgun articles comin'. Keep on to honor the memory of good men like my Daddy and keep on for all of us that'll live our lives as die-hard wheelgunners ... cause Daddy was right. In memory of Marvin L. Warren.

Dustin Warren

*I'm sorry for your loss but what a nice way to pay tribute to your dad. This was a nice pick-me-up for a tired old editor on a gray Monday morning. —BW*

## EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Regarding Will Dabb's story on the Bronco .22 LR Survival Rifle, please show this to Mr. Dabbs.

Gary Johnson

*This sure appears to be a very similar design to the old Bronco Survival Rifle (itself based on the Hamilton Boys Rifle) that Will covered, albeit with wood*

*stocks. We can't find any reference to the gun or company. Any readers care to enlighten us? —BW*

.....

## OOPS

I love your magazine and Guncranks videos especially. However as many of your readers are going to advise, the pictures of the Luger and the Broomhandle are mislabeled (*Surplus & Classic*, "Guns of the Original Stormtrooper," November 2021 issue) with swapped attributes. Wouldn't write but since I read every page at least once, thought I would take this opportunity to say "Hi." Keep up the good work, reading your magazine make me feel like I have a new set of friends, just need to meet them. Good work!

Tom Hurst

*I think the photos got swapped during layout but the captions didn't likewise change. Thanks for the heads-up. —BW*

.....

## LOADING YOUR BALLS

I read the article by John Taffin on cartridge-conversion revolvers. He explained how some conversions still had the bore for round balls and 357/358 bullets would just drop through and to use 148 HBWCs to help with accuracy. A solution I have

continued on page 65



## OOPS

# ANTI-GUNNERS IN THE GRASS

## THE LEFT HAS A PLAN

### Dave Workman

Something insidious is underfoot, a strategy so subtle it is likely going unnoticed in your own neighborhood, school district, small town, larger city and in your county.

If you don't wake up and pay attention, you may instead wake up some morning to discover you slept through a takeover of your community. Now is the time to stop it.

### COMRADE WORKMAN

For more than a year, I have been receiving emails from an organization calling itself the "National Democratic Training Committee" which seems to support every far-left item on the liberal agenda and every far-left politician. Buried down near the end of each of these messages is this ominous note: "Listen, there are 518,000 elected positions in this country. Imagine if Democrats fought for every race — no matter how small. Imagine a world where our values of compassion and dignity for all people are upheld on every school board, on every city council, and in every state legislature."

Got your attention, yet? This group also includes a hard link to find out more about running for public office. Just click on "I want to run for office" and the Democratic Training Committee will start indoctrinating — oops, we mean "training" — you for what they hope will be a winning campaign.

To paraphrase their own message, "Imagine if puppets for this group won every race — no matter how small. Imagine a world where their values became law, overruling your values, from the level of school board up through the state legislature."

### NO, YOU DO NOT WANT TO IMAGINE IT

With every email blast, they ask for donations. Essentially, they're a well-organized fundraising entity wanting

to push far-left values and legislation, support liberal anti-gun-rights candidates for public office and — if you let them succeed — your gun rights will be in trouble.

They are strongly supportive of anti-gun President Joe Biden, who campaigned on a gun control platform that calls for a ban on modern semi-automatic sporting rifles, licensing for all gun owners and other extremist tenets.

What should you do? Take their advice, of course!

Get involved in your community, from the ground floor.

Instead of sitting on the couch and complaining about what is happening in your local schools, at town or city council meetings, local planning commission meetings, county commissions or councils and state legislatures, get up and get in the game.

### UNDER THE RADAR

More than a year ago, I was invited to quietly attend a planning commission meeting in a local municipality. I stood in the back of the room, essentially in the shadows. In the midst of discussions about streets and future development, a local "activist" took advantage of a wide-open public comment period to promote a gun control agenda. Of course his comments had nothing to do with the business of the planning commission, but this is exactly how this sort of thing gets started in your community, right under your nose while you're at home watching re-runs. If this happens in your community, be at the next meeting to refute such people.

To its credit, the National Democratic Training Committee is upfront about its intentions. They're not hiding anything. Their goal is to train more Democrats — you know, "The Party of Gun Prohibition" — to win elections and control

public policy.

While it may seem unfair to single them out since they are very candid about their mission, this group represents the broader movement to change America to reflect their values — which may collide with your values. Those on the political left call themselves "progressives," a not-so-subtle effort to advance the notion they represent progress but what they're really all about is control. This isn't progress at all, but gradual suppression of individual freedom and contrasting opinions.



As a general rule, self-anointed "progressives" don't like guns. People who own guns can say "no" and back it up, which is what the Second Amendment is really about and always was. The far left doesn't like this. Don't think so? Ask somebody who insists you should wear a mask soon as you step off the front porch and even when you're driving alone in your own car.

### JUST DO IT!

Gun owners can do lots more than protest on the capitol steps every January or February, or show up at a town council meeting for a dose of lip service from the local politicians before they

do what they were planning to do all along, regardless the issue.

You can run for office, whether it is the school board, town council or some other position. C'mon, follow through on the tough talk and take the fight to the other side. Stand up publicly for what you believe; run on issues and take positions, offer solutions to local problems. Always in the background will be your desire to protect the Second Amendment, not just for yourself but also for your kids and the kids of somebody else you don't even know.

If you don't want to run for office, you can volunteer to work for someone else who does. This is actually good training for anyone planning a future run for office, and it gets your ideas on their radar screen. It puts you in a position to influence how they approach an issue, especially if they get elected. Where your rights are concerned, it's better to be on the inside than on the outside.

Check out every candidate for every public office in your community. Read

their statements twice, attend forums, ask the tough questions without becoming boorish. Learn their background and whether they are from your region, or moved there from somewhere else, bringing their politics with them.

In the event a gun control law is adopted that can be challenged in court, agree to be a plaintiff and be a good one. In other words, make sure there is nothing in your background to discredit the case or your participation.

Support a gun-rights organization with an occasional donation and keep them advised of local gun control

efforts. Such organizations can't know everything happening everywhere without reports from the grassroots. If you want to keep your rights, you need to protect them. Provide the intelligence such organizations need to stay ahead of the competition to stand in their way.

Get on social media and be prepared to argue with people who seriously dislike your lifestyle. Stay on message.

Politics is a contact sport. And remember this: You need to win every time. The other side only needs to win once.

**GUNS**



## AND REMEMBER THIS: **YOU NEED TO WIN EVERY TIME.** THE OTHER SIDE ONLY NEEDS TO WIN ONCE.

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## KITANICA ENVOY ATTACHÉ

BRENT T. WHEAT

If you ever watched the *Mythbusters* TV series, you know host Adam Savage sometimes wore a seriously funky winter coat with more straps and buckles than a bondage convention. When I found out his \$700 jacket was made by the same folks who just sent me an attaché, I was skeptical.

As usual, I was wrong. While I'm fairly sure I'd look goofy in one of their fashion-forward coats, it turns out the Kitanica Envoy Attaché is the bag I've been looking for. First off, Kitanica makes their stuff right here in the good ol' U.S. of A. — a huge plus in my book. I then carried the rather-understated attaché to several meetings ...

... and fell madly, hopelessly, head-over-heels in love. It's the perfect size when you need to tote a laptop rather than 67 lbs. of files, it's built like a proverbial brick relief station and the design is cunning, right down to the four different ways of carrying it. It's now my go-to man-purse — and don't hate me because I'm beautiful ...

**MSRP: \$139**  
Kitanica.com

## RADIANS CUSTOM MOLDED EARPLUGS

BRENT T. WHEAT

I've used this product for years, it's one of my long-time favorites and yet I've never written about them — until now.

The Radians Custom Molded Earplugs are similar to the product you can have done professionally at a hearing aid office or many major gun/outdoor consumer shows, but you do it at home and at a much nicer price. The kit includes some gooey, putty-like kid stuff you knead together then jam — gently, gently — into your ear until it hardens in about 10 minutes. Once you — slowly, slowly, to avoid sucking out your eardrums — peel them out, you have a set of custom-molded 26dB NRR earplugs that will last for years.

The putty comes in six different colors and with some careful planning and execution, I've even made custom earbuds though it's not officially recommended. Pro tip: Use a red permanent marker, tape or paint to designate the right ear, as in "red, right, Roy?" Best of all, you can pick up the kit for \$10 to \$15.

**MSRP: \$10-\$15**  
Radians.com

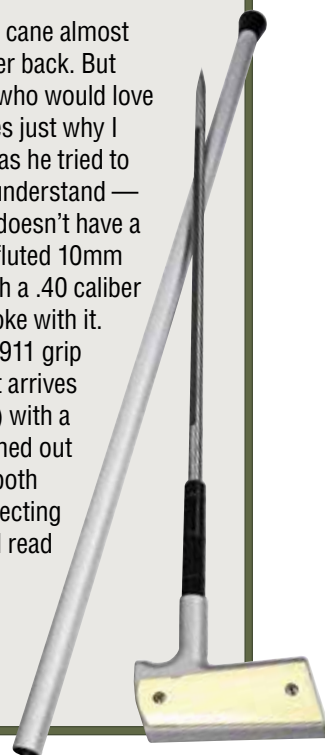


## COLD STEEL 1911 SWORD CANE

ROY HUNTINGTON

Confession time — I carry a sword cane almost daily, mostly to help my achy lower back. But there's just a teeny-tiny bit of me who would love to have to explain to the local gendarmes just why I "had" to run some malcontent through as he tried to do injury to my family. I'm betting you understand — completely. This latest from Cold Steel doesn't have a cutting edge, but is a brawny length of fluted 10mm 4116 stainless steel guaranteed to punch a .40 caliber hole through just about anything you poke with it. The best part? You can customize the 1911 grip with virtually any 1911 grip you fancy. It arrives at your door (if you live in a "free" state) with a pebbled black grip, but I instantly switched out to a polymer "ivory" look. At \$109, it's both dapper yet still formidable to an unsuspecting immoral villain. Perhaps someday you'll read an *Ayooob Files* about me?

**MSRP: \$109**  
ColdSteel.com



## LUTH AR MBA-5 BUTTSTOCK

### GUNS STAFF

**N**eed a full-featured AR carbine buttstock so adjustable even a veteran Chiropractor would be envious? The Luth-AR MBA-5 Buttstock deserves a look.

Built of glass-filled nylon, the buttstock utilizes a positive paddle-style adjustment mechanism to quickly set the length of pull from 11.5 to 14" to compensate for a variety of users and clothing choices. Upstairs, a wide-flared cheek rest provides all sorts of real estate to park your jowls while in the basement a short chunk of Picatinny rail gives space for a monopod. I especially like the rakish hook in front of the pic rail that gives a nice rest area for your support hand if you're firing prone.

The stock fits either commercial or Mil-Spec buffer tubes by using an anti-rattle set screw to snug down the unit when using the smaller Mil-Spec tube. It comes in both Flat Dark Earth and Black — also cheekily known as "Scorched Earth" — and includes a rubber

butt pad to keep the assemblage welded to your shoulder. Priced at \$49.95, the MBA-5 delivers nice value on a full-featured carbine stock.

Best of all, you can enter to win your own Luth AR MBA-5 Buttstock by visiting our special Bonus Giveaway at [gunsmagazine.com/giveaways](https://gunsmagazine.com/giveaways).

**GUNS**

[Luth-AR.com](https://Luth-AR.com)



## CROSSFIRE

*continued from page 61*

used for years is this: Buy a conical bullet mold from Lee Precision for the .36 Navy. This is a heeled bullet with .376 diving bands as cast from the mold. You can then use 38 short or Long Colt cases. The way I load them is to cast the bullets and use Lee Alox or 45/45/10 lube on the bullet and seat the bullets, then run the cartridge up in the resizer to crimp the case onto the bullet heel section. It's no more trouble than any pistol cartridge on a single-stage press. And if you use black powder, just forego the Alox and rub SPG in the lube groove (it has one on the drive section) after the crimp stage. This works like a charm.

WC Kirby

*Thanks for the good information but have you run into any trouble with this bullet in the .38 Special case not chambering in the chamber throats? —John Taffin*

.....

## .41 LOVE

Just finished the article on the .41 Magnum in today's GUNS email blog. I've been a .41 Magnum and .41 Special junkie (blame John Taffin for this one) for a long time now and have loaded for it for many years. Lee Precision custom milled some .41 Magnum dies to make them .41 Special dies and only charged me \$15 on the two dies they had to mill. Talk about amazing service at an amazing price! Starline is making .41 Special brass to make this caliber readily possible.

In any case, I have a Model 57 that started life with a 6" barrel. I had my gunsmith, Steve Moore, then in Littleton, Colo., cut the barrel to 5" re-crowned and re-blued. He removed the S&W red ramp/white outline sights and replaced them with night sights (brand unknown) and sent my hand measurements to a firm in Germany to produce black walnut finger-groove stocks. Then retired Dallas PD Motor Officer Robert Quinn, who lives up the road from me, did the trigger job (double action 8.1 lbs. and single action

2.3 lbs. — both on my Lyman scale).

This is a crazy sweet revolver and I love the .41 in either configuration. They mate up nicely with my Henry Big Boy blue steel lever-action .41. Please let John know I enjoyed the article and he's more than welcome, if he ever gets down this way, to take mine out for a spin.

Ron Bruce

*Thanks for the kind words and also for sharing your .41s with me. —JT*

.....

## OOPS PART DEUX

The photo and caption of "Duke's two favorites ..." (*Think Tank* "Northern Precision .405 Winchester Slugs", January 2022 issue) obviously are reversed, as the bullet on the left (.45) is obviously larger than the one on the right (.40), opposite what is stated in the caption.

Ron Weddle, MD

*Yep, you are correct. It would appear you looked at the photo far longer than did the editor! —BW*

**GUNS**



## 940 PRO FIELD 12-GAUGE SHOTGUN MOSSBERG

The black synthetic *940 Pro Field 12-Gauge Shotgun* is a new addition to Mossberg's family of 940 autoloading shotguns. The 940 has a gas-operating system running at higher cleaning intervals. It will cycle any type of quality factory-made 2.75" or 3"

ammunition. Standard features include an oversized, beveled loading port with redesigned elevator and shell catch; a new barrel-making process to maintain point-of-aim and impact; a slim-profile fore end and more. Ideal for hunting doves, quail, pheasants, ducks or small game. MSRP: \$868. For more info: (800) 363-3555, Mossberg.com



## MOUNTAIN SHADOW STEEL ALLTERRA ARMS

Allterra Arms' *Mountain Shadow Steel* hunting rifle has a spiral-fluted, stainless-steel barrel. This reduces weight, improves heat dissipation and matches the accuracy and performance of rifles with carbon-wrapped barrels. The rifle's

base weight is as little as 6.25 lbs. It is available in 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor and 6.5 PRC, 6.5 SS, 6.5 SST, 28 Nosler and more. Each rifle is built-to-order on Allterra Arms innovative Carbon Hunter stock in a variety of finishes. MSRP: Starting at \$5,495. For more info: (208) 608-5179, AllterraArms.com



## GIRSAN MC312 GOOSE EAA CORP.

The *Girsan MC312 Goose* is a 12-ga. semi-auto from EAA Corp. Weighing 6.96 lbs. and with an OAL of 52", this lightweight shotgun has a 5+1 capacity and a 30" barrel. Ideal for hunting in the

waterfowl season, the MC312 has a stock and fore end built of high-impact polymers; the receiver is aircraft aluminum. It features a vented rib with a fiber-optic front sight and extended screw choke tubes in a common thread pattern. MSRP: \$710. For more info: (321) 639-4842, EAACorp.com



## SUPERSASS ARMALITE

Armalite's *SuperSass*, which stands for Semi-Automatic Sniper System, is designed for use by the U.S. military. However, a civilian model is available for demanding shooters. With an OAL of 43" and weighing

11.2 lbs., the SuperSass Gen II in 7.62x51 Nato has a 20-round capacity. Its fully adjustable stock and gas system can accommodate suppressed and unsuppressed fire. The 20" barrel is black nitride 416R stainless steel. MSRP: \$1,814. For more info: (623) 780-1050, Armalite.com



## PIT BLIND BAG ALPS OUTDOORZ

Keep shells, chokes and other gear for waterfowl hunting organized, protected and accessible in ALPS OutdoorZ's *Pit Blind Bag*. The bag measures 18"x9.7"x11" and weighs 3 lbs. It comes in Realtree Timber or Mossy Oak Shadow Grass Habitat (in photo). The Pit Blind Bag has a pop-open main compartment with a removable divider to customize the content load. MSRP: \$64.99. For more info: (800) 344-2577, ALPSOutdoorZ.com



## SINGLE GUN CASE 36" BIRCHWOOD CASEY

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



## CASTLE NUT WRENCH TANGODOWN INC.

TangoDown's *Castle Nut Wrench* (Part Number: TD-CNW) is worthy of any toolbox. It is precision machined from 4140 steel, heat treated and with a black oxide finish. Designed to prevent damage to the castle nut, the wrench's teeth are dimensioned for positive, non-slip engagement. MSRP: \$42. For more info: sales@tangodown.com, TangoDown.com

### **TOROS T4** **STANDARD MFG.**

The *Toros T4* from Standard Mfg. utilizes the combat-proven gas piston operating system of the USMC's M1014. The system, which compensates for varying length shotgun shells and various power loads, is currently used in standard tactical shotguns of the USMC, the Israeli Special Forces and other countries. The *Toros T4* features ghost ring sights and

a 5.25" MIL-STD-1913 Picatinny rail. The 18" barrel accepts standard M1014 choke tubes. The frame is machined from aircraft-grade aluminum in a glare-resistant black finish. MSRP: \$899. For more info: (860) 225-6581, STDgun.com



### **MISSION 4 BUNDLE** **BYRNA TECHNOLOGIES INC.**

The *Mission 4 Bundle* from Byrna is the next level of home defense. It includes the Mission 4 launcher with CO<sub>2</sub> adapter + CO<sub>2</sub> stock, a Byrna-branded rifle bag, two 19-round coupled magazines and more. Previously available only to law enforcement agencies, the re-engineered Mission 4 is a powerful yet non-lethal defense weapon that can be used to defend your property or simply to have fun in your backyard. Under 32" long, it is effective at a range of 175 feet. MSRP: \$899. For more info: (978) 868-5011, Byrna.com



### **VESPID 30L BACKPACK** **KITANICA BAG LAB**

The *Vespid 30L Backpack* from KITANICA is constructed of 500D CORDURA Fabric and 210D nylon. The pack's 4-zipper opening allows top-, front- and full-loading access to contents. The harness is fully adjustable and padded with closed cell foam and spacer mesh. MSRP: \$180. For more info: (415) 305-7663, Kitanica.com



### **MICRO PRO RAD ELECTRONIC SIGHT** **CRIMSON TRACE**

The *Micro Pro RAD Electronic Sight* from Crimson Trace is an open reflex sight for compact and subcompact pistols. RAD stands for Rapid Aiming Dot. The sight has a red 3 MOA aiming dot and a recessed multi-coated lens with acquisition window. It comes with the CT RADIANT Ambient Light Sensor and the CT MOTION Sensor. Made of 7075 Series Aerospace Aluminum, the Micro Pro RAD is 30% stronger than most industry standard sights. MSRP: \$274.99. For more info: (800) 442-2406, CrimsonTrace.com



### **XECUTIVE IWB HOLSTER** **N8 TACTICAL**

N8 Tactical's *Xecutive IWB Holster* is built around a firearm-specific, single-piece Kydex molded pocket. It features an optic-compatible cut and proportioned sight channel along the spine to accommodate most red dot optics and elevated front open sights. Compatible with popular carry handguns from GLOCK, Springfield Armory, SIG SAUER, Taurus, S&W, Walther, Ruger and more. MSRP: \$49.95. For more info: (888) 732-5011, n8tactical.com



### **VEHICLE HUNTING GUN RACK RMP**

#### **GREY MAN TACTICAL**

Grey Man Tactical's *Vehicle Hunting Gun Rack RMP* package is the ideal setup to secure hunting gear, accessories, rifles, shotguns and bows in your vehicle. RMP stands for Rigid MOLLE Panel. It's made from injected molded glass-filled nylon so you can be sure the gun rack is durable and sag-resistant. The package includes a 15.25x25 RMP, top and bottom buckle straps, helmet/backpack hook, 8" and 12" Velcro cinch straps and more. MSRP: \$299. For more info: (985) 290-3161, GreyManTactical.com



### **MASTER GUN VISE** **REAL AVID**

Real Avid's *Master Gun Vise* is the first real bench vise made exclusively for guns and gun tools. With the vise, you can build, customize, repair and clean guns or mount scopes and accessories. You can reposition your gun without removing it from the vise. MSRP: \$299.99. For more info: (800) 286-0567, RealAvid.com

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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 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.

## BCM RECCE 16 KMR-A GIVEAWAY

**W**e're giving away Bravo Company's *BCM Recce 16 KMR-A* carbine for the March issue of *GUNS Magazine*! The BCM Recce 16 KMR-A boasts BCM Gunfighter upgrades like a KMR Alpha Handguard, a charging handle, Mod 0 Compensator, buttstock, Mod 3 Pistol Grip and more. Upper and lower receivers are machined from aluminum forgings 7075-T6 and hardcoat anodized per MIL-A-8625F, Type III, class 2. The 16" BCM barrel is 11595E certified steel.

The TLR-RM 2 from Streamlight is a 1,000-lumen long gun light with integrated laser. It can run for 1.5 hours at a beam distance of 200 meters using two CR123A Lithium batteries. Weighing 4.95 oz., the 4.6" TLR-RM 2 securely attaches to long guns with MIL Standard 1913 Rails.

CRKT describes the *Kith* as "familiar ... just like an old friend." With an OAL of 3.78" and weighing 2.30 oz., this folding knife with a front lock is strong and lightweight. It has a 2.95" 8Cr13MoV stainless steel blade with a satin finish and the handle is glass-reinforced nylon.

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

Bravo Company's BCM Recce 16 KMR-A, Streamlight's TLR RM 2, CRKT's Kith and Silent Dry's Pioneer Dehumidifier — amazing prizes all! For a chance to win, here's what you should do. Go to your computer, type [GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways](http://GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways) on your browser and enter! Or write your name and address on a post card (don't forget our address too), affix a stamp and mail it. —Jazz Jimenez

**GUNS**



### **BCM RECCE 16 KMR-A**

**Manufacturer:** Bravo Company  
(877) 272-8626

[BravoCompanyUSA.com](http://BravoCompanyUSA.com)

**Caliber:** 5.56 NATO, **Collapsed Length:** 32.5"

**Extended Length:** 35.5", **Barrel Length:** 16"

**Approx. Weight:** 6.1 lbs.

**Value:** \$1,563



# CKAGE GIVEAWAY



## TLR RM 2

**Manufacturer:** Streamlight  
(800) 523-7488  
Streamlight.com  
**Value:** \$149



**TOTAL  
VALUE:  
\$1,579**



## PIONEER DEHUMIDIFIER

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



## KITH

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

# DINOSAUR MOLD & THE .454 CASULL

## FANS OF THE SILVER STREAM ARE FAR FROM EXTINCT

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

**D**eep within the belly of social media, amongst tiered special-interest groups, you’ll find “bullet casters” at the bottom of the heap. A small lot, these lead-heads and worshippers of the silver stream manage to miraculously meet up.

Roaming the earth like dinosaurs before them, lead bullet casters are almost as rare. It’s also how jacketed bullet shooters think of them, snidely asking, “You’re still shooting lead?” But it’s more accusation than question. The dinosaurs grin, shrugging prehistoric shoulders, knowing the reasons why.

Perhaps this is the reason lead-heads seek their own, talking cast bullets/loads, fully aware of the fun the average

shooter is missing? Dinosaurs are more than happy to share this information to those appreciating it.

### A FRIEND INDEED

This was the case when friend Jim Williamson called. You remember Jim, he owns a very cool 71/84 11mm Mauser I wrote about here. Seeing my article on the Rossi .454 Casull R92, a lightbulb went off in his head. Seems he and Mick McPherson were experimenting with the Freedom Arms 454 Casull. Mick designed a special mold casting a heavyweight bullet for long-range shooting at easy cruising speeds. Jim offered some of the bullets for me to try. A few days later, over two hundred of the prettiest cast slugs arrived in the mail.



The bullet is designed to maximize powder capacity, so the crimp-groove keeps the bullet seated as far out as possible on Freedom Arms model 83s.

Weighing in at a hefty 420-grains, this long bullet is oozing with sectional density and bearing surface, making it fly true and penetrate deep at great distances. Jim told me they’ve discovered using 11.0 grains of Hodgdon Longshot generates 1,000 fps from Freedom Arms model 83s with wonderful accuracy.

Jim also stated they’ve shot it out to 600 yards, busting rocks, and it appears to be stable at this distance. This isn’t surprising, as Mic McPherson knows how to design a bullet. He’s a walking encyclopedia on handloading, gunsmithing and any other shooting-related information.

Typical 50-yard groups from the Rossi R92, bottom row targets, and handgun targets, top row, shot at 25 yards.





## LOAD & SHOOT

Loading Jim's slugs over the suggested 11.0 grains of Longshot, sparked by a CCI 400 small rifle primer in Starline brass and using my Dillon 550C progressive press, I'm ready for the range. I bring the Rossi R92 in .454 Casull, along with a Freedom Arms model 83 and Ruger Bisley 5-shot.

Touching off a typical 454 Casull load — a 300-grain bullet going in excess of 1,600 fps — is pretty violent, like holding onto a stick of dynamite. This load is much more manageable.

Shooting day was hot, 95° with 88% of T-shirt-wringing humidity. I had a TRUGLO Micro red dot sight mounted on the Rossi. At 50 yards, 3-shot groups cloverleafed into sub-inch groups. The Freedom Arms stayed true to its reputation with 1" groups or better at 25 yards.

The Ruger 5-shot Bisley held its own with groups in the 1" to 1.5" range. The load, while stout, isn't unpleasant at all to shoot. Without sweat stinging my eyes, I believe accuracy could have been a smidge better.

Jim's right — velocity hovers around the 1,000 fps mark for the revolvers. The Rossi and its 20" barrel increase velocity to 1,350 fps, which incidentally matches velocity of a Sharps rifle with black powder loads. A 420-grain slug, ambling along at 1,000 or 1,350 fps has a lot of momentum. Worshippers of the silver stream know this, as did the buffalo hunters so many years ago.

Steve Brooks made the quality single-cavity mold designed by Mic McPherson. The mold makes it very easy to cast wonderful bullets.



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I have a feeling there's going to be an avalanche of busted rocks next year at the Whittington Center from all the 420-grain bullets pulverizing boulders, one shot at a time. Jim let me borrow his mold, so I'll cast plenty of bullets. Dinosaurs are known to do such things, just to have some good prehistoric fun.

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counting pocket change.

We did have a few token purses for sale, courtesy of my wife. These were snatched up in a heartbeat as the women ran back to their cars while ordering the various husbands and boyfriends to follow within five minutes, under threat of a serious cold-shoulder penalty. Staying true to “the guy code” none of the men followed within a reasonable time frame, loosely defined as “sometime this weekend, or by Tuesday at the latest.”

As you might imagine the garage sale turned into more of a giant bull session than a merchandizing endeavor. The growing crowd cussed and discussed the various uses of the amassed stuff, which would then lead from one story to the next like a bird dog with Attention Deficit Disorder nosing through a five-acre briar patch.

For instance, one man would pick up an old butane pocket heater, dented and battered from years of late-season ducks hunts. He would then begin regaling someone else with the story of the time it was so cold in the blind his cigarette lighter flame froze solid and nearly burned down the cabin when it finally thawed out later that evening. This was met with a chorus of snorts and derision, leading to someone else telling another tale of shooting-related hardship, then another and another until the discussion inevitably ended up with a man standing on a chair, pantomiming an impossible physical position while explaining, “there I was, hanging by my fingernails 10,000 feet over a granite slab while I was eyeball-to-eyeball with the mountain goat. Then, I reached for my Model 70 ...”

I might have heard more of these stories if it weren’t for the chorus of honking horns in the driveway.

## I'M YOUR HUCKLEBERRY

At the end of the day, my projected income was far lower than hoped for. In fact, it was obvious I had been — in technical sales parlance — “severely beaten about the head and neck.” I’m

just not good with negotiation.

The morning started with my solemn vow not to be taken in by any sharp customers. I soon learned there is a sizeable segment of the population who, when not busy negotiating Mid-east peace or making billions in the futures market, practice their skills on unsuspecting garage sale proprietors. Here is an actual transcript of one such transaction —

*Customer: “How much would you take for this muzzleloader?”*

*Me: “It’s marked \$200 firm,” I said resolutely, then adding sheepishly, “I think it’s a pretty fair price, it took me almost a year to build ...”*

*Customer: “I’ll give you \$12, these three empty .38 shell casings and some pocket lint.”*

*Me: “I’ll take it. And I’ll throw in a pound of blackpowder free. And a sling. And caps, too, if you want them ...”*

It would appear I have sales-related insecurities and by now it should be obvious you don’t want me working the sales floor at your automobile dealership.

## THE CURTAIN FALLS

As the day ended, I was both relieved and pleased — relieved my storage spaces were bare and pleased I had a tiny bit of folding cash in my pocket. Meanwhile, the entire male population of my state was dancing in the streets over the wondrous deals they had found. This bliss was tempered by the fact they were all sleeping on the couch after their wives found the piles of empty brass, broken gun screwdrivers, old traps and general firearms junk they dragged home, but that’s not my problem.

All in all, by investing less than 10,000 hours of my time, I dramatically uncluttered my home and made nearly \$68 dollars by selling merchandise conservatively worth \$146,000. I also met lots of new friends — in fact, they all gave me their phone number just in case I plan on selling a major appliance, vehicle, home or kidney in the near future. I’m just thankful it’s all over.

Of course now it’s time to go shopping. After all, there are lots of empty shelves in the garage just begging to be filled.

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# THE GARAGE SALE

## YOUR GAIN IS MY LOSS

**Brent T. Wheat**

I couldn't help myself. Life had grown so chaotic, cluttered and unruly I was forced to commit the ultimate act of despair for a firearms enthusiast — I held a garage sale.

As expected, things didn't go well because I am the world's worst salesman. Considering my garage, barn, attic and rental storage unit were filled-to-bursting with cool shooting, hunting and outdoor gear, I should have walked away with a small fortune. Instead, I later offered to buy dinner for my various helpers so long as they confined their epicurean expectations to "roller dogs" at the local truck stop.

fact officially sanctioned waste disposal is both inconvenient and expensive. Most of this refuse used to end up in the ravine behind grandpa's farmhouse, but now it ends up prominently displayed in your driveway on a table made from sawhorses and an old door ("Solid Walnut — \$10 or best offer").

Despite my disdain for garage sales, I'll grudgingly admit there are occasionally guy-focused treasures among the trash. Once in a while you'll run across a dusty box of Early American reloading gear or a pile of holsters so low quality and poorly designed there might actually be state laws against employing them for holding firearms. But, at least, it's all cheap.

selling everything in this fashion would likely require a full-time staff of seven people but likely — after fees and postage — result in a net income of slightly less than the loose change in my truck's ashtray. Therefore, after heaving a few dozen giant sighs and some half-hearted moping, I steeled my resolve for the day when complete strangers would come into my home, haggle endlessly, then take home many of my cherished possessions for half-pennies on the dollar.

### SALE DAY

To my great surprise the first shoppers arrived nearly two hours before the scheduled opening, far later than I had anticipated. It's a well-known truism that published statements such as "No Sales Before 8 a.m." are interpreted by veteran garage-salers as a direct personal affront and challenge.

Armed with fake enthusiasm and \$50 in change, I opened the garage door precisely at 6 a.m. and prepared for the onslaught. I wasn't disappointed.

As gun writers are notorious for possessing large quantities of what is technically known as "swag," most of it lightly used, I anticipated a good turnout. As the electric opener slowly raised the windowless 20-foot door

like a stage curtain, a band of angels began singing as a horde of bargain-lusting men — eyes sparkling and mouths agape — was revealed in my driveway.

Something immediately became apparent: The few women in attendance hated my garage sale. I found myself laughing in a wholly misogynistic way at the obvious disgust females demonstrated upon seeing ammo boxes, old gun cleaning supplies, scabbards, firearms parts, bushels of duck decoys, backpacks and other such male-focused flotsam from wall to wall. The menfolk, meanwhile, were simpering about, clapping gleefully like toddlers and furtively

### NO LOVE HERE

For starters, like a significant portion of American males, I hate garage sales with a passion rivaling my distaste for socialism *and* boiled okra. In fact, I would choose to voluntarily have my various fingers run through a .308 resizing die rather than submit to a morning of "garage saling" with my spouse. This is because guys simply can't appreciate the value of slightly soiled baby clothes or the refinishing potential of old furniture with visible cat urine stains.

Overall, a garage sale is testament to the unspoken reality Americans generally have too much stuff — and the

The odds of finding good-quality, usable and inexpensive shooting gear is roughly the same as the odds of Your Faithful Correspondent running in the field of next year's Preakness, but not as a jockey. This is why I have a great disdain for the whole concept yet the day I was forced to tunnel through my barn like a coal miner just to reach a bag of duck decoys, it was time to do something.

I initially thought I could become an internet auction baron, using the services of the hugely popular website with a pig-Latin sounding name. Yet once all the accumulated items had been piled in my garage for cataloging, I realized



*continued on page 73*



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