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THE SPRINGFIELD
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 Whistles At A Nice Price

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CORROSIVE OR NOT?

I was trying to figure out if some recent ammunition I bought has anything corrosive in it, especially the primers? It's Winchester brand in .25-35, supposedly new old stock. The one box has different color primers which is strange, but is all the same head stamp. It's "W-W Super" over "25-35 WIN". I am not sure if the head stamp can help determine this, nor do I know if it is even in the original box. I've enclosed some pictures for reference. Thank you for any help you can provide!

"Paul" via email

Corrosive primers began phasing out in the 1950s, so I believe the boxes you pictured are probably of more recent vintage. However, this does raise a more important point: While most shooters disdain corrosive ammo, there is nothing wrong with it so long as the overall components are of good quality. This prejudice is legitimately based on the idea an uncleaned gun might suffer corrosion. Potential damage is a possibility, especially after many, many rounds and long neglect but realistically if you clean your rifle regularly, it won't hurt a thing. Consider any

gun made before 1950 and still firing was probably used exclusively with corrosive ammo, including all WWII firearms. Corrosive ammo or primers are fine, just make sure you break out the cleaning kit after a range session. —BW

MORE TRAPPER TALES

Brent Wheat's "Tale of the Suburban Trapper" in the Feb 22 issue made me laugh out loud! It recalled memories of my youth in the late 1970s. I lived outside of town next to a new golf course. I spent my youth building forts with tumbleweeds so I could ambush sparrows with my Crossman pump. Around the same age as Brent I had the bright idea of trapping raccoons around the pond, tracks being plentiful. After procuring a trap and asking a lot of questions, I set out to make my fortune!

The following morning as soon as I walked out of the garage I became aware of a good news/bad news situation. Good news — I caught something! Bad news — It wasn't a raccoon. I had in-fact trapped a very large, very angry skunk. Getting close enough to finish it off with my trusty Crossman while not getting sprayed was quite a challenge and only partially successful. Even worse was trying to figure out how to extricate said skunk from the trap after being dispatched. As near as I can recall, a large hole was dug and the skunk, trap, my clothes along with my dreams were buried. By the way, tomato juice doesn't really work! Right there with you, Brent.

David Meier

continued on page 25

GUNS

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COMPROMISE PART ONE: PERCUSSION PISTOLS

CAP-N-BALL FOR SELF-DEFENSE? SURE!

John Taffin

For several decades, the 7-1/2" style of single-action was my favorite. However, everything changes in life as we grow older. The 7-1/2" Single Action, be it Colt or Ruger was the easiest for me to shoot and the 4-3/4" was the easiest to pack. Then came the time I felt it was advantageous for me to compromise. The compromise consisted of coming up with one sixgun both easy to pack and having sufficient sight radius to make it easy to shoot. The choice was not difficult as I started turning more and more to a 5-1/2" Single Action which would do it all. It may be not quite as easy to pack and maybe an eyelash slower to get into action, and while not having the long sight radius, it is still more than adequate for anything I need it for. Over the years, way too many years, I have used the Compromise Single Action for just about everything. I also thought about having 5-1/2" Single Action Sixguns of every possible kind. Over the next few *Campfire Tales* we will be looking at these in their different categories starting way back in the beginning with cap and ball revolvers, the Percussion Pistols.

ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT

All of the Colt and Remington percussion pistols had long barrel lengths from 9" in the case of the Colt Walker, 8" for the 1860 Colt and Remington, and 7-1/2" for all the others. All of these were very effective although somewhat difficult to carry. The movies will tell us everyone was openly armed in the Old West, however, this was not true and most carried their weapons concealed, at least while in town. We do know many sixgunners on both sides of the law cut the barrels to a shorter length to make them easier to carry and conceal. Today, shorter barrels, usually 5-1/2", are available in both Colt and Remington replica percussion pistols



Two easy carrying 5-1/2" Percussion Pistols (above) are the .36 1861 Navy and the .44 1860 Army. The Ruger Old Army (below) is without a doubt the finest percussion pistol ever offered.



as well as the Ruger Old Army.

In the early 1970s, Ruger reached way back into history, took a good look at the cap-and-ball sixguns from the middle of the 19th century and decided those designs could be easily modernized. The result was the Ruger Old Army. Ruger used the same coil-spring-operated action in the Old Army as found in their extensive line of single action sixguns. They also offered it in

the much-easier-to-clean stainless steel, made the loading lever stronger, easier to remove and replace, and provided easily adjustable sights. The gun is rugged, simple and extremely accurate. I purchased my first Old Army nearly 50 years ago. In fact, it was the first Old Army to arrive in Idaho.

The original barrel length for the Old Army was 8" and it was available in both blue and stainless steel as well as fixed

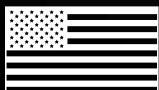


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sights or adjustable sights. When Ruger offered a stainless steel, fixed-sighted version with an easy handling 5-1/2" barrel, I quickly purchased a pair. They have proven to be much easier to carry than the longer barrel versions without giving up much muzzle energy.

These 5-1/2" Old Armies perform well with a Speer 0.457" round ball, Thompson's Lubed Wad and a CCI #11 percussion cap. With 35.0 grains by volume of Triple-7 FFFg, muzzle velocity is 925 fps with six shots in 1-3/8" at 20 yards. Moving up to 40.0 grains of Triple-7 FFFg yields 1,130 fps and a group of 1-3/4". These are serious loads! Just how potent are black powder loads? The standard .45 ACP Hardball load of a 230-grain bullet at 820 fps has long been regarded — rightly so — as a highly dependable fight-stopping load. This can be duplicated in a Ruger Old Army Percussion Pistol with a 220-grain conical bullet over 35 grains by volume of Pyrodex. The standard 140-grain round ball at 1,000 fps is an easy handling and powerful load.

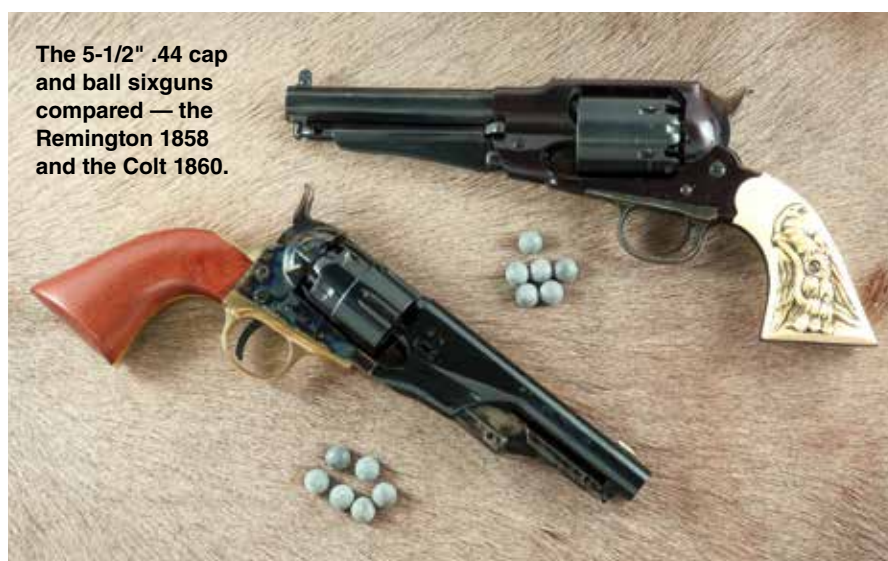
FINDING ONE

During the original days of the cap and ball revolvers, from about 1836 until the arrival of cartridge-firing sixguns in the late 1860s, 'Perfect Packing' Percussion Pistols are not easy to find. In his excellent book *Colt Model 1860 Army Revolver*, author Charles Pate states there was at least one factory that produced 1860 Army revolvers made with a 5-1/2" barrel. Today, Taylor's & Co. offers 5-1/2" 1860 Army and 1851 Navy easy packing pistols. Both Taylor's & Co. and Cimarron Firearms offer both blue and stainless steel 5-1/2" 1858 Remington models and I found a 5-1/2" 1861 Navy .36 at Dixie Gunworks.

These short-barreled sixguns today are often called Sheriff's Models. There are three ways to get one of these. First, they can be ordered directly; however, as of this writing, very little in the way of replicas are coming out of Italy so they are very hard to find. A second way is to have a competent gunsmith shorten the barrel, re-crown and install a new front sight, but it also requires shortening the bullet seating lever. This can be quite



The Old Army using black powder shoots as well or better than many modern pistols.



The 5-1/2" .44 cap and ball sixguns compared — the Remington 1858 and the Colt 1860.

expensive. Another way is to simply purchase a new 5-1/2" barrel along with the loading assembly. This not only gives us a Sheriff's Model, the original barrel and loading lever are still available should we want to go back to the original. The necessary parts are available from VTI Gun Parts.

RELIABILITY

Before carrying a percussion pistol afield there are several things that can be done to make sure it is as totally reliable as possible. There are three major areas to consider. One is to replace the original nipples with higher-quality aftermarket stainless steel or bronze alloy nipples. These have a smaller charge hole that helps prevent hammer blowback, which can allow fired caps

to fall into the mechanism. A heavier mainspring than normally used on, say a Colt Single Action, also helps along this line as well as providing positive ignition. Making sure the face of the hammer is smooth also prevents the hammer from pulling fired percussion caps off the nipple when the hammer is cocked for the next shot.

Personally, I find the replicas of these old original percussion pistols to be exceptionally interesting. They not only shoot well but open the pathway to the beginning of the long history of single-action sixguns. Whether the replicas chosen are Colt, Remington or Ruger, they are all 'Perfect Packing' Percussion Pistols.

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Massad Ayoob

My dad was a gun guy and his only son grew up in a household full of guns. Dad was a jewelry store owner and watchmaker, with preternatural hand dexterity until late in life when arthritis got him. I started shooting .22 rifles at four, got my first shotgun of my very own at around age six or seven. I started with handguns at nine and got my very own — an early Ruger Standard Model .22 — at age 11.

By then, I had learned to field-strip every gun in the house. My parents had lived through the Depression years and were accordingly thrifty — I got to strip and clean guns, it seemed, at least as much as I got to shoot them. The Ruger .22 stymied me, though because I got it apart but couldn't get it back together. It was the only gun that ever frustrated me to the point of tears. My father looked at it for a minute, then reassembled it for me. Decades later, I would be extremely grateful to Ruger for making the Mark IV version of that pistol so much easier to take apart and put back together.

I got my first 1911 .45 at age 12, a military-surplus Colt costing \$37.50 in 1960. My best Christmas present evah!



When shooting is part of the travel plan, take cleaning gear with you. Photo: Wil-son Combat.



Author smugly poses with his GLOCK cleaning plan. Her: G43; Him: G19 Gen5.

With it came an NRA manual on how to strip it. Before New Year's, I had gotten to where I could field-strip and put it together blindfolded in under a minute.

This was probably the high point of my skill in firearms disassembly/reassembly/maintenance in what is approaching seven decades of shooting.

IF YOU ARE A KLUTZ ...

Webster's definition of a "klutz" is "a clumsy person." That would be me. As dexterous as my father was, the gene apparently skipped my generation. I have learned to accept this. So have my instructors at various armorer's schools, who must have felt like Anne Sullivan teaching Helen Keller.

Life has forced me to learn certain manual dexterity skills. Martial arts and police defensive tactics, primarily *Aikido* and *Hakka-ryu* Jiu-Jitsu. Police batons, mostly the side-handle

Monadnock PR-24. The nunchaku Monadnock PN-12 Police Restraining Device I carried for a while on duty. Foreplay. The keyboard on typewriters and then computers, where I was once over a hundred words a minute until hereditary arthritis caught up with me. And, oh yeah, manipulating firearms.

But cleaning guns? Especially detail stripping and reassembly? Oh, hell, no.

My friends joke I only clean my guns when I notice lower life forms evolving in the mechanisms. This is cruel and unfair. This is only my competition guns. The carry guns, I keep cleaned and lubed.

Not because I want to, mind you, but because I have to. Sporting equipment, which costs you a trophy or an ego dump if it fails, is one thing. Emergency life-saving rescue equipment — such as a firearm — is something else



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Police Chief John Parsons (above) makes sure all department guns are always cleaned and lubed. So should we all. Famed expert Bill Rogers (below) demonstrates his meticulous gun cleaning protocol. We can all learn from him.

entirely which is why when I travel, there's some gun cleaning gear with me. What I teach with is what I carry. If it jams when I'm demonstrating for a class, I can be embarrassed ... but if it malfunctions when I'm fighting for my life with it, I could die.

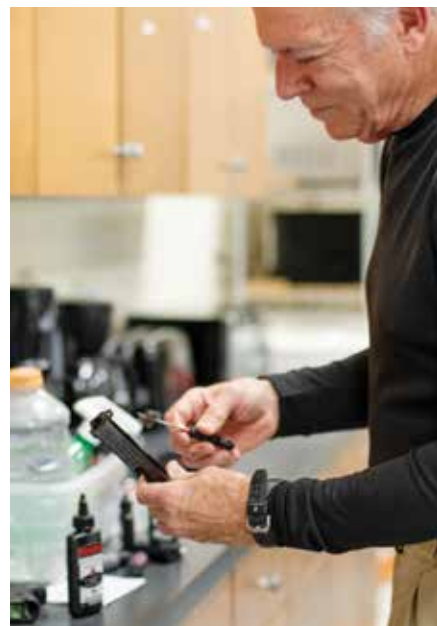
DELEGATING AUTHORITY

In the parts of my life where I've been a supervisor, I've learned to delegate authority to the best personnel for the job. I don't customize my own handguns — I assign the best professionals who specialize with those particular tools. My lovely bride is, thank God, mechanically inclined, and is a self-styled "shooter chick." A Princess of Polymer Pistols, she started with GLOCKS and still carries them. When she asked me if I'd send her to the nearest GLOCK armorer's school, I was enthusiastically positive. When she asked if she could go to the Mother Ship in Smyrna, Ga. for Advanced GLOCK Armorer's School, I cheerfully paid her way. When she started shooting Springfield Armory XD pistols, I sent her to their armorer's school and she was grateful.

Then I put my hands on her shoulders and said solemnly, "Darling, beloved, I think you're ready for 1911 armorer's school!"

And — dammit, dammit, dammit — she finally caught onto me ...

But, anyway, I still have a resident



GLOCK Nurse, which is one reason why I so often carry this brand of pistol.

So, now I still clean my own 1911s and most other pistols and revolvers. If I shoot them hard, well, that's why I keep all those extra springs and such on hand. I figure those guns are there to take care of me more than I'm there to take care of them. But ...

In the end, if we don't see to it those guns are taken care of, we can't expect them to take care of us.

GUNS

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JACKETED BULLETS IN .44 SPECIALS

DECISIONS, DECISIONS ...

John Taffin

Does anyone really know when modern jacketed bullets began to appear in sixgun cartridges? Yes, I know all about FMJ .45 ACP bullets that were used in both Smith & Wesson and Colt 1917s in WWI, as well as .38 Specials used by the military with full metal jacketed bullets. With the coming of the .38/44 Heavy Duty in 1930, special metal piercing jacketed bullets were available for this new Smith & Wesson large-frame .38 Special.

However, when the .357 Magnum appeared in 1935, the one major problem with this trendsetting sixgun was the fact it used cast bullets, which leaded up the barrel very quickly. The .357 Magnum was vastly improved by handloaders with the use of Ray Thompson's Lyman #358156 gas check bullet, which eliminated leading. The .44 Magnum appeared 20 years after the .357 Magnum and still no jacketed bullets in the early ammo. At least the cast bullets were improved by having a gas check or coated with copper.

When I started shooting in the mid-1950s I never saw any jacketed bullets for reloading or even in factory sixgun ammunition. Lee Jurras started Super Vel in the 1960s and he

Targets fired with John Gallagher custom .44 Specials.



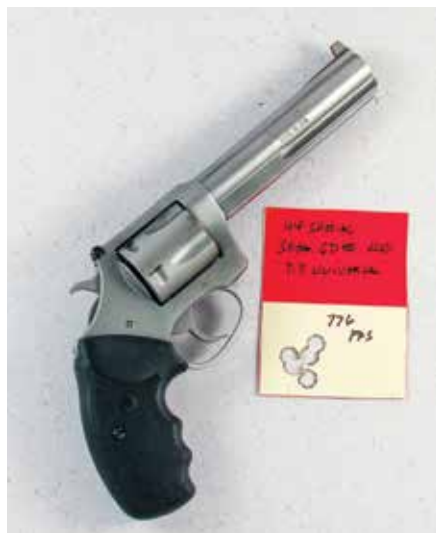
used lightweight hollowpoint jacketed bullets at more than standard velocity for impressive results. Did standard jacketed bullets for sixguns arrive before Super Vel? I would appreciate any information readers could supply on this situation.

Today we have all kinds of jacketed bullets for every conceivable cartridge, even though there are shortages from time to time because of the heavy buying of bullets and ammunition by so many shooters. The problem is not finding bullets but deciding which ones to use. What about jacketed bullets in the .44 Special?

The .44 Special was the first big bore cartridge to appear in the 20th century. The first large-frame Smith & Wesson, which we now call an N-Frame, appeared in late 1907 as the New Century, Hand Ejector 1st Model, or as most people know it today, the Triple-Lock. The .44 Special cartridge itself was simply an elongated .44 Russian using the same 246-grain round-nose lead bullet at the same muzzle velocity.



Get fired with engraved and ivory-stocked stainless steel Lipsey's/Ruger .44 Special New Model Flat-Top.



Target Fired with Charter Arms .44 Special Bulldog.

Much of the early ammunition was even loaded with black powder just as the .44 Russian was. The .44 Special cartridge is a perfect example of manufacturers not knowing exactly what they had. The original muzzle velocity was somewhere around 750 fps.

I have no idea who was the first to heavy-load the .44 Special, however, it may certainly have been Elmer Keith

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and he was the first to write about it. Because of his writings, a cult of sorts grew up around the .44 Special including a special group of enthusiasts known as the .44 Associates who shared ammunition reloading information and also published a manual with hundreds of .44 Special loads. All of Elmer Keith's work, once he decided on the best bullet shape, was done with his #429421 bullet he designed for Lyman-Ideal and which dropped from the bullet mold at about 250 grains. This bullet is the classic semi-wadcutter design with three driving bands of equal diameter, one which made up the base, one which was below the crimping groove and the third one which formed the shoulder of the bullet. What has become known as the Keith load drove this bullet at about 1,200 fps in a 7-1/2" barrel as my tests have confirmed. I doubt if Keith ever used a jacketed bullet in the .44 Special.

NO MAS MAGNUM

Since we have the .44 Magnum, I see no reason to try to employ many 240-grain jacketed bullets in .44 Special sixguns. I do have a few loads I use sparingly from time to time but I mostly save these bullets for use in the .44 Magnum. My .44 Special loads are the 240 Hornady XTP over 18.5-grain of H110 for 1,114 fps from a 6-1/2" Smith & Wesson, 17.0 grains of #4227 for 960 fps in a 5-1/2" Colt Single Action and 18.5 grains of #4227 for 1,050 fps from a 7-1/2" Colt Single Action. My long-favored cast bullet load of 7.5 grains of Unique used with this 240 jacketed bullet does a very respectable 960 fps from a 5-1/2" Colt Single Action.

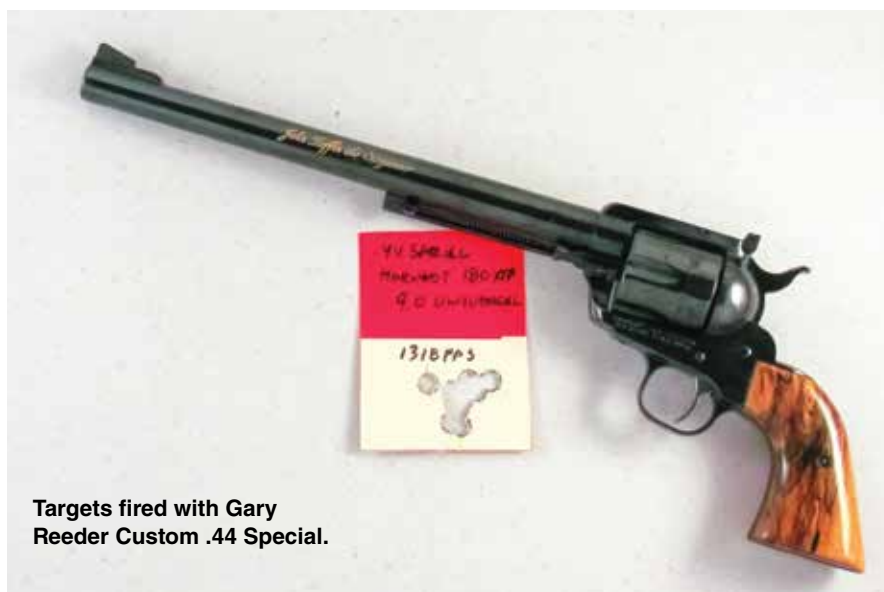
As I said, I use these loads very sparingly — mostly just for experimenting. However, my most used jacketed loads for the .44 Special are with the lighter-weight jacketed bullets, namely the Hornady 180 XTP-JHP, the Sierra 180 Sierra JHC and the Speer 200-grain Gold Dot Hollow Point. The latter is mostly saved for use in short-barreled concealment or self-defense style .44 Specials.

The Hornady 180 XTP-JHP is mostly loaded over 9.0 grains of Hodgdon's Universal with excellent results. A custom Texas Longhorn Arms 7-1/2" .44



Speer's .44 Special 200-grain 0.429" GDHP is especially designed for lower velocities in the .44 Special.

"THE SIXGUNS WILL LAST LONGER AND SO WILL I."



Targets fired with Gary Reeder Custom .44 Special.

Special built by Bill Grover on a Ruger OM Blackhawk clocks out at 1,271 fps with a five-shot group of 5/8" at 20 yards; a Gary Reeder Custom Ruger NM Flat-Top with a 10" barrel does 1,318 fps with a 7/8" group; Clements Custom Ruger 5-1/2" #5, 1,198 fps and 1/2"; and a factory Lipsey's/Ruger stainless steel NMFT 4-5/8" chronographs at 1,187 fps with a 3/4" group. I like the latter one so well I had it fully engraved and ivory-stocked.

Switching to the Sierra 180 JHC my load is 16.5 grains of #2400 for 1,340 fps and a group of 5/8" from the above-mentioned Texas Longhorn Arms Custom; 1,239 fps and five shots in 1/2" from

the Clements Custom Ruger; 1" group at 1,386 fps from the Custom Reeder 10" Flat-Top. Many years ago the late Bill Grover build up a handful of Skeeter Skelton Specials for six of us. Mine has a 4-5/8" barrel, a Colt Single Action grip frame fitted with one-piece ivory stocks. It clocks out at 1,131 fps with a 3/4" group.

The Speer 200 Gold Dot HP over 7.7 grains of Universal in a 5" Charter Arms Bulldog Target clocks out at 776 fps with five shots in 3/4" at 7 yards. All of these loads are much easier on the .44 Special sixguns than trying to drive a 240-grain bullet at 1,100 fps or more. The sixguns will last longer and so will I. **GUNS**

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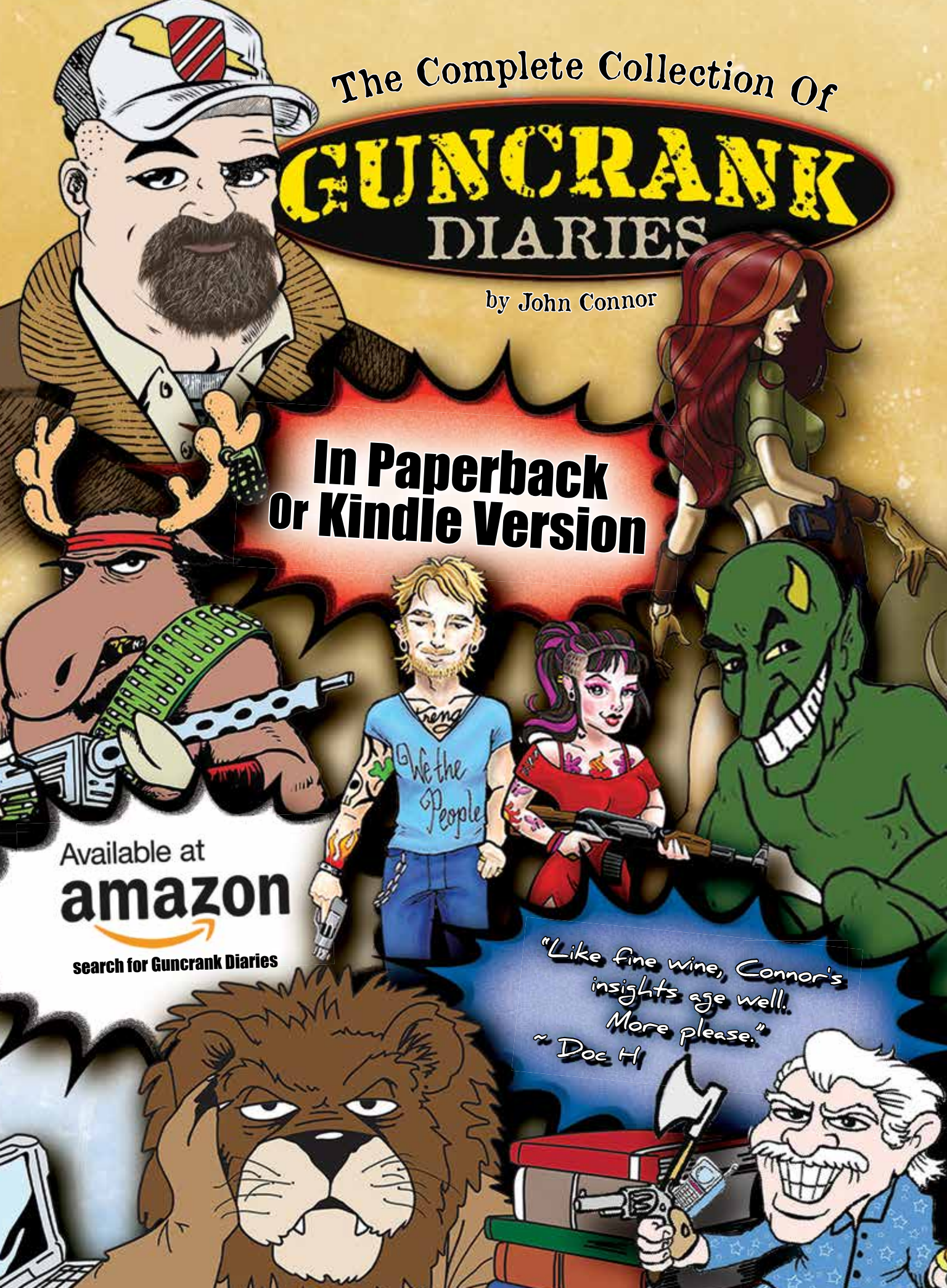
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insights age well.
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~ Doc H*





At left is a Japanese Type 99 Light Machine Gun. At right is a U.S. M1918A2 BAR (replica).

COMPARED: THE BAR VS. NAMBU DEADLY PACIFIC ADVERSARIES

Mike “Duke” Venturino • Photos: Yvonne Venturino

As a World War II history buff I favor studying the Pacific Theater of Operations. Most likely that’s because a family member served there in the U.S. Marine Corps. Regardless, you don’t have to read much about the Pacific Island invasions to encounter comments about two full-autos often pitted against one another. Those were the Japanese Nambu Type 99 7.7mm Light Machine Gun (LMG) and the United States Model 1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). Nambu and Browning

were both the names of their respective weapons’ inventors.

I’ve had the opportunity to become familiar with both of those full-autos, even to the point of owning a Type 99 LMG for 10 years now. Actually, I also owned a facsimile BAR for several years; facsimile as in it was a semi-auto version made by the Ohio Ordnance Company (OOC). Except for its inability to fire in full-auto mode, OOC BAR’s are dead-ringers for originals. However, a friend does own a WWII-era BAR I have been privileged to shoot.

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

The Nambu LMGs and Browning BARs as used in World War II are alike in some regards and vastly different in others. First off, they were both full-auto-only and both weapons were issued with bipods. However, vintage photos show many BAR-armed Army and USMC infantrymen firing their weapons standing or kneeling without using the bipods. The same might have been possible with Type 99s but I’ve never read or seen instances of it. Both weapons were fed with detachable box magazines and both had a nominal weight of 20 lbs.

NOW HERE ARE SOME TYPE 99 AND BAR DIFFERENCES

Type 99 magazines held 30 rounds of 7.7mm while BAR magazines held 20 rounds of .30-06. BARs had a lever to switch cyclic rates from approximately 350 rounds per minute to 550 rounds per minute. The Type 99 cyclic rate was a relatively fast 800 rounds per minute. Type 99 magazines were mounted atop the receiver and BAR magazines were inserted from the



Duke got the opportunity to fire this WWII vintage Browning Automatic Rifle Model 1918A2.

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Turning this knob frees the Type 99's barrel so a cool one can replace a heated one. Wooden handle is used so barrel changer doesn't burn his hand.

bottom. BAR sights were mounted so aiming was in line with the barrel while Type 99 sights were mounted along the weapon's left side. BAR barrels were semi-permanently installed — meaning a new barrel could only be fitted by a qualified armorer with proper tools. Type 99 barrels were issued with two quick change barrels. At first glance one might think the handle attached to the Type 99 barrel was for carrying the 20-lb. weapon. I thought so too. Actually, that handle is for dismounting a hot barrel so a cool one can be replaced.

Early in World War II, a single BAR was standard issue to a squad of soldiers and marines. Later the USMC changed their doctrine. A squad consisted of three fire teams; a BAR man, assistant gunner and two ammo bearers who also served with M1 Garand rifles as protection for the gunner. The 13th man was their squad leader. Type 99 LMG machine gun teams consisted of four men: gunner, assistant gunner and two men for packing ammo and protecting the gunner. For protection, the Japanese might have Arisaka Type 38 or Type 44 6.5mm carbines and the gunner was armed with a Nambu Type 14 pistol chambering the 8mm Nambu cartridge. Yes, Colonel Nambu designed the pistol and LMG just as John M. Browning designed the U.S. Model 1911 .45 and the BAR!

Here's a hint about how the U.S. Marine infantry felt about their BARs, as told to me by an Iwo Jima veteran. When a Marine was wounded on Iwo, as the litter bearers took him rearward for medical care, his M1 Garand or M1 Carbine was also placed on the stretcher. In the rear an armorer inspected and, if needed, repaired rifles and carbines for reissue to replacement troops. However, BARs never left the front lines. If the BAR gunner was hit, it was handed to the next ranking member of his team and the assault continued.

Naturally, I've not been advised by Japanese soldiers as to their opinions about the Type 99. However, U.S. Army Lt. Col. John George in his book *Shot Fired in Anger* tells of his feelings. He writes, "... Nambu Light Machine Guns caused me the greatest and most demoralizing fear I have known in all the combat I have seen." His reasoning was with such a high rate of fire, being caught in a Type 99 burst meant being hit multiple times.

It's a common American fallacy that Japanese weapons were "junk." Their later war production quality declined greatly but until then their pistols, rifles and machine guns were built to fine standards. I have many and shoot them. The Type 99 7.7mm is definitely the most impressive.

GUNS

COUNT ME OUT!

Regarding your January 6 episode of *Gun Cranks* (YouTube.com/guncranks) — As you three were talking about odd-ball cartridges it reminded me of the time I went to the local blackpowder distributor who had a shop in his basement. He had a wall of around 30 feet with various rifles and pistols. On the top of the wall was a huge cap-and-ball gun. Being a gun nerd I asked about it and was told it was a 2-gauge or bore. Of course the obvious follow-on was “Have you ever shot it?”

With a bit of a wince he kind of chuckled and said, “Twice, once out of curiosity and once out of stupidity.” I remember he mentioned it took 1/4 lb. of black powder and it truly did knock him to the ground, both times. Oddball cartridges come in all sizes. The late Dean Grennell in his book on reloading had some funny cartridges like the 50 BMG necked down to 22 caliber. Just waiting for the right gunpowder to come along.

Terry Gardner

.....



PLACE YOUR BET

Would you suggest reloaded ammo for dangerous game?

Richard J. Kelley Sr.

Some say “Yes” while some say “Never, Never!” I think the answer depends on you: Do you trust yourself or a reloading friend to be as meticulous and accurate as a factory loading machine with a 0.01% failure rate? I know people who fall on both sides of this question. As they say, “Step right up and place your bets” but remember you’re certainly not playing with house money when dealing with dangerous game. Think long and hard before discovering — too late — you lack a flawless attention to detail! —BW

PLAYING A BAD NOTE

I really enjoyed the January 6th *Gun Cranks* discussion about guns and airports. I was a professional trumpet player for 40 years and have always been a handgun enthusiast. A few years ago, I was hired to play at an Easter gig that required me to fly from the Mid-West to Tampa, Fla. I travel with three trumpets in a soft-sided bag and always carry them on the plane. On my return trip as I was going through security in Tampa, one of the TSA agents asked if this was my bag and I gladly said it was. I just knew the agent had a question about my trumpets and my mind was racing to come up with the perfect “airport excerpt” to play when asked if these trumpets were real — *Mahler 5 ... Pictures at an Exposition ...* The list was endless and I had the perfect captive audience!

The agent unzipped my bag and I offered to remove any trumpet she wanted, because I had about \$8,000 worth of trumpets in the bag. The agent said she didn’t want to see a trumpet but I had a “bullet” in the bottom of my bag. A *WHAT?* I’m thinking I am going to “airport jail” for sure.

I was directed to a table and while one agent was digging the .22 caliber cartridge out of my bag, this short, pug-faced, wanna-be-cop starts grilling me about my criminal record. When was the last time I was arrested? Have I ever been charged ... tried ... convicted? It went on and on. My answer to every question was “NO” and he obviously didn’t believe me. He took my ID and disappeared for at least 35 minutes. When he returned, he gave me my ID back like he was giving me his lunch money. I believe he was genuinely disappointed he couldn’t find anything on my record. Anyway, the moral to this story is: Don’t carry ammo in your shirt pocket. Place the extra ammo on a shelf (so it can roll off) and store your trumpet bag below that shelf. Thank goodness for clean living.

Marc Fulgham

continued on page 65



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THE GIST ON TWIST

RIFLING IS THE KEY TO PRECISION

Dave Anderson

Smoothbore muskets firing lead balls were not very accurate. To be more precise, they were accurate enough at very close range but as the range increased, the bullets veer off unpredictably. Long ago some forgotten genius found that if a sphere is spinning, it retains accuracy at longer ranges.

Baseball pitchers grip and release the ball to make it spin so they can throw more accurately. Actually a few pitchers developed a technique to *not* spin the ball. Throwing a ball to minimize spin — the “knuckleball” — is by no means easy. The few pitchers who could do it well such as Phil Neikro, R.D. Dickey and Tim Wakefield were virtually unhittable when they were really on their game.

NO HITTER

When the knuckleball is really working it moves in ways the pitcher can't predict, much less the batter. Sometimes though the knuckleball just won't break, which is why knuckleball pitchers go from unhittable to getting blown out.

When the ball doesn't break, you're left trying to sneak a 75 mph straight pitch past a major league batter — good luck!

As shooters we don't want bullets veering off unpredictably. We want the bullet to remain stable. Just as with a baseball, the way to keep it stable is to spin it. We generally measure rate of spin in terms of how many inches the bullet travels to make one revolution. If the barrel was made outside of North America, it most likely was made using metric measurements. A nominal 1:10 twist is most likely one turn in 25cm, equivalent to 1:9.84375. I remember being puzzled why some European-made rifles would have twist rates of 1:7.87 or 1:8.66. Why not use whole numbers? They did, except they used centimeters.

A spherical bullet is fairly easy to stabilize. Early black powder rifles often had a twist of 1:66, while current muzzle loaders seem to have settled on 1:48. As bullets got longer, spin rates had to be much higher in order to stabilize the bullet. A .30-caliber bullet at 2,500 fps from a barrel with a 1:12 twist exits the muzzle spinning at 2,500 revolutions per second or 150,000 RPM.



The 6mm Creedmoor case, like its 6.5 Creedmoor parent, allows the use of long, efficient bullets without having the bullet extend down into the case body.



The barrel on this Ruger American Predator model in 6mm Creedmoor is made with a 1:8 twist to accommodate long, ballistically efficient bullets.



The proven 140-grain Nosler Partition bullet (right) has a respectable G1 ballistic coefficient of 0.434 but the newer 150-grain Nosler Accubond (left) has a startling G1 B.C. of 0.611. Even if the 140 has a 100 fps advantage at the muzzle, by the 400-yard mark the 150 is going 200 fps faster and wind drift is only 2/3 as much.

Circa 1900 when smokeless powder cartridges were being adopted, a trend in Europe was toward long, heavy for caliber bullets — 156 to 160 grains for 6.5mm cartridges, 173 to 175 grains in 7mm. These long bullets needed twists of around 1:7.5 to 1:8.7 in order to stabilize. U.S. military ordnance used a fairly fast 1:10 twist for its .30-40 Krag and .30-'03 cartridges firing 220-grain round-nose bullets. The 1:10 twist proved adequate for the .30-'06 cartridge with sharp-pointed 150- and 172-grain bullets and remains the standard '06 twist to this day.

In those early days, bullets were not as consistent as those of today. Jacket thickness and metallurgy wasn't held to as close tolerances, nor were bullet weight and concentricity. American shooters tend to be more accuracy-obsessed than most. They found a fast-twist barrel increased the adverse effect

of bullet flaws. Rifles for newly introduced American sporting cartridges were given barrel twists just fast enough for the most-used bullet weights. Usually this worked out. The .300 Savage (1921) had a 1:12 twist, the .22 Hornet a 1:16 twist, both adequate for any bullet weight likely to be used. In a few cases, a slow twist limited versatility and adversely affected sales. Famous examples were the 1:14 twist of the .250-3000 Savage and the 1:12 twist of the .244 Rem.

Twist Today Away

In recent years there has been considerable interest in faster twists. One factor has been the growing interest in longer-range shooting and with it the development of long, highly efficient bullets. Another has been the continual improvement in bullet quality and consistency. Hunters have found heavier bullets in smaller calibers allow the use of light rifles with light recoil for game shooting. Centerfire .22 cartridges in particular have seen much innovation.

How does this affect you and me? If



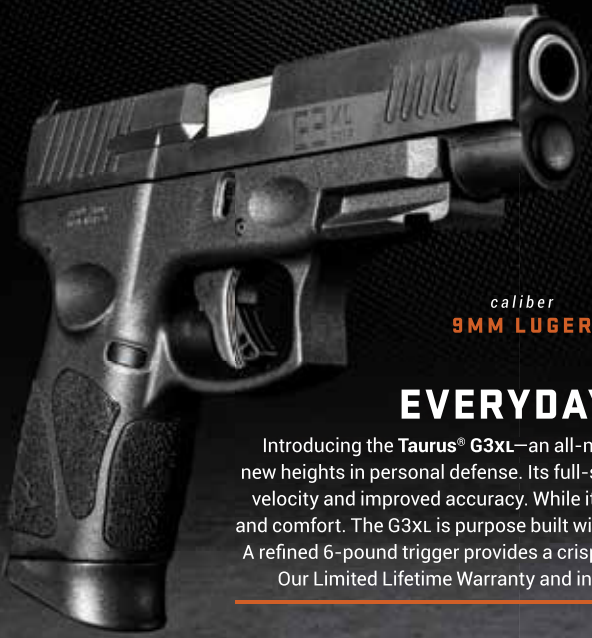
A few current bullets adapted to longer range shooting with terms such as VLD (very low drag) and ELD (extremely low drag). Note the 6.5mm 143 ELD-X box specifies a minimum 1:8 twist.

you have a .222, .223, .22-250 or .220 Swift with a 1:12 or 1:14 twist you've used for varmint shooting for years, carry on! I have several such rifles and feel no need to sell or rebarrel them.

If you have any notion of using long, sleek .224 bullets such as 75-grain match and hunting bullets, you'll need at least a 1:9 twist, preferably faster. A

1:8 twist is becoming quite popular for .223 cartridges — Browning, Ruger, Savage, Tikka, Winchester and others offer .223 rifles with 1:8 twist. The new CZ 600 uses a 1:7 twist in .223 and 6.5mm cartridges. With the quality of modern bullets, faster twists give up little, if any, accuracy and add to the rifle's potential utility.

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TOKAREV TX3 HD SHOTGUN

GOOD GUN, GREAT PRICE

Denny Hansen

Located 1,100 miles south of the Tula Tokarev facility of WWII fame, the new Tokarev continues the tradition of quality arms manufacturing at their facility in southwestern Turkey, combining state-of-the-art CNC equipment with old-world manufacturing knowledge. Tokarev firearms and accessories are available in North America exclusively through Tokarev USA.

I recently received a Tokarev TX3 HD shotgun for evaluation.

(A) A ventilated shroud sits atop the barrel giving the Tokarev a very business-like appearance. (B) Controls are very similar to the Remington 870. (C) Adjustable rear ghost ring sight is mounted on an M1913 rail. (D) TX3 HD has a single extractor but performed flawlessly.

THE TX3 HD

The TX3 HD is a pump-action 12-gauge shotgun. Finish is a matte blue. Thanks to an aluminum receiver, the weight is kept to 6.8 lbs. The stock and forend is made from Turkish walnut and fitted with a rubber recoil pad. Sling studs are located on the stock and end of the magazine cap.

The 18.5" barrel is fitted with a single extractor and chambered to accept 3" shells. A ventilated barrel shroud sits atop the barrel. An adjustable rear ghost ring sight is mounted on an M1913 rail. It has a fiber-optic front

sight. The TX3 HD is compatible with Remington pattern extension tubes. Standard capacity is 5+1. Length of pull is 13.5" and overall length is 39".

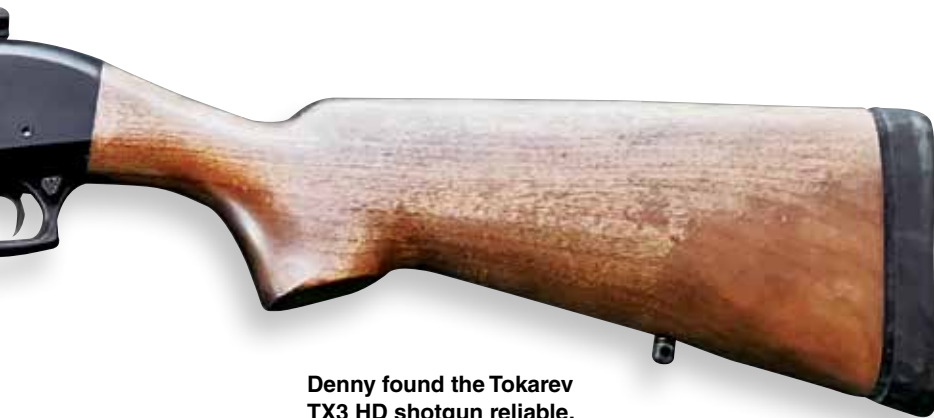
Controls are reminiscent of the Remington 870, with the action release located on the left side at the front of the trigger guard, and the push-button safety located at the rear of the trigger guard. The lifter is slotted, which makes reducing a malfunction easier.

Each TX3 HD comes with a choke kit with two extra chokes, a choke wrench, a three-round magazine limiter and an owner's manual.

AT THE RANGE

I fired a total of around 200 rounds, mostly birdshot, through the TX3 HD.





Denny found the Tokarev TX3 HD shotgun reliable.

With this admittedly small number of rounds, extraction was positive with the single extractor.

Since there are no serrations or checkering on the forend, it's a bit slick but still easy to manipulate if the thumb and fingers remain in the groove TX3 HD at the top of the forend.

The safety button is triangular in shape, and I found it more positive to employ than the standard small round button of the 870, especially with gloves. The fiber optic front sight was easy to pick up under speed.

I also fired buckshot and some slugs through the TX3 HD.

There was a time when I suggested buying several brands of shotgun shells and pattern them in your shotgun to see which load performed best.

As they say, that was then and this is now and you can save yourself considerable time and money by going straight to the Federal Law Enforcement Tactical round with the FliteControl wad.

Federal offers this in both 9- and 9-pellet loading. I prefer the 8-pellet load because, there is less of a chance of a flyer — and you are morally and legally responsible for each and every projectile launched.

Because of the way the FliteControl wad is constructed, there is virtually no spread at 10 yards. At 25 yards the pattern rarely opens up more than 8". A side benefit is the Tactical load has less recoil.

Although it's still no rifle, with the adjustable ghost ring sights, hits out to 50–75 yards are quite possible using quality slugs.

The Hornady American Gunner 1-oz. slug is designed to hit point of aim at 50 yards and with no hold over and the TX3 HD did just that. At 50 yards these slugs are still traveling at 1,038 feet-per-second with 1,046 foot-pounds of energy.

BARGAIN PRICE

A no-frills self-defense Remington 870 is currently selling for around \$450. A Mossberg 500/590 is going for around \$500.

The dealer price of the TX3 HD is \$279, which means the retail price will probably be under \$350 making this shotgun a bargain.

It may be Turkish made, but this gun is definitely no turkey and is a quality shotgun.

GUNS

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AUSTRIA-HUNGARY'S M95 RIFLE STRAIGHT-PULL MASTERPIECE

Frank Jardim

In 1886, the armies of Austria-Hungary's Hapsburg Empire were arming up with, what I would argue, was the most advanced repeating rifle the world had ever seen. Slim and well balanced, its straight-pull bolt action and en-bloc clip-loaded five-shot magazine made it the best handling, fastest loading and fastest shooting military rifle extant, firing the powerful 11x58mmR (rimmed) black powder cartridge.

KING OF THE HILL ... FOR NOW

Thanks to the engineering genius of the rifle's designer, Ferdinand Ritter von Mannlicher, it looked like the soldiers of Austria-Hungary wouldn't be outgunned by any of their European rivals any time soon. Unfortunately for Austria-Hungary, "any time soon" turned out to be a lot sooner than they expected. In 1887 the French began issuing their new Mle. 1886 Lebel rifles chambered in a new smokeless powder, small bore, 8x50mmR cartridge.

The Lebel was a far less impressive rifle than Mannlicher's, but its new cartridge was a global military game-changer. The smokeless 8x50mmR Lebel shot flatter, had a longer range, did not spoil accuracy by fouling bores with the residue of combustion and didn't reveal the soldier's position and obscure his aim with a cloud of white smoke. It made every black powder military rifle cartridge obsolete instantly — but not every black powder cartridge military rifle.

Mannlicher's Model 1886 rifle proved strong enough to immediately adapt to an improved black powder small bore cartridge, and then a

semi-smokeless cartridge — but to take full advantage of the more powerful smokeless powder, he designed a stronger straight-pull action with dual front-locking lugs. First fielded in the Model 1890 carbine, its obvious excellence led to a request for a full-length infantry rifle version. The new rifle, the Model 1895 or M95, was where Mannlicher refined his straight-pull action and en-bloc clip loading system to military perfection.

SIMPLY THE BEST

The M95 proved itself one of the finest battle rifles of the First World War. It weighed around a pound less than its equally lengthy peers and was slim and almost delicate by comparison. The soldiers who carried it appreciated its light weight but the Allied soldiers facing the M95 in the icy Alps and trenches took note of its high rate of fire compared to their turn-bolt action guns. The M95 was capable of 30–35 rounds a minute while turn-bolt actions

were generally limited to 15–20 shots a minute. The simplicity of the straight-pull's forward-backward bolt operation certainly made it easier to master than a turn-bolt action, which requires twice the number of motions to cycle. In addition, the upward motion to lift a cock-on-opening bolt handle — for example the Lebel, Berthier, M1903 Springfield, Carcano — is physically more difficult and more disruptive to the aim. The British SMLE, which cocked on the forward stroke like the Mannlicher, was the M95's closest rival in speed of operation.

The M95's high rate of fire was immortalized in 1917 by Italian soldiers in the battlefield song *Tapum*, the title and refrain referring to the "Ta-Pum" sound the Austrian rifles made while chambering and firing. German speakers nicknamed the M95 the *Ruck-Zuck Gewehr* (translating as the "very quick" or "no time at all rifle"). Ruck-Zuck was both linguistically descriptive and onomatopoeia of the sound of the cycling action.



These Bosnian enlisted men carried M95 Mannlicher rifles, the standard across the empire and made by state arsenals in Steyr, Austria and Budapest, Hungary.



THE LOSERS

At least 2,500,000 M95s were made, used primarily by Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria during World War I. Depending on the source, they were all made before the armistice. Austria-Hungary lost big in the peace treaty. The Hapsburg's 900-year-old Empire was dismantled and most of their M95s were parceled out to the victors as war reparations. Aside from Bulgaria, which was all-in on the M95 from the start and a good postwar customer for the reparation guns for decades, most of the reparation guns traveled far and wide as good small arms are apt to do in times of instability. Nearly all were shortened, and rechambered to meet the needs of their new users in the 1920s, '30s and '40s, making original, 50" full-length rifles in their original Austro-Hungarian M93 smokeless powder 8x50mmR Mannlicher chambering quite rare today. The rifle pictured in this story is one of those rare originals I truly wish could talk.

Stamps on the top flange of the butt-plate (most were originally marked in this way) show it was assigned to the Austro-Hungarian 51st Infantry Regiment that distinguished itself in courageous blood against the Czar's armies on the Eastern Front. A little "CE" stamp in an oval on the barrel shank shows it later ended up in Italian hands, either by capture or more likely as war reparations. A few years ago, Royal Tiger Imports discovered it among the Ethiopian military's cache of obsolete arms.

Royal Tiger Imports negotiated a deal to purchase and import the vintage weapons. How RTI got these arms, which included examples of nearly everything used in Ethiopia going back to black powder muzzleloaders, is a story in itself. The Italians invaded Ethiopia in 1935 starting the Second Italo-Abysinian War. They brought many M95

At 50" long, the M95 rifle (above) was the same size as most of its small bore, smokeless powder, bolt-action peers on the battlefield, but the lithe beauty weighed around a pound less.



Mannlicher's en-bloc clip method of loading ammunition was widely copied prior to World War I. Vertical ridges were stamped into the clip allowing visual and tactile confirmation of the correct clip orientation while loading.



Mannlicher's straight-pull bolt had a front and rear portion. It rotated the bolt head locking lugs into, and out of, battery with concealed helical cuts engaging studs in the rear portion of the bolt.

rifles with them to use in arming colonial forces loyal to them. Those rifles are often branded on the stock with the letters "AOI" which stands for *Africa Orientale Italiana*, the name fascist Italy used to describe the totality of her East African colonies.

RANGE TIME

To shoot 8x50mmR Mannlicher (not to be confused with the 8x50mmR Lebel), you have to handload it. Prvi Partizan makes .330 spitzer point 208-grain bullets and their 8x56mmR Mannlicher or 7.62x54mmR boxer primed brass cases can be reformed. Both are available from Grafts.com, which is my go-to source for everything mildly to wildly

obsolete. Shooting the M95 in the original chambering reveals it to be a much softer shooting gun than the post-World War I shortened M95s rechambered in 8x56mmR Mannlicher and 8x57mm Mauser. If you do shoot any of these guns, bear in mind the newest receivers were made in 1918 and chances are your gun saw a few wars as a second-hand small arm after its glory days in the War To End All Wars. I'd advise you go easy on the old girl. As of this writing, original configuration M95 long rifles and many other rarities from the Ethiopian cache are still available from Royal Target Imports.

GUNS

RoyalTigerImports.com



WINCHESTER

Model 37

Stone-simple, single-shot .410 perfection

Payton Miller

If you're fortunate to shoot long enough, you'll probably develop a fetish for specific types of guns. I'm no exception — I could in fact be Exhibit A, as I happen to be a sucker for .410 shotguns. My love isn't always

the usual high-dollar vintage items like Winchester's M42 pump, scaled-down Browning O/Us or even Remington 1100 autos.

I'm talking about relatively inexpensive, out-of-print American-made break-open single-shots made by Harrington and Richardson, Iver Johnson

and Stevens. And, of course, perhaps the coolest and most desirable of them all — Winchester's Model 37 — made from 1937 to 1963.

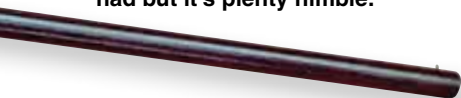
SCALING DOWN

When I first got bit by the sub-gauge bug, my initial impulse — against all my better judgement — was to go all the way down the size scale to a .410. No stopovers at 28 gauge. After all, why fool around? And since anything above and beyond a budget single shot was out of the question economically at the time, I used a couple of utility items for



From top: Winchester Model 37, Iver Johnson Champion, Stevens 940D. All full-choked .410s with an external hammer.

With a 28" barre, a 44" OAL and a weight of 6 lbs., the Model 37 .410 isn't the smallest vintage single shot to be had but it's plenty nimble.



a couple of years — specifically a late '40s Iver Johnson Champion and an early '60s Stevens 940D.

Truth be told I couldn't find a Winchester M37, a real prize. I became acquainted with it on long-ago dove hunts with my cousin Mike, who used an M37, but in a more serious and popular 20-gauge chambering.

Like all vintage Winchesters with a moderate price tag and a long production life, the Model 37 fits the time-worn description of "a lot of gun for the money," joining the ranks of Winchester's excellent Model 67 and 69 .22 bolt actions. When it premiered during the Depression, the MSRP was around nine bucks. Not to seem overly nostalgic — or bitter — but the price wouldn't cover a 25-round box of Winchester AA .410 skeet loads today!

During the course of its production run, the workhorse Model 37 was offered in 12, 16, 20 and 28 gauges as well as .410 bore. Barrel lengths ran from 26" to 32". It featured a walnut stock and a top-break lever just forward of the reasonably low-profile exposed hammer spur and an automatic ejector. One side note: During WWII, 12-gauge M37s were issued to the National Guard!

Although well over one-million Model 37s were produced, it took me a while to find one in .410. I could've found one sooner but, as I've learned, "all things come to those who wait," unless your personal lifespan becomes an issue!

What I eventually ended up with was worth the proverbial wait. A word to anyone interested in an M37: Don't expect "utility gun" prices on any decent specimen you're lucky enough to find.

WINNER, WINNER

My auction prize has a 28" barrel choked Full plus the cool "Steelbilt" stamp on the receiver. In the sub-gauge world, Full choke diameter in a .410 ranges from .395 down to 0.389" (Extra Full). Mine measured 0.388", which puts it in the "tighter than Dick's hatband" category. By

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Kevin Michalowski's 3 Favorite Things
(USCCA Expo 2018)



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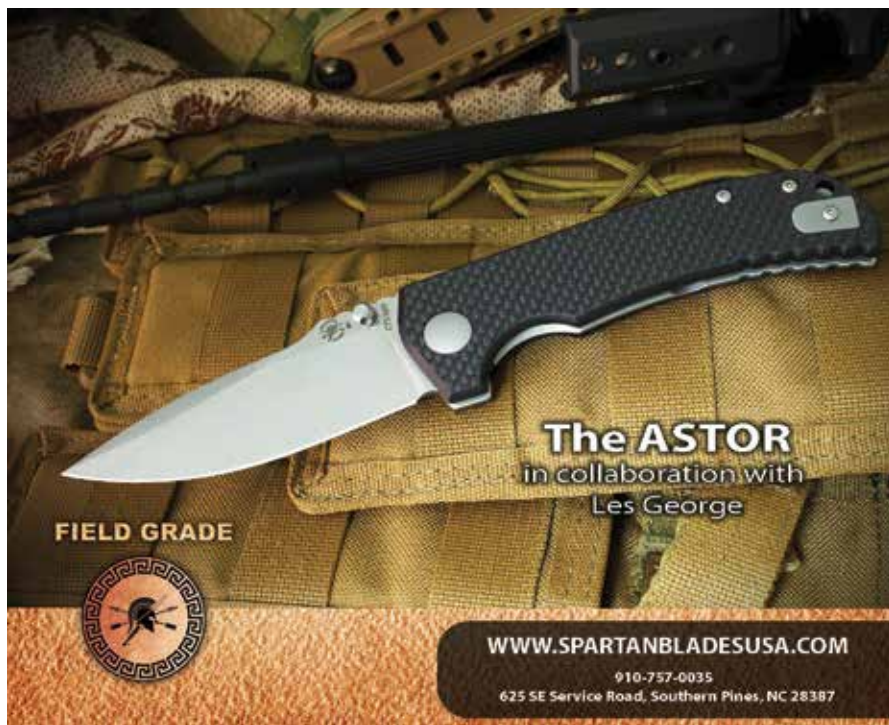
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way of comparison, my Iver Johnson Champion .410 single shot measures 0.391" while my equally elderly Stevens 940D measures 0.396".

It's difficult to find a single-shot .410 not choked Full but quibbling over what constitutes what kind of choke in a .410 always struck me as a bit silly. The practical differences between IC, M and F get diminished somewhat when you're talking about half-ounce of shot in .410 bore. There are guys who can tell the difference but I'm not one of them, particularly not at 15-21 yard skeet distances. If I'm pointing the gun right, any old .410 will work. If I'm not, a Cylinder Bore 12 gauge isn't going to help.

I tried the M37 at a 12" Caldwell "Orange Peel" turkey target at 25 yards and managed to get six or seven No. 4 pellets into the head/neck area. I aim to try some of the newer turkey-specific No. 5 or 6 .410 loads as soon as I can lay hands on some.

My first skeet experience with my Model 37 was less than I'd fantasized about — at least in comparison to my earlier .410 single shots. I busted 13 birds using Winchester AA No. 8s. Truth be told, the heavier barrel of the M37 was not what I was used to, at least in comparison to my Iver Johnson Champion, which had 2" less barrel and a bit over half a pound of gun weight.



No, it's not a 3-1/2" 10-gauge but countless turkey and other smaller game have had terminal encounters with the venerable .410 in the Model 37.



The Model 37 (top, left): No serial numbers, but a long production life and bombproof pedigree. The .410 "Steelbilt" was produced from 1937 to 1963. Five big ones: Winchester 3" 000 Buck produced one notable flyer at 25 yards (bottom, left), but that's still a "predator unfriendly" pattern.



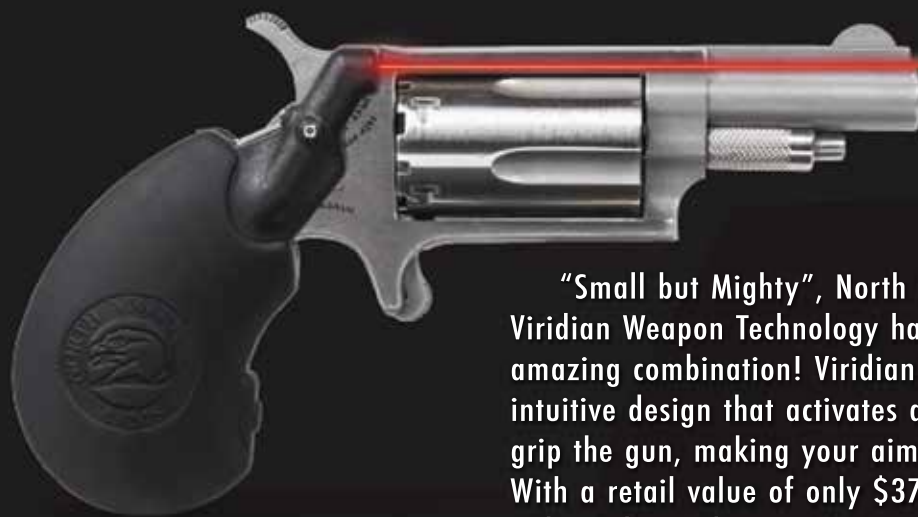
The automatic ejector is fairly forceful and — to be honest — I could live with a bit less power. Considering the cost of .410 ammo, I like to "shortstop" those empties while breaking the action without having to hunt for them.

A couple rounds of skeet isn't really enough to get right with a new .410. Shooting well on clay birds isn't a mystery. You just gotta do it. And that's something I intend to do a lot of. Problem is, when you're dealing with a half-ounce of shot from a Full choke, your margin of error gets scaled down a bit. All I can tell you is when I'm swinging the Model 37 right, keeping my head down and following through, the birds I center just flat smoke.

Here's to more of the same! **GUNS**



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The Springfield Ronin EMP — a lux carry 9mm with a nice price.



RONIN EMP

AN ENHANCED
MICRO PISTOL
YOU CAN AFFORD

Tom McHale

Photos: Rob Jones/The Imagesmith, LLC

She stole it, and I can't even press charges, in part because she's my wife, and in part, because I had it coming. The year was 2012. I was doing a story on the Springfield Armory EMP (Enhanced Micro Pistol) and its lineage to the 1911 TRP model. I had a loaner pistol sent my way — the original 3"-barrel 9mm model.

The original EMP may have "looked" like a scaled-down 1911, but inside is a lot of hidden engineering. The shortened frame allowed "proper" fit for shorter 9mm and .40 S&W cartridges. Everything in the EMP was built around the 9mm dimensions — no .45 ACP magazine spacer shortcuts. Springfield Armory patented the new ultra-reliable short-action design. The EMP has 17 unique parts compared to a standard 1911. So, while it looks like a 1911, acts like a 1911, and shoots like a very comfy 1911, it's indeed optimized for caliber numbers less than 45. I didn't try to see if it smelled



The front sight has an optic insert rather than a tritium capsule, but for many shooters, the major cost differential is more critical than the slight advantage of a self-glowing sight. The Ronin EMP rear sight (below) features Springfield's Quick Rack design as standard, so one-handed reloads and malfunction clearance is easy.



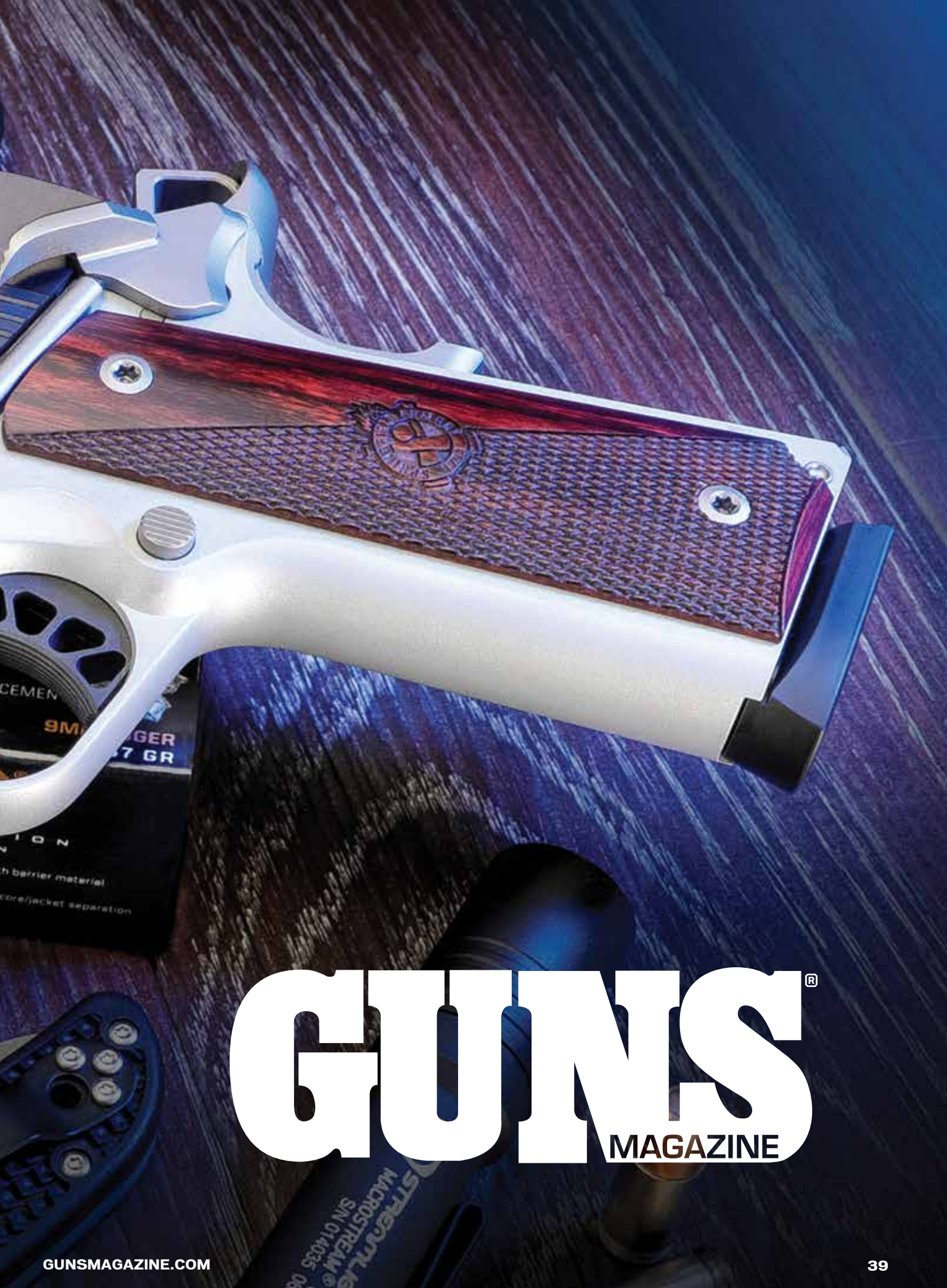


ALL
NEW

RONIN EMP



EXT GENE
DUTY AMMUNITION
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vely uniform upset and penetration
sive Gold Dot construction virtually eliminates
ellent performance through FBI testing protocol



GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE

like a 1911, but as an all-real-metal gun, I'll bet it does.

Having recently purchased a Springfield Armory 1911 TRP, I figured the EMP would make a lovely complement for more discreet carry situations. I mentioned in passing my plan to go ahead and purchase the EMP to my bride, who had just seen the bill for my TRP, and she was nothing short of ecstatic. "Great! I've wanted a sweet carry pistol!" And there it's been ever since. Men who've been married many years have mastered the art of shifting strategies on the fly. At least I still get to shoot it (almost) whenever I want.

LUXURY CARRY

It's no stretch at all to call the original Springfield Armory EMP the "high end" of concealable carry guns, as the pistol was loaded with upgrades out of the box. While beauty truly resides in the eye of the beholder, most shooters I've encountered over the past nine years I've owned one appreciate the two-tone cosmetics — black hardcoat anodized aluminum frame topped with a brushed satin stainless steel slide. The use of aluminum and steel allows noticeable weight savings for concealed carry while maintaining the shooting feel of an all-metal pistol. A bushing-less bull barrel provides a nice balance to the medium-sized pistol.

The grips are Cocobolo. You know, the tropical

hardwood derived from the heart of the *Dalbergia retusa* tree. They say you can hear the sound of waves crashing and a piña colada blender if you hold the grips up to your ear but there is a good reason high-end grips make use of Cocobolo. It's a hard and durable wood loaded with oils that protect it from water, sweat and gun oil — and it looks fabulous. The wood grips were checkered except for the small diamond surfaces around each mounting screw and the Springfield Armory logo in the center.

The original EMP was loaded with all the extras, including ambidextrous safety, night sights, low-profile rear housing, three extra Mac-Gar steel magazines, a nifty case with holster and magazine carrier and other assorted gear. All of this ran the price tag up to an MSRP of just under \$1,300. After, ahem, knowing someone in my immediate family who has owned one for nearly a decade, I can say it was worth the money. Slick, smooth, utterly reliable and it looks like a million bucks.

THE RONIN EMP GENERATION

New to the EMP line is the Ronin version. Like other Ronin 1911 offerings, the design objective is straightforward — a solid pistol, offering the most critical functional features at an attractive price point. In other words, cut out the expensive parts considered luxuries more than necessities. The new Ronin EMP ships in your choice of a 3" or 4" barrel model.

REDUCED AND REDESIGNED

Like the original EMP, the Ronin contains far more engineering than a shortened barrel and slide from a standard 1911. Springfield engineers designed a slew of revised internal parts to make the 9mm work reliably and reduce grip circumference as the shorter 9mm cartridge allows. The Ronin contains a proprietary frame, slide, firing pin, firing pin spring, extractor, ejector, trigger, plunger tube, plunger tube assembly, grips and magazine.

FEATURES & DIFFERENCES

While the basic Ronin EMP design remains true to the original EMP, some differences exist. For starters, the color palette of the frame and slide are reversed. The frame is still forged aluminum, but instead of black, it's treated with a satin silver Cerakote finish. The slide is blued steel instead of stainless. The bull barrel is forged and features a fully supported ramp like the original.

You'll notice the Ronin's safety is single-sided on the left side of the frame. The grips are wood but not advertised as Cocobolo. The checkering covers about half of the surface and uses a diagonal division — reminiscent of cutting a yummy ham sandwich corner to corner. The crust stays on, thank you.



The beavertail safety comes standard, along with extended thumb safety. It's not ambidextrous, but some concessions were necessary to hit a nice price!



SPRINGFIELD ARMOY
S/GENESCO, USA
EMP 90230

NO.
20 HIGH
PERF

Locking the slide back, you can see the massive bull barrel of the Springfield Ronin EMP. The beveled magwell makes reloading easy. The gun comes with just one magazine (below) to keep cost in line, but aftermarket versions are widely available.





CAPACITY

Capacity varies with your choice of barrel length. The 3" Ronin EMP features a single-stack magazine holding nine rounds of 9mm. Add one in the chamber for a total carry capacity of 10.

The 4" Ronin EMP also uses a single-stack approach, but its taller grip gives you a little more space for ammo, so you'll get 10 in the magazine plus an extra in the chamber.

All EMP magazines include a base extending slam pad — a nice touch for easy magazine insertion and handling. I suppose that's also handy should you need to yank a magazine out of place. The steel mags drop freely in normal conditions, so only a serious malfunction would require a yank-and-tear operation. I haven't had one of those in nearly a decade with the original, so I don't expect to see them with the new generation either.

Do note that while the magazines are the same as with the original EMP, you're only getting one in the box instead of three — one of the tradeoffs to make for a nearly \$400 MSRP reduction. Hey, if you want to get the gun and save for more magazines later, I think it's a swell way to spread out the cost.

SIGHTS

While the original EMP included night sights, adding approximately \$100 to the cost, the Ronin features a fiber optic front sight. It's a dovetail mount, so you can

either swap the red tube for a different color or replace the front sight altogether if you insist on Tritium. I've drifted away from Tritium as I've found fiber optics to be plenty visible unless it's near pitch dark.

The rear sight is Springfield's "quick rack" design, offering a ledge for one-handed slide racking on belts or other surfaces. The back surface is horizontally serrated to reduce glare distraction and contains two white dots flanking the center notch. The system is perfectly serviceable and I'll likely be keeping this one as-is, at least until the Novak's folks talk me into something swanky.

TRIGGER

The trigger is peachy right out of the box. There's maybe 1/16" of smooth and largely resistance-free take-up followed by slight back-pressure before a crisp break. I measured the weight right at 4.5 lbs. Interestingly, my original EMP still shares a near-identical trigger feel and a 4.5-lb. pull weight.

There are slight physical differences between the old and new Ronin EMP's trigger. The original was constructed from aluminum while the new version uses a Nylon trigger face. There's also an overtravel adjustment on the original EMP, which I've never used, but none on the Ronin, nor is there any detectable over-travel. This is another one of those minimal-value features left out to lower the price point.



FIELD STRIPPING

After removing the magazine and checking to ensure the chamber is clear, you need to compress the flat spring using an included Allen-wrench-like tool. It's a round device (no flats) as its only purpose is to jam the short end into a hole in the guide rod to prevent the spring from expanding all the way. Once you remove the slide stop like any other 1911, you can pull the recoil assembly out from the back as the barrel slides out the front. If you lose the Allen-thingy, use a bent paper clip to perform the same function.

SHOOTING

I shot the Ronin EMP 4" model using five different ammo types over several outings. As for subjective handling, I wasn't disappointed. Even with the

price-point-enhancing design changes, this pistol still shoots like a high-end model. The weight soaks up recoil, the action is smooth and I had no malfunctions of any kind. This one came straight out of the box, received no care, cleaning, or lubrication and went to work.

I mixed up bullet styles and weights to identify any obvious ammo sensitivities.

First up was Federal's Syntech Defense load. This one sways toward the heavier side for 9mm, weighing 138 grains. The blue-polymer-coated bullet is designed to fragment into three distinct wedges upon impact. I've gel-tested it in the past and it does precisely that. From the 4" pistol (as are all the following velocity and accuracy numbers), I measured its speed at 1,051 fps. From 15 yards, it was printing 2.0" five-shot groups when shooting using the iron sights and a Ransom Multi-Caliber rest.

Next up, I checked out Federal 124-grain Training Match ammo. At 15 yards, I got an average of 1.59" five-shot groups and an average velocity of 1,124 fps.

“

**IF THE EMP HAS BEEN
OUT OF YOUR FINANCIAL
REACH, THE RONIN EMP
IS YOUR HUCKLEBERRY.**

Black Hills HoneyBadger is a solid-copper projectile complete with novel cuts designed to violently displace fluid in targets much like a drill bit. As expected, they zipped right along, measuring 1,198 fps and printing 1.48" groups at 15 yards.

Norma MHP 108-grain defensive rounds are designed for maximum expansion. They averaged 1,133 over the Competition Electronics ProChrono DLX and printed 2.25" groups at 15 yards.

Last but not least, I finished up with some more traditional ammo, the Federal Punch 124-grain defensive round. This traditional jacketed hollow point bullet averaged 1,114 fps and printed five-shot groups of 1.43".

If the EMP has been out of your financial reach, the Ronin EMP is your huckleberry. With some creative design tweaks and repackaging, Springfield Armory has knocked nearly \$400 off the MSRP of the original EMP pistol. Coming in at \$899, this Enhanced Micro Pistol is more accessible to shooters who want a high-end carry pistol. With eyes closed, one would be hard-pressed to feel the difference.

GUNS

Springfield-Armory.com

CASE PREP

Steps To Improve Your Handloads

Denny Hansen

To most, reloading is a simple, straightforward task. Resize the case, insert a primer, the powder and seat a bullet. Yes, it will make a loud noise, but accuracy and even function can be improved — especially with rifle rounds.

What should be the first step is to clean the cases to prevent an expensive die from becoming scratched.

For several decades I used a Dillon vibratory tumbler. I first used crushed walnut shells with a polishing compound, and then tumbled the cases in ground corn cob to remove the polishing compound.

For the last four or five years I've

been using a Lyman Cyclone Rotary Tumbler before I resize the cases. The Cyclone takes brass cleaning to a whole new level. The “media” is small stainless steel pins combined with a cleaning formula and plain water. The small stainless pins easily slip inside cases and into primer pockets to provide superior cleaning action in these areas — something a vibratory tumbler can't do. The Cyclone will fit up to 1,000 pieces of .223 cases.

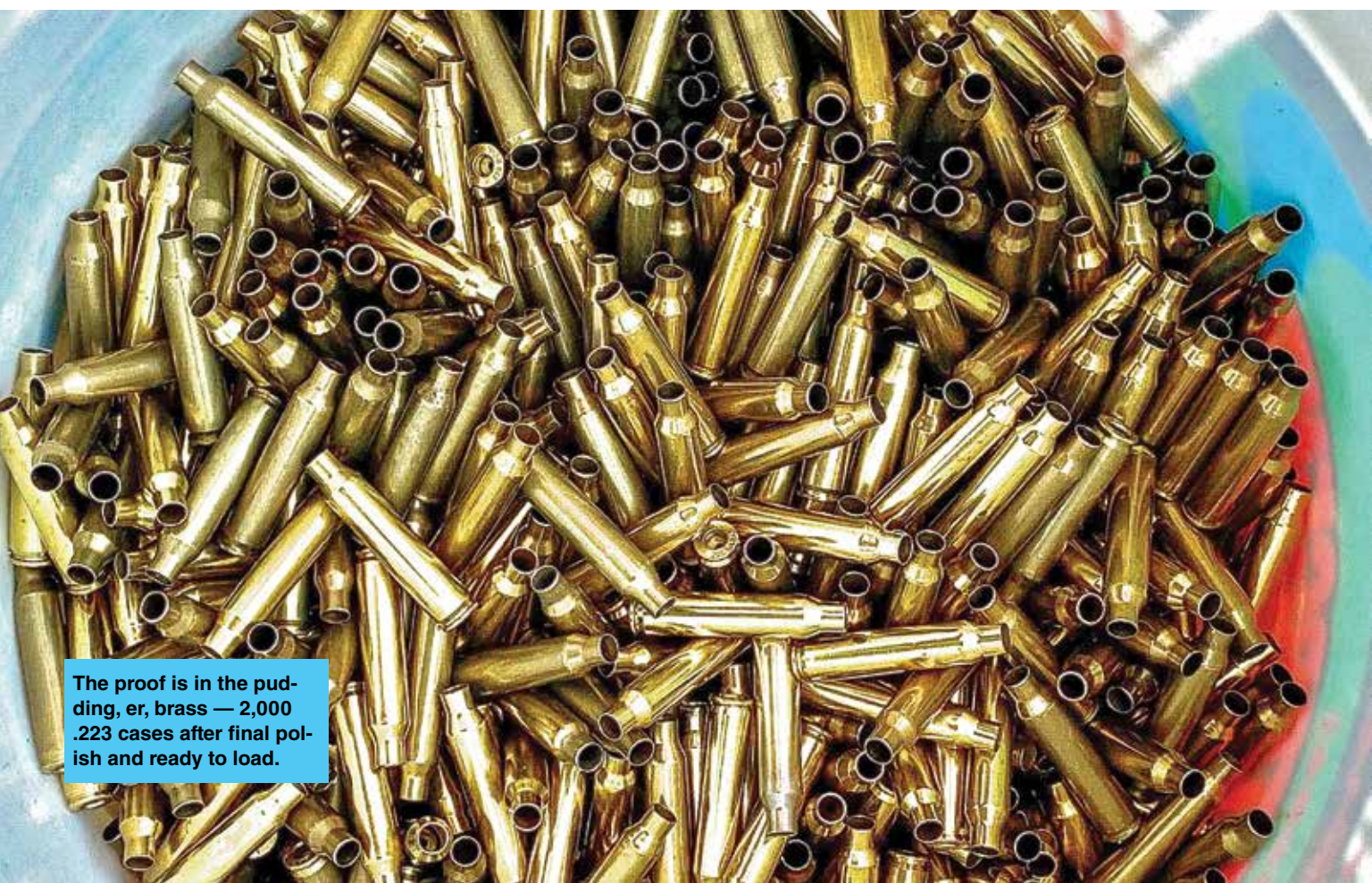
PIN IT UP

I pour in the pins, the cases, about a tablespoon of Dawn dishwashing liquid, fill to the top with plain water and screw on the cap. The built-in timer can run from zero to three hours. I

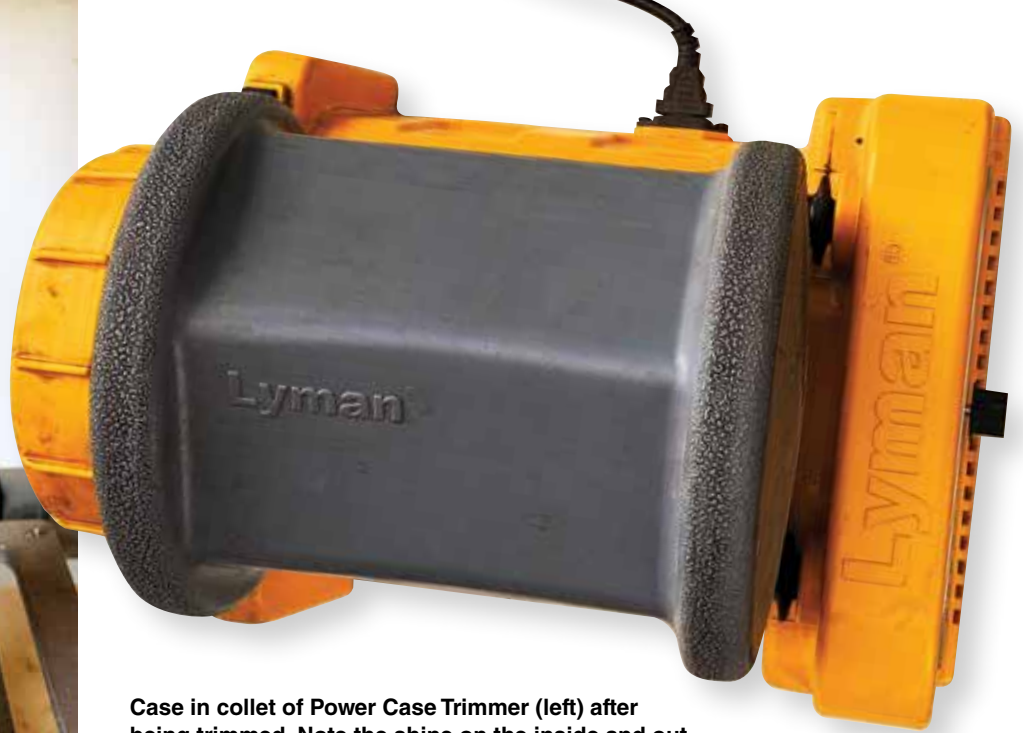
usually set the timer for one hour on this step. When finished, pour out the water and cases into the included sifter pans. The first pan catches the brass and the second pan has a fine screen to catch the pins.

Next I use a Lyman Rotary Case/Media Separator. It consists of two outer covers and a two-piece inner basket. The brass is poured into the inner basket, the outer covers are put on and spun with the crank handle to separate any remaining pins and spin the water out.

In areas with high humidity, some type of heater needs to be used to dry the cases. Here in Arizona, I pour the cases onto a towel, give them a quick once-over and leave them in the sun to dry.



The proof is in the pudding, er, brass — 2,000 .223 cases after final polish and ready to load.



Case in collet of Power Case Trimmer (left) after being trimmed. Note the shine on the inside and outside of the case mouth as they are chamfered at the same time the case is trimmed. Lyman Cyclone Rotary Tumbler (above) takes brass cleaning to a whole new level. Media for the rotary tumbler (below) uses thousands of small stainless steel pins.

The cases are now finally resized and de-primed. For rifle loads requiring the utmost accuracy, I use a Lyman primer pocket uniformer to ensure all primers are seated to the same depth.

When brass cases are extruded and the flash hole is punched, there is usually some small ragged pieces of brass in the case. A Lyman flash hole cleaner reams out this excess brass evenly so a uniform burn of the powder is achieved.

TRIM IT DOWN

Cases, especially bottleneck cases, will stretch upon firing. I trim all of my brass to the recommended trim length for two reasons. First, long cases can create a safety hazard through improper headspace and possible increased pressure. Second, cases are trimmed to ensure all bullets crimp into the jacketed bullet cannelure equally.

For many, many years I used a Forster Original Case Trimmer. Once set it was very accurate, but it was also tedious putting in one case at a time, cranking the handle and repeating *ad nauseum* — and each case still needed to be deburred on the inside and outside of the case.

Now I use a Forster Power Case Trimmer. It can be used with most standard drill presses. Quick, easy and

accurate, consistent case lengths are controlled by the stop on the drill press.

The Power Case Trimmer consists of a .490 cutter shaft and the base to which the collet housing, collet screw and the collet locking handle are attached.

To use, place a case onto the top of the collet, turn the locking handle to secure it in place. I use a master case of known length to adjust the stop on the drill press. Turn the press on and lower and try a test trim. It may be necessary to adjust the depth to achieve the trim length desired.

The cutter features sharp carbide blades that chamfer both the inside and outside of the case neck while it is being trimmed. Chamfer on the outside of the case neck is 30° and 14° on the inside of the case neck. Everything is done

in one step instead of three. Finally, the cases are back in the Cyclone to remove any sizing lubricant and for a final polish.

The steps are the same as above, but this time I add in a teaspoon of Lemishine (a hard water softener), a teaspoon of Dawn and a teaspoon of Armor-All Ultra Shine Wash and Wax. The results are a lustrous shine on the inside, outside and even the primer pockets.

Finish your loads as usual. Don't be surprised if round-to-round accuracy is more consistent. Function may also improve to a degree as those slick cases will chamber and extract more easily.

GUNS



ForsterProducts.com
LymanProducts.com

WINCHESTER

ENIGMA

Marlin rifles had clear advantages — didn't they?



Wayne Van Zwohl

In 1963 I learned life is not fair. Bruce had been absent a week. A lot of classes to miss. A lot to make up. But then he returned, a broad grin splitting cheeks red from November's wind. Details came soon enough. He'd been given — given! — a Winchester 94 .30-30, and hied off with his father to the clan's deer camp in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. There, on opening day, he'd used his new rifle to kill an eight-point buck — an eight-pointer!

My father didn't hunt. His only concession to my pestering had been a Daisy BB gun. The moon would turn to cheese before I owned a Winchester or shot a deer. How I envied Bruce the Blessed!

By all accounts, the moon is not yet cheese but the fates must have smiled as there's a Winchester .30-30 in my rack and antlers on the wall.

Then again, that 94 endures the company of several Marlin lever-actions. And while my Marlins have killed deer, bear, elk and pronghorn, I've taken just one buck with Winchester's classic deer rifle.

WINCHESTER

I've nothing against Winchester. In fact, its Brownie-designed repeaters, Models 1886 to 1895, have long impressed me as some of the greatest sporting arms ever. It's a common reverence, given the sales of Winchesters and look-alikes.

"The Winchester, stocked and sighted to suit myself,"

**“THE MARLIN 1881 STARTED WELL IN MILITARY TRIALS,
FIRING 10 SHOTS IN SEVEN SECONDS.
THEN A CARTRIDGE EXPLODED IN THE MAGAZINE.”**



The side-ejecting Marlin 1893, here in .32 Special, competed ably for decades with Winchester's 1894. Winchester lever-actions instantly appealed to horsemen (below, left). On wilderness hunting trips they still do! Marlin offered nothing to match the Browning-designed Winchester 1886 (below), here in .33 Winchester with tang sight.



wrote Theodore Roosevelt, “is by all odds the best weapon I ever had, and I now use it almost exclusively, having killed every kind of game with it [It] is deadly, accurate ... stands very rough usage and is unapproachable for the rapidity of its fire.”

By the time Roosevelt wrote 39 books (six on hunting), “Winchester” was shorthand for a lever-action rifle. From the first to bear the Winchester name, the Model 1866, to the 1895 accompanying T.R. and son Kermit on safari, lever rifles defined the brand.

Those rifles date to 1848, a decade before Roosevelt's birth. Stephen Taylor's hollow-base bullet, (with powder inside), then Walter Hunt's “Rocket Ball” and “Volitional” repeating rifle preceded development of the metallic

cartridge by Smith and Wesson. They refined the Hunt rifle after Lewis Jennings improved it, and in 1854 formed a partnership with financier Courtland Palmer. The next year, 40 investors bought them out to form the Volcanic Repeating Arms Company. Oliver Winchester became director and moved Volcanic to New Haven, Conn. When sluggish sales threatened bankruptcy in 1857, he bought all assets for \$40,000 to found the New Haven Arms Company. In 1860 its gunsmith, Benjamin Tyler Henry, received a patent for a 15-shot repeating rifle in .44 rimfire. It would sire Winchester's Model 1866. The following Model 1873 fired the .44 WCF (.44-40), Winchester's first centerfire cartridge. In 1878, Colt so chambered its Single Action Army revolver.

Popular on homesteads and both sides of the law, the .44-40 was soon said to have claimed more lives, human and animal, than any other cartridge. Winchester and Colt had become more than brands.

Not that Winchester's 1873 was perfect. New Hampshire native William Wright had gone west in 1883 to explore the northern Rockies, where he'd later guide hunters. His study of grizzly bears inspired a book published in 1909 but his first grizzly was almost his last. Hunting elk along a high-country creek, he spied a bear. It lumbered by at 40 steps. He fired. The beast charged. When his rifle's extractor failed, Wright leaped into the freezing creek and submerged to his chin tight under the bank's lip. At last, driven by bone-biting cold to climb ashore, he found the grizzly dead. He pried the spent .44 case free.

The Winchester Model 1876 was in many ways an outsize 1873 for the .45-75 WCF. Roosevelt evidently bought one — his first rifle — when he was 22. With the means to indulge his tastes, TR would order options like fine checkered walnut and case-colored steel, half-octagon barrels and half-magazines, pistol grips and shotgun butts. Famed engraver John Ulrich embellished his oft-photographed 1876. It had a crescent cheek-piece, Freund sights.

"I don't know how to shoot well, but I know how to shoot often!" Roosevelt needed eyeglasses and freely admitted he liked lever-actions because they could be cycled fast from the shoulder!

Winchester's Model 1876 was heavy but not stout enough for loads popular in Remington and Sharps single-shots. It lasted a decade. Its sequel: a dropping-block rifle designed by an unknown Utahn still in his 20s. Over the next 17 years (1884-1900), John Browning would bring Winchester 40 firearms, including the 1886, 1892, 1894 and 1895 lever-action rifles.

MAKING MARLIN

Meanwhile, John Mahlon Marlin, 19 years older than Browning, was in the last half of his career. Born in 1836, two months to the day after Mexican troops overran defenders of the Alamo, he'd grown up in Connecticut's gun industry.

His first paycheck, after six months as apprentice machinist, was \$1.50 per week! He labored over pistols and may have worked briefly for Colt. His first gun patents, February 8 and April 5, 1870, show a Hartford address. They would launch the Marlin brand.

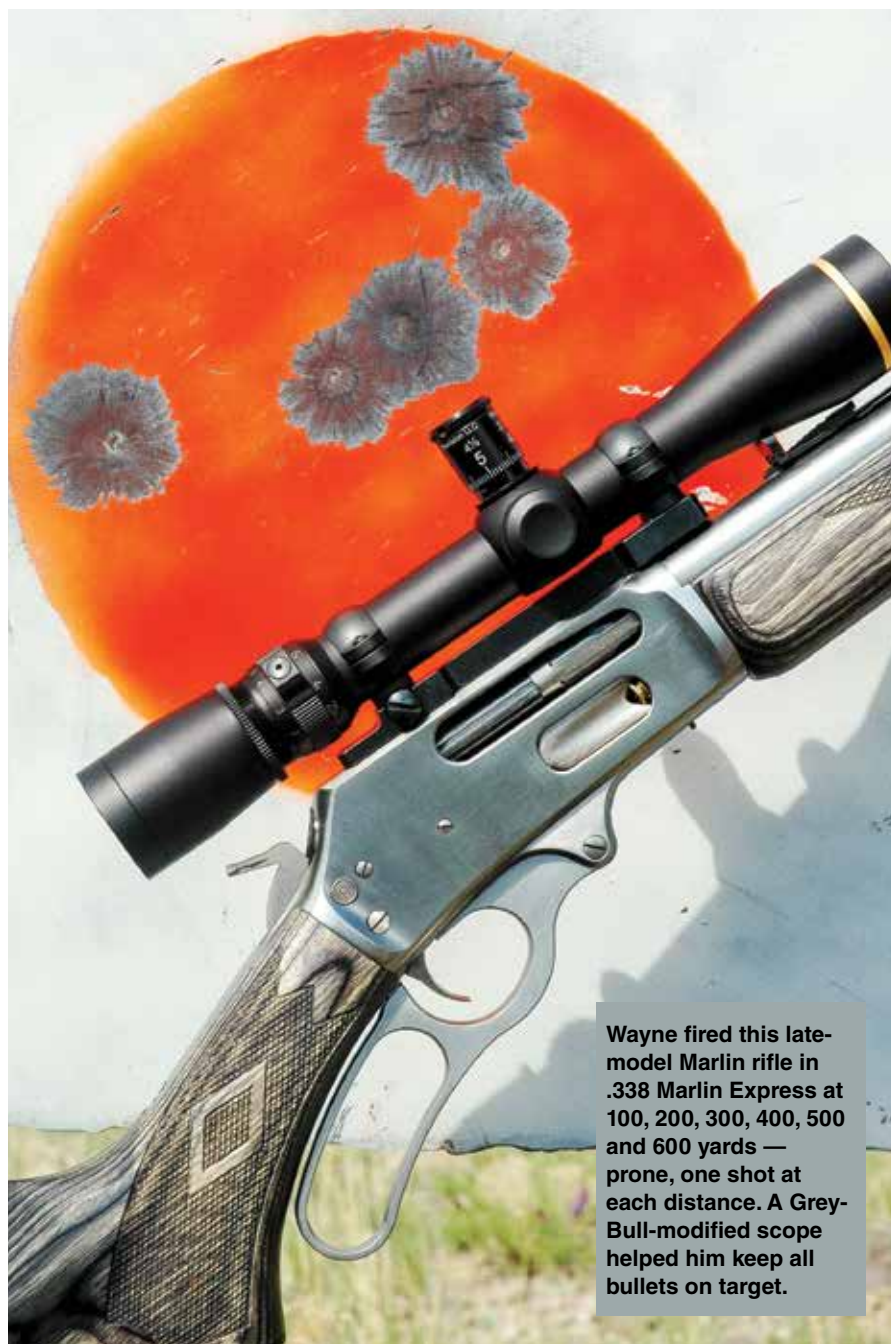
From 1863 to 1880, Marlin sold 16,000 "Never Miss" and "Victor" Derringer-style single-shots. In 1870 he added "OK" and "Little Joker" spur-trigger revolvers in .22 Short. More potent pistols followed.

Beginning in 1875, Marlin built rifles on the 1861 Ballard action. The underhammer, lever-driven repeater flopped.

Its 1882 progeny became the Model 1881 six years later. This 10-shot, side-loading, top-ejecting lever rifle was bored to .45-70 and .40-60. A small-frame version came in .32-40 and .38-55.

The Marlin 1881 started well in military trials, firing 10 shots in seven seconds. Then a cartridge exploded in the magazine. There were no injuries; no cause was given but the Army withheld approval.

The gun used a split carrier with a wedge to expand it in cycling, improving cartridge transfer from magazine to carrier. Marlin produced 20,000 Model 1881s.



Wayne fired this late-model Marlin rifle in .338 Marlin Express at 100, 200, 300, 400, 500 and 600 yards — prone, one shot at each distance. A Grey-Bull-modified scope helped him keep all bullets on target.

Like Winchester, John Marlin's firm got help from a firearms wizard. Lewis L. Hepburn had built muzzle-loading rifles until, at age 39 in 1871, Remington hired him. Result: the Remington-Hepburn No. 3 single-shot rifle. The company's 1886 fiscal woes sent Hepburn to Marlin, where his engineering talents were pivotal to the design of its lever-action Models 1888, 1889, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895 and 1897. The Model 1888 in .32-20, .38-40 and .44-40 held 16 rounds under a 24" barrel and cost \$18. Fewer than 5,000 shipped before Marlin dropped it in 1892. The side-ejecting Model 1889 in the same chamberings sold 55,000 rifles. The Hepburn-designed 1891, in .22 and .32, was Marlin's first successful lever-action rimfire. Exhibition shooting by Annie Oakley gave this \$18 rifle and its 1892 sequel a boost.

In the 1890s Marlin and Winchester competed directly at market. While Marlin's 1889 performed well, it couldn't match the power or sales potential of Winchester's '86. Nor had the Marlin brand earned celebrity in saddle scabbards during the closing decade of the Old West. But the 1893 Marlin (\$13.35 to start) handled the same cartridge class as Winchester's 1894: .32-40 and .38-55 initially, then .25-36. The .30-30 and .32 Special would follow in 1922, after the war interrupted Model 1893 production. Marlin's short-action 1894 in .25-20, .32-20, .38-40 and .44-40 sparred ably with Winchester's Model 1892. Still, sales targets pressured its debut price of \$18 down to \$10.40 in 1901!

In its Model 1895, Marlin offered an alternative to the Winchester 1886. Bored to .38-56, .40-65, .45-70, .45-90 and, later, .40-70, it cost \$18.50, with a \$3.50 premium for take-down rifles. In 1912 the .33 WCF joined the roster, appearing also in a lightweight (7½-lb.) version.

Marlin's success with take-down rifles prompted its Model 1897 lever-action .22. It would be one of Lewis Hepburn's last projects. A fall on ice in January 1910, broke his hip. It did not heal. Bedridden, the gifted inventor who'd contributed so much to Marlin died in August, 1914.

In 1936 Marlin gave its Model 1893



A Winchester's nimble saddle-ring carbine, here a .25-35, is one reason its Model 1894 sold so briskly. **B** A ballistic twin to the .30-30, the .32 Special gave way to the .35 Remington in Marlin 336 rifles. **C** Hornady LEVERevolution loads with pointed bullets give "deer rifles" like this Marlin 336 more reach. **D** Marlin has long listed the .35 Remington as an alternative to the .30-30 in its 336. Winchester kept the .32 Special for years then dropped it from its Model 94, now bored only for the .30-30. **E** Winchester's short-action 1892 became popular worldwide. Marlin's 1894 was its counterpart.

a facelift. Dubbed Model 1936, then Model 36 the following year, it listed for \$32. The Model 336, with round-bodied bolt and coil mainspring, arrived in 1948. Five years later, Marlin replaced its Ballard cut rifling with "Micro-Groove" rifling, ironed in with a tungsten carbide button. Introduced at \$74, the 336 sold briskly in .30-30, also in .32 Special and .35 Remington. It struggled in .219 Zipper, a chambering dropped in 1959.

TWO CHOICES

By the time Bruce killed his eight-pointer four years later, the Winchester-Marlin tug-o-war had narrowed to competition between Winchester's 94 and Marlin's 336. Neither company had a short-action (.44-40-length) lever rifle. Gone too were the big boomers. In 1935 Winchester had supplanted its Model 1886 with the Model 71 in .348. It expired 22 years later. Marlin's 1895 had faded too.

Though Marlin would soon introduce a 336 in .44 Magnum, and Winchester would later contract a fine reproduction of its 1892, lever-rifle options were few as Bruce field-dressed his buck. That year *Shooter's Bible* listed Winchester's 94 in .30-30 or .32 Special at \$83.95. A Marlin 336 in .30-30 or .35 Remington cost \$86.95. Three versions of the 336, priced the same, included two with pistol-grip stocks. The Texan shared the Winchester 94 profile. Both 6½- to 7-lb. carbines had straight grip walnut stocks and full-length six-shot magazines under banded 20" barrels. Open sights were similar.

WHICH WAS BETTER?

The 336's side ejection permitted low-over-center scope mounting. Its

A Chevy Suburban driven over this Marlin 336 splintered and sprung components. Wayne found the zero unchanged. Taped up, the lever .30-30 killed deer and pronghorn.





Wayne used an iron-sighted Marlin 336 in .32 Special (below), and one bullet, to take this elk at 130 yards.

wraparound receiver was stronger than the Winchester's and better shielded the action. Marlin's .35 Remington option appealed to hunters who thought the .32 Special to be a .30-30 with an alias.

I've shot elk with those ballistic twins, adequate but of limited effective reach on such big beasts. The last, taken with a .32 Special, fell to one bullet through the lungs at 130 yards. It was not as notable a kill as Ed Broder's in 1926. Late one November afternoon, he and his hunting partner reached their cabin near Chip Lake, Alberta in a Model T, then by horse-drawn sleigh. Broder made the most of the little light left. A big track in the snow led him to a buck which fell to his .32 Special. The antlers taped 355" — still the top score for non-typical mule deer!

Winchester 94s in .30-30 have also plumped the record books. Those I've used, all built before accountants took Winchester hostage in 1964, fly to cheek faster than do Marlin 336s and seem to cycle more eagerly. As to fit, finish and reliability, these two models are neck-and-neck. Rifles of both models can be very accurate, halving the 3" groups once commonly accepted. I've not torture-tested either but one Marlin proved its durability in a zero check on the prairie.

While I trotted out to change 200-yard paper, my pal fired up his Suburban to set steel plates at long range. He then ran over my shooting mat, crunching the Marlin's

receiver, lever and wrist into the earth. The butt-stock lay in pieces, lever askew. In a fit of equanimity, I counted to 10 (or was it 110?), then duct-taped the wrist. A vigorous tug on the lever freed the action, which then fed and ejected as if nothing had happened. Back on the mat, I prepared for gross sight adjustment. Instead, my shots centered the bullseye.

THE WINNER IS ...

Yes, in my view, Marlin's 336 deserves the wreath. But the Winchester 94 gets the popular vote. Credit timing. In 1860, while Benjamin Tyler Henry tinkered on a lever rifle Winchester peddled to the Union Army, John Marlin was tending parlor pistols. In 1883, as Winchester snared the brilliance of John M. Browning, Lewis L. Hepburn was still at Remington, yet to apply his genius with Marlin's team.

Chronology matters too. As the Old West became legend, the wistful remembered Winchesters bringing it to heel before Marlin had a functioning lever-action.

Even the language gave the brand a boost. "Winchester" came off the tongue with the cadence of a galloping pony. Winchesters winning the West offered alliteration.

Films followed suit. *Winchester '73* blessed the box office. Could Jimmy Stewart and Shelley Winters have carried "Marlin '81?"

Indeed, life is not fair.

GUNS

The 8mm Mauser

A rose – or cartridge – by any other name

Mike “Duke” Venturino
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

By my memory I had never fired any rifle chambered for 8mm Mauser until beginning my World War II firearms collection early in this century. Now I can say I’ve fired literally thousands of 8mm Mauser rounds including commercial factory, military surplus and my own handloads. They have been put through a large variety of firearms ranging from carbines to machine guns. I’ve come to respect the cartridge just as much as our .30-06 and far more than any other World War II military cartridge.

As with the average American rifleman, there was much I did not know or misunderstood about the 8x57mm, such that it didn’t originate as a Mauser cartridge. The 8x57mm was actually developed by the German military for their *Gewehr 1888* infantry rifle, which itself was a variation of a Mannlicher-style bolt action. It wasn’t until Peter Paul Mauser unveiled his Model 1898 rifle that the 8x57mm was mated to his rifles.

A NEW NAME

Also, as originally developed and as still known today in Europe, its name is not 8mm. It started as 7.9x57mm, segued to 7.92x57mm and finally here in America, for some reason lost to history, it commercially became the 8mm Mauser. For this article we will stick with 8mm Mauser, otherwise matters might get confusing.

When first introduced, it used a jacketed, round-nose 226-grain bullet. The original barrel groove diameter was 0.318" and the Germans called it the *J-Patrone* (meaning J-cartridge). Then in 1905, there came a great change which has influenced military ammunition unto this day — the Germans introduced spitzer (pointed) bullets. Just about every nation producing military ammunition followed suit, including the United States with its megafamous .30-06.

Again for reasons lost to history, German ordnance people increased their 8mm Mauser barrels to have 0.323" barrel groove diameters. Such rifles and ammunition were then known as *JS-Patrone*.



The German *Gewehr 98* is the first Mauser rifle mated with the 8x57mm.



These are the three most representative 8x57mm rifles used by the German *Wehrmacht* in World War II. From top: the K98k, K43 and G33/40.



These are three of Duke's K98k 8x57mm German sniper rifles. Top has Hensoldt 4X scope in short side rail mounts. Middle has Zeiss 4X scope in low turret mounts. Bottom has Hensoldt 4X scope in long side rail mounts.

Because military Mauser rifles with the early 0.318" barrel groove diameters were discontinued circa 1905, they are rare in America. However, some civilian Mauser rifles used the barrel dimension post-1905. It could be dangerous to fire 0.323" bullets in them so please know what you have before shooting them.

The 8mm Mauser will forever be known to the world in general as Germany's infantry rifle and machine gun caliber for both world wars. It was also adopted by Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia and even China, just

to name a few. It seems ironic when World War II broke out on September 1, 1939, Germany and Poland went at each other with both countries' armies using 8mm Mauser Model 1898 rifles.

STANDARD ISSUE

By the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the standard German infantry rifle was labeled *Gewehr* 98 meaning "Rifle 1898." They were turn-bolt-action with a five-round magazine capacity. Barrel length was 29.13" with overall

length of 49.20" and nominal weight of 9 lbs. Rifling twist rate was one turn in 9.25". Sights were an inverted V-shape front and notched V-shape open rear graduated to 2,000 meters. Windage was zeroed by moving the dovetailed front sight blade laterally in its stud. With about 5 million *Gewehr* 98s produced it remained in service with Germany's greatly reduced post-war army.

By the middle of the 1930s Germany modernized *Gewehr* 98s into the *Karabiner* 98K. Its basic mode of function didn't change but barrel length was reduced to 23.63", overall length of 42.90" and weight of 8.6 lbs. By the end of World War II in 1945 the K98k had undergone many changes. Ones produced in the late 1930s could compare with the finish quality of concurrent American sporting rifles such

as Winchester's Model 70. However, by 1945 the level of finish had deteriorated considerably while functionality had not. About 10 million K98ks were made.

One other '98 Mauser deserves mention — G33/40 made in Czechoslovakia at the BRNO factory. This was a special lightweight adaption of the regular Model 1898. Barrel length was only 19.29" with overall length of 39.10" and weight of 7.9 lbs. Extra steps were made to lighten G33/40s such as hollow bolt knobs and cutouts in the action because their intended purpose was for *Gebirgstruppen* (mountain troops). Because they might also be used as "walking sticks" when crossing snow and ice, a steel-protecting plate was put on the buttstock. Only about a quarter million G33/40s were produced.



This is a 1943 box of German 8x57mm. See the "for machine gun" note in red.



Duke's components for good shooting 8x57mm handloads.



A FINE MADNESS BEGINS

At the beginning of this century, I was standing in a Montana gun show feeling sort of left out. Every Old West firearm I ever desired I already owned. Gun show fever had me in its grip. There were dollars in my pocket but I was feeling as if there was nothing to spend it on. I stopped in front of a friend's table to visit and happened to look down at a nice looking Mauser rifle. At that time I wasn't sure of anything except it was a Model 1898. My friend informed me it was a German K98k made in 1937 with all numbers matching except the bolt. I asked, "Why only the bolt?" The answer was when German troops surrendered to Americans in 1945 they dropped their rifles in one pile and bolts in another. U.S. soldiers could rummage through them until



Duke's low turret 8x57mm K98k with Zeiss 4X scope shot this group at 200 yards.



The machine gun is Germany's legendary MG 43 shown with the K98k mounted with a ZF41 1.5X scope at left and a BRNO G33/40 at right. All are chambered for 8x57mm.

a bolt fit into a rifle and then bring it home.

Always a student of World War II history, I was intrigued by that. Also attractive was the rifle's price — a fraction of what Old West guns were selling for. That lit a fire under me that burns unto this day. It didn't hurt the K98k shot very well once I figured out 8mm Mauser reloading details. By 1937 Germany had gone from 154 spitzer bullets at about 2,800 fps to 198-grain ones at about 2,500 fps. Duplicating those ballistics had my K98k hitting on at 300 meters.

INVENTORY

Now my collection not only contains the first K98k but it has five scope-sighted German sniper rifles from World War II. Four are K98s with various scopes and one is a K43 which was Germany's attempt to field a semi-auto to compete with America's M1 Garand and the Soviet Union's SVT40 Tokarov. Obviously K43s were too little and too late to help change Nazi Germany's fate. Also in my collection is a G33/40. These are fairly rare nowadays because they have been sought out by custom rifle builders in order to use their exquisite-quality actions as basis for expensive sporting rifles. They have quite a bark and bite with 198- to 200-grain bullets that they push at about 2,400 fps. Also along the way I've been fortunate to fire a friend's MG42 with its amazing cyclic rate of fire of 1,200 rounds per minute. It actually sounds like a buzz saw.

Along the way I bought a very nice German '98 8mm sporter built between the World Wars. It was a beautifully crafted hunting rifle complete with double set triggers. Sadly it came to me after physical ailments ended my hunting career and was sold to a friend who still hunts. By the way, the same friend and I took one of my 8mm sniper rifles to a CMP 300- and 600-yard event in 2011 and finished fourth of 25 teams.

Space won't allow me to go into the myriad details of 8mm Mauser reloading. However, my standard load for all consists of any 0.323" bullet of 195 to 200 grains over 47 grains of Hodgdon's Varget.

More info is in my book *Shooting World War II Small Arms* available on Amazon.

GUNS

Running the **RIFLE- CALIBER HANDGUN**

Is it a pistol?
Is it a rifle?
Is it worth it?



The piston-driven SIG P516 is a rugged, top-end 5.56mm handgun based upon the timeless Gene Stoner-inspired AR15 chassis.



Firing the SIG P516 two-handed out of an isosceles stance resulted in good downrange effects but is tough to maintain for long periods.

Will Dabbs, MD Photos: Cassie Dabbs

They have become a staple on the American gun market — “handguns” built *de novo* upon an AR chassis introduced the American gun nerd to an entirely new genre of firearm. Combining rifle-grade power with handgun-sized portability, these testosterone-laden pistols are either the best or worst of both worlds.

The Pistol Stabilizing Brace (PSB) from SB Tactical revolutionized the industry. Approved by the BATF in several guises, the PSB attaches to the near end of a handgun and provides extra stability and support without changing the host gun’s pistol classification. However, the PSB brings along a few legal quirks. For a time you could carry a gun legally and then commit a felony when you lifted the same weapon to your shoulder. Thankfully this seems not to be the case any longer — “incidentally” — but the rules could change literally overnight.

An astute reader recently asked how effective these handguns-born-of-rifles might actually be in their virgin state. Intrigued by the idea, we set out to run a gun typical of the breed and assess its effectiveness. After trying several different firing techniques, burning a few bullets and counting the resulting holes, we reached some

conclusions that would not withstand even the most cursory standards of scientific acumen. What the project lacked in technical rigor, however, it made up for in fun.

PRACTICAL IRON

For this test, I used the no-longer-manufactured SIG P516. Built around a standard Stoner-inspired AR upper and lower receiver, the SIG P516 sports a 7.5" barrel underneath a gas piston-driven action for flawless reliability. The flattop upper accepts any standard optics. Three stubby lengths of Picatinny rail on the forearm are adequate for grips, lasers, and lights. Be forewarned, however, one of the many ridiculous quirks surrounding the 1934 National Firearms Act opines an angled foregrip on a handgun is legal whereas a vertical foregrip is not. Don't try to understand it. Just embrace the horror.

As a result of this arcane bit of foolishness, we restricted our P516 forearm to a Magpul AFG (Angled Foregrip) adorned with some rough appliqué material from Talon grips for better purchase. We mounted a SureFire X400 combination light and laser for use indoors or when the sun goes down. We perched a Holosun red dot sight atop the upper.

Holosun sights combine a ruggedized solar cell along with a battery backup for a robust red dot sighting solution



Running the gun sideways and up above the head “gangsta” style (above) proved about as effective as you might expect. Even at just 10 meters, Will couldn’t keep all the rounds on a standard silhouette. Resting the buffer tube on the cheek (below) looks kind of lame but resulted in superb accuracy. Recoil would likely make this impractical with a more powerful weapon.



taking up minimal space and remains all but weightless. The Holosun sight automatically adjusts its intensity for ambient conditions. This means if you chase something from the outside to the inside or vice versa, you need not call a timeout to fart with your optics.

In keeping with the original design of the AR pistol, we left the buffer tube naked. The point of this exercise was to run the gun in its native state without any ancillary stabilizing contrivances, though virtually all factory guns sport some variety or flavor of PSB. The results were illuminating.

PRACTICAL IMPRESSIONS

Original M16 barrels are 20" long while the M4 tubes most of our grunts are running downrange in the ongoing

kinetic festivities overseas are 14.5". The HK 416 rifle, which sent Osama bin Laden to his eternal reward in the hands of an American Navy SEAL, sported an 11" barrel behind a sound suppressor.

The lightweight 5.56x45mm round was controversial when it was first introduced and it remains controversial today. The subsequent, occasionally acrimonious discourse has already spilt an ocean of ink. The issue is the tiny .22-caliber bullet this round pushes requires speed to be effective. Ranging in weights from 40 grains all the way up to 77, this little projectile better lends itself to use against squirrels than *Homo sapiens* when its velocity drops unduly. Chopping barrels undeniably amps up the cool points but only at the expense of velocity and subsequent effectiveness.

I love a good Hollywood muzzle flash as much as the next archetypal American male, but touching off one of these stubby little guns for real, particularly in dim light, can indeed both trash your night vision and make you a target. One poor unfortunate about whom I recently read was gunned down on the streets of Tombstone, Ariz. in the 1880s at extremely close range. In addition to having his mortal glow suddenly and violently snuffed, he had his suit jacket set afire by the muzzle blast of his opponent’s handgun. In the case of the P516, however, the standard M4 flash suppressor does a remarkably good job of ameliorating muzzle flash. If you doubt my assertion simply twist the device off with a wrench and launch a few rounds downrange at dusk. Don’t forget your sunglasses.

PRACTICAL POSITIONS

We opted for four different shooting positions from which to deduce our assessment. We also fired my favorite Rock Island Armory .22 TCM 1911 alongside the P516 as a control. This gave us a yardstick against which to judge the P516, and the holes were the same size. We fired all courses offhand unsupported at a brisk cadence.

The first iteration involved running the gun off a single-point sling with the arms outstretched. This

technique was pioneered in the HK MP5K machine pistol and offers both stability and maneuverability. Maintaining counter pressure on the sling helps balance recoil and the gun launches rounds naturally in the direction your arms point. This firing position also allows ready access to the optics.

Drawing the weapon up such that the buffer tube rides along the cheek looks lame but actually renders surprising accuracy. This position offers a stable firing foundation along with access to the weapon's sights in a manner somewhat akin to what the gun's original designers intended. Firing in this manner at 10 meters, we tore a jagged hole. While such stuff is made possible by the trivial recoil impulse of the 5.56mm round, I would be reticent to give it a whirl with a more powerful firearm. Such antics with a .308 could result in an introduction to a facial surgeon.

The isosceles stance drives much modern tactical shooting. In these days of ubiquitous body armor, this position also offers a good defense against hostile gunfire. The isosceles position with the body square to the target and both hands outstretched offers pretty fair stability even for a hefty handgun. However, the gun does get heavy fairly quick.

Just for giggles we also fired the gun sideways "gangsta" style. Limitations of the language preclude my adequately describing how comically stupid this is. I have been shot at once before. Suffice it to say if ever I am subjected to such unpleasantness again I sincerely hope the miscreants on the other end practice this particular proclivity.

PRACTICAL REALITY

Though the handgun section of your local gun emporium is invariably the first stop for an American gun novice in search of an entry-level defensive weapon, the sad reality is handguns are the most difficult of all firearms to shoot safely and well. The ideal defensive piece for the



Fired at 10 meters offhand at a brisk cadence with a Rock Island Armory .22TCM 1911 set a control standard for our comparison.



Running the SIG P516 with the cheek resting on the buffer tube took best advantage of the optic (above) and rendered the most accurate results. Firing the P516 off a sling with the arms outstretched offered the best combination of controllability, accuracy and maneuverability (below).



inexperienced shooter is the pistol-caliber submachine gun. However, these handy little weapons are out of most civilian hands but in these handguns-birthered-of-rifles we do see some positive vestiges of the subgun.

Such weapons can indeed make fine defensive tools. Muzzle flash and sheer unfiltered noise are certainly considerations, particularly if these guns are used indoors or, Lord help you, touched off within a confined space like a vehicle. Their sinister visual signature along with the capacity to accept accessories like optical sights, lights, lasers and standard capacity magazines offer tactical capabilities not found on your favorite conventional service pistol. A turbocharged handgun like the SIG P516 might not be the first choice for a concealed carry weapon but should the zombies come — and you know they will — our bit of pseudo-science showed the P516 to be remarkably effective with all three of our legitimate shooting positions.

Burn enough ammo to get comfortable with your gun and practice to find what technique works best for you. During our recent testing we found our P516 grouped tighter than our favorite conventional handgun. It seems a rifle caliber handgun can indeed make for an effective defensive weapon.

GUNS

"PRACTICAL" CARRY WE HAVE A NEW REALITY

Will Dabbs, MD

The year was 1930. My grandfather worked for the railroad and enjoyed a reliable job when many folks had none. Now well into the Great Depression, American society convulsed under the suffocating blanket of true poverty.

People are bad. Anyone who claims otherwise has clearly never met one. We are all of us in desperate need of salvation. However, at that time and at that place most folks still yearned to be productive. The inability to be so pushed men to some dark places.

AN ALARMING ALARM

Money back then was stuff you could actually touch and feel. Not many people had it, but the banks and railroads still did. In the case of my grandfather's employer, the cash was kept in a strongbox on the second floor of the local station alongside a handful of other items of value.

The station master arrived for work one day to find the place molested. Some miscreant had scaled the exterior of the building in the night and gained entrance via an unlocked upstairs

window. A quick inventory showed a handful of pawnable items missing. The railroad official duly reported the breach to the local high sheriff.

The following week it happened again. This time the window had been locked. The thief had forced the latch and again made off with a handful of pilferables. The local sheriff was again duly notified, but the station master had lost his patience.

The next day the official brought his side-by-side 12-gauge from home and wired it to a chair facing the window. He loaded the gun, cocked the hammers and ran a piece of hemp cord through a pair of screw eyelets from the window to the gun's twin triggers. With the weapon thusly configured the man turned out the lights, locked the station and went home to his family.

The following morning when he reported for work, the station master found a room temperature vagrant in the yard outside the building. The demised miscreant had caught a fistful of buckshot to the chest and fallen backwards two stories amidst a liberal dusting of broken glass. The high sheriff was again notified.

The event made the local papers. The

station master had the window repaired and the sheriff congratulated the man on his ingenuity. For the duration of the time my grandfather worked for the railroad there were no more break-ins.

THE REAL WORLD IS SIMPLY NOT FAIR

Can you even imagine what would happen if somebody did that today? The media would portray the 12-bore as some kind of vigilante assault machine-cannon and the victim as an innocent entrepreneur simply exercising his nocturnal free-climbing skills. It wouldn't matter if the dead man had been a sex-trafficking, child-molesting, radical ISIS high Nazi potentate, the ingenious station master would be remanded to prison until the sun burned out. That's because America has gone utterly insane.

If Kyle Rittenhouse has taught us anything, it is that biased media narrative is now reality. It doesn't matter if the shoot was righteous or not. If you were packing something scary and some nearby 15-year-old girl caught you on a cell phone, then your life is over. The prosecutor in the Rittenhouse case would gladly have sacrificed the young man's entire life to display his scalp amidst his office decor.

So how does this apply to everyday carry gear? Pack the best gun you can afford, but don't get carried away. Had Kyle Rittenhouse been armed with a



Back in rural Mississippi in 1930, a scattergun like this made a strikingly effective automated theft deterrent system.



The ATI Nomad single barrel 12-gauge will set you back a C-note and won't freak out the neighbors.

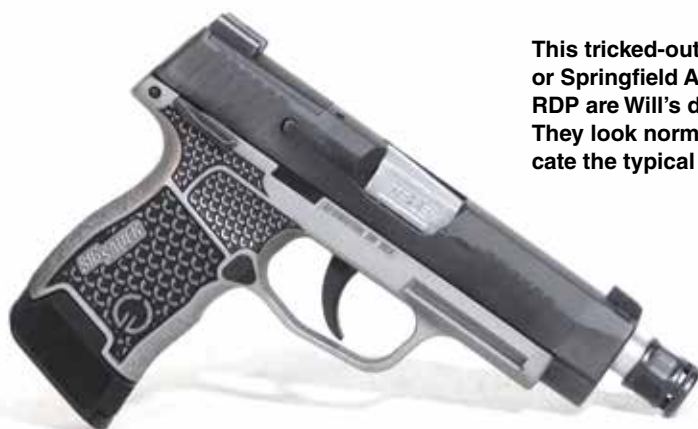


A Mini Uzi and an MP5K might indeed be the most efficient close combat tools in the world but good luck convincing a jury you weren't out looking for trouble if life goes sideways while you're packing one.

Pedestrian guns like this Canik TP9 from Century (left) or this Rock Island Armory M200 .38 revolver are timelessly effective without alarming the natives unduly.



This tricked-out SIG P365XL (left) or Springfield Armory Hellcat RDP are Will's daily carry pieces. They look normal enough to placate the typical pedestrian juror.



Ruger 10/22, a single-action Colt, or a lever-action .30-30 he still would have been dragged through the mud, but he likely wouldn't have gotten quite so muddy. I have myself proposed both short-barreled shotguns and stubby rifle-caliber pistols as defensive arms. However, we need to view it through a realistic lens.

A CHOICE TO MAKE

If the pending currency collapse/ alien invasion/zombie apocalypse

does ever upend civilized society, I will indeed grab my favorite black rifle and half-a-dozen P-Mags. Should I need to defend myself or my family against run-of-the-mill bodily harm, by contrast, I'll stick with a handgun. In fact, the weapons I keep handy while out and about are often fairly nondescript. My daily carry gun is either a tricked-out SIG P365 or a Springfield Armory Hellcat, but the kind of iron living in my glove box is more typically something along

the lines of a Canik TP9 from Century or a Rock Island Armory .38 revolver. Both weapons work great but shouldn't provoke the ire of the local DA unduly.

So leave the Uzis and MP5s for recreational blasting on the weekends. Practice with your favorite optimized black rifle just in case the Canadians invade. For those times when life might go truly pear-shaped, however, we might better just stick with a pistol.

GUNS



The Spyderco SpyOpera, manufactured by well-known Italian manufacturer LionSteel, is an elegant gent's folder masking a hard-use Spyderco at heart.

SPYDERCO SPYOPERA A KNIFE AT THE OPERA!

Pat Covert

While Spyderco has gained a huge reputation for affordable, hardworking EDCs over the years, the company likes to delight their followers with a slick, more opulent folding knife from time to time. The classy, streamlined SpyOpera is just such a knife. Produced for Spyderco by upscale Italian manufacturer LionSteel, well known for their high-quality European fare, the SpyOpera is an EDC that crosses over into the more refined realm of the “Gent’s folder.”

The SpyOpera is 6.90" fully deployed with a 2.88" Bohler M390 stainless steel Drop Point blade reporting for business. Spyderco keeps the blade lock simple with a strong, easy-to-locate lock-back mechanism positioned on

the spine of the handle. At 4.02" closed and weighing just 2.70 oz. — Titanium liners help keep the weight in check — this is a folder light enough to be carried loose in the pocket or you can keep the SpyOpera at the ready using its lightweight, wire-frame pocket clip. True to most of their folding fare, the pocket clip is reversible for Southpaws. The handle scales are a handsome, polished tan Micarta, tightly fit using Torx screw construction.

WHY YOU’LL LIKE IT

Business first. Bohler is Europe’s preeminent manufacturer of fine, proprietary steels and their M390 stainless is highly regarded for its ability to retain a keen blade edge, even under repeated hard use. In fact, you’ll find this same steel on premium, hard-use



A look at the rear base reveals the upscale folder’s tight construction.

survival knives. But the big show is the SpyOpera’s sanitary good looks. This is not a knife that wows with bells and whistles rather than its substance and manner. The SpyOpera’s fit and finish is impeccable throughout. Simply put, it is one of those pocket knives that surpasses expectations in the hand.

MSRP: \$250

GUNS

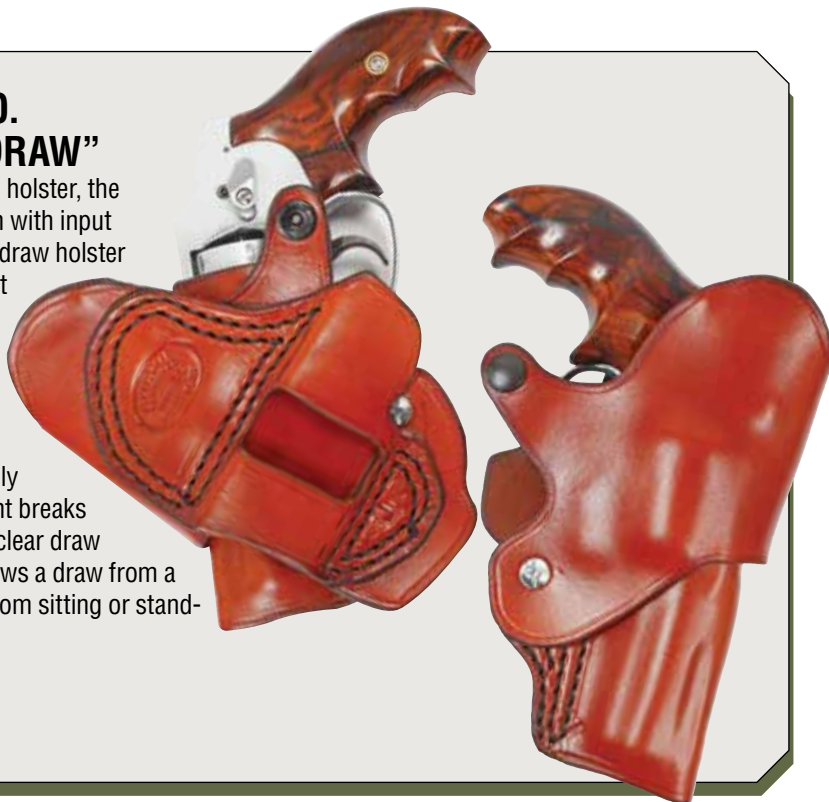
Spyderco.com

RITCHIE LEATHER CO. GXD, "GAYLORD CROSS DRAW"

Based on the famous Chick Gaylord "Comet" holster, the Ritchie brothers have modified their version with input from our own Tiger McKee. This is a cross-draw holster riding higher and tighter than the original. Our test rig is made to fit up to a 3" S&W J-Frame and is absolutely perfect for anyone spending time chair-bound (including disabled shooters), driving or anytime a cross-draw carry makes sense.

To draw, you grab the grip and pivot the grip downward. The inner portion of the holster actually holding the gun rotates downward. The movement breaks open the snaps holding the gun, allowing a fluid, clear draw toward the front. It's a natural movement and allows a draw from a cross-draw holster to be done amazingly easily from sitting or standing. It's also done without any undue contortion.

Introductory price: \$150
RitchieHolsters.com



EYEPAL PEEP SIGHTING SYSTEM

A couple of years ago I stumbled onto the EyePal system and it literally changed my ability to use iron sights. I was in the "giving up" stage and swapping to optics when the EyePal did its magic. Developed by a gent named Charlie Summers, who also happens to have retired from MIT as an optical specialist, the little plastic "clingy" EyePal patches adhere to your glasses and can be used hundreds of times.

The key here is they have a small hole or "peep" in the center, sized for handguns, shotguns or rifles. According to Charlie there's all sorts of science going on, but the bottom line is when stuck to your glasses, it allows you to see the rear and front sight *and* the target clearly. No fooling. I was suddenly able to use irons accurately again. MSRP is \$24.95 for a set and I'm telling you — just do it. Thank me later.

MSRP: \$24.95
EyePalUSA.com



LEWIS LEAD REMOVER

I dearly love to shoot, especially revolvers, but just as dearly hate to clean the things. During a phase in the middle 1970s I was shooting tens of thousands of .38 wadcutters yearly and my 6" Model 19 PPC gun was pretty much a constant lead mess. After trying everything, I stumbled onto the Lewis Lead Remover and presto — suddenly "getting the lead out" was fast and easy. No fooling. You basically use a cleaning-rod-like contraption to pull brass-screen covered fittings through the barrel and chambers. The brass screen scrapes the lead out while not harming the steel one bit.

Follow up with a bit of solvent, a bore brush, then some patches and you're good to go. I could de-lead my shooter in about 10 minutes and so can you. It comes in all the calibers you need and costs about \$30 depending on the kit you buy. Brownells bought the company some years ago so get it right from them. **GUNS**

MSRP: Starting at \$36.99
Brownells.com

DEFENSE EQUALS OFFENSE

REMEMBER THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR ALL FOR FREEDOM

Dave Workman

“**T**he best defense is a good offense,” says the old adage. It applies perfectly to the fight over our Second Amendment rights and as we roll into mid-spring, keep your eyes on the prize as you remember one thing — people died to preserve this right for you, and we will honor their memory at the end of May.

NEXT GOAL

The immediate prize would be an affirmative ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *New York Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen*. If the high court sticks with tradition, a ruling in this volatile Second Amendment case challenging the Empire State’s highly restrictive concealed carry permit scheme will come down late next month.

If gun owners win, don’t gloat. A victory will put anti-gunners on the spot and will give you an opportunity to question incumbents running for re-election this fall, along with challengers hoping to replace. Here’s how to quickly tell the good guys from the bad guys:

“I support the Second Amendment, but I think there must be some common-sense regulation of where people can carry firearms.” This is a “bad guy” response and a monumentally stupid one. It’s boilerplate; the kind of camo-speak politicians use to deceive the rubes.

“It’s about time the New York law was struck down and the right to bear arms is recognized as one that extends beyond the front door of your home.” This is a “good guy” response, and what should be taught to every class on American Government in every high school in the country.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Political candidates have far too long gotten away with “supporting”

the Second Amendment — “but.” In the firearms community we shouldn’t “support” the right to keep and bear arms, we should “exercise” it. We “live” it every day and we don’t need to prove to any bureaucrat we have a “special need.”

We can certainly cheer a victory next month if it comes, but we shouldn’t relax and let down our guard because there are more battles on the horizon. An affirmative ruling will not be the end of the legal battle, it will be the beginning.



Seven other states have similar discretionary permitting schemes and you can safely wager every one of those states is already trying to figure out how they will dance around any favorable ruling to gun rights. They will not quietly go along, instead offering arguments why their laws are different and therefore not affected by a New York ruling.

Keep this in perspective — this month will end with the Memorial Day observance. It’s not a weekend celebration to open the camping season; it is a day to remember all of those American servicemen and women who

made the ultimate sacrifice so the rest of us can enjoy our rights, including the Second Amendment. Memorial Day is not about hot dogs, hamburgers and picnics, and never was. It is about honoring the men and women who lost their lives defending those rights, including the right to keep and bear arms.

If you’ve been paying attention to this column, by now you will have been tucking money away to support a favored political candidate — or several candidates — who best represent you views. Over the next few weeks, figure out who these people are, contact them, write them a check, volunteer your time, set up an event for them to attend and share their views.

MID-TERMS

Just over six months from now, we all get to vote in the mid-term elections. This will be your opportunity to help take Congress away from anti-gunners and effectively put the Biden-Harris gun control agenda down for the count. Likewise, help change your state legislature. As this column explained last month, Virginia did it, so can you.

If Republicans take over the House of Representatives, watch for radical dinosaurs such as Nancy Pelosi, Steny Hoyer and their comrades to retire. If Republicans re-capture the Senate, you might be saying “good-bye” to Dianne Feinstein, Bernie Sanders and maybe even Chuck Schumer. They will not like being out of power and if they stick around, it is your job as a constituent to help make them miserable.

Here are some other things for your political wish list:

- Legislation mandating national reciprocity for all concealed carry permits and licenses by all states. National “constitutional carry” will come later because you’ve got to do this sort of thing in steps. Anti-gunners

invariably overreach and it costs them. We show our allies on Capitol Hill that reciprocity works, they will be more likely to take our efforts to the next level.

- Legislation requiring all states to become NICS compliant, coupled with a provision any holder of an active concealed carry license anywhere in the country can purchase and take home a handgun on the same day. This is something you can also demand from your state legislators. It should be non-negotiable.

- A bill allowing cross-state purchasing of handguns. If you can clear a NICS check in your home state, you can clear a NICS check in a neighboring state or six states away. You are the same unique individual and you use the same information on a Form 4473 whether in Portland, Ore. or Portland, Maine. This must also not be open to negotiation. The creation of the NICS system should have automatically nullified this restriction years ago. It is time to fix this.

As gun owners, remind your political representative you're not asking the impossible. You're not even asking for anything special. You are merely asking to be able to exercise your rights as a citizen regardless of whether or not you cross an invisible state line — and you expect them to act in your interest.

GET IN THE FIGHT

In the event your representative just can't find the time to meet with you, they don't get a second chance to blow you off. Support their opponent, recruit an opponent or become their opponent and be prepared to fight. Politics is a contact down-in-the-gutter sport and comfortable incumbents who find ways to avoid you deserve to end up being unable to ignore you when you campaign to throw them out.

You must never allow yourself to be convinced your vote or your involvement is irrelevant. Cemeteries across the country are the final resting places of people who gave their all so you could live free. Remember them on May 30, and do your part to keep this country a place worthy of their sacrifice. **GUNS**

CROSSFIRE

continued from page 25

TIP OF THE HAT

My Henry .22 is about 10 years old, but lightly used and developed some flaking of the finish on the receiver lately. I contacted Henry and they sent me a prepaid label to return the gun to the factory with no cost to me. That's fantastic service and a wonderful warranty. But, even more, I got the gun back in my hands 10 working days from the day I shipped it. That is an awesome turn around. I'm so glad Henrys are made and serviced in the USA. Kudos to Henry! I guess my dreams of a 357 magnum lever action will have to be another Henry.

Alan Weber



TANKS FOR THE INFO

Kudos to Tank for his "Pocket Dump and Peanut Butter Jars" column in the March 2022 issue. These small but well thought out caches are totally useful daily and not just for emergencies. Cash is still king and .380s still sting enough to slow down and possibly stop an opposing problem. Only thing I might add would be an Esbit stove and a few fuel tabs to heat water for the coffee or tea I would drink while settling myself down to make a plan for the next move. Again, good stuff anybody could put together and use.

Great magazine — you keep me turning down the offers from the competition.

Mark MacDonald

9MM CARBINE VERSUS PISTOL

Why are the 9mm carbine actions so much larger and heavier than with a 9mm pistol?

Gary W. Badger



BIG BELLY GUNS

As many of your articles do, John Taffin's recent series on "Belly Guns" made me wax philosophical. I opine the potentially most-promising big-bore belly gun of all was the S&W Model 296 in .44 special. However, the design was fatally flawed by S&W's use of its superlight titanium frame that limited the M296 to bullets not heavier than 200 grains. Recoil with heavier bullets could unseat the bullets from unfired cartridges, allowing them to move forward and lock up the cylinder. Had the gun been made in steel, it could have used the ammunition for which the .44 special was intended and would have appealed to fans of the .44 Special's big-bore heavy bullets.

Marshall Williams

I don't think there is a technical reason aside from the fact there are no major weight concerns with a carbine as with a pistol, along with the idea a more robust chassis tends to keep everything lined up and working properly. I'm sure most of the 9mm carbines could shave a few ounces off here and there, but what major advantage would it give and at what cost in performance and reliability? —BW

MORE CONNOR

It's cold, wet, muddy and just off of two 4" snowfalls in middle Tennessee. Last night, I pulled out my collection of John Connor's *Guncrank Diaries* from *American Handgunner* as published last year. I think this will be my third read of the book. I know you can't get it out before this winter is over but, please, please, please, compile and publish a collection of his Angry Odd Shot columns from *GUNS Magazine* soon. He flipped back and forth on subjects between the two magazines so much that we faithful readers need both. If you are able

continued on page 73



BRISTOL SIDE-BY-SIDE TRISTAR ARMS

TriStar Arms' *Bristol Side-By-Side* shotguns offer the traditional elegance and functionality of a classic side-by-side shotgun. The English-stocked, Color Case-Hardened and the gold-adorned, laser-engraved Silver Walnut are now offered in 16

gauge. These models have the same features as the rest of the line: Auto Ejectors, Brass Front Sight, Single Selective Trigger, Chrome-Lined Chamber and 28" Barrel, Select Turkish Walnut Stock and more. MSRP: \$1,190 for the Color Case-Hardened; \$1,130 for the Silver Walnut. For more info: (816) 421-1400, TriStarArms.com



UTAS UT9-M MINI DAVIDSON'S

The *UTAS UT9-M Mini* from Davidson's is a 6"-barreled semi-automatic pistol. The closed-bolt, blowback action 9mm pistol has a black matte finish and an OAL of just 1". It accepts AR15 pistol buffer tubes as well as GLOCK magazines. The UT9-M Mini comes with one 33-round mag, a hard shell plastic case, full-length top Picatinny rail and a forward hand stop. MSRP: \$1,099.99. For more info: (928) 776-8055, DavidsonsInc.com

OWB MAGAZINE HOLDER REMORA HOLSTERS

Remora's *OWB (Outside the Waistband) Magazine Holder* features a full-side Velcro flap that allows the user to adjust for perfect cant and comfort. All magazine holders are of the same original "Non-Slip" material used for IWB carry. The holder can accommodate a single stack .22 to a double stack .45 magazine, speed strip, small flashlight, or knife. MSRP: \$22.95. For more info: (239) 316-7770, RemoraHolsters.com



LICOS SMART RED DOT HENRICH TECHNOLOGY CO.

The *LICOS Smart Red Dot* makes taking the shot easier. A laser rangefinder is inserted directly into the red dot sight allowing the shooter to range the distance to the target. This gives accurate data for the point of aim. A wireless remote can be mounted to the stock and a single press is all it takes to give you the range. The LICOS does the rest for you. MSRP: \$599. For more info: HenrichTech.com

SCO15 UPPER RECEIVER SILENCERCO

SilencerCo announces the release of the *SCO15 Upper Receiver*. Ideal for pairing with the SCO15 Lower Receiver, the premium AR-15 stripped upper receiver features a mil-spec 1913 Picatinny rail and M4 feed ramps. Precision machined from billet 7075 aluminum with Type III hard anodized finish, the SCO15 Upper Receiver is also compatible with mil-spec forward assists and dust covers. MSRP: \$219. For more info: (801) 417-5384, SilencerCo.com



TAURUS GX4 T.O.R.O 9MM TAURUS

Taurus introduces the next iteration of its GX4 micro-compact pistol with the *Taurus GX4 T.O.R.O 9mm*. The GX4 T.O.R.O. adopts the Taurus Optic Ready Option mounting system to allow mounting of several popular micro-red dot sights. The GX4 T.O.R.O. also comes with a flush-mount slide cover plate for use with the non-optic option. The mounting pattern covers the Shield RMSc, Holosun HS507K and HS407K, the SIG ROMEOZero and more. MSRP: \$468.18. For more info: (800) 327-3776, TaurusUSA.com



XR920 CROSSOVER PISTOL SHADOW SYSTEMS CORP.

The *XR920 Crossover Pistol* was born out of a custom request for law enforcement. It has a compact-length slide machined from 17-4 stainless steel and a full 17+1 capacity frame. Chambered in 9mm with a 7.25" barrel, the pistol's polymer frame is ergonomically designed and has an aggressive grip texture and extended beavertail. The XR920 crossover showcases two styles — Combat and Elite. MSRP: From \$1,046. For more info: (469) 663-6359, ShadowSystemsCorp.com



591 SHORT ACTION SURGEON RIFLES

Surgeon Rifles' 591 Short Action is made of 4240 chrome moly 38-40RC. Weighing 2 lbs., 5.6 oz., it is offered in single shot, left hand and right hand. There is an integral 0.250" recoil lug and 20 MOA 1913 MIL-STD Picatinny rail running the full length of the action. A side-mounted, shrouded, bolt-stop helps prevent the bolt from releasing accidentally. MSRP: \$1,295. For more info: (623) 780-1050, SurgeonRifles.com



SHIELD JACKET ALPS OUTDOORZ

The *Shield Jacket* from OutdoorZ is suitable for hunting as well as everyday wear. Constructed of a polyester shell with a thick Sherpa fleece interior, the Shield Jacket is offered as a quarter-zip pullover with a high neck collar or as a full-zip jacket with a fleece-lined hood. The Shield Jacket and the Element Hoodie (pullover or full-zip) are stylish and functional garments for cold weather and part of OutdoorZ's expanded line of outdoor apparel. MSRP: From \$49.99. For more info: (800) 344-2577, AlpsOutdoorZ.com



RIVAL MICRO TREESTAND HAWK

The *Rival Micro Treestand* is based on a 20.5"x17.5" platform and flip-up seat. The assembly folds flat for easy, unobtrusive transport and the simple design and light weight make it easy to install to a tree with ratchet tree straps. The Rival Micro comes with a full-body safety harness. The treestand weighs 10.1 lbs. and is made of aluminum with nylon web seat construction. MSRP: \$249.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, Shop.HawkHunting.com

5-SLOT M-LOK LOW-PRO CANTILEVER ERGO GRIPS

The *ERGO 5-slot M-LOK Low-Pro Cantilever* (SKU 4768) allows you to use your Picatinny accessories on your M-LOK handguards. The outside is a Picatinny rail while the inside is the mounting system to the M-LOK handguard. The cantilever is made of 6061 T6 Aluminum with a hard-anodized finish. MSRP: \$37.99. For more info: (877) 281-3783 ext. 0, ERGOgrips.net



AIR HUNTER PCP PELLETS NORTHERN PRECISION

The *Air Hunter PCP Pellets* in .300 diameter for 25 and 50 caliber are made using Corbin equipment and hand-made one at a time. Northern Precision takes pride in making jacketed bullets. MSRP: \$10 for a sample pack of 10 pellets; \$20 for 50 of the .300 diameter dish base hollow points. For more info: (231) 768-4435, northernprecisionproducts.com



UNIVERSAL CONCEALED CARRY PACKAGE GREY MAN TACTICAL

With Grey Man Tactical's *Universal Concealed Carry Package*, your everyday carry items are always concealed and easily accessible. Use the pre-configured package with your favorite bag. It includes a #401 Backpack RMP (Rigid MOLLE Panel) Insert, a Universal Pistol Holster, a Double Mag Pouch and more. MSRP: \$109 to \$144 for the total package; \$40 to \$75 for RMP Insert; \$69 for other items. For more info: (985) 290-3161, GreyManTactical.com



A.P.I. SHOTGUN STORAGE BAG ARMS PRESERVATION INC.

The *A.P.I. Shotgun Storage Bag* from Arms Preservation Inc. protects shotguns and rifles with traditional stocks from rust. The storage bag uses a combination of Vapor Corrosion Inhibitor (VCI) and barrier packaging materials to prevent corrosion in firearms, spare parts and ammunition. A.P.I. bags are also available for pistols and tactical rifles. MSRP: \$19.99 and \$24.99 for shotgun and rifle bags respectively; \$11.99 for pistol bags. For more info: (585) 455-0681, APiGunBag.com

**SUBMIT
YOUR
ENTRY
ONLINE:**

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

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

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

SHADOW SYSTEMS CR920 ELITE PACKAGE

The CR in CR920 stands for Covert Role, quite apt for this ultra-concealable 9mm handgun, which happens to be our top giveaway prize in this issue of *GUNS Magazine*. Just released at SHOT Show 2022, Shadow Systems' subcompact shoots like a full-size! The new CR920 has all the ergonomics and features you expect from a Shadow Systems pistol, with subcompact concealability. It has directional serrations in front, rear and topside of the slide, a match-grade, spiral-fluted barrel, flat-faced, drop safe trigger, patented multi-footprint optic cut that directly mounts with most micro sized RDS optics and a light rail for micro lights. Capacity is 13+1 with a patent-pending basepad or 10+1 with a flush magazine option. The CR920 fits G43x/G48 holsters.

Streamlight describes their *TLR-7A Flex* as "small and mighty." Indeed, it is. Weighing 2.4 oz. with a length of 2.58", this tactical weapon light produces 500 lumens of light at a beam distance of 140 meters. With an ambidextrous rear switch to suit your shooting style, the TLR-7A Flex runs on a single CR123A lithium battery. If you win this giveaway, you can mount it on your CR920, all the better to see your target!

The *Minimalist Persian* from CRKT is a fixed-blade knife that glides and cuts like a scalpel. It is lightweight and easy-to-sharpen. Its 2.76" plain-edge blade is made of 8Cr13MoV with a bead blast finish. The handle is resin infused fiber. The Minimalist Persian has an OAL of 5.81" and comes with a thermoplastic sheath.

The *GUNS May 2022* giveaway with its compact package is just right for you. Win Shadow Systems' CR920 Elite with Bronze Spiral-Fluted Barrel, Streamlight's TLR-7A Flex and CRKT's Minimalist Persian! All you got to do is enter! Go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or mail a post card. —Jazz Jimenez **GUNS**



MINIMALIST PERSIAN

Manufacturer: CRKT
(800) 891-3100
CRKT.com
Value: \$36



CKAGE GIVEAWAY

CR920 ELITE WITH BRONZE SPIRAL-FLUTED BARREL

Manufacturer: Shadow Systems
(469) 458-6808

ShadowSystemsCorp.com

Caliber: 9mm, **Capacity:** 10+1 and 13+1,
Barrel Length: 3.4", **OAL:** 6.37", **Weight:** 17.8 oz.
Value: \$940



**TOTAL
VALUE:
\$1,201.75**



TLR-7A FLEX

Manufacturer: Streamlight
(800) 523-7488

Streamlight.com

Value: \$225.75

BEING SALTY — WITH A SMILE

PREPARE FOR THE WORST AND LIVE THE BEST!



Just relaxing
between shots.
What a great day!

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

Being a cop provides you with a front row seat to the greatest show on earth. However, exposure to life’s rawest theater comes with consequences. Your head will shake while your jaw drops as society’s worst actors reinforce the idea evil is real. You’ll see strange, twisted behavior that never crossed your mind.

After decades of witnessing these acts, your sense of humor gets twisted too. Over time the incidents lose their shock appeal. As a matter of fact, nothing surprises you anymore, a sign of saltiness. Amongst the ranks, an “Old Salt” is an endearing term for those veteran officers who’ve seen it all.

LAUGH OR CRY?

Humor makes most things tolerable. Twisted humor is the mechanism cops use to make serious situations more bearable by making light of life’s ugly events. The ability to pluck strands of wit, or bemusement from grisly occurrences is a release valve for stress.

Gallows humor allows cops to function, preserving their sanity. I always surrounded myself with fellow cops who kept the mood light and airy, until it was time to put on our game face. No sense being stressed or weepy, there’s more than enough to go around. These traits follow cops into retirement too — you know evil exists and your sense of humor is warped.

PEACE PACKERS

Most retired cops are always armed. They’d all shield their loved ones from danger without hesitation. Most would, for total strangers. When going out, old cops are alert, looking for trouble. Not to confront, but to avoid. They don’t need confrontation.

First rule of survival is being armed, second is to avoid using force, sidestepping confrontations. Retirees have no



Here’s Tank checking out some guns. There is a common vulgar description for this kind of grin!



Chicken wings and baked beans in the smoker.

powers of arrest. Their gun can only be used for protection from great bodily harm or death of themselves or others. This is why retired cops are happy staying home or visiting with known, trusted friends.

HOME ON THE RANGE

On the home front, the best example of being prepared can be explained by introducing my friend Phil. A cop's cop, retiring years ago, Phil was a Trooper, K9 handler, SWAT team member and finally Firearms Instructor. No Marvin Milquetoast, Phil is all Trooper. He cleaned things up by locking up bad guys. Simple formula, eh?

Most cops desire seclusion at home, dreaming of living on top of a mountain or out in the middle of nowhere, having a long line of sight. Phil did just that, building his house on top of the highest point of his 67-acre property. His driveway is about a half-mile, complete with motion sensors. Yeah, plural!

Having 90 seconds to "get ready" when alerted, he grabs his trusty Walmart Greeter, a shortened double-barreled shotgun. Carried along his leg, it's unnoticeable, as he steps onto his deck, peering out, waiting. If known, he returns the greeter, if not, it stays by his side.

Inside, Phil's La-Z-Boy chair has a .38 snubby within reach. He also has a 6" S&W model 28 Highway Patrolman tucked away to answer any trouble. He's rehearsed scenarios with his wife, should a home invader make the mistake of entering, involving his Colt 1911.

Does he sound paranoid? Phil simply says, "I'm too old to fight and too young to die!" Is it paranoia if you know people are willing to hurt you for your belongings? Most cops believe it's better to have and not need, being prepared for the worst, while hoping for the best.

HUMOR ME

Phil's over 75, sharp as a tack, and has a great sense of humor. I constantly get several funny emails from him, some needing to be opened privately.

Here's Phil, master of ceremonies, checking the status of things.



Here's the chow tent! First class all the way!

He shares them to keep things light and airy. But rest assured, when it's time to put on his game face and take care of business, Phil is ready. We meet regularly for breakfast, both always armed, always cheerful, always happy, always prepared. You'd never know it.

SHOOTOUT

Phil loves life, America, friends and

guns. He hosts a Shootout every spring for his closest friends to shoot, eat a catered breakfast and lunch, catch up, have some laughs and enjoy life. What else is there? Be smart, stay safe, have fun and laugh when you can. Be prepared for the worst while enjoying the best life has to offer. Be an "Old Salt" and think like Phil! Have fun while being safe.

GUNS

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

ADVERTISER	PAGE	ADVERTISER	PAGE
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I was so happy with the downright giveaway price, I figured whatever trouble experienced in moving the beast into my office would be offset many, many times by the savings. I would live to regret this idea.

Moving day arrived and at the appointed time, I backed a heavy-duty trailer up to my friend's door. I had borrowed several stout lads — all bribed with scarce ammunition — so along with the former owner and I, there were plenty of people to manhandle the safe out the door, onto the trailer then into my office.

As I entered his house, I saw a massive gray object blocking the path. I began looking around for my safe and my friend said, "Nope, that's it." I detected a hint of humor in his voice. He would live to regret the mirth.

The safe was bigger than I remembered by a factor of 10. In fact, I'd never seen a safe this large outside of a Federal Reserve bank. With 6"-thick walls and a door heavy enough to seal Strategic Air Command headquarters, this thing was massive. We all stood there in a circle staring at the spectacle, silently feeling our back ligaments tear and nascent hernias beginning to form.

THE PLAN

After stalling as long as possible, we attacked the problem in earnest. First, we removed the door, expecting it to be unbelievably heavy and unwieldy and were surprised to find we were correct. It took all of the assembled help to move the door into the trailer, which didn't bode well for the next operation.

A heavy-duty two-wheel dolly was slid under the side of the safe and secured with the same type of strap truckers use to anchor bulldozers. Grunting, straining, panting and swearing much like the aforementioned slaves — minus the flogging — we slowly pushed the safe up to an angle where it was balanced on the two solid rubber wheels of the dolly at a 30-degree angle. Two unfortunate

victims were chosen to keep the payload from tipping either direction, a situation which would have either resulted in a safe-shaped hole in the floor or two red greasy spots under the dolly.

Slowly, surely and surly, we wrestled the safe to the door. Now came three concrete steps down into the trailer. Various possibilities were considered until we realized simple brute force was the only technique needed. What could possibly go wrong?

Surprisingly, the move only took us an hour and we even held the casualty rate below 40%, if you don't count the small dog which disappeared during the latter stages of the move. I did later notice a hairy, platter-sized stain on the trailer floor but I'm sure there is no connection between the two events.

EASY DOES IT

At my house, it was smooth sailing. There were only two steps up to negotiate and a straight shot down the hall to my office. Everything went well and only two men succumbed to injuries. Before long the hulking gray beast was sitting in front of the large walk-in closet where it would soon reside. This is when a sick feeling, much like a boiling acid pool in the pit of my stomach, began to take shape.

Can you imagine what would happen if you purchased a 72-ton gun safe and wrestled it into position only to discover it was a half-inch too big to fit through the final door? For somebody to do such a thing would be the height of stupidity and carelessness.

Therefore, I'll just mention final positioning of the safe went well — after we removed the door, piece of trim, pieces of wall and several of my fingers. The remaining group, including several passersby, contorted into impossible and perhaps even illegal positions but eventually managed to wrestle the ungainly beast into position, where it will remain until the stars burn out and the trumpet of Gabriel sounds.

And, if Gabriel wants a gun safe on that day, I hope he's got a couple of burly archangels on the team because I'm sure my group will still be in traction.

GUNS

to throw a message tied to a rock into Connor's bunker, let him know he and his columns are sorely missed.

Steve Phillips

We get a lot of reader mail on John, but try as we might, he's not interested in coming back ... yet. I'll keep working on it. And finally, the book side of things is above my pay grade, but I'll pass this along. —BW



PAGE-LEWIS RIFLE

Wondering if you could forward this email to Payton Miller. He wrote an article for *GUNS* March 2022 on the Page-Lewis Model D. I have a Remington Model 33 Smooth Bore with no date or serial number and it's very similar to the one pictured on page 28. Total length is 44". My Grandfather had it for many years and passed it down through my dad to me. He said it was part of a "Father/Son" set and actually had the "Son" rifle in his hands, but didn't buy it. It's not very accurate with ball ammunition and my grandfather had it by the back door to shoot red squirrels using shot. Seems to be in good shape. Wondering if you have any history on the guns and where I might start looking for the "Son" companion.

Kent Crossley

The Remington Model 33 was produced from 1932 to 1935, according to the Blue Book of Gun Values. They list a total production run of 263,557. Smoothbore versions are slightly pricier than the rifled ones. I saw two rifled ones listed on GunBroker.com with beginning bids at around \$150. Short of lucking out at the used rack in your local Mom and Pop gunstore, that would probably be your best bet. Good luck! —Payton Miller

GUNS

MOVING DAY

IT ONLY LOOKS SAFE

Brent T. Wheat

Looking at the massive object, gray and solid, I knew how Egyptian slaves must have felt as they gazed upon the unfinished pyramids.

It stood nearly as tall as myself, I could almost lie comfortably on the horizontal top and it was nearly the same dimension front-to-back. The monolith was approximately the same weight as a block of solid granite and was by far one of the largest non-vehicle objects I had ever personally contemplated grappling with, aside from an angry female chap-erone at a Freshman mixer.

So why had I agreed to purchase this gun safe?

NECESSITIES

Let's commence at the beginning, where all the great Greek tragedies start. In this case, things launched with the phone call leading to my post as the Grand Poohbah of *GUNS Magazine*. After the initial shock wore off, I found myself quoting Roy Schneider in the famous scene from *Jaws* while stumbling into the kitchen in a state of shell-shock, muttering to my wife, "We're gonna need a bigger safe ..." And, to be sure, I did.

Now I'll reveal another personal dirty little secret

— at the time, my existing gun safe was tiny. It was larger than a bread-box but just barely. Even though I had been an outdoor and gun writer for several decades, my firearm collection was modest, even laughable, by most standards. The blame lies primarily with my selfish wife and children who were constantly whining about having luxuries we simply couldn't afford — food, clothing, shelter, heart medication, etc.

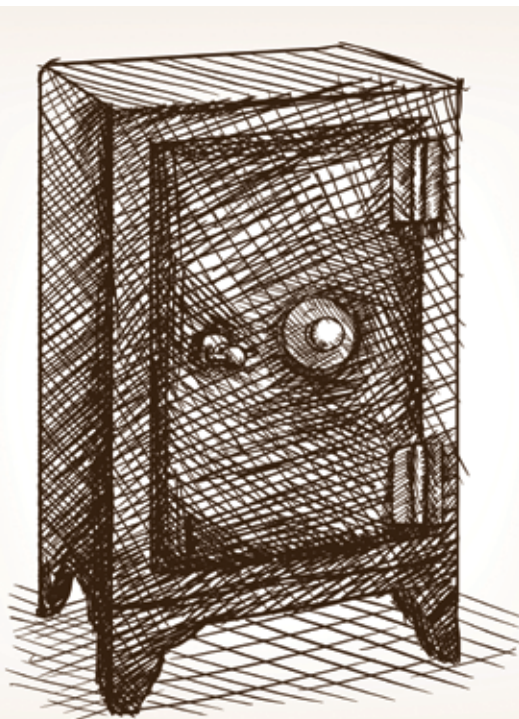
This was because I had discovered too late all the necessary outdoor gear — cameras, shooting accessories, hunting paraphernalia, fishing poles, boats, scuba gear, ropes and harnesses, decoys, boots, tents, sleeping bags, packs and trailers to transport all of the accumulated flotsam — wasn't sustained by the \$200 I was making for the occasional freelance article. This state of affairs seriously crimped my gun budget. I eventually realized an outdoor journalist came up with the old analogy, "The world is your oys-

including the helicopter wing. This certainly wouldn't be a "cash-and-carry" transaction.

I visited every sales outlet in the area, plus online stores, where I quickly discovered the spirits of any sales professional were instantly lifted by simply mentioning the words "gun safe." If you've ever seen a 4-year-old unexpectedly handed an ice cream cone, you get the general idea. As safes are now valued by the pound at the same rate as flawless diamonds, the sales commission alone was probably more than my first house.

After months of sticker shock, I finally broke down and started to purchase a safe. It was smaller than what I wanted but the only thing I could realistically afford. I was in the process of haggling the details — for instance, would they accept one kidney or two — when my phone buzzed. It was a friend offering to sell me one of his very large safes as he discovered it would be cheaper to build a midsize nuclear reactor in the backyard than pay someone to move the safe into his new home.

The deal was consummated instantly via text message, much to the chagrin of the salesclerk, who was already thinking about



ter, but you can't seem to pry open the damn shell."

SHOPAHOLIC

As gun magazine editors are blessed to handle large numbers of firearms as part of their daily jobs, my pitiful poor gun safe would obviously need replacement, a prospect I didn't relish. Not only are safes of the required size frightfully expensive, they weigh more than a standard aircraft carrier

adding the unicorn-leather seat option to his new Masarati once my credit card cleared. I walked out laughing, secure in the knowledge I had made a good deal *and* both kidneys would remain mine for the foreseeable future.

SOLD

The deal was done upon pictures and my hazy memories of the safe.

continued on page 73



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