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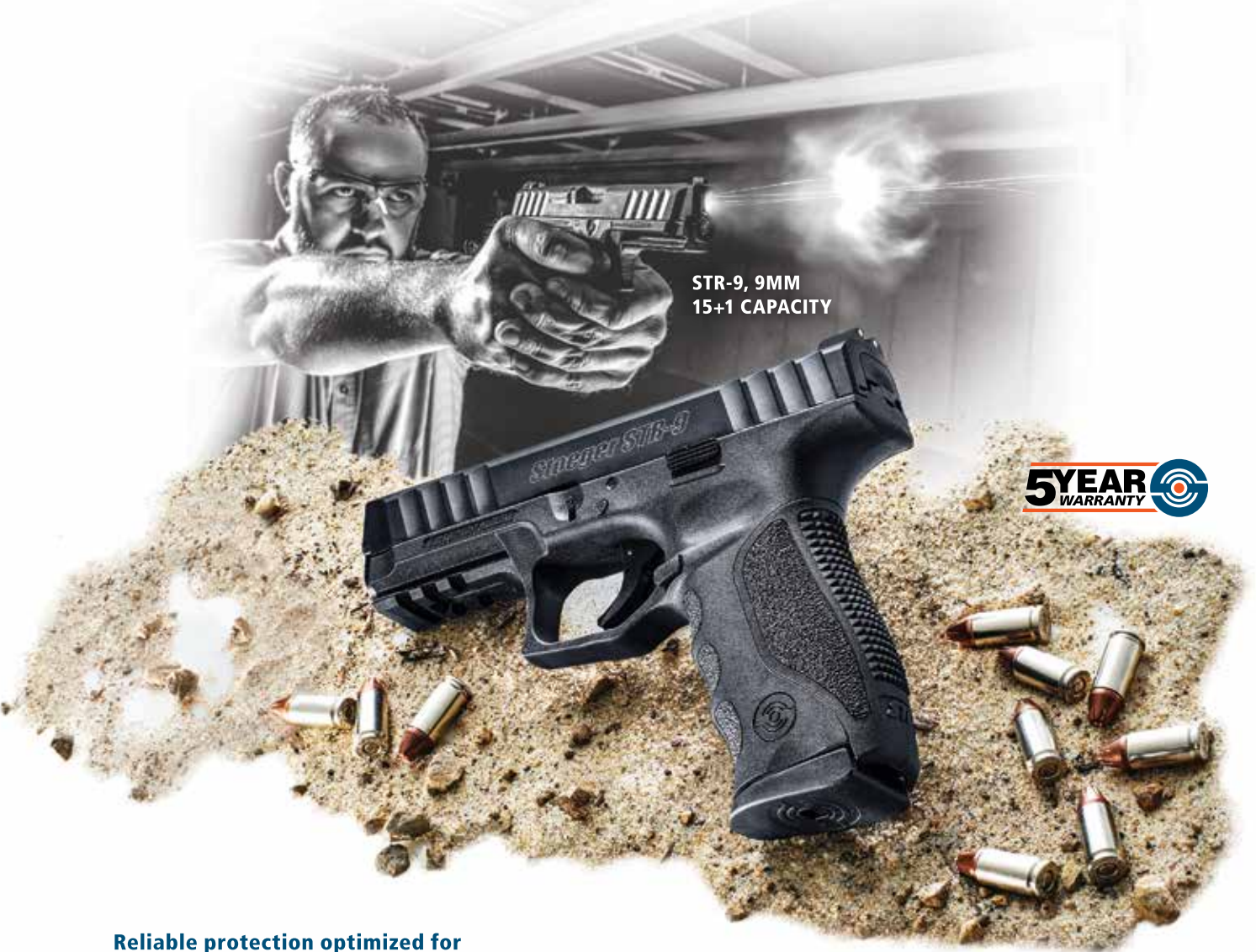
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2021

Volume 46 • Number 6 • Issue 272

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER



FEATURES

34 GUNCRANK DIARIES

Suffering for My Art: Riding the Lightning WILL DABBS, MD

38 TEST THAT GUN!

Best Methods For Testing Handgun Accuracy BRAD MILLER

42 RARE? ONE OF A KIND!

Charley Kelsey's Personal Devel Hi-Power JEREMY CLOUGH

COVER STORY

44 STACCATO 2011 9MM: REPORTING FOR DUTY

The 1911 Re-Imagined TOM McHALE

52 ANATOMY, INDUSTRY, WEAPONRY, ART

Georg Luger and His Amazing Artificial Knee WILL DABBS, MD

56 A HANDFUL OF PREMIUM BOOM

Magnum Research BFR Elmer Keith JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

60 SCCY'S THE LIMIT!

The New DVG-1 Striker-Fired Pistol DAVID FREEMAN

62 PRECISION TUNED STEEL!

Bradford Knives Takes the Guesswork out of Knifemaking PAT COVERT

64 NAZI MOUSE GUNS

Carry Pistols for History's Most Ghastly Villains WILL DABS, MD

DEPARTMENTS

18 SHOOTING IRON

Two For One: Creative Reloading MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO

20 HANDGUN HUNTING

How Far is Too Far? MARK HAMPTON

22 PISTOLSMITHING

Handgun Blues GREG DERR

24 CARRY OPTIONS

Now Is The Time For Fancy Leather JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

26 TACTICS & TRAINING

The Flashlight: Your Best Defensive Tool TIGER MCKEE

30 STUDENT HANDGUNNER

Accuracy: Goldilocks and the Many Rests SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

32 HANDLOADING

No Pistol Primers? How About Rifle? LINDSEY BERTOMEN

36 BETTER SHOOTING

How Much is Enough? DAVE ANDERSON

72 THE SIXGUNNER

Cimarron Concealed Carry Cartridge Conversion Revolvers JOHN TAFFIN

76 GUNNYSACK

Streamlight Pocket Mate, SSP Eyewear Methow RX Able Kit, Pepperball Compact, Holosun HE508T-RD X2 Red Dot Sight
TOM McHALE & SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

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COLUMNS

- 8 SPEAK OUT**
- 16 VANTAGE POINT** TOM McHALE
- 28 COP TALK** MASSAD AYOOB
Precision Police Pistol Shooting
- 70 GUN RIGHTS** ALAN KORWIN
The "Woke" Are Sound Asleep
- 79 AYOOB FILES** MASSAD AYOOB
Lethal Manhunt: The Dannemora Escape
- 90 THE INSIDER** ROY HUNTINGTON



RESOURCES

- 68 HANDGUN GIVEAWAY**
- 78 CUSTOM CORNER**
- 86 NEW PRODUCTS** DELANO AMAGUIN
- 88 AD INDEX**

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TOM McHALE

WIN HANDGUN OF THE MONTH **68**



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SOUTH PACIFIC RESCUE!

As usual with Will Dabbs' articles about his youthful episodes of life as a young aviator, the latest *Momentous Moments* (americanhandgunner.com) sent me back on my own journey. The attached picture shows me adrift in the South Pacific when I was only eight in 1965. Thankfully, I had access to my dad's water survival gear and was unaware of the dangerous skimmer shark lurking just behind me. I was rescued the very same day. Later that night before bed, while flying a B-24, I was involved in a dogfight versus my dad in an Albatross D.5.

Thankfully, I was able to go on to my own real-life aviation career. I avoided helicopters and "man-aged" to fly F-16s for 15 years, while collecting a life's worth of memories. Of course, I have no such incriminating stories to relate ...

Mike Krzynowek



Appendix Carry

I have attended several firearm shooting courses over the years and one of the first safety rules expressed is never point a loaded firearm at anything you are not willing to shoot or destroy. Then those instructors who like appendix carry demonstrate the exact

opposite all day long by sweeping their own genitals, femoral arteries and legs with every step they take.

In one sentence in this article the author states [sums up the conventional wisdom —Ed.], "where the handgun points doesn't matter because it is protected in a holster." I

disagree. You are still violating one of the cardinal safety rules, and personally I'm rather sensitive about Mr. Johnson and the twins and do not want a firearm pointing at them all day long. It does not appear to be realistically possible to both appendix carry and obey the cardinal safety rules. How can

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an instructor stand in front of a class and violate the very rules they express while they are stating those rules to the class?

Rod D.

A few things to consider. First, many carry methods (think IWB and even OWB) do, in fact, point the muzzle at body parts. How many people shoot themselves in the rear and/or leg with a traditionally placed holster? This would be impossible per your assertion. Second, many consider a holstered gun a safe gun as a properly holstered gun cannot be made to fire. Last, a good appendix holster will orient the muzzle so it points away from body parts every bit as much as a strong side holster. Closed foam wedge designs push the grip in and muzzle out. Now as for holstering and re-holstering from different carry positions, that's a whole different discussion! —TM

Snake Guns

Great article on the 44 Anaconda! I suggest a similar article on the Limited-Edition Colt Kodiak. The Colt Kodiak was a limited run of 2,000 guns that came from the Colt Custom Shop in 1993. Imprinted with a bear's claw (right side of barrel) it is one of two "Colt Bear Gun Models" made

from Colt. The Kodiak being the big brother to the Grizzly marked a new era breaking away from their long history of naming revolvers after snakes.

Brian in Seattle

Well, that sounds like a fun article! I'll get it in the queue. —TM

Budischowsky

I enjoyed the article on the Budischowsky TP-70 by Roy Huntington in your most recent edition.

My "Bud" came to me from a pawn shop in Prescott, Ariz., in the mid-1990s, and differs in a couple of ways from the piece in Roy's article. I'm hoping someone on your staff, or perhaps, among your readers could shed a little light on exactly what I have.

First, the serial number on my Bud is "XP06." Several years ago, I found a fellow who worked at the factory in Michigan during the set-up of the production line. He told me there were "around 20" guns made as prototypes, to confirm the production methods. He stated the "XP" stood for "Experimental Prototype" or "Experimental Pistol." Even the base plate of the magazine on my pistol has "06" stamped into it.

The second, and most obvious dif-

ference, is the grip panels or stocks. Mine are made of wood. Nicely made, well fitted and on the backside there is a pencil marking of "06." My real curiosity is a small "button" emblem embedded in the stock, which has an eagle (an American eagle, I believe). But above the eagle is a crown surrounded by a ring of dots, perhaps meant to represent stars.

These buttons are on both sides, and flush mounted. It would seem to me having the American eagle under a crown would be unusual. I thought this may have been some sort of presentation piece.

Any information that you can offer is greatly appreciated.

Ken Edney

Anyone have knowledge on the "XP" serial numbers? —TM

Gunsmith v. Armorer?

I was asked this question and didn't know the proper answer. I thought this would be a good one for *AH*. "What is the difference between a Gunsmith vs. an Armorer?"

Greg Chambers

The primary objective of an Armorer is to maintain firearms and conduct minor

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SPEAK OUT

repairs through parts replacement. A Gunsmith has the ability to machine firearms and parts as well as customize or create firearms and parts. The gunsmith is more of a machinist. The best analogy might be the difference between an automobile oil change service and an engine shop. — Greg Derr, Pistol-smithing Columnist

The Whinery

Here's a challenge: astonish me and print this letter. Inasmuch as, editorially, you're not at all shy about supporting gun culture as a righteous activity, why do you not, again editorially, have anything to say about the gun mayhem young men inflict on one another in inner cities? More specifically, why do you not comment on presumably legitimate firearms dealers who provide handguns, no questions asked, to those who then sell them to the criminally inclined? The young men who use these weapons to kill and maim have half-baked brains. How about yours? Do you regard yourselves as responsible citizens doing the right and righteous thing? (The question is asked tongue in cheek. It's obviously unserious.)

Mike Silverton
Belfast, Maine

Consider yourself astonished. After several reads, I'm still having trouble discerning your point. A couple of thoughts though. Rather than parroting the media soundbite about "bad" gun dealers being a problem, spend a whopping 60 seconds to do your own research on the number of prosecutions of "bad" dealers. Even under the Obama/Biden administration, presumably highly motivated to crack down on the fabricated problem you reference, the rate was statistically negligible. That's because FFL dealers are the most heavily regulated businesses in the history of ever. I find it interesting you yourself refer to young men killing each other having "half-baked brains." Hmm, maybe the fact the young males you reference are so ready and willing to kill each other is the problem — not the existence of guns, knives, other weapons or even FFL dealers? Does the existence of firearms cause choir-boys to turn into murderous thugs against their will? Just a thought. Last, but not least, we're called American



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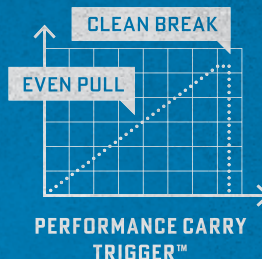
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Memory Lane

What a great history that took me down memory lane. When I joined the Tucson Police in 1969, Arizonans were prevented from legally carrying a gun concealed but open carry was allowed, although most never did. Even back then people looked at you funny. The first step toward CCW came with the complete revision of the criminal code in the late '70s. Now you could have a concealed gun in your vehicle, as long as it was in a holster and not on your person. Before that, it was legal to put a gun up on the dash. Talk about sausage making ...

Many of the cops I worked with were aghast. They watched TV and read newspapers predicting blood in the streets, as usual. I told them to relax because everybody who wanted to carry a gun in the car was already doing so illegally. The only thing to

change was the law.

Then along came 1994 and Arizona passed its first CCW permit law. Again, with the hand wringing by the media. Sure enough, nothing changed.

Then came the constitutional carry law. In between was the 1994 Assault weapons ban causing me to arrest three people on separate occasions for possession of hi-cap magazines which were not illegal.

Thanks to Mas for a great story.

A. Johnson
Sgt. Tucson Police, Ret.

Secret Squirrel Hi-Powers

In Handgunner September/October 2021, we published a reader letter inquiring about use of Browning Hi-Power pistols in Vietnam by U.S. Special Forces. Our call to readers for more info brought in more stories:

I also was in Vietnam from 1964-65. I can attest the Browning Hi-Power 9mm handguns were in use during the period I was there. They were carried by the "White Mice," the Vietnam Police. A close friend of mine got into a heated discussion with one of the officers one night which ended up with my friend acquiring the officer's firearm. We inspected this Browning Hi-Power, and

it was beautiful, and loaded. Not sure how to return home with this Browning, a decision was made to return the pistol. My friend returned it to the middle of a rice paddy. I have been wanting one of these pistols ever since.

Bwana

Guards at Strategic Air Command Hqs Offutt AFB Omaha Neb were issued and carried Browning Hi-Powers in the '60s. I have no idea how they were marked.

Ken Wicker

When I was providing Huey "Uber" service to 5Th SF Group in 1967 a bunch of them at the Border Camps and from higher HQ wore them. The guns specifically had non-U.S. markings and had been bought on the open market in Hong Kong or elsewhere over there. At least that's what I recall being told about their H-Ps.

S/Ed Stanhope
Pelican 840 '67
Flipper 21 '69

NRA

Just wanted to tell how excellent the podcast was on the NRA. I am a

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long-time member and had considered not paying dues again due to the suspicious behavior of the executives. However, you pointed out the problem with my thinking. I passed those thoughts on to friends and the podcast convinced them to pay dues but nothing additional. Glad I have you guys to listen to for advice. And by the way, the Sept/Oct 2021 edition is exemplary.

DR Martello

Old "Rifle-Pistols?"

If a stabilizing brace makes an AR style pistol a short, barreled rifle, does this affect the status of Hi Powers, broom handle Mausers, or single action pistols that had shoulder stocks designed for them? Is Granddad's Inglis Hi Power going to have to become a tax stamp/registration weapon? I mean those were specifically designed to fire a pistol from the shoulder.

Just something to think about.

Jeffrey L. Goerke

Rock Island Armory

It was good to see Rock Island Armory get some press. They make a great product at prices that are reasonable. My EDC is an RIA officer in .45. I also recently bought their Rock Ultra in 10 MM. You have an outstanding magazine. Keep them coming.

Dan Spears

Stimulus Provider?

Nate ("Stimulus Master," September/October 2021), I truly hope you enjoy your new Kimber Micro 9 I helped pay for. If "stimulus" money must be sent out and over, the gun industry is a fine place to use it. I just wish someone would help finance my gun collection. I only seem to write stimulus checks; I never get them. I hope everyone reaps huge benefits from the redistribution of my wealth.

Rex Chandler

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THE GREAT DISARMAMENT EXPERIMENT OF 2021



Remember the good ol' days when we all could enjoy a good conspiracy theory while laughing at how generally ridiculous it seems? I miss those. Nowadays, no matter how outlandish a conspiracy you can concoct, most will listen, ponder for a hot second, then knowingly nod and say, "Yeah, I could see that being true...."

Here's one for you.

You may or may not care about AR pistols. Maybe your handgun passion is laser focused on classic sixguns chambered in a caliber starting with "4," ending with "5" and carrying a "Colt" suffix. That's okay, I love you for it. But if you don't give a hoot about AR pistol issues, you should. And here's why.

I've been pondering the "why's" behind the administration's focus on redefining ATF rules regarding AR pistol braces. If you're not familiar, it boils down to this.

Devices engineered to make an AR pistol shootable with one hand can also be used to help brace the pistol against the shoulder.

To "solve" some statistically nonexistent "gun crime," the feds are proposing new rules that would essentially outlaw these devices and the guns on which they're mounted. Current AR pistol owners, millions of them, would either have to surrender their guns, register them with the ATF as short-barreled rifles (while sending Uncle Spendy \$200), or become an overnight federal felon.

You heard that right. *We're going to reduce crime by turning millions of law-abiding gun owners into felons.*

The worst part of the move is it's happening with absolutely no legislative activity. Congress, the only body empowered to make federal law, isn't involved in the process. By a simple policy change, a federal agency, under direction of the White House, is quite literally re-writing the law.

Why the focus on this particular issue? It's not exactly the type of bold "gun crime" move promised by the Biden administration. It's somewhat of a niche issue that solves no statistically significant problem.



The plastic side provides a solid hold without scratching valuable gear. Those grooves are great for barrels and other parts too.

I think they know a "big issue" legislative battle isn't winnable with a razor-thin majority in the Senate, opposition of virtually all elected law enforcement leadership, and the always-looming next election. The mid-term election pain caused by the '90s "assault weapon" ban burns fresh in the vote-counting cerebral cortexes of politicians.

First, this type of move represents an "easy" win to satisfy the base. "See? We are taking swift and decisive action on gun crime!"

Second, and more dastardly, devious, frightening, and perhaps brilliant, is the "test the waters" nature of this action. The proposed ATF policies will mint millions of "insta-felons" from law-abiding citizens, literally overnight. Will millions of Americans dutifully follow the new rules by turning in their guns or applying for ATF permission? *This, in my opinion, is the big experiment.* Can the executive branch succeed in eroding gun rights, piece by piece, simply by changing the rules? You can bet there will be plenty of eyes on two vital statistics: the number of new short-barrel rifle applications and the number of guns and/or braces turned in.

If people obey this new rule in large numbers, it sets a scary precedent for future moves just like it. If it works in some measurable way, you can bet your next *croquemouche* the second and third acts are in the planning stages. New "rule changes" by the ATF might include revised definitions of legal magazine capacities. Or perhaps they'll find a way to classify semi-automatic rifles, pistols,

MIGHTY VISE

Roy has enough specialized tool gear in his workshop to fabricate the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft. I'm not impressed. I can make most anything in my workshop as well, provided it can be constructed exclusively with nails, a small rock and duct tape.

Okay, so I may be lagging in the workshop cold war tools race, but I have something that'll shade Roy green with envy — the Mighty Vise.

That's not the real name, and I



Here's the secret. The ball joint locks solid with just the friction handle below. For extra rigidity, insert the Torq-Lok pin.

or shotguns as "machine guns." The sky is the limit.

There is a zero percent chance, up zero percent from a previous high of zero chance of gun-banning politicians being happy with an inconsequential AR pistol re-definition win. You can bet your bippy that's just step one.

Even if this initiative fails, there's a victory of sorts inherent in the process. Average Joes and Janes, who don't follow Second Amendment issues as we might, will become even more desensitized to the efforts to steal gun rights piecemeal. Like a 2" diameter multivitamin, the next intrusion on rights will be swallowed just a bit easier.

Get involved in the fight now. If you don't care about AR pistols, at least care about the next steps.

They're coming for the things you care about too.

Right: Every time I visit the man cave to do most anything, I end up using the Master Gun Vise as a spare pair of hands. The foam sides won't scratch, gouge or mar. Far right: The jaw covers are reversible between foam inserts and hard plastic. Note the locking pins.



risk getting in trouble with the fine folks over at Real Avid by referring to it as such. But even they have to admit, the Master Gun Vise is awfully comfortable in a mighty superhero cape. I'm sticking with Mighty Vise, because it's just so darn useful for just about anything.

The Master Gun Vise (MGV) is like traditional vises in one way only. It has jaws that will open and close with a rotating handle. That's about it as far as similarities go. You mount the MGV to your workbench, right on the front corner, providing a solid base for a ball and socket joint which supports the vise jaws assembly. And this is where the magic starts. If you're already skeptical about the possible rigidity of a ball and socket support system, bite your tongue and read on.

The ball mount system includes a friction clamp handle that lets you orient the vise unit any way you like in all three dimensions. When the jaws are where you want them — forward, backward, or even sideways — lock the handle and the unit becomes solid

enough to do torque application work on things like barrels and receiver extension nuts. If you want more rigidity, insert the Torque-Lok pin right through the ball and socket joint. Ain't nothing moving when you do that.

If you're like me, you might have an old bench vise mounted to a workbench. The jaws are likely checkered with some pattern sure to abuse the finish of any gun or part you secure, so perhaps you've bolted or duct-taped wood or aluminum blocks to the inside of the jaws to prevent marring and gouging of expensive toys.

The jaws on the MGV are made for gun work. The "built-in" steel jaw plates are flat, so you can apply near infinite pressure. Or, you can slip on the reversible Gun-Fit sleeves over each jaw. One side offers a plastic "flat sur-

face" with inset grooves for holding barrels and other oddly shaped parts. Flip the sleeves over and you have opposing closed-cell foam blocks for holding, well, just about anything. I use this setup more than anything as an extra pair of hands when cleaning or tinkering with accessories. Oh, these also have locking pins for serious "make it fit with brute force" work.

The Real Avid Master Gun Vise is, bar none, the handiest tool on my bench. It's great for cleaning, repairing, tinkering, installing, inspecting, assembling and disassembling. Heck, you can even use it to mount optics with the precision leveling knob. Check it out!



For more info: RealAvid.com



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The right to keep and bear arms is a patriotic responsibility to ensure that our country, our cherished freedoms, and our families are protected. Given this awesome responsibility, we take pride in our superior, handcrafted holsters and belts that protect your firearms until the moment they are needed.

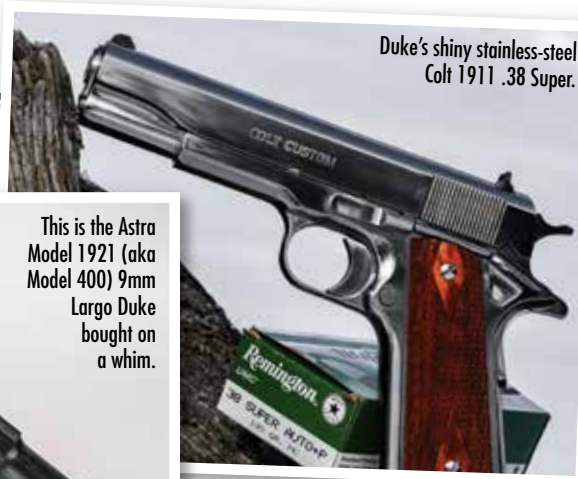
TWO FOR ONE: CREATIVE RELOADING

I'm nothing if not impetuous. A few years back I got it in my head a shiny nickel-plated Colt 1911 would suit me, so I bought the first one encountered. I would have preferred .45 ACP but this one was .38 Super. It sufficed anyway because all the necessary .38 Super cases, bullets and reloading dies were on hand.

Imagine my surprise after getting the 1911 home when I discovered it was actually brightly polished stainless steel. No matter, shiny is shiny. Right? My new handgun turned out to be one of the "ELCEN" series Colt had produced in the 1990s for a large distributor to sell south of the border. It actually had the flat mainspring housing of earlier 1911s, but sights were modern, high-profile front and rear with white dots. It is a fine example of quality pistol manufacture.



This is the Astra Model 1921 (aka Model 400) 9mm Largo Duke bought on a whim.



Duke's shiny stainless-steel Colt 1911 .38 Super.

9MM... SOMETHING

Fast forward a few years to a Montana gun show when I spotted a pistol with which I was familiar without having ever held one. On its slide was stamped "Modelo 1921 (400)." It is an Astra made in Spain. Naturally, I had to nab it too. I say it was familiar to me because back in my teens (1960s) they were offered for sale dirt cheap by modern standards in many gun magazine advertisements. Converse from the flat-side Model 1911, these Astras are rounded in shape but crudely made compared to the Colt ELCEN 1911. Crude but certainly robust as befits a pistol designed for military use.

Remembering from those old ads that Modelo 1921s were 9mm I



Starline's rimless "comp" .38 Super brass works perfectly in both his .38 Super and 9mm Largo pistols.

wouldn't have known exactly which 9mm this one was chambered for except it also came with a box of CCI Blazer ammo labeled 9mm Largo. In Spanish "largo" means long. This cartridge started as the 9mm Bergman Bayard, dating from the early 1900s. The Spanish military adopted it circa 1913 and renamed it 9mm Largo. Its case is 0.905" in length as opposed to 0.754" of 9mm Parabellum or 23mm compared to 19mm. However, both 9mms fire bullets nominally of 0.355".

NOT ENTIRELY DISTANT RELATIVES

My original plan was to shoot up the now discontinued box of Blazer 9mm Largo and then sell the Astra. Then I noticed in the instruction sheet accompanying the pistol that shooting .38 Colt Auto in it was acceptable. *Please note: the .38 Colt Auto cartridge is not the same as the .38 Super!* The .38 Colt Auto and .38 Super Auto are the same dimensionally, but the latter version develops much higher pressures which would be dangerous in the old Astra or any other .38 Colt Auto. The .38 Colt Auto's and .38 Super's case length is 0.900" and a 0.005" difference in semi-auto pistol case length is negligible. New cases will vary that much in the same lot.

However, I wondered about the following. Case design for the 9mm Largo is rimless but .38 Colt Auto is semi-rimmed. I had some old .38 Colt Auto factory loads on hand and they sure enough wouldn't chamber in my 9mm Largo. But Starline's .38 Super Competition cases are rimless and most certainly they chambered perfectly in the Astra. So, I was set. No new brass or dies were needed. *One handload could be assembled that would*

function perfectly in both pistols — at least I hoped.

However, there is one caveat. Reloading data for .38 Largo is limited. The only current manual in which I could find data is Speer's *Reloading Manual #14*. Starting loads listed for .38 Super are at or near maximum for the old Astra 9mm Largo. Of course, 0.355" bullets are proper for both rounds.

I settled on 5.0 grains of Unique with Zero Bullet Company's 124-grain, 0.355" RN and also with Oregon Trail's 0.356" 124-grain commercially cast RN. Both bullet and powder combinations chamber, function and fire fine through either semi-auto. Velocities run about 1,100 fps. Somebody has to be mentally asking, "Duke, what size are the groups each pistol delivers?" I say, "Who cares? I hit what I'm aiming at more often than not." Incidentally I chronographed the CCI Blazer 9mm Largo factory loads through both pistols and got about 1,200 fps.

With this two-for-one situation, I'm not as keen to sell off the Astra as I formerly intended. It's a neat historical handgun, albeit in an odd clunky way. And the shiny 1911 gives me some "bling!"





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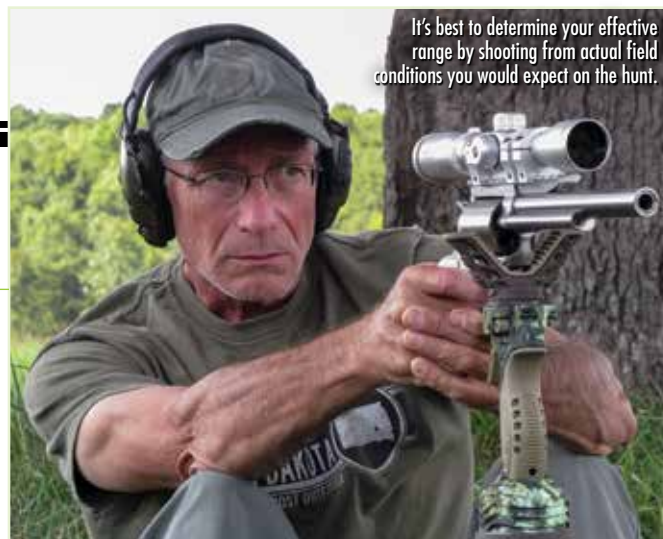
HOW FAR IS TOO FAR?

How do you determine your effective range for hunting? It's a thought-provoking question indeed — there is no one-size fits all answer. Fortunately, the answer doesn't rest in some complicated, complex formula.

LONG RANGE TEMPTATION

Long range shooting has become increasingly popular the last few years. It's been a driving force for bullet manufacturers, reloading components, optic companies, custom barrels and more. It's hard to escape the fact — long range shooting is increasing with popularity.

Like many, I too enjoy the challenge of long-range shooting. It's been a huge educational curve for me learning more about wind drift and bullet trajectory. Today's advanced technology can be found in the shooting industry with many products, including optics



It's best to determine your effective range by shooting from actual field conditions you would expect on the hunt.

and bullets far superior compared to 30 years ago.

One important fact that should not be overlooked or misunderstood — *there is a huge difference between shooting at a chunk of steel and taking a poke at an animal.* Take IHMSA for example, a silhouette match where competitors attempt to knock steel targets off their stand from various distances. Those rams are positioned at 200 meters or roughly 219 yards. A hit anywhere on the ram, top of the horn or rear-end for instance, will usually knock the ram down. This counts as a hit and life is good. The same shot placement on an animal results in wounded game. Not so good!

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As responsible and ethical hunters, we owe it to the magnificent game we pursue to do everything possible to avoid wounding an animal. It's the last thing hunters with ethics and moral principles want to encounter. A well-placed shot in the vitals will result in a quick demise. This should be our ultimate goal when squeezing the trigger.

Today you can occasionally find traffic on social media sites or internet forums where someone has taken an animal (and boasting about it) from an extended range. There are individuals with the capability who have taken a monumental amount of time



Three consecutive rounds from 100 yards with a Freedom Arms .357 Mag. under field shooting position.

This paper plate is a little less than 9" in diameter, roughly representing the vital zone on deer-sized game.

and effort on the range to make some pretty long pokes. Is it logical for everyone to attempt something of this nature? After 45 years of doing some pretty serious handgun hunting, I have learned some valuable lessons. As the

range increases in distance to the target, the odds increase on things going south.

There are some species generally associated with long distance shooting. Antelope and mule deer out west or mountain game such as sheep and ibex are often taken at extended range. Those hunters who have properly prepared for these types of hunts spend a considerable amount of quality time

on the range knowing exactly where their bullet strikes at various ranges. And they're shooting from actual field positions — emulating the shooting position they would expect, such as shooting off a backpack or similar rests.

FIND YOUR RANGE

It's very simple for me to determine *my effective shooting range* — I'm not concerned with what others are capable of accomplishing. The only thing worth a grain of salt is my own capability. Take a standard-size paper plate, approximately 8" to 9" in diameter, representing the vital area on deer-sized game. At what distance can I place three consecutive rounds inside the plate — shooting from a field position? *If I can't hit the plate three times in a row from a given distance, under field shooting conditions, I really have no business attempting a shot from that distance on a game animal.*

Obviously, revolvers in traditional hunting calibers such as .41 and .44 Mag. are much different from single-shot handguns chambered for bottle-neck rifle cartridges like 7mm-08 or .308. Knowing the trajectory of your bullet will provide

a better understanding of your gun and cartridge capability. When sighting-in my .44 Mag. revolver at 50 yards, the drop of the bullet at 150 yards is substantial. This is one reason I do not consider shooting at game with the .44 Mag. beyond 150 yards. Your mileage may vary.

Another component for consideration is the cartridge. Does your cartridge and bullet have the necessary velocity and energy to perform properly on game at a given distance? Just because I can place three consecutive shots in a pie plate from 200 yards with a .357 Mag., doesn't mean I should tackle moose from this distance.

Our guns, cartridges and our individual proficiency all have limits. Before we head out to the woods or mountains, it's best to determine our real-world capability. As Clint Eastwood once said, "Man's got to know his limitations."



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HANDGUN BLUES

The process of bluing firearms may have changed a bit in the last 300 years but the appeal to shooters has not. Bluing is still the most popular finish for fine handguns hands down. Like walnut grips and real leather holsters, bluing evokes deep emotions from gun aficionados like a fine Scotch or a Cuban cigar.

Nothing can compare to a blue S&W wheel gun or a Colt semi-automatic. Both Colt and S&W produced some of the best blue pistols in the world. The Colt Python with its high polish royal blue finish is the pinnacle of a blued handgun.



Apprentice Nick Derr works parts through the hot "bluing" process which treats carbon steel with black oxide. Lots of protective gear and ventilation is required.

A finished Colt 1911 slide after blasting and polishing.



THE PROCESS

Bluing, a hot process at 290 degrees, produces steam vapor. This vapor contains salt. Salt is corrosive to any metal it comes in contact with — why I could not blue in my shop. The metalworking machinery could all be damaged by salt exposure. I was lucky enough to construct an out-building for bluing. Even so, I added wheels to the bluing tank racks to move it outside into open air.

Ninety percent of bluing firearms is metal preparation. The level of blending, sanding and polishing will show through after bluing, so much work must go into metal prep. Unlike spray-on coatings, bluing will not hide scratches or tool marks. Colt spent hours on each Python and it shows in the finished product.

I use a number of sandpaper grades wrapped on blocks from Harrison Design that allow me to keep the flats smooth with crisp edges. Motorized buffers can kill rollmarks on a pistol if used too aggressively. Since I'm starting out, I am sticking to hand sanding. I start off by

amount of labor and time involved necessitated a change to "hot salt" bluing or "black oxide" bluing which is the process used by the industry today. Bluing is really a controlled "rust" process. It can be done a number of ways. Each can produce a great finish based on the quality of the gunsmiths' metal preparation.

For the small shop like mine Du-Lite offered a one-stop shopping solution. They make the bluing tanks and burners custom to fit the need of the user ranging from the one-man operation to full-scale production set ups for manufacturers. My set up is comprised of five tanks. One for cleaning, two for bluing and two rinse tanks on a custom stand. There are also three propane burners, one each for the cleaning and two bluing tanks. Walt recommends two tanks for bluing — each running at a different temperature to accommodate some different steel material types.

glass beading all the "round" area that will result in a "matte" finish. Next with 200 grit paper I remove scratches and tool marks working progressively to finer grits until I get the level of finish I want.

After a few hours or more of prep I hand the project off to my son Nick, an American Pistolsmith Guild apprentice, for the bluing. A consistent high-quality finish is everything to the custom gunsmith. So, it makes sense to have one person do it each time and he likes the process.

There are some great bluing services out there if you can't do it yourself. Glenrock Blue in Wyoming or Turnbull Restoration in New York. Both offer a variety of polishing levels. Turnbull

BLUING SETUP

I've wanted to do my own bluing for a long time, but shop space was not available. I finally made the leap to accommodate bluing in a separate shop, more on this later.

Two years ago, before the world stopped spinning due to the pandemic, I meet up with Walt Smith owner of Du-Lite Corporation at the SHOT Show in Las Vegas. Du-Lite of Connecticut is an OEM supplier of bluing salts and solutions to many manufacturers, starting with Colt in 1939.

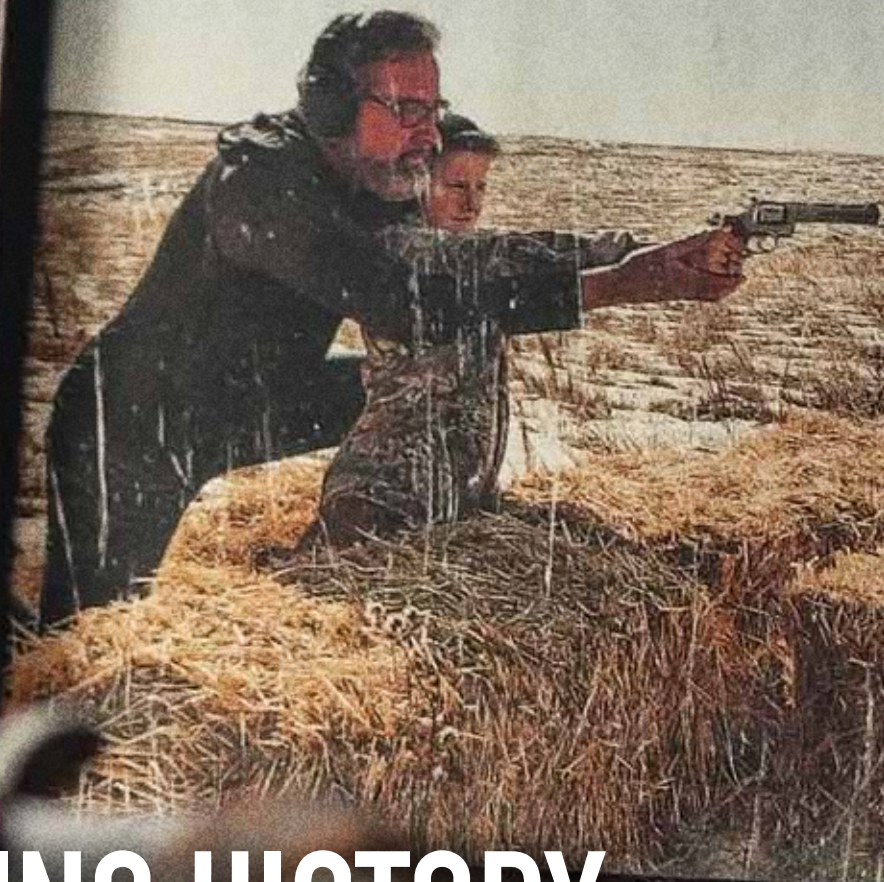
Prior to 1939, Colt used a charcoal bluing process which produced some of the best bluing in history, but the amount of labor and time involved necessitated a change to "hot salt" bluing or "black oxide" bluing which is the process used by the industry today. Bluing is really a controlled "rust" process. It can be done a number of ways. Each can produce a great finish based on the quality of the gunsmiths' metal preparation.



Handy aluminum sanding blocks by Harrison Design makes sanding flat areas easy and helps keep sharp edges. Greg has one for every grit of paper he uses in the shop.

offers charcoal bluing which is a large operation not done by many but the envy of everyone. 

For more info: HarrisonCustom.com, Du-Lite.com



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Experience legendary, robust shooting with one of the most eye-catching revolvers of all time. The new Colt Python's re-engineered trigger and custom walnut grips work in harmony to invoke perfect balance and smooth, steady performance. Since 1955, the Python has helped define Colt's legacy—now it's refined to become a part of yours.



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NOW IS THE TIME FOR FANCY LEATHER!

Nothing stirs a shooter's senses like traditional handgun hide, especially when eye-popping ministrations making the leather become alive with detail. Leather can be carved, laced, hammered, stamped, or dyed to highlight any holster style. You can even choose an exotic hide if you like. Nothing has the looks, feel, and especially smell of leather. It's mesmerizing!

Retiring your tired, ordinary shuck for a new, extraordinary rig, with any of the above treatments, will surely put a swagger in your stride worthy of John Wayne. Fancy rigs complement favored shooters more than any other accoutrements.

I've been fortunate knowing several top hide-stretchers over the years and am sharing their wares with you. During these times of low/no gun availability makes it the perfect opportunity to update your gear. It'll make your favorite gun feel brand new and will draw admiration from fellow shooters, as they give you a knowing nod, and a tip of the Stetson.



1) The 200AW secures an S&W 5-screw with Herrett Roper stocks and the 55BN carries a Ruger Officer-Style 1911. Below is a '70s Elmer Keith commemorative knife from a magazine subscription. 2) A custom version of BL Border Ranger, with lacing, looks fantastic, as does the hammered and carved Long Horn Companion, holding a Tyler custom Blackhawk. The .45 caliber is Tank's favorite. 3) Tank's Colt New Frontier rides in style with a Simply Rugged carved 120, while the Tyler custom 10mm/38-40 is carried in an elephant/basket stamped steer-hide Cattleman.

SIMPLY RUGGED

Sourdough Rob Leahy, of Simply Rugged acclaim, started his Alaskan business in a small backyard shed, later moving back to his home state of Arizona. Known for his pancake holster design, Rob offers several styles, including more traditional western style holsters. He also implements the use of exotic hides, including local rattlesnake.

I chose Rob's Cattleman holster design. Mine is basket-stamped steer-hide, trimmed in elephant hide. How cool is that? The holster provides protection and retention during rigorous activity, while allowing a smooth draw. Heavily built, it is strong and will last a lifetime.

For a more traditional look, I went with the SR 120 model, styled after George Lawrence Company's timeless field holster. John Bianchi designed the full welt design for SR. Carved by Richard Gittlein, this traditional design is stylish in the classical sense, perfectly fitting my Colt New Frontier.

The long tail strap allows you to chop up, releasing the snap, as you draw in one continuous motion. A dandy holster, indeed!

BARRANTI LEATHER

Pittsburgh, Pa. is home of the Pirates,

Steelers, Primantis and Barranti Leather. A family-run business big on quality, innovation and design, as well as classic reproductions of vintage leather, BL is a one-stop-shop for any leather need.

Doc's Long Horn Companion is one slick, high riding rig. By unsnapping the retention strap, you can conveniently remove the inner holster from the outer slotted belt strap, without undoing your belt. Returning to armed mode is just as easy.

Doc expertly carved Skeeter Skelton's Bar-T brand, with hammered background on mine. It fits my custom Tyler Gun Works Ruger Blackhawk perfectly.

Doc's other creation is a carved and laced custom version of his Border Ranger rig. It's a re-creation of a holster built by Texas Ranger Tol Dawson. A traditional exposed trigger with forward slant makes this BBQ quality rig functional and stylish. It will surely draw attention while in open carry mode. Doc is a true artisan and can complete any custom rig, or leather design imaginable.

MILT SPARKS HOLSTERS

Some styles are endless in form and function when it comes to holsters. The folks at Milt Sparks are committed to producing functional designs for everyday use. Nick Harvey and staff are shooting enthusiasts, licensed concealed carriers and continuously test their wares with extensive

field use, training, hunting, competition and everyday use.

Milt Sparks Holsters carries both long-time, proven traditional style and newer, cutting edge style holsters.

The 200AW was a favorite of Elmer Keith. My own 200AW (adjustable welt) was carved by a seasoned saddle-maker working for MSH. Going traditional, by leaving your rig as is, or going with a border stamp, are other available options. The 200AW has an adjustable tension screw for a secure fit. The wrap-around hammer shroud protects hammer and sights.

The 55BN (Bruce Nelson) is a long-standing, minimalist design of the Milt Sparks line. My own 55BNs are boned-out perfection, for whatever gun the holster is made for, proving simple can be beautiful, too. Pistols "snap" in place when holstered for safe, secure carry.

By having your shooter wrapped in quality, fancy steer-hide, you'll feel the pride only true pistoleros appreciate. It's the easiest way for dressing up any shooter, and the most noticeable, too!



For more info: SimplyRugged.com, BarrantiLeather.com, MiltSparks.com



JERICH0 ENHANCED

The Jericho Enhanced is designed to perform under any and all circumstances. With a new hammer profile, adjustable backstraps, a reprofiled trigger, an enhanced safety lever, and Novak sights, it is well suited for both defense and tactical purposes; while also living up to IWI's exceptionally high standards for reliable performance, accuracy, and quality construction.

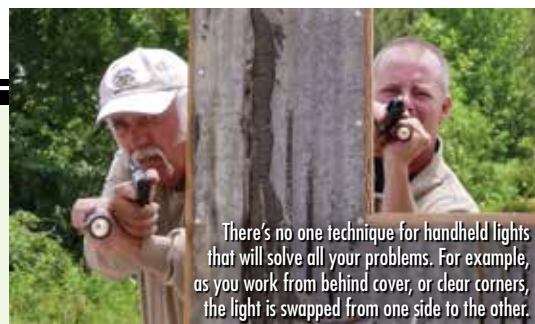


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THE FLASHLIGHT:

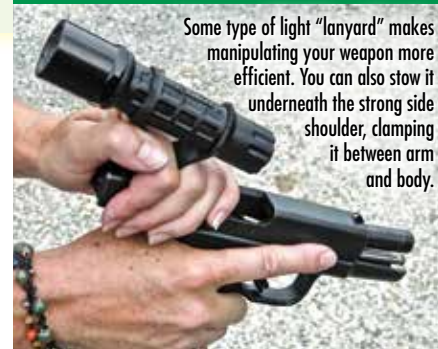
Flashlights are an essential piece of gear. For everyday life we use them for mundane tasks like finding the keys that fell underneath the car seats. It's my most used piece of carry gear. For self-defense they're mandatory — bad guys love low-light environments. Flashlights allow you to avoid danger or, if necessary, defend against an attack.

Primitive man carried torches to navigate unfamiliar terrain. We do the same with modern "torches." You can communicate with partners using a light to indicate your location, an exit to escape or designate an area of concern. "On my light ..." you illuminate an escape route. You can coordinate actions and information like "move to the stairs" or "I see someone moving."



There's no one technique for handheld lights that will solve all your problems. For example, as you work from behind cover, or clear corners, the light is swapped from one side to the other.

YOUR BEST DEFENSIVE TOOL



Some type of light "lanyard" makes manipulating your weapon more efficient. You can also stow it underneath the strong side shoulder, clamping it between arm and body.

LIGHT ENCOUNTERS

Shining a bright light in the eyes can disorient a potential threat. The parking garage is dark — low-light environments exist 24 hours a day — so you already have a flashlight in hand. A man advances on you. His body language says, "trouble." You snap the light up, shine it in his eyes for a second, then the light is off and you're moving. *The bright light stops his advance but, had he charged, you wouldn't have been in the last location he saw you.*

Flashlights are impact weapons. In

the old days, this was the reason to carry a large Maglite. A "hammer strike," using the light's body concentrates your force onto a smaller, harder surface than your flesh and bone and reduces the chances of injuring your hand.

In defensive situations, the light is used to locate and identify possible threats, and if necessary, engage with accurate fire. Remember Safety Rule II: *Never point the muzzle at anything you're not willing or ready to destroy.* Every year people negligently injure

and kill family and friends because they failed to identify what they were shooting at.

OPTIONS

Small, lightweight lights are easy to carry, and today's options put out plenty of light, more than you really need. (Yes, there is such a thing as "too bright," especially indoors.) It's a good idea to have small lights for administrative purposes, and bright light for defense. I carry hand-held lights. Weapon mounted lights are a little too bulky for carry but are great for home defense. Regardless, simple is best. I use lights with a momentary on/off action button on the tail cap and a constant on/off mode with a full click.

You're constantly turning the light on and off; this is where the momen-

tary switch comes into play. Lights with one mode of output are best. *You don't want the light cycling from low to high to strobe to S.O.S. and back again as you're using the momentary switch.* Keep it simple.

You use the light as little as possible,

or as much as necessary. There may be enough ambient light in the environment to move, clear or search without turning the light until locating a possible threat. Or it's so dark you can't see. You'll need light to ensure you don't blindly step into danger.

THE BASICS

There's no one technique for hand-held lights that will do everything necessary. You also don't need 19 different options. I teach four techniques.

When drawing the support hand and light are positioned at the side of the jaw. This aligns the eyes, sights and muzzle — quickest technique to get hits on a target — and ensures you don't sweep the support hand or arm with the muzzle when drawing. The light is positioned on the right side of the pistol when working to the right of cover or clearing a corner to the left. For working to the left of cover, or a right turn corner, the light is located on the left side of the weapon.

The "old" F.B.I. technique, simply holding the light off to the side, is great for scanning while keeping the pistol in a safe, low-ready position. When holstering, the light is brought back to the jaw, again positioning the hand and arm out of harm's way, and where it's ready should danger reappear.

Working with a firearm and flashlight complicates things exponentially. There's additional equipment to consider. It takes a little experimenting to discover what lights serve you best, and to determine how and where you'll carry them. There are principles for working with lights and specific techniques to employ the lights safely and efficiently.

Like all defensive skills it's about training, practicing and being prepared.



Positioning the light on the jaw to draw ensures you don't sweep the hand and arm with the muzzle and is also the quickest technique to align your eyes, light, sights and muzzle on target.



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PRECISION POLICE PISTOL SHOOTING

Defensive police handgun fire sometimes has to be fast and furious ... but sometimes, distance or limited threat exposure require precision.

The Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is justifiably considered one of the leading SWAT entities anywhere. Once, long ago, a senior SEB man was lecturing cops on deadly force and an officer in the audience asked, "Sir, when do we need to fire precision shots?"

The SEB man's answer was legendary. He snapped, "*Every shot fired by a police officer should be a precision shot!*"



In days past, 6" target-grade service revolvers like this Jerry Moran-tuned Colt Python improved precision shooting capability.

I've heard it said, "All the accuracy you need in the real world is a 6" group at six feet." I respectfully disagree with the statement. I was reminded of this recently when researching the 2015 Dannemora prison escape, in which it took precision shooting twice over to get the job done.

DISTANCE, THREAT EXPOSURE, REACTION CONCERNS

Convicted multiple murderer and torture-killer Richard Matt was aiming a stolen 20-gauge shotgun directly at Border Patrol Tactical team leader Christopher Voss from a prone position behind the cover of a log in the woods. Voss coolly blew the gunman's brains out with his M4 carbine, proving the words "swift" and "precise" do not necessarily contradict one another. Limited target exposure requires more precision.

Convicted cop-killer David Sweat was running some 75 yards distant when New York State Police Sergeant (and firearms

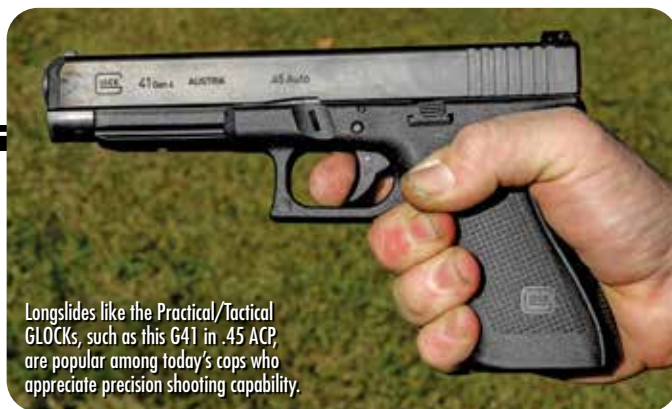
Many of today's police find carry optics improve precise hit potential.

Trijicon RMR is shown on a Wilson Combat GLOCK 19.



instructor) Jay Cook put shooting fundamentals together and dropped him with two .45 gap hits from his issue GLOCK 37 service pistol. Years earlier, the mass murder at Fairchild Air Force Base was ended by my friend Andy Brown, the first USAF Police officer to arrive on the scene. A measured 70 yards from a man with an AK47 clone, with no cover as the crazed rifleman shot at him, *Andy calmly took a kneeling position and put a bullet almost center between the cowardly murderer's eyes from his issue Beretta M9*. Distant targets require precision.

Creation of instant flaccidity also requires precision. The legendary Vietnam era Marine sniper Carlos Hathcock told his biographer Charles Henderson of multiple enemy soldiers who fell spastic chicken dances before they did from high-powered rifle bullets he had fired into the upper part of their brains. *Upper brain trauma can trigger a convulsive reaction causing the hands to clutch: the finger pulls the trigger, or the thumb presses the bomb switch*. In his last career training police riflemen for American SWAT teams, Hathcock adamantly



Longslides like the Practical/Tactical GLOCKS, such as this G41 in .45 ACP, are popular among today's cops who appreciate precision shooting capability.

EVEN UP CLOSE

Whatever the distance, the heart of the man who is trying to murder you is roughly the size of his fist. His spinal cord is about the same diameter as his little finger. Yes, his brain is bigger and his whole head is bigger yet ... but not all of his head is a "stopping target." Officer Jared Reston in Jacksonville, Fla. and Officer Tim Gramins in Skokie, Ill. each found this out in their first gunfights. Jared with a .40 S&W and Tim with a .45 ACP had each put multiple bullets into their attackers' torso "kill zones," *only to find them still up, running and shooting*, so they reverted to head shots. Each had to shoot their would-be cop-killer three times in the head to end the fight. Not all "head" is "brain." In each case, the first two large caliber bullets had shattered maxillo-facial structure but not hit the brain, and for each, only the last head shot got into the gray matter and shut off the computer. Distance? Well, Reston's attacker was literally on top of him, killed in the end by a contact shot.

told the cops to prevent that Dead Man's Kill, they had to put the bullet in deep brain to cause instant body relaxation: the tiny area between nasal cavity, ear canals, and base of skull. The same is as true with a service pistol as with a sniper rifle.

There were reasons old time cops carried 6"-barrel service revolvers like the S&W K-38. The accuracy enhancing longer sight radius is seen today in SWAT teams and even among rank-and-file police who are issued Tactical/Practical GLOCKS with 5.3" barrels, or the equivalent S&W M&P Pro pistols. The new trend to optic-sighted duty pistols, which seem to enhance precision accuracy, is likewise a good thing.

When I started in police work in 1972, we qualified at distances out to 50 yards. Time went on. The maximum qual distance became 25 yards most places, and some even went down to 15. But when we look at situations like the North Hollywood bank robbery, where distances were often 70 to 100 or more yards, we can see why some precision shooting needs to be in the training mix.



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ACCURACY: GOLDBLOCKS AND THE MANY RESTS



A wooden block under the trigger guard seemed to offer stability, but tended to create bounce, even with light .22LR recoil.

How do you know if a gun is accurate? Manufacturers advertise sub minute of angle groups and boast about the accuracy of long-range rifles, while for pistols they emphasize ergonomics. What makes a pistol “a shooter”?

Coming from a world of accuracy and precision, I have high expectations for myself and for my equipment. With a rifle I trust my ability and whether I sling up in the prone position or shoot from a bench or rest, I know if the rifle is not grouping, something is wrong.

With a pistol, however, I am not at the point to trust my skills alone — nearly any handgun outshoots me right now. Some handguns feel more natural to shoot than others. I also discovered during a trip to the range with a friend that I shot better with larger frame pistols than my small carry gun.

Finding A Rest

I still wanted to know. My default was always handing my gun and ammunition to a more experienced shooter — someone whose groups I could trust — but I also wanted to know for myself. My hefty rifle rest wasn’t going to work for this purpose, and my dad’s bags were hidden somewhere in the garage, likely covered in dust in a cupboard I was too short to reach.

A few weeks ago, I attended my first gun show, actually an Ohio Gun Collector’s Association meeting. Amidst long tables of beautifully engraved shotguns, rare rifles and piles of bayonets, I found what I was looking for. A rest. I picked the rubber Birchwood Casey “Nest Rest” off a table of odds and ends and haggled the price down. I appreciated it was small, portable and best of

all — cleanable! (Range benches are often splattered with bird excrement.)

The Test

Taking my two .22 pistols into the backyard, I decided to put them to the test. This is easier said than done and it took several failed attempts to shoot acceptable groups off a rest.

I first set the barrel of the pistol into the base of the nest rest. It made it difficult to get a proper grip on the pistol, but the sights stayed relatively stable. I started with the Ruger SR22 and transitioned to the Browning Buckmark. I fired five shots with each gun with SK pistol match ammunition. After two shots, the Buckmark slipped into the second groove, throwing the remaining shots. My first mistake was having nothing to support the rear of the pistol. The second was not having anything for the barrel to rest on.

I didn’t realize this at the time and instead decided to balance my hands on top of the rest — admittedly less stable but allowed for a better grip. This time, I fired two 10-shot groups. The Buckmark grouped nicely, an approximate 2" group at 15 yards. The Ruger group was slightly larger, with vertical stringing. I did notice I jumped the trigger some.

SOS

After some eye-opening chats and coaching, I tried yet again. This time I used a rolled-up towel to support the rear of the gun while the bottom of the trigger guard rested on a wooden block. This felt incredibly unnatural and I could not properly grip the gun.

To complicate matters, the target had vanished. I understand the target is supposed to blur while the front sight



The Birchwood Casey “Nest Rest” with slight modifications turned out to be the winner. The towel over prevents barrel slippage and bounce while the improvised butt support provided a second anchor point.



Note how the final setup also offers stability for the arms. The fewer points of movement, the better.

remains crisp. The target isn’t supposed to blur to the point of the aiming point being indiscernible and, in essence, gone. This has happened to me before with iron-sighted vintage rifles at 200 yards. At 15 yards it was depressing.

I had it half right now. The wooden block was too thick. I returned to my original nest rest, but this time with a rag underneath the barrel and a towel to support the rear. Testing accuracy when you can’t see is not only frustrating but pointless. Prescription glasses to correct my dominant eye’s astigmatism worked wonders. It was by no means perfect, but I could ascertain a target and a finite aiming point.

The groups weren’t perfect but were much improved. The process reminded me a pistol is vastly different from a rifle. Though I still long for a one-stop, easy solution to shooting from a pistol rest, the perfect rest really depends on the pistol and what you have lying around your house. Be creative!





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NO PISTOL PRIMERS? HOW ABOUT RIFLE PRIMERS?

Can I use small rifle primers in a pistol cartridge? The simplest answer is “no,” so that’s what I usually tell people.

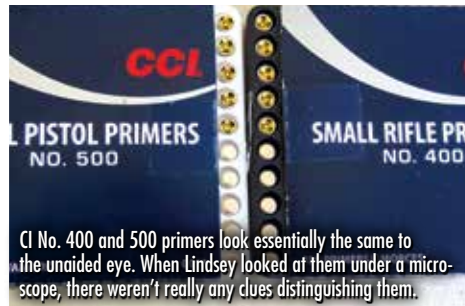
I asked a specific question to my contacts in the ammo industry: “If a person only had small rifle primers, could they safely load handgun cartridges?” Almost every one of them told me “No” right away, followed by, “That’s the official answer.”

Before I go further, I’m going to tell you *it is irresponsible for anyone to interchange load components, period.* I tend to use what’s in the Lyman, Speer and Hornady reloading manuals because they can test loads at a higher capability than I can.

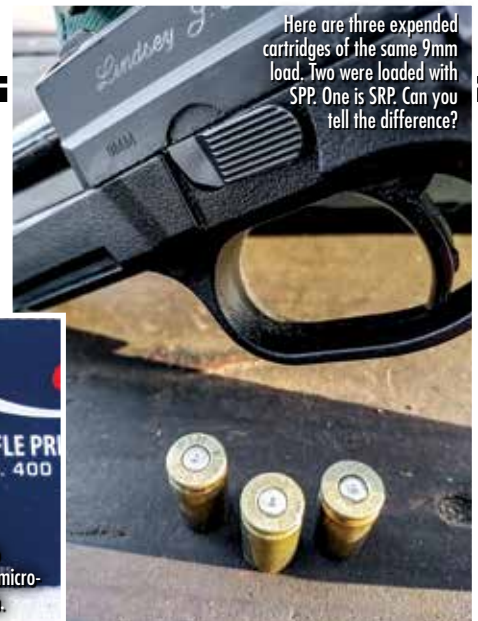
Having said this, I have lots of small rifle primers (SRP) and a dwindling supply of small pistol primers (SPP). With gun, ammo and component sales at record levels, don’t expect the ammo and primer supply to catch up anytime soon.



I know it sounds exciting, but testing loads means long days of firing bullets through a chronograph and logging the results.



CI No. 400 and 500 primers look essentially the same to the unaided eye. When Lindsey looked at them under a microscope, there weren’t really any clues distinguishing them.



Here are three expended cartridges of the same 9mm load. Two were loaded with SPP. One is SRP. Can you tell the difference?

ARCHITECTURE

Small pistol primers (SPP) and small rifle primers (SRP) are 0.175" in diameter; large pistol primers (LPP) and large rifle primers (LRP) are 0.210". There is a cup height difference in LRP and LPP primers, so the question of interchangeability is a “No.”

Boxer primers consist of a relatively soft brass circular cup with a pressed-in anvil, normally of a slightly harder brass. Between the base of the cup and the anvil is the priming compound. Most modern primers are non-corrosive, usually containing lead styphnate (an impact sensitive explosive), or other compounds.

The anvil is a concave dish-like device that looks like an upturned stool with a domed top. If it appears the “legs” of the anvil, which point toward the bullet, are not flush with the rim of the primer cup, they aren’t. The act of seating the primer should squish the anvil into the pellet slightly when the primer is seated flush in the cartridge.

SPP and SRP don’t really appear different dimensionally, or even regarding the amount of priming compound inside. However, SRPs are generally made of a thicker material than SPPs. This is a good argument for not working up loads with SRPs. If you were gauging the efficacy of your load by primer deformation, using a cup with thicker or harder brass may send your loads past safe levels.

Before I go further, let me reiterate. *Using SRP in handgun applications, unless it is specifically listed in a published reloading manual, is not recommended.* Using loads I’ve tested over and over again, I loaded the same cartridges with SRP. Like many (un)scientific endeavors, I kept everything else the same: same dimensions, same load, bullet, temperature and loading method. In most cases, I was able to use the exact brass head stamp. I tested dozens of cartridges besides what I shared with you and used load densities that were at least around 80%.



FINDINGS

Using an SRP in a handgun does not result in unpredictable velocities. Given the same load, using an SRP did not necessarily result in higher velocity.

Wolf SPP gave a much lower standard deviation than I predicted. This is a no-brainer, but the lower the standard deviation, the more likely the round is accurate.

If the cartridge cycled well with SPP, it cycled well with SRP also. *The chart shows some of the loads I tested.*

Just because I tested some loads and they worked fine, it does not prove all loads will have the same degree of success. The only thing I have proved here is the guns I used to test a few loads were robust enough to contain the rapid expansion of the loads tested. That’s the official answer.



CARTRIDGE	TYPE	WEIGHT	PRIMER	POWDER	GR.	AVE. VEL.
.380	PLAN	100	CCI #500	N320	2.8	715
.380	PLAN	100	CCI #400	N320	2.8	743
.380	PLAN	100	Wolf SPP	N320	2.8	725
40 S&W	PLSW	180	CCI #500	N340	4.7	701
40 S&W	PLSW	180	CCI #400	N340	4.7	696
9mm	PLAN	124	CCI #400	N320	3.8	1030
9mm	PLAN	124	CCI#500	N320	4	977
9mm	PLAN	124	Wolf SPP	N320	4	981



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Suffering for My Art: Riding the Lightning



Holy scripture can be a reliable source of guidance, hope, and comfort. On this particularly fateful day it was the backdrop for *Something Truly Horrible*.

Folks occasionally ask what it's like to be a rich and famous gun writer. Well, for starters, there are no rich gun writers. If somebody has found a way to make any serious money in this gig, I wish they would share it with me. As for fame, suffice to say it's not the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders who breathlessly start their every Friday morning with *Guncrank*.

We gun writers are a lot like James Bond — just without the cool cars, chiseled physique, and striking good looks. I guess this means we're actually nothing like James Bond, so never mind. There are, however, what you might call some seriously cool intangibles to the profession.

I've yet to meet a reader that didn't end up a friend. No kidding, you guys are awesome. We all like the same stuff. Gun guys are the sort to whom you'd gladly loan your pickup truck. With a relationship like this it seems the least I can do is to play around with cool new gun stuff, tell you about it, and then inform the IRS it was actually work. At least that's the way it is supposed to be. Then there was this cell phone case.

What's Next?

This particular gadget was a prototype stun gun cell phone case. This sleek little rascal wasn't much bigger than the ubiquitous Otter Box, and it protected the sensitive electronic device comparably well. *However, this inspired rig also included a built-in zillion-volt stun gun.*

The theory was sublime. What's

the one thing you never leave home without these days? You might forget your shirt, your shoes, your underwear, your spouse, or your offspring, but the typical American is never without their cell phone. Incorporating an effective non-lethal defense system into this ubiquitous omnipresent gadget seemed simply inspired. I had the article written before the case arrived. All that remained was to carry it about for a couple of weeks and then go back to massage the prose accordingly.

An Unfortunate Turn

I live way out in the sticks, so mine's a half-hour commute. That's a good thing. I get in the groove in the morning and decompress a bit at night. This way my bride doesn't smother me in my sleep, and the dog doesn't get kicked. Everybody wins.

On my drives I frequently listen to Max McLean read the Bible via an app on my phone. Max's dulcet rendition of the gospels or Psalms will cure what ails you after a long day armpit deep in pestilence and tragedy. I was driving the old Jeep Cherokee my dad gave me when he grew weary of it. The price was certainly right, but that thing was loud. As a result, I had the edge of my phone pressed up against my right ear. As I recall Max was reading Paul's letter to the Romans. *That's when my head exploded.*

It felt like Superman had kung fu'd my brain. My vision went white, and I suddenly couldn't feel anything below my nose. I knew my nose still worked,

because I smelled burnt hair. I guess Jesus was occupied driving the Jeep, because I sure wasn't doing that any longer.

The vehicle rolled to a gentle stop on the side of the road under Divine Guidance. *I could no longer remember my name, gender, or species.* The feed from my right ear sounded like Metallica playing live to an ocean of rabid banshees. The whole world was angled about 20 degrees to starboard. I realized later that was because I could no longer straighten my neck.

For a bit I seriously had no idea what happened. *I briefly entertained the possibility God had chosen to smite me.* Then I remembered Thor's cell phone case.

So that's what it feels like to mainline a million volts straight into your brainstem. I turned on the overhead light but couldn't find my phone anywhere. I discovered it the following day deep underneath the passenger seat. No, I have no idea how it got there.

I retained control of my bowels throughout, something of which I am in retrospect proud. I didn't wet my pants, either. I did, however, swallow my gum. At least I presume that's what happened to it.

It took maybe five minutes to regain my wits sufficiently to drive. By the time I got home the world was only five degrees off plum. I thanked Jesus for not letting me die (yet again), repackaged the phone case and sent it back with a passionate remonstrance to rethink the safety catch. Such is a typical day in the life of a rich and famous gun writer.





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BETTER SHOOTING

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

When you carry a handgun, whether for competition, hunting, or self-defense, the question arises how much extra ammunition is enough? In movies or on television it's easy — you just keep shooting until the gun clicks empty, look at it in astonishment, then throw it

at the adversary. In over 60 years of westerns and action movies I've seen hundreds of guns thrown and not once has it done any good.

Not being a movie star, I had to buy my own guns. After throwing away a gun or two you soon learn it's finan-

cially irresponsible. You're much better off reloading, which means you can keep using the same gun for years, a lifetime even. Obvious, you say? Apparently not to screenwriters.



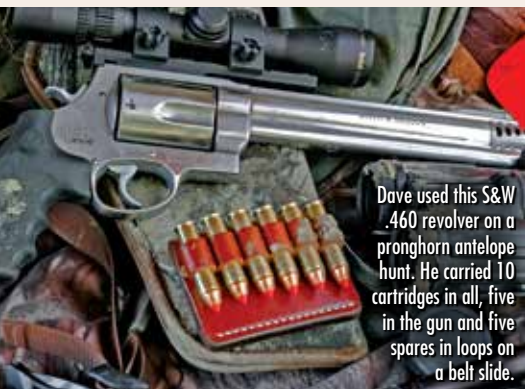
COMPETITION

How much spare ammunition should you carry? It depends on the gun's purpose. For practical pistol competition it's fairly simple. The stage design indicates the minimum number of rounds required to complete the stage. Figure out where you will reload and carry enough magazines to complete the stage plus at least one additional magazine.

In the early days of practical shooting competition, circa 1980, most shooters used 1911 style .45 ACP pistols and seven-round magazines. Most of the stages we shot back then

had low round counts, often six to 12 rounds total. Starting a stage with eight rounds in the gun and two spare magazines would generally see you through.

Through the '80s and '90s field courses with high round counts became more popular — elaborate courses with lots of movement, lots of targets and 30- to 40-round stages. Those of us who clung bitterly to our .45s were starting stages with seven or eight spare magazines. Skinny guys practically ran out of waist. For once I had a competitive advantage. Currently there are divisions for various handgun styles, so it's hard to generalize, but "enough plus one or two extras" seems to still work.



Dave used this S&W .460 revolver on a pronghorn antelope hunt. He carried 10 cartridges in all, five in the gun and five spares in loops on a belt slide.

HUNTING

When hunting big game with either rifle or handgun, a total of 10 rounds in the gun and in belt loops or a butt cuff seems adequate. I recall reading one of Jim Corbett's stories of hunting a man-eating tiger. He carried just three cartridges, two in his double rifle and a

single spare. Cutting it awfully fine I thought, and in fact he did run out of ammo and had to borrow a rickety old shotgun to finish the job. On long hikes in Africa, far from any resupply, I carried three in the rifle, seven in a web belt carrier and 10 more in a folding leather cartridge case for a total of 20 rounds. Probably overdoing it...

DEFENSIVE USE

My views have changed on how much spare ammo to carry along with a personal defense handgun. For decades my practice and advice was to carry one spare reload. From intensive reading (and limited personal experience), in the majority of defensive scenarios simply producing the firearm was sufficient to make the threat either surrender or leave. In the few situations in which it was necessary to fire, one to three rounds generally settled matters.

My concern was not so much running out of ammo but for clearing a possible malfunction. With a tested and maintained handgun and quality ammunition, malfunctions are rare. Should one occur I think a "broad spectrum" solution is best. Under attack and under fire is not the time to be analyzing the problem and

selecting the appropriate measure. We need a solution to positively get the gun up and running regardless of whether the issue is a dud round, failure to feed, stovepipe or whatever. Dump the mag, rack the slide rapidly three times to clear any obstructions, load a fresh mag and rack the slide to chamber a cartridge.

Maybe I've just been watching too much news, but over the last year or so I get the distinct impression much of the nation and of the world has gone completely crazy. Shortages of about everything, inflation, selective law enforcement, mob violence, home invasions, race hatred, skyrocketing violent crime rates, and this is by no means all.

There seems to be a real possibility of one day facing mob violence, no matter how much you try to avoid it. More rounds on tap are looking less like paranoia and more like common sense. High cap 9mm pistols are popular these days with

good reason. I can carry a GLOCK 19 with 16 rounds in the gun and two 17-round spare magazines for a total of 50 rounds.

No, I'm not thinking in terms of pitched gun battles and fighting off a mob. I'm thinking of enough ammo to keep the mob at bay while I escape, or at least get to my rifle.



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BRAD MILLER

BEST METHODS FOR TESTING HANDGUN ACCURACY

TEST THAT GUN!

You're at the range. You've got your handgun and ammo and you're going to find out how it shoots. Now what?

There are good ways to test your pistol for accuracy, and there are bad ways. The point of doing this is to determine how accurately the gun and ammo shoot. You have to use the right method, or you won't be able to come to a valid conclusion.

What Is Accuracy?

With respect to testing for accuracy, there are at least two types. *One is testing how accurately we shoot the gun. The other is how accurately the gun shoots.*

In the first example — testing how well you shoot the gun — you're testing your skill as a shooter to put the rounds where you want them. It involves mastering the proper grip, holding the gun and your body steady, sight alignment

and trigger control.

The second type of accuracy testing is to determine how well the gun shoots. There are two elements at work: the mechanical accuracy of the gun and the accuracy potential of the ammunition. In order to test the gun and ammunition for accuracy, you want to remove any effect the shooter might contribute.

Machine Testing

The best method eliminates the human variable and uses a mechanical device to hold and fire the gun. That's what a Ransom Rest does. The gun frame is secured in the rest and holds it in the same position for every shot. The trigger is tripped by a lever. Thus, gun alignment and trigger pull are done by machine.

Aligning the sights to the same position by eye with a tolerance measured in a few thousandths of an inch for multiple shots is not easy. Thus, while the



Improvisation works provided you find ways to support the gun at two different points. Perfect stability is the goal.

Ransom Rest might be theoretically imperfect with a loose slide to frame fit, in practice it does a much better job of repositioning the gun to point at the same spot than we mere humans can.

Offhand Challenges

Most shooters have to test their gun the old-fashioned way — by hand. There are right and wrong ways to do this. Let me start with the worst way, which is unsupported (offhand).

Things can go poorly when shooting unsupported. One day at the range a shooter in the bay beside me said he recently bought a new gun, and it shot terribly. What did he mean by terrible? He said it was shooting about 3 to 4 feet low at a distance of about 10 yards. Maybe the gun's sights were off, he thought.

He asked me if I would shoot it to confirm his suspicion. I sat down, rested the gun on the bench and shot at a rack of falling plates at about 10 yards. Three shots, three plates went down. He was speechless. It turns out he was shooting offhand. *He was flinching so much the bullets were hitting several feet below the target.*

Any flaw in technique can show up on the target. It's harder to apply perfect technique shooting offhand, and any flaws, such as flinching, can be grossly magnified.

Bench Shooting

The better way is to shoot from a bench or other firm support where you can rest the gun on a surface. There are several companies making pistol rests for this express purpose, such as Caldwell, MTM, Hyskore, CTK Precision, Target Shooting Inc. and Bullshooter, to name a few. You can also use any one of a variety of shooting rest bags.

The specialty rests are ideal for the job, but you can also just use simple sandbags, wooden blocks, rolled up towels, whatever you can dream up. For countless years I've used simple sandbags and wood blocks. They work!

Whatever type of support you use,

Supported Arm



Shooting by only supporting the arm is not the best method. The gun is free to move by any imperfections the shooter introduces.

Unsupported



Shooting unsupported is the least reliable way to test the gun or ammunition for accuracy.

the method in which it's used is the most important. You can rest your arms or wrists on the support, or you can rest the gun on the support. Which is better? *Rest the gun!*

Keep in mind you're trying to eliminate any movement of the gun that can be attributed to you. If you rest your arms or wrists on the support, the gun is hanging out there free to move, wiggle, wobble, shake, sway, twitch or jerk. Whatever your body or arms or hands do will be transferred into gun movement. You don't want that.

The commercial rests are usually designed to put the barrel or dust cover on the front of the rest (depending on the gun design), and the bottom of the grip on the rear of the rest. Thus, both the front and back (bottom) of the gun are supported. This is the ideal method — support at multiple places. You can emulate the two-point support with blocks or sandbags. Put the front of the gun on your block/sandbag, and the bottom of the grip on the bench.

Rest Tips

Depending on the height of the front rest, the bottom of the grip

might or might not rest on the table. You can use a spacer (another block, sandbag, towel, bottom of your hand, whatever) to rest the grip on.

If I'm using plain old sandbags, sometimes the trigger guard ends up being the front part of the gun supported. That will work, too. This isn't rocket science, it's simply being practical to provide solid support to help you keep the gun steady while you carefully squeeze off those shots.

If you rest the back of your forearms or elbows on the bench, make sure they're on a soft cushioned surface (soft pad, another sandbag) so they don't get bruised from the recoil.

Be sure the slide that extends past the dust cover on semiautomatic pistols does not contact the support rest. This can produce fliers and cause gun malfunctions. And be sure to rest your butt in a chair. Do your test while sitting, so you don't introduce body sway into the equation.

Even with a properly supported gun, you still have to do your part. You still must use proper shooting techniques to make this method work effectively. Take it slow and easy and pay attention to your trigger pull.

If you're shooting a revolver, pay close attention to where the front of the cylinder is positioned. Make sure there is nothing directly to the side of the gap between the cylinder and



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Revolvers require special attention when shooting off a rest because of the high-pressure gas and flame that escape from the gap between the cylinder and barrel. Protect valuable surfaces with a rag or towel. And keep your fingers away from that gap!



barrel (including your fingers!). The high-pressure blast of the flame coming from the gap, especially with magnum rounds, can damage your rest and redirect the blast back toward you if you're not careful.

When I use sandbags with a revolver, sometimes they are to the side of the cylinder/barrel gap, so I cover the sandbag with a towel. The flame blasting from the gap can be so intense it will rip holes in the towel and set it on fire. *One day when I was testing .44 Magnum loads, I shredded a towel to bits and set it on fire half a dozen times.*

Distance

At what distance should you shoot? The common standard distance for handguns is 25 yards. It's the gold standard and is a good distance to get an impression of dispersion, or tightness, of hits.

With short-barreled guns, especially guns designed for self-defense, you might want to shoot closer at 7 to 15 yards.

Serious folks will shoot to 50 yards, especially bullseye shooters, since that's the range they engage the slow fire targets. Longer distances are also possible depending on the shooter's intended purpose. I used to test the accuracy of my .44 Magnum loads at 100 yards in preparation for Silhouette matches that shoot out to 200 yards. And that was with iron sights.

There you have it. If you have access to a Ransom Rest, use it. If not, support the gun, take your time, get the sights aligned, squeeze the trigger slowly, and find out how your  gun shoots!

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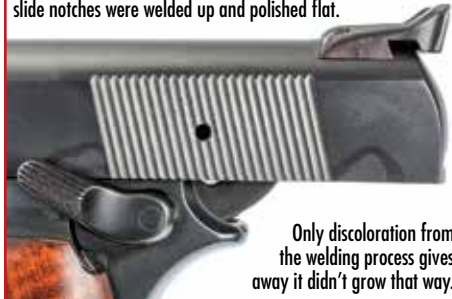
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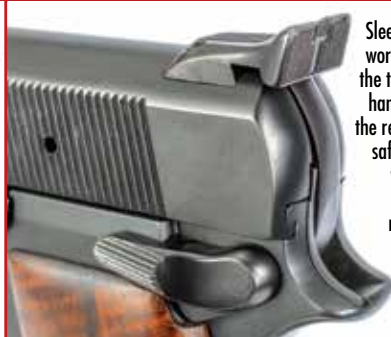
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RARE? ONE

Kelsey's gun could be cycled with the safety on, and the slide notches were welded up and polished flat.



Only discoloration from the welding process gives away it didn't grow that way.



Sleek is the word: From the trimmed hammer to the reshaped safety and welded-up slide notches.



The slidestop was contoured to a narrower profile more like the M1911. Hi-Power cognoscenti will also notice the controversial magazine safety has been removed.

CHARLEY KELSEY'S PERSONAL DEVEL HI-POWER

JEREMY D. CLOUGH

The ASP 9mm, a cut-down S&W Model 39, pioneered the idea of a concealable pistol that fired a service pistol cartridge. That was the first step and led quite directly to the second: Devel. Charley Kelsey, gunsmith and former racer,

ordered an ASP conversion and was quite disappointed by his experience. Kelsey's fertile mind became convinced he could do better, and he started Devel, named after a *Scottish word meaning to strike an incapacitating blow*.

In the late 1970s, there were three serious fighting guns: the S&W 39, the

M1911 and the Browning Hi-Power. While Devel is best known for its cut-down Smiths (a la the ASP), improvements Kelsey pioneered were later incorporated in all three pistols by their respective manufacturers. Along the way, he also patented the eight-round 1911 magazine and a gas-operated



Hi-Powers are the rarest Devels, with only four known. This was founder Charley Kelsey's personal Hi-Power.

OF A KIND!

The sights were replaced by a bold, square front with a serrated ramp and a curvaceous, but low, rear from Millet.



While the Hi-Power silhouette is immediately recognizable, features such as the contoured hammer give the gun a unique sleekness.



handgun, in addition to designing a fluted bullet that looks suspiciously like the inspiration for some of the current defensive projectiles. Unfortunately, he was a better designer than businessman, and the Devel corporation, in part crippled by the eight-round magazine they could not make reliable, ended in bankruptcy.

Kelsey's life is a story of bitter disappointment and of innovation appropriated by others, and now, some 30 years later, most shooters no longer even know the name "Devel." Wayne Novak, who has the largest known Devel collection, calls it "Devel Face," a slightly whimsical expression other people give you because they have no idea what you're talking about. This ignorance (which is changing a bit), worked in his favor when he discovered Kelsey's personal Browning Hi-Power because while others simply saw one more Browning, he recognized it instantly for what it was.

The Rarest Hi-Powers

The Hi-Power, John Moses Browning's last design, was completed after his death at FN by Dieudonné Saive of FAL rifle fame and is the rarest of all Devels. A total of four are known to exist. Kelsey's, as might be expected, was by far the most impressive.

While the silhouette is immediately recognizable, it has a unique sleekness. The hammer is contoured to match the rear of the slide. Kelsey always favored the idea of being able to cycle the slide of a pistol with the safety on — some of his M1911s were modified to make this possible — so the safety on his gun was modified and the then-unnecessary safety notch was welded up and polished flat, as was the takedown notch. Only the slight discoloration of the steel from the welding process gives away it didn't grow that way.

The traditional bulge at the end of the slidestop has been removed, and the



The Devel firing pin safety consists of a simple change to the sear lever found in every Hi-Power.

slidestop contoured to a narrower profile more closely resembling the M1911. The end protruding through the frame was trimmed as well. While it eliminates some functionality (the end of the slidestop is intended to depress the firing pin during disassembly), it's a very clean look. The sights are replaced with a bold, square front with a serrated ramp and a curvaceous, but low, fixed rear from Millet. The gripping surfaces are left smooth, and the bottom of the frame is welded up and shaped into a flowing magazine funnel and flare that helps keep the gun in your hand.

Safety Innovation

The lasting innovation, though, is inside the gun. Having been approached by a Federal law enforcement agency looking for a firing pin safety for its Hi-Powers, *Devel designed what is probably the most seamlessly integrated such safety.* Unlike the M1911, which has a fixed trigger bow, the pivoting trigger of the Hi-Power pushes up on a lever contained in the slide. As the front goes up, the rear of the lever bears down on the sear until it releases the hammer. Parenthetically, this is why Browning triggers feel so inconsistent: The trigger varies every time the slide cycles. The Devel design simply changed the shape of the slide-mounted lever to create a paddle that locks the firing pin in place until it is rotated down by pressure from the trigger. Simple and brilliant — so much so

Kelsey's contacts didn't resist the pressure to give the design to FN, cheating Charley out of his ability to patent it.

You'll find the safety in all modern Hi-Powers. Like I said, innovation appropriated.



The gripping surfaces are smooth, and the bottom of the frame is welded to create a flowing magazine funnel and flare that helps keep the gun in hand.



THE 1911 RE-IMAGINED



TOM MCHALE | PHOTOS: ROB JONES
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

Handgun competitions don't teach one how to fight, but they do an excellent job of burning in basic gun handling skills like trigger control, malfunction clearances, magazine changes and the like.

In similar fashion, competition race guns aren't suitable for duty or carry, but there sure are features and design know-how which should make the leap from competition range to the streets.

The folks at STI learned a thing or two about making next-generation,

high-capacity 1911-style pistols to dominate action-shooting sports. Not long ago, the company decided to enter the duty and self-defense markets, leveraging design features and manufacturing techniques applicable to defensive handguns. Fast forward from a re-branding to Staccato 2011, and here we are. *Serious users whose day jobs legitimately carry the description "tactical" have been flocking to the Staccato platform ever since.*

The reason is simple. The Staccato 2011 combines many of the benefits

of the proven 1911 platform with high capacity, reliable 9mm chambering and race gun performance.

The Power Of Hybrid

When you check out these pistols on the company website, you'll see a bold claim at the top of each page. "The world's best shooting duty (or 'carry' for the C2) gun." Big words but there's a lot to back up the claim. When I first shot a Staccato a year or so ago, I was enamored with the easy shooting of the P model. Soft shooting is nice for comfort,

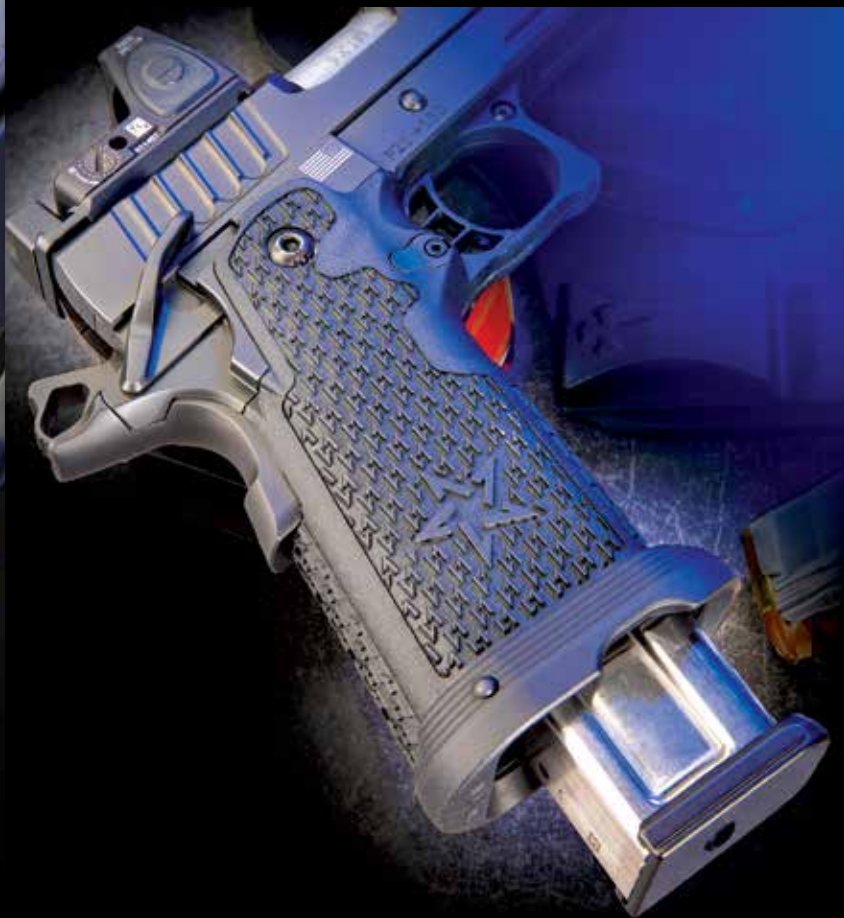
STACCATO 2011

9MM





AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER



but a “cushy” feel won’t save your life. What will is a pistol you can control with ease, even when shooting fast.

The secret to the Staccato’s docile shootability is its three-part design. A classic 1911, and just about every other semi-automatic pistol on the market, is a two “major” part affair, at least on the exterior. You have the lower frame/dust cover, and the slide. Companies mix and match materials on the lower half of the frame to achieve different performance characteristics. Think steel on steel, aluminum and steel, or polymer plus steel.

Staccato threw out the two-part model and went with three. The slide is steel. The frame has been split into separate forward and grip components — metal and polymer. The forward frame is made of steel on the P model and aluminum on the C2 model. The grip module and trigger guard areas are constructed from polymer. It’s this combination of metal for rigidity and polymer for weight savings and flex that make the Staccato 2011s such a joy to shoot. According to company engineers, a high-speed camera will show the grip module flexing under recoil, then springing back forward aiding forward slide movement. *Many people find they’ll actually dip the muzzle after*

each shot, at least until they get used to the surprising lack of muzzle flip.

Trigger And Safeties

Since the beginning, Staccatos have featured a dual construction trigger design, and users love them. The bow is stainless steel. The company considered and tested Titanium but found the stainless construction less problematic and less prone to unwanted flex. The shoe is made from nylon. Yep, that’s right. If you’ve followed the STI/Staccato history, this is no surprise to you, and you won’t find it the least bit unusual. If you’re new to this innovative platform, you might wonder why not steel or aluminum? The simple answer is the nylon/stainless combo just works and feels right. If you prefer, you can pick up an aluminum shoe model from Dawson Precision.

As for the feel, the P averaged precisely 4.5 lbs. pull weight while this C2 worked out to 4.25 lbs. — every time. These pistols are squarely aimed at the duty, concealed carry and self-defense markets, so those weights are spot on. You’ll experience a minuscule amount of pressure-free take-up, maybe 1/32”, followed by less than 1/16” of steady pressure before a crisp break. Reverse the process for the

reset. Maybe a hair over 1/16” of forward travel will get you there.

Don’t fret about using this pistol for self-defense with its short-travel trigger. It brings all the safety layers of a classic 1911, so the combination of features makes firing a shot a very deliberate undertaking. There’s a grip safety with memory bump that locks the works (the slide still reciprocates) unless you have a proper firing grip. The ambidextrous frame safety locks trigger, hammer and slide until you lower it to fire. For you lefties, there’s no discrimination on the safety — it’s equally generous on both sides, not a lame nod to “ambidextrous” by having something thin and barely operational on the right side of the frame.

Staccato P

The P is the larger sibling, identical in primary design features but with some selective tweaks appropriate for a larger pistol. The lower forward frame is steel, resulting in increased weight over the C2. The bushing-less bull barrel is 4.4” and the recoil system uses a full-length guide rod. For take-down, the Dawson Precision 4.4 Adaptive Tool-less recoil system guide rod features an inset hinge that’ll hold the recoil spring under tension so you can slide it out to remove the barrel.

STACCATO 2011 9MM



The pistol ships with two flush 17-round magazines and an extended 20-rounder. A removable flared magazine well makes reloads effortless.

Overall dimensions are 8.0" wide, 5.6" tall and 1.3" wide.

Staccato C2

The C2 features a 3.9" bull barrel, also bushing-less. The recoil system is a bit different, consisting of dual, non-captive springs, so you need to use the included compression lock tool for take-down. Capacity with standard magazines is 16 rounds plus one in the chamber.

The barrel and capacity reduce overall length to 7.5" long and 4.94" tall. Width is identical to the P model.

Sights And Optics

Both P and C2 models are available in iron sight configurations or with optics-ready slide cuts. If you order the optics version, you'll get sights designed to co-witness in the bottom of the sight window. On both the Trijicon SRO and Holosun HE508T-RD X2 I tested, the co-witnessing feature worked like a champ without obstructing the dot.

The rear sight is all black with horizontal serrations and mounts in a dovetail cut in the slide optics plate. The steel



front sight is also dovetail mounted and features a fiber-optic insert.

Both pistols feature a single-slot forward rail for additional light or laser attachment options.

Handling

I'm not gonna lie, it was a luxury having both the P and C2 models available to shoot side-by-side. Using the

same ammo in both, I was able to tinker and "feel" the nuances of each pistol.

The basic operation, trigger and general shooting characteristics of the two pistols were near identical as one would expect. After all, the operational design features are the same. However, I did notice a difference in "feel" and perceived recoil between the two guns. It isn't a surprise the P model was the

STACCATO 2011 9MM



softer shooting of the two, although *both guns exhibited the coveted “sights just stay on target” characteristic.* I did all the test shooting with red dot sights attached, and the dots just sat on the target, shot to shot. You almost have to train yourself to shoot faster; you certainly can with virtually no sight re-acquisition between shots.

I did the “kitchen scale” comparison of both pistols fully decked out with empty magazines and red dots installed. The C2 with a Trijicon SRO optic tipped the scales at 1 lb., 14.5 oz. The P model with its 20-round and a Holosun HE508T-RD X2 weighed in at 2 lbs., 8 oz.

To be clear, we’re fully immersed in “spoiled rotten” territory here. Both

pistols are the softest-shooting handguns I can recall testing, so pointing out differences between the two seems a bit extra. But hey, it’s my job.

The steel magazines drop cleanly, and the release button is crisp, a feature not unexpected from the Staccato 2011’s competition heritage.

Ammo

You know you’ve stumbled across a fun pistol when even during this epic ammo drought, you gleefully raid your precious ammo supply to shoot — a lot. I elected to try four different loads from three manufacturers, and I wasn’t shy about the quantity used. Regardless of what the internet says, gun writers are suffering the same short-

ages as everyone else these days, so *the pain of tossing empty boxes in the range trash bin is real.* No matter. I shot this pistol like it was still 2019 using the following loads.

Federal HST 124-grain — In lots of testing over the years, this one has proven to be a stunning accuracy performer. And it’s hard to argue against its defensive performance — expansion and penetration are always right on the money.

Black Hills HoneyBadger — As an all-copper projectile, it’s slightly light for caliber at 100 grains. This translates into soft shooting and low recoil — always desirable features in a handgun. The non-traditional projectile design isn’t intended to expand, so

penetration is reliable and steady. The bullet relies on a fluid displacement model somewhat like the operation of a drill bit to establish an effective wound channel. Oh, and thanks to the finicky nature of the Black Hills team, it also features outstanding velocity consistency and overall accuracy.

Norma MHP — The monolithic hollowpoint is designed to be a maximum expander. Also light for caliber at 108 grains, it's a great solution for civilian concealed carry.

Federal Syntech Action Pistol — This 9mm load weighs in heavy at 150-grains for competition and steel target use. The fat hunk of lead does a swell job of knocking down steel poppers and plates while meeting power factor requirements. The synthetic "jacket" shoots cool and leaves the bore clean — a pleasant benefit.

Difference A Barrel Makes

I wanted to explore the ballistic differences between the P with its 4.4" barrel and the C2 with its 3.9" barrel. What difference would the 1/2" make? I set up a Competition Electronics ProChrono DLX 15 feet downrange and proceeded to launch strings of the four aforementioned ammo types from each pistol.

The P chalked up the following average shot string velocities: Federal HST, 1,153.3; Black Hills HoneyBadger, 1,200; Norma MHP, 1,157.3; and Syntech Action Pistol, 896 fps.

As expected, the C2 with its shorter barrel turned in lower average velocities: Federal HST, 1,111.7; Black Hills HoneyBadger, 1,169.3; Norma MHP, 1,110.3; and Syntech Action Pistol, 885 fps.

To spare you the math, the ballpark "average" is about a 40-fps difference between the two except for the Action Pistol load that seemed less sensitive to barrel length.

Accuracy Olympics

Let the fun begin. With both of these pistols red dot equipped, I figured accuracy testing at 25 yards would be a breeze. And it was. Using my new favorite Ransom Multi Caliber rest, I shot multiple five-shot groups from 25 yards with each of the four ammo types. Since I was shooting two different optics, the Trijicon SRO and Holosun 508, I switched them between guns halfway through the shooting, so I shot each ammo type from each pistol with each optic. While unlikely, I wanted to make sure none of the accuracy results were affected by any difference in sighting.

Starting with the compact C2 model,



I shot multiple groups with each ammo type and averaged the results. The Federal HST worked out to 1.93", while the Norma MHP and Black Hills HoneyBadger printed 1.39" and 2.0" respectively. The Syntech Action Pistol surprised at just 1.69".

The P model shrank those groups, with the Black Hills HoneyBadger winning the day with an average group size of just 0.92". Hard to argue with that. The Federal HST, Norma MHP and Syntech Action pistol measured averages of 1.39", 1.29" and 1.92".

Here's the kicker. When I ran the math of all ammo types shot all day, and calculated a single combined average, I came up with 1.38"

for everything fired from the P model pistol. Consider me impressed. I should also note I was probably being limited by the red dots themselves. The Trijicon and Holosun red dots feature 2.5 and 2.0 MOA dots, which cover 0.635" and 0.5" of the target at 25 yards. Considering the little bit of dot blur, I have to wonder what a fine-crosshair handgun scope would yield with this pistol.

The Staccato 2011 C2 starts at \$1,999 for the iron sight version. The optics ready model sells for \$2,299. The P model ranges from \$2,099 to \$2,399.



For more info: Staccato2011.com



While the P38 officially replaced the Parabellum in 1942, the P08 Luger soldiered on to the very end of World War II.

ANATOMY, INDUSTRY, WEAPONRY, ART

WILL DABBS, MD PHOTOS: SARAH DABBS

GEORG LUGER AND HIS AMAZING ARTIFICIAL KNEE



The Luger P08 is a classic military handgun. In the hands of a German soldier like this *Fallschirmjäger*, the Parabellum rendered acceptable military service across several continents in two wars.

Epiphany is the term according to my friend Mr. Webster. It is the moment when a previously mundane item or event takes on a new and unexpected significance. It was an epiphany birthed from a frustrating encounter with a stubborn cocklebur that brought us Velcro. Now it seems half the planet is held together with the stuff.

In 1893 a German engineer named Hugo Borchardt designed the Borchardt-Selbstladepistole while working

for Ludwig Loewe and Cie of Berlin. At a time when the state-of-the art was the cartridge-fed revolver, Herr Borchardt's magazine-fed repeater was earth-shattering. The action was an inspired mechanical adaptation of the human knee. The resulting gun was long and heavy and as a result, revolutionary though it was, it failed to generate any significant military sales.

In 1898 one of Hugo's fellow engineers, Georg Luger, received a patent for an improved version of the



The action locks open on the last round fired so reloads are efficient and quick.



The brilliant articulation of the toggle action is seen here to good effect.

Right: Sights are typical of the day and are small and precise to the point of being functionally useless in a tactical environment.



Borchardt-Selbstladepestole. Further improvements resulted in the 1900 pattern pistol that was sold in quantity to the Swiss military through the newly formed Deutsche Waffen und Munitionsfabriken (DWM). In 1903 the design was accepted by the Imperial German Navy and in 1908 by the Kaiser's army as the Parabelлум P08. Thus was born arguably the most iconic handgun in history.

Anatomical Origins

To study the action of Luger's Parabelлум is to appreciate genius. The major components of the design are all on the outside so an astute student can press the barrel of an unloaded example against a firm object and watch the knee joint articulate in slow motion. *The barrel assembly moves backward about 6mm before the external cam built into the frame forces the toggle upward and breaks the lock.* From this point recoil pushes back the bolt and extracts and ejects the fired case. A coil spring in the butt drives the bolt back into battery, chambering a fresh cartridge in the process while locking the mechanism in position for the next round.

What is so extraordinary about this serendipitous design is its genesis. The men who designed this pistol did so with little more than paper, pencils and a ruler — no computers, no finite element analysis, no AutoCAD. Those who actually built the first examples turned out the parts on machines controlled via hand wheels and more than likely driven by steam.

German engineers of this era had a rite of passage. At the end of their training, they were given a steel cube and a collection of hand files. *Prior to graduation, the cube had to be a ball.* We just do not produce artists like that anymore.

Elegant Execution

There is a near-sensual elegance to the lines of Georg's masterpiece. The rake of the butt places the line of recoil in proper



The leather hardshell holster for the Parabelлум handgun as reflected by this superb replica from World War Supply did a great job of protecting the weapon from the elements. It was, however, slow to put into action when stowed.

orientation with the shooter's arm and the uniquely Teutonic ambience hearkens back to the days of greasy U-boats and cloth-covered biplanes. That the reality of its use involved frozen French mud and veritable oceans of blood is a sobering reminder of what happens when industrialized nations go to war.

On the range recoil is a bit on the sharp side and the single action trigger

is not as crisp as it could be. However, I own a beautiful 1972 Mach I Mustang that my son and I resurrected from a nearly unrecognizable pile of rust. It is hot in the summer, cold in the winter and as loud as the World War II fighter plane for which it was named. *Manhood does not orbit around classic machines because they are comfortable, reasonable, or efficient.* My muscle car gets



With the action at full recoil the genius of the mechanism is made apparent. The similarity to the human knee joint is obvious.



The classic lines of the P08 Parabellum are iconic in their execution. Upon firing the action recoils about 6mm until the toggle engages the external cams and breaks the locking mechanism upward.



The safety is positioned on the right side only. In the down position with the German for "Made Safe" exposed, the safety is engaged.

11 miles per gallon on a good day. We admire, work on and collect such things because they are artifacts of a better, simpler time.

Magazines need a little help, hence the finger dimples in the base, but tactical reloads are still fairly expedient. The bolt locks open on the last round so the shooter need only give the toggle a snap to close it on a fresh magazine. The sights are tiny and precise, as was the custom of the day, so they are not of any great tactical use.

Legendary Implement

The P08 Parabellum is as much art as war machine. In my mind that it has a function it accomplishes so efficiently elevates it above the sort that just hangs on the wall or sits on a shelf.

Let us not forget *Herr Luger* also designed the 9mm Parabellum cartridge. This little 9x19mm masterpiece is the most produced metallic cartridge in history. It still rolls out of munitions factories the world over to the tune of billions of rounds per year even today. This fact might seem an afterthought in light of the handgun that bears his name speaks volumes regarding the man's genius.

"Let him who longs for peace prepare for war — *Si vis pacem, para bellum.*" The phrase so moved Georg Luger he

*A true expert
can't resist a lesson.*

Here's one thing we know—
everything we still don't.
Even after 39 relentless years.
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Magazine baseplates are dimpled to facilitate extraction and most Parabellum pistols are slotted for a shoulder stock.



The P08 Parabellum served the German military through two World Wars. Despite being superseded by more advanced designs Herr Luger's innovative handgun soldiered on through the end of WWII.

christened both his pistol and the cartridge it fired the Parabellum in tribute.

Names like GLOCK, Kalashnikov and Stoner have earned incontrovertible positions in the lore of firearms design. While they have each in their own way legitimately shaped the direction of mankind in the last century, they seem to a man to be pragmatists. They built tools that were revolutionary but industrial. Their weapons equip men at arms on a breathtaking scale.

By contrast, Herr Luger shared comparable motivations yet produced his product under utterly dissimilar circumstances. His pistol yielded reliable ser-

vice to generations of his countrymen at war, yet was produced in a time when engineering was arguably as much aesthetics as math.

I have lived to shoot my entire life and have written for the gun press for 20 years. That I was in my 5th decade before I purchased one of these remarkable handguns and really came to admire it is one of those imponderables in my world.

A great man once extolled art is

where you find it. In the case of Georg Luger's amazing artificial knee, the translation of human anatomy to engineering and then on to ordnance is an extraordinary bit of serendipity. In my view, it handily qualifies as art.

Special thanks to World War Supply for the quality reproduction military equipment used in this article.



For more info: WorldWarSupply.com

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MAGNUM RESEARCH BFR ELMER KEITH #5

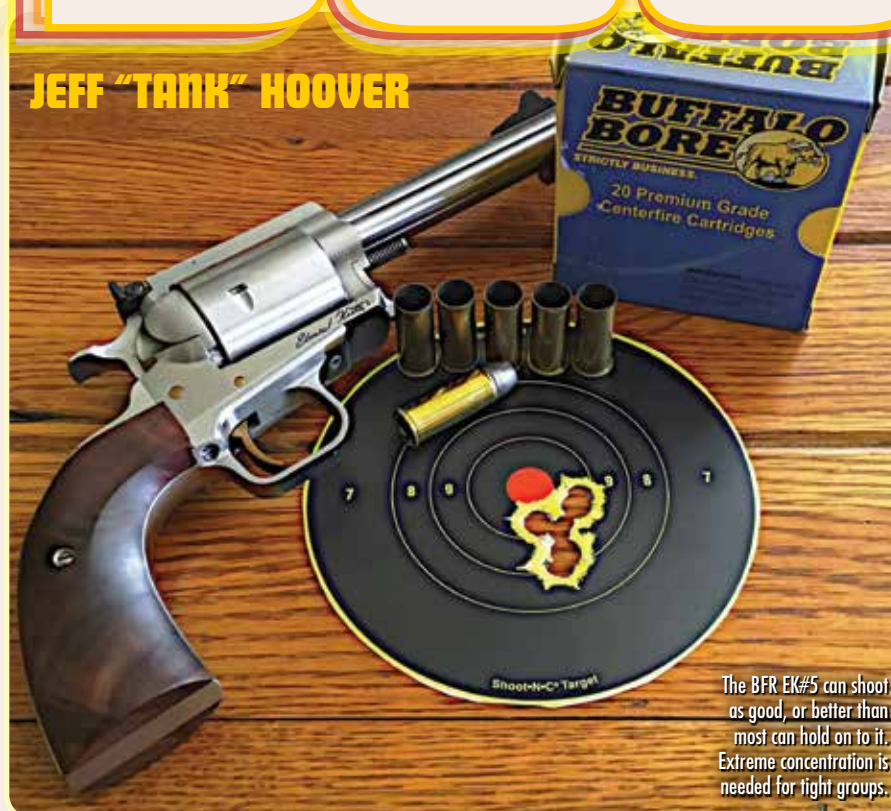
A HANDFUL OF

The Grand Old Man's signature is laser engraved onto the frame, honoring Elmer. Notice the locking base-pin latch like the original #5.



PREMIUM BOOOOM

JEFF "TANK" HOOVER



The BFR EK#5 can shoot as good, or better than most can hold on to it. Extreme concentration is needed for tight groups.

magnum Research's Custom Shop recently released a tribute gun, honoring the Idaho cowboy and Grand Ol' Man of Sixguns, Elmer Keith.

This gun is special for several reasons. Foremost, honoring Elmer Keith is always justified! Secondly, it's chambered in the 500 Linebaugh, which also pays tribute to John Linebaugh, a man who picked up where Elmer left off, with experimentation and presentation of big bore revolvers in calibers of his own design.

The BFR EK#5 gun continues to carry on the creed of traditional sixgunners in an affordable, packable, well built, five-shot, SA revolver exemplifying the traits of two men who knew revolvers.

Details

One of the details setting the EK#5 apart from other single-actions is its custom locking base-pin latch mimicking Elmer's original #5 sixgun. Keith first saw the design when Harold Croft,



Here's an in-close look at the base-pin locking latch.



Classic walnut stocks are beautifully fitted by Brett Pikula of the BFR Custom Shop. He is the Custom Shop, making each and every one.

a Philadelphia, Pa. gun enthusiast, visited Elmer to witness Elmer's long-range shooting. Elmer starts lobbing rounds at a 4'x4' board — 700 yards away — hitting it with every gun Croft brought with him, making him a true believer. A friendship transpires and after much experimentation, the Keith #5 is built, after four previous attempts of making the perfect sixgun.

Looks Matter

Elmer's signature is laser engraved on the bottom right side of the frame, while the bottom left side has "500 Linebaugh" clearly and proudly marked on it. The barrel has Magnum Research Pillager, MN lasered into it.

Brett Pikula tells me the pins, ejector rod button and screw, trigger, and base-pin latch screw have been heat-treated, giving them a gold-tone finish complementing the brushed stainless steel wheelgun.

The oversized cylinder has recessed chambers, providing the loading gate support during recoil. Brett has worked on every BFR revolver since Magnum Research took them over in 2001 (over 25,000) and runs the Custom Shop.

The flat rear sight is serrated, adjustable for windage and elevation and of square notch design. When matched with the tall ramped front sight, it provides a wonderful sight picture for the heavy loads the .500 Linebaugh requires.

Lastly, the gun has a free spinning cylinder, meaning should you overturn the cylinder while loading, reversing direction is possible.

Handloading

I have two bullet molds for the .500 Linebaugh. The first will be my main hunting bullet, which drops from an MP-Molds 450-grain LFNGC (Long Flat Nose Gas Check) design. Loaded over 26 grains of 2400 and sparked with



Close-up of cast perfection. Who said lead is dead? Not Tank! Note his Smurf bullets ...

a WLPP, velocity is over 1,200 FPS. Groups of 1.45" are the norm. I size all my cast slugs 0.512" with the Lee APP press and it speeds up the sizing process tenfold. I used Sage Outdoors .50 caliber SRT Gator Checks for the MP-Molds cast bullets.

For those who don't cast their own slugs, Hunter's Supply makes a dandy bullet. It's a 420-grain LFN design and shoots wonderfully. Velocity is just over 1,200 FPS when loaded over 26 grains of 2400. Groups ran a snug 1.18".

Smurf Loads?

It took me a while to appreciate light "gallery" type loads after I started handloading. To be honest, I never thought about them until one day an older gentleman asked me, "What 'light' loads do you shoot?"

Stopping, a light bulb lit-up over my head as I thought, "Why beat myself and my guns up shooting full power loads all the time?" It was a valid question.

My second mold comes from Todd Corder, a mold designer who sells molds he designs and has LEE Precision manufacture. This one is a 0.513" diameter 300-grain wadcutter. Loaded over 12 grains of Unique and WLPP, I get around 900 fps for the sweetest shooting load



Flat, serrated, adjustable rear sight makes for a wonderful sight picture.

that allows me to enjoy and savor the fine gun from which they are shot.

Being powder coated in Ford blue makes the "Smurf" moniker a natural. Groups of 1.27" were the average for this fun shooting plinker. It's a perfect practice load and great for beginners who want to try out an authentic big bore single-action, without making them shell-shocked.

Buffalo Bore

Factory fodder consisted of Buffalo Bore's fine custom ammunition. Tim Sundles is the proprietor, and he loads his ammo for top performance — within



Some things needed for fun .500 Linebaugh handloads. Hornady dies, MP Molds, Lee molds, Hunter's Supply cast bullets and Alliant powders Unique and 2400.

safe parameters. Buffalo Bore's ammunition is great, always providing top accuracy and velocities. Clean burning, I've never had a problem with extraction, or other high-pressure problems, while shooting it.

Heavy loads consisted of a 435-grain LFN cast bullet at 1,300 fps and 1.19" average group size. The 525-grain LFN at 1,100 fps is a handful and grouped at 1.6". Buffalo Bore also makes a lighter shooting load using the same 435-grain LFN at 950 fps that is pleasant to shoot. In fact, this load shot the best, averaging 0.65". It was the clear winner, accuracy wise. Think there might be a correlation here?

Shooting

I did all shooting at 50 feet with my forearms resting on a 6x6" carpeted block. Temperature was 26 degrees, making the heavy recoil extra fun, especially since I forgot my gloves. No

matter, I got through 50 rounds of eye-opening ammo. With a gun like this, it's a pure pleasure to shoot, but takes extreme concentration not to anticipate the recoil. I only teared-up a little.

Groups of five were shot for two groups with each load. I'd kick out the worst shot from each group, measuring the best four shots. I then averaged the two groups for the final result.

Dimensionally Speaking

Being a Custom gun, you can have yours made with a variety of choices. This particular shooter has a 5.1" barrel with an overall length just under 11" and height just under 6". Weight unloaded is 48.1 oz. and trigger pull is a consistent 2.51 lbs. This gun feels lighter in the hand with the slim stocks and grip-frame.

Leather

I had "Doc" Barranti make one of his famous #5 holsters based on the early Lawrence 120 holster from the 1920s/30s, with a wonderful portrait of Elmer Keith proudly displayed on it. I don't know how he does it, but it looks sharp!

Following both Elmer and John Linebaugh's recommendation of keeping a powerful sidearm portable, the #5 shuck is an obvious and traditional choice.

The Final Word

I'll admit this is the first Magnum Research gun I've ever shot, and it impresses the hell out of me. Fit, finish, smoothness, accuracy and the fact it's built with the precision of a Swiss watch and strength of a bank vault.



Brett Pikula has worked on every BFR since Magnum Research added them to the family. We're talking over 25,000 guns over 18 years. He now runs the BFR Custom Shop, among other things.

The gold-tone accents, perfectly fitted, well-figured walnut stocks and laser engraved signature make this a truly special gun. Add the custom base-pin locking latch like Elmer's #5 and it is of heirloom quality.

Being chambered in .500 Linebaugh gives due credit to the man who faithfully followed Elmer's footprints and designed one of the most powerful handgun cartridges in the world. This is the complete package for traditional sixgunners in a five-shot big-bore SA revolver.

Go to Magnum Research's Custom shop and build your own custom big-bore boomer. You won't be sorry.



For more info: MagnumResearch.com, LeePrecision.com, Hunters-Supply.com, BuffaloBore.com



A true SA revolver lover's holy grail! A Magnum Research BFR .500 Linebaugh resting next to a Barranti Leather Tom Threeperson's 120 shuck. Note Elmer's portrait.



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The muzzle opening on the DVG-1 is oval shaped with the barrel forced into the bottom during lockup. Right: Note the flat trigger design on the DVG-1.



SCCY'S THE LIMIT!



The front and rear serrations plus the straight trigger set the DVG-1 apart from the previous CPX models.

THE NEW DVG-1 STRIKER-FIRED PISTOL

DAVID FREEMAN



The new DVG-1 (front) uses a new Quad-Lock system with four lockup points.

When SCCY announced their new DVG-1 pistol more than a year ago, I put my name on the list to get one. The gun-buying frenzy associated with the pandemic had the company's production lines running at max capacity to fill orders for their existing CPX-1 and CPX-2 products, so it took a while before they were able to ship evaluation copies to writers. But when my sample finally arrived at my local gun shop and I opened the box, I immediately felt I was looking at something special.

The DVG-1's machining is flawless. Its fit is tight and smooth. Everything about it says quality, yet it's a gun that retails below \$300. That's with two magazines and a trigger lock. Also, with each of the magazines, you have the choice of a flat base plate or one that is extended with a slight pinky-finger curve. You might find the flat base plate better for carrying, but believe me, when you shoot the gun, you're going to want the

extended base plate.

The hot thing in defensive pistols these days are handguns in a class that's being called "micro pistols." SCCY was building micro pistols long before the current crop of micros. Micro pistols are typically an inch or less wide, have a 3" barrel and a double-stack magazine with 10–12 rounds. Most of those guns are selling for \$500 or \$600, yet SCCY's contender is selling for half the price of many of the others. It's a gun that will comfortably fit in your pocket while carrying enough rounds to get you out of a defensive encounter.

What's Different?

If you're familiar at all with the SCCY hammer-fired CPX Series pistols, know the DVG-1 is striker-fired. While the DVG-1 has an advertised 5.5-lb. trigger pull, the CPX guns have a 9- to 10-lb. trigger. The trigger on the DVG-1 is straight and the CPX trigger is curved.

The DVG-1 has front and rear slide serrations. The CPX slides only have rear serrations. Also, the DVG-1 has a reduced grip circumference compared to the CPX grip. It measures 5.5" at its widest point compared to 6". The recoil spring on the DVG-1 is a compound spring, one inside the other. The CPX-1 and CPX-2 utilize a single recoil spring.

The DVG-1 features the Roebuck Quad-Lock operating system first made available in the CPX-3 .380. This system provides a more stabilized barrel and therefore improved accuracy. I compared the DVG-1 barrel design to that of my CPX-1. The difference is visibly evident, but it took a little study for me to understand how it works. The front half of the barrel lug is angled and then turns flat. At the rear, there is a tang with a curved edge that marries up to the slide when

Top view of the DVG-1 barrel (left) versus the CPX barrel (right) shows how the barrel lug is flat on top.



the gun is fully locked. The barrel's cam system is radiused to rotate around the disassembly pin to push the back of the barrel upward. This forces the tang to engage the front section of the slide, producing two of the four lock-up points in the design. The second part begins with the muzzle of the barrel being pushed downward. This is where the Quad-Lock system differs from most semi-auto pistols whose barrels are loose around the muzzle opening of the slide. Where the opening for the muzzle on most slides is perfectly round, the opening on the DVG-1 is oval shaped. Since the barrel is already locked at the rear of the lug, the Quad-Lock recoil system forces the front of the barrel downward. It is this feature that uniquely defines the Quad-Lock.

Looking at the DVG-1's slide from the front, it has a crescent-shaped gap just above the barrel while the bottom of the barrel is sitting almost flush against the muzzle opening. It looks off center, but it's not because the muzzle opening in the DVG-1's slide is not round. The barrel won't move from side to side if you push it — it's locked in place. This "V" comprises the other two lock-up points. When the gun is fired, the barrel is forced further into the "V" where it is locked up even tighter at the moment of discharge.

The sights on the DVG-1 are solid, white three-dot sights, easy to see. But if you want to change them out, any aftermarket sight for a GLOCK will fit the DVG-1. More and more manufacturers are adopting the GLOCK pattern sights, and it was a smart move on the part of SCCY to follow this trend.

The front slide serrations are helpful as the slide is small and the recoil spring stiff. The slide lock mechanism is the same as on the CPX models and is plenty big to do the job.

Breaking It Down

Takedown on this gun is done by locking the slide back and removing the disassembly pin which will require a little prying with a small screwdriver. You then



The DVG-1 comes packaged with an extra magazine, two flat magazine baseplates and a trigger lock with keys.

ease the slide forward until it comes to rest. Then, after ensuring the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction, pull the slide back slightly and pull the trigger. The slide will move forward off the rails. Depress and remove the recoil spring and the gun is ready to clean and oil. Reassembly is done by putting the barrel and recoil spring back in the slide and sliding the slide back on its frame rails until it clicks into position.

Range Time

I shot three types of FMJ ammo and two types of JHP in the DVG-1. With one of the magazines, I was getting nose-dives while attempting to feed Sierra 115-grain JHP cartridges. Those are new cartridges to me, so I wasn't sure if it was the ammo, but when I tried it in the other magazine, it fed fine. Other than an occasional failure for the slide to lock back after the last round was fired, there were no other issues with any of the ammo. At 10 yards I could put 10 rounds into a 4" target consistently. This is definitely a gun that can benefit from a little break-in period, say 200 to 300 hundred

rounds. Although the trigger pull is advertised at 5.5 lbs., my Lyman trigger pull gauge measured the one on my test gun at a consistent 7 lbs. plus an ounce or two. It was a little grungy at first, but after dry firing the gun maybe 20 to 30 times before taking the gun to the range and shooting 350 rounds through it, the DVG-1 still had a 7-lb. trigger pull, but it was smooth. I consider it a major improvement over the 10- to 11-lb. trigger on my CPX-1 and CPX-2.

Final Observations

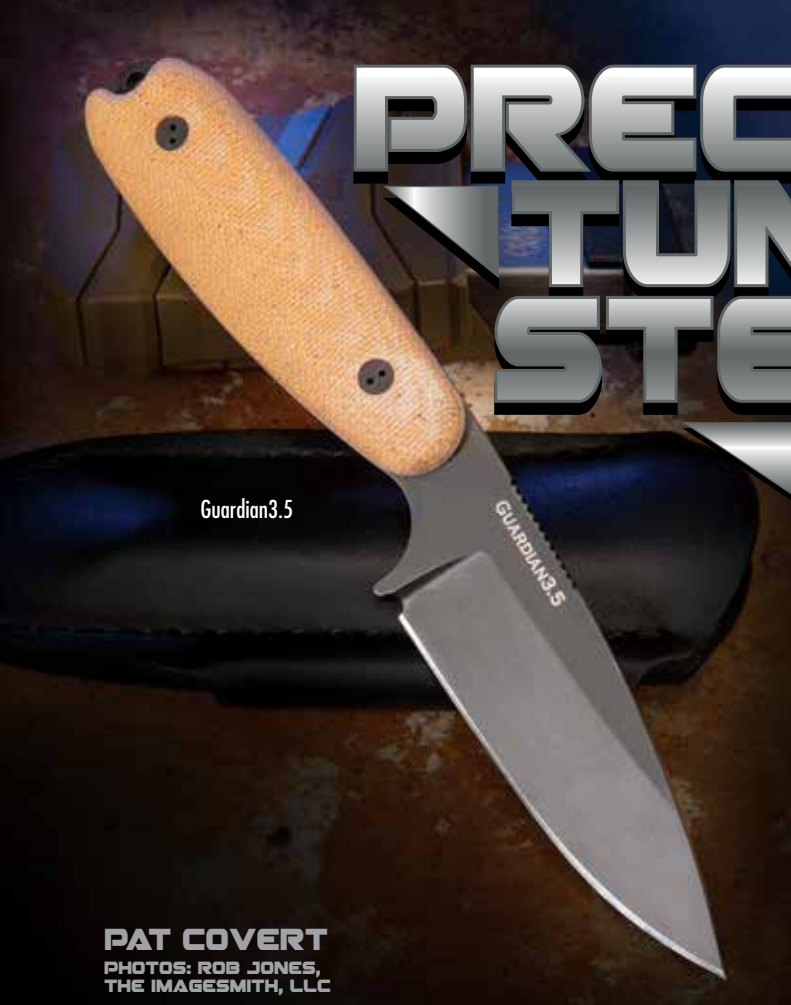
I would have no trouble trusting this pistol as my EDC gun. It will carry easy in a pocket or in an IWB holster such as one I have from ComfortTac for small guns. The cost is compelling, so you can stash one in your console or glove compartment, put one in various cubby holes around the house (providing you don't have young, curious kids) and carry one as a primary or backup pistol whenever you go out. The SCCY's the limit!

For more info: SCCY.com



The DVG-1 is SCCY's newest addition to the Micro pistol market.

PRECISION TUNED STEEL!



Guardian3.5

PAT COVERT
PHOTOS: ROB JONES,
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC



Elmax G-Necker

BRADFORD KNIVES TAKES THE GUESSWORK OUT OF KNIFEMAKING

There was a time when custom, hand-made knives were considered the finest cutting knives in the land and, while the human touch is still highly revered in cutlery circles, modern CNC technology has become a fine art in itself. Around 25 years ago a noted custom knifemaker was in the process of shucking his custom label and switching to becoming a micro manufacturer — telling me his knives would become even better because he could hold tolerances he couldn't achieve in his handmades. Chris Reeve Knives would become a full-blown force to be reckoned with in the cutlery industry and win *Quality in Manufacturing* awards year after year at the annual Blade Show. Since then, many top custom knifemakers have made CNC a part of their knifemaking diet.

Bradford Knives

Founded in 2011 by Brad and Nicole Larkin in Renton, Wash., this enterprising couple had a game plan and it didn't include a lot of human touch. "There

is very little handwork on our blades," Brad tells *Handgunner*. "Almost everything is done in a machine shop environment. We consider ourselves a production knife manufacturer with many customizable options — like scales, grinds, and finishes — such that whatever knife you build, chances are there are not many in circulation exactly like what you have specified."

The Larkins didn't just jump into the knife business cold, however. Brad's background in manufacturing and a flair for design served as the foundation for a sound start. Initially, the Larkins tested the cutlery waters with a simple culinary knife. "The Gatsby steak knife was a surprisingly popular first introduction, and we quickly pivoted to being a customer focused, customer driven cutlery business," notes Brad. "Our next knife, the Guardian3, was developed based on customer feedback, realizing the industry was needing a compact EDC fixed blade built using premium materials and technology."

Growing The Line

The release of the Guardian3 would portend bigger and better things to come. "The Guardian3 is still our flag-



Chef Knife AEB-L Steel

ship knife and most popular,” Larkin informs. “Known for its sub-compact design and ability to conceal carry, this fixed-blade is designed to replace your common folder. It’s small, lightweight, easy to draw and re-sheath, and once you wear this knife, it’s hard to imagine grabbing another one again.”

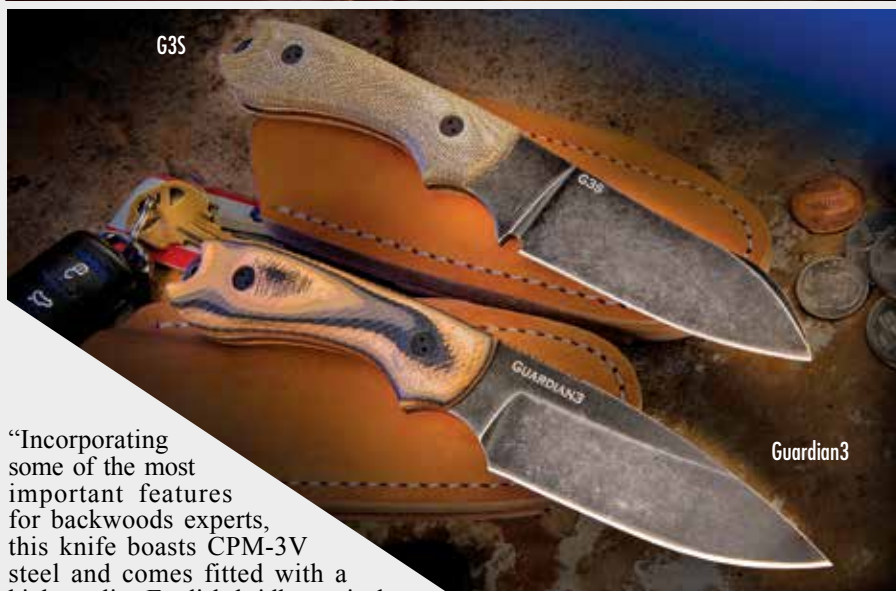
The Guardian3, checking in at 6.75" overall with a 3.0" drop-point blade, soon begat siblings in various lengths all the way up the Guardian6, which stretches out to 11.0". Bradford also offers the Guardian3 in optional Wharncliffe and Sheepsfoot blade styles. “The Sheepsfoot G3S has been growing in popularity since its release,” Larkin relates. “This model was developed using the same popular scales and leather sheath system as our flagship Guardian3, however we incorporate a well-balanced Sheepsfoot style blade with an integrated finger choil guard for enhanced safety. The Sheepsfoot blade shape can work well in rescue situations, skinning and cleaning animals in addition to its primary role as a compact every day carry tool.”

The Guardian3.5 adds a bit more length to the equation. “The G3.5 is an ideal EDC blade and a perfect size for horizontal, cross draw carry,” Brad conveys. “Also known as ‘scout’ carry, this method of carrying fixed blades is designed to take the work of your folding blades and be highly concealable at the same time. You can deploy the blade faster and easier than a typical folder and put the knife back in to its sheath easily at the waist.”

The fun doesn’t end with the Guardian series. “The G-Necker is a compact neck-style knife made out of premium Elmax steel — heavy stock designed to create a robust handle area without the need for additional scales,” Brad imparts. “It is carefully designed to give the user an excellent pinch grip purchase, great for fine cuts as well as emergency use.” By “robust” Larkin means one-quarter inch steel, a feature rarely seen in a neck knife. Having personally tested the G-Necker I can tell you, it’s a little beast.

Stepping up in size is a Guardian both bushcrafters and survivalists will enjoy. “The G5.5 is designed as a survival/bushcraft crossover,” Brad relays.

Guardian5.5



G3S

Guardian3

“Incorporating some of the most important features for backwoods experts, this knife boasts CPM-3V steel and comes fitted with a high quality English bridle vertical carry leather sheath. This knife is great for an overnight camping trip or a week in the back country. There is not much the Guardian5.5 will shy away from.”

Finally, the Larkins added a welcome addition to their original steak knife with their Bradford Chef Knife. “This premium upscale kitchen knife was designed in close collaboration with some of the greatest local chefs in the Pacific Northwest,” boasts a proud Larkin. “The thin blade stock is somewhat rare in the culinary industry and allows for some of the finest cuts modern culinary tools can provide. The AEB-L steel is a kitchen favorite not only for its superior stainless properties but also its ability to hold a precise edge — and its ability to be sharpened relatively easily.”

Sheer Quality

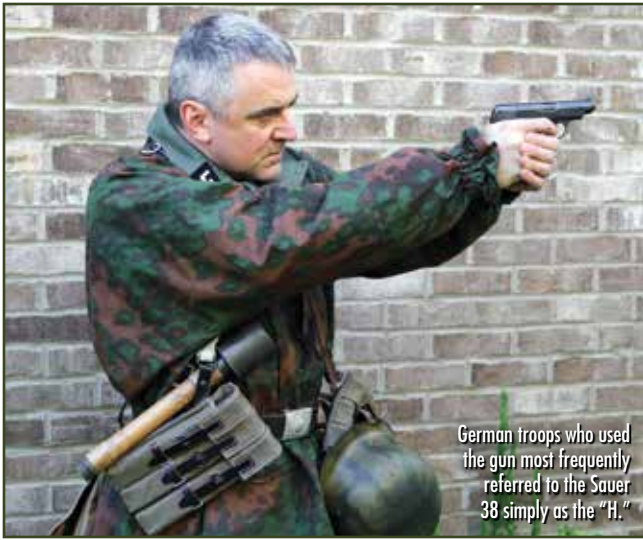
Aside from versatile designs the Larkins offer all their knives in top shelf, proprietary steels and durable handle scales. “We use a variety of different steels and pride ourselves on being application specific,” Brad explains. “Simply put, we choose the best materials for the job. Our favorite EDC steel is M390 stainless, and our favorite out-

door steel is CPM-3V stainless. Handle materials can vary but Carbon Fiber remains a favorite as well as popular colors of G10 and Micarta.” Add this to the ability to pick from a veritable cornucopia of handle materials from plain to fancy and Bradford customers can have a field day designing their own personal cutter.

“Our customers are users and collectors,” Larkin notes. “They appreciate quality materials, quality manufacturing and U.S.A. pride! We try to continually innovate but we are not creating a new knife every month, rather curating a collection of unique steels matched with some of our tried-and-true favorite models of absolute workhorses of knives.” Asked about the company’s future plans Brad simply states, “We will continue to push the envelope of manufacturing and quality, focus on customer satisfaction and be driven by their uses and applications.” Having given several of Bradford’s precision tuned factory knives a workout I can attest you’d be hard to find anything that cuts any better.



For more info: BradfordKnives.com



German troops who used the gun most frequently referred to the Sauer 38 simply as the "H."

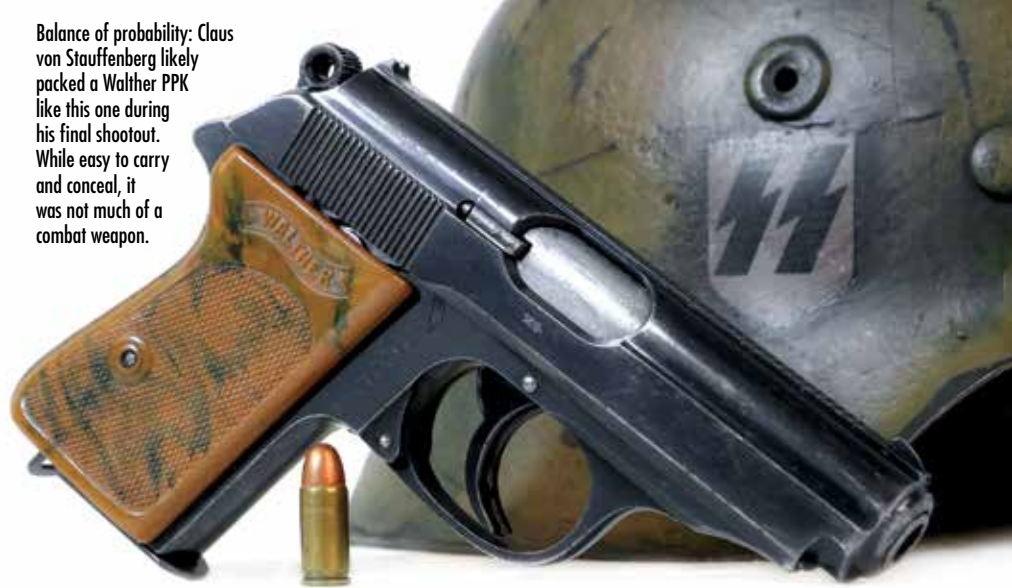
Despite rocking some of the most fearsome weapons in the world, the Nazis packed some of the most pathetic little mouse guns. This is a .32 ACP Walther PPK.



NAZI MOUSE GUNS

WILL DABBS, MD

Balance of probability: Claus von Stauffenberg likely packed a Walther PPK like this one during his final shootout. While easy to carry and conceal, it was not much of a combat weapon.



CARRY PISTOLS FOR HISTORY'S MOST GHASTLY VILLAINS



The Germans used a bewildering array of handguns during the war.

Claus Philipp Maria Justinian Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg was old German aristocracy. His hereditary titles included "Graf" (Count) and "Schenk" (Cupbearer). Von Stauffenberg was born in the Stauffenberg Castle, the third of four sons. The Stauffenberg bloodline was one of the most storied in Germany. A devout Catholic who gravitated toward National Socialism when he thought it was the vehicle to lift post-World War I Germany out of its economic and political mire, he soon became disillusioned. The Night of the Long Knives and Kristallnacht along with the systemic oppression of the Jews, gradually turned von Stauffenberg against the Nazis and the deranged Austrian Corporal who led them.

Von Stauffenberg fought with the Wehrmacht during the invasion of Poland as well as in France, earning an



Despite producing some of the world's most advanced weapons, the Germans issued some awfully anemic handguns.

Iron Cross First Class for his trouble. He invaded Russia in 1941 as part of Operation Barbarossa. By 1942 he was serving in Tunisia with Rommel's Afrika Korps.

In April 1943 von Stauffenberg's column was strafed by Australian P40 Kittyhawks. Severely injured in the attack, the young Wehrmacht officer lost his left eye, right hand and two fingers from his left hand. He later joked with friends he never really knew what to do with so many fingers when he still had them.

After months-long recovery, von Stauffenberg was posted to the Ersatzheer in Berlin. This Replacement Army was tasked with providing replacement troops to frontline units attritted in action. This turned out to be an optimal position from which to foment a coup.

With the assistance of a select few co-conspirators, von Stauffenberg obtained a pair of small bombs to emplace in a briefing room with Hitler and his Generals at the Wolfsschanze, Hitler's East Prussian headquarters. Pressed for time and struggling to arm the weapons with only three functioning fingers, von Stauffenberg only got one device activated before he had to deposit the associated briefcase. As fate would have it, Colonel Heinz Brandt innocently moved the case behind the heavy leg of a wooden briefing table and unwittingly saved Hitler's life.

Von Stauffenberg returned to Berlin to activate the remaining part of the coup. Once all involved heard Hitler had survived the attack, failure was guaranteed. Hitler loyalists pursued Von Stauffenberg and his co-conspirators to the Ersatzheer offices at Bendlerstrasse and engaged in a fierce but brief shootout with their handguns wherein the Count was wounded in the shoulder.

The Guns

The weapon von Stauffenberg carried during his final engagement was a curious thing indeed. The Nazis gifted the world with some of the most effective weapons in military history up to that point. The transoceanic U-Boat, V2 ballistic missile, Me262 jet fighter and Tiger tank were all apex predators

for their class at the time. However, despite all these undeniably powerful weapons, the typical sidearms carried by most of Germany's most revered leaders were ridiculously pitiful.

The .45ACP M1911A1 automatic pistol used by American forces during World War II was hands-down the most powerful combat handgun of the war. Loud, heavy, rugged and mean, the M1911 was much like the country that birthed it. However, on the other side of the line German officers typically carried diminutive, little mouse guns easy to tote discreetly but fairly ineffective in action.

Walther PPK

The specific weapon von Stauffenberg used during his final shootout with Nazi security forces is generally assumed to have been the Walther PPK. Spawned from the previous Walther PP (*Polizei Pistole*) developed in 1929, the PPK (*Polizei Pistole Kriminal*) was one of the few handguns in common use that could actually be employed with only three fingers. The diminutive weapon went on to worldwide fame in the hands of Ian Fleming's James Bond.

The PPK is a trim blowback-operated pistol custom designed for concealed carry. The single stack magazine carries seven rounds, and the magazine release is located underneath the right thumb as it should be. The most radical aspect of the design, however, is its SA/DA trigger.

Carl Walther designed the PP-series pistols to combine the benefits of an SA/DA revolver along with the trim architecture of an autoloader. The weapon is designed such that it can be safely carried with the chamber loaded and the hammer down. The first round is subject to a long heavy trigger pull for safety, while subsequent shots are crisper and more precise. There is a hammer drop safety located on



The M1922 featured a grip safety along with the manual safety lever and a magazine disconnect.

The .32 ACP Browning M1922 was produced by the FN plant in Belgium for the Nazi war machine under German occupation.

the slide to safely deactivate the hammer over a loaded chamber. The slide locks to the rear after the last round is fired. Giving the slide a little snatch drops it over a fresh magazine.

The PPK has a fixed barrel and tiny sights. In a pinch the weapon can be charged by pushing the edge of the muzzle end of the slide against a handy countertop. From that point up until the magazine runs dry the gun can indeed be run with only three fingers.

Mauer HSc

The Mauser counterpart to the PPK is the HSc. HSc stands for *Hahn Selbstspanner* or "Self-cocking Hammer." Of the two the HSc is actually the more advanced design.

Introduced in 1940, the HSc employs an eight-round single-stack magazine and a novel cylindrical hammer. This device has an unobtrusive little tab that is easy to cock yet doesn't catch on clothing during the draw. Like the PPK, the HSc employs an SA/DA trigger system.

The magazine release on the HSc rides on the heel of the butt in the European fashion and is incrementally slower than the thumb button of the PPK and M1911A1. However, the slide of the HSc locks to the rear automatically on the last round fired. Drop the empty magazine, slam in a fresh one and the slide drops back into battery of its own



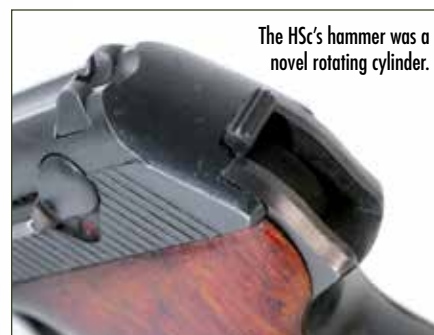
The Sauer 38H (left) went on to influence countless subsequent guns like this SIG SAUER P226.





The Mauser HSc was arguably the most advanced handgun design of the war.

Though its .32 ACP chambering was fairly pathetic, it had some very well-reasoned features.



The HSc's hammer was a novel rotating cylinder.



The Sauer 38H introduced the frame-mounted decocker to the world of combat handguns.

accord. There are no external switches and nothing is faster, even today.

The "H"

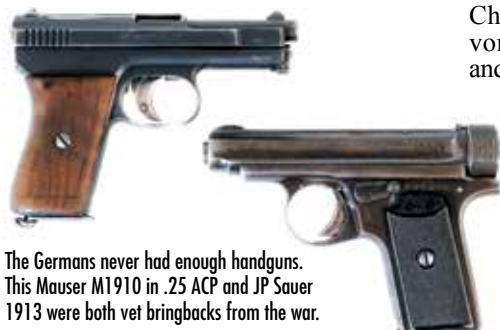
The Sauer 38H was often just referred to as the "H" by the troops who used it. The gun was produced from 1938 until the end of the war. The 38H was also a fairly uninspired unlocked blowback design. However, the trigger and safety system went on to birth an entire family of modern combat handguns.

The 38H sported three separate controls on the left side of the gun. The thumb-activated magazine release operates in the manner of the PPK as does the slide-mounted safety. However, there is also a manual decocking lever located on the left side above the mag release. This pivoting lever safely decocks the action over a loaded chamber. This same feature found its way onto the SIG SAUER P220-series handguns still in production today.

Another novel feature of the 38H was its magazine safety. This device deactivates the gun when the magazine is removed. I absolutely despise these things myself. However, the infamous SS General Sepp Dietrich was bearing a Sauer 38H when he was captured by the Allies in 1945.

Browning Triple Safety

The Browning Model 1922 was referred to as the "Triple Safety" based



The Germans never had enough handguns. This Mauser M1910 in .25 ACP and JP Sauer 1913 were both vet bringbacks from the war.

upon, you guessed it, the gun's three separate safety mechanisms. These included an automatic grip safety, a magazine safety and a manual safety lever on the outside of the gun. The M1922 fed from a nine-round single-stack box magazine.

An evolutionary development of the previous M1910, the M1922 was a product of the fertile mind of John Moses Browning and was produced at the FN plant in Belgium. However, once the Germans overran the facility, they continued production for their own war machine. Nazi M1922 pistols saw extensive service with all branches of the German military and bore *waffenamt* proof marks.

Pistol Clutter

The Germans never did have enough pistols to go around and used a wide variety of disparate guns as a result. The Polish Radom and Belgian Hi-Power as well as German commercial pistols like the Mauser 1910 and 1914, the C96 Broomhandle and the JP Sauer 1913 are typical examples. While the familiar 9mm P08 Parabellum and Walther P38 were the most widely issued German handguns, the Nazi military was cluttered with dozens of lesser pistols.

The Rest Of The Story

Co-conspirator German General Friedrich Fromm, the Commander-in-Chief of the Replacement Army, had von Stauffenberg along with his aide and other coup participants arrested in a failed effort at saving his own skin.

He staged a sham court martial and sentenced them all to death, ostensibly in an effort at covering up his own involvement. At 0100 on July 21, 1944, the entire group was executed via firing squad by the headlights of an Army truck. Von Stauffenberg's last words were,

"Long live our sacred Germany!"

Von Stauffenberg's brother Berthold was also a plotter. He was tried and convicted by a pro forma "People's Court" and sentenced to death by slow suffocation. He was strangled and then resuscitated multiple times before finally succumbing. The entire ghastly process was filmed so Hitler could enjoy it at his leisure. Ultimately some 20,000 Germans were executed or dispatched to concentration camps as a result of the failed coup.

Ruminations

Of greater interest than all of these different pistol designs is the curious cartridge they fired. While the 9mm Parabellum has proven itself in more than a century of armed conflict, the diminutive .32 ACP was an odd choice. Designed by John Browning in 1899 to feed his then-revolutionary M1900 pistol, the .32 ACP (Automatic Colt Pistol) typically pushed a 73-grain bullet to about 980 fps. This is the sort of round that will certainly kill you, but it might take a week or so to do the deed.

In the final analysis perhaps the Germans appreciated something we did not. Wars are not won by handguns. Truth be known, wars are not typically won by tanks, rifles, or submarines, either. Wars are won with trucks, and the Allies had a veritable limitless supply of them. The Germans frequently viewed their pistols as more badges of rank than combat implements. That made the humble handgun in all its many-splendored guises a bit of a footnote to the overarching saga that was World War II.

Special thanks to World War Supply for the cool period gear used in our photographs.



For more info: WorldWarSupply.com

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SCAN TO ENTER

We've been told it's difficult to find postcards nowadays so here's a tip: You can use index cards, back of greeting cards and even cereal boxes. A reader also said you can buy blank postcards from your local post office.



The SR1911 in .45 Auto — Ruger describes it as a classic. The gun we are giving away is that and more. It's one-of-a-kind because it sports the Commemorative FMG Serial Number FMG-45 in honor of *American Handgunner's* 45th year. With a capacity of 8+1, a barrel length of 5", an overall length of 8.67" and weighing of 39 oz., the full-size SR1911 has a stainless steel slide and grip frame with low-glare finish, hardwood panels on the grips and drift adjustable Novak 3-dot sights. It went through a precision CNC-controlled machining process for a superior slide-to-frame fit and smooth slide travel. Other features include a positive barrel lock-up, replaceable grip panels and a checkered backstrap, an aluminum, skeletonized trigger and hammer, a titanium firing pin, an oversized beavertail grip safety, an extended thumb safety and a slide stop lever. The SR1911 comes with 8-round and 7-round stainless steel magazines.

The next prize is the *Wedge* from Streamlight Inc. It is a USB-C rechargeable EDC flashlight with a slim, compact design in Coyote brown. With a length of 5.46" and weighing 3.3 oz., the *Wedge* can emit 300 to 1,000 lumens of light. It is IPX7-rated for waterproof use to one meter and impact-resistance tested to one meter.

The *Stylus* from CRKT is classy with a sleek, slim profile for any pocket. This folding knife with liner lock by designer Ken Onion has a flipper to deploy the blade fast and an IKBS ball bearing pivot to deploy the blade smoothly. The 3.18" plain edge blade is made of 12C27 Sandvik steel with a satin finish. With an OAL of 7.38", the *Stylus'* aluminum handle makes it strong and lightweight.

Help celebrate *American Handgunner's* 45th year! Join our giveaway for a chance to win the one-of-a-kind Ruger SR1911 with serial number FMG-45 plus a uniquely shaped flashlight from Streamlight and a classy knife from CRKT. Visit AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways or send a (post) card! —Jazz Jimenez

SR1911

MANUFACTURER: RUGER, (336) 949-5200, RUGER.COM
CALIBER: 45 AUTO, CAPACITY: 8+1, BARREL LENGTH: 5", OAL: 8.67", WEIGHT: 39 OZ.
VALUE: \$1,129

WEDGE

MANUFACTURER: STREAMLIGHT, (800) 523-7488, STREAMLIGHT.COM
VALUE: \$149.95

STYLUS

MANUFACTURER: CRKT, (800) 891-3100, CRKT.COM
VALUE: \$69.99

TOTAL VALUE: \$1,348.94

GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



THE “WOKE” ARE ASLEEP

Inventing new ideas to describe the impossible — and make it sound rational and normal — are Marxist and communist control tools. These are mechanisms designed to keep people cooperative and in line. Looking around you, and especially watching or reading the so-called “news,” you can see it at work. George Orwell called it newthink. Stalin called the people subject to this form of mind control useful idiots. Whatever you think of the people and the process, it’s running rampant in America, and threatens your right to keep and bear arms.

Newthink

When Joe Biden made bizarre pronouncements about guns in a nationally televised address and had the utter gall to say none of it affects the Second Amendment.

For example: “My job, the job of any President, is to protect the American people.”

No, Biden’s job is, “to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution.”

For example: “Modifications to firearms that make them more lethal should be subject to the National Firearms Act.”

No. That’s just patently false. *Guns are supposed to be lethal. The 1934 NFA has nothing to do with it.*

Government lacks any semblance of delegated power to do the things he declared, and the statements he made lacked even shadows of truthiness. What he called the “assault-weapons ban” that began during the Clinton years essentially banned nothing. *Even the revered New York Times, that widely recognized harbinger of lies and deception about guns and gun owners, admitted afterward Clinton’s 10-year program had no effect on crime.* The AR-15, the supposed target of that law, has so little involvement in crime it is simply stunning the Democrats and the left would focus attention there. It’s a reflection of how little woke folk understand about

guns, how criminals operate and what the threats to our safety really are.

The one-shot-at-a-time AR-15, America’s most popular long gun, is statistically disconnected from the 7,000 annual murders in urban neighborhoods, which politicians and mass media ignore, while talking about “communities of color.”

**“ONE CAN BARELY
RECALL ALL THE
MYTHS GUN-BANNING
WOKE ACTIVISTS HAVE
INVENTED AND THROWN
AT YOU IN EFFORTS TO
COALESCE POWER INTO
THEIR OWN HEAVILY
ARMED HANDS.”**

Revolving Door Myths

Virtually everything the woke left agonizes about guns is a myth, used to take focus away from the real problems. The “bad parts of town,” mired in enforced federal-program poverty, dysfunctional families, fatherless homes, drug-addicted streets, schools that don’t teach — these don’t make it to reformers’ consciousness. And suicides, responsible for a significant portion of the “gun problem” is a medical issue, which doctors won’t tackle, because of the stigma it casts on the accused.

One can barely recall all the myths gun-banning woke activists have invented and thrown at you in efforts to coalesce power into their own heavily armed hands. Remember *Saturday Night Specials*? That went away when everyone realized it was basically a racist stereotype. Along with it went *Junk Guns*, the idea that firearms only the poor could afford was the root of all evil. It too lost its value when even the corrupt media realized they needed a new flag to wave.

One of my favorites was *Cooling-Off Periods*, which morphed into *Waiting Periods* (“just commonsense,” now a single word). This canard was hopelessly bizarre illogic. One enraged spouse would run out to a gun store in a frenzy, looking to buy the gun needed to murder the other spouse. But having to wait three days (or five, or 10 — it doesn’t matter), he would cool off and the homicidal rage would pass. Then you should believe the angst would never occur again. Ozzie and Harriet would get on famously for the rest of their lives, and the gun, now home, would never get used. No more waiting period, and life is grand. Could it be any more irrational? The woke have abandoned that like screen doors on submarines.

Lately it’s *Ghost Guns*. The *Invisible Guns* hysteria died when everyone found out GLOCKs and similar polymer-framed sidearms are superb, not invisible at all, and preferred by law-enforcement agencies everywhere. *Printed Guns* stopped being a threat when the truth emerged — a single-shot .22 from a \$3,000 printer and blueprints couldn’t compete with a \$200 used .22. Ghost guns are blocks of aluminum that require knowhow, a tool shop. Do criminals really use them?

Maybe the worst part is how bad the so-called “news” has become. The *Columbia Journalism Review*, once a paragon of unbiased virtue, now has a gun-news manifesto it expects reporters to sign and obey. A one-sided mash-up of gun-control silliness, it fails to recognize the value and social utility of firearms, and they don’t know it. The woke aren’t just asleep, they’re comatose.



Award-winning author Alan Korwin has written 14 books, 10 of them on gun law, and has advocated for gun rights for nearly three decades. See his work or reach him at GunLaws.com.



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Ruger's Old Army is converted into a .45 Colt with the use of R&D conversion cylinders.

This Richards Conversion accepts both .44 Russian and .44 Colt loads.



CIMARRON'S CONCEALED CARRY CARTRIDGE CONVERSIONS

In 1856 S&W entered into an agreement with Rollin White who held the patent on revolvers with bored-through cylinders, and then in 1857, some sources say August 1858, using this patent, S&W introduced the Model #1 as the first cartridge firing revolver. This little seven-shot, tip-up, single-action revolver was chambered in what we now know as the .22 Short. In the mid-1860s the Model #1½ was offered in .32 Rimfire. Then in late 1869-early 1870 S&W hit the sixgunnins' jackpot with the Model Three American chambered in both the centerfire .44 S&W American and the .44 Henry Rimfire. *Sam Colt could have had the Rollin White patent but felt powder, cap and ball would always be preferred.*

Conversion Workarounds

Due to the White patent no one else except S&W would be allowed to produce cartridge-firing revolvers until 1869. In 1868 S&W entered an agreement with Remington, allowing them to convert their percussion pistols to cartridge firing revolvers using a bored through cylinder. Sam Colt was now gone, and *the Colt*

The Path To The Peacemaker-5½" versions all:



These 5½" 1858 Remington percussion pistols in .44 and .36 are easily changed into cartridge conversions using conversion cylinders from Taylor's & Co.

company was left out in the cold.

Once the patent ran out, Colt began offering cartridge conversions on their basic 1860 Army Model. First came the Richards Conversion in July 1871, followed by the Richards-Mason Conversion in 1872. The latter is easy to distinguish from the former as it has a full-length ejector rod housing running all the way back to the front of the cylinder. Both Colt cartridge conversions were built on the cap and ball 1860 Army.

The third entry of Colt was not a conversion but a new revolver. This was the 1871-72 Open Top.

This completely new production began in 1872. The standard barrel lengths for the two cartridge conversions were the same for the 1860 Army, namely 8" while the 1871-72 had a slightly shorter 7½" barrel.

Were shorter barrels offered? The definitive work on cartridge conversions is *A Study of Colt Conversions and Other Percussion Revolvers* by R. Bruce McDowell, and on page 283 is shown a 5½" 1871-72 Open Top Revolver with well-worn ivory stocks. He says of this picture: "Some Model 1871-1872 Open Top .44s have short barrels such as that pictured. The gun is serial number 4138, has a 5¾" barrel and Army-size ivory grips with steel grip straps. Most of these revolvers were shipped from the factory with a 7½" barrel, and if shortened, were done so by owners or gunsmiths after they left the factory. Shorter barrels were very popular with lawmen, gunfighters,

railroad detectives and others needing to clear leather in a hurry.” This revolver mentioned by McDowell is also interesting in that it is not chambered in .44 Colt but has been converted to .44-40. Someone was very serious about a Perfect Packin’ Pistol!

Cimarron Conversions

Original short-barreled cartridge conversions may be hard to find, however thanks to Cimarron Firearms, both the Richards and Richards-Mason Conversions are offered in replica form as well as the 1871-72 Open-Top all with 5½" barrels. Both 1851 and 1860 versions, so named because of their grip frame, are offered. The former has the grip frame identical to the Single Action Army, while the latter is the same as found on the 1860 Army cap and ball revolver.

In addition to .44 Russian/.44 Colt/.44 Special and .38 Long Colt/.38 Special in several variations, Cimarron also offers both a .45 Colt and a .45 Schofield chambered version. A check of their current catalog shows the 5½" Richards is available in both .38 Special, which also handles .38 Long Colt and a second version which chambers .44 Special, .44 Colt and .44 Russian.

The first cartridge conversions and the Open-Top that I encountered several years ago were chambered for the .44 Colt. This cartridge has a rim smaller in diameter than that found on the Special and Russian. Those cylinders were too small to allow the two latter cartridges to chamber. So, if one wants to shoot all three .44 cartridges, it is necessary to make sure it is a later model with the slightly larger cylinder to accept the rims of the Russian and Special.

Looking at the specifications of 5½" Richards-Mason replicas we find both versions of the .44 model with one handling .44 Colt and .44 Russian and another accepting all three. The .44 Special is the longest of the three cartridges and any chambered for this .44 will handle the other two also. It is available as well in .38 Special, .45 Colt and a version that is dedicated for .45 Schofield/.45 S&W only.

This brings us to the 1871-72 Open-Top which in the 5½" barrel length version can be had in .38 Special, .44 Colt/.44 Russian, and .45 Colt. The interesting thing is this model is also available with a 4¾" barrel.

All three versions load through a loading gate on the right side and have an ejector rod for removing spent cases just as found on the shortly to appear Single Action Army — the first big Colt to have a top strap. Unlike the SAA,

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The 5½" Ruger Old Army performs exceptionally well as a .45 Colt.



Both of these Richards Mason Conversions are chambered in .38 Long Colt/.38 Special.



which not only has a top strap, and a permanently attached barrel, the barrel assembly of the cartridge conversions and Open-Top are mated to the frame with a wedge pin just as the 1860 Army percussion pistol.

Chamberings can be confusing so it is a good idea to call Cimarron and see exactly what is available and whether the .44 version will handle all three cartridges and whether .45s will accept both the .45 Colt and .45 S&W/Schofield. All these Cimarron replicas are of excellent quality, nicely fitted and finished and, thanks to Mike Harvey's diligence, exceptionally authentic.

Remington Conversions

Remington percussion pistols can also be made easily into cartridge conversions by simply adding conversion cylinders. I had Milt Morrison of Qualite Pistol and Revolver start with a pair of 1858 Remingtons, one in .44 and the other a .36 cap and ball, and shorten the barrels to 5½". Once this was finished, it was only necessary to add conversion cylinders. For the former one has two choices as I have excellent quality Kirst Konverter cartridge conversion cylinders in both .45 Colt and .45 ACP while with the latter Remington mentioned the same cylinder will work with both .38 Special and

.38 Long Colt. If one is a reloader, very easy shooting loads for practice can be made up using .38 Short Colt brass.

Conversion Notes: .38

There is something that needs to be noted about .38 Conversions. There is no problem with the Richards, Richards-Mason, or 1871-72 Open-Top. However, if a cartridge cylinder is added to a Remington or Colt .36 there will be a problem when trying to fire standard loads. Both have 0.375" barrels instead of the normal .38 barrel of 0.357". The original .38 Colt loads used a heeled bullet, which was smaller at the base to fit into the brass case while the remainder of the bullet was the same diameter as the brass to mate up with a barrel. To obtain any accuracy with conventional bullets, one needs soft cast hollow base bullets that

will expand to fit the rifling of the larger barrels. Hollow base wadcutters will work or Buffalo Arms offers soft cast bullets with hollow bases.

Ruger Conversions

Before production ceased on the Ruger Old Army in 2009, they not only offered the original long-barreled version with both adjustable and fixed sights, they also offered a 5½" stainless steel fix-sighted, easier-to-pack and handle example. These are percussion revolvers, and excellent ones at that, however they can easily be changed into cartridge firing sixguns chambered in .45 Colt.

To use these conversion cylinders, one removes the original cylinder, and uses the same base pin that is part of the Old Army loading lever with the new cylinder. For use with cartridge firing cylinders, Belt Mountain offers a replacement base pin that's easily removable and does away with the original loading lever assembly making it much easier to remove the cylinder for loading cartridges. Belt Mountain offers a spring-loaded latch to secure the base pin thus making it unnecessary to use the screw through the side of the frame.

Options

I have several conversion cylinders for the 1858 Remington and 1851 and 1860 Army from both Walt Kirst and



A pair of Richards-Mason Conversions chambered in .38 and .44 and a Richards .44.

Taylor's & Co. R&D conversion cylinders. Most of these conversion cylinders come with a back plate with six firing pins, safety notches between chambers, and a locating pin in the back of the cylinder that mates with a corresponding hole in the conversion ring/back plate.

To load, the back plate is removed, place cartridges in the cylinder, replace the back plate, and put the cylinder in the Old Army frame, returning the base pin. To unload, remove the cylinder, take off the back plate, and remove the cartridges. If they do not fall out by gravity, use a rod or a wooden dowel to tap them out from the front of cylinder. Kirst Konverter cylinders are available for a long list of replicas in addition to the Ruger Old Army with some kits available with a loading gate. There are also conversion kits available to change some replica percussion pistols to .22 sixguns.

The workmanship on both the R&D and Kirst cylinders is excellent. A pair of Ruger Old Army 5½ percussion pistols were fitted with R&D cylinders several decades ago. Both were near perfect fits in the Old Army frames and in two older Old Armies. With most .45 Colt loads, and the conversion cylinders in place, both revolvers shoot just slightly below point of aim at 20 yards.

Ammo Flexibility

When the cartridge era entered in the early 1870s, many sixgunners had their revolvers converted to cartridge firing by adding a new cylinder. The smart ones held onto their old cylinders, just in case they found themselves without ammunition.

Whether for plinkin' or packin', cartridge conversions offer a lot of versatility. With the versions I have I can choose to shoot .38 Short Colt, .38 Long Colt, .38 Special, .44 Colt, .44 Russian, .44 Special, .45 Schofield, .45 Colt, and even .45 ACP. That does not leave many bases uncovered.

It has been over 150 years since the first cartridge conversions appeared. They only held center stage at Colt from 1871 to 1873 when the Single Action Army appeared. For concealed carry they may not be anywhere near the upper part of the list of practical options, however, they will still certainly work and especially for traveling off the beaten path be it in sagebrush, foothills, forests, or mountains they will still work just fine while giving us a grand connection to the past.



For more info: Cimarron-Firearms.com, KirstKonverter.com, TaylorsFirearms.com, QualityGunsmithing.com, BeltMountain.com

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TOM McHALE

STREAMLIGHT POCKET MATE USB

As the saying goes, “two is one and one is none.” And if one of the two is a mighty mouse, all the better.

The Streamlight Pocket Mate is a tiny, and I do mean tiny, keychain light with a big attitude. Its single activation button — handy for a thumb — turns on the low-power mode that beams out 45 lumens of light. This is plenty for making your way from the car to the house or finding lost keys or a light switch. Another press amps the output up to a whopping 325 lumens, turning the Pocket Mate into a viable alternative defensive tool.

The light weighs next to nothing (1/2 oz.) and features a mini-USB charging port. A charge will get you an hour at low power or 20 minutes on high. A spring-loaded hook allows easy keychain attachment and a subtle clip lets you go hands free. *Streamlight.com*



SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

SSP EYEWEAR METHOW RX ABLE KIT

I'm in love. I've gone through piles of safety glasses over the years — favorites that got scratched, frames that fell apart, others I wore to death. Over the years I settled on one pair because they were the



only ones I could see out of. They had a prescription insert but to change it, clean it, or clear the never-ending fog, you had to completely take apart the frame. The Methow Kit eliminates this problem. A prescription insert clips quickly and easily underneath the fog-free lens, allowing for quick changes and cleaning. I also never thought about using colored lenses. The Methow kit includes six HD anti-fog lenses to accommodate various light conditions. They are easy to switch out, extremely durable, UV rated and exceed ANSI Z87.1+2015 standards. Best of all: They don't fog! *SSPEyeWear.com*

TOM McHALE

HOLOSUN HE508T-RD X2

Holosun has come on strong in the durable handgun red dot category with models ready and well-suited for hard use, in part thanks to Titanium bodies surrounding the more delicate electronic parts.

One of the standout features of this optic is the “target” reticle — a 32 MOA circle surrounding a 2 MOA center red dot. It's an addictive sight picture once you try it. You can also run with just the outer circle or center dot only.

The side-mounted battery tray means no change of zero when swapping the battery every 50,000 hours or so and its Shake Awake technology ensures the dot is on and ready to go when the gun is moving. Last but certainly not least is the solar panel mini-farm on the top. If you do manage to run a battery dry, the unit still runs on solar power. *Holosun.com*



SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

PEPPERBALL COMPACT

I was always worried about the pepper spray I carried in my purse. I never planned to use it, and to be honest, I wasn't comfortable with it. I wasn't afraid to carry it with me, but rather worried I'd spray myself with it or waste so much time trying to figure out how to use it the point would be moot. Enter the Pepperball Compact. This 6.9" device is a single shot, reloadable and non-lethal personal protection device. It fires a Pepperball projectile with a launch distance of up to 30 feet, nearly 3x the range of my old pepper spray. The Pepperball contains pepper blend irritant that bursts into a cloud upon impact, spreading 12–15 feet in diameter. The Compact is intuitive — switch to fire and press the button, much easier than my keychain model and easily concealable. *PBLifeLite.com*



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SITUATION: Two particularly vicious murderers escape from prison, holding a whole region in a grip of fear.

LESSON: There are some situations only righteous gunfire can solve. Marksmanship matters.

In the northwestern corner of New York state sits a little village called Dannemora. It is populated by some 4,000 people, roughly three-quarters of whom are inmates of the prison known as Clinton Correctional Facility. Many of the law-abiding residents work at the prison. They and other residents call the prison "Clinton." Most everyone else colloquially calls the prison simply "Dannemora."

Among the men listed as the most potentially dangerous of those thousands of inmates were David Sweat and Richard Matt. Despite their history of ruthless, murderous sadism and escape attempts, they had of late maintained "good behavior" and earned some privileges inside the walls. *They also groomed at least a couple of prison employees as friends who would bend rules for them.* As a result, they were able to escape during the first weekend of June 2015.

In the days that followed, my wife and I were teaching in upstate New York, Saratoga Springs, and like everyone else in the region kept an eye out for the faces in the mug shots that dominated the news media. Half a decade later, I came across the most thorough documentation I've seen yet of the escape and the massive law enforcement operation that followed, the book *Dannemora* by Charles A. Gardner. Aptly subtitled *Two Escaped Killers, Three Weeks of Terror, and the Largest Manhunt Ever in New York State*, it was written by a municipal court judge retired from a quarter century career with the N.Y. State Department of Corrections who lived in the area.

Preludes

It is axiomatic in criminology many violent criminal actors had troubled childhoods, and equally true that a great many people with those disadvantages grow up to be law-abiding, productive citizens. Not David Sweat, violent even as a child and kicked out of elementary school at age nine for carrying a concealed butcher knife in class. His adventures in drug dealing and burglary saw him in and out of penal institutions starting in his teens. By 2002, he was into ripping off gun shops, and bragging to acquaintances how he would kill anyone who might send him back to prison. One night in July of 2002, he and a couple of cronies were gathered in a darkened parking lot celebrating a successful gun shop burglary when they saw a Broome County Sheriff's Department patrol car pull into the lot.

As Deputy Kevin Tarsia, 36, exited his vehicle, he was ambushed by the gang, Sweat firing at him with two stolen guns. Several bullets stopped on the lawman's body armor, but not all: wound channels ripped through his intestines and one kidney. He was down but still alive when David Sweat drove his getaway car over him, brutally dragging the body across the asphalt parking lot beneath the undercarriage. Sweat watched as one of his thug buddies snatched the severely injured officer's own issue GLOCK .40 and cold-bloodedly executed the now-helpless deputy with two shots to the face.

Hunted down not long after, Sweat proved to have no stomach for pulling guns on cops already pointing theirs at him and meekly submitted to arrest, quickly snitching off his accomplices. A year later, he pled guilty to first degree murder and was on his way to Dannemora.

The hulking Richard Matt was older than Sweat, and if anything, an even more vicious murderer. The son of a criminal, he graduated from foster homes to "reform school" by the time he was 14. A lifelong bully since childhood, he had a high IQ and talent in art, but it seemed from the beginning he would rather steal than work. He was skilled at manipulating people, particularly women. By age 19 he had twice escaped from jail. The escape from Dannemora in 2015 would be his fifth attempt and his third successful one.

His odyssey went on to include a stint in Elmira for a murder-for-hire plot. In 1997, on parole at age 31, Matt was offered a job and a chance at redemption by an elderly man who owned a food company. *Matt thanked him by first stealing from him, and then finally abducting him and torturing him for the stash of cash Matt believed the man had squirreled away.* Frustrated to find no

Continued on next page

AYOOB FILES

money, Richard Matt broke the old man's neck with his bare hands, dismembered the corpse with a hacksaw, and threw the body parts in the Niagara River.

Detectives cracked the case fairly quickly, but by that time Matt was already in Matamoros, Mexico where he stabbed an American tourist to death to steal a few hundred dollars. Quickly captured and imprisoned there, he was eventually extradited to New York for the murder of his benefactor, and in 2008 was sentenced to 25 years to life and on his way to Dannemora, where he would meet and conspire with David Sweat.

The Escape

I'm not going to publish a guide on how to escape from a maximum-security penitentiary. Suffice to say Sweat, and particularly Matt, had a trait common to sociopaths and psychopaths: the ability to charm the gullible. Particularly vulnerable was a heavy-set, middle aged woman named Joyce Mitchell, who ran the prison tailor shop where both convicts worked. It was confirmed she definitely had a sexual relationship with Matt and possibly also with Sweat and was excessively chummy with both.

Both cons had made life easier for themselves by informing on other criminals before they got to Dannemora, and inside the walls, Matt had cultivated prison guard Gene Palmer. The bulky killer con also painted portraits for Clinton staff to garner more favors, including getting situated in proximity to Sweat in the relatively lightly monitored "honor block" area of the prison.

Mitchell bought hacksaw blades, hiding them in frozen hamburger meat she smuggled into the prison, and gave to Palmer to deliver to the pair. They used the hacksaw blades to cut through the cell walls, allowing them access to tunnels that ultimately led to a manhole cover in a Dannemora street outside the prison grounds.

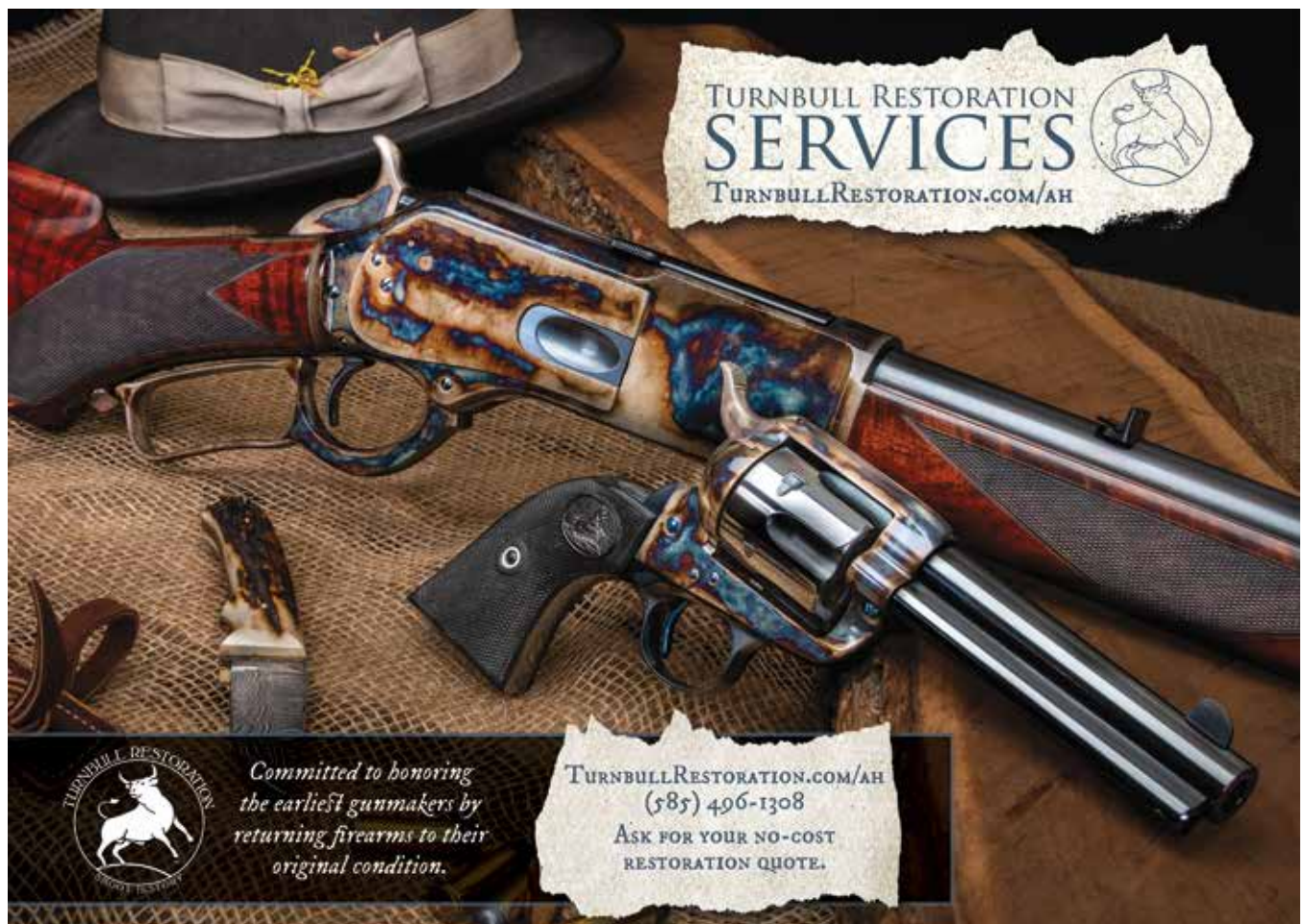
It would later be claimed (and denied by Mrs. Mitchell) the plan was for her to drive to a pickup site after Sweat and Matt had cleared the walls, and head for Mexico — and before leaving town, the cons would murder her husband so she could collect his half-million-dollar insurance policy. Exactly how this would work out if she was in Mexico with two hunted men, one of whom had a murder sentence to serve in that very country, was never explained. Detectives theorized the pair simply planned to murder her after the escape, dump her corpse, and drive on. It became

academic when Mrs. Mitchell failed to show up at the pickup point, and the fugitives desperately headed into the surrounding woods on foot.

Enter The Governor

Andrew Cuomo, known to our readers as a sworn enemy of gun owners, doesn't seem to have much love for police and correctional personnel either. The Governor of New York saw the whole thing as a PR opportunity and turned his tour into something close to *The Convict's Guide to Escaping From Dannemora*.

Wrote Charles Gardner, "The visiting officials from Albany paraded through the prison with cameras and cell phones documenting the escape route and crime scenes. In one of the many ironies surrounding the case, this was a violation of several departmental policies, including strict rules against cell phones and cameras inside prisons. *In other words, top state officials were breaking some of the same rules about which they would later beat up on Corrections officials.* The governor's entourage gave their photos and video to the news media and posted them on social media." (1) Added Gardner, "Apparently indifferent to investigative protocols, the governor, acting commissioner, and their staffs crossed crime-scene tape and



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handled physical evidence while touring the escape route. Investigators watched silently as this parade of people contaminated active crime scenes. Why Albany bigwigs allowed photos and video from the crime scene to be publicized, the investigators couldn't understand. But they kept their mouths shut."

Gardner also noted the correctional officers and police officers alike were disgusted Governor Cuomo referred to the cop-killer and the torture-murderer as "gentlemen" and "Mister."

Meanwhile, two desperate criminals with proven homicidal tendencies were at large.

Murderers In the Woods

While Andrew Cuomo was performing for the news cameras, the two fugitives were in the woods surrounding the area. They'd headed there as soon as they realized Mrs. Mitchell wasn't coming with the getaway car. Realizing the futility of their plan to escape to Mexico without wheels, they headed north to the other border: Canada was very close, "hiking distance" if not "walking distance."

Neither had a history of hiking, hunting, camping or other outdoor sports. They had managed to get hiking boots smuggled into their cells unnoticed, but as they plodded through the

forest, they still gathered blisters, and were tormented by mosquitoes. Had they had to live off the land, they might have become starved enough to surrender.

Northern New York has much beautiful forest land, but it's not all wilderness. Many consider it vacation land. Numerous cabins and modest, privately owned hunting lodges dot the area, and the pair broke into many such currently unoccupied structures.

Mitchell bought hacksaw blades, hiding them in frozen hamburger meat she smuggled into the prison, and gave to Palmer to deliver to the pair.

The break-ins provided them with more than enough food to sustain them. Located for recreation, many of those cabins had an ample supply of liquor, and occasionally marijuana, to which the fugitives helped themselves. The pragmatic Sweat indulged moderately if at all, but Matt had always been an out

of control drunk when he was free and reverted to type. He would stay under the influence of alcohol for most of his remaining time at large.

Meanwhile, law enforcement had mobilized en masse for what turned out to be a three-week search. *I've heard no one challenge Charles Gardner's assessment this was the largest man-hunt in the history of New York State.* Most estimates put the "cop count" at around 1,500. N.Y. State Police were naturally there in force. Numerous SWAT teams were called in. As close as it all was to the Canada line, there was a heavy Border Patrol element involved, including BORTAC, the elite Border Patrol tactical unit. Bordering Vermont cops were on high alert status as well, and RCMP and other Canadian law enforcement entities, likewise, on the other side of the border. Even the elite FBI Hostage Rescue Team was called in.

And the hunted killers had another faction to worry about: armed citizens.

Armed Citizen Factor

Matt and Sweat considered home invasions and car theft to facilitate escape early on, but decided against it. Part of what motivated that decision may have been fear of being shot to death by occupants. The perception of "anti-gun New York State" comes from the



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southern N.Y. megalopolis the locals call The City and The Island. Upstate New York is largely rural and home to many hunters, and concealed carry permits are much easier to get there than downstate.

The local populace was indeed up in arms. Bird hunters bought buckshot for their shotguns, broke them out of their safes and gun cabinets, and loaded them up "ready to repel boarders." People were reported to be openly carrying loaded handguns, illegal as hell in even upstate New York but unnoticed by the police, who were out looking for Matt and Sweat. This was particularly true in and around Dannemora: The prison was the area's primary employer, and a great many citizens worked there. They saw *the face of the enemy* every day and had already armed their households. Many residents who didn't have guns went out to buy some: Firearms retailers in and around the area reported a major uptick in business.

Encounter

On June 20, the fugitives were holed up in a remote cabin accessible only by all-terrain vehicle. Its owner, who happened to be an off-duty correctional officer, brought his dog out to check on the status of the place. The dog alerted as they neared the cabin: Matt and Sweat were in fact there. The owner drew his handgun, took a cover position, and ordered the men out. He was rewarded with the sound of a back door slamming, and a glimpse of the two men running away. They were long gone by the time he could summon the cavalry.

The bad news was by then, the fugitives had found a 20-gauge shotgun, fortunately with no ammunition. They had no stomach to bluff what appeared to be an ordinary man armed with a loaded handgun.

Unfortunately, they soon broke into another cabin where they found a box of 20-gauge rifled slug rounds. The danger level had just increased.

Matt Goes To The Mat

The prison buddies had grown hostile toward one another. Matt's drunken, stumbling slowness grated on the more athletic Sweat, who felt his partner was slowing them down. Moreover, Matt spoke of going to the road and carjacking to escape, and of dying in a shootout with police. They separated.

On June 26, Richard Matt, now a lone gunman, concealed himself by a roadside and fired the stolen shotgun at a passing pickup truck pulling a camper, striking the vehicle but missing the driver. The driver called in, and police converged on the scene. They found Matt lying prone by a log and ordered

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him to show his hands.

Instead, Matt swung his shotgun — now sawed-off with tools found at another burgled camp — at one of the officers.

It was a spectacular case of “cause of death: sudden and acute failure of the victim selection process.” Matt’s target was National BORTAC team leader Chris Voss, a combat veteran former Army Ranger.

Voss beat Matt to the trigger.

Aim the M4 carbine, press trigger, reset, repeat. And it was over. Matt’s head, Voss’ only exposed target, had taken multiple high velocity .223 hits. He had been killed instantly before he could fire a shot. Richard Matt had died a quicker and easier death than his victims.

No Sweat

No longer encumbered by his staggering, drunken partner, David Sweat had covered more miles in two days alone than the whole rest of their three weeks together. On June 28 he was walking along a stone wall through a field some 30 yards from Coveytown Road when he was spotted by passing N.Y. State Police Sergeant Jay Cook. Alone in his patrol car, Cook pulled

over and asked the man to stop for questioning. Instead, Sweat ran for the tree line. As Cook ordered him to stop, Sweat kept running; he threw off his backpack to gain more speed and screamed he was unarmed. If he shouted that because he thought it meant the trooper couldn’t shoot him, he was wrong.

“Suffice to say Sweat, and particularly Matt, had a trait common to sociopaths and psychopaths: the ability to charm the gullible.”

Sweat, 35, was outrunning the 47-year-old sergeant. Away from his patrol car, armed only with his pistol, alone without backup in a rural area he knew had spotty radio contact, the trooper couldn’t take Sweat’s word he was unarmed. He had positively ID’d one of the two then-most identifiable faces in New York state. And, the cardinal criterion of the governing case law, the U.S. Supreme Court’s Garner decision: Cook

knew this man was a clear and present danger to innocent human life for so long as he remained at large.

There has been some incorrect info on what happened next. For example, the *New York Times* incorrectly published Cook went to a kneeling position. (2) Cook himself told *American Handgunner* what really happened:

“When I realized I had to shoot, I jumped into an Isosceles stance, with my left foot a little ahead of my right. I held the sights center mass and focused on the front sight: He was a little blurry blob. I fired the first shot and he pitched forward and almost lost his footing. His right arm flopped wildly up in the air. He managed to catch himself and keep running. I fired the second shot, and he dropped immediately.”

Cook continued, “With the heavy camo clothing he was wearing, I couldn’t tell how badly he was hit. I saw an empty knife sheath on his belt. I kept him at gunpoint with his arms out to the side. He said, ‘I’m gonna die ... I just wanted to live. I just wanted to disappear.’ When backup got there, we handcuffed him and took off his upper clothing, and that’s when we saw where he was hit.”

Sweat would later say, “He hit me twice and it was — the first one hit me in the shoulder, the top. It killed this whole arm. I couldn’t move it. And the other one

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was on the other side. I thought, 'Man, I'm going to hit the ground,' and just started spitting blood up. He hit my lung." (3) The 200-grain Speer Gold Dots from Cook's department issue GLOCK 37 in .45 GAP had inflicted arm and thorax hits. The distance from Cook's firing point to where Sweat collapsed from his bullet wounds was measured at 210 feet. Sweat's empty knife sheath hadn't been empty long: The blade was found later nearby, where the fugitive had either accidentally dropped or intentionally discarded it during the final foot pursuit.

The manhunt would later be estimated to have cost up to \$28 million. Now, it was truly over.

Lessons

The two corrections officers both served time behind bars for their parts in the escape. Other occupational heads rolled, so to speak, at Dannemora. David Sweat was last heard from in solitary confinement for 23 hours per day for the rest of his life. It is from his subsequent confession we know what went on with him and Richard Matt during their fugitive time.

We know from Sweat they had monitored media; for one thing, he had a stolen transistor radio with him at the time of his capture. They had to have heard the media stories of citi-

zens arming themselves, an obvious deterrent to attempting carjackings and invasions of occupied dwellings his drunk and perhaps suicidal partner wanted to perpetrate.

We learn twice over precision marksmanship can be critical to survival. BORTAC team leader Voss was looking down the barrel of a slug-loaded shotgun when he coolly put multiple bullets into the small target presented to him in time to save his own life and the lives of his brother officers. Sergeant Cook's remarkable marksmanship with 100% hits on a running cop-killer after a strenuous foot pursuit, at three times the normal maximum police handgun qualification distance, was nothing less than what the late Col. Jeff Cooper would have called "a feat of arms."

This article is dedicated to the 1,500 guardians who participated in the manhunt that ultimately kept many people safe from two particularly cold-blooded murderers. 

Footnotes: (1) Gardner, Charles A., Dannemora, NYC: Citadel Press, 2019, pp. 163-164. (2) Rashbaum, William K., Swamps, "Marijuana, Moonshine: 2 Prison Escapees' 3 Weeks on the Run in New York," New York Times, Sept. 17, 2016. (3) "Rashbaum," New York Times, op. cit.



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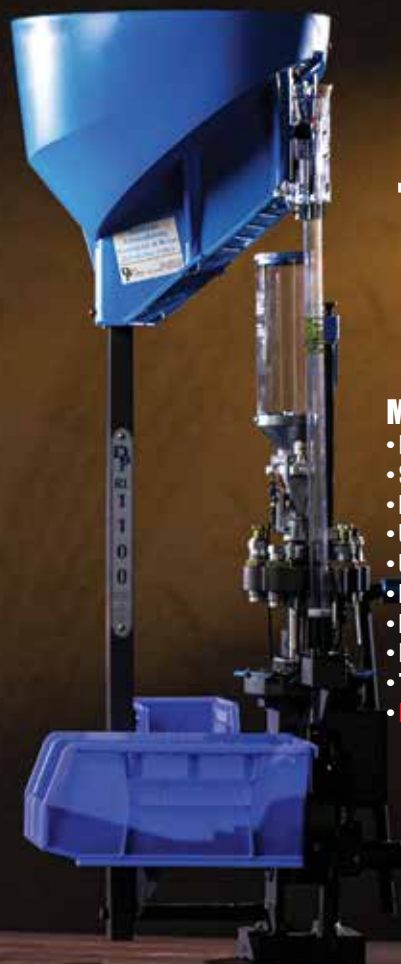
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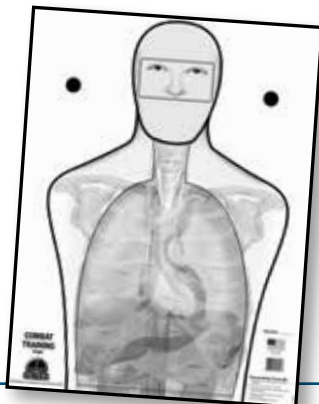


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using a trigger pull gauge but it's a job best left to, as they say, "experienced gunsmiths." Let's go over it though so you can wrap your brain around it.

Install the sear spring, trigger, mag catch, disconnector, disconnector/sear pin and mainspring housing. Now you can see the whole shebang looking at it from the rear. Put a trigger pull gauge on the trigger and test the pull. Don't pull it too far or you'll start to engage the sear spring time too. What you're measuring here is the center (sear/disconnector) time. It should be around 12 to 14 oz. or so on the gauge so use an accurate one. I like digital ones.

Now add the sear to the parts you've installed. Use your trigger pull gauge, pulling enough you engage the left (sear) time too this time. The combined weight of both times should be around 26-28 oz. If it isn't you need to carefully adjust the bend angles of both the center and left time together or one will be out of sync and might be too hard or too soft to work the part it's handling. Overbending the springs (like

any spring) can break them or worsen things so tiny bends and checking frequently is the trick here.

Clark makes a four-leg sear spring. The center time has two "fingers" at the top. This way you can adjust pressure on the disconnector and trigger return separately and would have impressed Mr. Browning I suspect.

If you did any of this — and you really shouldn't have unless you knew what you were up to — do a safety check at the bench. Then when you fire it, just load two or three rounds for a few mags on the odd chance you have one of those exciting "uncontrolled firing" events. If everything works out, then you've adjusted the sear spring correctly and safely. If not, you're likely someone who doesn't listen to advice and never should have tried to "fix" it to begin with, eh? You know who you are. I'm sure.

If you'd like to see us cover something

Actual sear springs Roy has taken out of in-use 1911s. Top one is shaped about right. All seemed to run fine but you can see the differences in time bends and even designs. Note rust on a couple — yikes.



else (revolvers or autos) let us know at editor@americanhandgunner.com and we'll do our best. 

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INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

1791 Gunleather	17
Aimpoint	78
Altamont Company	77
AmeriGlo	29
Armscor/Rock Island Armory	27
Beltman Inc.	40
Benelli USA	2
Black Hills Ammunition	54
Böker USA	75
Bushnell	19
Colt	23
CrossBreed Holsters	71
Cylinder & Slide	82
CZ-USA	91
DeSantis Holster	13
Dillon Precision Products	85
Fiocchi Ammunition	33
Heckler & Koch	35
Holosun	8
Indo-US Mim Tech Ltd.	9
IronMind Enterprises Inc.	40
IWI US	25
Kimber	11
Les Boer Custom	41
Levergun Leather Works	6
Mag-na-port	82
MTM Case-Gard	12
N.C. Ordnance	10
Nighthawk Custom	59
North American Arms	88
Powder River Precision Inc.	78
Ransom Rest	10
Real Avid	37
Ruger	15
SCCY Industries LLC	7
Simply Rugged Holsters	73
Sneaky Pete Holsters	67
Spartan Blades USA	73
Springfield Armory	92
Standard Manufacturing Co. LLC	14
Streamlight	81
Taurus International Mfg. Inc.	21
Tedder Industries	3
Ten-Ring Precision	78
TOPS Knives	83
Turnbull Restoration Co. Inc.	80
Tussey Custom	78
Versacarry	31
VZ Grips	6
Walkers	84
W.C. Wolff Company	75
Wilson Combat	55
Wyoming Sight Drifter LLC	78
XS Sights	14

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GUN CRANKS

I sometimes wonder what would happen if one produced a talk show resembling a genetic mutation engineered from involuntarily donated *Today Show*, *The View*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, the *Sonny & Cher Show*, and *Rowen and Martin's Laugh-In* genetic material. But without Sonny Bono's discordant singing. Then add guns.

Then I remember Gun Cranks.

In case you haven't yet tuned in, we've re-launched the Gun Cranks Show. While the internet is chock-full of "gun shows" of one serious and monotone sort or another, there aren't any which offer the easy and comfortable feeling of shooting the bull at the range after a good shooting session. And to my knowledge, none of them can stomach the thought of poking fun at sacred cows, and more often than not, themselves.

Want to know about the latest foibles over at the NRA? And what we ought to do about it? Check out Gun Cranks. How about sniping chickens? While the strategy may sound harsh, Roy has a terrible problem with ill-tempered roosters with shockingly poor dating manners sneaking into his hen house. I'll leave the rest up to your imagination.

Every week, join *GUNS Magazine* Editor Brent Wheat, Special Projects Editor Roy Huntington and me to discuss the latest in gun news, new products, tips and tricks, gear, borderline ridiculous stories and plenty of laughs.

You can catch Gun Cranks at [YouTube.com/GunCrank](https://www.youtube.com/GunCrank) — a new show goes live every other Thursday.

STAY INFORMED!

The tech tyrants of social media love to show you only a tiny fraction of what we publish on social media, so if you want to keep up to date on Gun Cranks and everything else going on around here, subscribe to one or more of our weekly emails. You can choose from *American Handgunner Insider*, *Carry Options*, *Personal Defense*, *First Look: Guns & Gear*, *GunCrack Chronicles*, *GUNS Magazine Insider*, *GUNS Magazine Podcast*, or *Wheelgun Wednesday*. Better yet, choose them all! You can subscribe at [American Handgunner.com/Newsletters](https://www.americanhandgunner.com/Newsletters).

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SEAR SPRING SAVVY

DEMYSTIFYING THE 1911

Gunsmithing content in the magazines always generates some good questions from you all. I recently covered disconnector operation in a 1911 (*Insider*, M/A 2021) and almost immediately someone asked me to explain the “funny three-tined spring thingy” in the 1911 grip. That’s the sear spring, so hang onto your seat and here we go.

That rascal John Browning was a stickler for making parts that have more than one job to do if possible. The sear spring in a 1911 is a classic example. If you look at it as it’s mounted in the grip, the left tine puts pressure on the sear to keep it engaged with the hammer until it’s “pushed off” by trigger pressure. The center tine applies pressure on the bottom

of the disconnector, keeping upward pressure on it. It also forces the trigger bow forward, assuring the trigger returns after being pressed. The right tine is bent “backwards” (toward you) forcing the grip safety outward, dropping the arm of the grip safety, blocking rearward travel of the trigger until the grip safety is pushed in. Presto, that’s four jobs with one spring. Smart guy, eh?

As it is with most things with the 1911, original, high quality stock factory parts work fine. A “Colt” branded spring will likely never give you any trouble. Ditto for other name-brand models from the likes of Cylinder & Slide, Clarks, Wilson, Nighthawk Custom, etc. I’d stay away from the “gun show junk box” springs as you just never know how they were made — old rusty steel beer cans maybe? I’ve “fixed” lots of guns having been “worked on to improve them” and tossed out poorly made sear springs. They often have rough edges, mis-shaped tips and bend angles looking more like a drunken spider’s web than the delicate curves of an original.

How It Works

It’s pretty straightforward actually. Properly installed it’s held in place by pressure from the mainspring (hammer spring) housing. As the housing slides up into the frame the sear spring flattens some, pressing the tips of the tines against where they belong.

The spring itself should be clean, the edges even and the tips

Sear Spring: Left tine handles pressure on the sear, center double duty controlling the disconnector and trigger return pressure and the right keeps the grip safety “out” at rest.



bearing against the gun parts should be smooth, even polished so they move easily. A dab of light grease, or oil, makes sense there.

The left tine handles sear duties. The correct pressure assures solid engagement of the sear and hammer notch, helping to prevent the hammer following the slide down. Too little and the sear may not “catch” the hammer notch and you might find yourself experiencing some “uncontrolled firing” as they say!

The center tine (riding against the disconnector foot and trigger bow) assures the trigger returns after being pressed and also contributes to the weight of the trigger pull. It’s a delicate balance of being heavy enough to assure the trigger returns and “too” heavy causing an excessive trigger pull weight.

The third tine on the right side keeps that grip safety behaving, but a mis-adjusted one can also allow the grip safety to rattle when out. Gently bending the tine’s curve back a bit will usually fix that little quirk neatly. Gently please!

Adjustments?

There are actually ways to measure the “weight” of the spring pressure



The main spring housing (hammer spring) captures the sear spring. Here you can see how the grip safety tine faces rearward.

Continued on page 88



FORCE

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